RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT H. MCCLOUGHAN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This is an interview with Robert McCloughan on July 19, 1994, with Kurt Piehler. And I want to begin with your grandparents and your parents, and you wrote in your survey that your grandfather fought in the Civil War.

Robert McCloughan: Right.

KP: Did you ever meet him?

RM: Oh yes. He died when I was age twelve. I knew him very well.

KP: What did he say about the war, the Civil War?

RM: I have a copy of his discharge at home which outlines his service. He first enlisted in the New Jersey infantry and saw service in front of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, and participated in the Mud March. And was wounded in front of Fredericksburg by a log rolling on his foot, which crushed it, but it was repaired. And even though he walked with a limp, he was able to get around without any problem. After his term of enlistment with the Army was up, he came home, and four weeks later, enlisted in the Union Navy and saw service on ships in the James River and the Potomac, and at the end of the war was discharged. ... That's all I can remember from ...

KP: Yes. Did he say what the war was like? Did he ever talk about battles or camp life? ...

RM: No, never did.

KP: Or being in combat?

RM: ... Never said a word about it.

KP: Did he ever say anything about people he had met during the war?

RM: Oh, he said he had met Lincoln and ... Grant. Now whether ....

KP: Whether he actually ...

RM: Whether he actually had or not, or whether he just saw them from a distance ... it's hard to say. He may have. ... He wasn't one to tell ... stories or anything of that sort. So he may have.

[Mr. Robert McCloughan has requested that the following article be added to his transcript. It is a transcript of a newspaper interview given by his grandfather, Jacob Boughner McCloughan, a Civil War veteran, to a local New Jersey newspaper.]

Jacob Boughner McCloughan

"Uncle Jake"

"Men in the naval services were supposed to wear white suits when the President was visiting. It was a pretty sight, all of those long, straight lines along the deck. Blue uniforms were used for service only--regular work and fighting," is the way "Uncle Jake" put it. "We used to drag the white suits along behind the ship on a tow line in the salt water, making them nice and clean. "I recall one morning when there was to be a Presidential review," "Uncle Jake" states. "I could not change to a white suit, President or no President. I was down in the fire room, and the white suit would have become greasy, anyway. When the review was underway, all men on the boat would come out upon the deck. The President would pass in a little boat. When Abe came through on this morning I was the only man on board in a dirty blue suit. I came near to being put in irons for the offense, but I would not change."

"Uncle Jake" has a great laugh at some of the tales told by the old-timers, claiming that they were in the battle of Bull Run, but says, in reference to the occurrence, "I was never in that battle, nor anywhere near it.

When I was in the army there were some pretty hard times. There were times when the larder was empty. We marched for three or four days at a time often raiding farmers' turnip and potato patches along the way. We would eat the raw vegetables, but raw turnips were not so good.

Once in Tobaccoville, the captain went into a store to buy some cheese. He asked for two pounds and the man cut it off a big wheel. The captain gave him $2 in Federal money, which the man refused to accept. The captain had to cover the man with his gun and back out of the store in order to escape from the place. Then we went in and took the whole wheel of cheese. It wasn't very nice, but we were awfully hungry and it was good cheese.

Before we occupied Tobaccoville we were marching along one afternoon. We had been promised whiskey upon reaching the next village. Right outside the town a citizen came out and told the captain to let no one drink it because it had been poisoned.

When we arrived at the place the drinks were poured out for us. The whiskey was in large tin cups, fastened by two-foot chains to a long table.

The captain immediately issued orders that no one should drink. Unfortunately, one poor fellow did. He died in terrible pain about half an hour later.

The navy was lots better. Here we got all we wanted to eat, had beds right on the ship, and didn't have to sleep out in the rain any more. That's why I always recommend to young men that they join the navy.

It's pretty hard when you sleep on the ground all night long in the rain, and wake up in the morning with your head half buried in the mud.

Once we went down the river (when we were stationed on the James) to get a lot of new recruits. The captain and I were the sole occupants of the ship. The new fellows said that the war wouldn't last long since they were in it now. When we reached Agans' Landing in the evening, shells began to fall pretty close around us, making it a little uncomfortable.

We were all sitting out on deck when this started. In a few minutes no one was left on board but the captain and me. The fellows who were going to clean up the war had run down in the hole of the ship, the worst place they could be, because if we were ever hit they wouldn't have a chance.

Another time when I was a fireman on the Gamie we were struck by another boat. I was knocked in a bunker, ending up in the coal. I heard the captain up on deck yelling for the other boat to stop. I ran up on the deck. The other boat kept on its way. The captain then ordered the men on deck to 'man the guns--that'll fetch her'--and it did. She stopped and turned very promptly, it being_____"

The above newspaper article has the beginning and end missing and the date is unknown. It is thought by the family to have come from the Courier newspaper, but [they] don't know the date.

[The interview with Robert McCloughan now continues.]

KP: He may have.

RM: Yeah.

KP: Your father did not serve in the First World War.

RM: No.

KP: Did he already have children or was there another reason?

RM: ... No ... I think-- I'm not sure what the draft rules, or what have you were at that time. He was married, and whether he had a deferment because of that. It seems to me, I remember him saying that it was good that the war ended when it did because he would have shortly have gone in or something of that sort. Now, whether that was the case, I don't, I don't know.

KP: What did he think of the war, the First World War? Did he ever express an opinion? Your father or your mother?

RM: ... My mother, of course, was against anything of that sort. So, ...

KP: Really? She just ...

RM: ... [inaudible]

KP: She opposed war.

RM: [inaudible] ... Opposed war, and ... [war was] horrible ... and what have you. So ...

KP: Did she ever join any peace groups?

RM: No, as far as I know.

KP: But she did, in general, just said war is bad.

RM: Right.

KP: What did she think when you stayed in ROTC? Did she object?

RM: There was no ... remark one way or the other. Nothing ...

KP: Has she ever said ...?

RM: The first ... two years was ...

KP: Required.

RM: Required anyway. And ... I think by the time ... toward the end of the sophomore year when we had to apply for the advanced course. By that time things looked rather grim anyway. So ... [she] probably thought it was a good idea.

KP: What did your father do for a living? Do you know?

RM: Yes. ... He, originally, was in the newspaper advertising business, and ... later on ... worked for the New Jersey Civil Service Commission, and ... was a manager of the ... state employment offices or what have you.

KP: ... And your mother, did she work outside the house?

RM: Never did. ... Never did. Nope. Same as my wife. She never did (laughs).

KP: How did the Great Depression affect your family?

RM: Well, dad had lost his job in the newspaper business, and it took him a while before he located this job with the ...

KP: State civil service.

RM: Civil service .... So ... we were hard put. The same as a good many families were at that time.

KP: What was Somerville like growing up? Do you have any memories that come to mind?

RM: No. ... I think it was a good little town to grow up in. ... As small towns go. No problems. I was able to walk to school. Walk through Main Street and ... do everything else. If something was up the far end of town, I used my bicycle, ... (laughs)
But that was about it.

