

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN R. LEWIS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. John R. Lewis on May 6, 1997 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler. I would like to begin by asking a little about your parents. You were born in New York City and your mother and father were New Yorkers?

John Lewis: Right, that's right.

KP: Do you know how your parents met and how they got married?

JL: No, I don't. My father was sixteen years old [when] he went to the Mexican border, and he was probably the youngest man down there. He lied about his age. Then he came back and he lied to my mother [about] how old he was. So they were married. And then he went to France with the 27th Division, and he was gassed and wounded in the Battle of the Hindenburg Line. When he came home, [he was] among the last of the troops, because he was hospitalized for a while. And shortly after that, we moved to New Jersey, and he started with the Prudential Insurance Company as a salesman. He was promoted to assistant superintendent in Red Bank, and then promoted to district manager in Burlington. So, I moved, naturally.

KP: Prudential's decisions.

JL: Yeah, right. Not made by us.

KP: You mentioned that your father lied about his age to go to Mexico. So he took part in the Punitive Expedition in Mexico in 1916?

JL: He was about the youngest one down there, but, since he volunteered, I doubt that he considered it a "Punitive Expedition."

KP: What did he say about his experience?

JL: He didn't talk about it.

KP: He didn't mention anything?

JL: He didn't talk about World War One, either, but I found some letters he'd written to one of his sisters, that told about the Battle of Hindenburg Line that he was involved in when he was gassed and wounded.

KP: So he never told you about being gassed or he never told you about what it was like to be in the trenches?

JL: No, no, never did. And, really, I didn't talk to my children about it, either. I think children are reluctant to push their parents on something like that.

KP: Did your father ever join the American Legion?

JL: He belonged to the American Legion.

KP: Was he an active member?

JL: He was active during his early years, but I don't think he was by the time we reached Burlington. I used to go to the parades in Keyport. We lived in Keyport for a while and watched my father walk with a flag on his shoulder. And I really felt proud of my father.

KP: So he was very proud of the service?

JL: He was, I think he put some of that in me. There is nothing wrong with being in the service. Serve your country and do it, get it over with.

KP: You mentioned your father had a successful career. Did he stay well employed during the Great Depression?

JL: Well, yeah, he was a district, assistant superintendent in Red Bank, for nine years, I guess. Then he was one of the youngest people selected to be a district manager. He had like seven or eight branch offices, a home office in Burlington. And he was a director of the bank in town, he was on city council, he did all the things you were supposed to do.

KP: He was very community minded.

JL: Very much so.

KP: How about your mother, how active was she?

JL: Not very much. She was a housemaker, wonderful cook, great mother. She had friends, she played bridge and things like that, but nothing beyond that.

KP: Were your parents active in the church?

JL: My mother was, my father wasn't.

KP: You lived in New York and you lived in different parts of New Jersey, what did you think of the different places you lived? I mean, New York is very different from Burlington.

JL: Well, we left New York when I was a baby.

KP: Oh, okay.

JL: Probably less than two years old. My sister out here was more than two, but I'm sure we were in New Jersey by the time I was four.

KP: But you lived in very different parts of New Jersey?

JL: Well, I loved Red Bank. I had some great friends there, we had lots of good sports, we had the river, we had sailing. It was a good place to grow up.

KP: And I take it you liked the Shore.

JL: Yeah, we used to go down to the Shore in the summer. Sea Bright in the summer time. 'Cause there weren't any jobs. I had a little lawn-cutting job, and a window washing job, but kids couldn't get much work in those days.

KP: When you say you were active in sports, what sports did you play in high school?

JL: Well, in Red Bank, we had freshman baseball, but that's the only sport we had. And my sophomore year, I was on the basketball and football squads, but I wasn't a stellar athlete. They didn't have baseball, so I did that for my sophomore and junior year. We moved to Palmyra, and the coach said, "You're gonna be the quarterback," and my mother said, "You're not gonna be the quarterback because they don't have insurance." So I didn't play football.

KP: But you wanted to?

JL: I went to Germantown Academy, and I played football and basketball in Germantown. And I was on the baseball team when somebody stole my glove and shoes, and I told my headmaster that, "They didn't steal things in public schools, why do they steal in private schools?" He and I were on the outs from that point on.

KP: So you were surprised that they were stolen?

JL: I just put 'em in the locker and left no lock on it. The next day, I went there and they were gone. He didn't act as though it was any of his problem, "Go out and buy another glove and shoes." And I said, "I'm not going to ask my father to do that."

KP: Why did your parents send you to Germantown Academy, or why did you want to go?

JL : I wanted to go because I thought I wanted some more background in math courses.

KP: When you were growing up, did your parents want you to go to college?

JL: Oh, I think so, because they hadn't gone, and my father realized the limitations to his career. He did not have a college education, and, although he had done exceptionally well, he couldn't do any better.

KP: So your father was frustrated because he couldn't advance any further without a degree?

JL: Oh, I say, very much so.

KP: Because your father really had a remarkable career, especially given the '30s and the Depression.

JL: Yeah. He worked hard, you know. He had eight men who were salesmen under him in Red Bank, and every night I'd see him leave. He was going out to work with the men.

KP: Selling insurance with them?

JL: Helping them.

KP: What were the differences between Red Bank and Burlington?

JL: Well, have you ever been to Burlington?

KP: Yes, yes. Actually this last summer, I went.

JL: It's a very old community. And it's, I don't know how to describe it without sounding racist, but there are a lot of blacks there. They bought a very fine home on the river, but one block back, it was like Atlantic City. And it's a shame, because there were so many old buildings in Burlington that could have been renovated and brought the city up. When my father was city manager, he said, "What we ought to do is get a bulldozer and level the town," which wasn't the right thing to say, but he was so frustrated with the way things were.

KP: When was he city manager?

JL: He wasn't. He was on the city council.

KP: This was back in the '30s?

JL: It was more in the '40s, during the war.

KP: Did your parents stay in Burlington for the rest of their lives?

JL: No, my father retired when he was fifty-five and moved out to Coronado.

KP: Oh, really?

JL: They were gonna go to Florida, and they went down there for a convention for Prudential people in May. Then they went to Mexico City, and then they came to Coronado. Well, it was like going from a sweatbox to Coronado, where the climate is always very even, and they decided that's where they wanted to live.

KP: Now, were you living out in Coronado at the time?

JL: Yes, I was recalled for Korea, and I was sent to Coronado, to the Amphibious Training Command, so they came out to visit in '54, and in '55, he retired. By then they had already purchased this house and moved into it.

KP: So the military played a key role in where you would end up?

JL: Very much, very much, yeah. When I was recalled, I could have gone to Norfolk, and I never would have stayed there, I can tell you that. I came back to Rutgers in '46. When the war ended, I had command of a ship that was built specifically for the landings in Japan. They were rocket firing ships, they built forty-eight of them, they trained forty-eight commanding officers. When the war was over, I put in to get out, I had the points, and they said [that there was] no qualified relief available.

KP: You were an officer, so ...

JL: So, I was a lieutenant commander by then, and they said, "You can have a spot promotion to commander," and I said, "No, my wife is about to have a baby, and if I'm gonna stay in for another year, I want to stick in the Philadelphia area," so they gave me a job up there. And when I finished that job, I went back here. Ed Curtin was the Dean of Men, then, and Ed and I were old friends from before, and I went into see him, [and I said], "Coming back, what do I have to do?" And he broke out my transcript. I said, "You know, I went to midshipman's school, and that's certainly equal to two years of ROTC," so he gave me two years of ROTC. I said, "I went to mine school. I had the top electricity and magnetism professors in the country. That's certainly equal to physics," [and] he said, "[It] sure is." And I said, "I took a history course while I was in New Guinea, and I should have that." So it ended up, I had to take five courses and I took five on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and I got my degree in February.

KP: And I assume you used the GI Bill.

JL: I used it for about four months, three months, something like that. Then I went down to Campbells Soup Company and I was picked for the management training program. And I went right to work there. That's what I did until September '50, when I was recalled.

KP: Going back a little bit, since your parents wanted you to go to college, did you have any ideas of where you wanted to go to school?

JL: I don't think I had any ideas of where I wanted to go. We were down in Williamsburg, one time, and I saw that beautiful campus and all those girls, and I thought that would be a nice place to go. And my father said, "No, that's not a nice place for you to go." So I went to Rutgers. Applied for the scholarship, got the scholarship.

KP: How crucial was the scholarship, would your family have been able to afford the tuition?

JL: Oh, I think so. My sister and I both started, because I started a year after I finished high school. She started when she finished high school. So it would have been a strain on him, but he

could have done it.

KP: Your sister was going to Boston University, which was a private school.

JL: I have no idea what her costs were.

KP: Did she win a scholarship also?

JL: No. She did win a fellowship to Mount Holyoke. She taught there for two years.

KP: And then she joined the Navy.

JL: Then she went to Smith and got a commission with the Navy.

KP: When you came to Rutgers, what did you want to major in? What career did you think you would be interested in?

JL: Well, I majored in business administration, and I figured, this was still tough times, and I figured that I would probably end up with Prudential. But at least I'd end up with a degree. I wouldn't be sweating it out like my poor father was.

KP: So not having a college degree really made a big difference in his career.

JL: Oh, yeah. He was a very bright man and a very honest man and a hard working man, and he could have done tremendous things if he had the education.

KP: You majored in business administration with the thought you could work for the Prudential?

JL: At that time ...

KP: Yeah, well, Prudential was ...

JL: A big hirer, I'm sure.

KP: Yeah, and I've interviewed a number of people who have worked at the Prudential at some point, either before the war or after the war.

JL: I remember two, I was a Beta, and two of the Betas had gone into this Marine training thing, and I thought about that for a while. And they were both interviewed for jobs in their senior year, and they were both offered jobs at about \$125 a month. And we said, "If they offered you fifty dollars a week for the rest of your life, would you take it?" There was a lot of debate about this, again, a different mentality than the kids today have. They talk about one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand. Different.

KP: Yeah, it's very different. When did you join the Betas?

JL: I think it was November of my freshman year, right after rushing period. Both Bill Jordan and I joined. We had been at GA together and had roomed together.

KP: Do you remember your initiation?

JL: Oh, yeah. Sure do.

KP: How painful was it?

JL: Well, they tried to play Bill and me off against each other and we wouldn't do it, so we always ended up tying and then they'd beat both of us. So we figured, you know, "This is the way it is, so go ahead."

KP: Before we started this interview, you talked quite a bit about Bill Jordan, who was your roommate during first year. You mentioned that he was an (Upson?) scholar, he played football, and he had to interrupt his education.

JL: Well, his father died, and Bill had to go back and run their chemical plant in Philadelphia.

KP: Do you know if he ever finished college somewhere else?

JL: No, no he didn't. He was in the Navy. He became a signal man in World War Two. After the war, he went back to the plant and developed some process that made the plant a lot of money. He had a younger brother who was a playboy, and his mother liked his younger brother [more], and they squeezed him out of that company in the early '50s, and they kept all of his patents, 'cause he developed them while he was there. So they came out to California and they stayed in Coronado for a while, but his wife had an allergy problem and they ended up in Redlands, and he built a chemical plant in Redlands.

KP: How interesting.

JL: And he developed some more patents. He developed a mud for drilling, and he developed something that goes on the backs of carpets and, I don't know what else he developed, but he was quite successful.

KP: I don't know if college would have helped his success any more.

JL: He was a good athlete, but he was a much better student.

KP: He sounds very similar to Ralph Schmidt, who was a chemistry major.

JL: Well, yeah, I imagine [that] Ralph and Bill were in a lot of classes as freshman.

KP: Their stories sound very similar. Did you work at all when you were going through college?

JL: Well, after football season, I waited on tables and washed dishes at the Beta house to get my meals. And, at the end of my junior year, if I had come back for my senior year, I would have been the steward. I wouldn't have had to work, but I would have been in charge of the kitchen.

KP: Making sure everything runs correctly.

JL: I could have been president or I could have been steward and I said, "Give me the steward job."

KP: You mentioned that Professor Harold Corlett was your favorite professor. Why does he stand out?

JL: Because he was my favorite professor. He was a Spanish professor. He'd been here for years and years. He was a kind man and had a good sense of humor. There were three of us who played football, either on 150 or the varsity, and we just had a great time in his class. He said, "This was the most interesting class I ever had."

KP: Really?

JL: And all during the war, he wrote to me, or he contacted my wife. When the war was over, and he wrote, I was away, and he wrote my wife a very kind letter about how glad he was that I had made it through the war. So I have nothing but fond memories of Mr. Corlett.

