

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT F. MOSS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Robert F. Moss on October 13, 1994 in Metuchen, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and...

Bryan Holzmacher: Bryan Holzmacher.

KP: I guess I'd like to begin by talking a little bit about your parents. You grew up in Perth Amboy?

Robert F. Moss: [I was] born and raised in Perth Amboy.

KP: And your father worked for Western Union, and your mother...

RM: Yes. They were originally Morse operators. The dot and the dash. ...This is early in the century. ...My mother and father met in Thousand Islands, New York when my father was a manager of the Western Union. [He was] a young manager of the Western Union Summer Office in Ogdensburg, NY and my mother was up temporarily at the Thousand Islands resort for a summer job. ...They were talking on the dot and dash telegraph machine and started up a romance and finally decided to meet. Eventually they got married and they needed a better job. They got transferred to an industrial city, Perth Amboy. My father was the manager and my mother was the clerk from time to time, the assistant.

KP: Did you ever think that you might work for Western Union?

RM: Never. Western Union later became a typewriter communication ... where you type on a tape that goes through the machine and the tape goes through the machine in California or New York or Florida. And those tapes are pasted on a letterhead of Western Union and delivered by a Western Union messenger. So the Morse Code became obsolete.

KP: So your parents saw the transition

RM: Absolutely. They were trained in it and lost it, and stayed with the company in a different mode.

KP: You wrote in Tom Kindre's book that he was trying to compile ... that it was very important to your mother to stay in touch with people and friends. That you spent a lot of time visiting, Brooklyn for example.

RM: Yes, that was one of the lessons she taught me. She was an only child. She had high school friends. I'm not sure she finished high school, but she had friends in school and she kept up with those friends. They turned out to be my aunts. And I have done the same thing with my old friends. I don't let them slip away. I send them cards when I travel and we get together once in a while. So I have a lot of social friends.

KP: You mentioned that you stayed in touch with people from high school and of course from college, I know.

RM: Yes, I've taken them sailing and taken them to different ball games and invited them to parties from time to time. We're slowing down in our older age.

BH: Is it your own boat?

RM: Yes, I was out sailing yesterday.

BH: You were sailing yesterday?

RM: Because I have a prospect to buy it. I've had the boat for twenty-three years and I could sail it a few more years, but I think it's probably a good idea to bring it to an end before some accident happens or something happens like that. I've had all the fun and success and happiness that I could possibly obtain from anything.

KP: You grew up in Perth Amboy. What kind of community was it? What was it like for you when you were growing up?

RM: Well, it had a wonderful school system. ...It had a great reputation in those days and of course it's on the waterfront. I've always lived near the waterfront. So I got started in swimming and sailing at an early age. It was a mixed community. A lot of Ukrainian and Hungarian and Slavic people lived in the North end of town. In the south end of town, there were Jewish families and Catholics and Protestants, mostly from Western Europe. So every group was represented in a town of about 40,000.

KP: Was your father a volunteer fireman?

RM: No, no.

KP: [I ask this] because I remember reading in the WPA guide that there was quite a struggle in Perth Amboy over the volunteer firemen.

RM: Well, there was always something going on in those departments. My father was a member of the YMCA and he played volleyball on a regular day with a regular group every week. And my mother said, "Don't ever interfere with his volleyball." (laughter) I don't think that we ever did.

KP: When did you know that you wanted to go to college? What were your parents' thoughts about college?

RM: Well, my sister is five years older and this was the middle of the Depression. She graduated in [19]34, high school. I graduated in '38. The middle of the Depression. My folks fortunately had a job, but they were cut in pay and cut in hours. Some how they managed to put my sister through four years of NJC [New Jersey College for Women]. And when she graduated NJC, that was my first year to go to Rutgers. And my parents just made sure [they could afford it]. It didn't cost very much in those days.

KP: They wanted you to go to college?

RM: The family always planned [for] college. There's no question about that.

KP: [Was this] because your father only had some high school?

RM: Yes, that's right. Neither one of them, I think, were high school graduates.

KP: But they still thought that it was very important to...

RM: Yes. My mother wanted me to be a dentist. She had it all picked out. I even took pre-med in college for two years. I changed because I didn't think I was cut out to be a dentist or a doctor. I wound up a lawyer.

BH: You took pre-med for two years because of your parents' wishes?

RM: Exactly.

BH: Okay, it wasn't your own decision?

RM: No, I didn't really know what I wanted. So [in order] to make the opportunity possible, I took pre-med.

KP: Did you think at the time, that you wanted to be a lawyer when you switched from pre-med to....

RM: No, absolutely not. In my fourth year of college, I was a commuter like my sister. After three years of college and spending every lunch hour in the student union building, playing ping pong, I developed a friendship with Tom Kindre and Dr. Alvin Mancusi-Ungaro. And towards the end of our junior year, we were all very active. We discussed the possibility of getting together and renting an apartment in New Brunswick. We enlisted another fellow Victor Shedko, who was only a sophomore. The four of us rented an apartment on Paterson Street, across from the court house. Well, I spent a whole year there, across from the court house and never walked into the court house once.

BH: So it was an after thought then, being a lawyer after graduation?

RM: Well, the rest of the story is that Al thought he might be a lawyer because his father was a lawyer. When he decided to be a doctor, I said, ... he was going to be my lawyer and I was going to be a promoter. I was going to promote things like golf driving ranges with college students working in [them]. I had a few other ideas. Anyway, when he decided to become a doctor ... I didn't quite know what to do. When the GI Bill of Rights was announced, when I was in the middle of the war, I decided to go to law school later and to become my own lawyer. And that's what I did. I never thought of it until literally the end of the war to be honest with you. Actually,

I had a job with Young and Rubicam in New York City when I graduated college. [I worked] for about two months and then I was called into the Army. I was an advertising apprentice.

KP: Yes, yes, I know.

RM: They are well known. A good advertising agency.

KP: Why did you come to Rutgers? Had you thought of going to other schools?

RM: Well, actually for undergraduate college, it was the only opportunity. The only opportunity to commute to college.

BH: Did you have to work through school?

RM: I did work summers. One summer I worked at the Perth Amboy Dry Dock Company. That's a company that lifts boats up out of the water and paints them and chips off the old paint. I was in the paint shop one summer. Another summer, I worked for Shell Oil Company in their storage tank project in Seawaren and I was the assistant to the foreman, drove the truck, and was the gofer. They weren't big jobs, but they were two full-time summer jobs. During my college years, especially my senior year, I sold candy and worked in a pocketbook factory. I did eventually get a state scholarship my last year based on my extra curricular activities probably. And so we managed to put it all together and I had the support of the family all the way through. But you know they didn't have a lot of money. In fact, they lost the house. I guess ... in the late thirties, because they just couldn't do everything and they were in the same boat as everybody else in the depression.

KP: So Perth Amboy was fairly battered by the depression?

RM: All the banks closed. Like I said, they didn't really lose their jobs. Which was good, but they couldn't live up to even the modest style that they had. We had a big house, [so] we moved into rental properties.

KP: But your family stayed in Perth Amboy?

RM: Oh, they stayed in Perth Amboy until I came home from the war. Then my mother, my father and I moved to Metuchen in 1948, during ... the beginning of my third year of law school.

KP: And so that's how you came to Metuchen?

RM: Well, we looked around, at Summit and Westfield and Morristown. We could only get as far as Metuchen because money was very tight. We found a brand new apartment project with reasonable rent. Brand new, it was very nice, Redfield Village. When my wife and I were married, we lived in Redfield Village for two years, too. It's very nice. It's still going, Redfield Village.

BH: Had you moved up to Morristown ... would you still have commuted down here to go to the law school or would you have....

RM: Well I commuted to law school, in Newark, no question about that. I did look at Northwestern. My mother wanted me to go west because my sister was in Indiana. She wanted to try to get the family a little closer together. But, between my connections to the waterfront, and to Rutgers and the high school friends, I didn't want to move west. But I did go to Northwestern and look around while I was out visiting my sister. I applied at Columbia with ten thousand other United States war veterans and we took an examination. All ten thousand of us I think in various parts of the Country and it turned out just to be a vocabulary test. After four years of four letter words, I wasn't too good on the long words and I'm sure I flunked the test. It would have been tough commuting to Columbia. I went to Rutgers and in three years I was a law school graduate. In the same month, I was sworn in as a lawyer.

BH: So you would say from your four years at Rutgers before law school, you liked it enough to want to continue here then as your first choice?

RM: You mean at Rutgers?

BH: Yes.

RM: Oh, I had nothing against Rutgers ever. Again, convenience. If I had the money to go to Harvard and could have gotten in-- ... but it was very tough right after the war. Everybody ... on the GI Bill of Rights was applying for schools and you had to really be brilliant to get in that first year. I didn't want to waste a year. ...Plus ... there was no chance of going to Harvard or living at law school. So, I lived at home and commuted to law school in Newark.

KP: Do you think at Rutgers you missed something by being a commuter?

RM: Well, if you listen to the fraternity boys you might think that, but I don't think I missed anything. I think they were kind of narrow and clannish and silly in some ways. We ... faced the real world, but I don't really think it's always good to go away from home that young I entered college at 16. But you know, I was president of the Commuter's Club and I was in the Glee Club. I played freshman lacrosse and I was in the Scarlet Key Society. I was very active. I ran for office during my senior year as a neutral , but I guess they didn't want a commuter to win. So I didn't win.

BH: With the clubs you were in, like lacrosse...

RM: That was my freshman year. I played freshman lacrosse.

BH: Did you go around to other schools out of the state and play or were you...

RM: No, we only played games at Rutgers for some reason.

BH: All home games?

RM: Yeah, I guess so. Freshman, it was a freshman [sport].

BH: You didn't continue playing because...

RM: I don't remember ever traveling to play a game.

BH: You just stopped playing because you weren't interested anymore?

RM: Well it's kind of tough commuting.

BH: Right.

RM: I can remember once I was hit in the face with a lacrosse stick and went to the doctor. He put a bandage over my eye. I was down at the Albany Street bridge hitch hiking home because if you missed your ride, which you did when you stayed late, you had to hitch hike home or take the bus. When I got home, my mother was shocked but I didn't damage it [the eye]. It came out all right. But it ... just didn't make sense to try to be a full college student, with a rah, rah, rah attitude. I did what I could, but I was limited in what I could do as a commuter.

KP: You worked during the school year itself?

RM: I had an NYA job. This was a laboratory job for ten bucks a month, I know. My senior year, when I lived in New Brunswick, I had a lot of jobs, but when you're commuting you really couldn't do much in the way of part time jobs.

KP: Did you often hitch [hike] between Perth Amboy and Rutgers?

RM: Well, we paid a student or different students from Perth [Amboy]. I commuted for three years and his car would stop in front of my house at seven in the morning. I would get in and we would probably have four students in the car. We each paid a dollar a week to the fellow lucky enough to have the car. And we would go to New Brunswick. Then the car would come home probably at four. If I was practicing lacrosse or staying for any other reason, I would miss it and then I would either have to take the bus, which cost twenty cents I think, or hitch hike. I did a little of both over ... those commuting years.

BH: You said that you were in the Glee Club. I was reading something about that...

RM: I joined the Glee Club during my junior year. In other words, when I ... switched from pre-med, which was a very heavy course with calculus, quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis, chemistry, botany and biology. It was a very heavy course. I passed, but I didn't do great. And after two years I switched to Business Administration. It was easier for me and I got higher marks and I ... felt I had time. But, I didn't think of it quickly enough and I didn't go to the try outs in September. But in October I said to myself, "I should have tried to join the Glee Club." So, I went to see (Dr. F. Austin Walter) and said "Gee, I'd like to join the Glee Club." "Well," he

says, "You missed all the trials." "Well I'd like to try the Glee Club." He gave me a trial and he said, "O.K., I'll let you join the Glee Club, but you have to buy a set of tails and a fancy dress shirt and a tie because that's what we sing in." I went home to my parents and they came through with essentials. It cost forty dollars. Forty dollars today would be four hundred dollars. I mean with what you could buy with it. So it was an expensive item, forty dollars, but they got it up and I joined the Glee Club.

BH: As a bass?

RM: No, I was the second tenor, and I still am I guess.

KP: You stayed in advanced R.O.T.C. Why?

RM: There's a sad story in connection with that. It was compulsory, freshmen and sophomore R.O.T.C. They paid you for your junior and senior year, so I continued in it. But, I was called in for a medical examination and in the course of the medical examination I said that I had hay fever, which I did every summer from August [until] October. I would sneeze and sniffle and my eyes tear and things like that. Well they dropped me from advanced R.O.T.C. So I stopped getting paid. It was disastrous. They said you can continue going to class, but you don't go to summer camp. So I continued going to class for the credit and just to show my friends that I was still in it, but I wasn't getting paid. It was really a sad thing. I wasn't smart enough or sophisticated enough to lie, ... which so many people do to get things in this world. I didn't go to summer camp. However, when the war started, they must have gone through the old records of the R.O.T.C. members that were dropped for some reason or another and they pulled me right back.

