RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDER NAZEMETZ

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

KURT PIEHLER
and
KEVIN MCGUIRE

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TRANSCRIPT BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

Alexander Nazemetz: Well, let's try it, whatever you want to do, and let's see how it goes. I can't promise anything. [laughter]

Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Alexander Nazemetz on April 6, 1995 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler ...

Kevin McGuire: ... and Kevin McGuire.

KP: I would like to take you back before the war.

AN: Sure.

KP: I would like to ask you a few questions about your parents.

AN: Go ahead.

KP: Your parents both immigrated ...

AN: That's correct

KP: ... to the United States. When did they come over from the Austro-Hungarian Empire?

AN: Well, … my father came over, I believe, in 1910. He was about twenty-one-years-old, and my mother came over in 1911. She was seventeen.

KP: You mentioned on the pre-interview survey that they were Ukrainian.

AN: That's correct.

KP: Is there a migration history there?

AN: Of the Ukrainians coming to the United States?

KP: Well, coming first to Austro-Hungary?

AN: Well, no. This was simply because of where they lived. They lived in the province of Galicia, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which changed borders constantly. You know the history of Europe there. … I think my father came over to avoid the draft, ... right. My mother came over for a different reason entirely. Her father had remarried and she did not get along with her step-mother. And so, she just took off. And, apparently, from … the stories I remember her telling us, … her step-mother robbed her, … when she didn't have anything, really. But, when she got to Bremen, German, which was her port of debarkation, she wanted to stay there, because she really liked the city. But, she decided she'd better keep on going, 'cause her father had given her enough money. Interestingly, her port of embarkation, where she got on the train, was in Auschwitz. We don't know too much about that. That was just the city where

there was a train and that's where she got on it. It became famous after the war. [laughter]

KP: Your mother and father came over for different reasons. What were your father's reasons?

AN: Just to get away from the draft. I think he was in danger of being … drafted, and he … didn't want to be. I think … one of his brothers had already … come over, 'cause … four of the boys came over, my father and three of his brothers.

KP: But, he, in a sense, came over alone?

AN: Yes, he did. They all came over, apparently, because there were already people here that they knew. ... I think my mother came to Carteret, where she was supposed to know people, or somebody was supposed to know her. I don't really know too much about that. But, Mom and Dad met in Passaic and that's where they were married. The Ukrainians were marrying Ukrainians in those days. There wasn't much of a melting pot.

KP: What was your father's first job?

AN: He was a machinist. He was a trained machinist and he stayed in that all his life.

KP: What kind of companies would he work for?

AN: He worked for a company by the name of McKiernan-Terry Corporation. It was in Harrison, New Jersey. He was there all his life. After Passaic, they moved to Newark. And then, they wanted to get out to where there was a little land and they could have a garden. So, they moved to South Plainfield. They had eight kids, of which I am the sixth.
KM: In the community that you grew up in, did your mother know people in that community?

AN: No. She knew people when she was coming over to this country. ... I don't know whether they sponsored 'em in those days or not. I really don't know that. But, … she came over and she became a domestic. They didn't speak English, neither one of them. But, by the time they both died, they both spoke English quite well. We were not obliged, as in some families, to speak Ukrainian. My father always felt that as long as we were going to grow up in this country, he thought we should know English. And so, except for my oldest brother, … who is fluent in Ukrainian, the rest of us just were [not]. We could understand it. And, whenever Mom would talk to us, or yelled at us, or something, and it was in Ukrainian, we always responded in English.

KP: But, they did not stress the fact that ...

AN: No

KP: ... You learn both languages?

AN: No, they never did. It's … perhaps a shame, now that I think back on it.

KP: Your father stayed with one company throughout his career?

AN: As far as I can remember, yes.

KP: For as long as he was alive?

AN: For as long as I can remember, until he died in 1941, yes.

KP: You were part of a very large family.

AN: Well, in those days, eight was an average family. You know, they had all the kids to take care of the parents when they grew old. ... I have three brothers and four sisters. Two sisters have since died.

KP: What was it like to be part of such a relatively large family?

AN: When I was a kid, I thought it was an awful lot of kids. But, as I grew older, and, now, I don't think that's really such a big family. I really don't. My oldest brother is going to be eighty-one. And, … he is, or was, a dairy farmer, over in Hillsborough. And, my youngest sister just retired after forty-two years … as a nurse at Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia. [laughter] So, we went the whole route.

KP: Your father, how did the Great Depression affect him?

AN: As far as I can remember, he always worked. And, of course, my brothers, who were much older, they also went to work at a very early age. Most of them … have grammar school educations.

KP: Yeah, I noticed that on the survey.

AN: Yeah.

KP: What was the notion in terms of education, that the oldest must work and not continue with school?

AN: Well, no, it was, I think, the family needed the money. … I'm guessing now, but, I think that's probably what it was.

KP: What kind of expectations did they have for you, in terms of going to college?

AN: I don't think ... [that] it was ever articulated. I do know that when I graduated from college, … my mother, who was alive then, was enormously proud that I had made it through college. She says she never thought that a child of hers would go through college.

KP: Really?

AN: Oh, yes.

KP: How do you think your father would have felt about it?

AN: I think the same way. In fact, I enrolled in Rutgers in engineering because my father had an engineer who was his boss. And, he always felt that if I was going to go anyplace, I should study engineering. And, of course, that was a mistake. [laughter] I did enroll, and I spent one semester in engineering. But, … after about two weeks here, … I knew I was in the wrong curriculum. I had only been out of the Army about two months, I think. And, I went to the Dean of Men, and I said, "This is the wrong place for me." And so, they gave me these psycho-motive tests. Dr. Starr, psychiatrist, psychologist, administered them, and, after two full days of testing, she came to me, and she said, "You're one of those." And so, she gave me a third day of testing and she recommended that I go into journalism ... and advertising. So, I did. And, I've been happy ever since.

KP: I noticed that your oldest sister did go and get a nursing degree.

AN: My youngest sister.

KP: Excuse me, your youngest sister.

AN: Yeah

KP: You and your sister are really the only people in your family with degrees.

AN: We [were the] only two. I have one brother, between us, he's younger than I, okay, ... and he wanted to study voice. And then, apparently, Public Law ... what is it, 346? I don't remember. Apparently, it didn't cover voice. And so, he decided not to do that. And, he went into printing instead, and became very successful, because he got into computer forms about fifty years ago. And, … he retired from Chemical Bank as, I think, second in command of the purchasing department.

KP: So, it sounds like your brothers and sisters did very well.

AN: Yeah, and all our kids are doing much better. There are … only eight grandchildren, right. And, my two sons have Masters degrees. My brother John's two boys have doctorates, and … my other nieces and nephews all have Bachelors. Several of them are connected with universities.

KP: Oh.

AN: Yeah, … my nephew, John, is a professor of industrial engineering at Oklahoma State. My son, Alex, is the Director of Admissions at St. Bonaventure University. My niece, Marjorie, her

last name now is Knox, she was an instructor at the University of Rhode Island. So, we're around there and pretty much in the teaching business. [laughter]

KP: Your father's death in 1941, how much of a shock was it to the family?

AN: Well, he had been injured in his shop, and, therefore, … when he was hospitalized, ... we kind of expected it. It was quite a traumatic [thing], though. I was sixteen at the time.

KP: What was the accident? What had happened?

AN: Oh, I don't even remember that. ... I don't remember that. But, I know that he was injured, and I can't remember if something was swinging, or something, and he got hit by it. I don't remember precisely.

KP: You said your parents moved from Newark ...

AN: … To South Plainfield.

KP: South Plainfield.

AN: Yeah, and that's where I was born.

KP: And, they probably moved because they wanted some open space?

AN: They wanted some open space, because, don't forget, … these were people where they came from a farming community. If they could have a few chickens, and a garden, this was going to be just ideal for them, ... and they had those. [laughter]

KP: How did this affect you?

AN: Well, I didn't think much of it, ... you know. I always thought that's the way everybody lived. [laughter]

KP: So, how much did they have? How big was their garden, etc.?

AN: Well, it wasn't large. … If I remember right, I think we had something like six lots. I don't know what that makes up for, maybe a half an acre. The house still stands. Somebody's living in it. And, the fence that my father put up, and that my kid brother and I painted any number of times, is still there, too. [laughter] I'll tell you, when he built something, it was going to last. [laughter]

KP: Did they have any livestock, any chickens?

AN: Yeah, they had chickens. You know, I don't think we ever had ducks. I don't think that duck was a popular kind of foul. Chickens, yes. I think, at one time, we had a cow. But, as I

grew older, I don't remember the cow anymore. But, I think, when I was [a] real [young] kid, we did. Somebody had to get milk for all these eight kids, even though milk, I think, was about ten cents a quart. [laughter]

KP: What about your neighbors, did they have similar homes and lots?

AN: They had … similar things. … We were in a neighborhood which was primarily Slavic, I would think. I know there were some Polish people there, and there were some Russian people there. It was interesting, my mother could shift from one language to another. She … didn't have much education, but, she spoke five languages. And, she could just slip from one into another. The only one she had a little difficulty with was Czech. And, the only reason I found that out's 'cause my oldest brother married a girl who was Czech. And, her mother spoke Czech, and my mother would speak Ukrainian, and the two of them were able to communicate. Don't ask me how.[laughter]

KP: Your mother did not work outside of the house?

AN: No. She was a domestic before she got married, but, she didn't work after that. They had eight kids and they came two years apart, except for the last one, which was four years. [laughter] And, we have some Italian families where we went to school together, all the way through the line. There was one boy into the Italian family, and there was one in the Ukrainian family, or a girl, or something. And, in fact, I have … one friend, we started in kindergarten together, and his brothers and sisters went to school with my brothers and sisters.

KP: Your classmates, what were they like? Your neighborhood friends, were they also Slavic?

AN: No. We ... then were thrown in ... with some Italians. And, it wasn't till, I think around the sixth grade, where one of the other schools only went to about the sixth grade, and then, we were thrown in with people whose names were quite English. But, pretty much, it was that. We didn't meet any Jewish people until we were in high school. That's where the competition for academics became very strong, because they were all so smart. I have a very good friend who I went through high school with. We saw each other at our fiftieth high school graduation [reunion]. And, he said the only reason he came was to see me.

KP: Were you in any Ukrainian organizations, or were your parents?

AN: They used to have a Ukrainian church, when my parents belonged to that, and I learned to say my prayers in Ukrainian, okay. I think I've forgotten those now. There is a Ukrainian church here in New Brunswick. I think it's up on Livingston Avenue. That's the church from which my mother and ... two sisters were buried from.

KP: So, they were active in the Ukrainian church?

AN: Yes

KP: But, they did not belong to any other organizations?

AN: No, I don't think so.

KP: Was your father in any union when he was at the plant?

AN: I can't answer that, 'cause I don't know. I don't even know if they were unionized. I really couldn't tell. I ... don't know. I never heard him speak about that. But, that doesn't mean I heard every conversation either. We were excluded from quite a lot of them. [laughter]

KP: When you were going through school, what kind of expectations did the teachers have for you?

AN: For me, personally?

KP: For you, personally, but also, for the other students. Who did they expect to go to college? How many did they expect?

AN: In grade school, I don't think that was a factor.

KP: Yeah.

AN: I don't remember it at all. In fact, … you know, after I took these psycho-motive tests, I discovered that I didn't learn how to do arithmetic in the grades. And, yet, I was a good student in arithmetic. But, what does that mean? The other guys were so dumb? I don't know. But, apparently, I didn't really learn to do arithmetic very well. The problems, when somebody says, "You've got three apples, and you take away four oranges, what have you got left?" I just wasn't able to do that. I don't know why. And, because my brothers and I all had pretty much the same teachers, and, I don't know, maybe [it] just wasn't ... the classmates I was with. Of the group that I went to grade school with, … I would say there was fifty in the class, maybe twenty of us, went on to high school.

KP: That many dropped out?

AN: Yeah, … or a lot of them went over to vocational schools. There was a vocational school here in New Brunswick for boys, at the time. I'm not sure where the girls went, Woodbridge, or somewhere. And, but, we went on to high school. And, actually, I enrolled in high school in a general curriculum, because, at that point, I really wasn't thinking ahead to college. Fortunately, I had a general science teacher there who made me change over to an academic curriculum, which was very fortunate. At least that way, I had the credits to get into Rutgers. [laughter]

KP: So, when you went to high school, you did not have a vision of going on to college?

AN: No, no, no. See, … I entered high school in 1939? Now the war, of course, in Europe, was on, but, we, at that point, did not know that we were going to be involved. And, I wasn't that

much of a student of what was going on politically, or whatever, to think about that too much.

KP: Did your parents, and you, have relatives still in Ukraine?

AN: Yes. Some of them apparently are still there.

KP: Did you have any contact with them at all?

AN: No. My recollection, I remember, and I don't remember how old I was, but, my father … got a letter from his sister. And, he was infuriated, because he couldn't read it. And, that was because she wrote in Polish. **You're not Polish are you, by any chance? I was brought up to be prejudiced against the Poles. I don't know, I think the war between the Ukrainians and the Poles was like seven hundred years ago, but, they have never forgotten it. ... And, I mean, if anybody were to call me a Pollock, I would take terrible umbrage. And, I don't know why. But, anyway, [on] the World War II fronts in Russia, or the area where my parents came from, [there] was a little town called (Fishchanetz?). That's where the war was fought, right there on that battleground. And, the people there were relocated. Now, I understand that I had a cousin by the name Alex Nazemetz, who, when the Germans invaded that area, joined the German Army. I don't know. He never returned from the war. But, ... here I'm going into all my family history. I didn't think we were going to do that. [laughter] But, my brother visited the village in, my kid brother, … 1969, I think it was. He went skiing in Austria, or somewhere, and he decided he would make this trip. And, he made it, through the help of a relative in Canada, who saw me on television. I was on a ridiculous quiz show there one time. And, they saw me, and, of course, I was introduced as Alexander Nazemetz, and they called me an advertising man from New Jersey. Now, this person in Canada had a brother named Alex Nazemetz who never returned from the war, right? And, … they didn't know where we were. And, of course, we didn't know she was there, right. But, later on, through some relatives in Pennsylvania, we found out, and my brother went there, and, through their help and a school teacher of theirs, he made this trip. And, ... what did he do then? He spent about three or four days there. He couldn't go to where my cousins lived. … Well, he actually went to Lvov, you know where that city is, on the border … of, I guess, the Ukraine and Poland. And, they visited with him there, because there was no overnight accommodations in the village where they lived. Now, he took some pictures, and then, I had a relative, apparently, who visited there. He was twelve when he was relocated. He now lives in, well, … it's a part of a Polish community, ... somewhere around Stettin, which sometimes was German, sometimes was Polish. I don't know, but, we've never been able to really verify that ... he's a cousin. I really don't know. [laughter] But, ... he wrote to my brother, and then, we couldn't read … his letters. We really don't know anyone who can read the language. And then, I worked with a woman who was Russian. And then, he wrote, and said, "Write to us in Russian." So, I wrote this nice, long letter, and I gave it to her, and she translated it into Russian. And, he responds back that he can't read the writing. He can't read the Russian. You know, so, really, we gave up. My brother, John, the oldest boy, married a Ukrainian girl. And, her father was really quite literate, and he was able to read the letters. But, when he passed on, nobody else could read the letters. So, occasionally, we do get a Easter**

card, or Christmas Card. But, it's very hard to keep in touch when you can't communicate. It's very, very difficult ... when you're not exactly sure. [laughter]

KP: How did your parents feel about the approach of war in 1939, 1940, 1941, especially when the Ukraine was invaded?

AN: I really have no recollection of how they felt. They were really quite Americanized. They didn't think very much of what was happening over there. I know they were very concerned about the fact that there were four boys in the family. And, of course, all four of us went in. So, … it was pretty traumatic for my mother, because … my one brother who went in, like, in January of '42, and that was right after my father died. And then, my brother John and I went in, in '43. And then, my younger brother, Walt, didn't go in until '45. But, … we all served.