KP: Now Ray Taub has mentioned about Somerville. He also grew up in Somerville.

RM: Yeah.

KP: Did you know him at the time?

RM: Sure. Very well. He and I were in school from about, I guess, fourth grade on up through high school. So ...

KP: So ... you knew him through ...

RM: ... He lived, oh, three blocks away from me. We knew each other. We played in the high school band together and that sort of thing. (laughs)

KP: Now Ray mentioned that when he was growing up at one point, the Klan was very active in Somerville. Do you remember having any recollections of that?

RM: Which was that?

KP: The Ku Klux Klan.

RM: ... I remember one time. ... There was a small park a block away from us. And one night, the Klan came down there, burned a cross in the middle of the ... park. Now, who it was intended for ...

KP: Yes.

RM: ... or what the reason was, I'll never know. My parents didn't know anything of that sort. Well, there were houses all around this park, so ...

KP: Yes.

RM: Maybe they were just practicing. Who knows? (laughs)

KP: Your high school, what was your high school like in the sense-- for example, how many people went to ... college from your recollection? Was it assumed you would go to college once you made it to Somerville high school?

RM: Not necessarily. In fact, ... I think the ones who went to college were the distinct minorities as far as numbers are concerned. Now I can't recall how many of us went. A few of us applied to Rutgers. And I think, out of my senior class, I can count one, two, three, four, at least five of us who came over here.

KP: And how many made it?

RM: I think. ... Four of us graduated. ... One or two transferred to other schools ... before their senior year and graduated from all those other schools. For instance, John Fenyk who was here in the Ag[ricultural] School. He transferred out to ... [the] University of Kansas because he wanted to become a veterinarian. And I don't think they had a veterinary school here.

KP: Yeah. They didn't, and they still don't. (laughs)

RM: Still don't. So that was the reason for him going.

KP: Why did you choose Rutgers?

RM: ... Number one, it was close. I applied to [the] University of Alabama. Why, I don't know.

KP: Were there any family ties there?

RM: No family ties, whatsoever. A fellow who lived around the street from me was going to Rutgers. In fact, I think he had graduated by the time I was even considering applying. ... It was close by. It had a good reputation. Money was a distinct object. And ... I think just those three things were the reasons why I came here.

KP: Did you commute to Rutgers?

RM: My first two years I did.

KP: And then after that?

RM: And then after that I went down to Ford Hall ....

KP: What did you see as the differences between commuting and then living on campus?

RM: Commuting, I think you lost a lot of the flavor. You lost a lot of the after hours activities. ... For instance, basketball games in the evening, pep rallies in the evening, or various other things. You missed out on all of that. ... If you were commuting, you just came to class and hurried home, and that was it. You really didn't get the full effect, flavor of going to college.

KP: What do you see as some of the divisions on campus? ... One of them was the split between the commuter and those who lived on campus. Were there other divisions that you saw?

RM: I think there was a division of fraternity and non-fraternity, although it didn't particularly bother me one way or the other. I was pledged to a fraternity, but I declined to join because ... after exploring the cost involved, ... I just didn't join because I couldn't afford it.

KP: You decided it wasn't worth it.

RM: Didn't work out.

RM: Let's put it that way. (laughs)

KP: Why did you choose business administration as a major? Why did you select that major? ...

RM: Frankly, I don't know. ... Math was certainly not a problem to me in high school, nor was physics or anything of that sort. ... I probably decided I didn't want to be an engineer, and ... so business was a little more broad in scope and that sort of thing. And so that's what I went for.

KP: When you entered college, what type of job did you hope to get? What were your hopes and aspirations? Which is hard to reflect back on.

RM: Frankly, ... I don't know if I had thoughts in that direction at that time.

KP: You were one step at a time.

RM: Right, yeah. In other words, I didn't come in with the idea, "Well Gee I'm going down there to study to be the president of X, Y, and Z company." ... My thinking just wasn't that way at that time. Probably should have been, but... (laughs) ...

KP: You stayed in advanced ROTC, which a lot of people decided not to do. What led to your thinking to stay in?

RM: Well, number one, I sort of enjoyed military science. Number two, I could see that perhaps this is going to be very beneficial ... in the near future because of the world situation at the time. And ...

KP: So you could see us entering ...

RM: Yes.

KP: Possibly entering the war.

RM: Right.

KP: Now a lot of people said they had their two years of ROTC, and they decided the one thing they weren't going to do is go into infantry, that they would prefer the Navy or the Air Force.

RM: Right.

KP: What were your thoughts on that?

RM: Didn't bother me. In fact, I expected infantry all along when the graduating class, the ROTC, and there were roughly 50 of us in the senior class who graduated. And when our commissions came in, the majority of them were infantry. And one other fellow and myself were commissioned in the Quartermaster Corps. A couple were commissioned in the Engineers, and maybe one or two in Chemical or something of that sort. The only reason I can see why the Army chose to put us in Quartermaster was the fact that I had business administration.

KP: That's the only reason?

RM: The only reason that it came through. I mean, it was sent in. Presumably, this is all infantry training, the ROTC, and then the commissions came in. Two of us went to Quartermaster.

KP: But you didn't apply. You were expecting ...

RM: I didn't apply for Quartermaster. And even the ROTC officers here were surprised. "Hey, how did you get to Quartermaster?" They didn't know themselves because they hadn't put in any recommendation one way or the other. They just sent in my records. (laughs) There's no rhyme or reason to ...

KP: You had stayed with ROTC for the full four years. Do you have any recollections of the instructors?.

RM: Yes. Colonel George R. Koehler was commanding officer of the ROTC. Major Robert B. Johnson, Major [Jesse D.] Cope. There was one Major Malone, but I think he left before I

graduated. Lieutenant Elmer H. Klinsman. Let's see. Sergeant James McCarthy. There were one or two others whose names escape me right at the moment. They were all fine men.

KP: How effective was your ROTC training?

RM: I think it was very helpful. ... They were limited, I believe. Number one by what the Army directed them to do, and what things [they] ... allowed them to do and that sort of thing. Our six weeks training up at Plattsburgh, I thought, was very beneficial.

KP: So when you actually did become an officer, what did you see as the gaps you had? What did you know fairly well and what did you need to learn?

RM: Well, of course, the basic training here was infantry.

KP: Yeah, and then you went into Quartermaster.

RM: Wound up a Quartermaster. By the first few months I was teaching basic infantry training anyway, so that's the reason ...

KP: Because, ... in fact, you were in a platoon. And when you left the platoon in Virginia, did you ...?

RM: Well, it was basic.

KP: Basic training.

RM: Basic training. So when I got to Camp Lee, they said, "Well, gee, you've had ROTC. This is all infantry training. Your best deal is to go out here and train the troops." Which I did.

KP: And how did that feel to be a commander?

RM: Oh I enjoyed it. Fine.

KP: And you were a platoon leader. Did you have a sergeant under you?