KP: Hay fever then didn't seem.....

RM: It didn't bother them then. I lost I don't know how many hundreds of dollars, which would have been very helpful in my junior and senior year.

KP: Why did you stay in R.O.T.C. even when you were dropped from the payroll? Did you think we were going to war?

RM: No, no. It was a course. And I'm really not sure why I stayed in to be honest with you. I mean I have no philosophical objection to the military because the military is why we are a free country. I had time and it was a credit course. I was unhappy that I wasn't getting paid. I wasn't ambitious in the military, but I felt it was the sensible thing to do. It turned out to be because I was an officer all through the [war.] I might have become an officer through OCS anyway, but I started as an officer in the reserve.

KP: Did you think the U.S. was going to go into the war while you were in college?

RM: I had no idea, no idea. I paid very little attention to the news. There was always something going on in the world. Always.

KP: Yes, Leon Canick made the point that he was one of the few people to read the newspaper while he was going to college. Did you get the chance to read the newspaper often while you were going to college? It sounds like most people just literally didn't have the time.

RM: I don't remember buying a newspaper. When I was home the family got a newspaper. I probably looked at it.

BH: Do you recall the feeling of others in the clubs or classes regarding whether the U.S. was going to go into the war?

RM: Well, I would say in our senior year, when Hitler was really running rampant. I mean he had done a lot of preliminary things that nobody paid much attention to. I suppose we were concerned because we were getting to draft age. But to my knowledge, none of us did anything. Maybe that's why I stayed in R.O.T.C. I really don't recall. But it wasn't of great importance until Pearl Harbor. Then it was of great importance.

BH: So you are saying it was more of an atmosphere of indifference then, when Hitler...

RM: No, I think in the back of our minds we knew we were young and one way or the other, if there was a significant war, that we would be involved. But I don't think any of us did anything particular to let's say to avoid it or anything like that.

KP: Where were you when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred?

RM: I was in the Glee Club, performing in a concert in Trenton at the, I think it was the Trenton Library.

KP: The War Memorial?

RM: It might have been the War Memorial Building. But I forget who we did it for, but we were invited down there to do it. We are invited by many organizations. Somebody came in and told Soup about it. [He] handed him a note. Then Soup stopped the concert and we all sang the Star Spangled Banner. Whether we finished the concert or not, I ...I think we were almost finished, but we may have sung the Rutgers Alma-mater and then went down to the bus and went back to New Brunswick. That's where I was when it was announced on the radio.

KP: You were in R.O.T.C. Did you assume you would be going?

RM: Well, I had a draft number. ... I don't know whether a real member of the R.O.T.C. had a draft number or not to be honest with you, but I had a draft number. I got my job in New York based on my fairly high draft number. ... The boss, the personnel manager was very upset at Young and Rubicam after I was there for two months, when I said I had to leave because I got called into the Army. He said you had a high draft number. I said, "I took R.O.T.C. at the University and they pulled me in through that. I didn't really know whether they would or not

because they had dropped me officially. So he was upset, but there was nothing we could do about it.

KP: Had you thought of joining the Navy?

RM: Never, never.

BH: Even though you enjoy sailing?

RM: Sailing a wooden boat with sails or a fiber glass boat with sails is not comparable to being on a steel hotel floating with guns. Not at all comparable.

BH: So you prefer to be closer to the water?

RM: Well, I got pushed into the ... yes I do. I got pushed into the infantry through the R.O.T.C. and I just never made the attempt to get out of it.

KP: You worked for Young and Rubicam. Were you just in a sense waiting for your draft number to be called or...

RM: Well, that's what the personnel manager figured, but I was interested in Young and Rubicam anyway. If it weren't for the war, I would have stayed in advertising. I started out as a messenger. You take art work to your various clients around town. All were reachable by subway or bus or taxi. I was messenger for a month and they promoted me to the mail room. There you help sort the mail and take it around to the different offices. I don't know what the next step would have been. It could have been copywriter of something like that. There isn't any question that I would have been very happy in advertising. Although my wife "poo pohs" it. But, when the war was over, I went back to see Mr. Starns, the personnel manager. Just to talk to him because I wasn't exactly sure what I was going to do. He said, "there's so many coming back ..., it would be a long time before you get anywhere." I think I was going to go to school again anyway. So, I enrolled in law school.

KP: But if the war hadn't come along you might well have ended up...

RM: I would have ended up with a career, probably at Young and Republican, because I was qualified and my mind was such that it was very creative as far as that type of work is concerned. So, I think I would have been very successful.

BH: Do you think you're happier as a lawyer?

RM: Well, ... one of the reasons I picked law is that I was a company commander in the Army. That means I had 220 men under me, a kitchen and office staff and eight or ten officers. I was the only person in the whole group that was free. I could hop in my jeep and go here or go there and I could think ahead and plan. I liked that freedom within limits. So I said, "What's comparable in civilian [life], being free?" Well, being in your own business. Then which

business? Well law was about the only one that didn't take a big investment and I had been thinking about law a little bit because of Al. I guess that's part of the reason I picked law, because I am free. I've been in this office 45 years. I started with that little office to the right as you enter. Not the waiting room, but the little one. That was my room for 25 dollars [a month] for five years. Then I expanded from there. But I'm free. I mean, I went sailing yesterday and I could have done this forty years ago too, but I probably worked harder than if I worked for somebody else. Now I enjoy that little bit more of freedom.

KP: You're on a flexible schedule?

RM: Very flexible, yes. If I don't get work done during the day, I do it at night or I do it on Saturday or Sunday. I get my work done.

BH: Do you work because you enjoy it?

RM: I enjoy it, yes.

BH: No thoughts of retiring?

RM: Well, lawyers don't really retire. There is a problem of staying in law even when you're trying to slow down, the overhead continues. You really have to work hard enough to pay your overhead and then take maybe your reduced income, but you still have to work pretty hard even when you're slowing down.

KP: You were inducted. They reviewed the records and your draft number-- in a sense you were drafted into the Army?

RM: No I was not. I was ordered in by the Army Reserve.

KP: Army Reserve?

RM: My draft number was never reached.

KP: Never reached, but the Army Reserve...

RM: I don't know if it was eventually reached, but I was pulled in and...

KP: And commissioned?

RM: Well, I had to go through a three month refresher course at Fort Benning, Georgia, the infantry school. I was commissioned at the end of that, but it was not OCS, it was Army Reserve.

KP: The assumption was that you were all officers when you went there?

RM: Cadets, they called us, but we didn't draw second lieutenant's pay or wear the bars until we finished the training. I don't think we did. But, I think maybe I did have my second lieutenant's bars all through the ... course, but I had to go through that course to be assigned to a unit.

KP: What was that like, your training? For example, how effective was it?

RM: Oh, wonderful. I mean, everything there is in the infantry. You learn, the pistol, the carbine, the M-1 rifle, the machine gun, the mortar, the 60mm mortar, the 81mm mortar. [There was] no artillery, this was infantry. The compass, tactics, close order drill, hiking twenty miles, 25 miles, 35 miles in one day. So those are the things that you do. A little physical training [also].

KP: You were a Boy Scout at one point, was that helpful?

RM: Absolutely! I'm an Eagle Scout.

KP: Did you go to the National Jamboree in 1937?

RM: I went to the National Jamboree in 1937 in Washington, D.C. One National Jamboree, that's the one I went to. It was very exciting. We camped on the island. I forget the name of the island. Jefferson Island or something [like that], across the Potomac [River]. In the middle of the Potomac, we camped there. That was our Jamboree location.

KP: Was that your first trip to Washington D.C.?

RM: Yes, well wait a second, that was at age ... sixteen. We had done some traveling as a kid. We may have been to my Uncle Henry's in Washington before that, at age twelve.

KP: You hadn't traveled very much before the war?

RM: Well, by automobile we had been to Niagara Falls and Washington. I'm sure we were to Washington as a family before the Jamboree. We traveled out to Long Island, but that was it, automobile trips.

KP: So your infantry school in Fort Benning, Georgia was the first time in the deep South?

RM: Yes.

KP: What was that like, that experience of traveling?

RM: It was the first time I was ever on a railroad train that went backwards. They come off the main line and go into town and then they back out to the main line and go. ... When I was on that train and it backed up, I was very startled.

KP: What did you think of the food? [What did you think of] Southern food and Southern language?

RM: I liked the grits with butter. I liked the ham hocks and the beans. I never had any problems with the food.

BH: What about the people in the South?

RM: They all had grand daddies who were in the Civil War. They talked about it all the time. They weren't as sophisticated as we are in the North. They were good people. They were crazy about football. I was assigned to what they call a National Guard Division, the 31st Infantry Division. The General was the President of the Birmingham National Bank. My battalion commander was a teller in the Birmingham National Bank. I didn't run into a lot of doctors and lawyers and professors and things like that in the Army.

KP: You had gone through R.O.T.C. all four years, except for the summer camp, when you weren't on the payroll.

RM: Right.

KP: How effective was your R.O.T.C. training? Did you think [that] after you went through...

RM: Well, it all fit together. I didn't have any problems with the three month infantry school. And it was ... all cumulative and nothing contradicted anything else. ... Most of our training at R.O.T.C. was out of books. Yes, we would drill once in a while so that probably helped some.

KP: When you were actually in the field, did [you] think, "they didn't teach us this in the book," or "this was silly, what they told us," did you?

RM: No, just continuous. If there was a little repetition, there couldn't have been much because we were trained in three months. You could say eight hours a day, but it was really full-time. Whereas with R.O.T.C. you went to a two hour class and once a week you had a two hour march or parade.

KP: When you went to infantry school, did you know which unit you would be assigned to? The 31st or that was still...

RM: I had no idea, ... they handed you your orders and that was it.

KP: So you were going through the school, but you didn't know where you would end up?

RM: No.

KP: Where were most of the people in your class from? Most of the cadets.

RM: Oh, they were from all over. The cadet class was drawn from all over. When we were assigned to the National Guard, the key people there were from Alabama and Louisiana and Mississippi. But the draftees that filled our division were from Massachusetts. There were a lot of Boston accents in our enlisted men. We were ready for our draftees. [The paper] gets in a pile somewhere. Then they say who needs a bunch of draftees? ...then they send them. They don't scatter them around the country for some reason.

KP: National Guard divisions often came under fire. Many [people] have been very critical in their remarks, even those serving in them. ... What did you think of your experiences?

RM: Well, one of the reasons I'm here is [because] I was in a National Guard Division. Nobody in Washington wanted to use them until they had nobody left to use I guess. I mean all of the regular Army divisions were put right out there because they wanted to win the battles. They didn't think that we could win. Not that the boys weren't just as brave, but the division reflects the general. The regiment reflects the chicken colonel and the battalion reflects the lieutenant colonel and those personalities determine your missions, your success ultimately and their reputation in the War Office. So that's one of the reasons that I'm alive. We were minimally engaged in direct conflict with the enemy. We were engaged, but minimally in comparison with the Marines and the regular Army.

KP: So you had a sense even during the war that there was a reluctance to use...

RM: Well, we complained about being in Louisiana on maneuvers twice while still in the States instead of moving anywhere, but really we were lucky. We were in the State nearly two years before going overseas.

KP: But if you had been sent out earlier...

RM: Absolutely. The bigger the battles, the more the risk.

KP: What did you think of the effectiveness of your commanders?

RM: Well, for the missions we were assigned, we did very well I think. Fortunately, we weren't assigned some of the missions like Normandy and Iwo Jima and places like that. I think the men would have done equally well anywhere, but the leadership was good old boy, you know, old buddies.

KP: So you had that sense that they were good old boys?

RM: Oh, yes. I assume some people really talked about it all the time. I'm not that type of person.

KP: Yes, because Tom Kindre once came across in his unit, which was a National Guard unit, he came across a case where someone needed to be disciplined and the senior officer in this case said, "I can't discipline him, I work for him back home."

RM: Yes, I'm sure that happens. Well, I had my to do's with my commander because I did wind up a company commander, but on my way up I was a section leader and a platoon leader, and assistant company commander. When I was a mortar platoon leader, which was my big reputation, "The Moss' Mortars" in the Army, we did very well. I ... was one of two, the first two Combat Infantry Badges, later turned into a Bronze Star, in my regiment because of my work with the mortars. I can tell ... you more about that later.

KP: That would be great.

RM: But my commander was sending my platoon on clean up details and silly things and marching. I said, "I want them to have more training." I mean once we were in New Guinea, on the land. While we were waiting around for action, I said, "I want to give them more training." So I had a fight with him about that. But I finally got my way and we separated from the other men and we intensely reviewed all of our training and then added to it.