KP: Are there any other professors that stand out, either for good or for ill ...

JL: No, not really, no. I can't think of any.

KP: Most people I have interviewed from the Class of '42 and earlier really didn't enlist until after Pearl Harbor. You decided to enlist far earlier than you had to.

JL: I knew there was going to be a war.

KP: When did you know there was going to be a war?

JL: I think in '39, after the Germans started. Several players on the team all felt the same way. And one day, Art Perry, who'd graduated in '38, who was an Air Force officer, flew over in one of those little bi-wing planes, and flew over the football field. Everybody was waving and getting excited about it. We talked about, "Oh, we'd be a bombardier. It's fun, like shooting baskets. You can drop bombs." But then this call came about the Navy, and I always liked the Navy. I was in the Sea Scouts in Red Bank and I really enjoyed, lived on the water all my life, you know, really. Raritan Bay, the Shrewsbury River, the Delaware River, went to college on the Raritan River. I went to midshipman's school on the Hudson River. So being on the water just was something I'd enjoy.

KP: So there was a real pull to join the Navy.

JL: Yeah, after that program was available, I didn't think about anything else.

KP: You mentioned before we started, that the person who told you about the program and ended up going with you and a friend to sign up, both of them got rejected ...

JL: One ended up in the Coast Guard, and the other ended up, actually, in the Navy. He had high blood pressure at that test, and they couldn't get it down. So they said, "No, not now." But some time later on, they said okay.

KP: You were in ROTC at Rutgers.

JL: First two years, it was mandatory.

KP: What did you think of your ROTC training?

JL: I didn't like it. I didn't like all that drill. My big problem was [that] I had very bad shoulder injuries during football season and I was usually taped up and I couldn't do anything with the rifle, so they had me in the Colonel's office polishing the cabinets, this kind of stuff.

KP: This sounds rather unpleasant.

JL: There was nothing about it that I liked. Didn't like the brown uniforms. We used to have the [command] "squads, right" and some guy in front of you would turn the wrong way and wack you with his rifle, or I would wack somebody with my rifle. That wasn't my life.

KP: It's interesting that you should say that because I get the sense that being in ROTC convinced a lot of people not to be involved with the infantry.

JL: No, I didn't feel that way about it. At that time, I didn't think so much about the war.

KP: But you did like the idea of the Navy if there was going to be a war.

JL: Right.

KP: Now, you mention that you enlisted in 1940. Do you remember what month?

JL: I can remember the day.

KP: What day?

JL: August 6, 1940. I had to go to a Justice of the Peace or something, Notary Public. My father had to go with me to say that, I was still twenty, that I could do this. So that's the day that I signed up.

KP: How did your father feel about you enlisting?

JL: Oh, he thought it was great. He realized there was going to be combat, too.

KP: He had fought in World War One, which was supposed to be “The war to end all wars.” How did he feel about World War II?

JL: Well, of course, he wouldn’t be very happy about it because people were getting slaughtered over in Europe and he’d seen that before.

KP: Did he have a sense of disappointment that his war hadn’t been as successful?

JL: I would think so. As I say, he very seldom talked about it.

KP: Really?

JL: I would think, no, he never talked about it. In fact, I was up here nine months of the year. Those months I was home, I was only home for the summer after my freshman year and my sophomore year. After that I was gone.

KP: Was your father very busy? It seems as though he didn’t talk a great deal.

JL: He was gone a lot. When he was in Red Bank, he was out with his men all the time, and when he was in Burlington, he was civically involved. He became the person that goes around, he volunteered to be the assessor. He put the highest assessment on his own house, so people wouldn’t criticize him for it. He got on the city council. A volunteer fireman wanted another fire truck and he said, “Don’t you have enough fire trucks?” And they started to boycott Prudential, so he called the fire commissioner down to check it and they said, “Burlington has enough fire equipment for a city six times its size,” or something like that. He was on the bank board, and when the bank was doing well, the directors raised their pay and he said, “You should raise the interest and give more interest to the people,” so he quit. He was idealistic.

KP: He was quite a role model, in terms of ...

JL: I’ve tried to be like him, but I can’t quite come up to that ...

KP: Most people, I think, would have a hard time living up to those standards.

JL: I’m a bank director now, and I was telling my sister, when we get paid, which really isn’t very much for the work we do, and she says, “Those who have, get.” I said, “What do you want me to do, give it all back?” I said to my wife, “Tell them what I read every week.” “Well,” she says, “he gets a pack this thick.” I said, “Eight hundred dollars a month,” which is what we’re getting now, “isn’t all that much. It’s a busy bank.”

KP: Of the people you talked to, what were they thinking about the war? Did people think it was a mistake? Were some people looking forward to it?

JL: I don't think anybody looked forward to it. I think everybody realized that the time was going to come when we had to go. We just hoped we wouldn't get killed, injured, or whatever, and our friends would live through it, too. Beyond that, we weren't philosophical about much of anything. Just having a good time.

KP: My students have read the *Targums* from the '30s and '40s and they noticed that there was a lot of emphasis on the three Fs: fun, fraternity, and football.

JL: I would think so. Yeah. We were all too poor to have dates at Douglass. No one had any money, you couldn't do much. The only alternative was to get involved in things.

KP: Besides football, what other activities did you participate in on campus?

JL: Well, my fraternity had a basketball team that we organized and drafted the good kids in our fraternity and we actually played basketball, pretty much along the East coast. We challenged other Beta houses to basketball games. We beat the JV [team] at one dance weekend. We had a good team.

KP: So, you were too poor for dates?

JL: Yeah, as I say, my parents were putting two children through school, so I had a very limited spending account. A nickel ice cream down at Doc Coffman's was about, you know, the big day.

KP: What about the movies, did you ever get to the movies?

JL: Very seldom. Professor Corlett used to say, "Mr. Lewis, if I ever need you, I'll just go up to the gym and I'll find you."

KP: He had something of a sense of humor?

JL: He was just great. He was the kind of professor you would enjoy.

KP: You joined on August 6, 1940. When did you actually report for your actual Navy training?

JL: Well, I took a month's cruise in November 25, 1940 through December 18, 1940.

KP: 1940.

JL: ... 1940, and in May of '41, I went to midshipman's school. September 12, 1941, I was commissioned and went on active duty.

KP: Now, backing up. You mentioned that the first month you were on board a ship, one of

your first duties was to scrape the deck.

JL: That's right. All of us did. All reserves, like I was, reserve midshipmen. Interesting thing is that the ensign who was in charge of my group, [I went into the real estate business when I got out of the Navy] I sold him a house in Coronado and we're still great friends.

KP: Really, this ensign from the first day?

JL: He was the Class of '39 at the Naval Academy. And the other ensign, who was in the Class of '38, I sold him a house, too.

KP: So you've stayed in touch with a lot of the people you served with?

JL: Yeah. Unfortunately, a lot of them are no longer here.

KP: But you stayed in touch after the war? What were your initial impressions of the Navy? How did the Navy look from your initial point of view?

JL: Well, on the ship, you knew you were gonna have to toe the line if you wanted to go to midshipman's school. At midshipman's school, you had to study harder than you ever studied in your life, because in ninety days, they crammed a tremendous amount of stuff into your skull. And then after that, as an ensign, everybody knew you were an ensign. We used to say say, "Red ass ensign." No rank among ensigns. Having rank among ensigns is like honor among prostitutes. So anyhow, I enjoyed it. How can I say I didn't enjoy it? I loved being on ships.

KP: So you liked being an enlisted personnel aboard ship?

JL: They all knew, on the USS *Wichita*, that we were gonna be officers. They didn't give us a bad time about being reserves. The ensigns I was telling you about couldn't have been finer to this group. Most of us were college graduates.

KP: And you didn't regret being in the Navy?

JL: No. No, I didn't. Not a bit.

KP: What about seasickness? Did you get seasick at all?

JL: I did later on. I didn't on that ship, which was a big ship. The first ship I went on was a YP, which was a seventy-five foot ex-Coast Guard cutter. We were on an anti-submarine survivor patrol off the East Coast. One morning, we were working with a submarine, I went out and I went over to say something, and I was into the wind and lost everything I had ... I realized that's the first time in my life I had ever been seasick. I didn't get sick much after that.

KP: What did you think of the customs of the Navy, especially on your first cruise?

JL: I didn't have any problems with them. I figured that's the way things are. I mean, I saw it in ROTC and I figured it was the same way in the Navy. Just that it was a better way to live.

KP: One the nice things people have said about the Navy was that they had clean sheets, a shower, and good square meals.

JL: Right, that's right. You could have been standing out in the rain, in the rough seas, and all that stuff, freezing to death, but when you're all through, you had a warm bunk to get into.

KP: I've also asked people who've been in the Navy about their quarters. They are quite cramped, even for officers.

JL: Well, they are. On this YP, there were two bunks in a space half this size, I guess, and a small head. The next ship I went on was a minesweeper, and I was the executive officer of the minesweeper, and the engineering officer and I shared a room, and the commanding officer had a room all to himself. I later became the commanding officer on it, but they still weren't any bigger than this area in here. Then I had command of this rocket-firing ship and I had my own room, which still wasn't much bigger than this.

KP: And you were the commander. You were in the pre-Pearl Harbor Navy, and I have interviewed people who were in the pre-Pearl Harbor Army, who said that the Army was very ritualistic. People in the Army described the situation when they got on base, they had to present their card to everyone on the base, as well as other customs. What kind of rituals do you remember about the pre-Pearl Harbor Navy that disappeared when war broke out?

JL: Well, not too much. Always, you stood on the left of the senior officer so he could salute. He got in the car last. He was the first out of the car. And that went all through the war. That never changed.

KP: Oh, that didn't change as much?

JL: No, and I don't think it changed in the Army, either. I would think that if you were with General Patton, you certainly would have observed those rules.

KP: How much harder was midshipman's school compared to college?

JL: Well, it was interesting. You know, when you're studying something you're interested in, it's different. I was never really interested in economics, but I knew I had to take it, so I took it.

KP: So you viewed it as the practical thing to do.

JL: Yeah, I figured that the Navy was probably gonna be a good career for me and I better learn what I was studying. So I did.

KP: What was the toughest part of the curriculum you had to take at midshipman's school?

JL: Well, you had navigation, you had seamanship, you had, it's hard to remember all the things we had. We had so many of them. Gunnery. We went out on a yacht that somebody had given them, we learned all about stuff there. We went on the Hudson River in a whaleboat and rowed. We marched a lot underneath the elevated, on the Hudson River there. I think it was 125th Street. There was an old reserve armory there, which they put on top of an old battleship.

KP: So you did your midshipman training in New York City?

JL: In the City. It's hard to remember what the courses were, now that you ask, 'cause I hadn't thought about it in so long.

KP: Were there any exams or anything particular that you found very easy?

JL: I found navigation tough. The seamanship and those courses, gunnery courses, they weren't that difficult. Navigation was.

KP: The people in your midshipman's training, what were their backgrounds? I take it they were college educated.

JL: Most of them were college graduates. I'd say fifty percent of them came from Ivy League schools. I don't remember anybody from Rutgers in that group.

KP: Yeah, you were the one Rutgers student.

JL: I was the third one from Rutgers to go in this program.

KP: Do you know the other two?

JL: One was George Wells and the other was Harley Lewis. Harley died during the war, not killed, but he had an infection or something. I never did hear exactly what it was. I think you said you interviewed George Wells.

KP: I think we have.

JL: I'm pretty sure, someone I talked to said, "Yes."

KP: One of my interns did the interview. Did the people who joined the Navy in this midshipman's school join for the same reasons you had? Had they thought a war was coming?

JL: I suspect that was part of it, and part of it was they didn't want to go into the Army. By then, after I was sworn in, there was a draft. A lot of these people came in, not before ...

KP: Pearl Harbor.

JL: ... Pearl Harbor, of course, but they came in, like in the early '40s, early '50s, let me get it right, '41.

KP: They didn't want to be a part of the peacetime draft. After finishing midshipman's school, you decided that the Navy was for you and you didn't want to take the option of returning to school.

JL: That was the option given to you before midshipman's school.

KP: Oh, before midshipman's school.

JL: First day, nobody walked out. There wasn't a soul who walked out.

KP: Really, no one decided they should finish school?

JL: And there were others, besides myself, who hadn't finished college.

KP: What did your parents think of your decision not to finish college?

JL: Well, my father was upset that I didn't finish college. But he felt very happy that I was a commissioned officer. If you'd been a private in World War One and your son was a commissioned officer in World War Two, you would have felt good about it. And my mother was very apprehensive [that] I was going to get my butt blown off or something like that, but neither one would be anything but supportive of what I was doing.