RM: Oh, sure. Many sergeants. (laughs)

KP: Your first sergeant, was he regular Army? ...

RM: ... I can't remember. I believe one or two of them in the company were regular Army. I can't remember. Let's see. I can picture him, but I can't remember his name off hand because there were so many of them.

KP: But your relationships with your sergeants in general or any specific ones. Do any stick out? Did any of them view you as a brash young lieutenant?

RM: No. ... They were very helpful. There was a supply sergeant ... in that particular company who was a bit of a wise guy if you want to put it that way, but I ... didn't have any problems with them. ... The platoon sergeants and the first sergeant were all top flight guys. The mess sergeant, Sergeant Flannery, he was top flight. They were all very helpful.

KP: So in general, you worked very effectively with your sergeants. Your sergeants weren't an impediment.

RM: Right. Yeah. ... In fact, I think I became close friends with two or three of them.

KP: ... When you were at Rutgers, how far had you traveled?

RM: I hadn't been beyond the three states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York.

KP: So Plattsburgh is about the farthest north you had gone?

RM: Plattsburgh, I think, was about the farthest north I had been at that time.

KP: And the shore, Jersey Shore, was that the farthest south?

RM: The Jersey Shore was the farthest south probably. (laughs)

KP: ... So you went to Virginia ... once you were inducted. And how did you find Virginia?

RM: Nice and warm. ... I got there ... June 25, or something of that sort. And it was just getting hot, but stayed hot ... (laughs). So out there, in the hot sands on the firing range and that sort of thing, it was plenty warm. Of course, there was no air conditioning except in the officer's club, if you ever got a chance to go there. (laughs)

KP: Your platoon, where were they from?

RM: A good many of them in that particular situation ... were from west-central Pennsylvania. Oh, Sunbury, Huntingdon, Altoona.

KP: Up in that region.

RM: Up in that area, yeah. They were all trainees who had been drafted. And when they found out I had been born in Pennsylvania, well, I ...

KP: Oh, so that was a bad choice.

RM: ...Well, that made it somewhat of a weld between the troops and myself. So I never had any problem there.

KP: Are there any other recollections you have of training? Of being a platoon leader? In terms of experiences with your men. Discipline, was that a problem?

RM: Not at all. ...They were all a good bunch of boys. Later on, in the 25th Battalion, I had one fellow who was a-- I wouldn't call him a disciplinary problem. ... He might of gotten [in] minor scrapes here and there, but I managed to get him off. (laughs)

KP: What kind of scrapes would he get into?

RM: Oh, he'd call up from the police station in Richmond, Virginia. He'd been hauled in, for speeding or something of that sort, and he didn't have any money with him. So, would I guarantee to the police sergeant that ... he would pay them off when he next got paid or something of that sort. So they let him out of jail. So I guaranteed to Richmond Police that ...

KP: That he would pay.

RM: That he would pay. And then I kept watch on him to make sure he did. (laughs)

KP: Did he get into any other trouble?

RM: No. A little. Just some minor things of that sort. No major crimes. Just little ... The phone rang when I happened to be on duty. It was a weekend. Sergeant Touchberry...was up to something again. But never.

KP: Never.

RM: Never anything bad. He was a good man. (laughs)

KP: ...You served as battalion adjutant. What were your responsibilities?

RM: Yeah, I was the battalion adjutant for the training battalion. ... An adjutant, actually, is responsible for insuring that Army regulations are adhered to. And is sort of the right hand man of the commanding officer as far as seeing that orders are carried out and that sort of thing and also handles administrative details.

KP: And how effectively were the Army orders carried out? Both general orders ...

RM: Oh, ...they were carried out all right. (laughs)

KP: Now you left your battalion. How did that come about? Because they sent you to Harvard.

RM: Yeah. Well, one of the ... officers down in the headquarters called, who I happened to know. And he said, "Bob, there's a new course starting up at Harvard, the Army Supply Officers Training School at the Harvard School of Business," and he said, "You have just the right qualifications for it. Would you like to go?" And I said, "Fine." ... "Good," he said, "I'll put your name in." And that's how I got there. (laughs)

KP: So that was your commander who did that.

RM: Yes.

KP: With the expectation you would return to this unit? Or that you would possibly get reassigned?

RM: ...When we went up there, nobody knew what would happen to us afterwards. And it so happened that they sent all of us out to depots. My orders read for training in depot operations. They sent me all the way out to California for two months and then brought me back to Camp Lee. Throughout the Harvard course and the California training I was still assigned to Camp Lee. So you figure it out. No rhyme or reason to the way they operate.

KP: Yeah.

RM: They could've just as well sent me to a-- we had a depot, similar depot, out here, south of Somerville. They could have ...

KP: Sent you there.

RM: ... sent me there. ...

KP: Or depots in Massachusetts.

RM: Sure. So I mean-- they probably didn't do that because it was too close to home. So, you know. (laughs)

KP: Who taught the course you took at Harvard?

RM: We had ... only one Army course that was taught by Army officers. The rest were all Harvard professors. All business school professors.

KP: And what courses did they teach?

RM: Oh, sources of supply, statistics. I can't remember, about five ... or six courses. Sources of supply, I think, was the only Army course. The rest were all ...

KP: The rest were all business courses.

RM: ... Business school courses.

KP: That you would take if you were getting an MBA?

RM: Right. And this was actually a short course for the MBA. ... A thirteen week course. (laughs)

KP: ... Did you ever expect to end up at Harvard? Was this a surprise?

RM: Oh no. This was a surprise. (laughs)

KP: Where did they house you?

RM: Right in the Harvard dormitories.

KP: So you lived in Harvard Yard?

RM: Yes, we lived, initially, I was in Claverly Hall over near Harvard Square, which is one of their dormitories. Then they moved us all over to the Business School dormitories. McCullouch Hall, which is over across the river there right near the Baker Library and the rest of the Business School.

KP: You had ended up in Harvard. How did you compare your Rutgers experience with Harvard? For example, the instruction.

RM: Well, ... of course, I was at Harvard under different circumstances. So it was hard to compare.

KP: But what about the business professors at the two schools. Did you get up there and say, "Boy this is not much more difficult than my undergraduate courses" or did you think that "these instructors are at the same level," or ...?

RM: No, I think it was more difficult. It was more difficult.

KP: You had sensed that this was the case.

RM: Yeah, it was more difficult. ... They didn't give us an actual ranking. There were about 200 in the class, and I think I was in the ... fourth decile, whatever that meant. Whether I was 40th down or something of that sort, which actually for me was pretty good. (laughs)

KP: Where did the men you trained with, where did they hail from? What parts of the country and backgrounds?

RM: They were from all over and from various Army posts. We had them from California, Wyoming, Ohio. I don't recall if there was anyone else from New Jersey there. There may have been, but I don't recall. But I distinctly remember a couple from New York, three or four from California that I met. ... One or two from Ohio. They were from all over the country. Out of 200 or so, there were possibly three or four from New Jersey there who I just ...

KP: Never met.