KP: So you were aware that training was crucial?

RM: Oh, absolutely.

KP: Apparently your division didn't have that same sense, that you needed constant re-training.

RM: Well, it didn't come from the top. I had to push for it and I got results later and was recognized for it.

BH: It wasn't seen in anyway as insubordination?

RM: It could have been. (laughs) Yes. I can remember another time, I probably was almost insubordinate, because I complained about the company commander did in the mess hall and other people could heard it. He called me in later and said, "Don't do that." (laughs) Well I said, "Why did you do what you did?" I'm a fairly independent person, Kurt knows that.

KP: One of your commanders was Captain Butler.

RM: That's right.

BH: What was he like? Was he a southerner?

RM: Yes, he was a big football player type and bragged a lot.

KP: Oh, yes.

RM: Anyway, that's Captain Butler. But he was a good leader. People would follow him. He had a personality. And he was one of the better National Guard leaders.

KP: So, he was National Guard?

RM: Oh yes, right out of Birmingham or one of those towns. I don't know what his career was, I can't remember.

KP: Lieutenant Colonel Matthews, did you have any dealings with him?

RM: Well he was the fellow that I had the dispute with about training.

KP: The training of your mortar unit.

RM: He was the teller at the Birmingham National Bank and became a lieutenant colonel and battalion commander. ... A battalion is made up of three rifle companies and a heavy weapons company. So, he was my commander. Of course, I had a captain in charge of my company, the heavy weapons company, but the infantry company captains I had nothing to do with. And the battalion commander was ... over of my captain. So it's the captain that I was talking about in the mess hall and the battalion commander that I was trying to get more time for training [from].

KP: Your regiment was commanded by Colonel Stubbs. Do you have any recollections of him?

RM: Well, he was sort of the antithesis of the southern boy. He was the intellectual and never said a swear word or did anything like Captain Butler or any of these other officers would do. I remember on my 21st birthday, for some reason he invited me to the officers club for dinner and we talked the way a college professor and a student would talk.

KP: What was his career before the...

RM: That, I can't remember.

KP: But, he was well read and soft spoken?

RM: [He was] definitely an intellectual.

KP: And he was a southerner?

RM: And a southerner, yes.

KP: Were you quite shocked at how earthy the language is among southerners or the Army or both?

RM: Well, not really. It wasn't that different. I worked in the Dry Dock Company and in the tank farm of the Shell Oil Company and I'd heard working men talk and that's what they were...

BH: It wasn't so much of a shock?

RM: No.

BH: Did you think it was unusual, you said most of your men came from Massachusetts, to have all Northerners under southerners?

RM: Well, it was an interesting contrast. ... When they're ready to fill up a particular unit and they've got the barracks for it ... then they requisition draftees. Then somebody has to say where they are to come from and they figure out the transportation and it's all logistical. It just turned out that we had an awful lot of Boston and Massachusetts draftees.

KP: How did the North/South split go?

RM: I'm sure there were some fights, but I don't think it was a serious problem. ...

KP: It wasn't a major problem. Now General [John C.] Persons, you probably didn't have any direct contact with him, but what was his reputation among the unit?

RM: Weak general but maybe a great bank president. We would say, "We just saw General Persons in his tent. He had his helmet on." He was way, way back in the rear somewhere and he had his helmet on. And he was a bank president. In this building, when I was a tenant, there was a dentist here and there was talk of going to another big war ..., like Korea or something like that and he said, "They can't call me, I don't know anything, but drilling and pulling teeth." And I guess if a guy is in banking all of his life, he gets to a point where all he knows is banking, paperwork, statements and things like that. And I think he was that type of a person.

KP: Did he ever expect to actually have a full time command?

RM: That's right, he was a part-time general, I don't know.

KP: He enjoyed being called General?

RM: [He] enjoyed the cocktail parties and things like that, but when they got called in the Army. He wasn't always the general, but he was the general in the beginning. We had different generals later.

KP: So he was eventually replaced?

RM: Yes. Our battalion commanders were moved, but I'm talking about the initial [commanders]. I mean towards the end, they were moved. I really don't know who the general was at the end. Persons was probably in there a long time. But I'm way down there in the infantry and didn't pay too much attention to that.

KP: But the rumors were, you widely knew that he was not a very good...

RM: Yes, I don't think that General Eisenhower or MacArthur would have picked Persons as though he was the one to do a big job. We landed on the island of Morotai, but it was weakly [held], ... it wasn't occupied by a lot of people. They did fight and we had men killed, but it wasn't like ... some of the other islands.

BH: When you were still in training in the U.S. did you ever get a feel for the attitudes of the citizens towards the soldiers?

RM: Well, I can remember going to the Raritan Yacht Club when I was home on leave. And once in a while we would run into, in the early years, a boy still in civilian clothes and he felt very uncomfortable. But I don't know. I would say that the country supported us 100%. You know 110%.

KP: You did a lot of your training in Louisiana, do you have any memories of that?

RM: Oh yes, Camp Shelby, Mississippi and maneuvers. We crossed the state line a few times into Louisiana. And if we had a weekend pass, we would go to New Orleans. We would take the train. It would take three hours to get to New Orleans and we would get a hotel room over night. It was very normal really, in a sense while we were in the United States. I'd go to the Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. They would invite us to a cookie Kloch and families would invite us to their homes. I remember going out to somebody's plantation. The father took us, there was a girl involved of course, and the father took us out in the field and shot a couple of hawks with a shotgun. We managed to fit in reasonably well.

KP: So in a sense you have very positive memories of your training experience?

RM: Well, I did my share of suffering, but I didn't get killed. I was willing to accept it without question.

-----End Side One, Tape Two-----

RM: [I was] called into the Army in, I guess July. The end of June or July. In other words we graduated on May 10th, 1942, I worked May and June at Young and Republican and toward the end of June, when I got called it was about two months. Then I had three months in Fort Benning Georgia, the Infantry School, that brought us into October. Then I was assigned to my division, the 31st Infantry Division. I was assigned first to go to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where my battalion was on demonstrator duty at the artillery school. I eventually wound up back with the division in Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

KP: When did your unit finally get orders to go?

RM: We were on maneuvers two summers...I guess it was that second fall or summer anyway that we were moved to Camp Picket, Virginia. Then [we moved] to where we boxed all of our guns and mortars and things. Then we went to Hampton Roads, Virginia somewhere in the

middle of '44 and got on the S.S. Acancaqua ... I was sea sick at ... Cape Hatteras and then we went through the Panama Canal. We were 41 days at sea until we landed in New Guinea.

KP: So you didn't get a chance to stop off in Hawaii?

RM: No, no.

KP: Did you have any regrets about that?

RM: No, [I] never thought about it.

KP: You did enjoy crossing the Panama Canal, you had mentioned once.

RM: Well we were just like an expensive cruise ship except that there were five of us, even as officers, with canvas bunks [in each cabin]. The enlisted men were probably ten. .. The next bunk was probably this high above your nose. (5 inches) There were a lot of people on that ship. [It was] not a terribly big ship.

KP: I read that you wrote the Rutgers Alumni Magazine about your...Ship

RM: I did. Did you ever find that letter?

BH: [Do you mean] Your Seasick Letter

RM: Did I mention that somewhere? I wouldn't know where to find it. You should give me a copy of it.

KP: Okay, I could. So it obviously left an impression on you.

RM: I was thinking of writing a book. I think for a while I took notes on a pad, but I finally gave it up. For example the men played poler all over the shop . By the time we arrived in New Guinea all the cash was in the hands of a few players and the stakes were high. One may have ended up with all if it.

KP: Did you save your notes?

RM: No, not the few that I started. I was thinking about it for a while, but I guess I wasn't that ambitious.

BH: Would the book have been primarily on your war experiences?

RM: [It would have been] just a diary type thing about what was going on, but I didn't keep it up.

KP: The men in your unit, where were most of them from?

RM: Well, I can't remember towns, but all of the sergeants were from the National Guard. A lot of senior privates even corporals were from the South. The privates were from the Massachusetts area, most of them. And the lower officers were like me, they came from everywhere.

KP: Your sergeants, how effective were they?

RM: They were excellent. They were the brightest. They were smart enough down there to pick out bright guardsmen to do the leading of the squads.

KP: So the sergeants, in some ways, you thought were better leaders than some of the senior...

RM: Yes, they were very good. They were experienced in their jobs.

BH: You said your first stop was in New Guinea?

RM: Yes.

BH: Was that as part of an assault force, when you landed?

RM: No, we had already occupied New Guinea and many islands. This was '44. We [had] declared war in December of '41. Then they had a lot of island fights in '42 and '43 while we were on maneuvers. See, that's what I missed, which I don't regret missing. But we still had to cross the Pacific.

BH: From what you heard of island fighting stories, were you apprehensive when you were going over seas about being involved in something of that nature?

RM: Well you knew you were going into a danger zone, that's all. You never lost any sleep about it.

KP: What did you think the enemy would be like? What was your image of the enemy while you were in training?

RM: They trained you to hate the enemy. [That's] the way it works in war. You're going in because you were trained and ordered in. Then when they start killing your friends...hate develops. That's how you keep going and that's how you keep fighting.

KP: Did you experience this hate?

RM: Oh yes. Like I said, it was in New Guinea. We established two perimeters to protect airports in New Guinea. One of them we weren't there long, then they moved us to one closer to the enemy up the coast. We built a perimeter, which is a series of pillboxes. [They were] made of logs from trees that you cut down, dirt that you piled on, and barbed wire that you laid in front and mines in front so at night...

KP: So you put together a pretty sophisticated perimeter?

RM: Oh, we had a very sophisticated perimeter to protect this airport, the supply depot and everything else. This was at the Wakde-Sarmi area of New Guinea, which was half way up. Hollandia, I think it was beyond Hollandia. Hollandia was where MacArthur had his headquarters. Bob McCloughan knows all about that. We built them. In our battalion area we had six 81mm mortars. We built six 81mm emplacements below-ground level with logs around them, but not on top of them. At the front the emplacements had covers and slits and things like that. ... We put big logs underneath our base plates. Otherwise they would keep sinking down. And we put permanent aiming points every ten degrees for our compass to be set from and adjust in between. We had charts. We plotted out all the pillboxes by number. We had elaborate charts, where in the middle of the night if pillbox number ten said, "We think there's some Japs creeping up. We can hear them out there." We would send some rounds. Well we knew exactly the yardage. We knew exactly the direction and with minimum light, just a little pin point flashlight, we would use either one mortar or six mortar guns and drop 81mm mortar shells in that area. Moss's Mortars got to be very famous because we never fired a short, which means a round that lands on top of our people. We accomplished that I hope, because we examined the powder-packs of every shell before we fired it to make sure it wasn't wet. We discarded some that weren't any good. But we never had a short andthey often found dead enemy bodies in the morning, or at least evidence that some were dragged away. One of the two.

KP: So you weren't just shooting away into the night and not hitting anything?

RM: Well, we only fired at the request of a front line pillbox by telephone. This is at night. Now during the day they did not ever come near us, but we would send combat patrols out. Up the beach and inland a little bit, just to know what was going on. We wouldn't want to be surprised by having them build up a force of Japanese soldiers one mile away and not know about it. So you had to patrol. And I was on a couple of those patrols. But not many, they don't normally take mortars on a patrol. They did once when there was a large combat patrol sent toward their base which was about fifteen miles down the beach.

BH: Mr. Kindre told us to ask something about a tank on the beach.

RM: Yes, well that was one of the combat patrols I mentioned.

BH: He said there was a story behind it.

RM: Well, we were on this particular large combat patrol and I had my forward observers with the infantry men up ahead.

BH: This was in New Guinea?

RM: In New Guinea, yes. Out of this base ..., we went out knowing the enemy could be there, anywhere. We kept our proper distance from each other, and we carried our weapons. ...We had

maps and at a certain point we picked a location where the trees weren't in our way so we could fire and set up our two mortars. We only had two mortars with us. And we fired on the directions of our forward observers off and on all day. They were attacking and moving about. [They were] feeling out the enemy. And then towards four o'clock, the enemy wasn't sitting there taking it [anymore]. They sent a patrol around and they saw us and started shooting at us. We had some infantry men there and they were shooting back. But I was ordered to ... retreat back to our base. So I gave the order. But we were being fired on. And ... one man grabs the barrel [and] another man grabs the bi-pod. The soldier who was trying to pull up the base plate couldn't get it up, so he left it in the ground. Anyway, they retreated as Ordered and I was yelling, "Is everybody gone? Is everybody gone?" I was the last one out and the crew had run so fast, I couldn't see them. I guess some of them ran down the beach and some of them ran down the path along the beach. Anyway, I said, "I better get out of here." I ran over to the beach and I started to move down the beach when all of the sudden some knee mortar shells were exploding around me.