KP: So, your mother would have preferred if you did not have to go?

AN: Yes

KP: She knew you had to go, but it sounds as if she was not pleased.

AN: Yeah, yeah. Well, ... in fact, … I can remember an incident where one of the neighbors … was coming over to visit with my mother, and I was working in our victory garden. You know about victory gardens? Everybody had a little extra plot of land to grow potatoes, or whatever they were gonna grow. And, she said to me, "You are not yet going into the service?" And, I said, "I'm leaving next week." And, shortly there after, I went in the house, and they were both bawling, [laughter] because she had, like, three or four sons, and they were all gone, too. ... You know, we had an awful lot of guys from our neighborhood who went into the service. And, … all of them returned happily.

KP: Really?

AN: Yes. All of them came back.

KP: So, there were no gold stars.

AN: No. Not in our immediate neighborhood.

KP: You mentioned you did not have a very good view of what was going on during 1939, 1940, and 1941. Even though we look back now and it seems very clear, did you have any inkling that we were on the verge of war?

AN: Well ...

KP: That we were building up for war?

AN: We really didn't. Now, I can remember Franklin Roosevelt making his speech, asking for a

declaration of war after the attack of Pearl Harbor. I remember the attack of Pearl Harbor. … I think I heard about it at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I don't know what it was. I had a teacher in school whose son was in the Army, in Hawaii, at the time. So, ... we began to hear a little bit more about what was going on. And, in high school, we were all gathered in the auditorium to hear the president make his speech and ask for a declaration of war. So, … at that point, I don't really think that it was going to affect me. After all, I was only sixteen. But, I swear, the day I became eighteen, on the 10th of February, 1943, I think, I got my letter, and ... [it] said, "Go." And, I think I had a preliminary examination the same day, which was primarily a blood test. And, I wrote to the Selective Service Board and asked for an extension, so that I could, at least, graduate from high school. Now, in retrospect, that really wasn't necessary. I would have gotten my diploma anyway, right? [laughter] But, then, I would have been in the war that much sooner. But, I graduated from high school on the 11th of June, and, on the 22nd, I was in Fort Dix. I had never been away from home ... over night.

KP: Really?

AN: Never.

KP: You had never been a Boy Scout?

AN: No. We didn't have Boy Scout troops right in our neighborhood. We didn't have that, unfortunately. We had heard of the Boy Scouts, but, there was just no troop right in our neighborhood. ... But, no, I had never been away. ... Oh, no, it was a traumatic experience for me to go into the Army. You know, … as I say, I had never been over night. I never had my clothes off in anybody else's company. And, of course, in the barracks, guys were walking naked across the barracks to go to the shower room, and I really couldn't quite do that. [laughter] You know, ... no, I think there must have been a lot of guys like that. … I'd wrap a towel around myself before I [went out there]. ...

KP: One of the things that has always struck me about the military is that there is no privacy, even in the latrines.

AN: Absolutely none. Oh, they had, half a dozen toilets, all lined up. There was ... no privacy booth or anything. You get constipated for the first week or so you're in the Army, and then, after a while, there's just nothing for it. You just have to do it. [laughter] No, it was traumatic, it really was. You know, they told us to bring enough clothes for three days. That was a famous little saying, and we brought wrapping paper and string. ... I don't know, after the third day, I guess, we wrapped up our civilian clothes, and tied a string around them, and sent them home, and that was the end of it. [laughter]

KM: You had said, in your survey, that your basic training took place in Greensboro, North Carolina.

AN: Yes.

KM: Was that an even bigger shock than the experience you had a Fort Dix?

AN: No, no. I think that they gave us a good deal of testing in Fort Dix. There was a lot of [tests]. I guess it was English, ... and it was math, and then, there were spatial kind[s] of things you had to visualize, and, apparently, judging from that, they were somehow able to classify you to the kind of outfit you should be assigned. I was very fortunate to be assigned to the Army Air Force, so that, ... when I went to Greensboro, that was a training base for guys in the Army Air Force, and it was a matter of going to lectures to learn about guns, and ammunition, and calisthenics, constantly. ... [laughter] [We were] always doing the Air Corps hop kind of thing, and they gave you more testing there. And, I went from Greensboro, which was extremely hot that summer, as I recall, and, you learned to wash your own clothes, that kind of thing. You learned how to take care of your area of the barracks, and, you learned how to make a bed. I never had to make a bed. I had four sisters. I never washed a dish, never cooked a meal. Boy, both my sons learned how to cook, I can tell you. [laughter] But, I learned how to make a bed, and we had to stand inspection, and, ... all that good stuff, and we learned to be military. We learned how to salute, and how to stand, and how to march, and, of course, respond to commands. When they made you do left flank and forward march, and, that kind of thing. ... Don't forget, we were also still a segregated army, right, so that our platoons were all white, but, we also had all black platoons, ... and they could march. I still remember, they used to sing and count cadence, and, boy, when they marched, they really looked good. The rest of us had two left feet. [laughter]

KP: Had you wanted to go into the Air Corps, initially?

AN: I did. Actually, when I felt that I was in danger of being drafted, somewhere along the line, maybe in April or May of that year, I tried to enlist in the Air Force, to see if I could get into a cadet program, but, I couldn't pass the eye exam. Okay, as you see, I'm wearing glasses.

KP: You wore them at the time?

AN: No. I didn't wear glasses at the time, 'cause ... I think, like, one eye was 20/30, or something. But, they wouldn't accept you then. So, I really didn't get glasses until I started at Rutgers, and I couldn't see the blackboard in chemistry class. [laughter]

KP: So, in many ways, your interest in the Air Force is a happy accident of your time at Fort Dix.

AN: Yes.

KP: You very well could have wound up in the infantry.

AN: Yes, I could have. ... I don't know how they, separated these guy[s], one from the other. I ... have no idea. I would just presume that I did pretty well on the tests. So, that's all I can say.

KP: You did not do anything extra for yourself at Fort Dix?

AN: No. You really didn't have much choice. Now, when I went for my physical exam, and that was in the Newark Armory, I had, fortunately, worked for the post office, and they had sent me for a complete physical, like the year or two before, so that ... I kind of, at least, knew what I had to go through in order to get a complete physical. And, I can remember standing in front of the desk sergeant, just when the sergeant was right there, and there was a young man in front of me, and he said to this guy, "What service do you want?" You know, typical of a sergeant. It's not, "Sir, ... where would you like to go or serve?" And, the kid said he'd like to go in the Navy, and he said, "Why the Navy?" right. ... He had a whole bunch of stamps there, and he hit his papers like that, and, upside down, I could read it. It said, "Rejected." Right, now, I presumed he was 4-F, right. So, when he asked me, I wasn't gonna say the Navy. So, I said, "The Army," and, when he did my stamp, I read it upside down, and it said, "Accepted," and there you go, I was in the Army. [laughter] Because, apparently, I passed, my physicals there, and whatever other tests they gave us. I don't remember, ... after all, fifty years is a long time, and I really didn't pay too much attention to all of these incidents until recent years, when everybody starts to ask me about these things.

KP: That is common. Actually, the person who created this project was in public relations and had a similar sentiment, that he really did not talk about the war, think about the war, until many years afterwards.

AN: Yeah.

KM: After your basic training, did you receive a liberty pass for couple of days?

AN: I think I got one three day pass, sometime during my basic training.

KP: How did you spend that?

AN: I came home, with my little satchel. I came home on a very crowded train, and I came up to Newark, and ... I don't know, I guess I caught a train to South Plainfield. I don't remember exactly the route, but, I came home, and I spent ... three days home, or something like that.

KP: Did your parents own a car?

AN: My parents did not own a car, but, my brothers owned cars, so, ... there were automobiles in the family. I think our first car was a 1932 Ford. [laughter]

KP: Once you were in the Air Force, did you try at all to get into any of the cadet programs?

AN: Well, see, I had already been rejected for them, so, I didn't know what to do at that point.

KP: You did not try again?

AN: No, I didn't try again. ... I don't remember that I did, and they sent me, from there, to

armorer gunner school in Denver, Colorado at Lowery Field, and there, we were supposed to learn all about bombs, and how to arm them, and that sort of thing. ... I'd forgotten how long that program was, but, pretty much, it went through the winter of '43, I guess.

KP: So, you had seen two very different parts of the country, the South, and then, Colorado.

AN: Yeah. Well, interestingly enough, ... when we were sent to Greensboro, North Carolina, they had all of these guys from New Jersey. A lot of them from the metropolitan areas, like Jersey City, and Hoboken, places like that, and us poor country boys from South Plainfield, and then, we got to Greensboro, North Carolina, and we got guys from Georgia and Tennessee, and we had never met southerners before, right. ... Here we go fighting the Civil War all over again, because the southerners always brought it up, and, some of the northerners were pretty quick about it, and referred to Sherman's March, through Atlanta. Holy smoke, ... I don't remember them all, but, ... we learned to get along quite a lot. But, it was interesting to meet all those [people], and then, I got out to Denver, and I went to school there. ... When we completed that, ... I don't remember if they asked us, ... did we want to go on to gunnery school, I don't remember that, but, I do know that that's where I ended up. And then, I went to Kingman, Arizona, right, where I went into gunnery school, and I had my first airplane ride in a B-17, [laughter] and, I learned all about caliber .50 machine guns. We had to learn how to take them apart and put them back together, blindfolded. We really didn't have to do that during the war, because we always had at least a little light, but, ... we had to take the innards out of the casing of the gun all the time, and clean 'em, and stash them. And then, every time, when we were about to go on a mission, we had to put them back in and check them, to make sure they worked. ... We got up very early in the morning. We usually took off at four, three-thirty, four o'clock in the morning. Our guns were all in place, and we had a little light in the tents, which were right there at our heartstands, ... and then, from Kingman, they sent us to Lincoln, Nebraska, for reassignment. And, I believe, I had a furlough then. I'd already gotten to be a corporal, seems to me, right, and that's where we were assigned crews, in Lincoln, Nebraska. I had met, in gunnery school, a young man from Plainfield, whom I had known slightly. ... He went to Plainfield High School and I went to North Plainfield, but, we worked the swing shift at a local factory from four to ten. You know, everybody that was able, could go and get a job, for at least for a little while, and he worked there, and so did I, and we were nodding acquaintances. But, I met him in Kingman, ... so that we became fast friends, right? The only person in the world I had ever seen in the Army that I knew, and, when we were in Lincoln, Nebraska, ... the Army asked us, "Do you have someone you would like to have on your same crew?" And, we were so naive that we said, "Let's tell 'em, we want to be together." We should never have done that, because, then, they asked us what our hometown was, and, as soon as they saw Plainfield, ... that we were both from there, they separated us. They didn't want to have what happened to the Sullivan brothers happen again to two guys from the same town.

KP: You think that was very clear?

AN: Absolutely. I think, in retrospect, that's absolutely the reason why. If we had just, gone to whoever was doing these assignings and said, "Hey, look, I met this guy down in Arizona and we kinda hit it off pretty good. Would ya put us on the same crew?" it mighta happened. But, we

did it, because they asked us formally, and, we had to write it out, and we did that, and, instantly, we were separated. ... We are both convinced that's the reason. Then, we got all our crew assignments. ... Let's see, we had four officers, and, I guess it was six enlisted men. So, there was ten of us on the crew, and, ... after that, we were transferred. I got a furlough then, and I'm happy to tell you that that was D-Day, 'cause, I arrived home, and I expected a telegram any minute, June 6th of 1944. I figured, "Oh, they're gonna call us back." But, they never did, and I spent about ten days home. Then, I went back to Rapid City, South Dakota, where we, as a crew, trained, and we used to fly day missions and night missions. ... [Whenever we] were not flying, we were off. So, the duty there was very good. It always ended up there were about six or eight of us who never could scrape up fifteen cents to go to the movies. We weren't making a lot of money, you see, so, it just went. What we did was eat out a lot, because mess hall food was just unbelievably bad.

KP: Where was the mess hall very bad?

AN: It was bad up there in South Dakota. It was bad almost every place, because they had to cook for so many people. You know, you really couldn't expect anything that was gonna ...

KP: But, I have often been led to believe that the Air Force had better food. Was that a myth that some have been perpetuating?

AN: Okay, now, ... I can back up a little bit and say, yes, that was true. Certainly, it was true when we were overseas, okay. Here, it was just mess hall stuff, and I don't know who these guys were who got to be our cooks and our bakers, but, when they had to cook up a pot of something, there was a enormous cauldron of something, and it wasn't always the best. [laughter]

KP: Your training took you to a lot of different bases and you commented on the Civil War being re-fought. What about Colorado? What struck you about Colorado? It was probably a much different place from what it is now.

AN: Oh, yeah, I think so. It was wide open spaces. I remember the trolley cars, which we no longer had here on the East. I remember going on horse back, from wherever it is we hired the horses, and we rode all the way to Golden, Colorado, and we saw the Coors brewery. Now, I have since been that route, and it is a highway with hotels and motels the whole distance, and it was just wide open country when I was there. What I liked about Colorado [was] that it was very scenic, ... the Rocky Mountains were off in the distance, and they were always snow covered when I was there. ... I did get a chance to get up to the Great Divide there, and I did a little skiing, which I was not very good at, but, I tried it, ... 'cause we used to get like thirty-six hours off every ten days, or something, when we were there. So, we did a little traveling about. ... I had a great teacher when I was in Colorado. There was a man there who was about thirty-two years old, who was a misfit with the rest of us, who were nineteen, right, and we don't know how he got into this group, but, he had to have friends. ... He was from Chicago, so that, he was a bit sophisticated, and so, when we went off on leave, he'd always come with us. ... In fact, that's where I had my first drink over a bar, and I was frightened to death, right, 'cause I wasn't old enough to drink, ... and I did have a beer. But, ... they didn't trouble us. We were in the service,

so, they didn't bother us. But, we would sit down at a table, and ... he taught us how to order from a menu. We were all learning. ...

KP: When you said order from a menu ...

AN: Yeah

KP: ...You had not really eaten in a restaurant before?

AN: Well, I had. Very rarely did we eat in a restaurant. It's not like today, when you take the baby when he's still in the bassinet.

KP: So, the experience of eating in a restaurant was unfamiliar?

AN: It was. I think it was unfamiliar to me. I think I did it before I got to Colorado, but, that happens to stand out, because we [had] somebody saying, "Let's try this," and, "This is good," and, "I don't recommend that," or, we could say, "Well, what is this?" you know, and he could tell us what it was. [laughter]

KP: What was your first drink like?

AN: It was a beer.

KP: Did you enjoy it?

AN: I can't remember. [laughter] ... I really don't remember.

KP: Did you pick up any other vices in the military that you remember?

AN: I smoked, I smoked. I didn't smoke in high school, although I was in with a clique of people who did. They were the sophisticated group, but, I didn't smoke. But, I did pick it up in the Army, and I don't know exactly why, except, maybe, I was just nervous and had to have something to do. But, that's all. I never picked up the swearing, which was just rampant, ... throughout the services.

KP: For someone who had never been away from home, did this sort of profanity, and also, often, hard drinking, from what I have been told, and a lot of card playing, shock you at all?

AN: No. I don't think so. ... I didn't get involved in the dice games or the card playing. I didn't know how to play cards. I learned a little bit about poker, and hearts is a game they used to play a lot, but, ... I never got into those things. I just stayed out of them. I was not very good at it, so, I didn't want to get involved, or else I'd lose all my money, what little I had.

KP: Your instructors, I guess beginning with Greensboro, who were they? Were they combat people?

AN: No, no, they were not combat people. They were ... just drill sergeants, like you might see in the movies. I did not really come in contact with someone who had combat experience until I was in South Dakota.

KP: So, even in Colorado, there were no combat tested instructors?

AN: No, no. They were civilians, in many cases. They were teaching at the school. Some of them were civilians, anyway, because, they were teaching us about poison gas, and then, of course, the military, they taught us about bombs, and how to arm them, or what kind of bombs were available to us, ... 'cause my job on the aircraft was to arm the bombs once we took off the ground.

