RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT H. MAX

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

WOOLWICH, NEW JERSEY
NOVEMBER 17, 2009

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview on November the 17th, 2009 with Dr. Robert Max in Woolrich Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey. This is our second session. Mr. Max, can you tell me where and when you were born?

Robert Max: All right. I was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania, February 11, 1937.

SH: Could you talk about your family history, beginning with your father's side?

RM: My father was a city fireman, [and] was promoted to battalion chief, and then, assistant chief. … Beyond that, he served … thirty-seven years as a city fireman. … Prior to that, of course, he was a boxer, steelworker, and finally a fireman. As a boxer, he had a hundred and forty-nine fights, with no losses.

SH: Who was he fighting?

RM: He was just a prize fighter, as they called them in those days. … We don't know when he was born. I mean, he lied about his age, somewhere around 1892. …

SH: Was he born at Allentown?

RM: Yes, he was born in Allentown. He had a big family, and, of course, his father died when he was very young. … He had to quit school at third grade. However, I never detected his inability to add, subtract, [or] read--it was remarkable. … He had to go out and work for his family, and he worked in a cigar factory. … Allentown, at that time, was a big cigar and mercantile center, and he had to take care of his mother. … His mother died young, also. … So, he had to fend for himself pretty well. …

SH: Did he have brothers and sisters?

RM: He had--let's see--I think it was two sisters and three brothers. …

SH: Let us go back and talk about your father's siblings.

RM: He had four brothers and two sisters, all born in the United States.

SH: Where were his mother and father from?

RM: … Well, we don't know whether he was from Lithuania, or Russia--the same with my grandmother. She is listed down as being Austrian-Hungarian, but she was Ukrainian, and she came over … in early 1900s.

SH: This would be your maternal grandmother.

RM: Yes, … from my father's [side]. … They all lived in Allentown. However, his two sisters moved to Philadelphia.

SH: Was he the youngest?

RM: He was the youngest. … There were other Maxes in Allentown, but for some reason, we never really mixed with them that much. … He was a boxer for that long, and, in fact, during World War I. … I still have his watch. He fought … in tournaments to raise … bond money since he was, at that time, … nineteen years old, and married, and had a kid. So, they didn't draft him. So, instead of doing that, he said, "I'm going to fight," and he fought … with Ring Town Riley. They had a few articles in the *Allentown Call Chronicle* at that time, before it separated, and that's why I mentioned earlier that everybody knew my dad.

SH: Your father's profession was in the cigar factory, however.

RM: … He made cigars as a kid, … talk about child labor. … Nobody really mentioned what he did, other than, he owned a pool room, and then, he became the fireman, and he wanted to be a policeman, but I forget what reason [he could not], he was too old. So, … he became a fireman, and he was a fireman for thirty-seven years. … He retired, I think, when he was seventy-two or seventy-five. Again, the disparity between when he was born. … I mentioned it the other time, at seventy-two, when they demoted him from battalion chief after political turnover in the town, he was steering the old back of the fire truck, the hook-and-ladder.

SH: We talked about that in the first interview. I was just amazed that someone that age would have the strength to do that.

RM: … He's a very strong guy. … He was a port sider--a lefty--but he was actually ambidextrous.

SH: Was he really?

RM: Yes, and I picked up some of his aspects, but not as much as he did it. … He was well known, … everybody knew him in Allentown, which was a problem, because I couldn't go anywhere without somebody knowing.

SH: Let us talk about your mother's family history.

RM: Okay, they're Ukrainian.

SH: What was her maiden name?

RM: Svitilla, hard name for everybody to pronounce, but Svitilla, and they came from

SH: How do you spell it?

RM: S-V-I-T-I-L-L-A, all right. … She had, let's see--one, Uncle Joe, Frank, Mike and Tessie, Rosie, Annie, Mary, four sisters and three brothers, and two of her siblings … died young. So, they had a big family, and my mom, well, she did well. She went to eighth grade, before she had to go out and work in … clothing.

SH: What about her father? Had her parents immigrated together?

RM: No, they did separately. … My grandmother came from northern Ukraine. It was actually near the Polish border, and at that time, Poland and Ukraine were intermixed. … Historically, that whole area had been overrun back and forth by everybody, including the Germans, and the Russians, and the Tartars. … So, it was a melting pot. The Ukraine was like that. I'm trying to remember the name of the city, it's the northern part of the Ukraine; Lukow. …

SH: You can add that later. Your grandfather was from the same area?

RM: I think so. We really didn't know much about my grandfather. My grandfather was a bastard. [laughter] I only met him once, and that was almost too much when I was a young kid.

SH: How many siblings did she have? Your mother had a very big family, where did she fit in.

RM: My mother was, sort of, in the middle. … My Uncle Joe was the youngest, and he was in World War II--the Philippines--[with] a few battle stars. My Uncle Frank was older, and then, my Uncle Mike was older, and he was a 4F. He didn't go in, and then, my other aunts. …

SH: Did you know this family better?

RM: Yes, I knew, actually, my father's family well, saw them a lot, … but more so with my mother's family. I guess everybody tends toward their mother's side, and that's what we did. In fact, every Saturday or Sunday we used to go down [to], we used to call it "the house" where my *baba* lived--my grandmother. …

SH: Do you know how your parents met?

RM: No. [laughter] They married in Easton, however, but I don't know how and where they met.

SH: Were they from the same church?

RM: No, not at all. They never said how they met. It was interesting.

SH: Were they of the same faith?

RM: No, I guess, … from the same area, the Sixth Ward, in Allentown. So, it was funny, … nobody spoke about how they met. Anyway, my mom was his second wife; his first wife died. So, really my two brothers, Willie, or rather three, Willie, Jerome, and Julius, were my step brothers. They were from his first marriage. My sister Janet and I are, of course, from my mother, Katherine. …

SH: How far apart were you in age from the three older brothers?

RM: Oh, Willie, the one who was killed, was the youngest, and we, I think [are] … something like eighteen or more years apart, because my Uncle Joe was the youngest on my mother's side, and he was sixteen years older than I. … He was drafted in World War II, and I mentioned, I still remember him, saying goodbye to him when he left on the train to go to induction.

SH: Really?

RM: Down at the train station in Allentown, but [I] … don't know that much of the family.

SH: Did the three older brothers live in the same house with you growing up?

RM: No, my brother Willie did. Jerome and Julius were married. I don't remember too much of that, at that point, because I was so young, but Willie lived with us. He lived up in the third floor, had it all by himself, his bachelor pad.

SH: How often did you get up to the third floor?

RM: … When he was drafted, I guess, or enlisted; I don't know. I guess, I must have been four or five, because … he was killed in '43, April of '43, April 3rd. I think I was in first grade, so I must have been five years old. See, I started school a year early. Yes, I must have been five years old when he was killed.

SH: Is your sister younger or older?

RM: She's two years older than I am.

SH: She would have remembered.

RM: She remembers--Janet remembers everything. She remembers everything including these things that [happened] before she was born. [laughter]

SH: I have heard that expression, but in a different context.

RM: Barbara remembers everything, too. I'm becoming senile. … I'm forgetting names and vocabulary. … I say, "I take her along on my trips, so I can remember what I've seen." [laughter]

SH: That is a good joke. Where did you grow up? Do you remember the street?

RM: Oh, yes. 945 Fifth Street. Well no, … we lived on Front Street before that, until we were, I guess, four, and then, we moved. Front Street was in the … southern part of Allentown, next to Fullerton, and it was next to our church, our Ukrainian Orthodox Church. So we could just walk across there. … I remember some great childhood friends there, and my *baba* lived on Green Street, which was about five blocks away from here. So, it was all in the Sixth Ward, and the Sixth Ward in Allentown, at that time--I still think, now--was a melting pot. You talk about a melting pot, every nationality of person was there, and they all lived together. [laughter] You

had Germans, Italians, Spanish, Irish, Egyptians, Arabs, all kinds of Arabs and Jews. They all lived together. It was remarkable--they played together, they lived together, they worked together.

SH: You talked about the wonderful sports programs that you had in the parks there.

RM: Well, we all competed. … I must say, however, to be perfectly honest, there were no blacks there. The blacks were in another part of Allentown, and there weren't too many. For some reason, it seemed like a silent part of Allentown, even when we went to school, there weren't too many. In high school, I remember some of them. I had one who was a very good friend, Pete Brantley. Pete was also a very excellent athlete, but you never heard much of them afterwards, and that was the weakness in Allentown. Now, Allentown is--who knows what Allentown is.

SH: Was this evident in elementary school?

RM: Well, not where we were. They were, I think, on South Fourth Street, where the Boys Club used to be. … I remember the Boys Club, because I used to go over there and play basketball every now and then, and so, my buddies were there. … That was about the only time I saw them, or some of the poorer parts of town. Well, our part of town wasn't that [bad]. Allentown was sort of, almost a caste system, where you lived. [laughter]

SH: Really?

