RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH PHILIP SCHREIBER

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Julia Gorley: This begins an interview with Mr. Philip Schreiber on March 10th, 2009, this is the second interview to continue from last week on March 3.

Sandra Holyoak: This interview will be conducted by

Daniel Ruggiero: Dan Ruggerio

Julia Gorley: Julia Gorley

SH: and Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Thank you again Mr. Schreiber for coming in and to begin, we'd like to start with the experiences that you began telling us about prior to coming back to the States. I think you were in Hong Kong where we left off last time. Okay, were there any other experiences that you recall that would be worth telling us about from Hong Kong? Where did you go?

PS: Well, Hong Kong was the first city or town that we had seen since we left Pearl Harbor. The last city we saw was Honolulu. After that it was going from one little island to another and going into Hong Kong was similar to taking the Staten Island Ferry to New York, down to the Battery, the tall buildings. Of course, the Battery would have been at that time, it was a large modern city, a real metropolis, and it was very exciting. Our first introduction to what life is like in Hong Kong immediately after the Japanese were moved out was--they called them little bum boats. The Chinese lived on boats in the harbor. The entire family lived on a junk or something called a bum boat. They were small boats, they just lived on them, and a bunch of them came alongside our ship as soon as we dropped anchor and began offering to sell us stuff.

SH: Really?

PS: Yes. They knew what sellers would like souvenirs to send home and things like that. A young woman had an infant in her arms and one of the sailors made a joke; he waved a dollar bill and said, "I'll give you a dollar for the baby," as a joke, and they actually were serious. They put the baby in a sack with a rope and tossed the rope up to him and he said, he's only joking. He said, "No, a deal is a deal." [laughter] Finally, the Captain had to shoo the boats away because they got very indignant. Finally, we got friendly with the people who came around and we're going ashore and the young woman came aboard to offer to be our number one girl. To a sailor it sounded great, she was very attractive and we said, "Well, what's a number one girl going to do with a hundred and thirty sailors up here?" She said, "Oh, I have my family and we're going to do all of your cleaning, your laundry, your cooking, everything. We'll make whatever arrangements you want ashore to buy things, we'll do whatever has to be done and in return you don't pay us, we'll just take your garbage." The way it worked was, after each meal, several members of her family would line up where we would throw our leftover remnants of our meals and they had these tin cans. We would hand them our tray that had the leftover food and they'd separate whatever was in the tray, the meat from the potatoes, into a different thing and take it ashore. We didn't ask what they were doing with it, maybe they ran a restaurant, who knows, but we paid them; that was their pay for doing everything. As a result, there was very little work that had to be done. Clothing, they had skilled shoemakers, tailors, everything. The first thing I did, the guy showed me a pair of shoes that he could make and it was done by barter. The best bartering was for cigarettes. Our cigarettes had been free, but with the end of the war, we had to pay five cents for a pack. [laughter] He would make me a pair of shoes for five cigarettes.

SH: Five packs of cigarettes?

PS: No, it was done with individual cigarettes.

SH: Oh my word.

PS: As a matter of fact, if you were walking down the street in Hong Kong and smoking, you would have a group of native Chinese following you because they knew eventually you'd flip the butt away and they'd take that butt. We traveled by rickshaw. The rickshaw was a wagon that a guy pulls. The fare was ten Hong Kong cents period, regardless of where you were going in the city limits. It was forty Hong Kong dollars for one American dollar. Now right behind the rickshaw was usually a kid, who looked like a kindergarten kid, holding on, running, being trained to do that too. If you didn't travel by rickshaw they had a trolley car system there, which we didn't like to use because Hong Kong, it's like Florida weather, and we wore our white uniforms. The people would get on with baskets of chickens or a dead pig over their shoulders and the trolley would get crowded, and so, once you were on a trolley, you never used it again.

SH: Now did you have a uniform made, because I know a lot of people had custom made dress?

PS: Oh, yes, I just mentioned the shoes. A custom made uniform was really something. It was all hand done perfectly and even the parts that were plain, like the inside of your cuffs, they would embroider dragons and things like that. They were really fancy there. I never got a uniform made because I'd been on the ship since it was put on commission. So I was in the very first group who would be given permission to go home. So, I figured I wouldn't need a uniform once I got home so the heck with it. What I did bring home though was pajamas for my mother and cousins, all of these were hand embroidered pillow cases. It took about a month until a ship came in to pick up the people who were eligible to go home, and the ship was a cargo ship, the *USS Kenmore*. They had converted the cargo hold, these tremendous places, into living spaces. They built wooden racks for mattresses for bunks; it was about a foot and a half between them. So you could go ten high, to get as many people as possible on it. I don't know how many thousand people went on this cargo ship.

SH: Were they Navy, Army? Was it a mixture of services, or just Navy?

PS: Everything. The ship had come in from somewhere in the Philippines. So, it had Navy, Marines, sailors, merchant seamen who were stuck out there, that sort of thing. You couldn't tell anyone from another because you just wore fatigue clothes, no one wore uniforms. The most exciting part of the day was meals, the lines were continuous. I mean, you could get in line for lunch right after you finished your breakfast. I mean, everybody was friendly with each other, they were upbeat, took thirty-one days to get home.

SH: Was that because of weather?

PS: It is because it's a long distance and the ship was slow.

SH: Now were you entertaining the idea of staying in the military at that point?

PS: No, nobody was, absolutely no one at all. Everybody just wanted to get home. That was it.

SH: When you were in Hong Kong, did you see any of the Japanese civilians, or were they being transferred out back to Japan?

PS: The British, who came in before I arrived, had moved them into internment camps and ships would come in and bring them back to Japan. I never had contact with any of them, none whatsoever.

SH: Any Koreans or misplaced people?

PS: As a matter of fact we couldn't tell one from the other. If they were native people from the Orient, we referred to them as gooks, I mean that was the term that was used there and one size fit all.

SH: Were there any expatriates that were in Hong Kong from say, any other country, whether Allied or Axis?

PS: We never ran into them, never ran into them, never. The people that we were socializing with were the British servicemen. They had the equivalent of a USO over there, it was called the NAAFI, spelt N-A-A-F-I, I don't know what it meant. [Editor's note: Navy, Army, & Air Force Institutes.] But it was a place for entertainment and everything like that. You could get a liter of Australian beer for an American dime. [laughter]

SH: When you were in Hong Kong then, for that month, was your bunk where your bunk was on the LST?

PS: It was on the LST [Landing Ship Tank], we lived on it; however, we could get something, we could live ashore if we wanted, and if we did, they'd give us compensation. It was called subsistence and quarters. It was three dollars a day for arranging your room and board. The number one girl said that she could get us a villa if six of us wanted to get together for eighteen dollars a day and that would get us a six bedroom villa and a full staff of servants. They would do the shopping, prepare the meals, do the laundry, the ironing, the cleaning, everything.

SH: Did you take her up on it?

PS: We did take her up, but we never hung around long enough because our name appeared on the list shortly thereafter that the ship is on the way.

SH: This transport that you took back to the States, was that manned by Navy personnel or Merchant Marines?

PS: Navy, that was a navy thing. It was called an AK, navy terminology. The A means auxiliary vessel and the K meant cargo. So, it was a Navy cargo ship, but fully staffed by the Navy, the sort of ship that Mr. Roberts was on. [laughter]

SH: Fair enough description. Did you ever travel outside of Hong Kong at all into the countryside or were you pretty well confined to the city, or want to be confined in the city?

PS: No, the city held enough interest for us and we were warned, nearest large city was up the river, Canton, I don't know what they call it today. [Editor's note: Canton, also the name of the province in which it is located, is now known by the name of Guangzhou, on the Pearl River.] A

friend of my uncle's, who owned a tailor shop where I was a kid, his name was George Chang and he owned a Chinese restaurant. He had come from Canton, he had emigrated from there and my uncle wrote to me that George would like, if I could, to send me some money to give to his family. I asked someone at the British Navy Yard, one of the military police, is it safe to go there? He said, "Stay away from it." He said, "Especially if you're carrying money." He said, "Because it is pretty lawless." The nationalists control the area, but the Communists were rapidly moving south, and there were a lot of Chinese refugees from the north who were coming into Hong Kong at that time trying to escape from the Communists. These were people who were either professionals or middle or upper class who had already known what the Communists were doing to their class of people. So, they looked all the same to us, but they spoke a different Chinese than the people in Hong Kong spoke. They spoke Manchu and the people in Hong Kong in that area spoke Cantonese. From what I gathered, it was like speaking French, Spanish or English. They're all romance languages, but go figure it out.

SH: I know there were some questions that we had. Go ahead.

JG: Just to go back to Okinawa for a little bit, can you tell us what your occupation duty looked like?

PS: I got the occupation ribbon to wear, but I never did occupation duty. When we talk about catch-22, we got caught in a typhoon off of Okinawa, but it was within our territorial limits, which entitled us to wear the occupation ribbon. So, I really never did occupation duty. The ribbon looks nice. It's a medal, the whole thing, and you figure, since you are entitled to it for being in Hong Kong, I got something called the China Service Medal, which was coveted for no reason except it give you barroom bragging rights. It showed you're an old China hand. [laughter]

SH: Those barroom bragging rights though.

PS: We didn't get these things until we were ready to be discharged. That's when we found out we were entitled to them.

SH: Not real currency at that point?

PS: No. Everything I did in Okinawa was strictly connected with the invasion itself.

JG: You mentioned NAAFI, the British version of the USO. Did you go to any shows there or anything like that?

PS: There were shows; I never got to see one though, because we were more interested in socializing, that sort of thing. We got along very good with the guys in the British Navy, the Royal Navy, and they would do something called splice the main brace on their ship. That's where they were issued rum for special occasions. It looked like a liter of rum in their mess cup; it's a big cup, canteen cup, that's what it was. They'd splice the main brace on holidays, there were a lot of them, the King's birthday, the Queen's birthday, that sort of thing, the anniversary of the ship when it was built, and they do that usually with their supper meal. They get this issue of rum and if they had guests, they'd dig up a cup for you too and you would join them with it and they carried ample supplies of it. Funny thing, I never was a drinker as a kid before, but once you're in, you're rolled in with that and it was a lot of fun socializing. So, I never saw any

entertainment, any USO show period, when I was in the service. They just didn't come out where we were and when I got to Hong Kong, if they were there, nobody was bothering with it. They just like doing whatever they're doing. It was all fun and games at that time.