KP: What did they teach you about poison gas?

AN: [They] just told us what it was, and we had a chance to sniff it. That's all I can remember.

KP: Did you learn how to arm poison gas bombs, in terms of launching a poison bomb attack?

AN: No gas bombs! No, never, never, no. The arming of a demolition bomb was just taking out a cotter key, that's all. I mean, there was nothing to it. [laughter]

KP: Now, the bulk of your training it sounds like, in Colorado, centered around ...

AN: It was around armament, ... pretty much. ...

KP: You said you were taught by civilians. What kind of civilians? What kind of back ground did they have?

AN: ... I can't answer that. I don't know. I have a feeling at least one of them was civilian, and he was talking about poison gas. I don't think he was the military type, I really don't. He just didn't look it. [laughter]

KP: At Greensboro, did you have regular Army sergeants?

AN: I think regular Army. They were regular Army. I would have guessed they were regular Army.

KP: When you compared notes with people in other branches, how did your basic compare to, say, if you had been in the infantry or another branch? Do you have any sense of what differences might have existed?

AN: I would say ours was easier. From what I've seen in the movies about the Marines, and that sort of thing, ours didn't compare to that. I don't think anybody harassed us in anyway. You know, because ... you had, all types. You had the guy who was a physical specimen, who could

do anything on the obstacle course, and you had guys like me, who weren't really all that good at it. You know, you could do it, it was a little bit of a struggle, but, you managed to get through it, and you could do the laps, and all that sort of thing. ... I don't know whether these things are interesting to you or not, but, I remember, when we were in basic training, ... it was so hot, and the field was so dusty, what they did was ask us to sew an extra button on our shorts, 'cause we wore ...

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

AN: And, I hadn't thought of that in a long time. [laughter]

KP: I think part of that probably got cut off.

AN: Really? ... We were asked to sew an extra button on the fly of our shorts. The physical training, we could do it in these shorts, and, of course, we got just dirty as could be. They took us out on forced marches. I know that we had to bivouac ... and we had a two-man pup tent. I fell asleep once with my shoes on. I could hardly walk the next day. You know, you got tired, and some of the guys found a stream, about a mile away, and so, boy, that went quick, right through our campsite so fast, and everybody just ran down to take a bath, right? And then, they found out what we were doing, and they made it off-limits. They did take us up to a lake one time, to go swimming. I don't know if it was a life preserving kind of thing, but, we went in with our shorts, I remember. And, because that lake was lined with pine, we came out green. We never got the shorts clean again. I don't know what was in that lake, ... it was just unbelievable. [laughter] You're making me think of things I never thought of in a long time.

KM: You had mentioned before, about the movies, about the Marine Corps, that you had never had training quite as tough as that.

AN: Yeah. Well, ... you've seen movies where you have this tough, tough sergeant, you know ...

KP: Like Jack Webb.

AN: ... And, he picks some[one], whoever it might be, and he'd pick on somebody, and just make him go through these routines to the point where he actually goes out to shoot somebody. We never had anything like that. They were tough on you. ... You couldn't call the rifle a gun, right, you had to call it a piece, as I recall, right. This is a piece and it's not a gun. ... We had to get out on the firing line. ... I don't remember how I shot with the rifle.

KP: How much gunnery training did you have?

AN: [A] lot. Down in Arizona, a lot.

KP: Did you have very much in basic training?

AN: Well, we had some. We ... had to qualify for marksman, or whatever it ... was, expert, or whatever that was.

KP: So, you did have that level of training?

AN: Oh, yes. We did.

KP: Now, were the people in your basic training all destined for gunnery crews?

AN: No. I don't know what happened to many of them. I really don't, 'cause, ... you know, once we got out of basic training, we were assigned all different places. It just so happened that I was a guy who went out to armorer gunner school. I don't know where the others went. I really don't know, and then, I went on from there, as I say, to Kingman, where we had ... a lot of gunnery practice. You know, ... we did an awful of shotgun shooting, and skeet.

KP: In basic?

AN: No, in gunnery school, ... in Arizona. We had, my recollection is, ... to qualify, we had to shoot twenty skeet out of twenty-five, riding on the back of a pick up truck. Now, understand now, I mean, you're flying in an airplane, ... and the other guy is flying, and so, you had to learn how to lead them. That's why we had to stand up in the back of a pick-up truck. ... It was in a circle, and, as the truck ran over a wire, the skeet would come either at you, or away from you, or something, and you had to shoot twenty of them, in order to qualify. Otherwise, I guess, they wouldn't let you be a gunner. They didn't want anybody shooting ... [if that] somebody couldn't hit anything. I don't believe I ever hit anything, by the way. [laughter] But, ... no, it was good. In fact, we all thought that was pretty good training. We shot air to air, pretty much. We had a drone outside there towing a target, and ... we would shoot. We had ammunition, I think, that was painted, so, we could tell whether or not we had hit the target, ... right.

KP: Maybe I should just clarify that your training in Colorado was centered around armaments, and maintenance of the gunnery, what it was, how to maintain it, but, you did not actually get trained to fire it until you went to Arizona?

AN: That's right, yes. Well, see, I think every crew had to have an armorer, so-called, and that's what I was.

KP: Your duties included arming the bombs?

AN: That's correct. You see, the bombs we had, regardless of, I think, the size, whether they were 100 pounds, 250, 1000, or whatever, they had the fins, the fins, and then, on the back, they had a propeller, right. Now, that propeller ... was really the item that armed the bomb. Now, what I had to do was, once we got off the ground, ... I guess the pilot would call me and tell me it's okay to arm the bombs. Then, I would go up to the bomb bay, and I would go to each one of the bombs, in the back, and there was a cotter key, that was holding this circular thing from moving. Now, I would take all of those out, and I would pull them back, and I said, "The bombs

are armed," and I would save those, just in case we had to land with the bombs.

KP: Did you ever have to land with the bombs?

AN: Yes, I did. ... What happens is, once the bomb was released, that little propeller had to rotate 250 times, or something like that, and it fell off. ... When it fell off, the bomb was armed, fully, you see, and then, it would explode on impact, whatever it hit. There was a plunger inside and it went down into the bomb and exploded it. Sometimes, it didn't work. [laughter] Most of time, I like to think it did. [laughter]

KP: What else did you learn in armament school?

AN: It's very hard to remember that, because I've just really forgotten it. It's been so long. ...

KP: It sounds like your gunnery practice in Arizona was extremely practical.

AN: Yes, I think it was.

KP: Especially, there seems to have been a real emphasis on accuracy, hence the skeet shooting.

AN: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. We had to do it and it was all kinda shotgun stuff. You know, ... it was interesting.

KP: How many people did not make it from the two trainings, the one in Colorado and Arizona?

AN: Gee, it's hard to know. I don't know, I don't know. We also went, in gunnery school, ... through the decompression chambers, right, 'cause in gunnery school, we didn't fly on oxygen. ... We flew, regular height, 10,000 feet, something like that, over the Grand Canyon, so, we could have a look, and that kind of thing. ... Now, the thought has just escaped me. What was I going to say? Oh, the decompression chamber, ... it was a chamber, in which, what they did was try to simulate the atmosphere as we went up, right. Now, the first time that I went in it, I passed out at 18,000 feet, and that was just at the point where they had said, "Put your oxygen masks on," but, I don't remember that. What I do remember is somebody helping me put it back on. So, I had to repeat that, and I went up, and I think we had to stay at 18,000 feet for about ten minutes, minus oxygen masks. But, we had guys in that chamber who were writing their names, constantly, and some guys got up around 22,000 feet, before they really had to do something about it. ...

KP: You say they had you write your name constantly?

AN: Not me. Others were asked to do that, just so they could see what it looked like, ... 'cause at the end, it was just a scribble. Each thought he was writing his name as beautifully as he always did.

KP: Really?

AN: Oh, yeah.

KP: That was the test of their limits.

AN: Yeah. You have no control, absolutely, 'cause anoxia sets in, and you just go to sleep, ... forget it.

KP: Oh, really?

AN: Oh, sure. Lack of oxygen? That's a way to go, believe me. [laughter]

KP: So, were guys shocked when they saw their signatures?

AN: Oh, sure, sure.

KP: Because they thought their handwriting was the same.

AN: Well, I was shocked when I passed out. I thought I was just as strong as everybody else, ... but, they were very understanding. They said, you know what, it could have been that I wasn't really feeling up to par that day, or, maybe, I had something for breakfast that didn't agree with me. But, ... I can't say that actually happened. I just ... didn't make it that first ten minutes, that's all.

KP: Yeah.

AN: But, ... in actual combat, we put the oxygen masks on at 12,000 feet, and, coming down, as long as we were in friendly territory, ... we took them off at about 16[,000 feet]. Now, ... the smokers on board, of course, would like to light a cigarette at that point. They'd been out maybe seven or eight hours. But, you see, a match wouldn't light that high up. The only thing that would light was a Zippo lighter. That's why all the Air Force men carried them, because that would light. Once you got the cigarette lit, it would stay lit, and it would burn, but, you couldn't strike a match at that altitude. It would just fizz out. [laughter]

KP: How hard was it for smokers?

AN: I don't think they thought about it much.

KP: You had enough things to think about.

AN: Yeah, I think so, because most of us were pretty scared. We were, ... you know, overseas.

KP: Had you been interested in aviation at all growing up?

AN: Well, I don't know whether you fellas remember Hadley Airport. ...

KP: I do not remember it, but, you are not the first person to mention it.

AN: Yeah, okay. Well, they used to have little airplanes over there, and they used to have what we used to call a parachute jump every Sunday, right, and, we'd go out, and we'd watch this guy get up on this bi-wing plane, ... whatever they called it, and, ... he'd jump off, and open up the parachute, and everyone would clap and go home, ... but, it never sparked any interest in me. I was never particularly interested.

KP: You never used to take trips to other airports, or collect and build model airplanes?

AN: No. Oh, maybe I tried to build one. I'm not very dexterous with my hands. I found that out very early in life. ... [laughter]

KP: After your advanced gunnery training in Arizona, then you went to Rapids City.

AN: No. We went back ... up to Lincoln, Nebraska. That's where we were assigned crews, and then, we went up to what they called operational training, in Rapid City, South Dakota. That's where we flew as a crew, you see. Each gunner in position, each pilot, and co-pilot, navigator, and bombardier, and we all had our various assignments. We used to fly day and night missions, and ... we did air to air gunnery. We did air to ground gunnery across the Badlands of [South Dakota]. They had, I guess, they were wrecks of airplanes, or something, they had put out there, and we used to try and shoot those, and shoot at them. ... We did try to, change positions, every once in a while. Me, as a waist gunner, I would try the tail position. I was a little bit too tall for the ball turret. They wanted somebody who was under 5'9" in there, and I could get into it, but, it was pretty uncomfortable, 'cause, the gunner sat there with his legs up around his ears, and ... it was just tough. ... [I would] want to try ... the top turret, that was a scary spot, because you're up on top there and you don't see anything. ... [laughter] But, I didn't have any trouble flying. I was not afraid of being in an airplane.

KP: Where did you have your first experience of actually flying in the Air Force? Was it in Arizona?

AN: Yes. It was in Arizona.

KP: How did that happen?

AN: Well, first of all, I don't know, we were just there, a day or so, and they put us in an airplane, and took us up.

KP: How much training did you have in the air before you joined your crew in Lincoln, Nebraska?

AN: In terms of hours, I don't know. We used to fly quite a lot. We flew quite a lot. I know that ... when we first started to fly, a serious problem was air sickness, and part of that ... was because of the gun-powder smell. You know, when we were firing ammunition, ... that smell

permeated the whole aircraft, and, depending on what you had for breakfast, and they didn't provide you with anything to throw up in. You had to throw up in the bomb bay, and, if you threw up in the bomb bay, then, when they got down on the ground, you had to clean it. So, I threw up, I think, once. Fortunately, I didn't have that problem. But, I also learned there were a couple of things I couldn't eat before I flew. One of them was corn. The other one was an apple. Couldn't eat either one, 'cause they would repeat on me constantly. But, otherwise, I could eat anything, ... and a lot of guys were like that. You know, some guys just never got over it.

KP: What happened to them? Did they stay in the Air Force?

AN: They stayed in it as long as they [could]. ... One of my crew members, he was the engineer, he got sick every time he went up. We, the enlisted men, asked to have him removed.

KP: Was he?

AN: Yes, he was. Well, ... you know, he had a major gun position. You know, if we were in combat, you know what? The guy's in bomb bay throwing up and we're being shot at. No, it's not fair. So, we asked that he be removed, ... and he was.

KP: Was he an enlisted man, or an officer?

AN: Yes, he was an enlisted man. He was really the highest ranking enlisted man. He was what we called then a tech sergeant, right, and the rest of us were staff sergeants.

KP: How many missions did you fly before you called for him to be relieved?

AN: It was about six.

KP: So, you had actually been in combat with him.

AN: Yes. Yeah, right. We ... thought that once he got to combat, he wouldn't get sick, right.

KP: So, this had been a problem at training.

AN: Yeah. And, of course, ... he was a guy who just loved to fly, and he wanted to fly, and we didn't want to block him from it. But, after a while, it got to be too much. Once we got into combat, and saw what it was like, ... we didn't have the protection, the protection of those two caliber .50s on top of the aircraft, we were going to get a little bit nervous. Especially, you see, ... our first couple of missions, we had the unfortunate experience of having to come back all by ourselves. ... [laughter] You know, the group didn't wait for you. Something happened to your aircraft, you lost an engine for some reason, you got left behind. They didn't wait for you, and, if you're all alone over an enemy territory, in this big monster of an aircraft, ... in those days, it was big and monster ... [laughter] we just felt [threatened]. I don't remember who started that, but, however it got started, I was in favor of it, as I recall.

KP: What was your reaction, since he was the senior enlisted man?

AN: He wasn't, at that time. We all went overseas as corporals. ... I guess it was kind of an unwritten law that you didn't fly the English Channel unless you had three stripes, which made you, what was known then as, a buck sergeant, and I got those quite quickly, and then, after I don't know how many missions, maybe twenty, I got the staff sergeant stripes. That was ... pretty nice though. I made, in those days, I forgot what my base pay was, as I was flying overseas, I think it was about sixty dollars, and then, I got fifty percent flight pay, and overseas pay. I was making almost a hundred dollars a month. [laughter]

KP: But, in some sense, that was given wages at the time, even what a lot of front-line people made.

AN: Well, I tell you, I saved enough so that, after three-and-a-half years of college at Rutgers, where I went to school on Public Law 346, I cashed the last of my bank account to buy a suit to graduate, and I was only sending home about, I don't know, ten, fifteen dollars a month. ... I think I had a bond, or something, coming out. Actually, we didn't really need any money, 'cause you could live on the base, if you wanted to live that way, but, ... again, when we were overseas, we did want to get to London, and stuff like that.

KP: Your crew in Lincoln, maybe this would be a good chance to talk about the crew, and go through the crew, and who they were, and their backgrounds.

AN: Backgrounds, I don't have too much on, though, see, our pilot was a fella by the name of Stanton Lawrence, and he was from Rutherford, New Jersey, okay.

KP: Had he gone to college?

AN: I'm going to guess that he did. I don't really have that. There was ... a fairly wide chasm between the officers and the enlisted men, at this point. So, we never really consulted each other about what we did before the war, or, ... anything like that. I have a feeling that he did, 'cause he was about twenty-four-years-old, which made him pretty ancient. [laughter] He was Stanton T. Lawrence, III. Stanton T. Lawrence, IV was born when we were overseas. He was from Rutherford. I did find out later that he became an attorney, and I know I met him once, just as he was going to Trenton to, I think, get a license, or something, before the State Supreme Court, or something of that sort. I will [tell] you that we never kept in touch. The crew never did. Maybe, when we first started, we used to send Christmas cards, but, we were not like you see in the movies, everybody's a buddy. It just didn't happen that way. I thought we were a strange group of people, personally. [laughter]

KP: Some crews were remarkably close, were they not?