Somebody saw me. I don't know, maybe just one Jap saw me. Maybe he was in a tree. These little shells were popping [all around]. We did not have these very small weapons. I saw a little cave, so I ducked and the shells stopped. Then said, "What am I going to do, wait or run or what?" At that very instant a small tank was coming back from the combat patrol mission. Because they don't stay out at night. The Japs liked to move at night, we didn't. So I ran over and got on that tank and felt very happy that it came along. Now, one man didn't show up...back at the base. We worried about him all night. The next morning at six o'clock he showed up. He said that he had stayed in his hole. He heard Japs moving into our area where we were and talking. He waited until dark, then he crawled over to the ocean with his rifle and he went into the water up to his head. He walked all night in the ocean back to our base, which was maybe 12 miles or something like that.

KP: It must have been an incredibly frightening experience.

RM: Oh, it was frightening, yes. I heard bullets missing me by not [very] much.

KP: So is this your most vivid memory?

RM: Yes, this is I would say, the most vivid memory. The most dangerous [and] the closest I came to being killed. ... I never saw one, anybody; never saw a Jap that day, but we were in a jungle area along the beach and except for our clearing you could not see very far.

BH: The whole time you were there you never did?

RM: Well no, I'm saying in this instance. ... We were in jungle, we were lucky to find this little place to shoot from. But I'm not so sure it was wise to send mortars out on a mission, but we were expendable. You have got to be trained and you got to have the experience for the next one. So they risk that, but I didn't lose one man. Not one man. My mortar section consisted of 18 men with some riflemen to help.

BH: Were you ever involved in any attempts to go through the Owen Stanley Range or to take the rest of New Guinea back?

RM: ...I don't know where the Owen Stanley Range is. When we were at the perimeter in New Guinea, near an air port. We once took a patrol up into the nearby mountains to make sure they're clear. [We] went along the ridge for twenty miles or so and camped at night. Then we worked our way back. I probably had two mortars with me on that patrol, but it was mostly infantry men. I don't know if that was the Owen Stanley Range or not. ... But you've got to patrol whenever you have a base. You cannot allow the enemy to build up a substantial force that could hit you in one hour, you know, and overrun you.

BH: So they kept sending probes out all of the time?

RM: You've got to patrol. You've got to patrol.

KP: How long were you at New Guinea?

RM: We were overseas a little less than two years. We were on Morotai almost a year. So we were probably on New Guinea for three or four months in the beginning before we went to Morotai. Then we moved to Mindanao, in the Philippines. We were in the hills of Mindanao for a couple of months. That's when the atomic bomb fell. We were fighting Japs. We were being shot at right then and had casualties. This could be similar to that earlier experience except we were all together here, not isolated on a patrol. We were very thankful that the atomic bomb was dropped. Because we probably would have gone forward again the next day after the Japs in Mindanao. We would have had some more casualties. Then when the war ended, I was moved to Leyte.

In fact, I went to the hospital. Because I was in the mountains so much apparently I became undernourished. ... They tried dropping eggs and things, but really we were eating canned food and packaged items for quite a while. I had a vitamin deficiency and a mouth infection, so they put me in the hospital for a while. Then I was assigned to a special services unit running PX's, ... while I was waiting for my points to get me home for a couple of months...

KP: You spent a good year in Morotai you said.

RM: Almost a year in Morotai, yes.

KP: You said you were on the fourth wave of the landing.

RM: The landing, it was the fourth wave. There was resistance, but it wasn't heavy. There were bodies lying around as I was moving inland; Japanese bodies.

KP: There had been a number of assaults or landings. What did you think...

RM: Well I can remember the moment I stepped out of the amphibious vehicle. We were in the fourth wave. The first wave was infantry men [and] the second and probably the third. Three waves of riflemen. Then I had mortars. Probably the third wave had machine guns with the infantrymen. I was in the fourth wave which wasn't far behind. I can't remember how far these waves were apart. Maybe twenty minutes or something like that. We could hear the Navy shooting all of the big shells into the interior and the planes dropping bombs. It was a typical landing and , well planned. I mean they had done it so many times by them that they knew what they were doing.

...I didn't go in a boat. I went in an amphibious tank. [A] personnel carrier, amphibious, with steel, but it was open. It didn't have a top and didn't have any guns. It cranked up on the beach to a certain point and then you had to get out. We heard all the shooting going on. I ordered my men out and I got out. [We] got on the beach and got them together and [had them] follow me. We went inland. The infantry was ahead of us though, so we weren't concerned. There could have been a sniper or something like that. You just never knew. I could remember my thoughts, "Should I get out or shouldn't I get out?" Well, I got up and out of the vehicle.

BH: Were there other men in your company that were...reluctant and scared?

RM: We all did our duty. Let's put it that way, we all did our duty.

KP: How scared were you in combat and were there levels of fear?

RM: No, you were thinking of what to do next. You never panicked. I mean I never panicked. I don't know anybody, but probably a few guys panicked. I remember one fellow refused to go up a hill once when ordered and I think he was court-martialed.

KP: Was he an officer?

RM: No, ... his captain ordered him ... to go up the hill. He cringed in fear and was paralyzed. He got court-martialed.

BH: What were your thoughts after the landing?

RM: I was glad I didn't get hit. I was thankful it wasn't heavily defended. You are talking about the Morotai landing?

BH: Yes.

RM: Yes. We were too busy. ...You had to find a place to stop. We always set up our mortars in case we were ordered to fire. You can't always go into a pillbox, sometimes you have to put it right on top of the ground because you might be ordered for ten rounds or so from our forward observer. See, our forward observers didn't stay with us. They stayed with the infantry captain, the company commander. And the company commander has the right to ask for mortar support

or artillery support if it's available. Well it's not available the first couple of days in any landing. It's your mortars...

KP: That would be your artillery.

RM: Yes. So you have to put your guns right up on the ground when you stop. These guys knew how to set up really quickly.

KP: So your training really paid off?

RM: Well, yes. We had a big reputation like I said. This was true even back in New Guinea. One of our infantry officers was killed on a patrol. And in the next week's orders, he was issued the first Combat Infantry Badge post humously and I was on the same order; Lieutenant Moss. ... I was given it because of the effectiveness of the support by the mortars. And a few months later, they said those were changed to Bronze Stars. They were very modest awards. Everybody should have gotten a Combat Infantry Badge after the first few days. (laughs) ... But they were kind of selective at first. Anytime you got a Combat Infantry Badge with a paragraph that said what you did, they switched it to a Bronze Star very quickly. Somebody up at headquarters said that is silly to issue citations with the badge itself. Everybody in combat gets a Combat Infantry Badge, anyway so they switched it to a Bronze Star when there was a citation.

BH: In terms of the mortars, you wrote a mortar tactics book?

RM: Yes I did.

BH: Was that while you were in the United States or afterwards?

RM: No, it was ... in New Guinea when I was in this intense training period. Somebody asked me to write mortar tactics in three phases: tactics for circular perimeters, tactics for parts of large airport perimeters and tactics in attacking the enemy in support of infantry. And I did. I've got copies of it somewhere. I don't know if I ever sent it to Tom [Kindre] or not. But, it says secret right on top. I never looked to see if it got into the training manual. anywhere.

KP: So you don't know what the history of...[your report]

RM: I have no idea. I'm not interested in the Army. I was in the Reserves for eight years after the war, but I dropped out and spent my time on politics and business. And now I'm not getting a pension. It was probably pretty dumb. I should have stayed in another...

BH: Twelve years?

RM: Well eight plus four year in the service, that would have been twelve. So another eight years and I would have had a pension, but I had other things to do. My wife says don't worry about it and we don't worry about it. The pension in those days was going to be two hundred

[dollars], which wasn't very much, but now it's like \$1,000 with our cheaper money. So it was a foolish thing. I should have stayed in it. But I was not a military person really.

KP: After the beach landing and after the beach head was secure, what was your unit's mission over the course of the year in Morotai?

RM: Okay, we had a couple of missions. We did establish several defense perimeter sections near the airport. Another battalion was on the other side of the airport. So we never knew where an attack would come by land or across the island so you just set up. ...It really wasn't a problem. There were Japanese forces on Halmahera, but we don't really think they were equipped or had the incentive to come over and engage us in battle. I mean, we were island hopping and we didn't go into Halmahera because they had forces there. We went to Morotai, which had an airport that they had been working on and light forces. That's why we picked Morotai.

But our mission initially was to watch out for counterattacks, which didn't come, and to sort of protect the airport from sabotage and things like that. ... The island of Morotai is fifty miles long and there was a radar base installed there, and a radar base installed here and maybe another one. ... I was moved up to two of these radar stations. I remember being at one at Christmas. And we built perimeters around the station so that patrols from Halmahera couldn't come and knock it out.

So I was in charge of say an infantry force, two platoons or maybe a company with a company commander available. With my mortars in the middle ... protecting this base. Then I was moved to another one on the other side of the island. Maybe a bigger one.

We were supplied by small steel boats, landing crafts. I remember when we were on the easterly one. We had available a tank. Not a real tank, but an amphibious ... personnel carrier. This driver once when one of our supply ships were anchored there, he went out and visited the crew. Maybe he was going to bring supplies in. I don't know what the heck he was doing. He wasn't under my jurisdiction. Anyway, he tied it up and he was having such a good time he decided to stay over night on that boat and drink. The next morning all they had was a line with a frayed end. (laughs) He didn't leave the motors running. He didn't leave the bilge pumping, if they have them. I suppose they do. The thing just filled up and sank; a \$10,000 or \$50,000 piece of equipment.

KP: What happened to him?

RM: I really don't know because he wasn't under my command or jurisdiction. There were other people involved. Besides I was just there to protect the radar station. It was an easy assignment.

KP: The island after the initial landing was fairly secure then?

RM: Yes. I remember in one of our patrols in the early period, two of my men were killed. My men. ... We had to bury them in the middle of the island. Well, a month later, ... they wanted a

volunteer patrol to go and bring the bodies back. I volunteered because it involved my men. So, I was the lieutenant in charge of the whole expedition. Well, I knew it wasn't a terribly risky thing, but there was some risk. You could run into a pocket of Japs that are mad that start trying to ambush you and things like that. [When] we left, we probably had a patrol of about fifty. We left and I moved these soldiers fast. It wasn't like Mississippi, [where] you walked for fifty minutes and then you stopped for ten minutes. I didn't let them stop and they felt pushed to hard. They even complained after we got back but I didn't have one casualty. I kept them moving fast enough so that any interior Japs could not really organize anything in front of us.

KP: That was one of the things you learned in the field, how important speed was?

RM: Oh, absolutely! They were upset because you know they're privates, they do not think ahead. And we did have to camp overnight and have our watches. Guards were placed all of the time at every point around the camp. I was in the middle as the officer. We did find the graves. We wrapped the bodies in canvas and we had little yellow life rafts for pilots, you know. The bodies fit right in it; ... two of them. And we brought them down stream to the ocean. In other words we used a different route from our route going in.

KP: You took a different route out?

RM: We took a different route out. We went along a stream and floated the bodies. We didn't have to carry them down stream and got them back to the graves registration unit and accounted for our men. It was a successful mission and we were returned to base by boat.

KP: Was that viewed as very important, to try to take care of your men?

RM: Yes, that's why I never could understand what all of these people are concerned about "Missing In Action" with all of this attention and close comradely. Sure people get lost, they get lost in the water and you never see them again. An airplane parachute might come down in the jungle and nobody will ever find him, period. Never. So I really...

KP: So you think that one of the things you've learned from the military is that the military really tries to find...

RM: Absolutely. I don't think there's anybody really missing in action as far as I'm concerned, that's alive. Not one. Not one. ...The few they are worrying about are those who are captured but they are not M.I.A. I'm sure that some of them might have been killed by the hate that develops. I am sure there's nobody STILL prisoner. One or two didn't want to go home anyway. Some deserted and never went home So, [they] would marry a native girl and hope they were never found. Not marry, just live with a native girl. So I think this MIA thing is a red herring. Absolutely no real validity. If a family can't accept the death of a person who is missing in action for a year or a couple of years then I just feel sorry for them because they are really dead. Family's should talk to the immediate superior officer or non-commissioned officer of anyone missing in action and learn the circumstances where they were last seen. Then they will understand the realities.

BH: Was there as much interest in it after World War II do you think, as after Vietnam?

RM: Interest in what?

BH: MIA's

RM: That's what I'm saying. [In] World War I and World War II, missing in action was dead. In Vietnam, all of the sudden MIA's are a political issue, but there are unit reports of when soldiers were last seen and if over water or in the jungle with bodies not found, they are dead.