JG: Besides the British, did you have any contact with any other foreign allies, like the New Zealanders or Australians?

PS: Yes, Anzacs they were called, Australian New Zealand Army Corps, something like that, and not gurus, Indian something.

SH: The Gurkhas?

PS: Gurkhas, the Gurkhas and the service forces. They're British army soldiers, just the opposite of the Gurkhas. The Gurkhas came from Nepal and they were strictly fighters. The people who came from Bombay and places like that were the service troops. They drove the trucks and they did the cooking and stuff like that. We had a lot of contact with them, but the British didn't permit them into their NAAFI, they had their own. There was strict segregation there, really strict; I mean it was like going down to Alabama in those days between the black and the white people. They had no contact with each other whatsoever. So, as a matter of fact, the service troops and the Gurkhas were very poorly paid, very poorly paid, even by Hong Kong standards and sometimes they'd ask, they wouldn't beg, but they'd ask for help. If they saw us shopping for something, want to buy some oranges and stuff like that, we'd buy it for them, that sort of thing. The British allies, if you showed them any sort of a kindness or something, they didn't like it, and it reflected on their attitude towards you too.

SH: Oh, really?

PS: Yes. So, anything an American did for them he had to do really condescendingly, but they were all over the place, the Indian troops. The Aussies, the Anzacs, they were right with us.

SH: What was the scene like? Can you describe what Hong Kong harbor looked like? How far out were you anchored?

PS: Okay, we were anchored [in] Victoria. [It] is the main city in Hong Kong. Kowloon is the mainland. Victoria is an island like Manhattan and Kowloon would be like Brooklyn. We weren't allowed in Kowloon at all, not at all. As a matter of fact, the British wanted to keep that separate, because Kowloon would be the equivalent of going to the black section of Alabama and they just didn't want that mixing. So, we were technically restricted to the city of Victoria, which would be like being restricted to the island of Manhattan. It was big, I don't know how big, but it was big. We were anchored offshore, maybe a few thousand yards, that's all, and occasionally, to take on stores, we'd go into a dock or a pier, but most of the time, we were anchored out. It would be like being on a ferry boat going to New York. I mean it's right there, the tall buildings, the warehouses, the apartment houses, that sort of thing.

SH: How many ships were in anchor that you could see or would be your guess?

PS: There was one other American ship; a large one came in called the *Prometheus*. It was a repair ship and they were stationed there to do whatever repair ships do. There were loads of British Navy warships there. They had the Battleship *Anson,* which I'd been aboard a few times,

the aircraft carrier *Illustrious*, which I've been aboard and a bunch of cruisers and destroyers. They were all over the place, all over the place. Hong Kong was referred to as a Crown Colony; it belonged to the Crown, period. Everybody who lived there was a subject of the Crown, that sort of thing and the British; they had their own social system. The Chinese were inferior, but there was a middle class of Chinese who were the civil servants, the police that ran--didn't run, but they worked in the municipal administration. They had the university there, of Hong Kong. That would be the equivalent of their, pardon the expression, the Ivy League, that was where the British went or the extremely well to do Orientals went there.

SH: So, there were no American submarines, it was just the two ships that that you talked about?

PS: Our LST and occasionally another ship would come in with supplies for whatever reason, but we never saw an actual warship come in, not at all. A transport came in from France though that I remember because it carried the French Foreign Legion and they were allowed to go ashore and mingle with us. They were all Germans, all of them. They all had been captured and put in the prisoner camp in North Africa, they'd been captured several years before in North Africa, and when the war ended, they were released. Well, it seemed they'd been in contact with relatives and the ones who had relatives in the Soviet occupied [area] were told you are probably better off in your prison camp, really, they were serious. Then coming home, these guys, for the most part, joined the French Foreign Legion and they spoke German completely and the officers were all French and the sergeant was bilingual. He would translate into German and they'd line up for inspection and a French lieutenant would say, "Attention," and the German sergeant would say, "Achtung," they would snap to. They were headed to Indochina, which later became Vietnam, and they barely had time, well, they were all trained soldiers, so they were given the French Foreign Legion uniforms. They were used to soldiering and they were the only other ones that I remember being there and socializing with. I spoke Yiddish, which is very similar to German. So, I was able to converse with them and most of the time we wore our dungarees and they'd see my name was German, they'd say, "Bist du Deutsch?" and at that time we did not have all of the details of what really had gone on in the concentration camps and things like that. So, I would tell them I am Jewish, "Ich bin Jude." So, there would be mixed reactions there. Some guys would make sort of a black joke about it and other guys would take offense at it. It wasn't unusual that the sergeant carried a riding crop and he was pretty quick to beat the guy in the face that made a remark that he thought--usually I didn't understand because it was in their colloquial German. I had to listen closely and they had to repeat because from different parts of Germany, they have these different dialects that are, you just don't get them right away, same as with the British. I can talk perfect English, but an Australian was very difficult to understand, not only his dialect, but the colloquialisms. One of the favorite stories is, I had never been to Australia, but I heard this from guys who had been there. The term for give me a ring on the phone was, 'knock me up.' You can imagine when a guy asks the girl for her phone number and she said, "You can call me to knock me up tomorrow if you want." [laughter] I mean that was the standard term.

SH: You could get smacked.

PS: Well, understanding the Germans you can understand that it could lead to problems.

SH: Great story though, thanks.

PS: You got it down now. I don't know what part of Australia, or if it was all over, but it was a favorite story for guys to tell each other. We would sit around drinking beer and they'd talk about these things. It seems that Australia had a very liberal attitude and in America it was strictly Victorian at that time; I mean no matter who you were. I mean when you're sitting around NAAFI talking or splicing the main brace and your tongue is loose, all these stories would come out.

JC: Were there any other difficulties with German soldiers being in the same area as Allied, even though they had switched sides?

PS: None at all, none. As a matter of fact, even before I left the country, we had POW camps here with Germans and Italians and they were able to go on liberty or leave as we were. The only thing is someone had to take responsibility for them, but in the East and the West Coast, you had plenty of German speaking families and Italian speaking families where they just had standing orders with the POW camps. Anyone who wants to come visit them is going be welcome here. They were issued American Army uniforms, but they had a shoulder patch that said either Italy or something else on there.

SH: You were still here?

PS: Just before I left.

SH: Really?

PS: I left the country in the end of '43 or the beginning of '44 and by then all these people from North Africa had been captured and sent here. The big surprise was when I got back at the naval base when I returned to the United States, all of the work being done at the naval base at Treasure Island, which is in San Francisco, were German prisoners. We came off this cargo ship, the *Kenmore*, which had good food and everything. The first lunch we had was served by German prisoners, its cafeteria style, they put it on. Well, I'll tell you, that food, I have never eaten in a fancy restaurant, but I knew what to expect. I still remember the meal. It was liver with onions. I never cared for liver with onions, but I'll tell you this was really good and there was something called carrot soup, cream of carrots. If my mother put that in front of me, I'd have raised hell. You took a taste and it was really good and I went back for seconds of the carrot soup. I said, "Boy, I'd like to tell the guy who made this," and he goes back and he tells him, the guy comes out, the cook. He said that he was a master chef in Vienna before he got drafted into the Wehrmacht. I said, "Well, how do you become a master chef? He says, "It took him ten years." First you go to school for a couple of years, culinary school, then you're an apprentice, you work for someone called a journeyman and when the journeyman says you're ready for the journeyman's test, you take the test. Then if you can find a master who'll take you as an assistant, you can work towards the master. So, you got to look around for someone who will accept you, I guess like accepted into a PhD program. This guy had been a master chef and he says, he told us the name of the place, but it wouldn't make any difference. I imagine it was like the Waldorf Astoria, but the stuff was really good. I mean whatever he did, he did right. So, that was all German prisoners.

SH: Amazing.

JG: When did you get back to the States? Was that when you left from Hong Kong?

PS: Yes. I left Hong Kong, I left my diary home. It was, I think in December.

SH: Of '46?

PS: '45, December of '45, it was early in December of '45. I left the end of, I remember it was thirty-one days that we counted each day, we wrote it down in units of five and crossed them off. We didn't calendars. Getting off the ship, we went under the Golden Gate Bridge and the fire boats came out with the big springs of water. There weren't any welcoming crowds because they were used to boatloads of servicemen coming in, but the fire boats did come out under the Golden Gate Bridge and we docked in San Francisco. It was early in the morning and it seems that on the docks there was these shops and there was a milk truck being unloaded and none of us had had fresh milk. So, we bought the guy's milk out. I think milk sold for twenty-five cents a quart, something like that, fifteen cents. This guy wasn't selling it, but when the soldier stuffed a dollar bill in his pocket and grabbed a bottle of it, what's he going to do? [laughter] I think everybody who could grabbed a quarter of milk and downed it on the spot. It was the first fresh milk we'd had and we did not know how much we had missed that, because we got powdered milk which really did not dissolve too well. As a matter of fact, to this day, I don't use milk in my coffee. It turned me against it.

SH: Now when you were discharged from the ship, did you have to go to a relocation center?

PS: When I came off the ship, we were at this place called Treasure Island, I don't know if it's an island or what.

SH: It is.

PS: It is? Okay. It was a naval base. There was no room for us there, none, and we were told to find our own quarters and just report in daily to see if transportation home was available. They gave us the same three dollars a day that they offered us in Hong Kong and San Francisco, instead here we are with our sea bag. So, everybody is out on wherever the taxicabs pick you up and me and a few of my shipmates, just as many as could get into the cab, piled into the cab. He said, "Where are you going," but he was used to guys not knowing. We said, "We got to find a place to live." He took us to the Sir Walter Raleigh, which was the fanciest hotel there was there, and they gave us a room. They gave us a room and told us that as veterans we are not going to turn anybody away. I would say it was a room about this size for six of us. They moved cots in and they told us, "Just sign for whatever meals you have here and we'll take care of it, we'll talk about what you owe us, but don't worry, your three dollars a day should handle it."

SH: Really?

PS: They never gave anybody a bill that I know. They didn't give me one; they didn't give anybody a bill.

SH: That is amazing.

PS: This was a fancy place. I mean the first thing that one of the guys wanted to do was get a good shampoo and haircut, because our water was salt water on the ship and you have to use salt water soap. It just doesn't melt and it's gritty. So, [we] went to a barber shop and we all got shampoos and haircuts and manicures, the whole thing. We had a lot of money; they paid us off

at the base there. On the ship we didn't need money. In Hong Kong we could use it, but we didn't need much. So, when we arrived in the United States, we got damned near two years back pay. The pay by those days was good. If you think of it in this year's terms it's not. I was a radioman, 2nd Class, it's like being a staff sergeant or a higher sergeant and I got 116 dollars a month. The seamen were getting like fifty dollars a month but it was enough. So, everybody was loaded with cash.