AN: That's what I understand. Well, I always regret that my crew was not like that.

KP: Why did you think the crew never bonded? You had flown a lot of missions together.

AN: Yes, we did.

KP: So, if something was right, why question it.

AN: Well, when we were in the air, everybody did his job, and ... it was perfect, right. But, when we were on the ground, socially, we just didn't match, that's all. ... I think, one of the reasons, I don't know, I have a tendency to be, maybe, a little bit more artistic. Like, ... we went to London. You know, there's one thing I hate, and I must have hated it then, it's [when people say things] like, "What are we going to do, now that we're here?" Well, "This is London. Let's go someplace. Haven't ya ever heard about London?" right. I was the only one, as far as I know, of the enlisted men, who made a tour of London, so that I could go to see Buckingham Palace, and the Tower of London, and ... the other guys didn't do it. They spent their time in a penny arcade, right, or else among, ... some of the Piccadilly commandos, the prostitutes that walked the streets. I didn't do that. I was scared to death every time they showed us one of those VD pictures. It was enough to drive you up the wall. [laughter] You have no idea how terrible those were. I'm surprised they don't have something like that for AIDS. Maybe they do, I don't know. ...

KP: You are not the first person to mention those films. So, your crew did not really get along?

AN: No, we were fine together. I mean, but, we were not buddies. We were not buddies at all. ... The co-pilot was a logger from Oregon. He was twenty-six-years-old. **(I recently met Jay's daughter. She disputes his age, saying he was much younger at the time.)**

KP: So, he was even older.

AN: And so, he was the old man of the crew. He always was, and even [in the] post-war, when I had occasion to meet him, on several occasions, he was a regular guy, right. ... He was a first lieutenant, and he was from Oregon, and he took a lot of the pictures that you see in here. All of the negatives have been developed by the 100th Bomb Group Association. They make a very good exhibit of the air war, 350th Squadron. World's worst combat photographer, but, he took 'em anyway, right. The bombardier was, I believe, from Ohio, his name was Marvin Berg. Somewhere along the line, I heard he'd had about a year of medical school, because I know that he ministered to me when I was wounded. ... The navigator was a fellow by the name of Dankewalter, ... I think from Indiana, and he was very much aloof. He was, like, twenty-years-old, and one year older than most of us, and he was a second lieutenant, and, therefore, we had to look up to him, and we paid no attention to him, and he paid no attention to us, right. [laughter] Our engineer was a fellow by the name of Joe Boden, from Chicago. He is a member of the 100th Association, by the way.

KP: Now, is this the one that got sick?

AN: Yes, he's the one who got sick. ...

KP: What happened to him?

AN: Well, he flew as a substitute after we requested he be relieved as our engineer. Whenever somebody needed an extra gunner, or something, and how many missions he flew, I don't know, but, he didn't fly regularly with us after about six or seven missions. I can't remember the exact number. Our radioman was a bodybuilder from Los Angeles, California. Couldn't get up unless he did ten push-ups in the morning, and he had one of these things with the spring across it, like that. None of us took up ... the body building, but, we taught him how to smoke, right. ... Our ball turret gunner was a fella by the name of Ray Wilson, from Carlsbad, California. He was just short enough to fit down in there. I was the waist gunner, and there was fellow by the name of Adolph (Caruso?) who was the right waist gunner. He was from Chicago. Tail-gunner was Dick Korpalski, ... also from Chicago. Now, when we ... immediately, got overseas, I don't know, where the directive came from, but, a decision was made that there was one waist gunner too many. Caruso and I drew straws, on who would stay with the crew and who would be transferred. I'm not sure if I won, because I stayed with the crew. He was transferred. I have learned that he went to the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy. ... What became of him then, I don't know.

KP: When you said they thought they had one waist gunner too many ...

AN: Too many ...

KP: Why?

AN: Well, it was because ... [the] radioman had a gun, also. ... He had like a canopy over his cabin, 'cause his cabin was between the waist and the bomb bay, and he could man [the gun in] that one, but, ... I think it was the war was winding down, and they really shouldn't expend so many lives. They decided that he, [the radioman], could come back and man the other waist gun, rather than have this one on top, because they had the top turret gun anyway, and I think they were afraid he'd shoot off the tail, anyway, which is a possibility. So, that was the reason, as far as I could tell.

KP: You mentioned that, initially, there was a chasm between officers and enlisted men. Did that continue?

AN: Yeah, I think it did. It did, I think it did. I think they were nice enough. We didn't socialize at all. You know, ... but, all officers were our censors, you see. They had to censor our letters. ... I think my pilot read the first letter I wrote home, and, after that, I sealed the envelope. But, I never said anything I should not have said, and ... he either signed the envelope ... as, having had read it, or the co-pilot.

KP: So, in other words, he was supposed to read every letter ...

AN: He was supposed to.

KP: ...But, he did not.

AN: No. ... He, just cautioned us, and just said, "Hey, be discreet." They were always afraid that our letters would fall into enemy hands. ... That was something that they really instilled in us, "[A] slip of the lip is gonna sink any kind of a ship," ... and I believed it. I really did believe it.

KP: We are having an exhibition at the library on that. We have a number of those posters in the library. I have seen a number of them.

AN: Do you?

KP: I have to see if we are actually using one of them for the exhibit, because we are using a number of the World War II era posters, but, I have seen a number of them.

AN: Yeah, but, ... in indoctrination classes of every kind, they told us about this, and, ... we just weren't to say anything to anybody, 'cause, it's amazing, ... the Germans were not stupid, you know that. God, it is known that they flew right over our base in England, and asked for landing instructions, and got 'em, and they bombed the runway. They spoke perfect English. [laughter]

KP: When was this? Do you remember?

AN: That was before my time.

KP: Yeah.

AN: I don't know if that's apocryphal or not. I really don't know. ... [laughter]

KP: How many hours of flight time, roughly, did you get while training in Lincoln? Also, how did that initial shakedown go?

AN: Let me see if I have any record of that in here. I don't know if I do or not, but, I know we flew an awful lot of hours up there. ... I don't know whether I have it here or not. At this point, I can't put my hands on it. You know, I don't really have anything here for South Dakota. ... We must have flown every three days. ... I would imagine, the other two days, they kinda gave us a chance to rest up, ... do whatever we wanted to do, and, ... as I told you, basically what we did was, we had to go on the flights where the pilot was being trained also, and the co-pilot. We had to ... shoot landings, and the whole crew had to be on board. We would do flights from Lincoln, to Bismarck, to, wherever all else, and back again. We would do this at day, and then, we would do it at night, and we would give both the pilot and the navigator a chance to do that. The bombardier had some instruction on that, too. ... I do remember that we also had ... ditching training in case our aircraft ever went down in water.

KP: What did that training consist of?

AN: Well, they taught us how to get the inflatable boats out of the aircraft. ... I think, ... there were six of us, [I] remember, in training now, and there were four. I happened, when I was going through South Dakota, [to] be on G-1 crews, right. Therefore, whenever there was anything to be demonstrated, we did it, and we had the entire group, and that was a lot of guys, a lot of crews, all lined up against the lake there. ... We had a guy with a megaphone talking to us. We were in bathing suits, and six enlisted men [got] in one boat, and four officers [got] in another, and they asked us to upset the dingy. When we upset it, I discovered then that I was the only one who could swim among the enlisted men, and, in the other boat, the co-pilot from Oregon was the only one who could swim. ... Both of us helped our crew back into the boat, after we righted it up. Then, we were swimming together, Jay Powell and I, and he said to me, "Alex, we ditch, we're swimming." [laughter] I said, "Yeah, we're swimming," but, we didn't have to do that, very fortunately.

KP: How good of a group did you think it was in training? You mentioned that the engineer was constantly getting sick.

AN: No, ... that had really nothing to do with it. As a group, as a crew, when we were flying, there was nothing wrong with the group. It was absolutely perfect. Nothing was wrong. The radioman did his job and all of us did our job[s] as gunners. We all knew how to take care of our guns and how to stash them. We knew how to get dressed and all of that business. Everything was fine, and we went about our business, and did it.

KP: Were there other crews which were not successful? Did you know of any?

AN: Not as successful?

KP: Well, that had problems that your crew did not?

AN: Never really. Well, ... let's see, let me put it this way, in terms of inter-relationships, ... when I was in South Dakota, I was in with a group of about six or seven other guys, each one of whom was on a different crew, okay. Now, if we had all been on the same crew, ... we probably would have crashed the plane. [laughter] I thought we were kind of a good group that got along well together, who enjoyed going out, and having dinner, and seeing a show. As I said, sometimes we couldn't scrape up fifteen cents among us, just to go to a movie. We certainly didn't have enough money to buy beer. ... That's because we spent it all. ... We had an opportunity to get off the base whenever we weren't flying, so, we always went out to eat, and food in South Dakota was superb. They had steaks, and we always used to eat steaks, and I also learned what it's like to be very drunk out there. ... [laughter]

KP: There seems to be a story there.

AN: Well, here's the six or seven guys, who are about to ship out, and they were all good friends for about, what? two months, maybe three, and we're all going to war. ... We're all on different crews, and we don't know where we're gonna end up, and so, we had a party, and I drank too much. That's all. ... I got sick, and, oh, did the bed go around. It was awful, just awful, and that

never happened again. Can I say, it isn't that I don't have a drink. I enjoy a cocktail and all that good stuff. Oh, but, this was just God-awful, just awful. [laughter]

KP: Since you had known these people from different crews, did they ever comment on their crews and how they were working?

AN: No. ... Anyway, if there was any comment, they'd lie just as I would have done, I think, at the time.

KP: I interviewed a pilot a few months ago and one of the things that struck me was that he only saw one overseas mission, but, he did a lot of training. One of his distinct memories was that planes were constantly crashing in training. Did you notice this?

AN: Never saw one.

KP: Really?

AN: Never saw one.

KP: Do you consider your group lucky?

AN: If you consider a bad penny lucky, that it will always come back, perhaps, yes. I think our crew was very lucky.

KP: Most people have said they saw crashes at some bases and it was almost a regular occurrence.

AN: I have. When I was overseas, there were a couple of crashes. There were a couple of accidents in the air. This was, like, over the base, before they even got to war. ... No, I think by the time we got over there, our guys were pretty well-trained. I really think so. I think, earlier on in the war, ... and I don't know when that pilot flew, or when he was active, in his service, ... I would say that was probably true.

KP: That the training was more rushed?

AN: I think so, yes, and, I think ... that's verified and substantiated in this book that I told you about, A Wing And A Prayer, where he talks about the lack of discipline when flyers first get overseas. ... Apparently, he's willing to, point that out, ... and it wasn't until they got some pretty good officers up front that ... just said, "Hey, let's go," [whistles and claps his hands] you know, "We've got to be what is known as GI then," you know.

KP: A lot of people on crews have mentioned that they were remarkably informal. In fact, one crew member mentioned that they ate constantly together. He was an officer, but, he was constantly eating with his men. They were so informal that, against regulations, they even had the enlisted men stay with them in the barracks.

AN: Nope, never happened. Not when I was overseas. Now, again, in the earlier part of the war, I would think so. I would think that that happened. But, by the time I got there, it didn't happen.

KP: There was much clearer separation.

AN: Much clearer separation, yes. We had our own barracks, we had our own dining hall, and that sort of thing, and it was rare that we ever were together.

KP: Except, when you were actually on a mission.

AN: Yes.

KP: What about when you were waiting for missions? What would you do?

AN: Well, when we were waiting for missions?

KP: Yeah.

AN: Well, we were in our barracks. ... I think the thing was, again, we would fly once in three days. There were four squadrons in my outfit. I was in the 350th. There was the 418th, the 351st, and the 349th, so that, ... you know, they never wanted us to fly that many mission in a row, because being on oxygen for five or six hours was very debilitating, even for somebody who was only nineteen-years-old. ... But, no, we just didn't have that. ... I didn't, personally, right.

KP: Did you know of any other crews that had great contact with their officers or great camaraderie?

AN: No. Again, because, maybe, they didn't talk about it. You see, ... maybe it just never came to my attention, because, ... let's see, when I got overseas, ... I got over there in October of 1944. The oldest crew, or the crew with the most missions in my squadron, had seven missions, and I thought, "Jesus, I gotta fly twenty-five. You know, where the hell are these other guys?" Well, I found out that we were replacements for a devastating flight on September 15th, where they lost most of their aircraft. You know, there's, you figure, nine guys on a crew, and, if there's twelve planes from the squadron, you lost a lot of men that day, and so, we came in as replacements, and the guys, in our crew were just enlisted guys. We never saw their officers. They never came into our barracks, never, and I never heard them talk about how good they got along. Some of the crews seemed to get along pretty well, like inside our barracks, ... but, well, even ours did. ... We were in one corner and another crew in another corner, ... but, no.

KP: From the other airmen I have interviewed, one memory they have is of taking planes on sort of semi-unauthorized missions. One person, I think he was based in Alabama, even took it home. He took a flight home for the weekend to South Dakota. Did you ever do anything like that?

AN: Not with a B-17, I don't think. You couldn't have landed that at Hadley Airport. No, I never heard of that.

KP: You never had that?

AN: I never had that experience, no.

KP: Where the pilot would try to fly it to a base across the country?

AN: No, never. Never without some kind of authorization, no. [laughter]

KP: How did you get across the Atlantic?

AN: We flew. ... We got a new airplane, a brand new B-17, ... and, I was trying to think about where we got that airplane, and I don't remember. I don't remember if we went back to Lincoln, Nebraska, where we picked up the airplane, and then, from there, we flew to Grenier Field, New Hampshire. I didn't even know there was an Air Force base there, 'cause I remember thinking to myself, "What a good duty this would have been, had I known it was here," right. But, ... we only stayed there about a short period of time, maybe twelve hours, and, from there, we flew to ... Gander, Newfoundland. ... Of course, we hit snow, and we were only there for a very short time, maybe, again, twelve hours, and then, we took off from there for Iceland, and it was on that leg of the flight that the pilot opened up the orders to where we were going, because we had been issued, and had gotten, shots for the jungle, you see. We got cholera shots. We got these packs that, obviously, we were going someplace, like God knows where, in New Guinea. You know, we didn't know where we were going, and while we were getting these strange shots, I don't know whether it was all camouflage or what it was. ... But, he opened up the orders, and he announced to the crew that we were ... being assigned to the Eighth Air Force. We were in Iceland for only about twelve hours, I guess enough to re-fuel the aircraft, and ... we didn't see anything there. We just had to stay with the aircraft, and then, from there, we flew on to England, and we landed in Wales, somewhere. I don't remember where it was, and we boarded a train there, and we went on to our final destination point, which was Diss, which is midway between Ipswich and Norwich. I'm not going to say exactly on the coast, but, on the eastern coast of England, just where that hump is. ... Diss is right in the middle there, and ... we took a truck from there to a little town called Thorpe Abbotts, and that was where our base was. So, Diss was the train station, and I found out many, many years later that this was the home town of Thomas Paine, where he and his father were stay makers. I didn't know that at the time, ... and Thorpe Abbotts was just a little community. ... Our base was what they called dispersed, and we had farms in-between, and farmers living there, and, so, our base was here, and we had to walk about a quarter of a mile or so to where they had, maybe, the mess hall, and then, our other things were over here. ... Everything was dispersed, so that if you looked at it overhead, it wouldn't look like an Air Force base, except that England, pretty much, was one big floating Air Force base, at that point in time. And, we were assigned to barracks there. I landed in England on Friday the 13th in October. That wasn't too much fun, not that I'm really scared of the ... [number] thirteen, but, that, ... could be scary. [laughter]

KP: Was there much superstition in flying?