KP: Even though your father would have preferred if you'd finish college, he was still proud that you were an officer.

JL: I think he also realized that there was no way I could get through June of '42 and not have a problem with the draft or be on active duty.

KP: How many people didn't make it through midshipman's school?

JL: You know, I honestly don't know.

KP: You didn't see like people disappear all the time?

JL: Not en masse, no. As I say, all of them graduated from college except for a few of us, and most of them came from very good schools. There were two sections. There a deck section, which I was in, and an engineering section, and we didn't see much of each other. The section that I was in had the Ls and the Ms. Morgenthau's son was in there. Joe Lykes, whose father had the Lykes line was in there. There were no great athletes in our class. But they're all pretty fine people, I thought.

KP: Did you develop any friendships in your midshipmen's group?

JL: Well, we're together for three months and then everybody scatters. When I went to mine school in the first part of '42, I saw a few of them again. One of them was my best man when I was married, in March of '42, but only because he came down to relieve me. I saw him on the deck. We had just come in from picking up survivors of a sunken ship. His name was David Langfitt, and I said, "Dave what are you doing here?" He said, "I'm your relief." I said, "Where am I going?" He said, "You're going to mine school."

KP: And this was the first wind you had of it?

JL: Yeah, I said, "I'm getting married tomorrow, do you want to be my best man?" He said, "Yeah." So, we get married and I went AWOL for two days to get married and got away with it. Got a lecture about, "There was a war on," and all that stuff, which I understood.

KP: After midshipman's school, you finished in ...

JL: September '41.

KP: Where was your first assignment?

JL: I went down to the Navy [Yard] in Philadelphia, to the Naval Intelligence, because the YP was being fixed and they couldn't put me on it yet. So I was on the commerce and travel section, which worked the waterfront. Some nights, I would have to wear a uniform and the British embassy people would pick me up. I'd stick a .45 in my pocket and I'd roam through the docks of Philadelphia.

KP: Looking for what?

JL: Well, all the cargo in these freight cars was going to go overseas, and I was supposed to, if I saw anyone messing around, I guess I was supposed to shoot 'em. I don't know.

KP: And you would be with the British embassy people?

JL: I'd be by myself. They'd take me down there and they'd say, "*Sayonara*." Next morning, they'd pick me up and I'd go change back into street clothes and work the waterfront. Go on abroad the ships and talk to the captain, see if he had any intelligence that we could gather up and pass on.

KP: What types of things did you gather?

JL: To be honest with you, very little. They didn't seem to have too much to tell.

KP: Any suspicions of things you were looking for?

JL: No.

KP: I know it's a long time ago, but ...

JL: No, I can't remember anything. We went aboard banana boats. We went aboard oil tankers. We went aboard cargo ships. They were all very honest people who were doing an honest trade. They hadn't been in Europe, of course. The war was going on.

KP: In 1941, the Navy was basically fighting a war in the Atlantic. Where were you and how were you involved, at that time?

JL: I started off with this YP, and our job was anti-submarine warfare and survivor rescue. If a ship was torpedoed in our territory, they would send us a message, and we would go and pick up the dead bodies. That time of the year, no one lasted long in the Atlantic Ocean.

KP: When did you start your duty on the YP boat?

JL: In the latter part of December.

KP: So before Pearl Harbor?

JL: No, it was after Pearl Harbor. The boat still wasn't ready.

KP: But it was supposed to be ready before Pearl Harbor?

JL: God only knows when it was supposed to be ready. It was an ex-Coast Guard cutter. They call it a "six bit-ers," seventy-five feet long. It and the YP, both had been side by side and partially submerged in the Cooper River in Camden, they resurrected them because they didn't have anything to start the war with. Once they got the thing ship-shape, as much as they could, then they put the crew aboard. And they put a Lewis machine gun on the bow, gave us a bunch of World War One rifles and a Tommy-gun, two depth charges we couldn't outrun, and said, "Go get 'em." That's about the way it was.

KP: How big was your crew?

JL: There were two officers and thirteen men.

KP: Did you guys know everyone fairly well?

JL: Oh, yeah, and these were much older men. These were recalled fleet reserves and they had served on huge ships and they didn't know anything about small ships, small arms, or anything like that. We had a Lewis machine gun that would only fire a single shot, after this guy got through messing around with it. We had a Tommy-gun that would only fire on automatic. We were in bad shape to be out looking for submarines.

KP: Because if a submarine surfaced, it wouldn't have been a very fair contest.

JL: They could have taken a rifle, 'cause we ran on gasoline, we were a floating gasoline bomb.

KP: Did you spend a lot of time picking up bodies and survivors?

JL: That was part of our job. Primary job was patrolling. If we saw a submarine, we were supposed to report in and then go after it. Fortunately, I mean, I say that, because I wouldn't be alive otherwise. We didn't see any subs. We heard about 'em. They told a story about this one German sub, that when they did sink it, they found Silver Cup bread on board that had been brought out to 'em.

KP: That story has been mentioned before. I wondered if that is myth or an apocryphal story, or if it really happened?

JL: I have no way of knowing. The people who told it were Navy people and they said that the Germans rendezvoused, and these people would be out there in small boats and they would load them up with supplies while they charged their batteries at night. Because these were diesel subs and they had to charge their batteries. I assume it's true.

KP: You were doing this patrol duty in Philadelphia, and at night you'd look for trouble?

JL: No, this wasn't Philadelphia. This was in the Atlantic. We operated between Atlantic City and Cape May.

KP: So this duty where you patrolled the waterfront, this was before you were on the ship?

JL: That's when I was, that was ashore.

KP: Were you doing this duty when Pearl Harbor occurred?

JL: I did. In fact, I was up here. I had a date with a girl from Douglass, and I walked to the fraternity house and was talking to the fellas, and someone ran in and said, "They just bombed Pearl Harbor. All people are supposed to report to their stations." So I turned right around went down to the railroad station, got on a train to Philadelphia, went down to the Navy Yard and reported in.

KP: What was the scene at the Navy Yard?

JL: Well, it was pretty hectic. A couple of days later, they showed me some pictures that weren't published of Pearl Harbor, and it was terrifying. To see all of your battleships either sunk or burning. It was a mess. Everybody was worried. Fortunately, the carriers were out at sea.

KP: Were you surprised at how easily these battleships could be sunk?

JL: Well, they were the battleships.

KP: Yeah, I mean the battleships. Because the battleship had been the symbol of invincibility.

JL: Billy Mitchell demonstrated to the Navy that he could go out and bomb a battleship and sink it. So you had to be somewhat aware.

KP: So you were aware that Mitchell ...

JL: I was aware of it. Sure. But these were old battleships. The new battleships that they built during the war, they were something else.

KP: Oh, yes, yes.

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

KP: You were the second officer.

JL: Yeah, there was a JG, a Merchant Marine officer, who was in charge, and I was the second officer.

KP: How long would you be out patrolling? How many days or how many hours?

JL: Well, we would be out, in the seven-day week, we would probably be out five days. We'd come back in to get fuel and provision, go into Cape May and get drunk or whatever.

KP: You never sighted a submarine?

JL: No. One night we thought we saw one. We went over there and it was fishing nets. We were relieved. We were ready to be heroes, but not dead ones.

KP: Did you ever pick up any survivors or any bodies?

JL: Yes, they were dead. The water was so cold, by the time we got the message and got to where they were ... And they had these old, cork life jackets that went around here. I know, one time, I had a boat hook in one of these fellows and I was getting ready to work it back to where we could get him out of the water and I looked up and here's this Army Air Corps bomber making a run at us. Bomb bays were open, and I was supposed to get married the next day. I thought, "Oh, Jesus."

KP: This was in your duty off Cape May?

JL: We were off Atlantic City, at that time. I could see where he [the pilot] would think our ship was a submarine. It went like this, and the cabin was like this and like that.

KP: So, most of it was flat, except for the cabin. If you weren't looking carefully enough, you could mistake it for a submarine.

JL: Yeah, if you were up there, and just as young and dumb as we were, and at the last minute, we had these recognition symbols on top, each day, you laid two strips of canvas in different directions. So he must have seen those at the last minute, and he swooped over us and kept going. Then a Coast Guard ship came and we turned all of the bodies over to them and we went back in, and that's when my friend, David, was standing at the pier.

KP: Saying that you're ...

JL: ... Going to mine school.

KP: You would go between Philadelphia, Cape May and Atlantic City?

JL: No, we didn't get back to Philadelphia at all, once we left. We were based out of Cape May, and then we were based out of Atlantic City.

KP: How many other ships were based out of those two places?

JL: Well, there was another YP, the YP 10. And there were some minesweepers, and that was it.

KP: How did civilians react to Navy people after Pearl Harbor. Was there a real sense that ...

JL: Great, yeah.

KP: ... They were really glad that you were there?

JL: Yeah, the fellow who was in charge was relieved by another fellow, who was more my age, and we would come in from a trip at sea and we would go to the boardwalk, and we'd go to the head of the boardwalk, and at each hotel we'd stop, and we couldn't buy a drink, everybody would buy a drink for you. So, it was pretty good living, and our crew had a great time, too.

KP: So they were also treated well?

JL: They were treated well, but they would get in trouble with the Coast Guard. We had one man aboard who had been out in the China fleet, and he called them "White water sailors." We would get a call from some bar and they'd say, "You better come down here before this gets out of hand." So we'd go over and get our men together and get them back to the ship. It was just almost like in the movies.

KP: Because the pre-war Navy and the Army had a reputation for being a hard drinking lot. I take it that your sailors were in that ...

JL: Sailors and officers alike. Like college kids today.

KP: Yeah, college students tend to drink a lot.

JL: I just visited, down in Hilton Head, to see Charlie Prout.

KP: Oh, okay. We haven't interviewed him yet.

JL: Well, Charlie was the editor of the *Targum* and the yearbook. And he was a Beta, too. He said they stopped at the Beta house recently, and he said it was terrible. He said you drive around College Avenue and the DKE house, which used to be a beautiful house, is in shambles, and he said the guys were all sitting out there drinking beer and yelling at the people walking by. He was really upset about it.

KP: I can imagine, because fraternities were a lot different when you were there.

JL: Yeah, very little drinking and no carousing because there were no women.

KP: Since we're back talking about Rutgers, Dean Metzger also had a way of keeping things in line. Do you have any memories of Dean Metzger?

JL: Well, only that he was tough. Very tough.

KP: What about chapel at Rutgers, did you attend?

JL: Well, chapel was mandatory, as I remember it. At least in our freshman year.

KP: Did you meet your wife at college?

JL: No, this wife is my new wife. My first wife and I were married for forty-six years and she died of cancer. She was at Montclair Teacher's College.

KP: How did you meet your first wife?

JL: She was from Burlington and I had met her in Burlington. She was in college and you couldn't be married and be in college, so we didn't tell anybody we were married until I was out in the Pacific.

KP: Really?

JL: 'Cause she couldn't, when you were at Montclair. She started teaching high school English at Glenridge in January of '43, and she taught for two years while I was away. And when I came back, we concentrated on raising a family, which took a while. At the New York World Fair, she was selected as New Jersey's Most Typical Girl. She was very pretty, very bright, and could sing and play the piano.

KP: As New Jersey's Typical Girl, what were her responsibilities at the fair?

JL: I don't know. Governor Moore was the governor then, and this was in 1940. I didn't really know her too well then. I didn't get to know her until later on.

KP: When did you start dating?

JL: We were married on our eleventh date.

KP: Really?

JL: Because I couldn't get home very much. We were married March 14, in '42, and our first date was right after Christmas in '41.

KP: So you had a GI marriage?

JL: I would say so.

KP: I mean, you knew her ...

JL: I had known her from before, casually.

KP: But you hadn't been that serious for that long.

JL: No. But I felt very fortunate to have met her and then re-met her.

KP: Had you thought about waiting until the war was over to get married?

JL: No.

KP: Both of you thought ...

JL: Both of us, you knew that your chances of survival were okay, but no guarantee. So we had a delightful romance. When I came back two years later, for the first time, it was just wonderful. It really was.

KP: You were married and you didn't really see each other for two years. What was it like to come back to someone you married but ...

JL: ... Didn't really know?

KP: ... Didn't really know, or even if you did know her, two years is a long time.

JL: We picked up very quickly. She came out to San Francisco and met the ship. She had cousins over in Oakland and they were, he would manage the Navy shipyard over in Oakland, so

they had gas. You know, he took us all over, it was great.