BH: Do you think it was a result of Nixon using the MIA's to delay ending the war? His basing removing the troops on, "As soon as we account for all of our soldiers?"

KP: Why do you think the MIA became an obsession], because you see the black flag everywhere?

RM: I don't understand why. Somebody made political capital out of it and it wasn't Nixon. But somebody was making political capital out of it.

KP: You were at Morotai for a while. Did you have any contact with natives at Morotai or New Guinea?

RM: We would exchange an undershirt for a bunch of coconuts or a rack of bananas or something like that. There were always a couple of people hanging around that would do things for you. You would pay them a quarter or give them something. We were paid. We were paid overseas. When you were in a stable situation it wasn't that bad. The soldiers played poker and we had a case of beer a month. Sometimes it would not come right away and you would get six cases at once. So you would pile them in your tent, if you had a tent. It all depends on your situation. They wouldn't issue you beer when you were on a combat patrol or a mission. When you were in a stable situation and you had shifts on duty and shifts off duty [they would issue it].

KP: So you had a much clearer demarcation...

RM: Even my mortars, had shifts. We had six mortars. Two mortars would be on duty all night and if I felt it was necessary I would get another section out. If I [still] felt it necessary, I would get another section out. I'm saying you had shifts, so you were always on duty. I was always on duty as a commander.

KP: So your experiences at New Guinea and Morotai, you had a fairly stable... Often a lot of combat units are constantly on, but you were on many nights able to sleep. How did you sleep during your...?

RM: Well when we were out chasing these bodies we slept on the ground. We had tents. We had packs. I had a tent and I would take bamboo shoots like this and I would make my own bed.

Everybody would do their own bed. You would cut a bamboo shoot 2 inches in diameter. Then you laid the bamboo down. Then you would split it with a machete, open it up, and turn it over to have an eight inch wide base. Then you would take another one and all of the sudden you would have a three foot base six foot long. You would put an extra tent half or poncho on it and your blanket if you carried it. I can't really remember. Then you would sleep pretty well.

KP: Even though you knew the Japanese did most of their action at night? You didn't have a hard time getting a good nights sleep?

RM: No, because we always had somebody on duty. So if there would be a strange noise they would wake you up. Absolutely. The soldiers who were on duty better not sleep.

KP: Did you ever catch anyone in your unit sleeping on duty?

RM: I think a few times. Because I would make spot checks. I was an officer and I had a responsibility. I would make spot checks. See we had lots of different situations. We had easy situations almost like going to work. You were on duty when you were at work, like policemen. And we had dangerous duties. But fortunately our dangerous periods were few and short.

KP: And generally when you were on patrol, was your...

RM: When you were exposed out there. We had casualties on almost every Combat patrol. One of my best friends who lives in Florida and I see almost every year, was a very daring patrol leader... I was sort of a more conservative officer than he was. He was always adventurous. He went on the most dangerous patrols and came through unscathed, unscathed. He would even slip onto Japanese occupied islands in a rubber boat. You know, just land on a beach. [He would] check and look around and then he came back to report. This is called reconnoitering. He would do it with a handful of men. HE had special mission patrol training in the States and he was good at it.

Another lieutenant, [Lieutenant] Sumner, was killed in a very similar mission. My friend, he should have had the medal, not me, you know. He did not get a medal to my knowledge but he got the job done. He was sort of a soldier of fortune. He was good on these patrols I'm telling you about. He probably had a medal and I don't know it.

BH: When you were on these patrols, how close was the contact between you and the enemy?

RM: It depends on what your orders are. If you're to patrol a certain area, then you patrol that area and never see anybody. They wouldn't send you against an enemy section without a sufficiently large force. Like that combat patrol, the main one, the biggest one that I was on. Of course, I never carried a rifle into combat anyway. I mean I had a carbine, but my mission was always support the front. Not the point or anything like that.

BH: So you were never involved in any close fighting?

RM: The point is the solder up front and he's the one that gets killed first normally. If he's not killed first, he's killed second because they shoot somebody behind him and then they take care of him. But then the lieutenant radios back, "We've uncovered the enemy." That's what the general wants to know. If there are some casualties, there are some casualties.

KP: When you were on patrol you felt very expendable and you had to be very careful.

RM: Well, I've driven my car now for over 50 years with no accidents. I drive defensively and carefully. I don't always obey the speed limit, but I only drive faster than the speed limit under very open conditions. [It's] the same thing when you're in the service. I mean the smart infantry riflemen, I'm talking about riflemen now, when they hear fire and fall, they don't just stop. They roll over. They fall with their rifle drawn and then they roll over ten feet. Anybody loading their rifle to shoot at that bush where they fell will not hit him because he has moved. In other words, there are lots of ways, to protect yourself but of course a lot of things are beyond your control and you get killed anyway.

BH: As an officer you realized that you were expendable. Do you think the privates realized that?

RM: Yes, that's why they were a little more wild than the officers. The officers tried to keep their heads and these guys would drink when they could and be a little careless. The smart ones, the better educated ones would rollover and be very careful. They were also careful not to be cowardly, you know, and hide when they were engaged with the enemy. [There were] a lot of brave people out there. A lot of brave people.

KP: So a lot of your men impressed you with their bravery?

RM: Oh, yes. I don't know why, but the Americans in World War II [were brave]. I think it was because we had the support of the public. We were fighting dictators and arbitrary leaders who were anti-free country. So we had great support. The young fellows were all gung ho, you know. They were probably too gung ho. I was young. I was a second lieutenant at age twenty-one. I was a captain, I was a company commander by 23 and captain at 24. And ... I wasn't particularly ambitious. I just did what I was told.

BH: Did you have any experiences along side allied forces?

RM: Yes, I ran into Australians. We drink their beer. They have the best beer in the world. The best beer in the world, a quart of dark Australian beer.

BH: Where was that?

RM: This was in New Guinea.

BH: Did you get along with them on a personal level? On a professional level?

RM: Oh sure. Yes. They were more professional at it. [For] some of them, that was their life. They didn't send Australian draftees. I think there were plenty of Australian Army people that loved to [be adventurous]. I mean they were more of a frontier country than we were. ... I wouldn't say I had a lot of contact, but I do remember some Australians.

KP: Did you ever get R&R in Australia?

RM: No.

KP: Did you have any chaplains in your unit?

RM: Oh yes, I always knew the chaplain because I was an officer and he was an officer. And at officer's meetings he was there. And he tended to people and held services. Sometime I was there. Sometimes I wasn't.

KP: What denomination was he?

RM: Well they were all denominations.

KP: So you had several different denominations?

RM: They had all types of services. I even think some of the Catholics recited a Jewish prayer and vice versa.

KP: How important were the chaplains to your unit? Did men often go to services?

RM: Well, I'd say it's comparable to right here, right here in Metuchen. Some people pay attention to them and some people don't. And I don't think it would be right not to have a chaplain in a battalion. I think it was a battalion chaplain. It could have been a regimental chaplain. But he moved around from battalion to battalion.

KP: So you thought he was useful to have? That he did help morale?

RM: Yes, go see the chaplain. (laughs)

KP: So you did use that line?

RM: Yes.

BH: Did you notice if there were any divisions along religion lines? Did the Jewish people hang around together? the Catholics? Did they avoid each other? [Was there] any kind of tension?

RM: We had some Jewish soldiers in my company. One was a Lieutenant. One was the company clerk, the one I'm thinking of was very enterprising. Some of them are enterprising people as they are in New Jersey. This fellow, when we were in Camp at Hattiesburg and Camp Shelby, he

would ... hire a bus and sell tickets to New Orleans on the side. (laughs) So, some solders were very enterprising.

I've seen Jewish chaplains. I had a very good friend named Lieutenant Friedman, who was one of the most professional soldiers that I ever knew. I think after the war he went to Israel as a professional soldier and hired out... I've never seen him since. But, no there were some Jews in the infantry.

KP: There were even some Jewish officers?

RM: Oh yes.

KP: How did that go, with all the National Guardsmen from Mississippi? Was there any tension there?

RM: Well, there were Jews in Alabama and Louisiana. There were Jews in the National Guard. There were no blacks. There were no blacks.

KP: Did you have any contact with any black units?

RM: Towards the end of the war, there were blacks in my unit, but not in the beginning.

BH: Were there any tensions from there?

RM: Not towards the end. Everybody was occupied with other thoughts. But I came home on a troop ship with quite a few black officers in my suite or whatever you want to call it. ...I was very impressed with them. If you grow up with a few prejudices against blacks, it's unfortunate. But when you have contact with those who are a little bit educated [you can see], they are no different. Absolutely no different than anybody else.

BH: So do you feel the southern officers...

RM: Oh no, they had their strong prejudices.

BH: So there was tension then?

RM: Well, we didn't have any blacks in the 31st Division. ...Later on, I'm saying, at the very end of the war, people were transferred just because they lost their unit or went to the hospital. So there were always a few around, but by that time nobody really worried about it. It wasn't really an Alabama/Louisiana National Guard anymore.

KP: In other words, it had been so diluted as the war went on.

RM: Absolutely. Boston and all these other influences [came in]. [The] casualties and mutual education [helped also].

KP: You mentioned that you also lost your general.

RM: I think it was a Colonel. My regimental commander. He and his staff for some reason, in New Guinea, got on an airplane. [In order] to reconnoiter something and the damn thing crashed. Everybody was killed. I think that's what you were asking about.

KP: Yes. So they needed to replace those...

RM: Yes, I think the military is a very dangerous situation from the point of view of accidents.

KP: Just in general?

RM: In general, right here in the states, there's no question. [It's] very dangerous. I've been a sailor for all my life and I told my wife the other day, "You know we've had a wonderful career sailing, but it's a fairly dangerous sport." And so everything has its dangers once you get out of an office like this.

KP: So you had said, that even if you're not necessarily in combat, it's just dangerous?

RM: Absolutely, no question about it. Absolutely.

KP: You were sent after Morotai to Mindanao. What was your stated mission when you landed?

RM: Our mission was to chase the Japanese into the hills of Mindanao, which we did. The day the war ended we were in the mountains. We had been receiving our supplies by air drop. And we were pushing further into the mountains chasing a Japanese force that was retreating. They would fight back every once in a while. We had casualties. We were trying to gain freedom for Mindanao.

KP: Were you landed directly on Mindanao or did you land at another point in the Philippines?

RM: No. Mindanao is an island. One of the largest islands. We landed near Davao, probably at the port of Davao. We were taken in trucks to the foothills. Then we set up a camp there for a few days, then got organized. Then we went up the Kabowi-Talomo Trail which is a walking highway. I mean, not for cars not for wagons because it went up hills and down hills with steps. Somebody had taken the trouble to build steps on the Trail. It took you into the heart of Mindanao. We were on our way to the heart of Mindanao. We didn't want the Japanese to stop, assemble, reorganize and re-supply somehow and attack Davao or the Philippines or the Americans or anybody... You have to keep the enemy off balance, once you've got him off balance. And it was getting closer to the end of the war.

KP: Could you sense that it was getting close to the end of the war?

RM: Well, we knew the war was over in Europe. And we knew that some of them were coming to help us, you know. We knew that there would be planes and ships. ...We could increase our force at a higher rate than we were increasing our force when they were occupied in Europe. So we knew, but we didn't know how it was going to end. We didn't know whether we would be landing on Japan or not.

KP: So you expected to be in Mindanao for a while and not necessarily on the invasion of Japan?

RM: Oh, I think that. We would continue to island hop.

-----End of Side Two, Tape Two-----

KP: This continues an interview with Robert F. Moss on October 13, 1994 in Metuchen, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and Bryan Holzmacher. Just to finish your point, you were saying about the war ending in Mindanao. You expected in a sense to be...

RM: Oh, yes we were just following orders. And we knew we were island hopping and we had gotten as far as the Philippines. I can't really tell you where everybody was honestly at the end of the war. I'm sure there are some published maps of where everybody was. We had progressed fairly well and our next ship could have taken us to a Japanese beach. Because I think we probably had Okinawa and a few other closer islands by then, so you hop. The rear jumps ahead of the front. Those soldiers in Okinawa wouldn't keep going. They would take us from the rear. Well, I had no reason to believe we wouldn't. But maybe MacArthur wouldn't have let our division land again at an intense area. Maybe they had enough regular Army and Marines to do that.

KP: You don't really know?

RM: I don't really know.

KP: How much did you know when you were in the field? How much did you know? How often would you get a newspaper? How did you know how the war was going? Or did you? Did you know very little....

RM: There were radios. And most of the time, we didn't pay attention. It was much too routine. When there was something big going on like V-E Day...

KP: You knew...

RM: We knew all about that.

BH: Right when that happened or a while after...

RM: Well, it was on the radio.

KP: Well, what about something like Iwo Jima and how tough it was. Did you...