RM: Never happened to meet, yeah.

KP: Do you have any recollections about Boston and Harvard Square?

RM: Boston was a great town. (laughs) I liked Boston.

KP: Yeah. So you got into Boston a good deal?

RM: Oh yeah. We got off at noon time on Saturdays ... or maybe one o'clock. And we'd go hop on the subway over at Harvard Square, and run to downtown Boston, and heavens knows what we'd do. There was always something, whether we headed for the bar in the Statler Hotel or the Merry-Go-Round Bar at the ...

KP: Copley?

RM: Copley Plaza, right.

KP: Oh okay. (laughs)

RM: (laughs) Yeah. ... I hope you had that erased.

KP: Yeah. ... So this was Boston. Boston has fond memories for you in terms of ...

RM: Yes, very much so. ...

KP: And where did you hope you would be assigned?

RM: Nobody in the course knew ...

KP: Where.

RM: ... knew where. ... Of course, there was always speculation and rumors and the commanding officer of the course didn't even know where we were going. He said ... it was up to Washington, and he said no word has come out of there as to what they're going to do. A week before we graduated we were told we were all going to depots for further training. Then a couple of us were assigned out to California. Some were assigned to... Richmond, Virginia. Some were assigned to...Chicago. All over the country. And whatever happened to all those fellows, I do not know.

KP: So you all broke up?

RM: We all broke up. Yeah.

KP: Now, ...they sent you out to California, which you went to from the other end of the country. ... How did they send you? Did you take the train?

RM: Oh yeah. At that time there was nothing much in the way of air travel or anything of that sort. ... So I took the train out.

KP: You now were seeing a good bit of the country. What were your recollections? What surprised you about different parts of the country?

RM: Oh, just ... fantastic because ... going by train, you got to see ... everything really ..., which you don't see from the air now and that sort of thing. It was a fantastic trip out, and of course, out in the southern California desert where this depot was, we were supplying the Desert Training Center. ... And it was hot. Very interesting country. ...They left me out there two months, and then brought me back to Camp Lee for an advanced supply school.

KP: Before leaving California, ... what did you get to see? And what were your responsibilities ...? You were still in training.

RM: Actually, ... I got to see ... Palm Springs, Lake Arrowhead, Los Angeles, Laguna Beach. And ... I think my fondest recollection of Laguna Beach is that I got the worst sunburn anyone ever got out there on the beach. I was out there just for a couple of hours. ... That was a bone of contention with the commanding officer there at the depot, who made sure that the medics ... didn't put sunburn on my medical record because sunburn was not considered "in line of duty." So I think, in mid-August 1943 I contracted ... the Grippe or something ... of that sort. At least that's what it shows on the medical record. (laughs)

KP: Oh, so you had to be treated for this sunburn.

RM: Oh yeah. Yeah. In fact, I had sulfanilomide and cod liver oil or something similar spread all over my leg. ... (laughs) ... Major Barksdale, who was the executive officer there at the depot, he took good care of me.

KP: Was he regular Army or ...?

RM: Yeah.

KP: Do you know anything else about his background and his abilities?

RM: Not a thing.

KP: How well did the depot run? How effective was it? What were the problems and the successes of the depot?

RM: Of course, with a depot of that sort, you had a minimum of Army personnel. The Army was there just to ... oversee the whole operation. Day-to-day operations, mainly were done by civilians.

KP: So it was primarily a civilian work force with a few Army personnel.

RM: Civilian work force, that's right. ... There were no troops loading boxcars or anything of that sort. ... We'd have two or three officers in each large warehouse supervising the operations and the ... signing for things coming in and going out and that sort of thing. But the actual operation of fork-lift trucks and the thousand and one other things that you'd need in a big supply depot was all done by civilians.

KP: Who were these civilians? Where did they come from? Surrounding communities?

RM: Surrounding communities, yes. Some were from San Bernardino, Pomona, Riverside, ... Chino ... anywhere in the surrounding communities.

KP: How old were the workers in the depot?

RM: ... Anywhere from, I guess anywhere from ... eighteen on up. Some were young girls. Some were older men, older women what have you.

KP: So ... what percentage of women, roughly? How many would you say were women?

RM: Well, it's hard for me to say. I would say, the majority of them were women. ...

KP: And were they driving fork-lifts?

RM: Oh sure. The majority of them were women because ... able bodied men were in the service. They were driving fork-lifts.

KP: So they weren't just stuck in the secretarial pool.

RM: No, no, no.

KP: Any other recollections of California or of the depot? After having seen the depot operation is this something you wanted to do? Run a depot or work in a depot?

RM: ... I have no particular recollection one way or the other about it ... because I was there two months.

KP: Yeah, two months.

RM: The orders read, "To observe ...and to be instructed in depot operations," or something of that sort. So that's what it was. ... I was out there two months and then all of a sudden this major called me in. He said, "Boy you're going back to Virginia," so ...

KP: And you went back to school?

RM: So I went back to school. ... In Virginia I went back to advanced supply school .... Good grief. (laughs)

KP: What did you learn in advanced supply school?

RM: At that time, I just don't recall. It was ...

KP: More Army regulations.

RM: ... More regulations, and ...

KP: Procedures.

RM: Procedures.

KP: Yes.

RM: At that time, I was happy out in California, you know. And I thought maybe at the end of this two weeks or two months training in California that I would get a permanent assignment. Instead, ...

KP: Back to Virginia.

RM: I was sent back to advanced supply school.

KP: And you eventually did get an assignment as procurement officer.

RM: Yeah.

KP: In your pre-interview you listed Dover, Delaware; Chicago; and New York as places you were stationed. There's a story there.

RM: ...This is the most ridiculous thing. ... I had completed the supply school, and ... headquarters called and said, "We have orders for you to go up to Dover, Delaware on a per diem basis." So I reported into Dover, Delaware, and there was what they call the Dover Buying Office for the perishable subsistence division of the Office of the Quartermaster General. We were buying one million pounds of poultry a week down through the Del-Marva Peninsula for the Army. And the reason they had this office there, was because the Army was not getting the poultry it needed. ...

What we would do, ... the chicken growers would load live chicken cages on trucks then ship them up to New York for the New York market because they could get a much better price up there than they could by selling it to the Army. They would never offer it to the Army and the Army was not getting it. So we would go out. We had a veterinarian officer, a quartermaster officer, and sometimes an FBI agent ... and maybe a Department of Agriculture inspector or something of that sort. We would go out and stop these chicken trucks on the highways at night. And the veterinarian and the agricultural men would inspect the chickens to see that they were not diseased and that sort of thing. We would requisition the load of chickens on the spot, turn the truck around, and send it back to Swift and Company's dressing plant in Felton, Delaware or wherever it was. And, finally, the Army was getting the chickens it needed. That was the way we operated.

KP: But you did this for how long? How long were you stopping trucks?

RM: Well, we were there-- I was actually there, I guess, two or three months.

KP: Would you stake out a road?

