

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN F. SCHWANHAUSSER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. John F. Schwanhausser on April 29, 1995, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your father, who graduated from Rutgers in the Class of 1915. Why did your father choose Rutgers? Do you know why?

John Schwanhausser: Oh, yes, very much so. My father was a member of a very strong, German family. His father had come over in 1869, and my father had wanted to be a doctor, and he went to Columbia for a year, and then, my grandfather purchased the Charles Beseler Company and decided that my father was to become an engineer. So, my father was sent to Rutgers to become an engineer, to work in the Charles Beseler Company, which he, very obediently, did, and ended up as a partner of Charles Beseler.

KP: How large was the Charles Beseler Company when your grandfather purchased it?

JS: Very, very small, probably only a dozen to fifteen employees, and my father worked throughout the Depression years there, and he had a brother, who really wasn't very capable, who was supposed to go out and get the business. My father ended up doing almost everything with it, and, somewhere along the line, he ran into a man who had money and wished to invest in my father's talents, and he put him with another man. They got rid of ... my uncle, who really wasn't doing anything, and another man came in, and this partnership prospered. ... During the war, [they] made projection apparatus and had all sorts of Vu-Graphs, and Vu-Lights, (trademark names of Beseler) and projection apparatuses in all the services. It was a big improvement for my father to do that. ... When he retired from the company, it was in the range of two hundred employees.

KP: What did your father tell you about Rutgers? Did he want you to go to Rutgers?

JS: Yes, he certainly did. As I grew up, my talents were in math and the sciences, much more so than anything else, inherited, probably, but, he always said that, "Well, if you can't make up your mind to do anything else, go take engineering. At least it'll teach you how to think," and so, there wasn't much doubt that I was going to go to college, the only question was, "How are we going to pay for it?" and, fortunately, I was able to get a full tuition and fee scholarship in 1942, and so, I came to Rutgers. I was pledged Chi Psi before I graduated from high school and things were sort of set up, you might say, for me, my brother having been here and graduated in 1941 before me. It was sort of an accepted thing, right from the beginning.

KP: Why did your brother go to Rutgers?

JS: Similar reasons, ... similar thinking.

KP: Did your father ever attend reunions?

JS: Yes, yes. He was very active in the Class of '15, and he used to come back, oh, if not every year, certainly every five years, and would always love to come back and see his friends, ... not all of whom were Chi Psis, but, some of them were, but, he had established a freshman relationship with a bunch of people. He lived in Winants Hall, and he knew a whole bunch of people in the

class, ... and he was, number one, the president of Chi Psi, but, he still kept up his other associations. He was ... in the Glee Club. He didn't sing, but, he played the mandolin, and, back in those days, it was a mandolin and glee club, and so, he was in that.

KP: How did your father's business fare in the Great Depression? You mentioned that money was tight when you were looking at colleges.

JS: ... Oh, yes, it was very difficult in the Depression. What it was, was basically, it was lantern slides. You may recall the old three-and-a-quarter-by-four lantern slide machines and, basically, what it was, was a company to manufacture the projectors for this. My father was at various expositions. He had several exhibits that he designed and built in the New York World's Fair in 1939, and the igloo and the Carrier building [Carrier Igloo of Tomorrow] and some of the others, he designed ... and did that, and that was simply because the lantern slide business really didn't have much going for it in those days. That was kind of a frill that people could do without, so, there wasn't an awful lot of business in that. So, he found other ways. He was a marvelous projectionist, during the war. He then became interested in opaque projection. ... He'd always had an opaque projector, but, this was very important to the Armed Services, because they wanted to be able to put any kind of copy in a machine and project it, and my father, I remember him spending nights developing mirrors, and silvering mirrors, and designing projection systems, ... to build these opaque projectors for the service.

KP: The war came along at a crucial time for your father.

JS: Yes, it certainly did, right, it certainly did. Things were ... not going very well and the war years made the operation profitable. Actually, the Beseler Company still exists today. In fact, ... my father designed and built an enlarger, which is considered to be the Cadillac of enlargers ... by many photographic organizations. When I go into stores and ask them if they carry the Beseler Projector or the Beseler Enlarger, they say, "Well, yes, but, that's ... a marvelous piece of equipment." ...

KP: It is still viewed as the standard.

JS: Oh, yes. I'm very proud of my father's achievements in this way. He probably, in his time, knew as much about opaque projection as anyone in the country.

KP: Did your father envision that you and your brother would join the company?