KP: After you got married and had a very abbreviated honeymoon ...

JL: Yeah, two hours.

KP: You went to mine school. Where was the mine school?

JL: Yorktown, Virginia. Right outside of Williamsburg.

KP: The place of the Battle of Yorktown.

JL: Right. Right on the James River. We had a professor from Harvard name Morash and a professor from MIT named Aiken. And I think it was Aiken who developed one of the first computers after the war. They taught magnetism and electricity, and in the afternoon, we had practical. We saw how they put mines together, we learned about the intricacies of the three types of mines, and we went out in minesweepers and learned ship handling, whatever.

KP: How difficult was the course compared to your midshipman training?

JL: Not as difficult, really. Just two subjects to worry about. And these men were really great instructors. There was no question about that.

KP: When did you go on your minesweeper?

JL: In the end of May '42.

KP: And where was the minesweeper based out of?

JL: We were the first, there were four of us that left together, one broke down in Panama, so three of us went on and we arrived in Australia at the end of '42. We were the first ones to cross the Pacific, to have made that trip, and when we arrived there, we were barely running. Nobody expected that these ships were gonna make that kind of a trip. So they had to get all of the spare parts out to Australia and put the ship back together again.

KP: That seems to be quite a voyage.

JL: It was. It was a three-month voyage.

KP: Ships that are not very big, relative to ...

JL: One hundred and thirty-five feet long and thirty-five feet wide. Thirty-five men, at that time, and three officers.

KP: Over a long expanse of water.

JL: That's right. We zigzagged all the way across, too. We were escorting a tanker because we had to refuel, and we needed refueling, so we went over with this tanker.

KP: What were some of the problems that you had?

JL: Well, the main engines were not built for that type of a trip. And we had what we called a "mine exploder generator," which was as big as one of our main engines, and we had to strip that down to get parts. When we went up the Brisbane River, we went up with one engine and only one auxiliary generator was working. When it worked, the thing was just going like this all night long. So we were glad for the rest, and our mail caught up with us there. We had all our mail from three months, you know. Sacks of mail.

KP: So you hadn't stopped at Hawaii?

JL: No, we went from Panama to Bora Bora, to Pago Pago to Suva to Noumea to Brisbane. After we arrived in Bora Bora, the tanker went on. It had some PTs on there that we later worked with. We could make those fifteen hundred mile trips, so the three of us went on together.

KP: The Pacific wasn't really that secure in 1942, compared to ...

JL: Oh, no. It was ...

KP: There had been the Battle of Midway, but the Japanese were still a real force.

JL: When we saw smoke on the horizon, believe me, we prayed that they weren't a big group of Japanese ships. Fortunately, it never was.

KP: No sub sightings?

JL: We had a sub chaser with us, and they thought they had a sub. We all were throwing up depth charges, but I don't think it was a sub at all.

KP: You were working with a small crew on both the YP and the minesweeper. Did you do a lot of duty as officer of the deck?

JL: Well, when I was the executive officer, I was also the first lieutenant, I was the gunnery officer, I was the minesweeping officer, and I had a couple of other smaller jobs. When I became commanding officer, then I was just commanding officer.

KP: How well did your crew get along together?

JL: Very well, very well. We picked up the crew in New York, so there were a lot of New York kids on there and they're a lot of tough kids, really tough kids. Golden Gloves boxing people, and they weren't hoods, but they were a couple of steps removed from it. We never really had,

honestly, we didn't have much trouble with them.

KP: Really, you didn't have a discipline problem?

JL: One time, in Brisbane, three of them went, they got into the armory and picked up some guns and went ashore, we were tied up at a Colonial Sugar refinery, this was during the period we were inactive. The night watchman from the refinery came down and said, "Hey, your men are shooting up the place." So I got a couple of chiefs, we put on our sidearms and we started, there were three of them, if I remember correctly. We found one passed out on the grass, so we took him back to the ship. The second guy was holed up in the corner, in the bushes and we talked him out of it. The third fellow was a little tough guy, he was only sixteen years old, we found out. So I told the chief gunner's mate, chief bosun's mate, "Take those big battle lanterns and shine them on him. I'm going to go up and talk to him." So I'm up there, he got this .45 pointing at me, I'm thinking about Gary Cooper and all those people. I'm thinking, "This may be stupid, but what else can you do?" You know, you can't back down, you don't want the men of the ship to think you're chicken. But, you know, I'm thinking this is not the smartest thing I've ever done. I keep talking to him as I approached him and he said, "I know you have a gun." I said, "Yeah, I got a gun, but I'm not gonna use it. I want you back on the ship. Now put your gun down." I'm a little bit closer than you and I are, at that point, my gun is still right there. And out of the dark, our chief signalman comes barreling up and knocks the guy down. So we both jump on him, took the gun away from him. And [as] we're marching him off, he reaches under his blouse and pulls out another .45, which we took away from him. He was given a Bad Conduct Discharge. Interestingly enough, they had a YMS reunion in Florida last year, and he went to it. And he looked me up and he called me and he apologized for what had happened.

KP: Really, he had been discharged ...

JL: He was discharged. He went into the Merchant Marine, and he worked, he had a big family, a lot of grandchildren. He said, "I'm really sorry and I want to apologize. I want you to know I am sorry, and I want to apologize to you." And I thought that was very nice.

KP: It was a long time.

JL: It was from '43 to '95.

KP: It must have troubled him.

JL: I'm sure it must have. You don't get a BCD and take it lightly.

KP: What about the other two people who had been in this incident?

JL: They were all court-martialed, but the other two were returned to the ship and they were restricted for quite a while.

KP: But eventually they got an honorable discharge?

JL: When I left the ship, they were still on board, no trouble with anybody. One was the kid we called “Brooklyn,” and the other was, he was from the middle part of the country somewhere.

KP: I take it a minesweeper is too small for any stewards.

JL: We had one steward, a big black kid from Tennessee.

KP: How did he get along with the rest of the crew?

JL: At times, he came into me and said that he needed to be away from them. So he and I would just talk, if I weren’t on duty. But most of the time, when we were in Charleston, after we were almost sunk in a hurricane on the way out to the Pacific, they insisted he not ride in the back of the bus. And this was in ‘42, so you know how this went over with the Southerners.

KP: Your crew just decided that this wasn’t fair.

JL: They said it wasn’t fair and they were going to make him stay up there with them. So most of the time, I think, they were probably thrown off the bus. We got down to Panama and they were having such a great time that the commandant chased us out to some little island and said, “When you’re ready to sail, we’ll call you. In the meantime stay out there.” But they really weren’t bad. They were just young kids away from home for the first time, and Panama, was kind of an exotic place ...

KP: They seemed to be a very competent crew. Even though they got into trouble on shore, it seems as though they did their jobs on the ships fairly well.

JL: Never had a problem. We always fulfilled our mission. Up in New Guinea, we were up there longer than anybody, when I left the ship. The people who ran the things up there [were] always very complementary to us.

KP: What I find really fascinating is the weather that you encountered.

JL: Well, we were lucky and we had good weather the whole trip.

KP: You mentioned this hurricane off of Charleston.

JL: Oh, that was on our way, yeah. All four minesweepers were made out of wood, and it was green wood, so it warped a lot. And we were using a bucket brigade to keep the water out of the, probably from sinking. If Charleston hadn’t been close enough, I don’t know what we would have done. They put us all in dry dock and reworked the ships for about three weeks, and then we shoved off again. But that was really the only bad storm we were in.

KP: On the whole voyage out to the Pacific.

JL: Yeah, it was great.

KP: Did the Navy food live up to its billing, or did you eventually get tired of eating out of cans?

JL: Well, after a while, we were living on canned grapefruit juice and billy beef in cans. Then we'd get to Bora Bora, and the Army had a big thing there, and the Navy did, [too], so we would resupply. Then we were at Pago Pago in the Samoan Islands, and then we were at Suva and then we were in Noumea and then Brisbane. Up in New Guinea, we had, some times, when we didn't have any fresh vegetables or fruit or eggs or anything like that. It worked out. Nobody died. Everybody was slim and thin.

KP: Could you talk about the other two officers on the minesweeper and their backgrounds and your relationships to them?

JL: Well, Eric Johnson was the commanding officer. Eric graduated from Harvard in '38. He was in NROTC, and he was a very competent ship handler and very intelligent, but he was an alcoholic. I was the exec, the third officer had been an associate professor at the Wharton School. And the three of us were Rutgers, Penn, and Harvard.

KP: Pretty well educated crew.

JL: Yeah, we all got along very well, except when Eric would, we get into Suva or some place and he'd get bombed out of his mind. The shore patrol or the Army would say, "We've got an officer out here. Could you identify him?" And I'd say, "Is he big?" "Yeah." "Bring him on board." He was about six feet four. Big guy.

KP: But he didn't drink aboard ship.

JL: Oh, no.

KP: It was really when he got on land.

JL: On land. So when I relieved him, the crew was really glad to see him go because he was a little hard to get along with. We were up in New Guinea, every time he would go ashore, he'd go ashore and we'd be out there while the Japs would bomb at night. Then he'd come aboard the next day and he had been drinking with this Navy captain on the beach. They didn't respect him too much, at that point. I felt he was a good ship handler and a very smart guy. Good navigator.

KP: But when there was a chance to go on shore, he headed for the Officers' Club?

JL: That's it, that's right. Fortunately, we ended up with five officers onboard, so we didn't miss him. We, there was three of us, there was four on, four off, or four on, eight off, depending on what the situation was.

KP: Eight hours is a long time to be on.

JL: Yeah.

KP: I've gotten the impression ...

JL: You have time to run down get something to eat and run back up. Stay up there.

KP: What about the third officer, could you tell me a little more about him?

JL: Naturally, being a graduate of the Wharton School, he was bright. His name was Arleigh Hess. He came from New Jersey. His father had a water company down in, some place in South Jersey. Arleigh had a brother who had gone into the Navy, too. Arleigh's father had gone back into the Army as a lieutenant colonel, I think.

KP: Did he stay aboard the ship when you left it?

JL: He had already left. He was relieved. Another officer came aboard. He went back and picked up a minesweeper of his own.

KP: How long did you stay and how well were you received at these various ports of call?

JL: Few days. Bora Bora, three days; Pago Pago, three days; Suva, two days, Noumea two days, then Brisbane, where we had to get repaired.

KP: So you spent a lot of time in Brisbane?

JL: About three weeks, while we waited for the ship to get [repaired], then, because no minesweepers were there, we had to sweep, virtually, everything from Brisbane up to New Guinea. Never found any mines, but we swept it and they could feel safe, because we had our submarine base in Brisbane at that time, Brisbane and Perth. And there was only one passage out of the Great Barrier Reef and that was up by Cairns, and we swept it any number of times, but that would have been easy to mine. And then in early '43, John Buckley, who had the PT boats, used us to tow them, there were eight PT boats, and each minesweeper towed two of them, and we had an old gunboat that had gotten out of China. We went up to Thursday Island, which is between Cape York and New Guinea, because Buckley had convinced MacArthur's staff that the Japanese were gonna invade Australia from Timor, and that we would, haul his boats out, release them to then go torpedo these ships. And then he would go back to Thursday Island and we'd be out in the damn Timor Sea waiting for those Japs to get over being mad. But, fortunately, the Japs didn't invade.

KP: You weren't relishing having to stay out there waiting for those PT boats.

JL: Well, neither would you. We could make ten knots and they could make forty. They could be home, in bed, by the time we turned around. But that was part of what you were expected to do, you know. That was your job and you didn't moan about it.

KP: You were glad certain things didn't work out as expected.

JL: Well, naturally, sure, I wouldn't be here today probably. We spent a lot of time escorting landing ships from Northern Australia to New Guinea. We would put one minesweeper in front and one in back.

KP: There wasn't much of a naval presence in '42 out in Australia.

JL: Very little. We were three minesweepers, a sub chaser, and LSTs began to arrive. We had a division of destroyers, and that was it. The Navy wouldn't send any big ships there. There were too many Japanese air bases. There Rabaul, Wewak, and all those. It wasn't safe for a Navy ship.

KP: Did you experience any air attacks?

JL: A lot of them, yeah.

KP: What was the first time you were attacked?

JL: Well, we were escorting six LSTs on a landing, and each one had, the six ships among them, had a brigade of Aussies, with all their equipment, and there were fifty-seven Japanese dive bombers, torpedo bombers, and fighter planes, that made an attack. Put two of the LSTs out of commission. We shot down three planes. About that time, the destroyers came out and the P-38s came from the beach and the rest of the air battle was theirs, not ours. After that, it was just a whole bunch of smaller air attacks.