RM: You could tell by the junior high, is where you went. At that time, Allentown only had three junior highs--Harrison Morton, Central, and Raub. I went to Harrison Morton Junior High, which was the lower rung, Central was the middle rung, and Raub was the upper rung. … We never met until we went to high school, and then, we all mixed, but there was still that, "Oh he went to Raub. Oh, he went to Central." … At our reunion, … our 50th class reunion, our class vice-president was from Harrison Morton, Eddie Pavlik--wonderful individual, could play any instrument, was an excellent musician, became a teacher. He got all of us from Harrison Morton up on the stage to sing Harrison Morton's fight song, and then, Raub wanted to get up, …it was fun. … It was remarkable, even looking back at it, that distinction was still there. So, that was Allentown as I say, but Allentown was a hundred thousand people, but a country town, small town.

SH: Did you do any traveling as a family?

RM: No, never knew what a vacation was. [laughter] Well, my father worked as a fireman. He worked shift work, and we practically didn't have the money to travel, … although we never considered ourselves poor.

SH: Did your mom work outside of the home?

RM: No, … I think she worked part-time, once, at the clothing mill, but not much. … She was always home, always cleaning, always cooking, always baking. As I mentioned before, she was the world's best baker.

SH: Were there stories about how people came through the Depression when you were growing up?

RM: Some--again I still remember that my father, during the Depression, was a fireman. … So, he got paid every two weeks, not much, but he got paid, and that got … the family through the Depression. … He helped my mom's family, because they were not working, but he helped them out, and of course, when my mom baked, … she used to take a lot of stuff down [to] the house. … I was just saying, with Barbara's family, her father was a tailor--one of the many things that [he did]--[and] a musician on the side, and he used to help out the different parts of the family on her side.

SI: Was your wife Barbara from that same area?

RM: No, Barbara was from Englewood, New Jersey, and actually from Brooklyn.

SH: Oh, that is right.

RM: We met at Douglass. …

SI: That's right, I remember in the other interview.

RM: Our little episode of playing bridge, yes. [laughter] Well, whatever it is now, we're still together. In fact, … she just reminded me the other day, … we were talking about snow and the weather and how warm it is, and she said, "Yes, you remember," she said, "the big snowstorm we had in 1987," when I was working at the Pentagon. She was working in downtown DC. She was an insurance agent for this insurance company, Block [Insurance] Agency, that insured all the major museums in the country. I had mentioned before, that she had insured the Holocaust Museum, Smithsonian, so forth. … We had a blizzard, really snowed, and she used to come to the terminal at the Pentagon, and I used to go there to go home, but for whatever reason it was, she left work early, because the snow had piled up. … She was freezing in the terminal waiting outside, and I said, "Gee, you know," I'm in my office in the Pentagon, "things are bad, maybe I'll go up and take a look and see what's up." I go up and I find her, and she didn't have enough clothes on. So, I gave her my coat and I got a ride home for us. … I mean, talk about serendipity, she would have frozen if that were to have been the case. … I just happened to find her, and said, "Gee, why don't I go up there and take a look," and I did. Anyway, she said April 1, 1956, we had snow in New Brunswick, New Jersey, all right, in April, and that was the day [laughter] that was the day, we all, for some reason, we started a snowball fight. When I say we, students and the fraternities, and so forth. I forgot the name of the street, right behind College Avenue, fraternity row.

SH: Union Street?

RM: Union Street, I guess. … We started that snowball fight, and the TKE House and the Phi Gamma and the Betas. … All of a sudden, somebody, and we never knew who, said, "Hey, let's go over to Douglass College." Then we said, "Oh yes, let's go over to Douglass College." So, I would say, no exaggeration there, at least fifty to seventy-five guys, all right, and for us, a snowball fight was … good clean-cut fun. … So, we start marching over the back roads from Union Street to Douglass College. We did not see one cop along the road, [laughter] and we were making noise, and we're jeering, and we're singing. We finally get to Jameson campus at Douglass, and all of a sudden, everybody starts running into Jameson campus, and Jameson is sort of a quadrangle. … I remember some guys going in through a window to get into the dorm, and all of a sudden, they come flying out. The girls threw them out the window, [laughter] but it turned into a panty raid, and that's the panty raid I remember telling you about. It was unbelievable, guys were running in, all of them coming out, waving their panties, and so forth. … The poor girls, at that time, we didn't think about it, but the poor girls, some of them must have lost their whole wardrobe. … One guy was even thrown off a roof, and it's a two-story roof. … So, the rest of us kept on going, and we marched over …. [to] Gibbons. … Still you didn't see a single cop, … nobody was there at all. How can all these guys, making all this noise and racket …

SH: Was this during the daylight?

RM: During the daylight, through the daylight--classes were over. … It was in the afternoon, and we marched over to Gibbons campus, and this was my sophomore year. I remember it well, because I had been to Newark, I had met Barbara, well, sort of, … over the football season. … So, I said, "Let's go in Gibbons 28," and that's where she was. So, we went to Gibbons 28, and … they wouldn't let us in, [laughter] but I said, "But I came over here to see this girl." … They wouldn't let us in, and so, we finally disbursed, and then went back to the campus, but that was the infamous panty raid at Rutgers College. I mean for staid conservative, controlled kids, to have a panty raid and march across town was unbelievable at that time. …

SH: Did it make the *Targum*?

RM: I don't remember. I don't think it made the papers, but I know that it didn't make … their desk blotter, because there never was a policeman. We couldn't understand, all this, and nothing happened. So, that was the infamous panty raid of 1956 at Rutgers College. I'm surprised you didn't hear about that. That was a big social event. That was even bigger than the water fights we used to have.

SH: Really?

RM: Oh, yes. Later, I forget what year, we had a water fight, the same place. Somehow Union, and the Delta Phi house there, and so forth, plus the Dean of Men's office was there, on Union Street. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Ready?

RM: … One of the springs, it must have been the following year, I guess. … The dean's office was right next to all the fraternities. That might have been by design to try to control them, I don't know, but initially we had two deans, Dean Curtin, Edward, who was the "mean dean," and Dean Crosby, Howard Crosby, who was the "lean dean" because he was tall and slender. Dean Curtin, by the way, was a Phi Gam too. [laughter] Anyway, we had this water fight outside Union, and it was going wild. I mean, we were throwing balloons of water … and all of a sudden, out of the office, steps Dean Crosby, and he walks into the middle of the street, and he says, "I want all you guys to disperse and stop this," all right. So, you're talking twenty, thirty, forty guys out there who run wild, you know, young men. He steps on to the middle of the street and says, "I want you to stop this, now," and we did. He said, "I know everyone of you." We ran out of there, I mean, can you think of a guy like this, stopping a riot? He did it, but we respected him. In those days, I guess, you respected your elders, but he was a very great gentleman, [and] a good dean. Dean Curtin was good. They took care of the students, they really did, part of, I guess, our development at Rutgers. I know Dean Crosby got me through calculus. I still think he gave me a gift, but, yes, that was the water fight that we had. Back to my parents. [laughter]

SH: Can you describe what your earliest memories are of Allentown?

RM: Oh, yes. I attended the Dutch Reform Church, near where we lived on Fifth Street, … even though we were Ukrainian Orthodox.

SH: You can explain that if you want.

RM: [laughter] Yes, my family was actually Ukrainian Catholic before they came over, and for some reason they had a problem with the Church, so they became Orthodox. My Aunt Mary and her family were Ukrainian Catholic. The rest of us were Ukrainian Orthodox. … I can't even remember the name of our church anymore, shows you how religious I was, [laughter] but that wasn't located near where we lived on Front Street, and we moved to Fifth Street. … We moved to Fifth Street because my father was given money as part of a settlement on the Jacob Max estate, and he used this money to buy a house on Fifth Street, I think it was three or four thousand dollars. [laughter] The reason they gave him the money, and I got to tell this. … They had a big family, cousins, and so forth, and so on, and he was the only one whom they could trust to tell the truth of what happened. So, he told the truth, and they said, "Fine, we'll give you the money." He says, "I don't want the money." We'll give the money to you anyway." So, that's how he got the money for the house.

SH: What was the controversy?

RM: Oh, it was a familial controversy, as to who did what to whom and why. You know, whenever somebody dies in the family, things go wrong. Everybody wants money.

SH: This was his father?

RM: This was his uncles' family.

SH: His uncle's estate.

RM: Right, at that time. Anyway, that's how we got the house on Fifth Street, and that's where I went to school, to Garfield. … It was at the top of the hill, that I mention later on. Anyway, Dubbs Memorial, that's it, Dubbs Memorial, Dutch Reformed Church, was on Fifth Street to, but it was, oh, about, maybe, half a mile away. It seemed like it was a mile away, and St. Mary's was my Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and that was at, all the way to Front Street, which was maybe two miles away, which was too far to walk at that time, because it was up and around, across the bridge. So, my mom wanted me to go to church, and Janet, go to church, get our religious training. So, we went to Dutch Reformed. … Every Sunday, we went there. I think I went ten years in a row without missing a Sunday.

SH: Good for you.