JS: Yes. He thought that perhaps we might and that was a consideration. However, in 1949, when I graduated, there weren't too many jobs to be had. I had a cadet program with Public Service, Electric & Gas and I took it, simply because I didn't have any other offers. I wanted to get married, and so, I took it with the idea that ... that would get me started, and then, I would move over, possibly into my father's business or possibly into another kind of work. My brother had gotten a job with GE and was deferred during the war, didn't have to go in service, as I did, because he was working on special kinds of street lighting, ... the idea was not to have too much light spill, but, at any rate, yes, we thought about it, both my brother and I. My brother was reasonably well satisfied

with his work at GE. He became a traffic control specialist with GE, designing traffic control systems. ... My father's business partner was Jewish. He was a marvelous individual, but, he had a son that I really couldn't get along with very well, and I foresaw that I was not going to be able to be comfortable in that operation. So, I told my father that I thought that I would do just as well in Public Service, Electric & Gas, and he accepted that. He understood exactly what I felt, and my brother, effectively, said the same thing, so, yes, neither of us ever went in on it.

KP: You could foresee problems, not so much with your father's partner, but, with his son.

JS: My father's relationship with his business partner was excellent. They both understood and respected each other's capabilities, ... and it was something that rescued my father from [the] oblivion of the 1930s, and they knew and understood [that] each other's abilities were complementary. ... The business partner's son, it was obvious to me, did not hold the same kind of respect for my father, or me, for that matter, and so, it just didn't seem [to be] the sensible thing to do, and my father was able to negotiate a very satisfactory settlement when he left the company.

KP: When did your father leave the company?

JS: Well, actually, what happened was, my father had ... prostate cancer, ... I forget when it was exactly, in the early 1950s, and, when they operated on him, they called my mother, and my brother, and me, and said that there was very little they could do for him, and he had, maybe, three or four years to live. We never knew for sure whether he knew that, *per se*, and my mother didn't want to talk about it with him. However, it became apparent that, when we did not want to go in the company, he began to try to work his way out, but, he wasn't successful until, ... and you can put this on the record, but, it's a little unusual. ... By that time, I was taking my Masters degree at Rutgers-Newark, and, as part of that, it was important to set up a case, for a case history, and one of my courses was to set up a case, and I decided that I ought to be able to get sufficient information from the books and things ... from the Beseler Company to do that. Well, my father's business partner wasn't very comfortable with that, because he thought my uncle, who had been a high executive in Worthington, was attempting to use me to get information about this company, and would you believe that he offered my father a retirement at that point? He knew my father was looking to leave, he knew that my brother and I really were not that interested, so, when I began to poke around in the finances of the Charles Beseler Company, I think his motive was to buy my father off ... and stop me from poking around. So, he did and he offered my father a good [deal]. He also, of course, knew that my father had had the cancer, so, he knew what the problem was, and so, anyhow, it seemed to work out, effectively, to our benefit, because my father, then, was able to retire and received enough compensation from that that my mother was well taken care of.

KP: How did your parents meet?

JS: My father and mother met at Lake Hopatcong. My grandfather ... used to rent a cottage at Lake Hopatcong. ... My grandfather on my mother's side was a piano felt importer, and ... he owned a cottage just down the way, and they met and became friendly, and, well, she came down here to Rutgers for a couple of dances and all that sort of thing, and so, they married shortly after he graduated.

KP: Your mother attended finishing school.

JS: Yes, yes, right.

KP: Did she ever talk about what she learned there?

JS: No, not really. It was just exactly that. ... In those days, a rich, ... or well-off, not rich-rich, but, a well-off German family would look to send their daughter, rather than to college, in those days women didn't go to college, ... to, quote, "finishing school," and so, it was Brantwood Hall, and this was really like a super high school that would teach her all the social graces, ... and my mother did understand and have a good feel for what the social graces were.

KP: Your father was Dutch Reformed and your mother was Lutheran.

JS: Right.

KP: Given your father's German background, how did he come to join the Dutch Reformed Church?

JS: I really don't know. All I know is that when we went to Maplewood, we found a Dutch Reformed church that my father seemed to be interested in. My father's mother died when he was two years old. He was brought up by his ... older sisters and I think they probably had as much to do with whatever religious affiliations he might have [as his parents]. I really don't know much about that.

KP: Your father was born in Jersey City and lived there for a number of years and your mother was born in Hoboken. How did they come to settle in Maplewood?