SH: Was anybody mugged or anything? You guys were walking little targets.

PS: You're right, but we didn't think of it that way and nothing ever happened in San Francisco, nothing at all, spent three weeks there at the Sir Walter Raleigh.

SH: Where were you checking to see when you could be sent home?

PS: We were given a phone number at Treasure Island and I'll tell you, for all the time I spent there, I don't remember what the heck I was doing most of the time there.

SH: That's what I was just going to ask. So, what did you do to while away the time?

PS: We walked around, hung out, the sort of things you do on a vacation in a big city, go sightseeing, that sort of thing. I must have gone to a USO, but I really don't remember.

SH: What were you planning to do now that the war is over, you are almost home. Were you starting to make plans or just to get home and then you would make plans?

PS: Exactly. We were not making any plans at all. When we were kids, we gave it some thought. Most of the people that I knew and myself would follow in the example of our parents who had been in business. So, you will go into business of some sorts, small businesses. As I said, I had been apprenticed as a tailor to my uncle, so I thought maybe I'll do that, but I really envied the guys who sold my uncle his woolens, his imported woolens. He represented the wool manufacturers. I said I would like that, traveling all around and eventually I decided on that career. I went to work for my uncle when I was discharged.

SH: Now did you call home when you got to San Francisco?

PS: As soon as I could get to a phone, I called home. It was a Sunday morning and my mother answered, but I had written to her when I left. I'd say, "You're not going to hear from me because it is a long trip." So, she was very happy and relieved, very happy and relieved. You were entitled to thirty days leave and in addition to that, if you were far from your home, in order to get home, they gave you something called a delay en route, this is the time it takes. Everybody got a thirty day delay en route regardless of how long it took because the discharge places were too glutted to take you anyway. So, this thirty day leave plus the thirty day delay en route that I was told not to worry about.

SH: You said you were about three weeks there in San Francisco.

PS: I think so.

SH: Then you would be assigned a slot on a train?

PS: When you have a reservation on a train, not any seat, but you were given a ticket and that train would have to accept you. They'd have to put you, the troops who were given those tickets, got priority.

SH: So, you knew you were coming back by train, that you weren't going to have to take a ship back?

PS: Yes or an airplane. They didn't have too many airplanes, they used all of the airplanes they could, but the planes couldn't carry that many people in those days. They weren't as big as these are. They did have them though and it took a week to get home. I remember stopping in Utah for a few hours, places like that.

SH: Was the ride back home a lot different than the ride that you had taken? I mean before you had taken the ship down through the canal and then that.

PS: Completely different world.

SH: Really?

PS: Yes, it's like taking the train into New York from New Brunswick, but for a week. [laughter]

SH: But you were getting to see a part of the country you had never seen before.

PS: Yes, the Great Plains, everything like that. Believe me; it gets boring after a couple of hours of looking at a desert or cornfields. How much are you going to look at?

SH: What did you do? Shoot craps again?

PS: It was just bullshitting really. [laughter] Talking about whatever you wanted to talk about.

SH: Were most of the people that were in your car that you were hanging out with from the East coast or were they getting off along the way?

PS: They were getting off along the way, but it seems a lot of them were from the East, the bulk of them must have been from the East coast, because gradually civilians would be replacing those guys, but it was still mostly servicemen. I remember very little about that train ride.

SH: Okay, then I won't ask any more questions, because I was going to say, did sailors hang out together?

PS: No, whoever was near you.

SH: Fair enough.

JG: I am not sure if you talked about this last week or not, but how did you find out about VE Day? Do you remember where you were?

PS: That was in May, May of '45. [Editor's Note: VE Day was on May 8th, 1945] Well, I was the radio operator so I'd hear about it immediately. We all knew it was coming; it was a matter of

just very short time and there was no celebrating. Let's see, May of '45, I'm trying to figure out where the heck I was.

SH: You would have been in the Philippines if I remember correctly.

PS: Alright, you're right. It could have been there or Okinawa because we invaded Okinawa on April 1. So it was one or the other.

SH: Yes, you were doing the milk runs back and forth.

PS: Yes, that would have been in May doing milk runs, resupplying, reinforcing troops in Okinawa when VE Day came. We all knew that this was the beginning of the end and Okinawa, of course, was the first stepping [stone] to the actual invasion of the home islands of Japan. So, we weren't looking forward to it, but we knew it was the end. I mean if we were in the rear, where they had USO shows, we'd feel a lot different about it.

SH: Was there any difference in the way you were supplied? We talked of the people who always felt that the men in the Pacific were kind of down the totem pole from the men who were serving in Europe. Did you notice any difference in the amount of material?

PS: We were not the least bit concerned, weren't concerned at all. It never occurred to us that if we were down in the totem pole, we didn't know it. For one thing, they gave us more ammunition than we could use. So, we didn't feel deprived and we never went hungry, I mean if you like that food. [laughter]

SH: When you came back to the States and you were making your way cross country, where did you basically get off the train?

PS: Penn Station.

SH: Went straight into New York?

PS: Straight into New York and hopped the train back to Elizabeth, which we had passed right through, but it was an express. So, from Penn Station to Elizabeth was like twenty minutes, it's no big deal.

SH: Did the family know that you were coming?

PS: Oh, yes, I told them. I told my mother.

SH: You called from New York?

PS: As a matter of fact, we stopped along the way and I called up and let her know where I was, because we knew the estimated time of arrival, but it wasn't guaranteed. So, my mother was expecting me when I walked in.

SH: No one came to the train station?

PS: No, no. As a matter of fact, where we lived was walking distance from the train station so we lived along the tracks.

SH: Was it a big celebration?

PS: No, there was no celebration, just abject joy, that's all, and it's all over and I mean I was the only one home at the time. My two older brothers were still in. I was the first one to get out.

SH: Oh, were you?

PS: Yes, I went in after them, but they had not been in combat, so you came out on what they called points. So, when the war ended, my points were all way up. It was just a matter of getting a boat over into China so I could get home. My older brother, who was also a radio operator in the Navy, was stationed at the naval academy in Annapolis, they had a radio station there and my oldest brother was at some Alabama or they had all these air bases. He was with a mobile repair unit that went from one base to another. He was still in. My younger brother was on a tanker, a Gulf oil tanker anchored in the Philippines. They didn't know what to do with the oil. So, he said he was anchored there for about four months.

SH: Oh, my word.

PS: It was either the Philippines or New Guinea, one of those places. So, I was the first to get home and after I got--I think the first weekend I went to visit my brother down at Annapolis there. I was sort of anxious to see him, because the radio station he was at was the Navy's main radio station called NSS and the main job of a radio operator was to copy Morse code. The Morse code emanated from NSS and there were different schedules, and in order to be moved up in rank, you had to master something called the Fox schedule. Every letter had a name to it, Able, Baker, this was F. The Fox schedule was a very fast one and there was no repeating, none. So, you had to get it right the first time and the crew would listen to that, the ones who came by the radio room would think we're wizards being able to translate this into actual a message there. So, he was one of the guys who was a chief radioman by then and he would transmit the Fox schedule and we've been trained that, if there's any interference, you don't leave a blank, because there's a good chance you really heard it, but aren't aware of it. So, you write down, it comes so fast you write down whatever you think and it turned out usually it was correct too. So, I wanted to see what he was doing down there.

SH: See if you were as fast as he was, right?

PS: Sort of. Also, when I was a kid, I collected the postmarks of all these ships and there was a ship I wanted to see. It was used as the brig, the jail for Annapolis. It had been a flagship for the Spanish Fleet during the Spanish American War in Cuba; they captured it at Santiago, the *Reina Mercedes*. When the Navy captured it, they just commissioned it into the US Navy as a barracks ship and they tied it up at Annapolis. It never went anywhere, it couldn't, but I postmarked it. I said, "This is really neat, an American ship named after the Queen of Spain." So, I got a look at it. It didn't look like much; it was just a hulk which they made into a complete barracks.

SH: But it was serving as a brig at that point?

PS: Yes. The midshipmen would kid about it that it didn't go anywhere, it couldn't go anywhere, and it was living quarters also for the people that they couldn't find living quarters for. So, I went to visit him, I spent time with, spent a weekend with him actually. Spent a month until my delay en-route was used up, then I got my thirty days leave and by then I was ordered to

something called the receiving ship in New York, receiving ship or station is barracks where sailors go to wait for their next assignment, but this was at Pier 92.

PS: It was just like the *Reina Mercedes*, it was an old ship. It had been a cruiser during the Spanish American War, the *USS Seattle*, but it couldn't go anywhere, it was converted into barracks. When they thought they would be able to process you at the discharge center, that was at Lido Beach, Long Island, they'd have you come there. Just so you wouldn't get too bored while you were waiting to go there, they'd send you out for jobs. It seems there was a hotel on Broadway and 71st Street that was the barracks for the WAVES [Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service], the women in the Navy, and they sent me over there. The officer in charge of whatever I was supposed to do said, "We need you to collect the laundry from the staterooms." In the morning you knock on the door and they will hand you their laundry and you throw it in this big basket. Well, so the WAVES were used to guys being short timers there. They say, "Well, you're new here aren't you?" I said, "Yes, what do you do around here?" The first stateroom I went to said, "We'll show you." We went downstairs; the Navy had leased this hotel all except one spot that had been their bar, which had a separate entrance. It was closed off the hotel, but open to the street, but still I guess operated privately. So, we walked out the main entrance and we're going around the corner to the bar when the Navy Shore Patrol passed by and I was not in uniform because it seemed to be out on the street like that, you couldn't be wearing your dungarees. You had to wear a uniform with a hat. I had neither and the Shore Patrol stopped me and brought me to the WAVE officer and said, "This man said he is connected here, he's out of uniform." So a breach of Navy regulations, so he says, "If you can't stay under Navy discipline, I'm sending you back," which he did. They sent me out to Floyd Bennett Field which is out in Brooklyn along where Coney Island [is], that general area to pump gasoline at their gas pump for the trucks, sort of a gas station deal. So, I finished the next few days pumping gas.

SH: Totally disciplined right?

PS: Totally disciplined, yes.