RM: ...We were aware of all those things. The communication was good. The American forces were wonderful. We were cut short for a while there, but I mean as they produced and developed.

KP: Yes.

RM: It was beautiful.

KP: What about the food at the various places? ...You [had] mentioned at the end [that] you developed a vitamin deficiency.

RM: Yes, I did because I was in the hills so much.

BH: That was supplied by the air drops, right?

RM: Yes, oh yes. I can remember them. They would drop crates of eggs with a parachute.

RM: Mostly they just dropped packaged rations and things like that. That was the problem. They tried to give us an egg once in a while. ...You get in line and you get one egg, you know. You could do anything that you wanted with it.

RM: You could build a fire and boil it or you could put a hole in it and suck it out. There wasn't enough. There wasn't enough.

KP: Your problem with food supply was mainly at Mindanao, not at Morotai or New Guinea.

RM: No, we had kitchens in New Guinea. Anytime we were near an airport, protecting an airport, there were always adequate supplies because there were engineers and quarter masters and everything.

KP: At Mindanao in a sense you were really in the field?

RM: Yes, we were moving ahead against the enemy. Actually, it was probably ... comparable to the landing at Morotai. Except that there were more Japanese in Mindanao. But they were disorganized and we were chasing them away... They had probably occupied Davao and ran the city. They controlled everything. They controlled Manila and they controlled Leyte. We didn't have a real base. We lost all of our people at the ...Bataan Peninsula. ...Somebody ahead of us must have chased them out of Davao. We didn't make the landing. We were the follow up forces to chase them into the hills.

BH: Did you run into any stragglers? Did you capture any prisoners?

RM: Sure, we captured prisoners and turned them over to somebody else and sent them back as quickly as we could.

BH: What were they like? Seeing them up close.

RM: They weren't very healthy.

BH: In terms of nourishment?

RM: They looked pretty thin and unhappy. They had women.

BH: With the troops?

RM: Yes, I can remember seeing tents with twenty women in them. Blues and yellows and reds, ... not dresses, but shirts and pants.

KP: Were they Japanese women?

RM: Yes ... Thank goodness I was never involved in the prisoner element or the holding of prisoners. I was offered an opportunity when I was in Leyte of going to Japan on a troop ship carrying prisoners back to Japan. I turned it down. In other words my feeling against the Japanese was such that I didn't want to go to Japan. Maybe I should have [gone].

KP: You felt the...

RM: I had the chance to do it as an officer. [The chance] to be one of the leaders/officers in charge of ... troops that were escorting Japanese prisoners back to their homeland.

BH: When you saw these prisoners, did you feel that they were like the savage killers that they were depicted as in boot camp?

RM: Oh, no. No, no. They are no different than we are when you look at it objectively. No, no. We were killers. We were savage killers and they were savage killers in a fight.

KP: Did your men ever loot the bodies of dead Japanese soldiers?

RM: No. Well, I've heard of it...

KP: You never witnessed it?

RM: We never had a battlefield with enough bodies strewn around it. Thank goodness. I've seen dead bodies and nobody paid any attention to them. Some were bloated. Maybe somebody picked their pockets already. I don't really know.

KP: But...

RM: No mutilation or anything like that.

KP: In terms of Mindanao, is there anything else in terms of your actions there that are vivid or memorable? You were still with mortars?

RM: I was probably a company commander by then.

KP: So you had moved up to...

RM: I was a company commander in Morotai, but I didn't have the rank yet. I was a first lieutenant with company commander responsibilities.

KP: Now you were a company commander so you had more than the mortars, you had the entire...

RM: Yes, the machine guns.

KP: The machine guns.

RM: We had six mortars. ... A company commander of a Heavy Weapons Company had three machine gun platoons and one mortar platoon. The machine gun platoons had four machine guns each and the mortar platoon had ... three sections of two mortars, each, 81mm. That's about this diameter, 81mm.

KP: So you had more responsibility too.

RM: Yes, I can remember once on, I think it must have been on ... it was either Morotai towards the end or early when we had a camp in Mindanao, getting a little frustrated with all the headaches I had as a company commander. I can remember walking away from the company commander's headquarters tent out into a field about 100 yards. Then turning around and looking back at my camp. Then I put my hands up like this and said, "I've got this whole company in the palm of my hand. Why is it such a headache?" ... And I went back and started in... I was still young, so ... when it was dumped on me it was quite a responsibility. But I knew the infantry organization but still you learn. This is one of the most important lessons that anybody can learn in life. The earlier you learn it, the better. With a very difficult big job, there is only one way to attack it. Break it down into little jobs and do each job one at time.

KP: That's one lesson you learned in the military?

RM: Yes, that's one of the things I can remember going through when I went out and did that. I still remember, until this day, going out [into the field]. I probably had people in the hospital and supplies didn't show up or somebody was complaining about the food, you know. The two jeeps weren't working. I probably had in one day, too many problems. And I just walked off to gather my self together and that's how I did it.

But, the overall lesson is that any big job, even here in my office ... I get plenty of big jobs, you break it down into little jobs. So you have to mentally decide what's [going to be] separated ... as another one and another one and get ten little jobs. Then you do them one at a time. You take which one is the most important to do first. You shift them around and do them one at a time. Then all of the sudden the big job is done and you get paid.

You can not do a big job like people think you can do it. You have to go at it systematically and break it into parts. I learned that in the military. In fact, when I came home, I was involved in politics. I was borough attorney. I was on the borough council. I was municipal chairman of my political party. I said to myself, "Running a town is no different than running a company." You've got your tents and your people. You've got your distributions system to protect and you've got your quartermaster supplies or stores to watch. You've got your garbage to dispose of and your sewage and refuse. What's the difference between them?

KP: Except you live in better houses than tents. (laughs)

RM: (laughs) That's what I'm saying, it was really very comparable, very comparable.

BH: So you feel that your military experience led you towards politics?

RM: I think everybody that goes through it or 99.9% that go through it, are better for having gone through it. There are a few people that come out kooks, because they just don't agree with anything. That's too bad. I would say the vast majority of people are better off from having been in the military. Even without a war. Even if just going through the training.

BH: So you view it as beneficial?

RM: Absolutely.

BH: A benefit to your life.

RM: Absolutely. In fact one of the things wrong with our so called society is the lack of discipline. The lack of understanding of discipline. The lack of understanding, of experience there are things more important than doing what you want, you know. People who just want to do what they want are never going to get anywhere. You've got to learn discipline and that's the best place that I can think of learning it, in the military. A lot of people won't agree with that, but that's what I think.

KP: Had you thought of making the military a career?

RM: No, never. Never, Never...

KP: Then after the war ended...

RM: No, I was done. I did stay in the reserves for a while. For one thing, I was paid. I was going to law school, so I went to reserve meetings and got a little money. I got a little money from the GI Bill of Rights. I lived with my folks in an apartment. And then I went to camp a few times, but I didn't enjoy playing soldier. Eventually, after I got out of law school, I stayed in another five years and that was it. I was promoted to major. I probably should have transferred to the Judge Advocates Department but I didn't particularly want to do that either. So, I just got out.

KP: After the atomic bomb was dropped, how long did you remain in Mindanao? You had mentioned that you had been sent to the hospital.

RM: Well, first we came out of the hills. We brought some Japanese out with us. That took probably a week to get out of hills. Then we set up a camp. And there was a Filipino barber and I went to him and I let him shave me. I think that's where I got the infection. I was undernourished. And I had an infection on my face and it got into my mouth and they sent me to the hospital. They put Jensing-Violet on it or whatever it is. It was bad enough to send me to the hospital. I was put on an airplane and went to the hospital in Leyte, none were in Mindanao. So I never went back to my unit after that. It was breaking up anyway. I was in the hospital for a couple of months. My friend Tom Stilwell was in the hospital. The guy that was on patrol. ...He taught me how to play bridge, which I never knew how to play. When I was feeling better, I would play ping pong at the hospital. The nurses would come to give you a back rub everyday. It wasn't bad.

KP: What did you think of the medical care in general?

RM: What I had seen of course I was never wounded or anything, but I understand the surgeons were very good.

KP: So if someone was wounded in your unit, they could get fairly good medical care?

RM: Oh yes, like our chaplain, we always had our ... first aid medical people. Some of them got to be pretty good. They were right there. "Medic, medic!" He was always right there.

KP: So your medical care was also very good in the hospital?

RM: Oh yes, I had no complaints about the medical care. They were pumping me up with vitamins and iron and other things. And treating my infection, [which] never came back, you know. A facial infection isn't good because it could come back. It never came back. And I was cured completely. I didn't even file a disability. I probably could have, you know. When you were discharged there was a man sitting there, "Do you want to file a disability?" I probably could have, but I didn't.

KP: You never had any trouble?

RM: Never had any trouble. Well, I did lose bone. My own doctor, Doctor Alvin Mancusi-Ungaro, I went to him when I was in law school. I became anemic from studying so hard and commuting and the drudgery. ...He pricked my finger and looked at the color of the blood against the chart. He said, "You're anemic." I mean it wasn't red enough. And he fed me some iron, I was having trouble sleeping. He fed me some iron and in two days, I was sleeping like a baby. I had an iron deficiency. These things you learn along life. Now I take an iron pill every once in a while, not often.

I know what iron deficiency anemia, what it can do to you. Because, it knocked me out. And he examined me and looked at my teeth and said, "You are going to lose all of your teeth." I had lost from the infection lost some bone. Without the bone, it exposes more of the teeth and sooner or later they loosen. I still have some roots, but ... eventually I will lose all of my teeth. I still didn't file a disability claim.

KP: You also never joined any veterans' organizations. [Why?]

RM: Not actively. I did belong to the American Legion for a while in Metuchen, but I never went to any meetings. And I was Parking Authority Attorney and we were thinking of condemning the American Legion building. So I resigned from the American [Legion]. And I never rejoined. We never condemned their building. They still have it.

KP: After you got out of the hospital, where did you go next?

RM: Okay, they decided that ... there wasn't any point in sending me back to the unit. And they assigned me to Special Services. And I was assistant to the Special Services officer in Leyte base camp. Where I was, I can't remember if it even had a name. There was an officers' club there and a PX. It was his job to entertain the troops and bring in USO shows. I mean the war was over. Now it was just a matter of waiting for your points to take you home.

It was like a base in Fort Monmouth or something. You were there. You had to be fed three meals a day. You had to go out and have a place to have a beer at night. You had to have a PX to buy your toothpaste, you know. You could date a nurse or maybe there were dances on Saturday night. I think they were at the officers' club. So I was assistant Special Services Officer for a few months. They gave me one job. They had this big metal building with a high roof. I forget what they call them. A warehouse, empty. Well, they were running out of space, so they wanted to build an office one flight up and needed a floor. They assigned me the job.

I said, "I'm no engineer!" "Oh, well it's not that tough a job," So I went to a lumber yard and they had Japanese labor working and carpenters cutting the lumber and all. I had beams cut to put the floor on. ... And the beams were pretty heavy. If I were an engineer, I would have cut them in half, but I didn't.

I made these Japanese put up beams like this, this thick. And I saw them when they were bringing it in to build the floor. And there were fifty Japanese collapsing under this load. Finally, somebody smarter than I was said, you don't need that much of a beam. And they put

them back on the trucks and took them back and cut them in half for the main beam and cut them in quarters for the cross beams. Then they put the floor on top of that. So I was a failure as a builder. That came under my Special Services. That was one of my jobs.

BH: Was that at the time that they offered you the opportunity to go to Japan on the prisoner ship?

RM: Yes. Yes, right along there.

BH: You said that you didn't want to go. Was that because of resentment towards the Japanese?

RM: Yes, yes emotional feelings. I had no desire to see any Japanese.

BH: Do you still feel that way in any sense?

RM: No, no.

KP: Would you buy a Japanese car?

RM: No, I will not buy a Japanese car. My friend Stillwell bought several. (laughs) We have a little contention there. No, I would never buy a Japanese car. I agree with you there. That's true. That was a good point. But I don't have strong resentment. And I thought maybe someday we would go to Japan, but we never got around to it. I think maybe now we won't bother.

KP: How did you come home finally?

RM: There was a troop ship and I had enough points. And I was right in the same area there, the Special Services job. Of course, we were in a port area on Leyte. ... We marched down with our points. I had two Japanese swords in a box that I was carrying. I had a Japanese pistol that I had picked up somewhere. When I was in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, I took all of the bullets and threw them overboard. So I still have the pistol somewhere, but I threw the bullets overboard.

KP: What about the sword?

RM: I still have the sword somewhere. Maybe it's in the attic.

BH: These were things you found in the field or bought off of native inhabitants?