RM: Oh, I was a good kid, I knew the Bible, I knew everything. I used to sing in there, take part in their plays, and what have you. …

SH: You said you had a fine soprano voice.

RM: Yes, sort of, and I used to, I was a ham at that time too, but, after Sunday school, we used to walk to Sixth Street to Tellis' Jewish Delicatessen, to get some bagels and lox. … They'd say, "Now, what are you doing with bagels?" I said, "We just like bagels and lox and rolls," and we used to come back after the church and have our breakfast. … St. Mary's was across town, a typical Ukrainian Church, the way it was built, and designed, and all the incense inside, and the men used to sit on one side, and the women on the other. … I remember my mom wouldn't let me talk or look around, and you're sitting in church like a statue, you couldn't move. … I remember I mentioned Mary Turzen before, was a singer, one of my teachers, and they used to sing from the top from the chorus, and oh, a cappella, that was … the type of Gregorian, type of chant. But, of course, they had the women there, and it was beautiful, but I couldn't enjoy it, because I was too busy sitting still. You couldn't look around, and so, and we didn't go that often; we went on holidays. I used to go with my Uncle Joe, and we used to stay in the back of the church where all the guys who ate garlic and drank, sat in the back of the church. [laughter] … Anyway, that was it, and they used to have Easter egg hunts there, and we used to go on Easter, and dress up in our Easter finery, our knickers and have you, as a kid. Unfortunately, on the Easter egg hunt one day, they didn't quite cook the eggs, and as I put it in my pocket, they broke.

SH: Were these the highly decorated Ukrainian eggs?

RM: Oh, yes--*pysanka*. Yes, like what we have over there on the table.

SH: Wow, they are so beautiful.

RM: Oh, no they're beautiful, and my mom used to do it every Easter. I could never; she was artistic in that way. … She taught us, and of course, we colored our Easter Eggs for years, and

we had our kids do it too, but not as much. It's gotten out of the way. … She made beautiful eggs, and that was the point of it. Anyway, the reverend at the Dutch Reformed Church, was Dr. Rev. Milton F. Klingman. Talk about the singer, not the song. The guy was just excellent. He used to give great sermons, and … talk about a Christian gentleman, it was he. … I remember he used to come down to the house and visit his parishioners, and, of course, he knew we were Ukrainian Orthodox, and he knew we went to church, and he came to visit us, anyway. He used to say, … "I like to visit all my parishioners, and you are, even though you're not of my faith. You're my parishioner," and he used to say in Sunday School, when he used to talk to the kids, ("There's two hands, I came and I love."?) [laughter] Here I am, I'm seventy-two years old, and I still remember this.

SH: That is wonderful.

RM: So, he was fantastic, and my other church, [laughter] St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, … Father Chomicky, Gregory Chomicky. He was from the old country. … I was a real pain to him. … Going to grammar school at Garfield, we had to go over to St. Mary's to learn catechism, and had to learn Ukrainian, and that was one of the main mistakes I made in my life--I never learned Ukrainian.

SH: I wanted to ask if you had learned the language.

RM: I never learned it, I learned some, but I was too busy. I said, "Who wants to know this language," … and I used to be out there shooting marbles in the courtyard of the church, and he used to grab me by the ear, he'd come in. … We had our Ukrainian books, but I just never studied. … Finally, my mom said, "That's the end of it, you're wasting your time." …

SH: You must have had some sort of an ear for languages because you end up majoring in German.

RM: Oh, I did. I still have the ear, and I could hear it, and I remember some of the phrases, and so forth. … I tried picking up Russian when I was in California in SAC [Strategic Air Command], when Barbara and I were taking it. … Then, before you knew it, we were sent to France, and we were picking it up then. … I think a major drawback was I just wasn't concentrating on the language. … Steven minored in Russian at West Virginia, and he was conversant in Russian, and when he went to Russia, he was able to use it. … So, he went to Russia, we went to Russia, and sometimes I wonder how life is so cyclical, that my brother Willie went to Fort Bragg, Steven went to Fort Bragg. … Willie was killed in Africa, Steven went to Saudi Arabia, which is right around the corner. I ended up going to Africa for a few things but--strange world. [Editor's Note: Private William Max served in the 47th Infantry Regiment, Ninth Infantry Division, and died on April 4, 1943, while fighting in the US Army's North African Campaign.]

SH: What language did your grandmother speak?

RM: Ukrainian.

SH: Was she fluent in English?

RM: No, she didn't know much English at all, but she understood everything everybody said.

SH: Did she really?

RM: … It was remarkable. My mother was bilingual--all of my aunts and uncles were bilingual. … Ukrainian at that time, I don't know whether it was dialectic or not, because of … where they lived, closer to the Polish border. … The Poles who lived in town, they were all on the same block, they could converse, you know, they understood everything, the language. I guess Ukrainian and Polish were more similar than Ukrainian and Russian. … There was no big problem, and then you had Syrian down there, you had Egyptian down there, it was unbelievable, and everybody understood. My father was multi-lingual, right--third grade [education]--multi-lingual. He could speak German, he could speak Syrian, he could speak Hebrew, and just because he lived down in the Ward, and he had the ear, plus he used to play the musical instrument.

SH: What did he play?

RM: He played the tuba, all right. … They had one band there, anyway, he played in it, and he was in there with a lot of Irishmen. He also played on the football team that was composed of all Irish--he was not Irish.

SH: You said someone in your father's family was from Russia?

RM: Yes, they were, Russia, or Lithuania. When I tried finding our roots, we never could find it, and my cousin Sally, … whose grandparents were my dad's sister, we could never find out the name because the name Max is truncated. … We don't know whether it was Markovski or Maxemcheck, nobody could ever track it down. With my mother's side, Svitilla, and it's easy to trace, but I still haven't found any Svitillas. With Barbara's side, with her, it's Siclari. We were able to go back to Corleone, to Sicily, and check it there. In fact, we went to the church where her mother's father was born, and I remember she and I, and the sacristan, … the people who help out in the church, went into the records, and it's all there in Latin. You know, the Catholic Church, Roman Church, is unique. We're going back hundreds of years, and they have it all written down, and they have who was born, mothers, fathers, and so forth, and we were able to translate it with my two years of Latin. … I was doing better than the other guy. We traced her roots there, and we traced her father's roots … in Calabria. So, in fact we're going to go to Calabria next year.

SH: It is beautiful.

RM: … It was great. So, … with my folks, my father's side, we couldn't find much out.

SH: Do you still go back to Allentown for festivals?

RM: … I go back on holidays. In fact, we're going back on Thanksgiving, to spend it with my sister and her family, but I went back this summer. They had the old-timers' banquet. It used to be all the old-time athletes, and now it's just whoever wants to come. … First time I had a chance to; I saw guys back there I haven't seen since 1954, it was unbelievable. They changed, I didn't, [laughter] but its marginally true--two guys I couldn't recognize, they recognized me right away. … As I say, I'm not as slender as I used to be, and holy cow, but it was great seeing them, and the things, I don't know how they remembered some things, … but that's memory.

SH: What do you remember about the different holidays or feast days?

RM: Nothing really. The only feast days were the Great Allentown Fair, which was a marvel in itself, and that was basically it. They didn't have festivals as such, much other religious festivals in Allentown, at least, that I remember, or that I attended.

SH: What about Christmas?

RM: Oh, Christmas is great. I had two Christmases. I had the regular Christmas, and I had the Ukrainian Christmas. They had a different calendar, the Gregorian. Was it Gregorian? I get it mixed up. … So, we always had Christmas on January 7th. So, I always used to get two presents and that was it, just two presents. [laughter]

SH: One more than you had before.

RM: Oh, yes. … If you're talking about festivals, at my grandma's house, my mother's house, you always used to have Christmas Eve there, and you had the traditional Ukrainian dinner of no meats. … We had the *pierogies*, and the bread, the garlic. There were all kinds of things. … Finally, we had some *kielbasa*--a lot of it was Polish-oriented--and my father used to say, because I used to eat garlic, and my father couldn't stand it, and he used to drive home, and he says, "Open the windows." [laughter]

SH: That is good for your health.

RM: … We were healthy. … Easter was always a major … Ukrainian celebration. … On Christmas, the church choir used to come around, and sing at a lot of houses, and then, the priest used to come around, and used to bless the bread, and at Easter time he used to come around, and bless the eggs, and the *horseradish* and the *babka* bread. So, you know, it was very interesting, with his incense. My mother always wanted me to be an altar boy, and, of course, I never did, and I was bad. However, I think about 1986, no it had to be longer than that, my nephew, Jan's son, I'm forgetting, was married. Anyway, they needed somebody to stand up by the altar, and hold the candle, and the priest looks at me, and he picks me out, and he takes me up there, and I said, "Gee, Mom, I finally made it, I'm an altar boy." … Oh, my mom was dead at that time. That's why I said, "If only she knew that I finally made it, she'd be happy." [laughter]

SH: How did your family feel about your decision to go to college? How did they react?