AN: Yes, a lot, a lot. I don't know. We never used the word thirteen when we flew the thirteenth mission. That was mission 12-B. [laughter] That's true. ... Our barracks were very near a wooded area, ... of which, all of the trees were numbered, or they were so marked, somehow, ... but, Americans don't care about markings. ... There were guys in the barracks who, when they heard an owl cry, would go out and shoot it, because they just figured that meant disaster, the next day. Yeah, everybody had superstitions.

KP: Rabbit's feet and lucky coins.

AN: I don't remember those, I don't remember those, no. The guys got drunk one time, and brought a rabbit back, named him George, and George had a litter of a bunch of rabbits and became Georgianna.

KM: I wanted to ask, on that note, about the superstitions. What was your thirteenth mission like? Did anything go wrong?

AN: As a matter-of-fact, it did, and it was on the 31st of December, which is thirteen backwards. [laughter] We lost twelve airplanes that day. That was perhaps my most, ... I don't know, terrible mission, if you want to call it that.

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

KP: Oh, yes, yes. I am always curious. This continues an interview with Mr. Alexander Nazemetz. Excuse me, am I pronouncing that correctly?

AN: Nazemetz.

KP: Thank you.

AN: Nazemetz, yeah.

KP: On April 6, 1995, at Rutgers University, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and ...

KM: Kevin McGuire.

KP: Between changing tapes, we somehow got into a discussion of the Memphis Belle, and [laughter] I would be curious to hear your reactions?

AN: Well, I found that it wasn't real. ... The Memphis Belle is really the story of the first Eighth Air Force crew that finished twenty-five missions and they all came back. They were [a] very highly decorated crew. I think they got the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Queen and King of

England came by, and visited with them, and shook their hands, and the ground crew was so embarrassed, because they were in fatigues, things ... which didn't show up in the movie at all. Now, the people I was with, who saw the film, enjoyed it very much, but, for somebody who lived through something like that, I didn't think it was very good.

KM: Do you find that to be a problem with most Hollywood interpretations of the war?

AN: Of anything, of anything really. You know, if you've read any of these books that they make movies of here, ... you could come out in a state of shock, and I have done it, like when they did The Firm. This is just an aside. When I got up from my seat in the movie, I said to my friend, ... "They have three highly paid writers who loused up a perfectly good book." ... I said, "You know, the picture's good, but, it could have been better." It really could have been better. Now, let me tell you about this. ... No, actually, it was the twelfth mission. Excuse me, it was the twelfth mission that was the bad one. I'm sorry. ... Mission 12-B was what we called a milk run. We didn't have anything really seriously happen to us that day. [laughter] No, but, ... on the 31st of December, I referred to it here as the fiercest encounter with the enemy ... of our crew, and it was a New Year's Eve trip to bomb submarine pens in Hamburg. The anti-aircraft flak was very heavy, and we completed what we called a bomb-run satisfactorily, right. ... The group comprises thirty-six airplanes. That's one squadron is high, one is medium, and one is low. On the bomb-run, they fan out, so that they follow each other, and they're all on the same level. ... When we got to the rally point, where we were supposed to get back into this group formation, we were attacked by enemy fighters, the Focke-Wulfs and the ME 109s. The enemy aircraft flew right through our squadrons, right, and they made us into very ragged and dislodged formations. Everybody was trying to get out of the way. We didn't know who we were gonna hit, and everybody, of course, was shooting in every direction, even me. ... Our ball turret gunner was credited with one aircraft destroyed, and we had a substitute engineer then, and he was also credited with one aircraft destroyed. ... As we were regrouping, and we were, at this point, now, flying back to England, breathing hard, because the attack was over. ... How long it lasted, ... none of us ever seems to remember. It couldn't have been more than fifteen or twenty minutes. It just seemed like an eternity at the time. And, because the formations were so ragged, one aircraft was coming up to fill up a space, and another one was coming down, and they landed right on top of each other. Absolutely on top of each other. ... I reported it as mating dragonflies, that's what it looked like to me. I saw them peel off, and I counted four parachutes. Now, there were eighteen men aboard. The crew of the top aircraft was in our barracks, right, so, we knew the guys. ... The top aircraft was piloted by a guy by the name of Glenn Rojohn. He's from McKeesport, Pennsylvania, telephoned me ... two years ago. I was out in my backyard, and my wife brought out the phone, and I said, "Who is it?" She said, "I don't know." He said, "Alex," and I said, "Yes." He said, "This is Glenn Rojohn." Now, mind you, I hadn't heard that name in fifty years and I knew him immediately. I knew him instantaneously. He walked away from the crash, he and his co-pilot, and the reason, I guess, that he called me was that my name appeared in Splasher Six. ... His radioman's wife had written to me after the plane went down, and I wrote back to her, and I told her that I was sure he was probably a prisoner of war. I don't know if she still has that letter. I really should try to get in touch with her. Anyway, she told Rojohn that I had seen the plane go down, and so, he called me, because, apparently, he is writing a book, or a story, or something, on that particular incident. ... I have a story from the *Pittsburgh Press.* ...

He sent it to me, 'cause I told him that I had written to the paper, but, I was not able to get a copy of it, and he sent me the complete story of what happened. ...

KP: On May 14, 1992, in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette.

AN: Yeah, and I wrote to them, because I heard that that story had appeared. And the thing that was troubling, as we were flying back, we were already over the North Sea, and you gotta remember, this was the 31st of December, in the middle of winter. ... We saw four parachutes, and they were opened up over the North Sea, but, the coastline was still in sight. ... You know, here we are, five miles up, I don't know how far away that line was, but, ... that plane was among **stet** that our group lost that day. The squadron overall lost twelve.

KP: Did you learn from him about what had happened to him?

AN: Yeah. He said he walked away from the crash, and then, he became a prisoner of war. And he was interrogated quite a bit, because they thought we had a new kind of aircraft, when the two aircrafts were together, see, with eight engines. [laughter] Pretty ridiculous, but, ... you know, you never can tell. You don't know what happens in the war.

KP: How scary was it the first time you flew?

AN: Well, I tell you, ... when we first went to war, it was, "Hot dog, we're going to war." It wasn't terribly scary at first, right. We were briefed for Metz, France, and we didn't hit Metz, France, because the weather was so bad. So, we went to a place in Germany called Saarbrucken, and, this is really our first taste of the war. We did wear helmets, and we had, I guess it was, a piece of armor plate in front of the window, and so, we tried not to stand up straight, because the window was huge. So, we kinda got down behind it, and ... our gun emplacement was right there, and that was the first time I saw flak, and, you can't really hear it, unless it's awfully close. Now, when it gets close. ... And you asked about being lucky, I think we were lucky, because our aircraft was hit that very first mission with one piece of flak, shrapnel, right, and I knew that it came very near me. Now, I was standing up, and I looked down below, and I couldn't see any hole, and I looked up, and I couldn't see any hole there, either. ... For the entire length of our trip back to the base, I couldn't find the hole, and I knew that it made a hole, and my tail-gunner heard it hit, too. ... The aircraft was not disabled, and, when we came out of the aircraft, ... you know, in the back, there's what we called a hatchway, when we'd get out, and it was a double piece of aluminum. That was the only place where we had double aluminum. Every place else, the wall was, an eighth of an inch thick, if that. When we got out, we noticed that the bottom, the outside part of the door, was completely blown away. What had happened was, the shrapnel came at an angle so acute, so that, when I was standing up, I couldn't see the hole, right. So, when I was standing from my height, I would have to get down on my knees to find it, or something. Well, when I saw that, I think I must have shaken from my head to my toe, realizing how close the thing came to me, and how fast it must have been going. And, that flak just didn't come up, up and down, or straight across, it came in every direction, three hundred and sixty degrees, and it really scared us. ... Well, it scared me, I think, more than the other guys, 'cause I was near it. But, we always went to what they called debriefing, or whatever, and the flight

surgeon was there, and he gave us, or he was prepared to give us, a double shot of bourbon, for medicinal reasons. ... I was being very brave. I said, "No, thank you very much," right. I think I did that about three times, [laughter] and, after that, I took it. And, they used to give us orange juice, or tomato juice, or grapefruit juice, or something, to, sorta get us back into shape. Now, bear in mind, that we did not eat all this time, and, we probably had breakfast at two o'clock in the morning, and, by this time, it was already approaching evening. ...

KP: So, there was no snacking aboard the plane?

AN: Yes. There is. They gave us a little pack of candies. It was about two inches square and there were different kinds of candies in it. They gave us a pack of gum, and they gave us a Hershey chocolate bar, but, you see, it was so cold that everything froze solid, and the only way we could eat that chocolate bar was to place it under our arm for about twenty minutes, so that we could bite it. [laughter]

KP: Even then, it was hard?

AN: Yes. ... On the first mission, too, we had oranges for breakfast, and I took mine with me, because, I thought, wouldn't that be a good thing to have on the way down, right. ... It froze so hard that I couldn't put my fingernail in the skin or in the rind. I just couldn't, and, of course, it was no good after that. It was pretty stupid to think that it wasn't gonna freeze. ... [laughter]

KP: The altitudes that you flew at, were you used to those altitudes?

AN: Yeah, we had flown them in training over in South Dakota.

KP: But, for how long? For the same periods of time?

AN: I imagined that it was. ... Yeah, I think we had six and seven hour missions in South Dakota, yeah. ... But, then, they didn't really think much about eating, ... when we were in South Dakota. But, here, you got to be pretty hungry by the time you were coming back, and, because we just didn't have anything to eat, I always ate my chocolate bar, always. Some energy I suppose. [laughter]

KP: What kind of training were you given in case you were shot down? What kind of training did you get for that?

AN: In the way of training, not a hell of a lot. We were issued .45 pistols, okay. We were obliged to carry those with us. We tied our shoes on to our parachute harness, okay, one on each side. We always wore our parachute harness. The chute just slipped on in the front. ... I guess it's different from what it is today, but, it was kind of a rectangular package, and we always put it on the side. Now, they told us it was not a good idea. We couldn't move around with that thing in front of us a lot, and so, ... we kept it near by, hoping that if we did get shot, there would be time enough to put it on. But, sometimes, when you put it on, flak could go through it, and that would be the end of your parachute. You know, but, we wore our shoes. They told us, in the

event we had to parachute out, for any reason, ... now, remember what time of the year this was. This was ... late October '44, early '45. They told us, if possible, to get captured by the Luftwaffe, which was the Air Force, because they seemed to have more respect for the American Air Force, and we were definitely told to avoid the Wehrmacht, the Army, and try, by all means, not to get caught by the civilians, because, apparently, they'd really give us a bad time. That's what we were told. In the way of training, there really wasn't a hell of a lot, just try not to get shot down. [laughter]

KP: What kind of survival equipment did you get? Did you get any kits?

AN: No, no kits. I don't remember any kits, and my friend that I told you about, who went to the Fifteenth [Air Force], he was shot down, and he had no survival kits, either. He walked two weeks, trying to make his way to Hungary, and he said he got so hungry. Eventually, ... he said he was walking the streets of villages, ... and he said his wires were hanging all over, he said nobody paid attention to him. He was eventually captured and he was a prisoner of war. [laughter]

KP: What was your biggest fear?

AN: Do you know my biggest fear? I thought I would get hit in the neck or my legs, because ... we had a flak suit, very much like what maybe a catcher would wear. ... I guess it was like a piece of old fashioned mail. It was little pieces of metal that overlapped each other, and ... it came down like this, like a bib on an overall, right, and it came front and back. So, I always felt that was pretty much protection for the vitals, and I had a helmet. So, I thought, "Jesus, the only thing exposed is, my legs and my neck," and I got it in the neck. [laughter]

KM: I guess this is a good place to ask about the last mission, the one that you got wounded on.

AN: That was my thirty-third, yeah. We went to Hanover, Germany, 14th of March. I really don't remember a lot about, exactly what happened, except that, ... we also had a chute in the aircraft through which we deposited what we called chaff. Now, I don't know whether anybody's talked to you about that or not. Radar was still a fairly new thing, okay, and so, what this chaff was, it was lengths of ... silver paper, I think about a foot long, and very much like the tinsel on a Christmas tree, except that it was stiff, right, it didn't just hang over. And so, some of the aircraft that we flew were equipped with this sheet, and we would come in with three or four boxes of this stuff. And, me, as the waist-gunner, back there by the chute, I'd have just dropped the stuff out, 'cause what happens, well, ... then, it's sprinkled down below the aircraft this way, and the radar that the Germans were using would hit that first, and then, bounce back, and, therefore, they wouldn't get our altitude, immediately. It worked for awhile, but, ... they could see they weren't hitting anything, so, ... they would check it. Now, when I was doing that, I was on my hunches, just opposite the ... right waist position, and I heard the announcement of, "Bombs away," from the ... bombardier. When the bombardier said, "Bombs away," I looked out the window, and I had to look up, right, and I saw the bombs coming down. I was hit immediately. ... It came right across from the left side here, this way, ... hit the throat mike that I was wearing, first time in thirty-three missions, right, and went out the other side of the aircraft.

Now, the reason I was wearing that throat mike was the mike in my oxygen mask, after these missions, wasn't working. You sweat, in this terrible cold. ... Ice forms on the exhalation outlets there, and I used to keep a handkerchief, by thirty-three mission it was a pretty dirty handkerchief, right, and I would clean my oxygen mask with it, and quickly put it back on my face, so, it wouldn't freeze. But, I didn't know I was hit immediately. My tail-gunner began to call me, instantly, and, ... what I did, because I had worn this throat mike for the first time, because the other one wasn't working, I had to press to talk. ... The talk button was on the handle of my gun. I think I tried to say, "I'm hit." But, I didn't hear it, right. Meantime, it's funny, because I'm trying to recollect this, and I remember looking down, and I saw the throat mike on the floor, and I saw the brass springs, and I thought, "Now, isn't that funny?" This is all happening in a split-second, mind you, and then, I realized that I had taken my hand away, and my glove was all bloody. So, I reconnected myself, to the old mike, and I just said, "I'm hit," right, and then, I heard the conversation. The pilot told the radioman to go back and check on what happened to me. So, he came back on an oxygen walk-around bottle. This was something that ran for fifteen or twenty minutes. ... He was a ruddy guy, and he was this big weight lifter. He took one look at me and turned pale. And, I couldn't see what happened to me, right. Now, I only had a high school education, but, I know about jugular veins. I knew where vocal cords were, and I was unable to talk, ... and he just went so pale. ... The blood just drained out of him, and I thought, "Jesus, what happened to me?" And then, he disconnected me, and then, he was talking. Then, the bombardier came back, and he sprinkled sulfa on me, and he gave me what he called a half a syringe of morphine. I didn't hurt, so I didn't want it. ... I know that I told him through hand motions. I couldn't speak, so, I was really scared. I thought something happened to the vocal cords, and I told him not to shoot red, red flares upon landing to indicate wounded on board. You know, and, if the crew chief could see that it was his airplane, he'd get scared, and he didn't want anybody on his crew to get hurt, and I asked him not to do it, and, would you believe, I saw the red, red flares go over.

KP: When were the red flares shot? When you approached the base?

AN: Just ... as we were coming in. The pilot asked permission to leave the formation, so that he could come in first, okay, and so, ... immediately, we landed. The doctor was there, and he said to me, "Did you ... spit up any blood?" and I said, "No," and then, I think he said, "You were lucky." ... Outside, I heard a voice say, "Hey, Doc, you need the stretcher?" ... I spoke then, and I said, "No, I can walk," and I could walk. [laughter] ... I was in the hospital for three weeks.

KP: When did this last mission, your thirty-third, take place? What month was it?

AN: It was March 14th, 1945. In fact, just this past March 14th was exactly fifty years.

KP: That you were wounded.

AN: Yes. [laughter]

KP: You were wounded from flak?

AN: Yes, piece of shrapnel.

KP: Where was this mission over?