RM: I think during one of the campaigns, probably the last one, when the prisoners were marched away, there were piles of them laying around. And you picked up a few. I was an officer, I guess I had a privilege. But some of the guys did pretty good. ... You couldn't take too much. I could only carry that little box and the pistol. I wouldn't have taken anymore anyway. But I ... don't know whether it was legal or not, but it was sort of one of the things you did, bring a couple of souvenirs home.

KP: Which port did you land in the United States?

RM: San Francisco, Golden Gate Bridge.

KP: So you had the Golden Gate, San Francisco arrival?

RM: We did. Yes, that was nice. And we were put in a little camp waiting for the train. I had, not a relative, but one of my mother's Brooklyn friends had a child who was married and out there. I looked them up. I was in communication with home all of the time. And actually things got tough for my family when I was still in New Guinea. My father was sick and he lost his job, ... his retirement job. I put in for support dependents. And so they got some money.

KP: Hardship?

RM: Dependents, dependents. I didn't have a wife, but I had a dependant mother and father. They weren't working, because they were too old. ...My father was sick, couldn't work. ...They sent them a check. Maybe they deducted something my pay me too, but they added to it too. I don't remember the figures.

KP: How did you get back from San Francisco to New Jersey?

RM: Well there was a four day train ride.

KP: So you just took a train ride across the country?

RM: Across the country, right.

BH: Did you see any, sights in the stops across the country...

RM: Oh you saw the stop in the middle of Utah or whatever it is. It's in the cowboy pictures. I can't think of it. We never really got off the train. I mean it was a sleeper.

BH: Were there still crowds welcoming the soldiers home at that point? How late were you arriving?

RM: There was a regular crowd at the dock. ...A band and all of that stuff when you landed. And when we got to South Jersey...

KP: Fort Dix.

RM: Fort Dix. That's where we were processed out and had our medical exams. We had blood tests. I never had so many blood tests. R.O.T.C. and in the Army, I must have had 40 blood tests. Then the Reserves. I know I never caught anything from the Army because all my blood tests were normal. ...Actually, I've been pretty healthy. It was just that infection and eventually I

got arthritis. Who knows what from? Sleeping on the ground who knows? I had a [hip] replacement ten years ago. I still have some arthritis, but nothing in my hands.

KP: Nothing except for some bone loss in your mouth?

RM: I probably could have gotten a disability pension for that, but I never filed. [It was] too minor, too minor.

KP: How did you meet your wife? Before the war?

RM: Well she lived in Metuchen. She went to the same train that I did to go to law school. She went to New York to work. But I had known her in Perth Amboy, casually. She was one year different in the high school. And she was in my church. So I knew Carole Peterson from Sunday school and from school. When I went to Rutgers and she was at NJC the few overlapping years, but we never dated.

KP: You never dated each other?

RM: Just somebody I knew of period.

BH: How was the dating life at Rutgers? Were there a lot of opportunities to date?

RM: Oh yes, I dated. I took a lot of girls to dances. I went to all the dances. I took girls from Perth Amboy. I never went steady at the college. I don't know whether it was good or bad, but anyway I never went steady. I think I was too ambitious to get educated to get side tracked by that. So I made a point I think of not going steady. Of course, if you hit the right one, it would overcome your plan anyway. But it didn't and it was probably just as well.

KP: You were a Republican before the war. Richard Marlow was a Republican during the war and he said that there weren't very many Republicans at Rutgers when you were going.

RM: Well, I didn't join a political club for sure. But I was a Taft man. And I can remember when I was in the states for nearly two years. We would get leave. You know 30 days leave a year. You would go home twice, maybe for one week at a time. I would very often ... change trains in Washington. And I can remember walking over to the Capitol and sitting in a bench outside the Capitol. And I think I went into the Congress and I heard Taft make a speech one day. I remember sitting out there and saying, this country is made up of all sorts of people. Mostly from Europe: Italians and Hungarians and Danes and English and French and Dutch .. and Polish. And I said, "They are all mixing together." We learned in zoology, that when you mix different strains, they become more vigorous.

The prodigy becomes more vigorous. Where you inbreed the prodigy becomes less vigorous. I applied that principle to the United States. And I said, "This is going to be great. All these people intermarrying and so they're going to be vigorous and strong for freedom. We're going to become a wonderful country." I don't know whether we have or not. I think I said something

like that in my letter to Tom [Kindre]. I'm not sure how it turned out because there is so much and segregation. Not really segregation, that's the wrong word, but polarization of people sticking together with their own group. We are still getting mixed up more and more and I think in the long run the vigor of the American population will be less identifiable with race or nationality. Maybe in another one hundred years. There is not going to be even Asians and Italians. We are all going to be so mixed up that we're going to be something, I don't know what ..., Americans maybe.

KP: Do you think growing up in Perth Amboy and the Army is part of that?

RM: Yes, I was very well aware of the ... ethnic backgrounds of people. I dated a girl for a short while in high school who was a Ukrainian. And her parents wouldn't let her get serious with anybody, but a Ukrainian and in that church, for example. Instead, we just went roller skating together. There were a bunch of Ukaranian girls called "Junior Debs". I did notice that. And I was Dutch. My father was Dutch and my mother was German. And maybe we felt we were better than the Slavish people. I don't know. We weren't, you know. They were just as nice and decent and studious as anyone. Incidentally this girl ultimately married an Irishman.

KP: So you had a very positive sense of the different communities that existed in Perth Amboy?

RM: Yes, most of them drifted away to Edison, Metuchen, Woodbridge and places like that, but their roots were in Perth Amboy. We are all mixed up now. There are still groups that hang together.

BH: Were there any black sections?

RM: Yes, Perth Amboy, (Willikes?) Lane. It was a black section. One of my classmates became the chauffeur of David T. Wilentz. And he spent his whole life, there that was his job. I would meet him at class reunions and things like that. I'm sure there were other blacks that became professional. It wasn't a big black section in Perth Amboy though.

KP: You were a part of the GI's that came home and went into politics. In fact I read an article that you were appointed to the borough council with Vinnie Utz.

RM: That's right.

KP: Do you have any recollections? Everyone has a Vinnie Utz story.

RM: He was plucked out of the citizenry by Mayor Costa of the Ice Cream Company. He was a star athlete at Rutgers and a war hero. He lost an arm in the war, and later died in a tragic fire at home. The Republicans lost the election that year and Vinnie left politics. He was a fun loving guy but did not seem to like the political scene. Were wert two different kinds of Councilmen.

KP: So you were surprised he was appointed?

RM: Yes, I didn't think he was serious enough for that job. His manner was not very political. It's like becoming a judge. You are supposed to have judicial temperament and Vennie did not have political temperament. He was very outspoken.

KP: ... temperament ...?

RM: ... temperament. I think I have judicial temperament, but I never wanted to be a judge. One reason I was politically active because I might want to become a judge someday. You had to have political activity. I wanted that option for me, but as I enjoyed my freedom...I didn't seek it. I was idealistic and thought lawyers should be active in the community, and I was.

KP: So you never really wanted to be a judge?

RM: I turned it down three times.

KP: Really?

RM: Yes, I was approached three times. Because there weren't that many Republicans and apparently I was qualified. I was certainly qualified politically. No, but I turned it down. I never wanted to be a judge. I'm not saying it was the right decision because today I'd be retired and making fifty thousand a year for doing nothing. And you can hardly make that in the practice of law today, working full-time. Not in a small town anyway. ... From that point of view it was a mistake. For money. But for quality of life, I'm much happier with my life as a lawyer.

KP: Do you think you had a different outlook politically as someone who had been sent overseas on this GI experience than others, say those who hadn't had the same experiences? When you were a young council man and your other sort of political activities.

RM: I don't really understand the question.

KP: You were a Young Republican?

RM: I was State Chairman of the Young Republicans.

KP: You were on the borough council. Did you see the world differently than Republicans who hadn't gone overseas? Who hadn't fought in the war?

BH: Non-veterans.

KP: Non-veterans.

RM: Well a slice of my experience was different. But different experiences makes you better. I learned something through my political experience that's worth relating. I learned that when you went to a meeting, and I don't care what it was about, and you prepared yourself and you had an idea of how to solve the problem, ... there was never a time when I didn't come out of a meeting

after two hours of discussion and debate without a better solution than I went in with. In other words, I learned that discussion was absolutely essential to getting anything decided and done correctly. No matter how smart you thought you were, it was always improved by talking with other ... points of view.

There is no right answer that any ... one person has. It has got to be debated, that's why we talk about debate in Congress and things like that. They don't always debate well, but they often do debate really well. I've admired Congress when they have clashes and they figure out little amendments that takes care of this problem and takes care of that problem. Then they put the whole thing together. A lot of times it comes out real well. But, when your differences are so strong, as they are sometimes, those compromises won't work and that's happened a lot lately.

KP: You had seen a good part of the world. The Republican Party before the war had a strong isolationist strain. So did the Democratic Party. Did your attitude toward the world change?

RM: Not too much. I don't think we should have gone into Somalia. ...I don't think that because you put a few starving children's pictures on television, that should make a country upset entirely.

KP: How did you feel about the Korean War and the Vietnam War? Did you think...

RM: Well the Vietnam War was an anti-communist war. And communism finally collapsed, but we didn't know it was going to collapse. If you let communism continue to spread... So I'm not so sure it wasn't the right way thing to do. It certainly wasn't as wrong as a lot of people make it out to be. It's wrong how they handled it. They didn't go all out. They didn't bomb Hanoi and use what they could use ... We've occupied Haiti in a back door way, but Haiti is more stable now because we are there. If we could have occupied Vietnam, which was going communist, and put a stop to the communism, I'm sure we could have. I mean if....and got them turned around, that would have been a good result. You have to do some of these things in a military way.

Yet, I'm torn too. Why should we send boys? Let them suffer in their own mess, you know. So, I'm torn too. Like I said, I don't have a solution, but I wouldn't object to sitting around a table with twenty people and discussing it three or four times for three hours each. Maybe with discussion we could find a common ground and that's what government is. That's what government is. You elect people and they have councils and they have committees and they have hearings and they try to come to a solution of this or that. So I'm saying, ... I'm torn myself, but I don't think you can just ignore everything. Maybe I would have been an isolationist. But the people that don't want to be isolationists know how to get around it. There is a lot of suspicion that Roosevelt could have stopped Pearl Harbor and things like that. He didn't, because he knew it would bring us into the war. He wanted us to be in the war.

KP: In 1952, who would you liked to have seen get the Republican nomination? Were you a Taft man? Douglas McArthur?

RM: I was for Taft until he got defeated, yes. Because ... he stated and verbalized the things that I thought make a country go.

BH: In the 50's and the late 40's, dealing with the Red Fear and Communism, since you were just mentioning communism with Vietnam, what do you recall about McCarthy and what was your attitude towards him?

RM: Well I thought he was a radical. ... There are extremists in every area. He was an extremist.

BH: Did you feel that right from the start, that he was....

RM: He was bad. You see our world unfortunately, our news, our publicity, makes people famous or infamous. Of the people that get their name talked about some are freaks, someone shockingly unusual. I mean Madonna is a freak. Roseanne is a freak. It's one big freak show after another. They are not reasonable or ordinary people. Let me tell you my story about reasonable people. I went to Sunday school. I was a Boy Scout. I went to all of my classes in grade school and high school. And I saw my teachers, and I saw my scout leaders, and I saw my Sunday school teachers and my minister. I thought all adults were reasonable people, you know. With the same idea, well disciplined, learn, become a better person.

Well, after a lifetime, and even a few years after I got out of Perth Amboy or out of college, I learned, "Everybody is a kook to some degree or another, except me and thee" and "I'm not too sure about thee." So, if everybody was reasonable, the world would be different. But, we're not. We have our influences and our prejudices. ...Something that you don't think is kooky, but I think is kooky and vice versa. And we have to live with that. But I admit when I was growing up I thought everybody was a reasonable person. I didn't know about criminals and I didn't know about people like McCarthy, who lie and exaggerate to make whatever point it is they are trying to make. I thought everyone was reasonable. It's just not true.

BH: So I take it that you were not fond of the sixties with the counter culture movement with the hippies...

RM: No, I thought it was terrible. Dean (Heckle?) was the Dean of the law school. He told me that he tried to sit down with these rebellious students and talk to them. They wouldn't talk. They didn't have any expression on their face. They had some kooky idea that they thought was right and we're not reasonable. ... Dean Heckle, I don't know if you ever heard the name?

KP: I've heard the name.

RM: He was the moderator of the Presbyterian church. That's the top job in the entire country, for awhile. He never married. He was a bachelor and he was our dean. He was a constitutional law professor. A good friend of mine. ... I called him on the phone once in a while when he was in his final nursing home years. But, his description of the goofy way of the students and whoever was influencing them was strange. I have no idea who, but it was a goofy person. ...