KP: Did any of your crew ever get killed from these air attacks?

JL: We had one man wounded, and, later on, one man was killed.

KP: What was the closest call you had from an aerial attack?

JL: I think that raid, in particular. We had no idea how big it was until after the war. I was reading a book that some Air Force general wrote and he was telling about that particular battle.

KP: With the fifty-six planes ...

JL: He had said there were fifty-seven planes involved in it.

KP: At the time, you just knew that there were a lot of them.

JL: I kept seeing those things flying around and seeing them dropping bombs. We were just doing everything we could to keep out of their way. But I remember this black steward's mate, who had been in the National Guard [oh, boy, it's getting dark out there] and he was on the .30

caliber machine gun, and this Betty bomber went by and he just held his gun, that plane flew right through it. I could see [the bullets] working their way across. About that time, a P-38 came down and he finished it off.

KP: He didn't desert his post? He stayed at his post?

JL: Oh, yeah. He was great. He mowed that thing down. I think it would have gone down, I think there'd been a lot of dead guys in there before the P-38 got it. But I had to say the P-38 wiped it out.

KP: Did you experience any other attacks from the Japanese that wasn't from the air?

JL: No, we were never in a surface battle. We were in the all the New Guinea, New Britain landings, and they were all air attacks.

KP: I think you are the first person I've interviewed who was aboard a minesweeper, much less in command of a minesweeper. Could you describe what a minesweeper does when you sweep for mines?

JL: Well, there are three types of mines. There's a moored mine, there's a magnetic mine and there's an acoustic mine. The moored mine are the kind you always see, the big round balls with the horns coming out of them. You sweep them with sweep wires that go down and out to the depth you think. The acoustic mines, we had a thing on the bow that went down, and there was a hammer in there that sent out a big sound wave ahead of us. The magnetic mines was when we had this big generator and we had a big long coil that went out in the back, and it sent out a [magnetic] field. That's about how it worked. Three types of mines, and you were prepared to sweep or destroy all three of them.

KP: So you'd go back and forth.

JL: Well, when we swept for moored mines, we swept in formation, and we had certain ways we wanted to be.

KP: Any close calls while sweeping for mines?

JL: No, we never found a mine.

KP: Really, in your whole ...

JL: Japs never put mines out.

KP: Did you sweep for mines anywhere else besides Australia?

JL: Well, we went up to Thursday Island, and we swept from Thursday Island up to New Guinea, which, I think, was the longest continuous sweep of the war. But, again, no mines. Our

biggest job was, we were escort and navigational guide for the smaller amphibious ships, and on landings, we would escort the LSTs. So we were hardly ever minesweeping, we were mostly escorting ships.

KP: You mentioned being a part of several landings. Could you recount your ship's role and your memories of the landings you took a part of?

JL: Well, most of them, like the one I just told you about, that was the Lae/Salamau. That was the first big landing in New Guinea. We'd been in a smaller one in Woodlark Island, but that didn't amount to anything. Then there was Finch Haven, and then there was Arawa, over in New Britain, which was a very rough little landing. And then Cape Gloucester on New Britain. And the Admiralties. And there were several after that, that we didn't get in on, because we'd been out there long enough that they gave other ships a crack at some of these things, too. I was the senior officer on a supply echelon over to Arawa, and just about the time we got there, the Jap aircraft got there. So that was interesting for a while. But the P-38 showed up again. P-38s always saved our butt. I picked up a P-38 pilot who had been shot down. He came up to the bridge and I said, "How did you get hit?" And he said, "I don't know. It was my first mission and I never saw the guy who hit me."

KP: He was probably very lucky to be alive.

JL: I saw him heading toward New Guinea and I saw one engine was smoking and I thought, "Jeez, I hope you make it." Then all of a sudden the plane went like this and there was a parachute. So I told the other ships in the area [that] I was gonna go out and pick him up, which I did. I already had the survivors of a sunken coastal ship on board and a beach master and his party, and they were pretty well bomb-happy from all the beating they took. So that was one time when my crew's morale started up here, and ended down here, because they were with all these people who were really stretched out.

KP: How long did you have them onboard?

JL: I took them back the next day, so I had them aboard for the best part of a day. I just stayed up in the bridge. I figured I was up there for forty-eight hours. And the Japs were looking for us. They were dropping flares, they knew we were out there somewhere, but they never found us.

KP: How did the Australians receive you?

JL: Great. Great. We finally got down to Australia, we went down to Cairns because we had mushroom growing out of our life rafts and, with our wooden hulls, we had worms in it and we had to get it repaired. And the crew went ashore and the Aussie soldiers, by then, were a little resentful, and I had a big German kid from New Ulm, Minnesota, and he came in and had a black eye. I said, "Minny, what happened to you?" And he said, "Well, this Aussie started a fight because I was with a girl." I said, "How's the Aussie?" And he said, "Well, he's okay." He said, "But I want to marry this girl." You know, I was twenty-three, maybe twenty-four, and he was probably eighteen or nineteen, and I said, "Minny, you've only known this girl overnight.

You can't be serious about this?" He said, "I am." I said, "Well, I'm not gonna give you permission to do it." So that's where it ended. He never did. He was still on the ship when I left and he was still speaking to me. I think he probably realized how lucky he was. But mostly, the Aussie people were very appreciative of the Americans being there, as you can imagine.

KP: When you were younger, did you go on a lot of vacations?

JL: Toward the end, when he went to Burlington, we went from Red Bank, too, we went up to a little lake in northern Vermont called Lake Willoughby. [Dad] had a month's leave, vacation, he'd take two weeks. He had to come back. "Prudential can't run without me." We were always glad to get back to Red Bank, Vermont was a beautiful place, but all our friends were down in Red Bank.

KP: In the Navy, you were sent to some really exotic places.

JL: I could never have been in those places at my age. How many people do you know who have been in New Guinea?

KP: Exactly. Or to Australia. Australia is an expensive holiday.

JL: Yeah. I always appreciated the Navy.

KP: Even though you saw a lot of action, you seemed to accept it as part of the job.

JL: Well, you had to. There was no way you could not do it, especially if you were in command or second-in-command.

KP: Being in command, you have to set a good example. How hard was that? For example, standing watch could be dreadfully boring.

JL: Well, this minesweeper rocked and rolled a lot. We would roll forty-five degrees, forty-five degrees, day after day, and you'd be up there holding on, and your knees would work, back and forth. It may have been boring and tiring, but it was always sort of interesting, especially up in New Guinea.

KP: How long were you in New Guinea. How many months?

JL: Well, we were there, from about April of '43 until, I was there 'till July of '44.

KP: That's over a year.

JL: A year and several months. And when it came time for the crews to go down to Australia for R&R, the captain up there called me over and he said, "You've got the most experienced ship up here. I'm going to keep you here, but when everybody gets back, I'm going to send you down to Cairns," which is what he did. But the day we reported into Cairns, they said, "You've got two

weeks to get ready because you've got to go back for another landing up there." So for two weeks, everybody just crowded as much into it as they could, because, by that time, you got to the point where you were fatalistic about it.

KP: I would imagine that would dampen morale a little bit.

JL: They were expecting to be in the station the last week we were in Cairns. And we didn't have the lines on the pier when the officer came out and said, "You're going to dry dock, and you got two weeks, so get going."

KP: So instead of staying in Australia, you were going to be sent back to New Guinea.

JL: Right away, yeah.

KP: It sounds like they took it very well, considering the circumstances.

JL: What else can you do, you know?

KP: That's true.

JL: I came back from being in Cairns, and there was a big circle of Aussies on the dock and two of my men were fighting. I waded in, to brush them aside, and they knocked me on my butt, and I got up and I said, "Take these guys aboard my ship." They did. And I called them in and said to these guys, "You're going to be court-martialed and the Army's going to do it, not me." And they sent this one guy to a rock pile for a week and the other guy, who hadn't start it, they didn't do anything to him. But when he came back he came in and he apologized. They always apologized when they were in trouble.

KP: Which is a sign they were a pretty good crew.

JL: And this one fellow was, as I say, a Golden Gloves boxer. But he came in, he sat down and said, "You know, I would never do this to you." And I said, "Well, I understand that, but you did it. And you just can't do that and get away with it. So whatever they do to you that's your punishment." So he had a week breaking rocks or something.

KP: You were too small of a ship to have a chaplain.

JL: No, we didn't.

KP: Did you ever have services aboard your ship?

JL: Never, no.

KP: What about entertainment? What would you do when you didn't have any orders or any responsibilities?

JL: Well, there was the Officers' Club, once in awhile. Most of the time, I just stayed aboard the ship. Read, talked to the men, cleaned up ship. We weren't idle very much, because they didn't have enough ships up there to stay idle.

KP: What about the voyage across? Were you so busy keeping the ship going that you didn't have time to be bored?

JL: Well, that was boring, I'll admit that. But there were sharks that you could watch, there were manta rays that broke out of the water, there were flying fish that, once in awhile, would crash on the deck. There were things that, as a kid from New Jersey, I never saw before, and a lot of it was very interesting. And Bora Bora, I just loved Bora Bora.

KP: What was so interesting?

JL: It was a South Sea island. You know, you've heard of it. It's probably the most beautiful island in the world. And Pago Pago was interesting and Suva was interesting because it was an English place. And Noumea was interesting because the Free French were there and they weren't very happy with Americans.

KP: How did you detect this?

JL: Arleigh Hess, the other officer and I, were in a pharmacy in Noumea looking at post cards, and you could hear these two men talking. And Arleigh understood French, and he told me what they were saying. They just weren't very happy with Americans. You know the story about the Free French. I don't have to tell you that.

KP: So you picked up on it?

JL: Arleigh picked it up.

KP: Arleigh picked it up?

JL : Boy, those girls [my wife and sister] are gonna kill me. I told them it wouldn't rain today.

KP: What image did you have of these South Sea islands before you got there? There were these great '30s movies based on the islands. What did you expect to find?

JL: Just what I found. Beautiful trees, beautiful water, native people who were in outrigger canoes. And we would trade fish hooks for fresh fruit. The men found out that [if] they took hair shampoo and put it in little bottles and shook it up, they could trade it for any kind of fruit. Once there was an American couple there, had retired there, and they were trapped, they couldn't get off. He was an engineer from Chicago. And they invited the skipper and me for dinner. And they said, "We're not going to tell you what you're eating." I cannot eat fish, so I thought, "Oh, boy. I'm going to disgrace the Americans." Well, the first thing was clams, so I knew what

clams were, but they had a lot of sauce, so I just dipped them in sauce. The next thing was a salad with some chewy stuff in it. And after I ate that, which I could get down, they said that was raw fish soaked in lime juice. And then they came out with a thing like this, about that thick, and I had no clue what that was. It was tough and not very tasty. That turned out to be turtle, turtle steak. So I got through the meal okay, but that was one of the interesting things for me.

KP: What island?

JL: This was on Bora Bora. Which now would cost you three to six hundred dollars a night, to spend a night there.

KP: Exactly.

JL: My wife and I went back in '71. We'd been in New Zealand, we went to Tahiti. And in the newspaper, the bellboys were striking because they weren't getting [enough money], you know. And I thought, "God, in '41, '42, you gave them fish hooks and they were happy, and now they want everything the Americans want." We screwed up the world.

KP: Were you surprised at how much things had changed?

JL: Bora Bora?

KP: Yeah, Bora Bora.

JL: We went there in '71, we'd been in New Zealand.

KP: So that wasn't really that much time.

JL: It was thirty years. Time enough for there to be big hotels, and an airstrip, bell boys who wanted more money.

KP: What about the island women and your crew? Were there any liaisons that occurred?

JL: No, no. They used to kid the steward about it, but he didn't want any part of it either. Even up in New Guinea, we hardly ever saw a native up there. No problems.

KP: One of the things that people have told me was that they had very fond memories of the beer parties. If you were out at sea long enough, you'd occasionally have a beer party onshore. Did your crew ever have one of those?

JL: When we were in Brisbane, of course ...

KP: There were bars.

JL: ... In the city to take care of it. When we were at Thursday Island, there was no beer. There

was a little town that had been evacuated. The PT guys moved into the hotel and there was an open-air theater. We saw *Sun Valley Serenade* about once a week, we all knew the words. It's the only film they had. They just kept showing it over and over, everybody'd just go in and see *Sun Valley Serenade*. But there was a bottling plant there that had been abandoned and somebody figured out how to make some soft drinks. There was no beer available, no booze available. And up in New Guinea, there was no beer, no booze. Eventually, they built an Officers' Club when enough Army people were up there, Navy people ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with John R. Lewis on May 6, 1997 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick New Jersey with Kurt Piehler. You were saying that you had taken some beer aboard ...