RM: We'd go out along the main highway and sometimes ... these trucks would take the New Castle Ferry across the Delaware on their way to New York, and we'd be right there at the ferry terminal requisitioning them.

KP: How did this go? Did one of you ... go up to them and say, "This is the Army! We want your chickens"?

RM: Well, no. ... We'd stop them on the basis of inspecting, to see whether they were disease ridden or what have you. ... Then we would requisition the load right on the spot.

KP: Did you ever have people resist? From what you are telling me, it seems that these people were trying to pull a fast one?

RM: Oh sure. Because they could get a much better price for the chickens in the Black Market. And finally, it ended up, the growers of chicken and the poultry men would first offer the chicken to the Army, and if we didn't want it, they were free to run it on up to New York. But they hadn't been offering it to us, and we had no way of getting these chickens prior to this. And once we finally got the thing organized ...

KP: Once it was clear that you would just stop their ...

RM: Right.

KP: They finally came around.

RM: They finally came around. Right

KP: Did you ever have an incident when you stopped someone, that they resisted your efforts.

RM: None whatsoever.

KP: No. They generally ...

RM: No problems. None whatsoever.

KP: Did any of these chicken growers get in trouble with the law. You mentioned that sometimes an FBI agent was with you.

RM: They were there because there was there was a black market going on in poultry. And, I think the FBI was there to ... break this up or what have you. (laughs) ... But once that got organized, and we worked on it two or three months, ... then the poultry growers offered the Army the chickens, and we were all set. (laughs)

KP: So you went from chasing chicken farmers to ...

RM: Well then ... we had, oh I don't know, one, two, three, four, five ... or six Army ...Quartermaster fellows there. And ... once it got settled down, they didn't need us all there. So the question came up what to do with us. ... They sent me out to their headquarters in Chicago, and ... I was listed as a procurement officer, but I was an assistant transportation officer. And what we would do would be to ... route shipments of perishable goods from the Midwest--

mainly carloads of beef or what have you-- to various Army posts or to ports of embarkation or what have you. And ... along with a ... civilian, we would check the car routings. I had to sign the bills of lading, and an Army officer had to sign those. ... And I did that for a short time. An opportunity came when a colonel came back one day and said, "Bob, you are going to New York." I said, "I don't want to go to New York." He says, "Well, somebody says," he says, "You live there, don't you?" I said, "Well, I live in New Jersey." "Well, this is a good deal, and ... this is opportunity for you." "Okay." So off I came to New York, and I stayed right at 165 Broadway, of all places. ... In what was called the New York Quartermaster Market Center.

KP: So you actually lived ... on Broadway at 165.

RM: Yeah, I worked on Broadway and lived at home.

KP: ... With your parents?

RM: Yup. Commuted back and forth.

KP: ... And that must have felt strange.

RM: It did because everybody, all my friends were overseas or ... off in some camp or what have you. And what's this guy doing walking around here? You know in uniform. ... But the most screwball arrangement you ever saw. And none of it my doing!

KP: Yes. At Broadway what were your responsibilities?

RM: The Quartermaster market center, which was a division of the ... perishable subsistence division of the Quartermaster General's office, was responsible for supplying all perishable subsistence in the, what was then the First Army area, which was New York, New Jersey, and to the overseas ports. Our ... main job was procuring, storing and ... reshipping perishable subsistence to overseas out of the New York port.

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

RM: Are we back on tape?

KP: Yes. What was your specific duties at 165 Broadway? On a given day what would you do?

RM: We would get requisitions in from overseas and camps and stations in the area. And it was up to ... us to fill these requisitions from either purchases or from what we had in storage. And ... we would ... buy ... certain items. Others would come in. We would have it in storage, particularly frozen beef, frozen poultry, ... what have you. Fresh vegetables we would purchase. ... On any given day, ...we would all be working on these requisitions. ...

KP: So you would get a batch requisition, and you would try to fill it.

RM: And some would be from posts, camps, and stations in the ... New York, New Jersey area. ... The other, main requisitions were from overseas. We knew what we had in storage. ... We would have to requisition, perhaps, from Chicago to ship certain amounts, so we could fulfill the requisition for frozen beef. Or ... oranges would come from somewhere else and what have you. So ... some of the actual duties would be ordering frozen items out of cold storage warehouses. ... We had certain men who worked on specific commodities, one was a poultry buyer; another man was a fruit and vegetable man; a dairy man, eggs or what have you. They would get portions of the requisition and go about purchasing. And ... at times, various others took turns down on the loading docks in the port of New York, where the ... perishable subsistence was being loaded.

KP: And you would supervise?

RM: And we would supervise the loading, because ... sometimes we'd get a complaint from overseas that this material ... arrived in poor condition. We had to guarantee that when it left New York, it was in good condition. So then we could go back and say, "Well ..

KP: It's not our ...

RM: It's not our fault. It left here in A-One shape," or what have you.

KP: Did you have any problem with leakage, in terms of losses of supplies?

RM: ... There probably was, but I don't recall any ...

KP: Any instance.

RM: ... any incidence where ...

KP: Where all of a sudden, you know, a thousand pounds of beef just disappeared. You got to see a good part of the Quartermaster system, at least, stateside.

RM: Right.

KP: What's your assessment? How well did it work? What impressed you about it? What did you think could be improved?

RM: ... I thought it was very well run, actually. ... I wasn't too much involved in the clothing and equipage area. I was mostly in the food area, and clothing and equipage was handled out of the Philadelphia Quartermaster depot, and that sort of thing, which I wasn't involved in. But, by and large, I thought we did a doggone good job of supplying everybody.

KP: So you didn't see any gaps in the system. You didn't see anything that could have been done better?

RM: No. We had one interesting situation. We had a requisition from, I'm not sure which Army it was overseas. The general wanted to give his men an oyster dressing on their turkeys for Thanksgiving. And we had to go out and purchase, God knows how many thousand pounds of oysters ... and get them shipped overseas for this requisition. Now, that's one strange thing I remember. Everything else was rather normal.

KP: Routine.

RM: Routine.

KP: But this general, you don't remember who it was?

RM: No. ...

KP: But he insisted it had to be oyster.

RM: That's right. He insisted that his-- ... let's say it's the Seventh Army-- whether it was the Seventh Army or Second Army, I don't remember. But he ...

KP: ...Was this a request? Could you have turned him down or?

RM: The only way we could have turned him down would be if we were not able to purchase it. But somehow we came up with it. (laughs)

KP: As you said, you ended up in the screwiest situation, living at home, commuting into New York, mainly in uniform, ... and doing important work. Did you feel frustrated at being stateside for the entire war? Or almost the entire war?

RM: Yes. Yeah, because everybody else was going somewhere, and here I was.

KP: Back in Somerville. So how did you transfer? ...You went full circle. You went way out to the Philippines. How did that come about?