AN: Hanover, Hanover, Germany, and, it was interesting, because that was the only mission I wore that throat mike. ... You saw it, and [what is] interesting about that mission, also, is, that morning, when we were being briefed in the same room. The officers kinda sit up front, so they can see where, when they pull the curtain aside, ... you're going, and the rest of us just get to know where we're going. I sat next to a young man whom I had never seen before. I didn't know who he was. And, when the lights went on, they always said something like, "The smoking lamp is lit," or some wonderful thing like that, to get the guys who wanted to smoke to smoke. ... I don't remember our conversation exactly, but, I have a feeling, he said to me, something like, "What mission is it for you?" and I said, "Thirty-three." I don't remember what he reported to me about his, but, I think, ... I lit his cigarette, or he lit mine. He and I went to the same hospital in the same ambulance that afternoon.

KP: What happened to him?

AN: He ... got a piece of shrapnel in the Achilles heel. [laughter]

KP: When you were there, how many planes would you lose?

AN: Not many, by comparison with what it was earlier. That ... mission on the 31st of December ... was the most losses we lost while I was there. That was twelve airplanes. Now, early on in the war, the losses were extremely heavy, to the point where, I think, they had debated ... whether or not this strategic bombing was really worth the terrible sacrifices in human life, because, you lost so many men. Now, my group had, I don't exactly remember the number, ... I'm going to be very close, though. We had three-thousand-five-hundred flying personnel from the time they got over there in 1943 until the war was over in early '45, three-thousand-five-hundred flying personnel. Of those, seventeen to eighteen hundred were shot down. That's fifty percent, and, of those, about eight hundred were prisoners of war. So, ... that's a lot, and, other groups, apparently, have similar statistics. So, and we were only one of many groups, so that, I know that they have debated the point. My own feeling is that I really think the Air Force did a lot of good, softening up the areas where the ground troops had to go. Certainly, we must have destroyed the morale of the German people. I can't imagine anybody being happy about airplanes coming over for ten or twelve hours at a time, in a single file, the way we flew, and then, have the RAF come over at night.

KP: What were the missions that you took part in? What was the range of missions? You mentioned one mission where you bombed submarine pens.

AN: Yeah.

KP: The mission where you were wounded was the Hanover one. What was the range of missions?

AN: We went after oil refineries. That was in Merseburg. We went after marshaling yards. We went after tank factories in Kassel. I don't know what exactly our target was in Munich. We made one trip to Munich, but, I remember we were flying, easily, ... twenty minutes back towards England, and we could still see the smoke, and it was just as high as we were flying. ... I don't know what we hit, but, it must have been oil, or something, down there, ... which proves we hit something. Occasionally, we didn't hit anything. I mean, I'm not going to say we were sharpshooters, no, we weren't. ...

KP: You mentioned that sometimes you could not tell that you had hit anything, sometimes you hit nothing. How often would you know if you hit something?

AN: Well, they would always tell us. They would always tell us, ... if not in that immediate time, ... they had it posted. They would immediately tell us what we would do.
KP: You mentioned that you could sometimes see what had happened from the smoke.

AN: Well, from the smoke, yes. We could see it because the smoke rose so high. Now, normally, ... if we were watching the bombs, we'd drop the bombs, and, if we kinda looked back, 'cause it took a few minutes for those bombs to drop, all we saw was a little spark. Just a little spark, and maybe some dust. We never heard a noise, not like in the movies, where you hear the bombs drop. Everything was silence. We couldn't hear a thing. We were too far away. [laughter]

KP: I have also been told by people in the Air Force that the noise was absolutely deafening in a plane, the background noise. Was that the case with your B-17?

AN: Yeah, ... it was. I never thought it was deafening.

KP: But, it was loud.

AN: ... We communicated, by radio. You know, ... we all had our earphones on, and all, and our throat mikes, and that sort of thing. But, ... be pretty hard to talk, when the engines were all running, because ... there were no sound barriers. I mean, don't forget, Rosie the Riveter was putting these things together at Boeing just as fast as they could put them together. ... Where the ball turret went ... into the belly of the aircraft, I mean, there were spaces all around it, except where it was bolted. I mean, there was no comfort in those airplanes whatsoever. The pilot had a decent seat and so did the co-pilot. Nobody else did. We didn't have anyplace to sit down. We either stood, or else, we sat on the floor, that's all. [laughter]

KP: In your missions, how many times did you encounter flak? It sounds like you encountered flak every mission.

AN: Not everyone, but, most of them. Sometimes we went, and, we didn't encounter any.

KP: When were those cases? Do you remember any of those missions?

AN: Oh, I think if I went through this, ... I could probably tell you quickly. ...

KP: Yeah.

AN: ... Mission number two, I don't recall anything ... that was like that. That was to Wiesbaden, Germany. Wiesbaden, being a spa, I doubt that, and it was a cultural center, so, I don't know what we went there for. [laughter] In fact, my kid brother was stationed there for years after the war. No, see, ... there's flak on almost all of them. On our third mission, we were hit, and we had two engines out, and we landed in Belgium, and we spent one night in Belgium. ... The pilot didn't want to risk ditching ... in the English Ocean, ... the Channel. What am I saying? The English Channel.

KP: What was more feared, having to parachute out, having to ditch in the Channel, or having to make a crash landing at your home base? Was there anything that was dreaded more, since you mentioned your pilot did not want to risk ditching into the Channel?

AN: Well, ... now, don't forget, it was winter.

KP: Yeah.

AN: And, I think he knew that, of the group, there was only a couple of them who could swim. How far we would have lasted, in that kind of water, I don't know, but, as long as two engines were out, ... I think he made the right decision. ... On Christmas, we don't seem to have hit any, 'cause we flew on Christmas Day. We flew the 24th, the 25th, we flew the 27th, the 29th, the 30th, the 31st. Now, we were flying, then, in support of the ground troops at Bastogne. Okay, so, I have a Battle Star for Bastogne.

KP: So, what kind of missions did you fly in support of them?

AN: Well, ... we flew ... high missions, going after German supply lines and the marshaling yards. ...

KP: To keep Bastogne in?

AN: Yeah. Not right near Bastogne, but ...

KP: In the general area.

AN: We went places like Kaiserslautern. Don't ask me what was there, I don't remember. We went to Fulda. I think that was railroad yards. Frankfurt, again, I think a marshaling center for all kinds of equipment going through there. We went to Kassel, to a tank factory. In fact, I noted that everybody said that this was one where you could see the scrap metal going in one side and the tanks going out the other. I don't know that that was true. [laughter] We went to Cologne twice, two days in a row, 'cause we missed our target the first time. [laughter] ... This strategic

bombing, ... it really wasn't all that accurate. We just didn't have the equipment then.

KP: How quickly did you realize that?

AN: Well, I think right from the beginning, right from the beginning.

KP: When you were flying missions, what were your perceptions going over and what changed as a result?

AN: You mean before I went overseas, or before I actually flew on a mission?

KP: Before you actually flew on a mission.

AN: Well, certain of these areas already had reputations that we heard from previous crews that had been there, 'cause ... these targets had all been visited before. Certainly, Frankfurt had, and Hamburg had, and Kassel, Berlin. I went several times to Berlin. ... We didn't like to go to Berlin, because it was such a long mission. Okay, it was long. That was, I think, one of the longest ones I ever flew. But, I don't know that I really had any conceptions about where we're going. It also depended on where we were flying in the formation. You see, ... if we were flying in Tail-end Charlie, here, here, here, and then the last airplane, we always figured they were shooting for the front, missed 'em, and hit the one in the back. [laughter] ...

KP: How often would you fly in lead formation?

AN: We flew lead, ... of the Eighth Air Force, at least twice, okay. Once, we flew ... as one crew in a group of six, carrying only chaff, no bombs at all, when we were leading the Eighth Air Force, and, another time, ... the group led the Eighth Air Force, with bombs. This is ... a shot of the aircraft here when I was wounded. Now, see this little chute right here, now, that would have been the chaff chute, and I would guess that that little hole, right up there by the star, is the one that the shrapnel came through and hit me. Now, you can see there are holes all around and I was very fortunate that I was hit only once.

KP: How often would your aircraft get holes in it? Was that a common thing, you would come back from a mission and find holes in the plane?

AN: Yeah, ... it was fairly common, fairly common. We always seemed to get holes in our ship, always. I don't know why. We always used to blame it on the pilot. ... Stan, I'm sorry. We did, we always blamed it on the pilot. But, by the time we had ... twenty missions, ... we had then become the crew with the most missions in the squadron. I kinda think the captain of the squadron used to come by with regularity when we came back from a mission, to see how we were doing. You know, he wanted to make sure that we were still all put together, all right.

KP: So, a lot of the crews you made it over with did not make it to twenty missions?

AN: Oh, yeah, yeah. I think many of the crews that I came over with did.

KP: Yeah.

AN: Okay.

KP: But, in your particular squadron ...

AN: In our squadron, I think, many of the crews that came ... in, after we did, I think most of them made it back. Most of them made it back, except for that one really bad, bad mission. I saw one aircraft, explode in mid-air, and that happened to be on Christmas Eve. ... If you remember, from the stories about Bastogne, the weather was so bad in December of that year, and we flew on the 24th, and that was the first time we'd flown in a couple of weeks, because the weather had cleared. ... Also, what had happened was that it had snowed, right. ... When we were crossing the enemy lines, and I don't remember exactly where that was, if you looked down over this landscape, you couldn't believe there was a war going on down there. We were up high enough, but, you looked over this landscape that, was just now covered with snow. ... The sun was out, just as bright as can be, it was spectacularly beautiful, it really was. ... My God, it was just lovely, and here you are, flying along, and here come three airplanes from another group, just three. And, when you're flying, they kind of slip, you see them slip off to the side, and we were off to their right. And then, three puffs of flak, low, medium, and high, came up, and the medium one hit one aircraft right in the wing. The wing just folded over and went straight down, no opportunity for anybody to get out. ... I think I've confused that incident with one that I've reported on the 31st, and ... I've corrected that here. But, I just don't remember anymore.

KP: Yeah.

AN: It's hard, sometimes, to put them all in context.

KP: Yeah, oh, I am sure that is fine. I have blurred things together in giving lectures and so forth.

AN: Now that I don't believe. [laughter]

KP: Someone said that the anxiety of waiting for a mission was almost as bad as the mission itself.

AN: Okay, ... again, I think, did I say anything about the fact that there was this tremendous youth in the Air Force?

KP: You mentioned that.

AN: Okay.

KP: You were all very young.

AN: We were all very young, and I think part of it was because of the thing you're now talking about, this anticipation of going to war. We had, at our base in England, a signal light. My recollection is that it was red, white, and blue. But, if it were white, it meant that they didn't know if we were going to fly. If it were red, we were definitely going to fly. Now, wait a minute, if it were white, we weren't going to fly, red, we definitely were going to fly, and blue, they hadn't made up their mind yet, right. The guys who were twenty-two-years-old, right, if that light was blue, couldn't sleep until it changed color, right. I was too youthful to even be concerned. I'd go out there and say, "Oh, it's red," dumbbell me. And, it's red, we're going. What are you going to do? Go to sleep, and we slept. We ... always went to bed early, because we got up early. I mean, we were awaken[ed] at one thirty, two o' clock in the morning. Now, ... we didn't take off until it was dawning, but, then, we had to go out, and we had to go to breakfast, and then, we had to go out to the heartstand. We had to get our guns, we had to put this all together, and then, we had to take off. We flew over England for several hours before we took off over the Channel, because the aircraft took off one at a time, and then, we all had to get into formation. That took time, ... several hours. You did mention, or you asked me once, if we had landed with a full bomb load. I did do that once. What had happened, ... we were briefed for a mission, and we took off, and, as we were getting into formation, the fog kept getting higher, and higher, and higher, until we were up above 20,000 feet and the fog was that thick. And so, they decided to abort the mission, and not go to our target in Germany, and they diverted us. We couldn't land, right, and so, here we are, a whole group, full bomb load, and they diverted us somewhere to western England, 'cause I remember the pilot calling the navigator, and him saying, "Hey, Dank," he said, "Where are we?" He said, "How should I know?" He said, "All our maps are of Germany," right. [laughter] ... We landed in Cornwall, as it turned out, okay, and we spent the night there, and, the next day, we came down with a bomb load. ... The next day, ... my tail-gunner and I flew in a different aircraft. We were split up, because an aircraft had bumped into ours, somehow, and ... had to be repaired, so, we flew back. When we're landing at our base, we had a flat tire, and we were also landing with a full bomb load, and ... we ran off the runway, but, everything was fine. I mean, nobody was hurt.

KP: That must have been a little more tense.

AN: Well, yeah. But, also, what we had to do was, ... we had to stay up there long enough so that we would consume the fuel, so that the plane was not so heavy. That was also a problem, because, as long as we consumed the fuel, with a heavy bomb load, that kind of equalized it a little bit. We certainly, I don't think, could have landed with ... all our fuel tanks full, and then, the bomb bay load loaded, too. I don't think we would have made it much beyond the first contact with the runway. [laughter]

KP: What about your relationships with the crew chiefs?

AN: It was good. That was good. We always shared our rations with them. We got more as flying personnel than they did. I've forgotten what the rations were, the candies, and the ability to buy cigarettes, or something like that, and we always shared that with the ground crew. It was ... good. We didn't get to know them very well, because they worked at different times from the times that we worked. You see, they were up all night. They brought the bombs to the aircraft,

and they would check the engines, and that sort of thing, ... but, as far as I can tell, it was quite amicable. It was good.

KP: They seemed to have a very safe job, particularly after the bombing of runways stopped.

AN: Yeah.

KP: It was as relatively safe as you can get in war time.

AN: Oh, yeah.

KP: But, there was never the sense that they had a cushy job?

AN: Never, never. I don't think so. I think they had mutual respect, or we had mutual respect for each other. We knew what they were doing. I knew that, when I was wounded that time, and I came back, .. the crew chief said, ... "You know, I knew that was my airplane. ... I knew it was my airplane." How did he know? He couldn't tell from that distance, when he saw the red red flares. But, he said, yes, he knew it was his. ... Maybe he could tell this B-17, that looked ... just like all the others. Incidentally, we flew in B-17s, when I was there, that were not painted. Now, in the early part of the war, they were painted ... camouflage colors. Then, they learned that the paint was so heavy that it would be better not to paint them, 'cause the paint added so much more weight to the aircraft. You wouldn't think about that, but, I don't know how many gallons of paint it took to paint a B-17. ... [laughter]

KP: You are not the only one who has mentioned the mutual admiration and respect for the ground crew.

AN: Yeah. ... I think that was true, yes.

KP: What about your relationship with other officers, with other crews, and with the hierarchy of the squadron? The only time you would really see everyone was at briefings.

AN: That's right. Well, we would see, like, the colonel ... of our squadron. We would see him about the base, or something like that, and ... they would always speak, "Good evening, Sir," "Good morning," whatever it was. But, you had to exchange a salute and there was no fooling around. We had to salute. There was none of this business of not saluting, and, if your hat wasn't on right, you were told about it. See, that's why I say, in this part, when I got there, the discipline was, quite, as we say, GI. [laughter]

KP: What about getting off base when you were not flying a mission? Did you ever go into town at all? What else would you be able to do there?

AN: Mostly, I've forgotten how often we went. I think I got to London, maybe, three or four times, okay, in that seven month period. ... I don't remember if it was the first time I went ... to London, I got a ticket to the Old Vic Company, and I saw Hamlet, and I knew I was going to do

this, because, in our base library, there was a copy of Hamlet, and I read the story before I went. I don't know why I knew I was going to do this, I don't know. It may have been that I had been there before and saw that it was available, right. ... It was a four hour show, and I was fascinated by it, ... hearing these words spoken in the English language, and in the costumes of the period and all, and Hamlet was sensational. I didn't know who he was then. He was John Guilgud, right, and then, I also saw him in A Midsummer's Night Dream, I guess the next time I went. They were in repertory, or something like that. I remember that they served tea, ... at the intermission, and I had never seen that. I guess you ordered it beforehand, because they came with trays and silver pots. It was curious. Here I am, a GI, sitting there in the tenth row. I didn't know you could order tea. I didn't like the English tea. They used to have these wagons sometimes come around our base, very much like the kind of vendor that you might see even around here at the college. But, their tea always had milk in it and it was kind of dishwatery-like. I never really enjoyed it.