SH: So indignant I would have been, had I been you.

PS: But the end was near.

SH: Did you ever get back to that bar?

PS: Never, never.

SH: Now when you were pumping gas at Floyd Bennett Field, were you also stationed there, I mean in the barracks?

PS: No. I had to go with the other guys who were shipped out there, because they had gotten into some sort of trouble too. It was sort of a bus that would bring us there. I mean everybody--some guys worked in the warehouse, some guys were policing the place, which meant that you are picking up cigarette butts with a stick with a nail at the end of it, that sort of thing. But they were keeping you out of trouble. [laughter]

SH: So then what happened? You're discharged from Lido Beach?

PS: Went to Lido Beach and went through the entire process where they give you physical exams and give you whatever back pay is still on the books, tell you, advise you on what you might consider doing. Since I'd been a radio operator, they gave me a booklet with saying how I could use that skill in civilian life by going back to sea on a merchant ship, which almost happened inadvertently. When I got out, in Elizabeth they had a YMHA [Young Men's' Hebrew Association] and a bunch of the guys, like myself, who were out, started a club, but to have a club in this place it had to be connected to something Jewish. So, they decided the club will be registered under the Zionists, the Young Zionists of America. There was no Israel then; it was Palestine. So, we started this club because in the Y we could go bowling and play tennis and play basketball, all of that stuff and the dues were very little. So, I'd say I was a member for a few months when a guy comes, says he's from Palestine and he needs help. He said a lot of, "All of you are returning servicemen you have skills that we really need." He passed out blank paper and said, "Just put your names down if you're willing to help and what you did and in which service you were in and what you did. He got to my name and he said, "You we need" and he said, "We have these boats that are taking the survivors to Palestine." He said, "Radiomen are essential on the ship." So, he said, "I want you to go to the main office immediately, which was the next day, and they will be waiting for you there." So, the place was on 14th Street in New York. I remember it because S. Kline and Orbachs, those great department stores, Alexander's was there. I went to this office and the guy said, "We can use you, we have boats that we're buying, and the boat that we need you for is in Baltimore." He said, "You'll get an allowance of ten dollars a month to take care of whatever needs that you have and that's it. You'll go from Europe to Palestine with the refugees" and he said, "We're outfitting the boat now." Well, the boat was the *President Warfield*. Years later I found out when they wrote the story of *Exodus*, that was the *President Warfield* and he says, "We'll call you in a week. So get your clothes together, whatever you need." Well, a week passes, I don't get a call. I'm ready to go, packed. So, after about ten days I called up and he said, "We're going to put you on another boat that we're in the process of buying now. He said, "We got somebody else who was a radioman and we would rather use him." He's not Jewish. He says, "We can use all the friends that we can get and to get a non-Jewish guy to do that would be great for getting support." Well, it turned out he was a Lutheran seminary student who had been a radio operator on a ship like I was and I found out years later their assessment was right. Generally, the Lutherans are the ones who have the Christmas story or Easter story with the Jews killing Christ. They were the ones who embedded those stories in the European culture there. So, this guy really was a counterweight and he turned out to be one of the biggest supporters of Israel. As a matter of fact, he died a few years ago. He was my age and he said he wanted to be buried in the Israel Veterans' Cemetery where he is.

SH: Oh, really?

PS: Yes, he's buried there. His name was John Stanley Gravel and he'd speak at churches and things like that, but he bumped me off what became the *Exodus*. They never called me after that. It seemed they had gotten so many volunteers that they had more than they could use.

SH: Oh, really?

PS: Yes. Instead I got a wife out of the deal. [laughter]

SH: Maybe you should embellish on that a bit.

PS: Yes. I was waiting for the second call and my friends at the Zionist Club were going up to the Catskills as a group and I wasn't because I thought I would have to go here. One of the guys, this is in the summertime in July, came down with the flu or something. I mean he was really sick and he paid his twenty dollars deposit for a week up in Tamarack Lodge. So, they put the pressure on me to give this guy the twenty dollars, because his money was non-refundable, to go in his place. They said, "If you haven't gone now, when are you going to go? If they can stall you, you can stall them." So, I went up to the Catskills and I met my wife there.

SH: Was she also one of the guests?

PS: She was a guest.

SH: Guest there as well.

PS: Yes. As a matter of fact, we arrived there, unpacked, it was in the afternoon, it was July, it was very hot, and we all put our bathing suits on and jumped in the pool. You know how these pools are; they got these wooden lounge chairs all around. So, if you're going to get out of the pool, you get out where the prettiest girls are. [laughter] I ask this one if she will show me around, just started a conversation with her. She says, "I'm leaving tomorrow morning. I've been here a week and I'm leaving tomorrow. So, I said, "Would you mind showing me around the place?" She showed me around the place and if someone doesn't believe in love at first sight, they got to talk to me.

SH: Oh, really?

PS: Yes, it happened. I'll tell you, the more we spoke to each other, the more you got that. Not that there was that strong physical attraction, but within about two or three hours when supper time came she said listen, "Everybody's got reserved seats, where you sit with your group. I'm going to tell one of the guys to take your seat at your table. [laughter]

SH: That's nice.

PS: Yes. About ten o'clock at night she said, "I'm going to stay another week since you're here. She called up her mother, told her mother she was not coming home tomorrow. Her mother got very panicky that you know the veterans. [laughter] I didn't propose to her. I told her she is going to marry me. I was used to giving orders as a petty officer, which is what I was, and I say, "We're going to go find someone to marry us right in town." She says, "Well, I don't know about that. First you got to meet my family and this and that." So, she talked me into it. This was the end of July; we negotiated the beginning of December. [laughter]

SH: You were ready right then?

PS: Right then, yes. Our typical reply said let's get married or something; she says we will get married or nothing. [laughter] That was the culture of the day then. So, I ended up with a wife instead of going on the ship. It was a good trade off.

SH: Where was your wife from?

PS: From Montclair, not far from where I lived in Elizabeth.

SH: So, you must have passed the test with the family then.

PS: Yes. She passed all the tests, I flunked. I flunked. I wasn't working. I had no income and by then I decided I'm going to go into business. I had some money saved up from my pay, three years pay that piled up, and I decided to go to school, but not to college. The Veteran's Administration, if you're going to use your G.I Bill for education, you can use it for anything that they okayed. They gave these psychological and aptitude tests to make sure that you are heading in the right direction. When I said I am going into business, the counselor said since I'm anxious to get started, instead of going to a regular college to go to a place that will train you for business and New York had Pace Institute that did that. Now it's Pace University, but they had been training accountants and lawyers, because all you had to do is pass the Bar or pass the CPA exam, like Kaplan does. It would train you to do that and they had recently started a program for business entrepreneurs and they hired a consulting company to set it up. These guys were the ones who set up the Harvard MBA program and what Pace did was take their MBA program, because it dovetailed with their accounting and law. My favorite professor was one of the key guys up at Harvard with this Solomon Brothers Consulting Company that had set it up. So, it was a two year course that basically was the Harvard MBA thing. It was enough to pass the CPA, enough to pass the Bar, plus statistics, a lot of advertising. We have guys who owned advertising agencies. They'd gone to work, come back, and they were reestablishing themselves. They got jobs on the faculty just teaching copyrighting, media, everything you need if you were going to be an entrepreneur. That [was] the two year course and the G.I Bill covered it. Pace Institute had no campus, they take anyone who could pass the exams and they rented office space. If they got a lot of students, they'd hire more people off the street and hire more office space. It was near Wall Street in downtown New York and I started there. After about a year, it seemed they were dickering to become a college, to give a four year degree, and the board of regents in New York told them that this two year course that you're giving to the accountants, lawyers, and what not, if you add the humanities to it, you can give a baccalaureate, Bachelor of Business Administration. Instead of an MBA, it will be a BBA. So, I figured you could go at your own pace too. The two year course, I had just about knocked a year and a half off in about a little over a year, because they knew that it was all veterans. They were used to working twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. If you could pass the first batch of courses, you can take as many as they thought was safe. So, I finished the four years in about two and a half years. The rest of my guys, most of them, did the same thing and I finished Pace. By then, the Korean War started and I had joined the Naval Reserve during the interim.

SH: Now when you were discharged you joined the reserves?

PS: No, I refused.

SH: Oh, really?

PS: Yes.

SH: So, why did you join in the interim? I cannot wait to hear this answer.

PS: I was apprentice to my uncle. I went back to work for him, because I didn't want to be sitting around. While I was going to make up my mind, I would rather work a full day, because I could take whatever time I wanted off from my uncle's store. A naval officer comes into the

store dressed in his uniform and he's got recruiting posters and asked me if he could put one in the window. He's been sent to Elizabeth to start a Naval Reserve unit and he said, "Were you in the service" and I told him. He said, "You were on an LST." He said, "You've got to see what we've got." The Naval Reserve had sent him an LST, a surplus one for his Naval Reserve unit down at the Elizabeth waterfront. I don't know why, it was stupid to get homesick for the damned thing, but I joined when I went to visit him. He wanted me to do recruiting for him, to go talk to the kids at the high schools, things like that.

SH: Now was this before you went to the Catskills?

PS: Yes. This was before.

SH: Right after you came home?

PS: Yes, it was a few months afterward.

SH: So, did you go to the schools and recruit?

PS: Yes.

SH: So, you had stayed in. What kind of duty did you have as US Navy Reserves?

PS: Just recruiting, that was it. I was a radio operator.

SH: How often did you have to either have the duty or recruiting?

PS: Whenever I had a speaking engagement.

SH: You were not committed to one weekend a month?

PS: I was committed to it, but you can take the one weekend a month altogether.

SH: Oh, I see, or two weeks during the same time?

PS: I mean it was a matter of time. So, they paid me for one weekend a month regardless of what I did. In other words, he wanted me available. It was more assignments then it would be one week in a month, they handled it.

SH: You were able to do this and go to school as well then?

PS: No, once I met my wife that was the end of the recruiting and I transferred to the Inactive Reserve, inactive, and went to school, plus I said when I came out in '50--it was either '50 or '51. '50 the Korean War started.

SH: In June.

PS: They had a draft then and if you were in the military, reserve or active, and you were in for a period of time, they extended it involuntarily for a year. So, when my time was almost up they invited me to reenlist for another four years and I ignored it. I got a second letter saying that your enlistment is hereby extended involuntarily for a year and you are to report to the commandant of the 3rd Naval District in New York for a physical exam.

SH: These letters were presented to you when you were still at Pace?