RM: ... The Army started to weed out all the younger fellows ... in this situation. Two or three of us got orders at the same time. Where they went, I don't know. ... I was the only one who got secret orders to go out to the Pacific. And ... the whole place was really, by that time, more or less decimated of the younger boys. Because somebody back at Washington said, "Well here. All these young fellows are sitting there. ... And we could use them overseas." Which made sense.

KP: So they pulled you all out.

RM: They pulled us all out. Yeah.

KP: ... And so you went to the Philippines?

RM: Right.

KP: In February of 1945. How did you travel from New York?

RM: ... Oh, from New York I took the train to ...

KP: Did you go cross-country?

RM: Train across country to ... I guess it was ... Camp Beale, California. And ... eventually, we got on a transport and went first down to ... Finsckhaven, New Guinea. We had an interesting trip along the way because about eight hours out of San Francisco, the ship blew a steam line. And then we had to return to San Francisco. Welders streamed on board, and they fixed it, and we left again the next morning. And the following morning when we woke up we were sailing again back under the Golden Gate Bridge. And this time, we stayed tied up to the dock for over two days while they made further repairs. ... The story goes-- now whether it actually happened-- that one fellow jumped ship there in San Francisco by jumping overboard. And so they lined up everybody and had a head count. And they had four people more than they were supposed to have anyway. So whether somebody actually jumped overboard or not, nobody knows. We finally did get going, and sailed directly down to Finsckhaven, New Guinea.

KP: Which was your intended destination?

RM: Yeah. Well, we didn't get off. We refueled.

KP: So you never set foot on an island, going out?

RM: ... Never set foot.

KP: In New Guinea ... you just saw the land.

RM: Right, refueled there at Finsckhaven. And ... then took off for Hollandia, New Guinea, where we debarked and were there hardly, oh I guess, perhaps two, less than two weeks. And miraculously, got back on the same ship. Why they kept that thing there, empty, I don't know. Got back on the same ship, and went in convoy up to the Philippines. And stayed there for the rest of the war.

KP: Before getting to the Philippines, what did you think of New Guinea?

RM: It was pretty wild jungle down there.

KP: What did you expect to find?

RM: ... I don't think it was any different from what we expected because we'd heard. By that time we knew what it was like or had heard what it was like. And it was just interesting to ...

KP: Actually ...

RM: ... see it first hand. But we knew it was jungle and what have you. But what amazed me was the fact that ... out of this horrible jungle and ... that sort of thing ... that we had put in airstrips and ... various other things which were just carved out of the jungle there. They really did a fantastic job.

KP: So by the time you saw it, it was a very settled place.

RM: Yeah, by that time it ... was. Because that was the staging area for a lot of the ... troops for the Philippines. It hadn't been cleaned out too long, but by the time we got there, it was cleaned out enough. It was still pretty rough.

KP: Yeah. Did you come in contact with any of the population, people who lived in New Guinea?

RM: ... No personal contact other than seeing them and that sort of thing. They were good workers, these natives.

KP: So they worked on base.

RM: Yeah. They were good workers.

KP: What did they do on base?

RM: Oh, delivery jobs, anything. One thing that amazed me, we had to sink pilings in swampy ground. And, of course, we didn't have a pile driver up there at the time. But these native fellows would tie a rope on either side of this piling, and then get a bunch of them on each side, and, by rhythm, would sink this piling down and just go: "Boom!, Boom!, Boom!, Boom!, Boom!, Boom!" Holding on the rope. And it was pretty amazing.

KP: Do you think that came about because the Army figured that's the way to sink it? Or do you think ...?

RM: No, ... that was ... their ...

KP: Their doing.

RM: It was their doing, yeah. It was their doing. They knew how to do it, you know.

KP: Oh, that's interesting. So then you went up to the Philippines. Do you have any memories of the cruise ship? Besides ending up in San Francisco a lot!

RM: (laughs) Three times we left. Yeah, we left San Francisco three times. No the cruise ship was ...

KP: How comfortable or uncomfortable were your quarters?

RM: ... They were comfortable enough. That was a good size ship, a 20,000 ton Navy transport. And it seemed to be pretty seaworthy and all the rest of it. ... Food was very good. And I have no particular ...

KP: Memories.

RM: Memories one way or the other. We used to sit and play cards all day or something of that sort.

KP: Now you ended up in Manila in MacArthur's headquarters.

RM: Right.

KP: You were in one of the top headquarters. Did you know going out that you were going to end up there?

RM: Nope. ... There were a group of officers on the same order as mine, who had various, what they called, military occupation specialty numbers. And the MOS numbers of all this group seemed like the format for a general depot or something similar. Now, I don't think any of us ended up in this general depot or what have you that we were supposed to. But they were the occupational specialties of those on the order. And we all were taking bets on the ship, of course, as to where we were to be assigned.

KP: So you did not know.

RM: We didn't know. Two of us ended up-- ... one colonel on the order, and I ended up in the same office in MacArthur's headquarters. Some of the others ...

KP: Were just sent out to others.

RM: Heavens knows where they went, yeah. (laughs)

KP: Were you intimidated by being in MacArthur's headquarters?

RM: No. It didn't bother me at all. It just ... felt right at home. The secretary to MacArthur's general staff, Colonel Larry Bunker, was an acquaintance of mine. And ... after I got assigned there, I stopped by to say hello to him and that sort of thing ....

KP: So you actually knew someone, at least. How did you meet him?

RM: Well, he was a family acquaintance from way back, and one of my family members said, "Gee, when you get out there, if you can, see if you can find Larry Bunker." Because he was ... sent down to Australia right after MacArthur went there when he ... left the Philippines at the beginning of the war a call went out for someone with legal and diplomatic experience, and to deal with the Australians on lend-lease. And ... Larry Bunker got the job because he had diplomatic experience. He was a lawyer with a large law firm in New York and he had been with MacArthur all along since 1942.

KP: Look him up.

RM: Look him up. Which I did. (laughs)

KP: What were your duties at MacArthur's headquarters?

RM: Actually, ... we were working on supply requirements for the expected invasion of Japan. And that was the main gist of the whole thing. Then when the war was over, why it became a question of going to Japan or going home. Some of the fellows left immediately for Japan, others for home. I wouldn't say immediately, but ...

KP: They had enough points.

RM: Within a few weeks. ... some went up to Japan. And ... I was left back on what we call the rear echelon because ... I had enough points to come home. And they had asked me, "Well, do you want to go to Japan with us? Or do you want to go home?" So I said, "Oh, gee whiz, I've had enough of this thing. I'll go home." So I stayed back in Manila until I came home. In Manila. I was loading on a transport on one side of the dock to come home. The rest of the outfit was on a ship on the other side of the dock, loading to go to Japan, and we were waving good-bye to each other. ... (laughs)

KP: Do you have any regrets not going to Japan?

RM: Yes, looking back on it, ... what the heck, I could have gone up there for six months or what have you, and seen it. The war was over, ... and I should have gone, but ...

KP: But you also wanted to go home.

RM: I also wanted to go home. I had married a girl back here just before I left for overseas.

KP: So in '44, you got married.

RM: Yeah.