RM: … It was just routine. Well, that's the decision that I had made, to go to college, because I've been making my decisions from junior high on, what I was going to do academically, and everything else. As long as I was home for dinner and kept out of trouble, and so forth, and did what I was supposed to do, they're content. So, before I picked the academic, I did well enough in athletics to get a partial scholarship and an academic scholarship, and I said, "I'm going to go to school." They said, "Where are you going to go." I said, "Well, I had narrowed it down to Rutgers." I said, "I'm going to go to it." "Oh, okay," you know. "Okay, what do you need," because they couldn't afford to give me any money, I had to use all my spending money. … "But what are you going to major in?" "Well, I'm going to major in this, so." "Okay."

SH: Do you remember any celebrations when World War II ended?

RM: No, nothing at all. … It doesn't linger in my mind as something exceptional. It was a war, I guess.

SH: Did the Korean War affect any of the students when you got to high school?

RM: No, nothing at all. … Some of our friends, our older friends, who had been in the National Guard, had gone over to Korea, but they all came back. … They were an artillery group, so they really weren't in frontline fighting. So, we didn't really have any mortality, or injuries, or such, in the Korean War.

SH: Were current events discussed in middle school or high school?

RM: I don't remember it. History is sort of a blank in high school. I remember English, of course, and I remembered the math, science, but, history all I remember is that, we went through the book. … One of the history teachers was a football coach. … I guess, football, all coaches were either history teachers or phys ed teachers, although I must say, one of them was a chemistry teacher, … but nothing really stands out academically that way. I guess we just kept our nose to the grindstone, and no one did any preaching. Today, of course, well, "this is a bad war, this is a bad thing," you know, everybody has their own axe to grind. Unfortunately, the teachers grind the axes, and they're not supposed to. They're supposed to present things objectively, and let the students make their own decisions, which doesn't happen anymore.

SH: I wondered if you followed current events regularly.

RM: No, not at all. As I said, the only thing in World War II that affected us, was collecting the cans, and the fat, and the papers, but that was it, and then what we saw in the movies, and the bond drives.

SH: Did you go to the movies often?

RM: Well, I couldn't go. I tried to go Saturday afternoon, but I couldn't get the fifteen cents that often. [laughter]

SH: Fair enough.

RM: Another big disappointment in my life, I wanted to see John Wayne in *Stagecoach* (1939) that was coming into the movies. … I couldn't get the fifteen cents to go to the movies, so I missed it. So, you see this is a major event in my life that I remember.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Please continue. Were there any stories about Rutgers that we did not cover in the first interview that you would like to put on record?

RM: Well, it was an eventful four years, you know, an enjoyable four years. I think Rutgers really helped make who I am, … the people you meet there are fantastic. Of course, then, without a scholarship, I would never have gone to college, never. Luckily, I got the scholarship from Rutgers, and the Class of '37 gave me a partial scholarship, and it wasn't until the senior year that I won the total scholarship, which was great.

SH: We talked briefly about the War Memorial Scholarship.

RM: War Memorial is the full scholarship that gives you four years of room, board, tuition, and transportation for those who live away, 'cause a few of my buddies who got that, lived in Ohio or in Bismarck, North Dakota. So, it had the transportation. So, … initially, I started out with an Upson Memorial, which was five hundred, and then, the Class of '37, which was 250. So, that was 750 out of--tuition, I guess, at that time, was a thousand. But since I was out of state, it was another 250. So, I had to work for that, or come up with the money somehow for that. So, I ended up working summers, and then, "they," whoever the ubiquitous "they," Rutgers, got me a job working at Tondini's Commons, and that's spelled T-O-N-D-I-N-I, Mario Tondini.

SH: Thank you for the clarification.

RM: … I told you what happened with my first luncheon there, with Bob Bear. We went for a scholarship weekend, and the rare roast beef. Well, I ended up working there in the mornings, or was it lunch, I forget. … They used to give you a card, like a time card, and that enabled you to get so much money a day to pay for food. Since I was on a training table, I used to come after football practice, and eat sundaes and milkshakes, trying to gain weight. I didn't gain a pound. … They used to have banquets. … The bankers, and so forth, used to come in. I used to work on those, which gave me a few bucks here and there for money, and later on, in the sophomore, junior, senior year, to get more money, I no longer worked at Tondini's, but I worked at the fraternity. … I also used to give blood every now, and then, down at the hospital at St. Pete's Hospital, especially when the big weekend came around. So, I needed that extra ten dollars. [laughter] Tell you another war story, sophomore year, some of us were going down to give blood, I and a few of the football players. So, we went, gave our blood, came back, and right outside the fraternity, the guys picked me up. … Two of them were big tackles on the football team, and they knocked the door [down], and they carried me in, and they said, "They took too much blood from him." [laughter] It was remarkable. … Of course, I mentioned, I worked at the post-office for a good many years, but … those scholarships really paved the way. So, … on our 50th anniversary, I gave back to the Class of 1937, all the money they gave me.

SH: Oh, how nice of you.

RM: It wasn't much. … Well, it was much, you're talking about, it's a thousand bucks, but I figured they did a lot for me.

SH: Do you what the War Memorial Scholarship was based on?

RM: Oh, on everything. It was primarily academics and athletics. I mean, that was a big scholarship.

SH: Do you know who financed it?

RM: No, not at all. No, all I know, … that's the one to get, the big one, and as long as you kept your grades up. Rutgers, … we had a lot of kids come to Rutgers on scholarships, athletic, but it was primarily--if you didn't have the academic, you weren't going to get the athletic, at that time. If you weren't at least a "B+" student, and have a good SATs--although who knew what an SAT was--you weren't going to get into Rutgers. … So, many of them did not come out for the teams, but kept their scholarships. It was remarkable, that's why I mentioned, in intramurals, … so many guys who were scholarship winners playing intramurals. [laughter]

SH: Really.

RM: But it shows the quality of Rutgers and the scholarship. Now, the schools pull scholarships, you know, you don't play or get hurt, and they pull it. … That was the problem, why I mentioned I had the scholarship to go to Wake Forest, until all my friends said, "Well, remember now, if you go to Wake Forest and you get hurt, they're going to take all your scholarships, because you can't play." I said, "Well, if I can't get a scholarship, I can't attend," and at that time, as I said, I was … five-foot-nine, a hundred and fifty-five pounds, and Wake Forest played big football. … I had a few injuries at Rutgers when I played, so if you're, heck, you're out for a couple of weeks for something and they take your scholarship, you're going back home again. … Penn State said I was too small to play, and they wouldn't give me scholarship, but Rutgers did. So, it's what I loved though. … We played Penn State my sophomore year, and Lenny Moore and Milt Plum are playing there, and I had, as a sophomore, I played a lot of ball that game, and I had a good game, and every time I made a good play, I used think, "Okay, Penn State, I'm too small for you, but look what I just did." [laughter]

SH: There is chatter out there.

RM: Oh, there's chatter out there, yes. … It was a good one, but Lenny Moore was just too good, I admire him. I hit him one time and he fumbled--claim to fame--but then he ran by me twice. [laughter] He got even, too.

SH: Did he whistle when he went by?

RM: [laughter] Who was that flash I just saw?

SH: Were there political issues being discussed in the classroom?

RM: No, not in the classroom. The only thing in the classroom was, of course, Dr. Schlatter when he said, "What the heck is Arthur Godfrey doing coming here and the class is called off," that was it. [Editor's Note: Arthur Godfrey was a radio and television personality during the 1950s who advocated for the development of American airpower.] I mean, nothing like you have today. You don't have any who were avowed communists who were teaching, or whatever. No, I mean it was, to me it was the way colleges should be. Not that they didn't incite you, to question, and to argue, and to discuss. You're always discussing something, or you had a good discussion in class. That wasn't it, I mean, and you could do all the arguing, but nothing was politically-orientated, or one-sided. It was just, the way it was supposed to be. … That's why I admire the professors so much at that time. … Yes, there were odds and ends going on outside on the campus, funding by the state, which we never really got enough of, and a few other things, which were really minor at that time. … I didn't become involved in too much of it, I was just, you know, I was very narrow. I'm in here, I'm doing my thing.

SH: Who was the President when you were at Rutgers?

RM: What the heck.

SH: Did you ever meet him at any functions?

RM: Louie Webster Jones, I think it was, Louie Webster Jones, and the provost. Mason Gross, was the provost, and, you know, but Louie Webster wasn't around that much. [laughter] Mason Gross was, and he later became president. … He was a unique individual. [Editor's Note: Lewis Webster Jones served as President of Rutgers University from 1951 to 1958. Mason Gross was President of Rutgers University from 1959 to 1971.]

SH: What kind of a presence did Mason Gross have?

RM: Oh, huge. I mean, … besides being a huge man, … he was here, and he was talking to students, and he taught his classes, too. Unfortunately, I never had him for class. …

SH: Was he doing the radio show or the TV show?