JS: Once again, ... my father did not want to stay in Jersey City. Shortly after I was born, my brother was six years old when I was born, and ... they were renting, he felt they were a little too close to ... his father there, and I think my mother also wanted to get away from the Schwanhausser family influence, and so, they came and looked at a place in Maplewood, to buy, and, in 1926, bought the house in Maplewood. This, of course, was when the Charles Beseler Company was doing reasonably well, and, wouldn't you know, my grandfather, two years later, came out and also bought a house in Maplewood, only two blocks away, so, ... it wasn't quite successful, in getting away, but, nevertheless, that's what happened. [laughter] ...

KP: Which section of Maplewood did you grow up in?

JS: Well, I think the best way to say that is, there were two sides of town, the east side of town, on the east side of the railroad, and the west side of the railroad, which tended to be a little more affluent. In fact, in the '30s, the west side of town, where I lived, was known as the "charge and send it" side of town, and the east side of town was known as the "cash and carry" side of town, rather than to make any other kind of distinction. You know, the area, in ... the 1920s, was being

developed and, as I lived there, much more of the hillside became developed. So, yes, I lived in the Jefferson School District, just down the street from Jefferson School, only half a block away, and about half a mile from the center of the town of Maplewood.

KP: How did the Great Depression affect your neighborhood?

JS: Well, the Depression situation was such that if you could pay anything at all, even just interest on your mortgages, and everybody was pretty heavily mortgaged in houses, the banks ... would much rather have you continue to do that, rather than foreclose. So, we were able to keep up enough to pay interest, I guess, I don't know, I was fairly young at the time, but, almost everyone had the same kinds of problems, some more than others, but, it tended to reduce our social life. We had very little social life. It was all that we could do to keep the house together and keep going, and so, some neighbors were more well off. I had a very good school experience, though, had a lot of good friends in school. ...

KP: Were you active in elementary school and high school?

JS: Yes, somewhat, right, yes. ... I was in band and orchestra, and I had been taking piano lessons in the '30s, and ... the money ran out for that, and my mother called the piano teacher and said that she was going to have to reduce it to one lesson a week, rather than two, and, another six months later, she said that she could no longer keep it up, and the piano teacher was such that she decided she still wanted to keep teaching me, so, I went once a week ... in 1935, 1936, when I was in fifth and sixth grade. I continued with that. Maplewood had a very interesting arrangement. ... It was a fairly affluent school system, South Orange and Maplewood together, and they had instruments that they had purchased over the years, and, if you could pay to take a Saturday lesson, you could borrow an instrument from the school system and play, so, I did. I picked up a French horn, and I played French horn ... throughout junior high school and high school, and that led, also, to my being ... able to blow the bugle, and that helped me get a job at Boy Scout camp as a counselor, as bugler, and then, I also used to spend my summers at Lake Hopatcong. My grandfather, by the time the '30s ... [came], he had bought a cottage in Hopatcong and I used to spend my summers there. My folks would stay at home, but, I would go there and be with my grandfather and the two maiden aunts, ... incidentally, one of whom had also brought up my father. So, there, I learned water sports and things, so, I became waterfront director at the Boy Scout camp, and I haven't mentioned it so far, but, when I got in service, I was also bugler, and the bugler detail was very worthwhile, because it kept me out of a lot of KP duty, and it made me just a little bit different from somebody else, and so, ... I have never regretted taking those French horn lessons and changing over to bugle, and it was very useful.

KP: Were you a Boy Scout?

JS: Yes.

KP: What rank did you reach?

JS: I was Eagle.

KP: Did you attend the Washington Jamboree in 1937?

JS: No, no. Well, I was too young at that time. ... I joined Boy Scouts in 1936 ... and I got Eagle in, I don't know, about 1940, somewhere in there.

KP: You seem to have very fond memories of vacationing at Lake Hopatcong.

JS: Yes.

KP: Did your family travel at all in the 1920s and 1930s?

JS: Very little, very little. ... There wasn't any money. My father and mother would come up, ... every other weekend, to Lake Hopatcong. They couldn't even afford to drive up every weekend, and they would come up every other weekend and spend the weekend with us, come up Friday and go back late Sunday, and so, yes, I was, effectively, away from the family for eight weeks of the summer, with the exception of the weekends.

KP: You mentioned that the Maplewood school system was very good. What kind of expectations did your teachers have for you in terms of going on to college? Did the majority of the community go on to college?

JS: Yes, yes, ... the majority in the community did go on to college, and there was, oh, I would say, maybe, twenty to twenty-five percent who did not. There were some less affluent sections of both Maplewood and South Orange; ... the people there, most of them did not think that they would be going on to college, but, by and large, the vast majority of kids in Columbia High went to college.