KP: These vendors, they were civilian vendors that came around the base?

AN: Yes. Yeah, they were.

KP: What other contact did you have? Did you ever go into the local pub at all?

AN: Only when I was on vacation. ...

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

KP: They know more about the war then ...

AN: They apparently think they do.

KP: Yeah. They end up remembering more than they think.

AN: I know that we skipped around, but, ... we went on flak leave ... in February. I think it was the second week, and we were gone for ... ten days. I think we were at the rest home for about seven or eight days. Originally, I had planned to go to Scotland, but, they decided that we should go to this rest home.

KP: Who maintained the rest home, the Air Force?

AN: The Army.

KP: The Army.

AN: The Army ran it, ... they had Army personnel there, not many, three I think is my recollection, and the American Red Cross. We went to a home called Walhampton House in Limington, England, which is on the south coast, near Bournemouth. ... I think we arrived on a Wednesday, and we were due to stay until the following Wednesday. And, the American Red

Cross girls were there. They greeted us. We ate five times a day. We had breakfast, lunch, tea, dinner, and a snack before bed, and we were awakened by a butler with a glass of orange juice in the morning. ... The house had 500 rooms, I think. It was huge. Or, maybe, it was 500 acres with seventy-two rooms, something like that. ... It had all this marvelous woodwork in it, and old pictures and, I guess, somehow, the U.S. had rented this for the duration, and they gave us civilian clothes, sneakers, a sweater, shirt, pants. In fact, I think I [have] a shot of me in my civilian clothes at Walhampton House. It's here. Oh, here I am. ... [laughter]

KP: For someone who, before joining the Army, had not spent the night away from home, this must have been really quite a change.

AN: Oh, yeah. It was. I tell ya, it was kind of traumatic at first. After a while, you kind of grow used to it. ... What they did there, they organized activities for us. We played baseball against a neighboring rest home, and I think it was officers, but, you couldn't tell, 'cause they were all dressed like this, in civilian clothes. You didn't know who they were. They ... got the local townspeople, I guess, to get little children in boxing matches. They must have been six or eight-year-old, ... and they came up to the house, and, we divided ourselves in half, and half was for one kid, and half for the other, and we cheered 'em on. They had dances with the English Wrens, or whatever they had in the neighborhood. We had a badminton tournament, as I recall. They issued us bicycles and we used to run the toll-gate, down at the bottom of the hill, with our bicycles. The toll was a half-penny, right, and we weren't gonna pay. Not these Americans, they weren't. We just went and scooted by. We used to hear that they would sell Scotch in the local pub between nine and nine-fifteen, and so, we would arrange to get there just in the nick of time. And, that's when, you asked, if, we ever interfaced with the English. We were in the pub one evening, and we were playing darts, which is a very favorite game of the English, and there was a young man and his father. He was in the Navy and he had just come back from Boston. He was an Englishman, and they were having a pint together, and we invited them to, join us, and we played darts together. ... We were also taught not to let the English buy us anything, because they didn't have any money, 'cause, I know they wanted to buy us the Scotch, and we wouldn't permit that. We were gonna buy them, and we did that, as I recall. You know we had all kinds of money. I was loaded with pound notes. ...

KP: So, you felt quite well off in England, in some ways?

AN: Yes.

KP: That is the sense I get.

AN: Yeah.

KP: You could do a lot of things that you usually would not be able to do.

AN: Yes, I did. Yeah.

KP: Did you imagine yourself doing these things?

AN: Well, ... the English, I think, liked us a lot. I'm not quite so sure that we, as Americans, liked the English all that much. We had a man coming through our place regularly, to do the laundry, and, gee, that was great, somebody local who was willing to do the laundry. ... But, ... something was always missing when it came back, particularly if you had something like sweat socks, which I guess were unknown in England, really. ... I came overseas with six or eight pairs, and I'm sure that every time I sent them to the laundry, at least one or two pairs didn't come back, and, he would swear that, I never sent them. ... In a sense, I couldn't blame him. They were deprived so much, and, by the time I got there, they'd already been at war for five years.

KP: You sense that they were really hard hit by the war.

AN: Yes, yes, I did, and ... if you've ever heard them talking about, "Have you got any gum, chum?" or soap. And, ... when I first landed in Wales, and to listen to someone from Wales speak is, ... when ... you've just landed in a foreign country, right. And, some of the girls worked ... in the mess hall, and I did hear that phrase, "You got any gum, chum?" ... It took me a moment to understand it, ... and I went into my fatigue pants, I could always remember that, and I don't know what I had in there. I had some change, maybe a dime and a couple of nickels, or something, and I had some Dentyne that had been in my pocket for, only God knows, how long. You know how that gets, with the wrapper, right? Do you know, ... I said, "You mean this?" and the hand, just like a chicken, picked it out that quick, and it was gone. I didn't even see what she did with it, right. It was so valuable a commodity. It really was, and I hesitated, because, the guys used the chocolate bars to trade for sexual favors, apparently.

And, when I was down in Walhampton House, in February, I became a staff sergeant, right. ... There were a couple of English women there who would be willing to do a little sewing for you, whatever. They were volunteers, and I asked them if they would please sew my stripes on for me. I couldn't sew them on straight, ... and so, they were very nice, and they did that, and I really wanted to give them something, and I didn't know what to give 'em, right. But, I did have some chocolate bars, and I asked permission first. ... I said, I have some, and [asked] if they would like to have 'em, because they sewed the [stripes], and they thought, yes, ... that would be very nice, ... and they took 'em. ... I didn't know what else to give them, ... because they didn't want payment. ... By the way, while I was on vacation there, I had my birthday. I became twenty-years-old, and they had a cake for me, and all the trimmings. It was nice. They had a birthday party for me.

KP: Your morale must have really gone up after this.

AN: Well, I don't remember that ... my morale was down, but, somehow, somebody was observing us, and decided that we better not let these guys go off by themselves, because, then, they won't rest, which is probably true. That probably would have happened, and so, what they did was, ... they just gave us orders, and we had to go to this place, and it was splendid. It was February, the weather was not bad. It was relatively warm. We could go anyplace we wanted in a sweater. I don't remember that it was particularly sunny, ... 'cause the weather in England was

just horrible all the time, ... but, it was nice, and we came back, and then, I don't remember how difficult it was to go back to war, but, ... apparently, we did it. [laughter]

KP: Did you ever go to religious services during the war?

AN: Yes, I went to Catholic services during the war.

KP: You went to Mass regularly?

AN: No, they had Mass everyday on a mission. I went to Mass occasionally before missions.

KP: How common was that? How many people went?

AN: A lot. I think all the Catholic boys went. I would imagine that some of the others went, too, but, I couldn't swear to that.

KP: Yeah.

AN: 'Cause, there's the business of there's no atheists in foxholes. That happens in the Air Force, too. I gotta tell you, more people prayed that never prayed before. [laughter] But, no, that's true. ... I didn't know the chaplain personally, but, he was there all the time. He never came to the barracks to visit. Maybe he was just spread too thin. You know, I don't know whether he was taking care of four squadrons or not. I couldn't even tell you that, but, that's quite likely.

KP: There was regular Mass?

AN: There was, yes.

KP: Did you ever go to any Catholic churches in England?

AN: Yes, I went to one. I can't remember where it was, though. I have a feeling it might have been in Cambridge, 'cause I went once to Cambridge. ... That was the only time I went. ... I visited St. Paul's, just on a tour, ... but, there was nothing going on at the time. That's an enormous church. Have you been there?

KP: No, I have only seen it from the outside. I have never been in it.

AN: In fact, when I was in it, when I was in the nave there, ... as you're approached the main altar, the left hand side, the wing there was all cordoned off, because a bomb had come through, and it went into the basement and exploded, and so, ... there was a big hole in the cathedral. I would presume that's all been repaired. I'm sure it has.

KM: At the time you were over there, had you heard about the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima?

AN: No. I was already back in the United States when that occurred.

KP: How did you feel at the time?

AN: Good. I felt the war's finally gonna be over. I didn't really know what an atomic bomb was. You know, in retrospect, I can remember that we had a biology teacher who talked to us about the energy that was stored in things like a lump of coal. ... He talked about, if they could capture it, it would drive a ship to England and back, that kind of thing, but, you don't immediately associate things like that when you suddenly hear that there's an atomic bomb out there somewhere. I was in Texas at the time and I really didn't think too much about the devastation. I just thought it was powerful enough that this was gonna stop the war, because I had letters of recommendation to send me to the Far East, and I wasn't ready to go, right, 'cause that's what they did when they sent you home. They said, "He did a good job over here, we recommend him for your theater of war," and I didn't think that was so nice. I like to have letters of recommendation, but, not to something like that. [laughter]

KP: Before I ask about your hospital stay and your return home, I would like to ask, did you ever have any confirmed kills or did you think you got close to shooting down an enemy fighter?

AN: ... At the time, I believe, the headlight tracer was coming into being. We did have tracer bullets, the tracer ones being that I could see where the bullet was going. The headlight tracer was ... the enemy, can see the bullet coming at him, all right. We ran one tracer for, I think, every ten rounds of ammunition. ... Of course, we always fired in short bursts. I shot at aircraft. There's no possible way of ever knowing if I hit one, all right. I only had one single gun. The tail-gunner had two, the ball turret had two, ... the nose had two, and the top turret had two, and ... the ball turret, particularly, had a very good gun sight, whereas I had to just use it just as if it were a rifle, you see. ... He had a sight down there, and, I think, the top turret did, too. Once he got that aircraft ... in the cross-hairs, and he was within range, he could ... shoot him down. Now, we had a lot of training in that, by the way, and it was called "jam handy." I don't know if anybody's ever talked to you about that before, and I don't know why that has never been made into a game at this point in time, but, ... we would sit at our place, we had a big structure, and it was a dome-like situation, right. ... Somehow, they were able to project film in this hemisphere, right, and ... the aircraft would come at you from all different directions, and you'd shoot at 'em. ... When you shot at 'em, it sounded different from when you missed, and, I guess, it was somewhere being recorded how good you, as a gunner, were doing, but, we had to do this periodically, too, and ... that was a great training thing for us.

KP: So, you actually found that very useful?

AN: Oh, yeah, yeah, sure. Didn't like to go, 'cause we always figured we were going to fail. [laughter]

KP: Did anyone ever not make it and suffer a mental breakdown on any of the crews you knew?

AN: I don't want to say mental, but, I will say ...

KP: Or, battle fatigue might be a better term.

AN: ... But, I will say, yeah, I think so. Yes, they did. We had a couple of guys in our barracks who had that, couple of men who were already married. Most of us were single. ... Some of the guys were really quite young, and they were married, ... and they worried, ... and you couldn't worry, 'cause they couldn't sleep, especially those guys who could not sleep. You know, 'cause, then, you were no good, if you could not sleep. ... They were taken off flying status. A very close call to a pilot, where the shrapnel, I think, came up from the bottom, and just tore all his clothes right up his side, ... and missed him completely, right, ... and he refused. You know, I supposed he could have been court-martialed for something like that, but, it was just so traumatic. He just wouldn't do it.

KP: He just refused to go back up?

AN: He just refused. He wouldn't fly anymore. That was it. Now, what ever happened to him, I don't know. ... Something must have happened. I don't know whether they brought charges or not, but, those two particular instances I remember. ... I think it happened a lot. Now, I don't know that anybody came back from World War II with this syndrome that they call PTSD, [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder], which is so common with the Vietnam War veterans, but, I think there was a certain amount of rehabilitation required by almost everyone who had seen combat, me, included. When I came home, ... I don't know what you want to call it, that nothing happened to me, even though I'd been through this experience. I remember that I was not able to sit still. I dreamed about being in the war, but, I was always in the backyard watching the flak. I was down on the ground looking up.

KP: You reversed your perspective.

AN: ... I would see the shoot[ing] going on, and then, I usually would wake up. I don't dream about those things any more, ... but, years ago, I did. I'd have some, but, whether anybody else did, I don't know that, either. You know, I don't know that.

KP: How good was the medical care you received?

AN: Good. I thought it was excellent. Number one, you could not fly unless your teeth were perfect, okay. You couldn't have a cavity.

KP: Why?

AN: Why? Because you went up into the air in this rarefied atmosphere. If you had a cavity, and some air was stuck in that pocket, you were going to get a first class toothache up there, right. ... In fact, [laughter] see how all these memories come up. When I was being discharged from the hospital, I had to go to the dentist, and I sat in the dentist's chair where, again, they were just lined up. There was no privacy there, whatsoever, and I sat down in the chair, ... and the dentist

looked at my teeth. ... He went around, and I'd had a lot of work done since, but, ... he said, "God, ... I wish all of my patients had teeth like you," right, and I looked at the guy in the next chair, and the blood was coming down from his mouth here, and he looked so distressed. [laughter] Then, he must have said, "Oh, look at that guy go, and ... he's got perfect teeth." Well, all of us did, and, ... when I say perfect, you couldn't have any cavities or anything like that, ... because ... air pressures were just too difficult. ... I had only ... one difficult time, and I can't remember what mission it was, and I had a slight cold, and I should have known better than to fly, but, I guess I wanted to make sure I just flew and got that other mission in, or whatever it was. ... It was a situation where we had the unusual situation of coming down fast. Normally, we didn't do that, ... and I got these terrible pains in the sinus cavities, because I wasn't able to equalize the pressures. ... I had to keep blowing my nose, and, fortunately, that cleared it, ... but, boy, I thought, "Wow," you know. [laughter] But, that care, and the care I got when I was in the hospital, was very good. The Sixty-Fifth General Hospital, wherever it was in England, not too far from my base, I guess, I think their contingent of doctors were all from Duke. ... I'm not sure if the nurses were there, from there also, but, I do remember, at least, when I was about to be put under, that the girl, ... back in those days, Kevin, I had curly hair, and I must have needed a haircut, because I know that she was twirling ... around, her finger around my hair. ... I was scared to death. I'd never been in a hospital, right, ... and I still hadn't seen the wound, and I could hear them talking. ... I heard them talking about a local, and I knew that, right, and he said, "No, ... because of where the wound is." ... I didn't like that, right? Right, but, you hear all this, and you're really not too terribly bright about all of this stuff, and ... that light was so huge, and she said, "Wouldn't that just kill ya, look at the curly hair," and I was out. They gave me sodium pentathol, I think. ... I think, I woke up around eight o'clock that night, and I must have, somewhere along the line, complained about being hungry, and they were trying to give me soup through a straw, and I was just too groggy to [be] taking [food]. ... Of course, when I woke up the next morning, I had this huge bandage around me, ... and I had to get out of bed, 'cause I had to go to the bathroom. ... The guy in the next [bed] says, "Hey, hey, hey, hey." ... You know, I think I can get out of the bed. ... I said, "Where's the bathroom?" 'cause I didn't even know, and then, ... of course, ... I kept looking at myself. I figured, "Gee, what could have happened to me?" Right, because ... they had bandages all here, so that I couldn't peel it away and try to look what they were trying to do, and then, the doctor came by, and I said, "When am I going to leave here?" He said, "Relax, we haven't even sewn you up yet." ... What had happened was, because of where the wound was, ... they wanted it to just, I don't know what they do, ... drain for a while. I was wounded, I think, on Wednesday, and they didn't sew me up until Saturday, but, ... meantime, I was a guinea pig for penicillin. ... They shot me every four hours with this new antibiotic, right. ...

KP: Probably more than you ever needed.

AN: Because ... I think I had pills. In fact, I even said to the nurse, ... "Why do you have to wake me up?" you know. I said, "Just stick me right there," you know. By this time, you see, I had become pretty sophisticated. Here it is, just go, stick me, right, but, they were afraid, of course, of breaking the needle. ... I didn't know too much about that. I knew that they were doing [it], but, I guess, basically, that's what I was, but, apparently, it worked. I was in the hospital about three weeks, I think.