KP: So you had to reason to go home.

RM: So I wanted to get home to see her and that sort of thing. ... At the time, it was what I wanted to do.

KP: Yeah.

RM: Looking back on it, gee whiz, why didn't I go to Japan?

KP: ... Did you see any enemy action when you were in the Philippines? Did you have any contact at all with the enemy? In a sense, how close was the war?

RM: Oh, it was there. ... When I got in Manila, the place was still burning, let's say, and still smoking. And ... there was combat down south of Manila toward Batangas. ...We used to watch the P-38s go out and bomb the Japanese gun positions up over the hillside there. But that didn't last too long. It was just sort of mopping up operations at the time when I got there.

KP: Now Manila was very devastated and when it was still smoldering. What struck you about Manila?

RM: ... Number one, a lot of it was damaged. A good portion of it by our artillery fire trying to dislodge the Japanese. Number two, I was struck by the modern, ... what was left of the modern facilities that were there. And it was a very interesting place.

KP: Really. What made it interesting?

RM: Very interesting.

KP: You say that. ... What struck you?

RM: Oh, they had high rise hotels, not 30 stories or anything of that sort, but maybe eight or ten stories. And ... some of facilities had been quite beautiful. Of course, most of them were all ...

KP: Broken.

RM: Had various stages of ... damage.

KP: But you could tell that a lot of the city was quite impressive.

RM: Right. Some of the government buildings were very ... much similar to a lot of our government buildings here, which is ... quite understandable, I think, because the Americans were very influential over there for years. ... And ... one of the amazing things, ... some of the piping, there in the city hall in Manila, where we eventually had our office was made by the Somerville, New Jersey, Ironworks.

KP: Which struck you?

RM: Which was very amazing. (laughs)

KP: You really got to see world trade.

RM: Yeah.

KP: How much contact did you have with Filipinos?

RM: Very much. We had ... two or three Filipino ... civilians who worked there in the office. ... Very fine people. I enjoyed the Filipinos. Another acquaintance, a man of course, was General MacArthur. That was Larry Bunker who introduced me to him. And ... I found him to be a very, very gracious person. And whenever I'd see him in the hall after that, maybe a week or two later, he knew my name, and said good morning. ... Never any problems there.

KP: So you were surprised that he knew your name. How big was his staff?

RM: Oh, heavens. I don't know. What did we have, 200, 300, or maybe more.

KP: So the fact that he knew your name, that took some ... doing.

RM: Right. (laughs)

KP: And it wasn't like a staff of 30 where ...

RM: That's right. ... I asked Colonel Bunker. I said, "How do you like working with him?" And he said, "Boy, ... no problems. ... If I do something right, he's quick to praise. ... And if it's wrong, he'll say, `Larry, this is wrong because one, two, three.'" And he said, "There was no ..."

KP: You knew exactly where you stood.

RM: You knew exactly what he wanted. And if said something is right, "Oh, this is fine." Or if it isn't right, he said, "Larry, this is wrong because of so and so, and so and so." And he said that there was never any problem working with him. I didn't have direct working contact with him. ... I would never go to his staff meetings. I wasn't high enough a rank, only a captain at the time. The colonels and generals would go, but ...

KP: In your section, who was the commander of your ...

RM: ... My direct commander was Colonel William Morris. ... He was a Signal officer, originally I think.

KP: ... And was he regular Army?

RM: As far as I know, he was. Most of them were. ... Another man, Colonel Peyton McLamb, was a West Pointer, one of the greatest guys I ever met. He and I were very close friends. He had served, for a while, on active duty after he got out of West Point. And then, was an officer at Citibank in New York. And then, of course, when the war came, he was ordered back in. But basically a military man.

KP: What struck you about the staff that you had come into contact with at MacArthur's headquarters? Do have any recollections or memories of his staff? ...

RM: I ... had no compunctions about dealing with any of them. They were all top-flight guys, and I enjoyed the association. There were one or two, of course, who were, perhaps impressed by their status or what have you. But we got that in any situation.

KP: So you didn't. Nothing ...

RM: Nothing.

KP: Nothing struck you.

RM: No, one way or the other.

KP: Are there any other memories of your Pacific experience? The Philippines or MacArthur's staff ... that I forgot to ask about?

RM: Oh, let's see. I can tell you some of the off the record things. (laughs)

KP: Oh, okay. (laughs) ... Had you thought of making the Army a career? You stayed in the reserves.

RM: ... I still had that opportunity when I got back down at Fort Dix. They said, "Well, do you want to stay in or do you want to transfer to the reserve and go off active duty now?" ... After some ... mental wrenching, why I decided to go off active duty. I think ... it was ... almost a 50/50 decision, but, at the time, going out and becoming a civilian again ...

KP: Had a lot of appeal.

RM: Had a lot of appeal.

KP: How did you meet your wife?

RM: Oh, I met her before I graduated from college. She was a student over at ...

KP: Douglass.

RM: Douglass.

KP: ... And you had dated in college. And then when you were in the Army?

RM: Right.

KP: And so far as your getting married, the war really hastened that.

RM: Yeah. Oh, I'm sure it did. (laughs)

KP: How did you get your first job after the war?

RM: I just went into New York and ... walked in two or three places and applied. And ... I talked to a few people. ... "Gee with your background, banking would be a good thing." So I walked into Guaranty Trust Co. (Guaranty Trust Co. is now Morgan Guaranty Trust), and they hired me.

KP: How much do you think your military supply background helped?

RM: None whatsoever. (laughs) ... To put the military experience to use in the civilian job, I'd have been better off with a company like, Kraft Foods or ...

KP: Yeah. But you ended up working in ...

RM: Ended up.

KP: ... in the banking business.

RM: Yeah. Some of the business administration training here had been money and banking and that sort of thing.

KP: And how did you find the adjustment back to civilian life?

RM: Well, I think, the Army was still in my blood, and probably still is. ... But no major problem.

KP: You ended up going from the banking industry into working for the Stock Exchange. How did that happen?

RM: Well, I was working at a bank in New York, and ... I had done a lot of traveling for the bank up through the New England area. And met a lot of bankers up in New England, from First National Bank of Boston, National Shamut Bank and others. ... One day, walking up Broadway at lunch hour, I ran into a fellow, ... who was, I thought, then with the First National at Boston, at least he had been when I met him. I said, "What are you doing down here?" And he said, "Gee, I'm over at the Stock Exchange. ... Come over and see me." So I went over, and he said, "We can use you." And they hired me on the spot, and there I stayed. (laughs)

KP: ... I've read in one of the alumni surveys that you did a lot of traveling for the Stock Exchange.

RM: Yes. I traveled extensively for the Exchange in fact, I think I hit all but one of the 50 states. I also visited companies in Europe.

KP: All but North Dakota?

RM: I hit 49 of the 50 states. Alaska's the only one I've missed. I traveled around, visited companies whose stock was not traded on the Exchange. And ...

KP: Encouraged them to ...