RM: I think he was at that time. Herb Shriner, yes, he was the expert on the Herb Shriner Show. … Rutgers was really a conservative school at that time, and I'm glad. [Editor's Note: Dr. Max is referring the *Two For The Money*, an early 1950s game show hosted by Herb Shriner on which Mason Gross appeared as a judge, although Shriner did follow that show with The Herb Shriner Show, a talk/variety show.]

SH: Did you go into New York?

RM: No, the only time I went into New York, I think was the night we were initiated in the fraternity. [laughter] Brothers took us in, and that was it.

SH: Did they bring you back?

RM: Yes, they brought us back. [laughter] Went into, where the heck was it, for Dixie Land Jazz, … Central Plaza, for Dixieland Jazz, oh, boy. I remember going back there, years later … to watch Sweet Emma and the Preservation Hall of Dixieland Jazz. They were fantastic. … When we went to New Orleans, Barbara and I, definitely, we had to go to Preservation Hall. Emma wasn't there, of course, but you talk about sweet jazz, Sweet Dixieland, that is pleasant.

SH: Were you a dancer?

RM: Yes, I used to dance. Oh, yes, you can't come from Allentown and not [know] how to jitterbug and polka, especially the polka. I knew how to polka before I could do anything, for all the weddings you go to. … In those days, no sit-down weddings, … none of that formal stuff. You sit down, and you have a buffet, and they had everything flowing, and the dancing, and we used to crash weddings all the time. [laughter] I mean, that was the fun of being a kid, you crash the wedding, you go, you get some free food, and if you're lucky, you can get a beer, although I didn't drink at that time, and if you see a nice-looking girl, you can dance a polka with her. … Family weddings, gee whiz, you had a ball, because all the family used to make the food and this. … Oh, I'd dance the polka all night, used to dance all night. I remember, oh, heck, who was it, … in the 1950s, "get out that kitchen and rattle those pots," Bill Haley. Bill Haley, he came to the Rainbow Ballroom in Allentown, Pennsylvania, it was off Tilghman Street. … We went there that night, and danced, and we jitterbugged all night. … He plays fast music, and we were dancing, and don't think anything about it, and the guys and gals had a good time. Now, I dance one jitterbug, and I feel like I'm going to die. I die when it's polka, and I can't finish a polka; and when I polka, *I polka*, you know. I don't do this slow, no, *I polka*. [laughter] On New Brunswick, they had the Falcon's Club, outside of New Brunswick. It was the Polish Falcon's Club.

SH: Really?

RM: And we used to go there some nights and polka. … I thought I could polka until I saw the kids there, oh, they did a beautiful Polish polka, you know, the spins. ...

SH: That was in New Brunswick.

RM: Outside of New Brunswick, close by. Yes, that's right. … They had a Swedish inn there, that had a *smorgasbord* that was out of this world.

SH: Did you go to church when you were at Rutgers?

RM: No, I had given up religion as soon as I left Dubbs Memorial.

SH: Was there mandatory chapel?

RM: Yes, mandatory chapel, you had to go once a month I think it was. So, we went, and we sat through that, and endured through that.

SH: Were these more lectures than church services?

RM: Oh, yes, they were lecture. Chapel was not religious-oriented, not at all.

SH: Do you remember any of the speakers?

RM: Are you serious?

SH: I thought I would ask.

RM: Although, at our 50th, Bill Erback, Bill became a chaplain, Army chaplain, and he had a career in the Army, and he came back, and he gave one of the talks at Kirkpatrick Chapel, Saturday morning of Reunion. Unfortunately, I had other things to do, and I didn't go, but I heard he gave a tremendous speech, not a sermon, yes. So, I mention him and in fact, one of my articles, because he was mentioned in the … the AMVETS magazine, on an article there, writing about heroism, and … had a quote. So, I had to put that in there, but remarkable, I never thought Bill would become a chaplain. I didn't know him that well, you know, as I mentioned, there are, what, two-thousand students, and you're familiar with everybody. … You can at least recognize their face, or their name, you may not know them well or so, which was fantastic.

SH: You talked about some of the friction with the people who lived in nearby towns.

RM: Yes, sort of a friction, as it always is, but they were relatively removed from us because the campus was separate--now, of course, the busses and everything else. … I mentioned my one buddy, and I didn't mention his name, and I still won't. He and I, in the summer, I went to summer school. I also had a job. Rutgers gave me a job so I could afford to go to summer school, still save money, and bring up my grades. I'll tell you, the support, talk about support when you need it. Well, we were working, picking up papers around the dorms, and we, you know, we had these sticks, with a needle at the end, and you're picking it. … I think it was the new dorms, was it, no, Demarest, where there was, sort of new dorms on the side, and we're walking along and all of a sudden, "phew," somebody throws a water balloon at us. … We continued walking, another water balloon comes out, I say, "What the heck is going on here?" So, we say, "All right, Jack you walk there, and I'll stand over here and see where it comes from." So he walks out again, lo and behold, out comes that water balloon. We see where it comes, we go running up the stairs, all right, we find out which room it is, and we bang open the door, and these two students were in there, they don't know what the heck is happening, and Jack has his weapon there, and he says, "If you throw one more water balloon down, I'll put this through you, ahh!!!" Those weren't townies, … but that's shows, Jack, how, but it was fun, you know. … I think, never would have happened if I would've flunked all my courses. Well, I didn't flunk my courses. … It's interesting, one of the courses that I did, … I got a "4" in it, and a "4" at that time, on a four-credit course, brought that whole average down. It was geography, Wallace was my professor, all right. … This guy, he used to come in, open his book, and start lecturing, the bell rang, closed his book, came in the next day, opened his book, picked up

exactly where he left off, bell rang, closed his book--but he covered everything. If he gave an exam, it was exactly on what his notes were. … Unfortunately, we went on a field trip to the Delaware Water Gap. It was a great field trip, looking at the stones, and the formations, and what have you. Delaware Water Gap is great for that, and a couple buddies and I made asses of ourselves on the back of the bus, and I guess he didn't forget that. Did he give a "4" or was it a "5," I forget. … Yes, that might have been the "5" which put me over, but the "5" in a four-credit course, whoa. It takes you a year and a day to come back from it, but he was a good prof.

SH: Was he?

RM: I give him credit, I mean the guy was really good, he taught the subject well. I remember a lot of things, and this was as a freshman. Yes, a freshman. So, he was pretty good. I remember him, more than I do with some of the others. There was Claude Hill, German, he was a fantastic guy. I wish I would have been more mature at the time I went through Rutgers, because of the good professors who were there, and I really didn't gather as much information from them as I could have, or asked some questions that I could have to go deeper, and Claude was one of them, because of his background in German, coming from Germany, and his first time he spoke, seeing how Hitler was coming in and everything else, it just didn't penetrate. I looked at it, sort of, at the surface. John Ciardi, Professor Young in English, so many of them. Well, I guess, that's what happens when you're that young, you can't take advantage of your good professors.

SH: So, your German professor talked about coming from Germany?

RM: Oh, yes.

SH: When did he leave Germany?

RM: The '30s, late '30s. … Claude Hill was a full professor at Rutgers, and very good. The only weakness, as I mention, is that they gave the classes in English. For me, that was good, because my German wasn't that good, but it should have been done in German, … pick up the proficiency. The vets who were in my class, of course, had no trouble in the advanced courses. … The irony of it is, in the Reserve program, they had a special offering for … select officers to go over to Germany, on a German Leadership School for two weeks, in Germany. … They would pick Reserve officers from all over the world to go. So, I was selected, one because I had done relatively well as a commander, and I also had, "Hey, he knows German." So, I went over for two weeks, and I picked up on my German, again.

SH: Did you travel all over Germany?

RM: No, it was just to Cologne, and you had the leadership school there, conducted in German, some classes in English. … The officers, I think we had some from Denmark, from France, a lot of German officers, Holland--there were two of us from the States. … So, it was a pretty good cross section, and we intermingled; all of them spoke English. I became very friendly with one of the German officers who was a tank commander, and he had a collection of Colt forty-fives, it was unbelievable. He took me to his home, and he had this collection, and he was showing me. … We had some chances to tour. We went to the cathedral, and all around in the vineyards, and

what have you, but it was interesting, because, one of the old-time Germans in World War II, and he, of course, he fought on the Eastern Front. [laughter] Yes, he fought, and all the Germans you met always fought on the Eastern Front. None of them ever fought on the Western Front, and he said, "We were pretty good, when we fought the Russians." … He said, "but we could have won the war," and later on, he started bragging a little bit and I said, "You know, I really don't appreciate this." He said, "Well, I don't want to hurt your feelings." I said, "I don't appreciate it because you Germans killed my brother," and that cut him off, that did it. That was the end of it. Then, he changed his tune, but we had, as I say, we had Dutch there, and the Dutch went through horrible [experiences], and they still remember it. I mean, they were not friendly with the Germans. They still remembered what was going on. … Yes, everybody fought in the east, no one fought in the west, but he was not a good officer. … The young man, the one tank commander, he was a sharp guy, really good. They were all good. At the end, you had to give a speech. So, I started giving it in German, and I went into English, and I said, "Now, you got to remember you can't talk that fast in German anymore, because … they won't understand us." [laughter] They looked at me, and I said, "Guys, you got to slow down your German," and they laughed. … [laughter] I was lucky, I went to a few good schools when I was in the Reserve. I went to that leadership school, I went to Armed Forces War College, and I went to the Air University for some classes.