PS: No, I was out of Pace by then.

SH: Oh, you were? Where were you working at this point?

PS: I was a management trainee for King's Supermarkets.

SH: Were you really?

PS: Yes, not for long, but I was putting my business training to use.

SH: Now chronologically then, you finished at Pace in 1950 before the war breaks out in June?

PS: I don't know just when the war broke out.

SH: I think I may be right with June. [Editor's Note: The Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950]

PS: I'm not sure when, but it may have been almost concurrently. It was in the same time frame.

SH: That's when the letters start coming in?

PS: There were only two letters.

SH: Okay. It was at the same time that the war starts in Korea that you get your first letter?

PS: Yes.

SH: But you had already started your internship with King's?

PS: Right.

SH: Okay.

PS: The job didn't last long.

SH: What happened?

PS: I came home one day and my wife had been crying all day and she showed me the letter, she said, "You got to go back into service" and I looked at the letter and I said, "No, this just says I got to go for a physical exam." She said, "They're not going to let you come home." I said, "No, it doesn't say anything about that." So, I get on the train the next morning and I go. I don't have anything with me and they give me a physical exam. The doctor said, "You look okay to me." I said, "But I have two punctured eardrums, I had it before." He says, "Well, I didn't see any light when I shined my flashlight."

SH: No sympathy there, right?

PS: None whatsoever, nobody went home. Everybody had to pile on to a bus at the rear entrance of the 90 Church Street where the commandant's building was, and went from Manhattan to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and that was it period, all set.

DR: How did you get involved in the King's training program?

PS: I was living in Montclair and there was a King's Supermarket. Since the Korean War had started just when I was looking for a job, I wasn't a good prospect to be hired anywhere. I think in school I had been working part time and one of the part time jobs I had was with the A&P, cashier, clerk, that sort of thing. I had done a term paper in retailing and I figure since I'm working in A&P, I would use that as a basis of doing a projection for five years of them and based on what we've been taught, I was very critical of it. I did the report and I got fired. I gave it to the manager to correct and he gave it to the district manager who gave it to the regional manager and someone said, "Get rid of me, he's trouble maker." So, I went to the manager of King's Supermarket in Montclair and told them, "I'm looking for a job." I gave him my resume then and a copy of that term paper. Joe Bildner, the owner, called me on the phone and said, "Do you want to start work tomorrow?" And that was it. He says as a management trainee.

Shaun Illingworth: Did he ever discuss your paper, any ideas you brought up in the paper?

PS: No. Nothing at all. I didn't work there long enough because I got yanked back into service.

SI: How long were you there roughly?

PS: Not long at all, it was several months. Let's see. I came out in June and by the time Thanksgiving came along I was back in service because I remember being at the Brooklyn Navy Yard over Thanksgiving and Christmas and they let me go. You only could go home for one or the other. So, I went home for Christmas and he gave a big party at Bill Dailey's Meadowbrook in Montclair. I don't know if it's still there. [Editor's Note: The Meadowbrook was owned by Frank Dailey.]

Shaun Illingworth: It's a famous club.

PS: Oh it is?

SI: It's not still there, but I heard about it a lot, the big bands would play there. [Editor's note: The building that was once the Meadowbrook is still standing in Cedar Grove, NJ. It was purchased and restored by a Macedonian Orthodox Church that uses it mostly for sermons in modern times.]

PS: Exactly. That's where the Christmas party was, had his own room, the whole thing. He had about five supermarkets at that time. So, that's how I got involved with King's Supermarket.

SI: Did you manage a department?

PS: I was a trainee from June until November when I was called back to service.

SI: Anything stand out about that period?

PS: Nothing, I mean I made friends and everything. His son, who was a little younger than I am, took over and eventually retired. His name is at the Bildner Center here [at Rutgers].

SI: Yes.

PS: I don't know what it is, but I lost contact with them. I just didn't want to go into retailing. I mean you think about in terms of quality of life, retailing takes more hours than most other things. I mean, more time away from your family, at least, I was thinking that way at the time. I found it later on, by experience, I found out it was false. No matter what you do in business, it takes time away. The more you get involved, the less time you have and the priorities switched in business. So, when I finally got to the point where I could go into my own business, I decided that it's not worth the tradeoff. So, I stayed where I was and eventually retired from 3M Company. I spent 33 years with them.

DR: You said after you went for your physical they whisked you away to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. When did you get in contact with your wife to let her know?

PS: As soon as I could get to a phone.

DR: How long did you have to stay at the navy yard? Were you able to go home and visit?

PS: You didn't receive an assignment. You were off from four o'clock until eight o'clock the next morning. You could go home or do anything you wanted to, which is what I did. I wasn't that far away and to make it easy for you, during the week they give you free passes to all the Broadway shows, those Rodgers and the Hammerstein things. So, at least twice a week, we'd take in a Rodgers and Hammerstein or whatever, My Fair Lady, whatever the heck was playing there. We had a good time, but it wasn't a happy one. My wife gave up her apartment. We had one two year old daughter by then and I got married and went to school at the same time. During my first semester I got married and my wife, when I got called back, we had no idea where I'd be or how long I'd be gone. So, she moved in with her mother and her stepfather. Mother had an extra bedroom, two bedrooms extra, so she moved in there. Then when I was assigned to this ship, the home port was Norfolk, Virginia and it was there every weekend. So, she moved down to Norfolk, Virginia and I was assigned to a flagship of an amphibious unit that carried Marines to invasion points and the Marines had all been recently recalled too. So, it was all reservists manning the ships and manning the Marine units and I was sent to the *USS Cambria*, the amphibious attack transport, a big, very large ship like an ocean liner. I don't know how many thousand troops it could carry, but it was the flagship of an entire group. It was commanded by a commodore. It's a step. They abolished the rank of commodore. Now its rear admiral, lower half they call it. Now they got upper half. The upper half has a flag with two stars and the lower half has one star. In the Army, it would be equivalent to a brigadier general. They assigned me as a radioman in his personal--he's got a staff, but if you're an enlisted man, you're not on the staff; only officers are on the staff. As an enlisted man, you're in his flag allotment. He is a flag officer and he is allotted us peons. [laughter] I was a radio operator. It's called a petty officer, but a non-commissioned officer. They needed somebody who could copy Fox, who had been trained to do that and I immediately became very close to the chief radioman and he found a place for my wife where his wife and daughter were. It was a nice apartment at a place called Willoughby Spit. A spit is a peninsula and this peninsula juts between Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean and they loved it there, because they got the best crabs and it was unlimited. The

first thing his wife showed us was a freezer full of crab cakes that she made, but my time with King's Supermarket was just a few months really.

SI: It sounds like was a more accepting company than A&P.

PS: It was. As a matter of fact, Allan, Joe's son, was at Harvard taking the MBA course at the time. [laughter] He probably saw my term paper of the A&P and told his father. I'm just making that assumption, but it didn't last long for me. I didn't want it. The Korean War was something else; we never went to Korea, never. We spent all week off the coast of Virginia and North Carolina. The Marines were in North Carolina at Camp Lejeune or something like that and Monday morning they'd come aboard these amphibious transports. We'd go off shore where they practiced debarking, climbing down these rope ladders into smaller amphibious craft and making beachheads, that sort of thing. Friday morning we'd drop them back off in North Carolina and go off to Norfolk and we'd be off for the weekend there. One thing I do remember though is a newspaper correspondent or a radio correspondent coming aboard to watch these maneuvers and he is broadcasting live from the deck of the ship. He's announcing to the public that the ship and the Marines were all reservists who were dragged back kicking and screaming. We found that very offensive, but we couldn't say anything, but the lasting effect, I don't believe, I'm very skeptical of what I hear in the news because of what he saw and what he reported wasn't what we were seeing. We were all volunteers. I mean we didn't like the idea of being called back no more than we liked the idea of going into World War II, but we did it voluntarily and with a degree of enthusiasm at the time.

[TAPE PAUSED]

DR: Where did we leave off? With a reporter on the ship?

PS: A reporter on the ship giving a completely wrong report. Here we said, "The public is going to believe this stuff."

DR: Now what was the attitude? You said you were recalled and a lot of people were reservists, but like you said, you didn't look forward to going into World War II either, but once you were there was it a similar attitude?

PS: It's something that had to be done, period, that's all. People who get involved in stuff like this, whether they're right or wrong, and I was one of them, believe in something and are willing to put our money where our mouth is. This is what it amounts to. We were there not because that we wanted to, we felt that we should be there, that we have a responsibility. We may have different reasons for it, I'm sure there were. As far as mine were concerned, I lived through the news of the Holocaust and I felt that it was the responsibility, I mean to go against that type of dictatorship or countries that want to gobble up other countries. Well, the communists want you to all be communists. I mean if they wanted it, they could be it where they are, but to force other people was wrong. So, when North Korea invaded South Korea, it was the Communists against the democracies, really, and a lot of the guys who were in the Reserves had different attitudes. They came from the Deep South where they couldn't care less about Democracy or Communism, but they felt a loyalty, I mean a sense of powerful loyalty, but we were all there willingly; not happily, but willingly.

DR: Did having served in the Pacific, did that give you any more insight of what was happening in Korea?

PS: Very much, very much which made me feel quite happy to be in Norfolk, Virginia. I mean I took my chances in the Pacific and if I didn't have to do it again, [I'd] be very happy not to do it, period.

JG: Were most of the people you were serving with also veterans or were they fresh recruits?

PS: Very few fresh recruits, very few. The amphibious force did not get the cream of the crop or who was viewed as the cream of the crop. The people who are the ivy league of the navy, so to speak, went aboard battleships, aircraft carriers, submarines, that sort of thing. The amphibious force is the place you go to get killed, but you're not smart enough to realize it. [laughter] So the people who were in it were the reservists who were called back; who more or less had that sort of duty. So, I landed up, by not a coincidence, back in the amphibious force and this ship that I was on, as I said, was a flagship. It carried the staff and the commodore, but from time to time when the *Cambria* had to have some work done on it like tune ups or whatever they do. We would go aboard the *USS Latimer,* which was another amphibious ship, or some other one, or sometimes just go ashore at a shore base, but it was strictly an amphibious unit. It was strictly a fighting unit. They just went where the troops went to fight and the people who are on it had all been through that before and still willingly didn't resist going back again; even did it voluntarily. There were recruits who came who were assigned for whatever reason, but for the most part it was reservists. Then you had a smattering of people, like the chief radioman who had gone in during the war and decided to make a career of it.