JL: Australian beer came in liters and it was quite strong. So I said, "We'll put this down the hold and nobody's going to touch it 'till we get to New Guinea, and then when we get settled down up in Buna or wherever they're gonna put us, we'll put the boat over the side, two of you get in with a bottle of beer each and then you come back in. Two more" ... Then I found they were beginning to swap off. Some guy didn't want a bottle, pretty soon it started, I could see it was getting out of hand. So I said, "Okay, guys. That's it. You screwed it up." Later on, I gave it to them, but they learned what the limits were.

KP: So the crew tried to test you in certain things?

JL: I think, in a way, they were, because I wasn't tough on them. I said, "You know, if you're reasonable, I'll be reasonable. If you wanna get tough, I can be tough, but I don't like to be tough. Let's just try to get along." And we did.

KP: The Navy could be very hierarchical, especially on big ships.

JL: I couldn't have made it on a big ship.

KP: Really?

JL: I wasn't oriented that way. I felt blessed that I was never on a big ship.

KP: You didn't miss being on a big battlewagon?

JL: No part of it. When I came back in '44, and I went through training for this rocket ship, they had six ships to a rocket division and I was a senior officer of a six. A classmate of mine was the senior officer of the next six, his name was Elmo Moss. And I said, "Elmo, what have you been doing?" I hadn't seen him since midshipman's school. He said, "I've been on an aircraft carrier." And I said, "What have you been doing on an aircraft carrier?" He laughs and said, "Oh, I marched the men up and down." So here's the difference. Here I am, I had been the exec of a YP, I'd been exec and commanding officer of a minesweeper and here's this classmate of

mine, same rank, same date of rank and everything. Big deal was virtually nothing.

KP: People have said that on a small ship, you have to do everything from disciplining your men to navigating to gunnery and so on. On a big ship, you usually get one person for each job.

JL: One turret, one five-inch gun or whatever.

KP: What was the hardest thing about being both the executive officer and the captain? Was it navigating, combat, discipline?

JL: Up in New Guinea, we piloted, we very seldom navigated, because we were always operating very close to shore. So we'd just take bearings, and we'd know where we were all the time. Gunnery, of course, was every time you were under attack, you were shooting guns. Minesweeping, when we mine swept, it was cut and dry. You just did what you learned to do. No, it was a good life, considering everything else. I could have been a Marine or a soldier.

KP: You mentioned you thought of joining the Marines?

JL: Well, it seemed like a good way to get a commission and stay in college. They had this platoon leader school that you went into after your junior year and after your senior year, if you qualified, you became a Marine lieutenant.

KP: After seeing a good part of the Pacific Theater, were you glad that you weren't in the Army and Marines?

JL: Oh, every day. I was escorting an LST up to an advanced area, and they were towing a dry dock with a bunch of Army people onboard that had never been there before. In the middle of the night, in a deep rain storm, the LST said, "We've lost our tow." So the subchaser was at sea with me and I sent a message to him [saying], "You escort him. I'm going to get the tow, I'm going to get the dry dock." So in this pouring rain, like it can only rain in New Guinea, I turned the ship around, and finally we thought we saw [them]. We didn't have radar, so we got our blinker gun out, which is a tube, and we blinked a message, no reply. Message, no reply. I said, "They're scared. They don't know if we're Japanese or American." So I said, "I'm gonna come along side and we'll take them, we'll pass the sweep wires over and bring them in so I can tow them." I went down, after we were tied up to them, and the one in charge came up and apologized. He said, "We were afraid. We didn't know who you were." So I took him in tow and I got them back to where they were supposed to go, cast them off, or we took them to where they were supposed to go. The next day, they came aboard with a crate of eggs and all kinds of stuff. And they loved to come aboard and eat, because they said, "This was like a second home to us." [Wow, my poor wife and sister.]

KP: How much trading went on? I've heard all kinds of legendary stories about people trading different kinds of stuff.

JL: I traded booze that I picked up in Australia for Army Air Corps .50 caliber machine guns. I

would get a bottle or two, go to the beach and hitch a ride out to Dobadura base, find an ordnance officer, and go to his tent and say, "What will you give me for this?" I'd say, "I want .50 caliber machine guns. I want ammo and mounts."

KP: Why .50 caliber?

JL: Because they were good. They were.

KP: They weren't standard issues on your ship?

JL: No, we had 20s and a three-inch and a .30 caliber. So then, the arrangements were made and I'd get a jeep. And, this one time, an Aussie lorrie took me, and I'm in the middle of the jungle, and he said, "I got to go this way," and he let me off. And up to that time, I had never seen a native in the jungle. But I heard this chanting behind me and I looked back and here was circle of these guys, all dressed up in feathers and orange paint. And again, I'm two years out of New Jersey, and I could hardly wait, if the next vehicle that came along didn't stop, I would have thrown myself in front of it. We did get our .50 caliber machine guns that way. That's the only real swap we ever made. Since I wasn't doing any drinking anyhow, it was a good trade.

KP: How often did you and your wife write each other, particularly in New Guinea?

JL: Every day.

KP: Did your wife save your letters?

JL: She wrote from New Jersey and I wrote from wherever we were and whenever the mail got picked up. It would come in batches. Sometimes, you'd get thirty letters, with pictures, hopefully.

KP: Before moving on, is there anything else about your experience on the minesweeper that I didn't ask about?

JL: We did a lot of towing, we did a lot of escorting, we did a lot of that sort of thing, which would be unusual for minesweepers, but that's all we could do. There were no mines and we could do this other thing.

KP: And you had a lot of assignments because you were the only ship around in '42?

JL: '43.

KP: '43, I should say. Were you disappointed to leave your crew?

JL: No, because I was very anxious to see my wife. I really hadn't had any time with her. When I came back I had orders to get command of a landing ship. It was a new one that I didn't know anything about. And when I saw it, I went in and said, "I don't want that ship." I said, "I had a

better command than that before and I'm not going to take that one."

KP: So that's when you were sent to the base in ...

JL: This was when I came back in '44.

KP: '44.

JL: They sent me to Norfolk.

KP: Norfolk, for the amphibious school.

JL: Yeah. They said, "Well, you can go down to Camp Rockford and get command of an LST." And I said, "Camp Rockford is, Winchell said, 'It's the only concentration camp in America where the officers climb over the fence.'" Then they offered to let me to go down to Fort Pierce for UDT training, and I said, "No, I'm not ready for that either." So they gave me a job training these ships. I would go out for two weeks at a time with a crew and train it and come back. Go out for two weeks and then a week and then some time off. And finally, this new rocket ship came out, and I went over and said, "That's what I want." And they said, "Well, you're not gonna live." And I said, "I don't care. I want that ship." So I went in that training, and I went down to Houston and picked up the ship. And while we were down there the war ended. We were supposed to lead the troops into Japan. And there was no way we were going to live, you just had to know that. This ship had 5,000 five-inch rockets on board. We could shoot 200 or 300 rockets a minute, and all trained and elevated, the most advanced ship in the Navy, at that time. We had forty-mm, twenty-mm, five-inch, we had mortars. It was a potent little ship, I tell you.

KP: In some ways, it became the future of the surface navy, with missiles and rockets.

JL: Well, in Korea, in Inchon, they say they just blasted the beach apart. And then they used them in Vietnam to a certain extent.

KP: When you reported back and they wanted to give you an amphibious ship and you considered it a demotion, there seemed to be some give and take in terms of your assignment.

JL: There were. They just seemed to understand that I wasn't going to be a happy trooper. I didn't mind going out to sea. I said, "Hell, if you give me what I want, I'll leave tomorrow. But I don't want that. I don't feel I got a good shake out of this thing and ..."

KP: I was curious about your comment about the one base that you said was the concentration camp.

JL: Well, there was this base called, Bradford, where they train the LST people.

KP: Why did it have such a bad reputation?

JL: Well, the captain of it was a tyrant, and you talk to anybody, I'm sure Ed Curtin would tell you, because Ed had one later on. He would have said the same thing, that this guy ran this thing like it was a boot camp. And these were all officers who came back from combat somewhere, and they weren't expecting to be treated like boots.

KP: And you knew about this?

JL: Well, somebody told me that Walter Winchell had said that, "Camp Bradford is the only concentration camp in the United States where the officers climb the fence to go on liberty." I'm sure it's true.

KP: What training did you go through to prepare for your next assignment?

JL: So, while I was waiting, they put me in this Training Afloat Program, where I would take an LSM crew and put them through all of the amphibious stuff they had to do for two weeks, and then go back and evaluate the ship and then take another one out.

KP: How long did you do this for?

JL: About six months.

KP: And this was when you were based in Norfolk?

JL: And Little Creek.

KP: And Little Creek. Did your wife come down and live with you?

JL: She came down, we could only rent a room, there was nothing available, and she would be by herself for the greater part of a month. After five weeks at sea, they gave me a seventy-two hour basket leave. Sometimes, she and I would cross on the ferry, pick up a train to Philadelphia and go to Burlington, see her folks and my folks, and beat it back. And every once in awhile, we'd get some liberty, and we had a week or so.

KP: So during the war, the time between you and your wife was very precious.

JL: Oh, it was.

KP: And you made the most out of those seventy-two hours.

JL: Yeah, yeah. There wasn't much you could do. We didn't have a car. We'd go over to the base in Norfolk and have dinner at the Officers' Club.

KP: What did your wife do while you were out at sea?

JL: Well, I don't really know. There were two other girls in the same house, where we were renting, and they just did things together.

KP: But she didn't work?

JL: No, no.

KP: How good was the training you received in the Navy, particularly because you became an instructor eventually? What were the strengths and the weaknesses that you saw during World War II?

JL: Well, the training that I went through for this rocket ship program was very intensive. They even had me fighting fires. They made me do everything. One time, for shots, I had to lead the crew to get the shots. No, I would say that training was very good and the instructors were very dedicated because they wanted to stay there.

KP: The instructors at the Navy bases wanted to do a good job so they could stay at those bases?

JL: I would say so. They'd be crazy if they didn't.

KP: Once you got out to sea, was there anything that you wished they had taught you that they didn't?

JL: I think I learned whatever I needed to learn, and then I implemented by experience. And you get a lot of experience. You know, they can't teach you everything. Eight weeks. And I had to learn how to tow, I had to learn how to salvage. A lot of things that were never part of a curriculum because they didn't expect us to do it.

KP: How good were the chiefs that you encountered on all your ships?

JL: Well, when we first took the chiefs on, they resented the reserve officers.

KP: Particularly in the early part of the war?

JL: Yeah, yeah. But as we, the chief gunner's mate and I had a problem because I would, in [my] spare time, I would go take a twenty-mm apart. And he said that officers aren't supposed to do that. And I said, "I'm doing it," and he would grumble and go off. I recommended him for warrant officer, he really knew what he was doing, and he made warrant. Chief bosun's mate made warrant. My chief motor mate made warrant. I promoted these fellows when I thought they were ready. I made them take the test. After a while, we had a lot of chiefs on the ship, but they'd been on there a long time. When I picked up this rocket ship, I had 155 men and seven officers. Of the 155 men, I don't think five of them had ever been at sea before. They cleaned out the bases, they took all of the bosun's mates, and the rest of them were just kids that had to be trained. And of my officers, only my exec had been at sea before.

KP: What was that like, because in all of your other crews you had a lot of experienced people?

JL: Yeah, we did.

KP: Now you have a ship full of inexperienced people.

JL: But they had a good training period, too. There was a place they were sent to learn how to work the rockets. The two gunnery officers, I didn't see them until the ship was ready to go. They were off in gunnery school. One kid just graduated from the Naval Academy and the other fellow had been personnel manager for EA Staley, so he was older than any of the officers. But they were all intelligent and they all learned their jobs, and [when] we had our shakedown [cruise], we had very good marks which is the, it's just like going to school. You either pass or you don't pass.

KP: So even with a new crew, it sounds like you didn't have any major problems.

JL: Well, we had problems. I just had to stay on the bridge, all the time, because the officers didn't know a thing about, the exec was the navigator and he had never navigated before. We sailed from Houston to Charleston, around Florida, and we were at the tail end of a hurricane, and I came up to the bridge and I said, "Where are we, Paul?" And he said, "I'm not sure." He couldn't take any sights, the wind, we were being buffeted. So I said, "Well, let's find the lights and start looking for the lights." So we took binoculars and, eventually, we spotted the light we were supposed to go around. And I just stayed up in the bridge with a .22 and shot at flying fish the rest of the time.