RM: Encouraged them to list their stock on the exchange. There were those who wanted to list and some who did not -- there was some strong selling of the advantages of listing on the Exchange which was necessary. And we would go out and investigate the company and at least get a look at them ... at their home base to get a feel of them before we would say okay "You meet all our requirements. Come on in. Make an application for the listing."

KP: ... How much in that job do you think your military experience helped? Was there a common bond with a lot of the people you would visit? Had any of those been veterans?

RM: Well, yes. In fact, I ran into a couple of people in companies who I had known originally, down at Camp Lee, Virginia. And ... the question, "What the heck are you doing here?" We hadn't seen each other ...

KP: Since camp.

RM: Since Camp Lee in '42, or '43, or what have you. ... So we'd sit down and compare notes as to what we had done or hadn't done since then. I ran into a few situations of that sort.

KP: You're the first person I've asked, and I should have asked it before. Did you know any classmates who died during the war? ... Anything about them?

RM: Not particularly because I don't remember their names.

KP: Yeah, you'd have to look at a list.

RM: I'm sure I knew them at the time. ... If I knew the names, I would be able to. Offhand, I can't think of them. I think we lost around twenty ...

KP: Yes.

RM: Twenty-something.

KP: You were in the reserves. Was there any concern, during Korea, that you would be called up?

RM: ... Our unit went to summer camp, one year during this Korean situation. And ... there was a similar unit there from New York. They kept the New York outfit on active duty, and we went home. Now, why, I don't know. I think the story was that their general was hot to get on active duty and volunteered the unit where ...

KP: Your commander wasn't as hot.

RM: Our commander wasn't as eager. So they volunteered the unit. Instead of going to Korea, they went to Iceland or something anyway. (laughs) ... which is quite similar-- you know there was an old saying in the Army: You get the back azimuth, azimuth is direction.

KP: Usually you'd go the opposite way.

RM: You'd go the opposite way. They had on my record that I had studied French here in college, and had a small working knowledge of it. And ... that came into play in one situation. Why? Because I had this knowledge of French. Well, if they were ever going to use it, I should have gone to France.

KP: France.

RM: But I got the back azimuth and went out the other way. So you figure it out.

KP: Well you also had been trained in infantry, and they put you in the Quartermaster Corps.

RM: Right, yeah, right.

KP: ... It seems that you've gained an acceptance from the Army of just that the Army does certain things, and you'd just go with the flow.

RM: No rhyme or reason. You can never figure out a rhyme or reason as to why they do certain things. And, looking back on it, you still can't figure it out. But, surprisingly, things do get done, despite all the screw ups, if you want to call them that. (laughs) I often thought in many situations, ... I've seen foul-ups in civilian life, and I said, "Gee whiz." ... I think the army has got a doggone good way of operating."

KP: So you were really left from the war that a big organization can really operate efficiently.

RM: Right.

KP: Front line soldiers complained about the Quartermaster Corps. How aware of this were you? Or do you think that it was just natural griping.

RM: I think it was natural griping. ... Actually up ...

KP: At your level.

RM: ... Up, maybe in the front lines. ... Maybe it was the wrong division supply, which was fouling up or something of that sort. It's hard to say.

KP: Yeah.

RM: We got the stuff, and we shipped it. Now ...

KP: What happened after that...

RM: What happened after that it's hard to say. ...The stuff we purchased, and there's still an awful lot of it sitting in warehouses somewhere around. (laughs) But not the food, but the clothing and God knows what have you.

KP: You never joined any veterans organizations.

RM: No. None whatsoever.

KP: It just, never appealed to you?

RM: Never appealed to me, and my impression of veteran's organizations ... is a bunch of fellows going and sitting at a bar, and rehashing glorified tales of this, that, and the other thing. It just didn't appeal to me at all.

KP: How did you feel about MacArthur's bid for office? When he put in a bid for the presidency? Did you support that?

RM: I thought at the time that he was a little bit-- number one, I thought he was a little old. Perhaps a little too military for the position. ... I don't think I supported him a 100 percent. I supported him as a former general and that sort of thing, whom I knew. But I don't believe I felt this guy will make a good president.

KP: Even though you liked him a great deal and you respected him, you had your doubts whether he'd be a good ... president.

RM: ... Right.

KP: Have you ever been back to the Philippines?

RM: No. Never have been. I've been back to Hawaii, we stopped in there on the way home. The ship stopped in there to refuel.

KP: So that was a very pleasant trip.

RM: ... I've been back to Hawaii two or three times since, but I never gotten to the Philippines. I'd like to go just to see how Manila is now and that sort of thing.

KP: Is there anything I forgot to ask?

RM: Oh, I think the upshot of this, Kurt, is, that with this screwball Army service that I had, I don't see where I contributed too much to the whole effort. I didn't kill any Japs or Germans. And perhaps somebody else could have gotten a load of beef or a crate of oranges on a ship the same way as I did. On the other hand, ... I instructed basic training to many recruits. I think, probably, that was beneficial and that sort of thing. Beneficial to them, whether they carried any of my instructions along with them or not, I don't know.

KP: The men you were instructing for basic training, where were they going?

RM: It was hard to say. Camp Lee, at that time, was what they called the Quartermaster Replacement Training Center. ... They were all draftees, who came in and received thirteen weeks of basic training. And then were either sent to schools there in Camp Lee, or were shipped off somewhere. ... I took one group of troops that had been going to motor mechanic school, or laundry school, or something of that sort, who got orders, and I took them up on a troop train to Indian Town Gap, Pennsylvania. And they were headed overseas. Now what they ended up as over there, or in what situations, I don't know. Others, they were there thirteen weeks and gone. They wouldn't go as a group. Like there were individuals or small groups, and various things.

KP: One question I did forget. I just realized. You were on MacArthur's staff when the atomic bomb was dropped.

RM: Oh yes.

KP: What was the reaction in the staff?

RM: We were all just-- ... nobody of course ...

KP: Even MacArthur didn't have an idea?

RM: No, it was so secretive. ...

KP: ...You obviously stopped planning the invasion. Did you stop right away?

RM: Oh, no. We didn't stop until even after the Japanese surrendered. We still had to ...

KP: ... Supply ...

RM: ... Supply for the ...

KP: ... Occupation ...

RM: ... Occupation and that sort of thing.

KP: So, in a sense, your plan had continued because of the occupation.

RM: That's right.

KP: Did anyone express thoughts about the bomb and its use?

RM: Not at that time. As I recall, I think a lot of us said, "Thank God we have something ... that'll really take care of the Japs finally," and what have you.

KP: Yeah.

RM: I don't recall anyone saying, "Well, gee, we shouldn't have done it," or what have you because I don't believe, initially, we knew what the results on the ground had been.

KP: So for you it was just an unexpected end to the war.

RM: Right.

KP: In a sense, it was a miracle weapon.

RM: ... Nobody had first-hand knowledge of it. ... We got probably word about it as soon as civilians here in the States did. Maybe later even. Who knows.

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

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