DR: Were you deployed anywhere else or were you just based out of Norfolk most of the time?

PS: Strictly Norfolk. We traveled between Norfolk and Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, which had a dock to take the Marines on. So, the ship eventually was deployed to Lebanon. I had a few weeks left that the commodore said he was going to send me ashore for discharge rather than take me to Lebanon and have to fly me back home because my involuntary extension would be over by then. So, I went aboard that ship, I mean in one way I felt good because it was familiar terrain to me and it was an environment I felt comfortable with. As a matter of fact I enjoyed that type of an environment, but a chance to do what this chief radioman had done came up to, for me to switch from Reserve to the regular. The commodore had asked me what I was doing between World War II and Korea. I said for the most part I was in school and I explained what I had done and he said, "Would you please get me a transcript of your record?" So, I had it sent to him and he saw it, well, he saw that he could use me in another capacity that--people don't join the Navy to be supply officers or paymasters. They're very difficult to come by and usually they promote people up from the ranks into that. People don't have formal training in it and I had gotten good grades in accounting and in law and in accounting, no one joins the Navy to be an accountant, but he needed one badly. I mean all of the commodores and admirals needed them but couldn't get them. So, he didn't say anything, but when income tax time came around, he asked me if I would mind doing his income tax for him. I did and he was very happy with the results and he said he'd like to recommend me for the Supply Corps Training School, which meant that you're commissioned into the Supply Corps. You're jumped up from a petty officer to a commissioned officer and because of my age and time in service; I'd go from radioman 2nd Class to lieutenant, which was a nice jump. He said with his recommendation, I would be

commissioned in the regular Navy, rather than the Reserve, and I'd be on his staff as his supply officer and paymaster or disbursing officer. I liked the idea. I mean here I'm coming in with a commodore, a guy who is going to be an admiral no doubt and I'm starting at the top really and after twenty years of service you retire at two thirds pay and I already had eight years in so it looked like a good deal, but my wife would have none of it. She wants to be married; she doesn't want her husband at sea for forever. So, the commodore arranged for my wife to talk to his wife. She couldn't convince my wife, couldn't at all. So, my career in the Navy was shot down then, but the ship was actually sent. They were having problems in Lebanon in 1950-'51 and they were sending the Marines out there and I don't know what they did. I don't know when they blew up the Marine barracks, what year that was. It was about that time frame, I think. I think it was in the '50s, wasn't it, I'm not sure.

DR: I want to say early '80s but that may have been another one.

PS: No, there was only one Marine barracks that was blown up but I don't know when it was but I came out at that time. [Editor's Note: The destruction of a Marine barracks in Beirut was in 1983, during the Reagan administration. There was US intervention during the Lebanese Civil War, but that war was in 1958, which would have been well after Mr. Schreiber left service]

DR: After this year had you been planning on what you were going to do or you were just waiting to get out again?

PS: When I was in, I made no plans because the way I felt at that time was that they can make as many involuntary extensions as they want. So, why bother? So, I put my time in and worked with the Marines. Years later I found a Marine, or he found me, who served on the *Latimer* when I was on the *Latimer*. That was Governor McGreevy's father.

DR: Oh, wow.

PS: Yes. I was living at Woodbridge. I had a house there and Governor McGreevy was Mayor McGreevy at that time and he'd run these monthly community programs where he'd go to a Knights of Columbus Hall, or a VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars], or American [Legion], and anyone who lived in the neighborhood could come and ask him whatever questions they want and he'd give a monthly report about what's going on. The guy really was a good politician. He did a good job of being in contact with his constituents and his father was his aide. He was in charge of veterans' affairs. It was not a paid job, but it was political to get the vote out, to get the support. Well, Jack McGreevy, the father, asked me if I'd like to get a monthly award. It is a certificate of appreciation of your military service and I liked him and his father. I said, "Yes" and he said, "You got to sign a paper where we can request your service record, because we want to make sure that we are honoring a veteran." So, when he looked at my service record, he was at Okinawa when I was there. It struck a response; lo and behold, we were both on the *USS Latimer* when he was recalled as a drill sergeant in the Marines. So, we've have been buddies ever since then. I am an honorary Marine in the Marine Corps League. I am the only sailor who's been permitted to associate with them.

JG: Did you keep in touch with anyone else that you served with or that you met afterward?

PS: We had reunions every year for a long time and I'm still in contact with the ones who are still alive, one of which is the captain of the ship, the second captain, one of the 90-day wonders.

He's like a year older than I am, but he was in his first semester of college and I just finished high school. So, he was eligible to be a 90-day wonder and he made a career of the Navy. He made a career of it. He made two careers of it. After he retired, he became a civilian employee. He commanded an LST in the Korean War and thereafter, it seems once you're pigeon holed in this sort of thing, you stay in it. When he was recruited for his second civilian year, they had him selling LSTs to Third World countries. I mean they would be interested in them and he would sail them out there with his civilian crew and demonstrate them. He eventually put twenty years in the regular Navy and then twenty years in as a civilian. The ships that they thought wouldn't last, these LSTs, they're still floating around. The ones they didn't scrap are still in use all around the world. The closest one I know goes from Connecticut to Long Island, Orient Point, Long Island to New London, Connecticut. It's a ferry boat now; it was converted into a ferry. It was one of these World War II LSTs and they were very durable and very useful since you don't need a dock. So, a lot of these undeveloped countries use them. They can just go right up on the shore and unload. The Greeks had a lot of them because they got a lot of Greek islands, it's an island nation, and our group, the LST Association, ran into a deal where we could get a free LST as a museum; the Greeks were going to scrap it. So, we asked for one and they gave us one that they'd been using for about thirty or forty years. I signed on as the radio operator for that ship to bring it back. I never made that trip. That landed up like the *Exodus*, but a lot of people wanted to go and bring it back. They were all in their sixties and the seventies, but they're there.

DR: So, they got the ship?

PS: Got the ship, it's kept in Mobile, Alabama, where they have some sort of a World War II place. They take it on cruises to demonstrate it to people up and down the Mississippi River and along the Gulf Coast and other LSTs, ferry boats; some are up in the Great Lakes with iron ore. They're still using the darn things. I was at a Bonds for Israel meeting where Israel will send out people to raise money, and in many cases, they're not asking for a donation. They're asking you to buy bonds like you US savings bonds. I went to this, they're held in homes with small groups of people and what happens is they get wealthy individuals to invite other wealthy individuals there. I wasn't wealthy, but I was friends with a lawyer who represented them and he says, "You know, we have an Israel admiral at so and so's house, would you like to come." It turns out that this guy commanded an LST in Israel in their various wars.

DR: Did you follow the formation of Israel very much when they were fighting for their independence?

PS: Yes, yes I did, and I still do. I'm still involved in something called Volunteers for Israel. It's a government sponsored volunteer program directed at non-Israelis where you have to agree to do the volunteer work that needs to be done. They will not tell you what it is until you arrive at your own expense in Israel and someone picks you up at the airport and brings you there. I've done it three times. Last year I was in the 151st Artillery Brigade of the Israel Army. Yes, it was putting supplies in bins. The year before I was in the Israeli Army Medical Corps where they had me in this unit where the first aid kits come in from the field, they've used, and you got to replace everything that's been contaminated or opened. Before that, I was in the Tank Corps in the Negev Desert doing supply work again. You don't have to speak the language or anything, because they put you in with other English speaking people and the soldiers are, for the most part, English speaking. So, I'm still involved over there.

DR: Are these assignments usually military oriented?

PS: Always, always. Anyone who objects to it, they have other things to do, usually hospital volunteer work, that sort of thing, but their first priority is military, but non-combat military. I'd say half the people aren't Jewish and they are from all over the world, but in most cases they are English speaking: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, all of the European countries, men, women, teenagers.

DR: How long are the assignments usually?

PS: A week, two weeks, three weeks. I usually go for three weeks.

DR: Now do you get act as a tourist at all or are you strictly there for work?

PS: No, they take you sightseeing places. You have your weekends off to do what you want. They'll fix you up in a hostel if you want or a hotel. So, when I go I will usually go for two months, so I can do what I want. My hobby was hiking. So, I've hiked the entire length from Eilat in the far south, all the way up to Banias at the northern tip. It's about hundred and fifty miles, but over the past thirty years I have done it in segments. Eilat is a point on the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, to the right is Egypt, to the left is Jordan and Saudi Arabia, but you're not allowed into each place. Up at Banias you have Lebanon and Syria come together, but there again, that is as far as you go. I find that what you experience yourself, very often, isn't necessarily the picture you get, like in history, it's not the conventional thing. Like last year, I was in the West Bank, which is going to be the Palestinian State and I made an acquaintance of a school teacher, a guy who was in his '40s. I found he was doing contract work in the building I was in. He was a school teacher, a high school teacher. It was summertime and he had this teenager helping him put in air conditioners in the walls of these stone buildings there and they both spoke fluent English and I asked them if I could visit him in the next village. I was in a Jewish village in the west. It's called a settlement there, and if I could go to his village, since we get along and he says, "Absolutely not." He says, "I can be friends with you here, but if I take you back there, although most of the people have a lot of Jewish friends outside, you have a lot of trouble makers and they'll make your life miserable." It's like living in the worst sections of Harlem or Newark and antagonizing the drug dealers. You can't get out of the place, but at the same time you can't antagonize these people. So, I see hope for peace eventually, but not in the immediate future.

DR: Now can we go back to after you were discharged after Korea? I'm curious where you went from Virginia? Did you come back to New Jersey?