KP: You didn't get much sleep as a commander, did you?

JL: I had no problems. I was young and healthy.

KP: You obviously enjoyed being out at sea.

JL: Yeah, I loved it. I really did love it.

KP: Even despite the bad weather, because people have said typhoons and hurricanes can be more terrifying than combat.

JL: Yeah, they could be. Fortunately we didn't get very many of those.

KP: You didn't get those types of typhoons or hurricanes?

JL: We didn't have those in New Guinea. Lot of rain, but no typhoons, no hurricanes.

KP: On your new ship, you mentioned that you had an experienced exec officer but he didn't know anything about navigation because he would be walking back and forth on the aircraft carrier deck.

JL: No, he was a LST officer. He had been on the LST, and God only knows what he was on an LST, but he couldn't navigate across ... I don't think anybody could navigate in that weather. We just sailed on a DR [dead reckoning] track and we were blown off course.

KP: You mentioned one of your officers had been a personnel manager and that he was quite older.

JL: He was thirty-two. I was twenty-four. I could remember being on the bridge when I was twenty-three and we had a signalman who was thirty-two and I used to look at him in the corner of my eye and think, "What's that old guy doing here?" Then, as I grew older and I had young men working for me, and they thought they were big romancing guys, they were thirty-five and these girls were younger women, and I said, "You don't know they look at you like you're an old man. Why don't you just forget it?"

KP: Where were you and your crew when you heard about VJ Day or the bombing of Hiroshima.

JL: Well, I was down in Houston. We were getting ready to go up to Norfolk. As I say, we were being built to lead the troops into Japan. We were supposed to blast the beaches.

KP: Did they give you any sense of when this invasion was going to be?

JL: Yeah, it was going to be in November of '45.

KP: So your mindset was that this was going to be ...

JL: I had to get ready to be out there for those landings. We were just about going to make it. There were some that were ahead of us, but we were gonna be up there, too. We had so much ammunition aboard, with those kamikazes, I said, "When we get out there, we'll just tell the Army troops [to] either get well ahead of us, or well behind us, because there's going to be a big hole in the ocean." I met some man, years later, who was on MacArthur's planning staff and he said, "Where were you when the war ended?" And I said, "I had command of an LSMR," and he said, "You wouldn't have lived." And I said, "I've already been told that."

KP: The Navy wasn't keeping anything from you.

JL: No.

KP: What about the crew, were they aware of the dangers?

JL: I don't think so, and I certainly wasn't going to tell them. They were young. They'd never been in combat before. They might have all left ship.

KP: Did you have a problem with battle fatigue?

JL: When I came back, I was tired.

KP: But no one on your crew ...

JL: We had one kid that wouldn't leave the bridge, we called him "Radar Eyes," because we didn't have any radar. He'd just sit up there with binoculars, all day long, looking for Japanese airplanes. He'd spot them before any body else could spot them.

KP: And he just did this because ...

JL: He'd been, he was what we called "bomb-happy." He just couldn't stand being below deck and not knowing what was going on.

KP: How long did you stay with the rocket ship after VJ Day?

JL: Well, after we had our shakedown and I made lieutenant commander, I went up to Washington, they had already told me I couldn't stay in, I mean, that I couldn't get out. And they found a relief for me, 'cause the ship was going to go down to Jacksonville to be decommissioned. And I went up and said, "Now look, I'm here for a year. What are you going to do with me?" And they offered me a spot promotion to command a squadron of LSM, a group of LSMR, or to go up to Casco Bay, Maine for an experimental radar ship. And I said, "My wife is in Burlington, New Jersey. She is within a month of having a baby and I don't need the spot promotion. I appreciate it, but I don't need it. Give me a job in the Fourth Naval District." So they sent me up to Philadelphia and I got a job down in the Navy base. And I was lucky I didn't go because she lost the baby. It was full term, but born dead, and she just went to pieces, and if I hadn't been around, it would have been awful. They would have had to fly me back from Japan or some place. So then I got out and went back to Rutgers.

KP: What did you do in the Philadelphia naval base?

JL: I was in the receiving station, in some innocuous job that had to be done, but it wasn't any fun.

KP: After combat, it must have been very routine and boring?

JL: It was. It was terrible, I felt ashamed of myself for taking it, but the alternative was the one I couldn't accept. I could have gotten out, but then I couldn't have gotten to Rutgers 'till next September. So it was accommodate yourself and get along.

KP: Where did you live at the time? Did you live in Burlington?

JL: We lived in Burlington, yeah.

KP: And you commuted to Philadelphia?

JL: Yeah.

KP: It sounds like it became a nine-to-five job.

JL: Well, of course, it was shifts. Sometimes, I would be on at night. But it was a bunch of crap. I didn't like it at all.

KP: Did you think about staying in the Navy?

JL: If Campbells hadn't hired me, I would have. I was still within six months of getting out, I could have gone back in as a lieutenant commander, and I would have. In fact, I told Nancy when I left, I said, "If these people are dumb enough to hire me, then I won't go back in the Navy." They were only gonna hire three college graduates and I didn't know what my chances were. And they had a whole battery of tests and interviews and stuff, and they wanted me. So I stayed.

KP: But that was not really part of your plan? You wanted to stay in the Navy?

JL: I would have, yeah, but I knew that I couldn't, with Nancy. I'd been away, virtually, the whole war, and we'd been married for five years. We hadn't had much time together, it wasn't fair, so I didn't do it.

KP: You were part of the Class of '42, but you came back as part of the GI Bill. How did the GI Bill change Rutgers, that you could observe?

JL: Well, see, I drove up from Burlington, went to five classes, from nine to two or something like that. Got in my car and drove home again. And I was aware that there were a lot more people around, and they were more mature and they'd all been in the service. Different attitude.

KP: Did you ever stop by your old fraternity house?

JL: Once or twice, but, you know. I guess, I felt I was more mature than maybe I was or something. I would have only been a fifth wheel there.

KP: Do you think your professors acted differently in class, with all of the GIs around? Did you notice any difference?

JL: I couldn't say. I didn't see any of the people I had seen before. I thought they were good. I enjoyed them. I took all the economic courses I needed to get my degree. I was a much better student. I can tell you that.

KP: The Navy changed your attitude towards college?

JL: The Navy made me a different human being. When I was here before, I was up to the gym, out on the fields, out with friends.

KP: I've had your pre-war type in my classes.

JL: I'm sure.

KP: A student of mine, I just ran into him at the train station, he's actually going into physical training as his career. He was a history major, he was always at the gym.

JL: When I came back, I had no time for the gym. I had to get through school. I had to go to work or get back in the Navy, and I put my mind to it, which was something I hadn't done much before.

KP: Campbells Soup is probably one of the leading companies in New Jersey. What made you apply there?

JL: It was the only job opening I saw. And I was the only non-Ivy League person chosen, because they were impressed with my World War II stuff, I know that. And I did well on the tests. But it was a year training course, most of it with the operation of Campbells Soup Company making soup. That's probably my dear wife. So, anyway, I was telling you that at the end of the year, the personnel director would call you up, and see what you wanted to do and then he'd tell you what you're going to do. You know how that goes.

KP: So, where was your first job?

JL: Well, I told them, "I'm not interested in being down in that factory. That's not what I want to do." He said, "What do you want to do?" And I said, "Well, I want to be president." He said, "You can't be president. Jack Dorrance is going to be president." Jack's family owned it and Jack came back about the same time I did. So I said, "Okay, I'll be a vice president." He said, "Well, we're gonna put you up in the purchasing department and we're going to give you the best job that someone like you can get in this company, but," he said, "There is one problem. If you screw up, you're out the next day." I had to order all the tin plate. I had to order all the cases. I had to order all the labels. I had to order most of the storage. And the man who had it before I had it, was going to be my supervisor, but he, like my father, had not the education. And he knew that was as far as he was going. And he knew they brought me in there, to move me along. The man he worked for was, at that time, one of the vice-presidents, and he later became chairman of the board. So I knew it was a great job, and I would deal with the general manager of the Continental Can Company, and, you know, all the top people, because I was ordering all this stuff. Then when the Korean War started, I said, "Nancy, I don't belong here. There's a war going on and I've been trained for it and I should be there."

KP: And you decided to stay in the reserves?

JL: I decided to stay in. I was recalled, then, for Korea and I spent the first part of the Korean War teaching commanding officers how to do their thing on the ships and then I became the operations officer and I scheduled the training periods for them. Then I had dispatch orders to fly

to Korea to take over as plans officer for amphibious squadrons.

KP: Where were you based during the Korean War?

JL: Well, Coronado. The home port for the squadron was Coronado and the training base was Coronado. By that time, I said, "I'm not going back to New Jersey no matter what they offer me."

KP: You might have very well spent your life in Burlington.

JL: I might very well have. But we lived in Riverton. We bought a house in Riverton, which is down ten miles below it.

KP: But you would have remained in the South Jersey, Philadelphia area.

JL: Yeah, I would have been there. Miserable. We exist nine months to live three months. Why should we put up with this? I know there are great places in this world. They called me to take command of a ship to go to Bermuda for two weeks, and when I came back, I said, "Boy, that's the place to go." And I contacted the people in Bermuda and they said that you've got to be a citizen and there was no way I could go there. Then I wrote to Hawaii, to a Rutgers man who was involved with Dole Pineapple, and they said, "We are only hiring from within." And then the Korean War started, so my problems were over.

KP: You would not have gone to California as a place to live if not for the Korean War?

JL: I doubt it. I don't know how I would have put up with that, stewing every night, 'cause there wasn't any air conditioning in those days. It was terrible. I knew there was a better way to live, but I wasn't sure where it was.

KP: You were based in Coronado for the entire time of the war.

JL: Yeah, I was at sea, most of the time. I was training these ships. When I became an operations officer, I was in, but there were certain special ships that they would only let me train. There was a submarine I had to train and there were control vessels I had to train.

KP: What was it like to train crews on ships that you hadn't served on?

JL: Well, the only one I hadn't really served on was the submarine.

KP: Yeah, the submarine is the main reason.

JL: It was a two week training period, and I went aboard, talked to the skipper and, fortunately, I was senior to him, because he was a nasty guy. And I said, "This is what we're going to do for two weeks," and he agreed to everything but one. And I said, "Well, I'll go talk to the Admiral," and the Admiral said, "If he thinks the submarine is going to roll over, I wouldn't think you

ought to do it.” So we didn’t do it. But it was interesting, ‘cause during the first week, we had an underwater demolition team detachment aboard and we had a Marine reconnaissance, and we let these men out from submerged and then recovered them and we towed them from the periscope. It was very interesting. And then the second week, I taught them how to control the rubber boats into the beach. So when I left the ship, the commanding officer and I were on good terms, but he didn’t like a reserve officer coming aboard who was not a submarine officer.

KP: Did you feel that there was a division between regular Navy people and those from the reserves?

JL: See again, being on a small ships, we saw very few of them.

KP: But you got the sense that it was out there.

JL: Oh, I knew it was out there, I knew it was out there. And it was really unfair, because I remember, I sent myself up to gunnery school at (Price’s Neck?), when I was executive gunnery officer, and some of the Naval Academy kids out of the Class of ‘43 had just graduated and they were up there. And they did some of the dumbest things I ever saw. I thought, “These guys had been in the Naval Academy for almost four years and they’re doing that? That’s really stupid.” I didn’t have that awe of these guys at all. But some of them now are some of my best friends, because I lived in Coronado. I’ve sold them houses, we’ve partied together. You know there’s no animosity. I’m a member of the Naval Academy Alumni Association. The only thing they bitched about was in the register of graduates, they were putting associate members like me in front of them. I’m not sure we’re still there. I think they probably got us in the back.

KP: What was your sense of the Korean War?

JL: World War II, we fought to win. Korea, I began to think, “There’s something wrong here. This isn’t how you fight a war. We’re not doing, we’re killing a lot of men and we’re not moving forward.” And when Ike came in and ended it the way he did, I was really unhappy. I was a MacArthur admirer.

KP: Really?

JL: ‘Cause, he was, I was part of MacArthur’s Navy for, you know, almost two years, and he had nothing, nobody gave him anything. We had very few ships, we had very few good provisions. He made every landing aboard a ship. People said he was “Dugout Doug,” he was not. The guy was a real honest-to-God brave hero. Maybe he was egotistical, but what ...

KP: It was sort of ironic that the Navy didn’t really like MacArthur.