SH: Where were these schools located?

RM: In Alabama, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, in downtown, … I don't recall. Anyway, it was pretty good. That's where I met Bob Kelly again. [Editor's Note: Rutgers alumni Lt. Gen. Kelley served as a jet fighter pilot (flying F-100s and F-104s) in Germany during the Cold War in the late 1950s and 1960s, including service during the Berlin Crisis. He served in Vietnam, first, as a F-4E pilot, completing 119 missions with the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing, then, as the Executive Officer of the 7th Air Force Tactical Air Control Center. Lt. Gen. Kelley later served as the ninth Superintendent of the US Air Force Academy from 1981 to 1983 (having previously served on its faculty in the mid-1960s). He also developed the US Air Force's Fighter Force Modernization Strategy for the 1980s and served as commander of the USAF Tactical Fighter Weapons Center (1979-81) and Vice Commander of Tactical Air Command (1983-86). His oral history interview is available on the Rutgers Oral History Archives website.]

SH: Did you really?

RM: Yes. Bob used to come and guest talk at some of the classes, and this was an advanced Air Force school for tactics, when I was there. … He came in as the guest speaker, and most of the people in the class were active-duty people, and I was a reservist, and he's up there talking, and he's looking down, and all of a sudden, he stops. He said, "Maxie, is that you?" [laughter] I go, "Yes, sir, it's me." He said, "I want to see you afterwards," and he continues with his talk. So, what happened, I go up to see him afterwards, he said, "Come on, let's have lunch together," and usually at these seminars, all the eager officers like to sit next to the guest speaker, and get their face points in, and so forth. So, Bob comes over, and he puts me right next to him, you know, and all these guys were going, "Who the hell is this reservist?" So, he and I are talking and reminiscing, and they get no face time in. So, talk about, if they could kill me, all right. …

That's it, and he says, "Keep in touch," and that's where I found out that he was at the Air Force Academy, and he said, "If I would have known you were Reserve, I would have requested you to be the liaison officer." That's when I said, "Now, you tell me," but I also went to another Reserve school at Maxwell, and I came across some Reserve officers from Arizona, A-10 [aircraft] squadron commanders. These guys had their act in shape. I mean, they were not the typical reservists, they were primed, and ready to go. It changed my entire outlook for them. They were good, but then, we folks at McGuire [Air Force base] had our act in shape.

SH: It sounded like it from the first transcript.

RM: Yes, we had our act in shape. … I said, in the transcript, I took over one part of the Frankfurt Rhein Main Air Force Base, just the transportation part with the squadron. … Then, I took over the basic part, and then, when I became deputy wing commander, I took three squadrons over, and we took over the whole aerial port function. So, you're talking three squadrons, which is about three hundred people, and we ran the aerial port function for two weeks. That set the pattern for things that come after that. I know it was a success, which helped me get, I guess, my appointment to the Pentagon for the four year tour, but it was good people. When you have good people working for you, you can do anything.

SH: Earlier in the first interview, you talked about going into Africa.

RM: Oh, yes.

SH: Was there more to add to that?

RM: Yes. At that time, '60 to '62, Africa was in turmoil, to say the least. You had all kinds of government change over there. The Belgians had just left, they had requested, I guess it was Patrice Lumumba, I get confused with all the different turnover of names there, and, of course, they brought in their mercenaries, your typical dogs of war type of stuff, and what have you, but they also requested the UN. … We, the 322nd Air Division at Évreux, supporting the UN, and were supporting all of that area in airlift--in fact, Europe and Africa. … My wing group, the 317th which was at Évreux, had the three squadrons there, the 39th, 40th, and 41st, and so, they had all the flights going out of there, and I … provided security when they needed it, which was often. When I went back to the Reserves, in the aerial ports, they needed us to do all the transportation of cargo. … They had flights going down to Africa all the time; it was a tremendous airlift, as I mentioned. Of course, it was UN, we even had UN uniforms, they called it OAS, or something like that, in French, I forget what it was. So, we were going down, and we used to send down ALC units, Airlift Logistics Command units, and they used to send about twenty-five people down there with a colonel in charge, and usually--it might have been one of those squadron commanders, or so forth, or a lieutenant colonel. [Editor's Note: Dr. Max is referring to the Congo Crisis that developed after Belgium relinquished control over its African possessions which resulted in intervention by United Nations Forces.]

SH: Were these US forces?

RM: These are our troops, out of Évreux, going down there to run the logistics aspect for NATO, and also to handle all the airlift components coming in, because we used to bring in the supplies, ammunition, especially the food, for everybody and the troops. Most of the trips I had down there, were ferrying troops down. So, they used to run the whole aspect of all the UN operations in Africa, and finally, though, I think the end of '62, they kicked the ALC groups out, and they put in sort of a civilian-type group, or what have you, but that was all done in civilian wear and no weapons. You couldn't carry weapons, or what have you.

SH: You did not have any weapons.

RM: No, we did not.

SH: Really?

RM: We did not have any weapons. We couldn't carry them, even concealed, and yet, as I mentioned, down the runway was parked the Russian Ilushin Il-14s, or whatever they were routinely, you know. I think, somewhere I even have a photograph, some of my slides of some of the Ilushin Il-14s, and then, we stayed there for, normally, three or four days, and then, in two of the missions, we had to take trips, foreign troops down line, one of them was to Luluabourg, two of them were to Luluabourg. … I mentioned the Irish troops we took, and later attacked by the natives, and wiped out, and the Irish are a major component of the UN forces that time. In another one, we dropped off some Nigerian troops, headed by two English officers. They went in there, I don't know how they made out, but that was it, but I enjoyed those trips down there. I had free time until we got ready to move back in Leopoldville. … In Leopoldville we stayed at Lovanium University, which was their university on top of the hill, run by the friars, or the brothers, and it was a different experience. … We used to go downtown into the markets, and the markets were unbelievable, it's the way you see in the movies.

SH: What was the language that was being spoken?

RM: French and English. The Belgians spoke French. … Nobody had a problem with it, although the brothers spoke French, and at that time, my French had improved a little bit, but I could understand more than I could speak. …

SH: So, NATO was paying the brothers to put you up, or was it the US government?

RM: I don't know. That's a good question. I never knew who paid for anything there, though probably the US government was paying for everything. That's more than anything else. I don't know whether we paid the brothers. We got reimbursed on our … travel vouchers, you know, expenses or not. I … remember … wandering around through town, looking at different things.

SH: Were you limited in the amount of money you could have with you?

RM: No, as I mentioned before, all they had to do was make sure you take dollar bills, so you can trade. … I made out, I mean, I still have throughout my house the things I picked up, the ivory, the teak. …

SH: Was there ever a sense that you were being followed?

RM: No.

SH: There was no surveillance of any kind.

RM: No, … we felt free. … Surprisingly, and I remember riding somewhere, we even passed a golf course where they were playing golf, but I didn't see any grass, all I saw was sand. [laughter] No, … it was not oppressive, and then, when we went into Kano, Nigeria, as I mentioned, coming down into the airport, you land there, and all the people, the civilians are watching the planes, and the colors, just abundance of bright colors, it was just astounding, but that was really something else.

SH: Where would you be housed when you would go into Nigeria?

RM: At a hotel. There was a hotel in Kano, it was a civilian hotel, and everybody stayed there, and we were just a crew passing through. … That's why I mentioned, we had all the different nationalities there, probably all dancing and drinking and the band playing. I mean, *Casablanca* (1942), here I am, you know. It was wonderful, as a young first lieutenant in there. I mean, my eyes are popping out, it's something else.

SH: There is a real expatriate community there.

RM: Yes, it was, and it was just like that. Another one, I guess was flying back one time, the pilot was a very good friend of mine. He was a second lieutenant--Phil, that was his name. He also had a Lotus car. … Phil came up through the ranks. He [was] a sharp guy, … aircraft commander as a second lieutenant. He could take that aircraft apart, and put it together again, but he was a character. Anyway, we're flying back, and we're coming across the Kano River, okay, or was it the Amazon, whatever, and he decides to … fly low--this is a C-130 [transport]. So, we start going, flying low, and we see these natives on their craft. So, he says, "Let's buzz them." [laughter] Here he is in this C-130, he comes down, and I swear, I have photographs of this too, through the windshield. I'm sitting up front, they were through the windshield. I said, "Phil where are you going?" He said, "We're going to buzz these guys." So, we go down, and we buzz them, and I swear, we were fifteen feet above the water, and these guys see us coming, and they jump into the water. I mean it was funny, and I look up and I said, "Phil, I think I just saw a silver flash somewhere." "Uh, oh," he says, "I better get my tail end out of here. … If they see my tail number, I'm lost," but we zip up out of there, and away we go. … I have photographs to prove that. …

SH: When you flew, you supported different areas.