KP: Attending Rutgers was, in some ways, a foregone conclusion for your father. Did you consider going anywhere else?

JS: Not seriously, especially after I got the State Scholarship. I mean, there wasn't any way I was going to go anywhere else, [laughter] unless I was able to get some money for it, and ... I was not in sports enough, or anything of that type, to get anything, so, I don't think there was ever any serious consideration of going anywhere else.

KP: The State Scholarship was very competitive. I imagine that Essex County was one of the more competitive counties.

JS: Yes, well, it was a statewide competition and I forget the numbers. I had always been able to do reasonably well in studies and classes ... and I graduated in the top ten percent of my class, and, here at Rutgers, ... I made Tau Beta Pi, as well, and, when I got my Masters degree, I also got Beta Gamma Sigma. So, I've never had too much difficulty with schoolwork. I think I work at it, ... it doesn't come easily, but, I work at it.

KP: When you were growing up, in the 1930s, what did you know about what was going on in Germany? You had relatives in Germany. How much did you know at that time?

JS: My grandfather used to rave and rant against Hitler and what he was doing. ... I had an aunt who married a German and who went back. This was, again, one of those aunts that brought my father up when my grandmother died. She married a German national and went back to Germany, and she had a daughter who was significantly older than I, and ... we heard about everything that was going on in Germany through *Tante Alice*, Aunt Alice, who was over in Germany, and, in the 1930s, this daughter came to visit us, so, I did meet her and see her at that time, and all I can say is, I really didn't have much personal understanding. I just know that my grandfather was very unhappy that Hitler was raising this war machine and all that sort of thing, and, apparently, my Aunt Alice felt the same way, but, of course, had to be very careful about what she said in Germany about that sort of thing, and she was also very unhappy with this cousin of mine, this older cousin who came to visit, because she married a strict Prussian German who was a fencer, and he had several fencing scars that he had gotten when he was in college and that sort of thing. So, I think my Aunt Alice, *Tante Alice*, was unhappy with that marriage. Incidentally, ... the way I got back to Germany and the ones I was showing you pictures of before, in Schwan-Stabilo, a German company run by relatives, my parents had gone back to Germany, but, ... this older cousin of mine had a daughter, and it was through that daughter that I reestablished contact this year. ... My older cousin passed away in September of '93, but, I had her address, and I wrote to that address, in hopes that one of her children would respond, and, fortunately, one did, and that's how we made this contact.

KP: Your parents traveled to Germany.

JS: Yes, they went back in 1954 for an extended trip.

KP: Where do you think your grandfather's negative attitude toward Hitler came from?

JS: Oh, I think from Alice, as much as anything. I think he saw that Hitler was not really going to be good for the country, and I think a lot of Germans felt that way, but, they were so intimidated by the situation that they were afraid to speak out. They were, in effect, brainwashed, and Gunter Schwanhauser, the CEO of Schwan-Stabilo, we had some discussions about that, when I was over there, last fall, and he agreed that that was a lot of the problem. He said, "The problem was '*Nationaler Stolz*,' (national pride). We were so unhappy with what had happened in the First World War and the domination that the Allies had put on us that we fell for what Hitler was doing and we didn't realize how serious it was until we couldn't get out anymore." ...

KP: When you were in high school, there were a number of debates over the level of American involvement in affairs in Europe and Asia. Do you have any memories of those debates?

JS: No, no, not really. I don't have much memory of that, until, you know, December 1941 changed all that, of course, but, up until that time, ... I don't recall that I had any great feel for the situation. I don't think I was thinking in terms of whether I might become involved. I guess I may have even thought that if I was off in college, I might be deferred and wouldn't have to go in the

service, as my brother had obviously become established when he graduated here in '41. ... After December 7, '41, that was a whole new ballgame and, of course, I was in my senior year in high school at that point.

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

JS: Well, I got home from church, and it was on the radio, and we had not heard before we went, and I remember the radio announcement, ... and I've learned to distrust my mental images of what things were, because, when I've gone back, frequently, afterwards, I've found that things really didn't look like that, or what I thought they were, but, anyhow, I have this mental image of walking ... into the front hall of the house, and either my father didn't go to church, maybe that was it; I had gone to Sunday school and came home from Sunday school and my father had the radio on and was hearing all about the attack.

KP: You had relatives in Germany during the war.

JS: Yes.