KP: It sounds like you were pleased with the medical care.

AN: Yeah, no question about that. ... The problem wasn't really that bad. You know, they told me what it was. They told me, basically, it was superficial. ... My bombardier told me that it nicked the esophagus. ... That troubled me a little bit, 'cause I didn't know just exactly how deep the esophagus was in there. [laughter] But, it's basically what they call a laceration. ... My brother Joe's wife, Mary, had a cousin who was stationed some miles away from me. And, he was an ambulance driver, and the day that I was wounded, he came to visit with me. He had done this before, and, of course, ... they didn't bring me back to barracks, they took me right off to the base dispensary, and then, on to the hospital. ... When he came into the barracks, he came looking for me, and I wasn't there, and ... everybody wanted to know who he was, and what he wanted to do with this guy, and they wouldn't tell him anything. ... They finally told him that I had been wounded that day, and so, the next morning, when he came to the hospital, he came with slippers. He brought me a razor, he brought me, what else? A number of things, that anybody who's in the hospital could use, ... which was great. Here he was, all of a sudden, and I had all the comforts of home, practically, right. Then, he wrote to his cousin, my sister-in-law, and said to her that Alex is resting comfortably, not to worry, right. She calls my sister, and said, "I got this funny letter from my cousin," 'cause the family had not yet heard. The pilot and crew came to visit me about two days after I was in the hospital. They all came together, and the pilot said, "Did you wire your family?" and I said, "No," you know. He said, "Do it," because, ... when Berg was wounded on the day before Christmas, he didn't tell his wife, 'cause it was a minor thing, right, but, the telegram came and scared the bejesus out of his wife, right. And so, I sent a wire, but, they censored it, so that the wire didn't say I was wounded. But, I wrote to my brother, who was then in Texas, and I drew him a little picture, and I showed him where the wound was, and all that, and the family all knew that I was, okay. They did send a telegram. I still have it. I think it's in here, ... and then, they sent periodic notices to my family on my progress. [laughter]

KP: After you recuperated, did you rejoin your squadron at all?

AN: No, see, the crew finished up their missions. They had to fly thirty-five, and I was excused from flying the other two, again, because ... the war effort was just about completed then. ... As long as I was hospitalized, they didn't figure they'd coerce me to do the last two. So, I did go back to the base for, I guess, the ceremony of the Purple Heart, and I don't remember, I guess, to pick up my stuff, whatever else was there, 'cause I didn't have anything with me at the hospital. ... I was there from the 14th of March, which was the day I was wounded, through the end of March. Just exactly what day I got back to the base, I don't remember, but, I did have a delay enroute to get to my port of debarkation, which was Chorley, a town in England, somewhere near Liverpool, right, and I remember that I decided that I would go to London. I think that's the only way you can get anyplace in England, anyway. Wherever you are, you have to go through London, and so, I was in London. I remember being in London when the newspapers announced that Franklin Roosevelt had died. Now, if you recall, that was April 12th and I was due at my port of debarkation the next day, which was the 13th, which happened to be Friday. Okay, so, [laughter] ... that's absolutely true. ... Well, see, I had apparently just missed a boat, and so, there

were very few enlisted men around, and they were shipping officers and enlisted men from that particular base, and so, they put us on KP. ... You know, somebody had to do it, and I was on night duty, and we were on KP, and I hated the chore. I had to eviscerate chickens. I remember that ... so vividly. I didn't eat chicken for about two years after that.

KP: Had you done much KP before?

AN: I did some when I was in basic training, but, everybody did it then. After that, I didn't do it. Here I was, already what we know as a non-com. I thought I was above that sort of thing, but, ... somebody had to do it, ... and it really wasn't that bad. ... What we had to do was to stand in the serving line and serve the guys. I know that, as I was serving, I was serving pie that one day, and I saw a first lieutenant ... looking at me, and I looked at him, and, when he passed behind me, I was looking at him, and he came over. He said, "Sergeant, do I know you?" and I said, "You look familiar lieutenant." ... Ended up he was in the class ahead of me in high school. [laughter] Yeah, how'd you like that? You know, we knew we've seen each other, but, of course, we'd changed in that little time.

KP: Yeah.

AN: Right. ... I don't remember exactly what day I caught the ship, but, I think it was on the 1st of May, and ... we were in mid-ocean. Well, I think we were out for three days, and I saw land, and I thought to myself, "Well, maybe I didn't learn my geography so well." but, I said, "I don't think there's any islands in the Atlantic," you know. Three days, I thought I was in the middle of the ocean. That was only Ireland, but, I mean, God, when I found out it was Ireland, I said, "It will take us forever to get home," right. ... I had somehow been picked to do MP duty. I guess they just went through the roster, and picked out every tenth name, and I was one of them. I don't remember if it was four hours on and four off, or four hours on and eight off. That seems more likely. It does to me. I don't know, but, I had to do this all the way across the ocean. ... It was just a matter of, wherever they sent us, to keep the GIs from going into the crew's quarters, or whatever it was. ... I was on this duty, I think, the second day out, and I had seen a merchant seaman who looked familiar to me, and that morning, at about four in the morning, I was reading a book, and he looks like he just got up, and he was passing me by, and I said, "Sailor, you look familiar to me," and here, he called me by name. He knew me right away, right. I didn't know him. He'd put on a lot of weight, and so, he made my crossing, not cruise like, exactly, but, I ate with the crew, I showered in their showering room, where they had fresh water and not half sea water and half fresh like everybody else did. We landed in New York on the 13th of May. It was Sunday, Mother's Day, and he got off the ship, and the first thing he did was to call my mother to say I [had] landed in New York.

KP: Which probably made your mother feel a lot better.

AN: Oh, yeah, sure. It was great, and she knew that I was home, and then, we went, from there, up to Camp Shanks. ... But, I'll tell you one of the most inspiring things on that return. We landed, I think, in Staten Island. I don't know where we would have gone there, where they loaded us up. Well, we were still on the ship, and we were hanging over the sides, and they had

sent out a little boat, with a band, and the girls, American girls, right. The buildings in downtown Manhattan had huge signs in their windows, "Welcome Home." And then, we got on a ferry, and we rode up past the Statue of Liberty, where I met some of the guys I went through training with, from Iowa, and places like that, and I remember standing there with those guys. I hadn't seen them all during the war, while we were overseas, and I said, "Yeah, I live only about thirty miles out that way, just past the Statue." ... It was, "Did you ever go up there?" and I said, " No, I hadn't been there," right, and then, the Empire State Building, "Did you ever go up there?" and I said, "No." I've been to both places now. [laughter] But, when we passed the Statue of Liberty, there was absolute silence on the boat, absolute silence, until we got far enough away, but, it was amazing. There were three thousand men on that ship, not a word was spoken. It really was really quite inspiring.

KP: So, after this really tremendous homecoming, you went to Camp Shanks?

AN: Yeah, and then, I came home for thirty days.

KP: What happened after the leave?

AN: ... My reassignment place was in Atlantic City, okay, and I went to Atlantic City, where I can't remember where we stayed. I think almost all the hotels had been commandeered by the Army, at that point. ... I guess we got reassigned there, and, from there, I went to Mission, Texas. Mission being way down on the Rio Grande, near McAllen, and not far from Brownsville and Corpus Christi. This was an Air Force base where they taught pilots to fly, and when I got down there, ... we were welcomed by the colonel of the base. I don't know, about six or eight of us had come down, and we were all so-called 'combat experienced veterans,' and for whom this colonel had enormous respect. ... I'm eternally grateful to him for that, but, ... he tried to give us the low-down of what the area was like, and what Mexico was like, and then, of course, I had to find something for myself to do down there. ... Of course, again, I had to be reassigned to do something. ... I don't know what they were going to do with me, ... and I had a chance to talk to a ... first lieutenant, and we got to chatting, and he wanted to know where I was from, and I told him, and he said he was from Elizabeth. You know he's a kindred soul, soon as you say Plainfield and Elizabeth, you're practically neighbors when you're in Texas. And, he had an opening in the commissary, the man in charge, because I had all the stripes. So, that's where he put me. He put me as sergeant in charge of the commissary, and that's where I was running a grocery store for the last two months before I was separated. [laughter]

KP: When you said you got the low-down on Texas and Mexico, what did you learn about Texas and Mexico?

AN: Well, he was telling us, ... what did he call it? He called it a bull pen. Basically, it was a whorehouse, I guess, and ... he said that, just be careful of places like that, and we were always careful of places like that. We did go down, ... the name of the town was (Renosa?). I think I've heard it in a song, too. You never heard of it?

KP: No.

AN: One of the cowboy ditties sings about Renosa. [laughter] But, we used to go down there to eat, once in a while, for Mexican food. Mission, Texas was really ... quite a nice duty for me. I really didn't do anything, except, prepare to go to college. ... I don't know how I learned about it or anything, but, I learned that I could take my college entrance exams there, through the United States Army Correspondence Courses. The Special Services arranged for me to do that, and I took my entrance exams for Rutgers there, and Rutgers notified me that I was accepted before I was discharged.

KP: Why Rutgers?

AN: Close to home, and I had three brothers in the service. Okay, ... I was living only ten miles away.

KP: Two of your brothers did not take advantage of the GI Bill.

AN: No, they didn't. They were older and they were both married, so, they didn't do it. My oldest brother did go to the Ag School, but, he went at night, okay, because he became a dairy farmer.

KP: So, he did take some courses.

AN: Yeah, he did. I don't know how long he went, couple of years, I think. He got quite a lot of credits, but, he just didn't ever finish. He's the guy who has two sons who are doctorates. You know, as he said, "I can't even talk to my kids anymore." [laughter]

KP: Before I start asking you some questions about Rutgers, just one question, had you thought about staying in the Air Force?

AN: No, not really. I really didn't. When I was in gunnery school, I was summoned up front by somebody, and I can't remember whom, and they wanted to make me an instructor. It apparently had something to do with the scores, my IQ, whatever it was. They thought that perhaps I would make an instructor and I suppose my life in the service would have been very different had I said, "Yes." I probably would have stayed in Arizona, but, I said, "No." I just didn't think I was cut out for that kind of thing, and so, they said, "Okay, so go to war." [laughter] But, even as I was being discharged, I think they asked us that question, and I just said, "No," because, at that point, I really knew that I was going to be going on to school.

KP: So, you knew at that point?

AN: Oh, yeah, when I was discharged, I knew that I'd be going back to school, and, as I told you earlier, they had an early date, I think it was October 25th, that they had a semester starting, or something, and then, the next one was going to be in February. Now, because I wasn't discharged until the 23rd, that 25th was a date I couldn't make, and so, I started in February.

KP: You were a charter member of a VFW post.

AN: Yeah, I'm still a member.

KP: When did that come about? When did that post get founded?

AN: Well, I would imagine right after. I don't have a recollection, but, I think it's fifty years ago, yeah.

KP: You, and several other World War II veterans, started it?

AN: Well, when you say several, there had to be sixty or seventy of us, yes, yes.

KP: It was in South Plainfield?

AN: South Plainfield. It still exists, okay, and I think it goes pretty strong. ... Well, maybe not so strong. I think the last time I got one of the little notices, they were kind of saying, "Hey, guys, where are you and why don't you come down?" but, it's because the World War II vets now are getting pretty old, ... but, they take anyone who's been overseas, pretty much. Now, I was very active right at the beginning. I even served as their adjutant for a while, but, once I got married, and moved away, it became increasingly difficult to just run down there and have a beer with the guys. My wife and I used to go down, periodically. We'd go down, maybe, New Year's Eve. ... My wife and I never went anyplace New Year's Eve because all our kids were born in December, you see, and so, usually, she was either pregnant or [had] just delivered, so, it was no fun to go out on Christmas or New Year's. ... She wasn't ready for 'em when we had bawling kids at home. ... [laughter]

KP: You came to Rutgers and had college initial been part of your plans?

AN: Not initially, no. See, ... when I was in high school, I don't know. I had attended a couple of things here at Rutgers as a representative of the high school, for something or other. I don't remember what it was. I spoke in a panel discussion. I don't know what it was. It was just here, it was close. I think I did try maybe one or two other schools, but, ... you know.

KP: Yeah.

AN: They were not serious considerations, because, don't forget, ... we got discharged on points in those days, and I was the only one who had enough points to get out. We didn't know that my kid brother was gonna re-enlist, and so, he didn't care, and the other two guys, we just didn't know what was going to happen to them, so, we figured, we better, and the war still wasn't over. ... Yes, the war was just over. V-E day came about when I was in the middle of the ocean, and then, V-J day came, in September. Yeah, so, it was over, so, I got out in October, ... and I say, I was able to live at home, so, it was easy. ... It was something I never thought about, living on the campus.

KP: You did not miss living on campus at all?

AN: Well, in retrospect, I would say, perhaps, yes, because, I think I missed a good deal of college life. When my boys began to think about college, I insisted that they live at the school, regardless of where they went, and, I said, "You must live ... on campus, absolutely must," and they both did. ...

KP: You mentioned, earlier, your decision to start in engineering and your decision to move into journalism. What kind of career did you envision for yourself in college?

AN: Well, I figured I was going to become an engineer.

KP: Initially.

AN: Initially, right. Except, after the first two weeks, I decided [this was] definitely the wrong spot, and I went to the Dean of Men. I can't remember who he was now, I really can't. I'm sorry.

KP: Dean Crosby?

AN: No. I think I remember him, but, I don't think he was the man I spoke to. But, anyway, I just went in, and I said, "I am absolutely in the wrong curriculum." That's when they suggested I take these psychomotive tests. The VA was also located here on campus at that time, and, with their help, and, I guess, maybe, I was fortunate, because the man who was representing the VA then was a man by the name of Eric Kirchberger, and he was my high school biology teacher. Right, see how I keep running into these old friends every place I go? And, I think he was a little surprised that I was having difficulty in school, because, in high school, I didn't have any difficulty. ... He kept looking at me through his glasses, and I kept saying, "You, Eric Kirchberger, you miserable guy. C'mon and help me here." I don't know whether he helped me with these testings or not. Somehow, though the Dean of Men's office, I took these tests with, what'd I say the doctor's name was, Starr? Something like that. Anyway, she recommended that I go into something more in the liberal arts area and, she thought journalism would be good. And so, when I investigated the journalism aspects, I thought perhaps I would enjoy the advertising more, and so, I went into the advertising sequence of journalism. Okay, ... but, I did spend one full semester in engineering, and I think I got credit for chemistry as a science. I lacked one half credit for entrance, and, maybe, the University was being generous to us returning veterans. ... They didn't catch up with me until I was a junior. I lacked it in solid geometry, and so, I said to them, "Would you mind if I took another semester of Spanish," and they said, "No." And so, I took another semester of Spanish. ... The A I got in that, why, they just took for entrance credit. I was a very good student in Spanish. [laughter] ... I had five semesters and I got five As.

KP: Do you still speak it?

AN: No. I don't do it, I don't do it. If ... I had gone to a Spanish speaking country, for maybe one summer, or something, I might have done very well, because that last semester I ... took,

they're only six of us in the class. Do you remember classes that big?

KP: No.

AN: No?

KM: I have never had a class that big.

AN: ... If I was not prepared, the professor talked to someone else, and, sometimes, I could come in and get away with it, and I just say to him, "Look, I'm sorry, but, ... I just didn't have time to do it this week," and so, we'd talk about something else. He was really good, but, then, I guess he was pleased I was that good a student, too. Do you know, that last semester, too, I missed my final exam. ... I just don't know how I did that. I never missed a final exam, but they changed the schedules around, and I had to go to the Dean of Men's office. I had missed the exam and I saw the professor's note there. He said he couldn't understand why I missed it and that I was a straight A student. So, I paid five dollars to do it again. I remember that. [laughter] Are you ready to quit?

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 8/2/99
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 8/7/99
Reviewed by Alexander Nazemetz 11/99