RM: When we flew into Leopoldville, we were supporting American troops who were part of UN, but nobody had a UN decal, or anything else. It was just that, yes, this is a UN support, and we're going in there. So, I guess, some of the troops who came in, were specifically UN troops.

As they do today, they wear their hat. … That was one of the few medals I think I really earned, and I never got.

SH: Did you transport people out?

RM: No, we just took troops down, troops and supply. … We used to pick troops up and ferry them back into there, take them into Leopoldville, then Luluabourg, Katanga Province.

SH: Never brought them out.

RM: No, so, we didn't have a chance to talk to them about that.

SH: Are there other stories around your service you would like to share?

RM: Oh, well, I mentioned marches on the Champs-Élysées, with my flight, and the honor, and General Lauris Norstad, but that was about it. Although we had, not military, but Barbara and I traveled to Normandy, somewhere in 1960 to '62, and we went to the Normandy beaches, and we went to Les Andelys --which is Richard the Lionheart's--castle, in Normandy. It is now, and all we found there was a pile of stones overlooking the river, and so, it was a beautiful sight, and we picnicked there. Now, it's now a tourist rendezvous. We went back this year. I'll tell you about that one. We went back this year, and they said, "Yes, Let's go back to Les Andelys it's a great place to see," and we were there, you know, early on. It's the same as when we went to Rome in 1961, I was able to park outside the Colosseum, and not worry about it, now you can't. … We went to the Normandy beaches, and very few people were there, and they still had some of the metal, the traps there. Nobody was around at all, there weren't any museums, was very dismal-looking. We went up to the Pointe du Hoc, nothing was there, nothing was fixed for tourists, the way it is now, and we went back this year.

SH: When you were there in the early 1960s, what did the cemeteries look like?

RM: I was going to get to that. The cemetery there, all it had was the main building … and row upon row of crosses and stars, and some trees around it. The basic format was there, and it was awesome.

SH: The white stone crosses were there.

RM: … Looking at the crosses, they were so situated that, as you look down, they became round, and it looked as if they were coming from the sea, and right at the edge is the sea and the beaches from which they came, and that is still the same. Now, they have all kinds of trees around it, and surrounded, and tourist sites and what have you, and they have some buildings, additional buildings, to sell things. I mean, it's still a holy place, but it's still commercial to a degree, because so many people are going there. There was nobody there except Barbara and me, and we just had complete privacy, and now, it's still fine, but it's unbelievable, but when we took our trip, we drove all the way around Normandy, … we took a tour to the beach. … Battlebus was the group, and we had an English guide, very well-versed, … and a good guide. Well, he took us to … Sainte-Mère-Église, all right. The famous Red Buttons, parachute, and

what have you, episode. He said, "Well, it really isn't that way," you know, when you go there, you see the parachute. He said, "He really didn't land in front of the church, he landed in back of the church, and he really wasn't shot by the Germans, he was shot on the way down, and he was hanging in the back there," and he said, "there were two other rangers who saved his life, and one was killed, but saved the life of one other ranger there." He was shot by the Germans, but had enough left in him, to shoot the German before they killed the other guy. This other guy also got hung up by the parachute and he cut the parachute, and fell, and landed on his back, and he went on then, and freed, I forget his name, Barbara remembers his name. Fifty years later, he comes back, this ranger, and he dies the same time. … He had a heart attack, he dies at the same time that he would have jumped, all right.

SH: He died in France?

RM: In France, the same time that he jumped.

SH: Oh, my.

RM: It's like Alexander Hamilton dying on July 4th. So, … we had these two veterans, one was from the … [Pacific], and one was from the European [Theater]. The one fought against the Japs, signed up when he was seventeen years old, and he was supposed to be a crew chief going on the Murmansk run. … He told his mother, and his mother said, "You aren't going on that run." He said, "Why not?" She said, "You're too young, and I don't want you going." He says, "I'm going." She called his commander, the commander sent him away. The Murmansk run, that boat was torpedoed, and they were all lost. He comes back, and he becomes a cook, and they sent him over to one of the islands, and he fights with the Marines. The veteran was in the Air Force, and he was a radio operator, and they transported the 82nd when they jumped, and our guide, who was right on the money all the time said, "Well, here's the pattern that they took when they left England. They came down this, and they came around there, they dropped the troops, and they went back this way," and the vet said, "No, we didn't go back that way." He said, "Here's the way we went back," and he corrected it, and our guide says, "I stand corrected." He said, "I may be the only one who now knows the correct way they came back," so, which was excellent. We then went to … where the gun emplacements were, and meanwhile, we had passed this group of Marines who were going through a little orientation. So, we finally get to the where the emplacements are, and our guide is telling us, and all of a sudden these Marines come by. … They were told that we had a World War II vet with us. Every one of them came up and shook his hand, then he starts telling them about it. They stood around him, and gave him such respect, and they did to the Navy guy too, and it was unbelievable. When they left, they all saluted them, took off.

SH: Were they on R&R?

RM: No, … I think they were part of a Marine tour or something that was specifically there to visit the battleground. …

SH: Wow, to be there and to be able to see that. It must have been tremendous.

RM: But the respect they showed, unbelievable. I can never tell that story.

SH: I am thankful that you did though. Your brother, Willie, was killed in Africa.

RM: … Right in Tunisia.

SH: In Tunisia, in North Africa. Was his body sent back?

RM: No, he is still buried there. They asked my parents, "Do you want to bring him back, or do you want him there?" They said no, "Let him lie with his fellow brothers."

SH: Did you find out what happened?

RM: Well, I started doing some research, and they're in the push from the Americans in the end of March, and they're trying to get … beyond El Alamein, and … pushing towards Tunis in El Guettar, and they're in the mountains, and the Germans were not moving. They had decided they were going to stay there, and they were using a lot of mortars and artillery, and the Americans just tried to move up, the British had another area, and they were doing fairly well. So, initially, the Americans just could not make any advance, and he was part of the 47th, and he was, as I mentioned, a BAR man, Browning Automatic Rifle. So, they always go up near the front, and unfortunately, they're the ones who the enemy always try to throw their mortars at, and that's what they did, they hit him with a mortar. … That was on April 3, and then, they just pushed the Germans off the hill, and then start moving forward, and they went all the way in, to El Geuttar, and that was the end. … The Desert Fox wasn't there at the time, he had departed for Germany, but that was it. He was not part of Kasserine Pass, where the Americans got walloped, but then, of course, that was expected. They were green, nobody knew, and the officers didn't know what was going on, but here they were just, they had to take ground, and the Germans weren't going to give up the ground, and there were casualties. [Editor's Note: The series of battles known collectively as the Battle of Kasserine Pass took place between February 19th and 25th, 1943.]

SH: Is he buried in an American cemetery?

RM: He is buried at the American Cemetery in Tunis, and I went to visit him.

SH: Oh, did you?

RM: Barbara and I took a tour of Mediterranean, and specifically, because it was one of the stops there. So, I had written the American Cemetery, whatever association, … which is a government agency, and is, I think, the only government agency that operates efficiently, because it takes care of all the American cemeteries throughout the world, and they're all run perfectly. The people in charge are excellent. The person in charge of the one here in Tunis, is a former marine colonel, … and then I wrote to him and said, "I'm coming in at this time, what can I do," and he gave me information. I wrote to my tour lines, and I said, "What can you do for me?" "Well, this is our tour and this is where we're going." I said, "Well, if you're getting close to the cemetery, could we stop at the cemetery?" "This is our tour line." They wouldn't do a thing. So, I got off at the tour, when it stopped, I got a taxi, took the taxi to the cemetery. The

marine was waiting for me, he and his assistant. They took me to the grave, they had sand, so they put sand over his name, so I could take photographs of it; it would stand out. Then, he played taps, and I was able to take pictures and took me around, and saw it. When I was standing there, I saw this group of about twenty, twenty-five people on bicycles. I said, "Gee, sir, who are those?" and he said, "Those are German tourists." I said, "German tourists?" He said, "Yes, every time a German tour line comes by here, they always send a group to the cemetery to pay their respects," and they said, "They go out of their way to pay their respects to our dead." So, I said, "This is fantastic." My line, or my tour, who wouldn't do anything to help me go to mine, and I wrote them a letter to that effect, telling them, "That this is ridiculous, when the Germans send a group there, and we don't make it as part of ours, something is wrong somewhere." Now, when I went back to Normandy this past couple of months ago, I visited the Germans, at their cemetery.

SH: Thank you. When you were able to visit your brother's grave, and then reciprocated to the German dead at Normandy, is this something that you can share and talk with your sister about?