Young people get influenced. They are young. I don't know who influences them. Young people get influenced by the goofiest things. And why they go to Woodstock and go through all of that trouble to hear some loud music with poor facilities, I have no idea. So I'm one to those reasonable people unless you decide I'm kooky too.

KP: You were a Republican in a Democratic county. Did that ever...

RM: It was difficult. I ran for office three times. Very frustrating. I was more interested in politics than the military, but I wasn't that interested to move to Somerset County and run in Somerset County.

KP: So in other words, you very much enjoyed practicing law?

RM: Yes and the private life. Today at this very minute, the private life is the ... diamond of the way to live. And ... not to go into show business and have your name bandied about, as an actor or politician.

KP: You in some sense like walking down the street and not having people know you?

RM: Absolutely, absolutely, it's the best thing in the world being a private person and, if you can, make a living in a private way. Unfortunately there are so many human beings with minimum talents. They can do unskilled labor or they can talk about a baseball game. They don't sense how to make a business out of this. ... And they're happy when they have a paycheck. Some of them lean on their shovels and accept a paycheck. So there are people like that. There are too many people like that, who do not prepare themselves with a trade. So they do need help, they need leaders to guide them, like union leaders or good employers who help train their productive employees. But if they're not productive enough then they will eventually lose their jobs.

BH: Did you ever at any point aspire to higher political offices?

RM: Well I ran for council. I was appointed, but I ran and everybody lost on the Republican ticket. Then I was appointed campaign manager of the Republican former mayor who wanted to run again. And he won by eleven votes, so I was made borough attorney. And I took on many cases. I was made borough attorney by two Republican mayors that I was campaign manager for. ... Metuchen went back and forth politically. The next time a Republican mayor was elected. I was probably on the campaign committee, but I didn't want to be manager and I didn't want to be borough attorney. He wanted me to be borough attorney and I said no. Somebody else took it. Because in those days, it got to be a terribly big job. I had trouble sleeping. They wanted an ordinance drawn by tomorrow. It was a high pressure job. I took cases to the appellate division and won them all. I took one case to the Supreme Court of New Jersey and won it. I was the borough attorney over a period of six years for two mayors, two years for each. And that was enough. Then I ran for assembly, in the midst of this probably. Then I ran for senate, but we lost in Middlesex county. I lost by 30,000, votes because everybody lost by 30,000 in Middlesex County, in those days on the Republican ticket.

KP: It's a very Democratic county?

RM: Yes, very Democratic.

KP: It's like being a Democrat in Morris County, which is the opposite.

RM: I was once municipal chairman, but I'm 72 now so about twenty years ago. I just dropped out. I don't even go to Republican Club meetings. And I voted for Perot. Bush is a Republican and I would support him, but he really fizzled out in my view. And I'm not to unhappy that they elected [Clinton]. I voted for Perot and I wish he'd done better, I wish he had been elected, but ... once Bush was out of there and now we've got Clinton, I have a feeling it will be a Republican Congress in the next [election]. I thought something had to be done to do that and a Democrat President for a few years wouldn't hurt.

BH: Do you feel Perot might run again? He's still popping up here and there.

RM: I think he's brilliant. He just doesn't have a debating talent and he's not a charismatic person. I think he's brilliant. And yet as I said a few minutes ago, what I think is a great idea, ... [doesn't] always go over with a group. ...He has some ideas that didn't go over. We all do. We all do. Clinton does.

BH: Since Perot's main objective was to rebuild the economy and get rid of the deficit, how do you feel about Reagan and Bush expanding the deficit so much?

RM: I'm not happy about it. I'm a Republican and Reagan was a Republican. I think they should have tightened their belts and ... spent less. He had certain objectives. One of them was to make the military very strong. I think that's what collapsed Russia. You know there are pluses and minuses of everything. We made Russia spend so much on military because we were spending on military, and that eventually collapsed them. Plus the fact that their idea of government was fallacious. Nothing like a free people. But free people have to be educated. Haiti, we are going to have a problem there because they aren't intelligent enough. They aren't educated enough. I mean they are illiterate, 75% of them don't know how to read and write. That's what illiterate means. Now how can you have a functioning democracy. We are going to have a terrible time. I heard what's his name, President Aristede, say the other day that education is one of his main goals. To get ... the people educated. ... I have views on any subject you've got I suppose, but they are not necessarily right. They are just my views.

-----End of Side One, Tape Two-----

KP: Is there anything about World War II that we forgot to ask or anything about your career or your Rutgers experience?

RM: I didn't make an outline because I've been so busy. But, it helps when you suggest a subject.

KP: Well I guess that one of the few things that I forgot to ask about Rutgers and that I do usually ask is, why was Professor Peterson your favorite professor?

RM: Well he was a philosopher. He was humorous and I ... enjoyed going to class. I'd use logic in my business, the major premise, the minor premise and the conclusion. I recognized it then, that it's important. And I guess I have a philosophy. And he helped set the limits of the subject of philosophy with his lectures and things. Whereas the economics professor talked about "wants," you know, and how to achieve them. It became very mathematical, the calculus professor went through these complicated formulas that didn't do anybody any good unless you were going to be a space scientist, you know. Medicine, if I were cut out for that, then the botany and the biology professor would have been fascinating to me. So it came down to philosophy.

KP: Oh yes, if there is something we forgot to ask...

RM: Well, I can think of a couple of things that maybe would be pertinent. For example, how education is applied to ... your personal and business life. I rented this office for 25 bucks a month, that little room, for five years. And I'm in a bank building with a bank. And I wanted more space. So I called the president of the bank, who was reachable. It wasn't that big of a bank. I said, "I want more space." He said, "Well we are building a new bank down the street. And there will be a new owner, so I'll let you know when we find a buyer for the bank building and then you can talk to him." He couldn't give me anymore space. Well I think I called him regularly, every two months, for about eight months because I needed more space. He hadn't sold the building yet. Well one day, the last time I called him, he got mad because I was pestering him. He said, "Why don't you buy the building?"

I opened my office with 200 dollars in ... cash. And I didn't have a secretary, you know. And I did everything myself. I typed everything. I didn't have any money. But I went home that night and I was thinking and thinking that it was a good suggestion. At two o'clock, I woke my wife up and I said, "I'm going to form a corporation with some of my friends and we're going to buy that building." This is education. Here I had a law school education. It didn't come to me quicker, but it came to me with that little comment by the president of the bank.

So as I walked around town and went to meetings, I said, "I'm forming a corporation to buy the bank building." And I offered it to maybe ten or twenty of my friends. I was trying to get somebody in different professions like a contractor, and a real estate man, and I'm a lawyer, and maybe a plumbing expert. You know things like that. ... Well some of my best friends turned me down and today regret it.

I had six people including me and we put in 3000 dollars apiece. And all of them had 3000 dollars, except me. So I charged them a 1000 fee to form the corporation and buy the building. And I borrowed 2000 from the bank to put my 3000 in (laughs) So we bought the building for 51,000 dollars and got a 40,000 dollar mortgage. We put in 18,000 dollars, less 11,000 cash to

buy the building with the mortgage. And so we had 7,000 left and we spent a little on renovations and things like that. Anyway, we formed a corporation, the Metuchen Professional Building Incorporated. This is 1955. That's what I am saying. That's how education creates something out of nothing. I mean, I didn't have any family with money. I opened my office here without a client in town. I mean, I was a newcomer. I moved into Metuchen in '48 and I graduated law school in '49 and was admitted to the bar in '49. I didn't know anybody. I still hung out a shingle and quit my job in Newark because I was a bachelor and could afford to live on very little. Actually, I kept going to law school. I earned a Masters of Law too. It's out there somewhere. It took me five years part-time going to Newark while running my office. Anyway.

KP: Did you think you wanted to teach law?

RM: No, no, I taught a lot of law, but I was not planning to be a teacher. I taught estate planning at Union College at night to adults. I taught business law at Rutgers for a while at night. Little checks, little jobs. I never wanted to be a teacher. But we formed this corporation, we bought this building. We ... looked for a tenant. ... Then we started lending money to the corporation because we needed more than the \$7,000 left over. We put this addition on. If you look in the back, there's an old three story building ... and a newer two story building. We enlarged the store to hundred feet ... I won't take too much time on this. But that's an application of ... our education. ... People out of nothing can create something. We bought another building. We bought another building. We sold this other building. We kept this till last. Now we liquidated the corporation five years ago. Sold the building to my partner, who formed a group to do the same thing. And we are left with some land out in Hunterdon County that no one wanted to buy. It's not ready for development, but it's getting close. So we own it individually not as a corporation anymore. And we had a wonderful time. It was a social activity. It was a business activity. We had plenty of headaches. We had to borrow money. We had to put more money in. Then we paid off our notes to ourselves and things like that.

...People who don't use their education and make opportunities are wasting their education in a sense. That's what makes America go. Everybody is a self-starter all over the place. I don't care where it is, Arizona. You can self-start something and fill a need. Like the economics professor says, if there is a want, you know, fill it. The only thing that I can say is that I've always been a leader. I was president of the Rutgers Law School Alumni Association and I went through all of the chairs there. Belatedly, I got active in the RAA [Rutgers Alumni Association], but I'm not ambitious to go anywhere there. I'm interested in the Alumni Glee Club and my class and that's about it. ...My wife and I have a deal. We are not going to take president of anything else, anymore. We are both in our 70s. We've done it. But we're not going to sit home and do nothing. We participate, but ... we are not going to be the top leader of anything, anymore. Now, I've enjoyed the interview and everybody I've heard has enjoyed the interview.

KP: Oh good.

RM: Some people complain about the personal questions, but they are not really personal. I hope you explain it that it's of interest sociologically. If you have any final question we can wrap it up.

BH: I had one question that I had wanted to ask that got kind of skirted around somehow. Regarding your feelings or memories, or how, if you actually saw an enemy soldier that you had killed, did it affect you in any way psychologically? Then or afterwards?

KP: Because people were trying to kill you, but you were trying to kill other people.

RM: Fortunately my shells were 2,000 to 3,000 yards away or maybe 1,500. So I never saw.

KP: What about when you were company commander in Mindanao?

RM: Oh, I saw, but I didn't shoot anybody myself. However, under those circumstances, I wouldn't have thought anything of it. If somebody was coming at me with a machete or a bayonet with a rifle. And I had a rifle and could point it, I would have thought nothing of it. Not a thing. That's what war is. War is hell. And there isn't any other way around it, war is hell, period. We'd be better off without war.

BH: So afterwards it wasn't an experience you tried to hide away?

RM: I do not understand these people who claim psychological problems and things like that. I just do not understand it at all. Maybe it's just my physical make-up. ... I have ... a conscience just like anybody, but you have to temper it with the situation. You kill somebody in self-defense, you shouldn't let that bother you for the rest of your life. I feel sad and I think they are sick. ... I don't understand why people go to shrinks. I don't understand why the Hollywood actors all have to go to analysis. I'm perfectly satisfied in my own analysis of the situation. ... I've never felt helpless. Maybe they feel helpless. I don't understand why they do things like that. ... There are four or five billion people in this world and no two of us are alike. So with those statistics, you are going to have some extremely bad and extremely good and extremely silly and extremely sick [people]. ... You are going to have all sorts of individuals and combinations of individuals. When you take any area there's a different combination. But, no two of us are alike and that's a broad spectrum to cover. I'm in a barber shop group and we sing a song, "Gee I Wish that I Could Write A Song," and one of the lines is: with three billion voices singing together are a happy sound" Trying to get everyone to sing together. It's a wonderful song written by Neil Sedaka. You young people might know Neil Sedaka. I never heard of him until I learned this song in the barber shop group. Incidentally, not to brag, we just won the district championship of our small chorus in Ocean City, Maryland last weekend. Covering six states, New York to Virginia. We have a barber shop chorus that I'm in and also the Alumni Glee Club of Rutgers.

KP: So you've always enjoyed singing?

RM: Well I sang in college and then I stopped. I went to the war then I went to law school and was building a business, but when Soup retired ten years ago, Soup [Austin] Walter a friend of mine as well as my director, I formed an octet for him to direct. I mean, not for me, for him to direct. Then a larger group decided to form the Alumni Glee Club. We all joined, but we sang

as an octet for eight years before we broke up. And we said, "If you guys want to sing, come to rehearsal at the Alumni Glee Club." I formed it just to keep Soup busy, otherwise he would be sitting at home doing nothing and I was a friend of his so I didn't want him to sit home doing nothing.

BH: Were you always involved in strictly acapella units or did you have backing bands?

RM: Well Soup ... trains us with a piano where as with the barber shop group, all they use is a pitch pipe, no pianos. But, when ... we sing in a concert, even the Rutgers Alumni Glee Club, it's acappella, no accompaniment.

KP: Well, thank you very much.

RM: Okay, I'm glad we got that barber shop in.

KP: Thanks again.

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