PS: Came back to Montclair and got a job. I bounced around a little and I didn't have enough money and I wasn't ready for my own business; I just wasn't ready. I landed up with 3M Company in their Pharmaceutical Sales Department, which I immediately liked, and I said this is the type of business that I would enjoy being in. Its pharmaceuticals and a lot of the pharmacies, I mean some of the pharmaceutical businesses, these are prescription drugs, were started by people who were neither pharmacists nor chemists. They know how to market them. My specialty was advertising and marketing and I began developing my own plans on my own while I was learning the business while working for them. It was sort of like a hospital resident physician, he's learning by doing. I got involved in selling pharmaceuticals, which is going into

doctor's offices and persuading them. What attracted me was the challenge. This company that 3M bought I was with, it was with a couple of companies that were absorbed by other companies and eventually were in 3M. Well, one of them was called Riker Laboratories. The name went back to 1818 as a drugstore and they eventually became a pharmaceutical company through a set of circumstances. They introduced the very first drug for high blood pressure, strange as it may seem, at this time, this is sixty years ago now when I started with them; treating blood pressure was a no-no. The cardiologists stated that if you had high blood pressure it was necessary to maintain your circulation. Couldn't get to your brain, your lungs, your heart without that, you needed it and they were taught that in medical school. They were taught it in medical school. What happened though was in Boston, which was the headquarters of the Rexall Drugstore chain, the president of Rexall had high blood pressure and although there are usually no symptoms, they can be fatal sometimes. Well, this guy got tremendous headaches that interfered with his work and his cardiologist said, "We don't treat that. If you got it you got to learn to live with it period." But this guy was a driving individual. He was successful because he wouldn't take no for an answer. So, his doctor said, "Well I'm going to send you to the top guy, who is at Boston University Medical School and you'll consult with him." This was a Dr. George Mason who said exactly, "You got it, have it, you got to learn to live with it. Your doctor told you right," but Mason had a fellow in cardiology. This is a guy who has done his residency from India and the Indian doctor said, "In India we treat this with a root of a plant called the Indian Snake Root plant." Dr. Mason said, "This is the United States; we don't do that sort of stuff here." Mason said, "I'll try anything." He told the Indian doctor, "Get me some." So, Mason said, "Well, we'll follow you and we'll see." Well, it worked, it brought the high blood pressure down and it stopped the headaches. So, I can't think of his name, but it doesn't make any difference. The president of Rexall bought this and we make over the counter drugs like aspirin and antacid and so forth for sale in our store. I'm going to start a prescription drug company. Since they owned the Riker Drug, Chinese said, "We'll call it Riker Laboratories instead of Drexel Laboratories, because of the connotation of the bargain basement drugstore; he didn't want that, whereas Riker was a distinguished old line Philadelphia pharmacy. He said, "We'll sell this stuff," and his article was published in the New England Journal of Medicine, all the prestigious [awards]. [It] didn't move because doctors are conservative. In the meantime, Ciba, which is a Swiss pharmaceutical company, saw this and they manipulated the molecule and came out with their own version of Indian [medicine], because you don't use the whole root. You use an extract. Ciba was an old line company that did have salesmen going out and seeing the doctors and they immediately began selling this stuff, which was inferior to the one that Rexall had. So, the president of Rexall told Dr. Mason who made the president of the pharmaceutical company, "You had your decision, now I am going to make mine. You are going to have to go out and get salesmen." So, they went out and they pirated salesmen from other pharmaceutical companies and I came in with this group. I had come back from the Korean business and I had the background that they wanted, not in pharmaceuticals, which is secondary, but in selling and marketing. The first thing they did was teach me what they teach cardiologists, so you can speak on the same level. First of all, you have to be very critical, but in a way that's not offensive, because you're going against what they are taught. I found the study of medicine applied to marketing very fascinating. I really liked it and eventually I went on from cardiology to gastroenterology to psychiatry, that's another specialty. So, it's always something new. I developed a plan for a niche in pharmaceutical marketing. It meant that I'd be traveling and away from my established place of work and I was very close to my immediate superior. I knew

I could trust him, or I thought I could, and I told them what I had in mind and told them I'm going to have to make a decision, whether I stayed here and go out on this, but I'm having a problem. I don't know how long it will take to establish this business; it looks like it will be about five or ten years before it is really paying. So, he liked the idea and said, "Suppose we become partners when you're ready." He says, "I'll cover for you here, so you can take your time and be where you wanted to." So, we operated on that basis for a number of years and I found that in that business was almost like being a naval officer, you're away from home. I mean because it's so wide spread, these pharmaceutical companies. Forget being in California or in Boston for a couple of weeks. They have big companies in Germany, France, Italy and I'd have to be traveling, spending several weeks at a clip there and I didn't like the idea. I mean once in a while it would be. I figure I could look forward to that for about ten years. It wasn't for raising kids, the family, stuff like that. So, 3M began using my ideas and I sold some of them, but I eventually retired. I didn't even want to retire at the time, but unfortunately it was sickness. My wife was not well and they had a buyout, golden parachute, which would mean I'd be damn near seventy to make that kind of money. If I did not take it, they would give me three years' salary, that's what it was.

DR: So, are there any other products that stand out that you had to convince the doctors to use?

PS: Everyone, everyone. For example, we had a non-prescription item for Tums and Rolaids, the same stuff, it's the oldest stuff known to man, it's chalk. This guy who developed a variation of chalk had developed a milling process that you could mill things to the finest powder like sand, would be almost soluble. The old antacids were chalky and gritty and you had to take so much that they caused something called acid rebound. You get the acid again on a rebound and they constipate. Big market for antacid for obstetricians who gave it to pregnant women for something called heartburn of pregnancy. The one that this guy had developed that we bought from him, he started his own company. It didn't work out that he bought the whole company. It was like a cream almost and it would work at one tenth the dose and not result in any acid rebound, but people who take antacids gobble them like candy. So, this was one tenth the dose that eliminated the constipation for it, but it was calcium carbonate, which is the same as everybody else's. The thrust of the appeal that we had was that ours was better, but everybody says that about everything, whatever is theirs. The big users were the obstetricians who were very busy people and the gastroenterologists who are very, very busy too and getting in to see them is a job. So, I developed a strategy for seeing them. I had gotten a source of old Roman coins, these were Tetrarchs. It's a copper coin that was used two thousand years ago. They found so many of them at that time that there was a glut on the market and a little research showed that a Tetrarch was a doctor's fee during Julius Caesar's time and calcium carbonate was frequently prescribed by those doctors. It was chalk. It was either chalk from the white cliffs of Dover in England or from ground up animal bones, seashells, it's all calcium. So, the tactic was to show the receptionist in the doctor's office the coin and say willing to pay the doctor for his visit. She would say, "Well, he gets a hundred dollars for the first visit and fifty dollars for subsequent. I said no, "I am going pay him what Galen got." Galen had written a textbook that gave the name that the drugs used in antiquity that are still used today. They're called Galenicals. The doctors are all familiar with the term Galenicals and Galen. He was Julius Caesar's military physician. So, I said, "I'll pay him what Galen asked from his patients." So, the nurse would go in to tell the doctor, "He's got an old Roman coin. He says he'll give it to you if you sneak him in between the patients." Once I got to him, I'd say I'm going ask you to use what Galen

prescribed to his patients, which is calcium, but in a form that the patients will like better, because it doesn't cause constipation. I'd tell him I'll leave him some samples so the patients can tell him if it works well. So, the product took off. It was stuff like that that I got a kick out of, the creativeness and the challenge, the whole thing. I would develop programs like that and other highly technical aspects of it, like how to check on how effective the salesman is, because you don't know who is causing you the rise in sales, because people can go buy this stuff everywhere. I developed ways of ascertaining how effective each individual was, but eventually I had to leave the business and retire. My wife died of her illness. Then I had my own problems. There was old age so to speak.

DR: What's brought you to Highland Park in retirement?

PS: I had bought a house through the G.I loan system where it was nothing down, no down payment. It's a three bedroom house, seventy-seven dollars a month to pay off the mortgage, the taxes, the insurance, came back from the Korean War I needed a place to live. The rentals around Montclair and in the city were more than I could afford. By then I had two kids and they had just completed the Garden State Parkway as far as the Raritan River and all these communities springing up along there, one of which was Iselin, and they were selling these--the builders would mass produce houses in Iselin where I thought 750 identical homes were put up on almost identical lots. The houses sold for 12,750 dollars, no money down, four and a quarter percent mortgage rate, guaranteed by the Veterans Administration, and seventy-seven dollars would pay off the house in thirty years. I bought one of the houses. We figured we'll be there a few years then move on. Instead I kept expanding the house until it had five bedrooms, one of which was a dormitory. I had six kids, three or four went to Rutgers.

DR: That is good.

PS: I went to Rutgers briefly.

DR: What did you do here?

PS: Newark had the Rutgers College of Pharmacy where, for my work, I wanted to get a better background in pharmacology, which is how drugs work in living organisms, how they work in the infected, and the College of Pharmacy gave courses on pharmacology. So, I got like thirty something credits in pharmacology there, but it wasn't a matriculation. Now you can get a doctorate or a master's degree in pharmacology there, but then, you came out as a registered pharmacist, that was it, period. I mean you could take the test. I didn't want that. I didn't want working in a drugstore. I wanted to learn how drugs really worked. So, I went to Rutgers College of Pharmacy and I got a certificate there and I used that to become a certified medical representative like these certifications you get in different professions. I bought the house in Iselin because it was cheap and it was easy to get to. You had the Parkway, the Turnpike, Route 1, Route 9 all coming together there and my wife died about ten years ago. My kids all got married or got their own homes, that sort of thing, and the time came where I figured I don't need all of that room anymore. I figured it's time for a condo and I wanted to be in an urban environment where you don't need to hop in a car every time you want to do something. Highland Park is like living in New Brunswick, you can walk to everything, not that I need to, but I prefer it. So, that brought me to Highland Park a couple of years ago.

DR: It sounds like you have been pretty busy researching naval history and associating with other veterans and you mentioned your presentation you are going to give this evening.

PS: Yes, that will be on the Maritime Aspects of the Holocaust, but expressed philatelically with stamps, postmarks, things like that. I have a bunch of items I've arranged. I have a PowerPoint presentation that's on this. It features, well naturally, the *Exodus* and several, I'm only going to talk about between twenty and thirty minutes. I do a lot of speaking of different types, but I find after thirty minutes, the attention span of people is way off and in order to revive the interest you have to get audience participation. I also talked on drugs to senior citizens, the risks involved in the drugs that they take, the legitimate ones, and there are risks in them. I got involved with the retired senior volunteer program that is run by the same government agency that has the Peace Corps, but they use senior citizens in their own community. They could use pharmaceutical sales people, because we're comfortable addressing groups about drugs and the government got involved with the program because the National Institute of Health found that something like a quarter of a million senior citizens are killed by using legitimate drugs incorrectly. For example, you wouldn't think of aspirin being a highly toxic drug, but it can kill people about six different ways and because the doctors don't warn the people about its toxicity. If the person dies, the death certificate will say something like died of natural causes. The patient, for example, may have had kidney failure. Kidney failure is the main cause of death in senior citizens and the National Institute of Health suspected that aspirin is probably involved in most of these because as you get older, your system changes, everything changes, one of which is your kidneys. The kidney strain out the poisons that you ingest. The kidneys are a filter, really, and as a person gets older, he loses kidney mass. In other words, those filters in there begin to disappear. As a result, kidney failures are very common as you get older and older. Aspirin, they only found this a few years ago, twenty years ago, when they discovered something in the body called the prostate gland and chemical hormones and they regulate the metabolism of the body. One of the things that aspirin does is it inhibits the action of the kidney to function correctly. So, when you add this inhibition of action to already disappearing action, you are shortening someone's life. So, what's toxic about it is that aspirin is so commonly used, many times people take it without even knowing it. They'll buy cough medicine. Aspirin is in a zillion things. You look at Robitussin in a drugstore, there's half a dozen different Robitussin's, day and night, sleep, this, that, and the other thing. Some of them contain aspirin, some of the Nyquil's contain aspirin. So, you get a geriatric case, an elderly person whose kidneys are already at risk, taking that additional stuff, it kills. Another commonly used drug that causes high risk is the one I mentioned, the antacids.