RM: No, just Barbara. I mentioned it to my sister, but, you know, she has a different life, but it's just Barbara. Again, as an aside, when Barbara and I went to Turkey, we visited Gallipoli, and Gallipoli is awesome. … They have a cemetery there that is comprised of both the Turks and the ANZACS. … They have a cemetery comprised of all of them. They're all together, separate, but one cemetery. … Who was the first president of Turkey? Kemal Atatürk, and he fought there, and he has on the memorial, that they dedicate this to all men lying here, and who fought here, in the hopes that they will all become one, instead of fighting one another, tremendous type of memorial for all of them. So, the Aussies just flock there, … and the New Zealanders come there all the time, if they come anywhere, they come to that cemetery, and it's done well. It's remarkable, the headstones and such. Oh, that's right the headstones on the cemeteries I visited in Normandy, the English and the German, have different insignia on each of the headstones, … indicating which unit they were with, and what have you, not like ours. Ours are just stark white, with either the star or the cross on it, and just the name. So, it was very interesting to take that, but it's also interesting too, when I went to … the German cemetery, [it] was part of the British cemetery in Normandy, and I think there are two cemeteries there in addition to ours, well taken care of, but very few people come to that one, I don't know why. …

SH: Had there been much touring in England?

RM: Some, went to England twice. Once, first time I went, [laughter] went there is when I was stationed in France. As, you know, I played rugby in France. Did we ever talk about this? …

SH: We talked briefly about it, about how you had to learn it on the field.

RM: I played three years with the French rugby team, the Evreux Rugby Team.

SH: You talked about the man who did not like Americans.

RM: Oh, yes, Rene, right, and at the end, still didn't like Americans, but my captain of the team Sarniguet was an ex-paratrooper, and a high school teacher. He was the one who was also faster

than I was, he was the fastest on the team, it turned out I was the second-fastest, small guy, he was only about five-foot-six, slender, maybe about 165 [pounds], but a paratrooper, an ex-French paratrooper. Anyway, he and I were dressing in the dressing room one day, and he did something to aggravate one of the other players, and the other player said, "You dirty Red, you *salle rouge*, Red meaning communist, and, of course, French communists were French, first of all, then they're communist second. … He called him a dirty French communist, and all of a sudden, the locker room got quiet, and I'm dressing there, and they all look at me because I could understand what they said, and I continue dressing, and the guy who called him a dirty communist came over to me, "Bob, I didn't mean it, Bob, he's not that, really. We know you Americans hate communists." I said, "Yes, I hate communists," I said, "but he's my friend, and he's a French communist." He said, "But." I said, "No, he's my friend, all right? Let's forget it." … [He] came over, gave me a French hug, but that's the way even the French thought of it, and they thought the way we react to it, that we just can't stand it. Of course, I guess the world thinks of us that way still, that it's black or white. … We were friends after that, we continue to be friends. …

SH: Did you play rugby in England as well?

RM: Well, their sister city was Rugby, England, and they decided that they were going to go to Rugby, England to play rugby with them, in an exchange. …

SH: Where is Rugby, England?

RM: Rugby, England is in the center of England somewhere, I forget, but that, of course, is where the game of rugby began, when William Webb Ellis, took the soccer ball, and ran with it, and that became the first, because I went to Rugby school later on, and have a picture. So, we knew that we were going to fly from Évreux to Rugby, and we took off from a grass flying field, I forget, it was somewhere outside of Évreux, and it was in a old "gooney-bird", a DC-3, and I'm sitting by the window and sitting next to me is Bebert Ledan. Bebert Ledan is about six-foot-one, 190 pounds of solid muscle, beautiful guy, friendly, nice, sweet, sincere, family man. … He worked for the sewer system of Évreux, and he asked me, "Are you afraid?" I said, "Yes." I said, "You?" He said, "Yes." So, it calmed him, because he was afraid. He was afraid to fly, it was his first time flying, so I held his hand, and when we got there, we stayed at the homes of the people in the British club. … Rugby in England and Australia, New Zealand, they're clubs, and they're family clubs, and their activity is playing rugby, and they play all year round, and, I guess, it's like, I guess, the Germans used to do with … their gymnastics thing, and then you have your social life around there. So, we got to play the game, and the British said, "Well, let's hurry up and get this game over with so we can get to the real game of rugby, of eating and drinking," [laughter] but I stayed with some English people, and they were fine. The only problem was, I still had limited French, and none of my guys spoke English, and none the English spoke French. [laughter] … I was busy translating as well as I could there, but it was an experience, and they took us around, and they took us to the Rugby site, and what have you, but they were friends, that was it. You had something in common, and the people had enough in common, that they understood it, and it was friendly, but, well, I guess the next year or so, Barbara and I went to England. We traveled around a little bit, we went to Rugby, specifically, I had to take her there. … There's a lot to see.

SH: There is. Is there anything else that we need to cover today?

RM: Well, I want to say that, without the GI Bill that I had--at my time from '60 on, I was able to take my master's degree, and my doctor's degree because of that--and I was able to take a year leave of absence for my doctorate, and have the GI Bill give me some compensation, although I did win a grant. …

SH: Just for this interview, tell me where you did your Master's and in what field.

RM: Oh, I did my Master's at Seton Hall. I did it in educational administration. I also got certified, so I could [be] an administrator, and I finished that, I guess, in a year-and-a-half. What was it, 1967, 1968.

SH: You did that because of the proximity to East Rutherford, where you were teaching.

RM: Yes, and they had a good school. Oh, I had a great law professor there, School of Law, who was fantastic, Tooey his name was, and Joe Tooey--how did I remember his name--fantastic on New Jersey law, and frankly, even when I was an administrator, I did know New Jersey Law well, and then, I got my, I went to Rutgers, got admitted at Rutgers for the doctoral program there, Doctor of Administration, EDD. … I had Wayne Hoy, he was a fantastic prof, Larry Kantor, Eleanor Delaney, who I mentioned before.

SH: When did you finish your doctorate?

RM: Well, I finished all my class work, I think in '73, but I didn't finish my degree until '78. [laughter] Which is funny, twenty years later, after I graduated, I finished my doctor degree. So, that was that, and I took my leave, my residency was '72, '73, I think it was, and then, I went back into education, but it took me a while to write, I gathered all my data.

SH: What did you write on?

RM: Teacher attitudes towards militancy, bureaucracy and professionalism, and my sample was all the regional high schools in Bergen County, since they were all the same, and it was a sample, and I went in, I developed my own test on militancy, I used a very good test for professionalism, and I used the Weber's test on bureaucracy, and I had to run my sample twice to make sure that I had a valid test, on my own, the other two, of course, were validated by previous samples, but it turned out, not really earth shaking, but to a degree, my hypothesis held out, that those who were professional, would also be militant. Those who are bureaucratic, would not be militant, but that was, you know, generalizing, but, it was interesting. It wouldn't be a good topic today, because of the way it has changed, and the unionization. … Remarkable, I was president of the Teachers' Association, at East Rutherford, and then I became president of the Administrative Association, became president of the administrators at Pascack Hills, and the head negotiator there, so I did all that stuff--all useless. Phi Delta Kappa, I was a member of Phi Delta Kappa, became president of the association there, which was a good organization, had some good people in there. Well,

Rutgers, when I think back, and the people who went through, and graduated in all their programs, good people, sharp.

SH: You talked briefly about your son being in the military. Is he still in the military? Did he make it a career?

RM: No, Steven got out after eight years. Initially, he went through West Virginia, had ROTC, won an ROTC scholarship, then went on his first active duty, right away to the DMZ in Korea, where he spent a year. Went back to Fort Huachuca in Arizona, for advanced intel school, went to the 82nd Airborne, and then in … December of '91 or January '91, he went to Iraq, as part of the 2000 "road bumps" of the 82nd Air Division. … He was in charge of their Black Hawk intelligence. He was over there a year, came back, went to intel school again in Huachuca, and then, went back to the 82nd, where he was on the fast track to gain command. … Then, he said, he got married, and unfortunately, his wife didn't like the military as a career, so after that he got out, plus he was a little dissatisfied with some command. As in all wars, people process through to get the medal, and they step foot in the area, and they leave, as soon as the other foot is ready to leave.

SH: Do you have other children?

RM: I have Dana, my daughter, she's here, she works for the State of New Jersey, in their tax bureau. She works for their computers, she has three kids. Steven has four kids, eight horses, three dogs, one cat.

SH: Where does he live?

RM: He lives in Arizona, Sierra Vista, south of Tucson. So, right close to Fort Huachuca, and he's now a contractor, and he sells intelligence programs to Fort Huachuca, which they're number one for communications and intelligence in the Army, and that was his field. So, he's now vice-president in charge of Sage Communications, in that area, and he makes proposals and he field tests all their intelligence work, before it goes out into the field. He says, "Dad, I can't tell you anymore otherwise I have got to kill you." [laughter]

SH: You have a perfect place to go in the winter months.

RM: Yes, we'll be going there January, February, but two months is too much for me to go to Arizona, although the weather is pleasant where he is.

SH: All right. With that, I will conclude the interview.

RM: My pleasure.

SH: I thank you again for participating in an interview with the Rutgers Oral History Archives.

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

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 9/12/2011
Reviewed by Robert Max 10/4/11