JL: Oh, I’m sure they didn’t, but we were out there and he fought a good war. He didn’t send 10,000 guys in where 10,000 Japs were. He sent them in where the Japs were not, and shut them off. Let them starve to death, let them try and fight their way through New Guinea, which nobody could do. So our casualties were a lot less than the Navy’s and the Marines’ and the

Army's in the Central Pacific. I mean, they had some terrible losses. They wiped out every Jap, but God knows, they almost wiped out every Marine that went in, too.

KP: Did you ever see MacArthur?

JL: Yes, I saw him quite often for me, I'd say. I saw him in Brisbane riding down in the big, I guess it was Rolls Royce that they had given him. I saw some of his generals up in New Guinea. I never saw him up in New Guinea, but I saw him several times in Australia. And the people in Australia loved him. He was their savior.

KP: It sounds like you were in support of him in '52.

JL: Yes, I was not an Ike admirer. I felt he had done some dumb things in that war over there, and that he was a politician in certain ways.

KP: And I take it you weren't too pleased with Harry Truman's firing of MacArthur.

JL: Maybe MacArthur, you know, maybe he got out of line. But they wouldn't let him fight the war the way he wanted it. Truman didn't want to drop any more bombs, atom bombs, which probably was right.

KP: But at the time ...

JL: At the time, I was upset.

KP: I wanted to ask you this in the beginning, but the Navy shaped your life in a lot of ways, mostly during your service, but also in your decision to move to California.

JL: The weather in Coronado. I said to Nancy, "You know, if I stay in Coronado, I'll see all of my Navy friends, and I'll have this beautiful weather. I've got the best of both worlds." And fortunately, I was able to do a lot of things. I did a lot of developing, I did a lot of building, and I made a lot of money. I had no regrets about that.

KP: Once you got out of the Navy and ended up in California, things turned out right for you. But what was your plan?

JL: Well, Hunts Food had a plant up in Fullerton, about a hundred miles north of San Diego, and I went up there and we all decided we didn't like that area. We drove all through California and then we got back to Coronado, I said, "Okay, what's the vote?" "Coronado," "Coronado," "Coronado," everybody. So then, what to do? And I went up to see a real estate broker that I had bought a house from, and he said, "I'd like to have you be my insurance person." I said, "Hell, my father was an insurance person and I never saw him. I don't want anything to do with that." I said, "What do you have for sale in the way of a business?" He had a paint store, a delicatessen and something else. So I messed around for a month or two, and finally I went in and said, "I'll be a real estate salesman." I had to study for the test, took the test, passed it. And worked for

him for a little over two years and then took another test for broker, passed it, opened my own office. I had all these good Navy friends and there were things going on that other people wouldn't touch because the commission was very low and I made a lot of good friends. And I got together with some builders and we did some building. Built apartments, bought a hotel. And I went over to Arizona and built a sixty-eight unit condominium. Some of the things I lost, a lot of the things I won. But I feel if I hadn't been in the Navy I probably wouldn't have had the temerity to go ahead with that.

KP: Especially in your generation, I've interviewed a lot of people who really stuck with their company. They stuck with Campbells Soup, they stuck with Prudential. But it sounds like you really decided that you wanted to live here and do whatever it takes.

JL: What my father said to my mother was, "He'd either be the richest guy in Coronado or he's going to be flat on his ass." That's what he said. Unfortunately, he died at sixty-one and so he never saw which way it went.

KP: You mentioned you joined the Naval Academy.

JL: What happened was, I always was a great booster for the Navy. But one of the coaches from the Naval Academy called me one day and said, "We need somebody out in your area to coordinate the football recruiting." I said, "I'd love to do it." His name was Frank Ganz and later on he became a head coach in the NFL, and very fine coach. So Frank came out and we talked about it and he had already started recruiting people, he was a great recruiter. So I worked out some names for him that I knew in the San Diego area and I called my friend Bud Zumwalt, who was then CNO, and I said, "Bud, I need a plane to take some kids back to the Naval Academy." He said, "You got it." So then I had a friend who was head of the Naval Air Reserve, and he gave me a plane. I had three years, I took fifty kids each year and about five coaches back. And then George Welsh came in as head coach, and he wouldn't go for this, which I really think was probably not kosher. I don't think we were supposed to do that.

KP: You could see why you should cut this out?

JL: Yeah, so then we just began individual recruiting of very fine student athletes. They had to be good students.

KP: Because the Naval Academy is no picnic.

JL: If they didn't have a 1000 SAT, I couldn't even talk to them. So I did that for quite a while. And one of the admirals said, "We're going to make you an associate member of our alumni association." And I said, "That's great." So they did, and I still am.

KP: You never joined any veteran's organizations?

JL: No, never have.

KP: American Legion or VFW.

JL: No. My father wouldn't join VFW. He said, "They were all draftees." He said, "I'll be in the American Legion." And I was so busy trying to make a living that I didn't have time to go to these things. I can see where they were great social clubs for the people who wanted to go to a bar at night and hang around a Legion hall and tell stories. I stuck pretty close to home with my kids and my wife.

KP: In wanting to spend more time with your family, was that because your father was away so much?

JL: Sure, I missed having my father around. Just, he was gone all the time. And when he had time to be home, I was gone, so it just didn't work out. I did a lot of work in the Navy League. I was president a couple of years, then I was national director, and I was national chairman of a committee.

KP: So you really followed the Navy since 1945.

JL: I really have.

KP: Since you've stayed in touch with the Navy, what do you think has changed?

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

JL: The admirals are all different breeds of cats, really. Computer literate, no combat experience, they're just bright guys who can probably do the job when they have to. The ships are entirely different.

KP: Well, you've probably been on the new ships. What do you recognize aboard the ship and what ...

JL: I told an admiral friend that if you get in a war, it's gonna be missiles, and you better have a better missile defense than you have now. And he didn't believe it, but I think I was right. I think the missile thing is a real terror. They can shoot a million dollar thing and hit somebody's backyard in Beirut, or wherever they're shooting. They can sure as hell hit a ship.

KP: That was the case in the Falkland Wars, that missiles really devastated several ships. One missile and the ship was gone.

JL: Replaced the kamikaze.

KP: You never encountered the kamikazes in New Guinea, but how did you feel about them?

JL: Pure terror. Anybody who wouldn't be afraid of a kamikaze is crazy.

KP: What made the kamikazes so terrifying?

JL: Because they were so hard to hit. I've had a lot of friends on ships who were killed on them by kamikazes. A lot of them managed to live, but half of their crew was killed. They just keep coming in. They had 6,000 of those kamikazes waiting for us to invade, and they had what they called a (Baka?) Bomb, which was a guy attached to a missile. This man I talked to, was on a planning thing, went ashore with the first people, the women had bamboo sticks with knives on the end. They were gonna fight. We would have lost a million people. So when people cry about the atom bombs, I think, "Well, I'm here. There are a million other guys here and there are probably three or four million Japs that are here. So, what's the problem? You wipe out a few and you save a lot." It's the way it worked out, I think.

KP: Did you ever encounter any Japanese prisoners of war?

JL: Only a couple up in the Admiralties. They were a sorry looking lot by then.

KP: Have you ever been to Japan?

JL: During Korea, I was in Japan several times and I came away from there thinking we better watch out for these guys. We had Waterman pens, at that time, and there would be men sitting on the curbs with one leg gone, and they would be selling a copy of the Waterman pen for like fifty cents or something. I bought some Japanese things that I still have and they are beautiful. We rented a Japanese car for two weeks. I swore I'd never be in a Japanese car. I said to Ronnie, "You know, I could change my mind. This is a great automobile."

KP: This was back in ...

JL: This was just this trip.

KP: So you've never bought a Japanese car?

JL: No, and her husband had been a naval aviator before he died and he said he had never had one. Ronnie says, "We'll never have a Japanese car." We might change our mind. When I see these people striking because they are being forced to work overtime. We're going right back to the same system. They'll price us right out of the market and the Chinese will take over.

KP: So there's also a Navy connection with your second wife?

JL: She was married to a naval aviator.

KP: And did you know each other before?

JL: No, we were introduced by a naval aviator friend of both of us. I had lost my wife. I hadn't dated anybody for three years. I just was really holded up. She had just come over from Spain, she had lived in Europe for thirty years. She came down to Coronado and had lunch at the Hotel

Del Coronado with these old Navy friends. And she said, "I think I can spend my six months a year here, but how do I find a place to rent?" And they said, "Call Jack Lewis." So I just talked to her on the phone, I told her where to go and she found a place there. Before she went back to Spain, these people who introduced us set up a lunch to say goodbye to her and for me to meet her. Nothing came out of that, but the more I thought about it, I'm sure you've never lost a wife, but it's a lonesome life.

KP: No, I know several people from the class who have lost a spouse.

JL: And Ronnie was lonesome. So I called this friend and I said, "When Ronnie comes back, give me a call. I'd like to see her." So we dated a few times, and after very brief courtship decided to get married. Worked out very nicely.

KP: Is there anything I forgot to ask you?

JL: No, I was a plans officer, the last big job we had as a staff, was we had to get the Army's 25th Division out of Japan to Korea, before the armistice was signed, 'cause once the armistice was signed, you couldn't bring any troops in. So we went up to a place called Sendai with all of our ships and seven merchant ships and started loading this whole division and all their equipment. I called a meeting of the seven Merchant Marine skippers and said, "I'm going to need hatch people, I'm going to need winch people," and they said, "You're not going to get them because these guys won't work." I had never heard this before. I said, "What do you mean, they won't work? I've been told you would supply them?" And they said, "Well, I can go out there and tell them, but they're not gonna do it." So I had to take my own ships' people. Fortunately, we had a lot of ships and I just spread them out and we got the division loaded and over to Korea. And then we came back, we were supposed to stay there and take the South Vietnamese to South Vietnam from North Vietnam. And I would have been in charge of that operation as far as, at my level. But another squadron came out and they decided we could go home, so.

KP: So you missed your chance to be in the Vietnam War, indirectly.

JL: Well, the Vietnam, the transportation of the people who wanted to get out of North Vietnam.

KP: You were not in the Navy at the time, but what did you think of Vietnam?

JL: Well, you want to know how I really feel about it? I felt that there was a sinister plot to make a lot of money in arms and munitions, and if you kill 57,000 Americans, so what? The way they fought the war, I had friends who were, by now, most of my friends who stayed in the Navy were admirals, and we would get together and they'd say, "You know, it's awful. We go out there and we sit down, we know all the targets, we line up the targets, we have to send it back to McNamara and those people and we get a dispatch back. 'None of them. We'll bomb those bamboo outhouses, go bomb this, go bomb that.'" And they were all just heartbroken. "Oley" Sharp, who was the Commander in Chief, Pacific, at that time, wrote a book, and Oley and I were playing golf one day and he said, "I'm writing a book about it." I bought the book and I

read about forty pages and I was so upset I closed the book. And I said, "Oley I couldn't read your book." He said, "We could have ended that war in six months if they let us fight. But the politicians fought it." And to this day, I think all of those names on that black slab didn't have to be up there. They just did not fight that war like a war should be fought. Now, I know that the generals and admirals aren't faultless, but they're a hell of a lot better than McNamara and some of those people. So that's my answer to your question. And when I saw those kids come home and the people spit on 'em, I thought, "Jesus Christ, these poor guys they didn't want to be over there in the first place." And it was terrible and it ruined a lot of them. And you still see a lot of them that are derelicts, really. They run around in their combat fatigues, grow beards and drink, and you don't see very many World War II men do that. I think in World War II, you had a purpose. You knew they were fighting to win and they had to win because the alternative, in that case, was terrible. The Germans and the Japs, turned loose on this country, would have been just beyond your comprehension. You didn't figure the Vietnamese were gonna come over here and weren't too worried about the Koreans coming over here, so you had a different attitude fighting that war. Should have fought it to win and get the heck out. Save the lives. That's the important thing. That's my philosophy, you've heard it.

KP: Well, thank you very much and I'm glad you've come back. You left Rutgers in ...

JL: February '47.

KP: You hadn't been back again until ...

JL: 1982.

KP: And was that for a reunion or ...

JL: Yeah, fortieth.

KP: I'm delighted to have you back again, you're just, shy of missing the actual fifty-fifth reunion.

JL: Yes, well actually I'm considered '42, so I'm missing the sixtieth.

KP: We're still on fifty-five.

JL: Oh, I'm sorry.

KP: You have another five years to go.

JL: It's my high school.

KP: High school.

JL: Yeah, well, I'll come back and see what it's like in five years from now to see how your

program is doing.

KP: Yeah, I'm surprised to be here as long as I have been.

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

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