DR: Really?

PS: They can kill. Heart patients, one of the most difficult heart conditions and commonly encountered ones is an infection of the heart. First they have to give a tetracycline or tetracycline anti-biotic type drug. Antacids block the action. So, it means although the doctor is prescribing the anti-biotic, the patient is on his own taking the Tums or Rolaids, he's negating the action of it, so that, the infection just continues on and kills the patient. So, I would give talks on this and other related things, warn people. The interaction of drugs is also a big risk. There are so darn many drugs and so many doctors that people see. Very often one doctor doesn't know what the next doctor is doing, not because he's non-professional, but he has no way of knowing it. You're brought into the hospital emergency room where you are rear-ended and you are groggy, you don't even think straight and they want to give you a muscle relaxant and analgesic, but you're in

no condition to tell them that you are already taking something like that. So, what I would advocate is that the patient carry with him a list of all the drugs he's taking, keep it with your identification in your purse or wallet. So, when they look for your identity, they'll come across this list of drugs and know that they shouldn't be using something that has got a tranquilizing effect when you are already on something for depression. It can kick a person into suicide, which does happened. So, I'd give a twenty to thirty minute talk on this sort of stuff and then the people, senior citizens especially, have a load of questions because they are taking so many drugs. They have a lot of complaints about doctors who don't listen, don't want to look, and my answer is you got the wrong doctor, you better find someone else.

DR: It sounds like a very important but overlooked thing.

PR: So, I use my experience in pharmaceuticals in that way.

JG: It sounds like you are very, very active still. I actually have a couple of questions, you mentioned on your pre-interview survey that you are a member of the US LST Association, the Jewish War Veterans Association, and the American Legion. I was just wondering how you got involved with all these different groups and how active you are with all of them?

PS: Well, I'm commander of my Jewish War Veterans post.

JG: That is pretty active.

PS: Yes. With the LST Association, I'm involved in recruiting and publicity. So, for example, for publicity, we want free advertising, which is publicity. So, what we do is we sponsor a commemorative envelope every year in conjunction with our annual reunion. We get the post office to issue a special commemorative postmark also. Now these things are news in the stamp philatelic press and local newspapers will put them somewhere in the paper. You make up a little item that we are having a reunion and we got this thing. It will be available to people, send them two bucks, and a lot of people know people who were in World War II. They say, "Oh, my dad is always talking about being on this LST and going on an invasion, whether it was at Normandy or Sicily or the Philippines." It's a nice little gift to give them. For two bucks you can't go wrong. So, every year I design one of these, I get an artist to do the artwork, design a postmark, and ask the post office to approve of it. They issue it and they cancel the envelope, the postage stamp on it was this special postmark honoring veterans of Iwo Jima or people who are VJ Day [veterans], this sort of thing; Normandy. That's been going on for twenty years, once a year I do that for the LST association. For the American Legion, I don't do much of anything but be a member there. I mean they're a well-oiled organization, but they just need warm bodies to help out at the local posts.

JG: Did you have any political involvement in your history or not as much?

PS: I worked with the McGreevy people, because I thought he was a very good mayor of Woodbridge. So. I was not involved in politics so much as doing things like getting new people in the community to register to vote, I call on them and do that. Iselin is a community that has a lot of Indians and Orientals and most of them are citizens, but calling on them and getting them out to vote takes a personal visit. They have a very positive response to it. So, I would do that. I would help out in the political campaigns too, for him and his successors, I would do it too, also. I liked doing it, number one, because I enjoyed it. Number two I felt I was doing

something worthwhile and number three, the people I met. I enjoyed working with the other volunteers and the candidates themselves. I was working for Corzine's campaign for Governor. I also teach English as a second language for the Jewish Family Service. Around here it's a lot of Russian immigrants and I helped them out with their citizenship studies and I got some of them involved with Corzine's campaign too. I mean they weren't citizens, but I told them, you want to be a citizen, you should know what it is all about. Even though their English was no good, they had skills that he could use. Some of them were better than anybody else I saw in the computer and stuffing envelopes, anyone can do. So, I got involved with Corzine, doing that, and they were able to get the Russian speaking citizens' ear. So, I helped that way. Then I had things happen that worked out fine for me and you never know when you can use some help. I wrote a history of the LST I was on. It wasn't in service more than two years, but its cramped pack with history. The official historians of the Navy in their history of the ship in the Dictionary of the American Naval Fighting Ships never reported its ultimate disposition. Every ship is either, in the Navy, decommissioned or sunk or written off. This one was left hanging and I knew it was decommissioned. I asked the captain about it and he said, "Of course it was decommissioned." This guy saved his orders, copied it, he sent me copies of these orders, and the orders sounded very odd to me. It was to take that LST to Shanghai and turn it over to decommission it officially, and turn it over to a representative of the State Department who will further transfer it to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association. Well, if you're involved with maritime items, that is not a sovereign agency that you can fly the flag of. I wanted to find out just was it flying the flag of China or what. If so, which one? Communist China, which was up around Shanghai at that time, or Nationalist China? Well, if it is the United Nations, the United Nations should be able to tell me. So, I wrote to the United Nations, I forget the department, and didn't get a reply. They just ignored it. So, I figured I'd like to find the actual record, which meant I would have to go into their archives, didn't get anywhere with that. So, through my political activity I asked my congressman if he could help. He had been a radioman in World War II and we were friendly. Bernie Dwyer, he should rest in peace, now he is gone, but he was a kindred soul. He said, "Well, write me exactly what you're looking for and I will see what I could do." Within a couple of weeks I got a letter from the United Nations Archives chief librarian inviting me to search the archives myself, since they don't have that help to do it, and suggested if I can bring some help with me. One of the guys in my Navy history club was trained in journalism, got a job as an investigative journalist for some commercial publication. It was checking out businesses and writing reports on them. So, I asked him if he would help me out and we both went to the UN's archives in New York and boy that was an eye opener to see what they had there. We were looking at letters from the King of Saudi Arabia to the UN, we had all these heads, they were official, stationery, the whole thing. Found out that the UN transferred that LST to Taiwan. Taiwan sold it to a commercial Chinese shipping company doing shipping in southeast China, and then, they leased it back together with a sister ship. They gave it Chinese names and the guy who does the investigative reporting found out that to find out about merchant ships, you had to go into Lloyd's Register. So, he traced from the time it was transferred to commercial use, it was reported every year until 1958. 1959 it disappears completely from Lloyd's Register. So, we had the Chinese names and the American name. So, he had a classmate at NYU, where he went to journalism school, who worked in the archives of *The New York Times* and tossed it in his lap. The guy came out with an August 1958 issue of the *Times* reporting that two LSTs were in a battle, two Nationalist LSTs, were in a battle with Chinese Communist torpedo boats and one of the LSTs was sunk and the other one, which had

the name of the sister ship, escaped. So, I said, "Well, this must be circumstantial. So, I wrote to Taiwan, to the government there, asked them about it, and there was no response. So, I wrote to Beijing, the Communist one, and there was no response. So, I wrote to the ambassador in Beijing and he responded. He said he is going to pass this on to his contacts you and he will let me know when he hears from something. We didn't have an ambassador to Taiwan because we don't recognize them, but we have the equivalent of it and they have the equivalent of an ambassador here. They don't call it an embassy and they don't call him an ambassador. This guy I heard from, the guy in Washington D.C, was the Taiwan America Friendship Association or something like that. This guy is a major general in the Taiwan Army and he sent me a beautiful letter that said absolutely nothing of anything I asked, but he said under separate cover, he's awarding me the China Service Medal of the Chinese Army. It's for all people who fought against the Japanese in World War II. My LST was there. He awarded me the medal. I got it together with my Occupation Medal and it got a picture of Sun Yat-sen on it. [Editor's Note: Sun Yat-sen was the first president and founder of the Republic of China.] It's a nice medal, but I still don't know what happened. I just brought up this story. If it wasn't for Congressman Dwyer, I could not have gotten into that. The state senator of Middlesex County, Vitale, is in to veteran's affairs. So, he gets me invited to the Governor's Mansion when Corzine was entertaining the marines on their annual anniversary, their 224th anniversary. Jack McGreevy put my name in, although I wasn't a Marine, as their favorite sailor to go. He did the same thing when his son was governor. Then I would bring my daughter. I have a daughter who lives not far from Princeton. So, I brought my daughter, my two granddaughters, had our picture taken with then Governor McGreevey. That in turn got me invited to talk on Veterans Day in her school.

DR: That is great. It sounds like you are keeping very active.

PS: Yes.

JG: Have you had a chance to do any other traveling?

PS: All of the traveling I do now is strictly to Israel each year for two months. There I do the volunteer work, the hiking, but I was incapacitated for a few years with cancer, it really knocked me for a loop. I had surgery for about four years running. So, I was stuck in my house in Iselin until I felt well enough. I didn't give up anything, but I had to cut down on everything during that period. So, I do traveling. I gave a talk in England to a Navy history group there, spent a week in London, spent a week as a guest of one of my correspondents on the Isle of Wight with him and his family. As a result, one of my grandsons was part of his school, was at the London University, spent a year there, and his friend in England invited my grandson to spend Christmas holiday with him. So, I'm still in contact and still involved.

DR: Alright.

PS: I think you wore out a couple of tapes and I want to go home and get ready.

DR: Well, we do not want to hold you up. Thank you very much it was a real pleasure.

PS: I'm glad.

DR: This concludes an interview with Mr. Philip Schreiber.

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

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