KP: How did your family feel about the outbreak of the war in Europe in September of 1939? Was there any contact with them through the Red Cross? Was there any concern about how they were doing?

JS: No, no. ... If I remember correctly, there was still some contact; ... there was mail. They were able to get messages back and forth, and so, we knew, for instance, that Eugene, (pronounced "Urgain" in German) the guy with the scars, had been sent to the Eastern Front. We knew that he was on the Eastern Front, so, communication, at least up until war was declared, was still possible. ...

KP: What about after war was declared?

JS: Well, then, of course, everything stopped. ... We didn't get anything. We didn't know what the situation was. ...

KP: When did you learn what had happened to the family, after the war?

JS: Right. ... See, if you're an infantryman and you're fighting people, the family situation was not very strong, ever. The German relatives had been over here in the '30s, but, we hadn't been particularly impressed with them, and Ergain, especially with his scars, ... you know, was kind of a scary individual. You didn't think much of him, and so, my grandfather kept up that association, because of his daughter, but, I guess ... my attitude was more of a writing-off, and then, after having fought through two hundred days of combat, where you're getting shot at all the time, those Germans were the enemy. As I think I mentioned, somewhere along the line, I had an opportunity, at the end of the war, to go visit those relatives and, frankly, I didn't want any part of that. I was too unhappy with the time that had been taken out of my life and the hassles that I'd been put to with the

service. All I wanted to do was get out, and get back, and get my education, and get married, and get back to normal. [laughter]

KP: You were not ambivalent about fighting against the Germans.

JS: No, no, not at all. ... I mean, it was unfortunate that the family was over there and was on the wrong side, but, I didn't have any feeling at all. They were the enemy and they were not permitting us to live the way we wanted to live. We obviously had to get rid of that cancer ... before we could proceed, so, that's what we had to do.

KP: In your childhood, did you speak German at all?

JS: No, not in my childhood, but, I took German in, I guess, ... the sophomore and junior year of high school, and I spoke enough to get by in Germany, not effectively, not fluently, but, I could make myself understood. It's a lot easier to make yourself understood than it is to understand someone who's speaking a language. ... I was always able to make myself understood, but, I wasn't always able to understand what the Germans were saying to me.

KP: Before you entered Rutgers in September of 1942, how had you seen the war change Maplewood?

JS: Well, for instance, I was in this military police reserve unit.

KP: How did that come about?

JS: ... That came about because I was a bugler, and they were looking for a bugler, and there were some people who had been in Scouting who knew me and asked me to join it. ... The idea was that if they were going to need help in case of any kind of an invasion or anything like that, they were going to need military police. So, it was kind of a patriotic thing to do, to join this military police reserve, and I guess I was either a sophomore or junior in high school when I got involved with that, and so, it was the bugle again. [laughter]

KP: What did this reserve unit do? Were you just standing by for a possible invasion?

JS: Right, right. They learned air raid techniques, directing traffic, that sort of thing, you know.

KP: Do you remember any of the Civil Defense drills you participated in? Were there any blackouts in Maplewood?

JS: I guess we did, and there certainly were, ... and I do recall that we assembled a few times; that was part of what we had to do with the military police reserve. When there was a blackout called, ... we were supposed to assemble immediately in Maplewood Junior High School, which was right near the middle of town, and I think we did that several times. It's interesting you should ask. ... Frankly, I'd forgotten that, ... but, we did. We just got together in readiness.

KP: Were there any scrap drives in Maplewood?

JS: Well, I remember rationing, of course, but, I don't recall any scrap drives, particularly. Maybe there were, I don't recall.

KP: How did rationing affect your family?

JS: Well, gasoline, as much as anything, that was the biggest problem. You couldn't get enough gas to go anywhere. It didn't really make too much difference to my father, because, by that time, we had had a ... 1930 Willys-Knight, and, by 1937, he couldn't operate it much anymore, anyhow. The problem with the Willys-Knight was, it was a sleeve valve engine, and it was very wasteful of oil, and so, you put almost as much oil in as you did gas. ... Also, things, by 1937, had gotten very stiff and difficult, and, I remember, my brother was in Rutgers in '36 and '37 and had to go to summer school, and he used the Willys-Knight to go to summer school, commuting from Maplewood, here, to New Brunswick, and that's the last the car was ever used. Then, my father sold it for scrap, yes, that's right. We also sold the piano ... that I had played, a grand piano, a Steinway, a beautiful piece of equipment, but, my mother decided she needed the money more than she needed the piano, sold that somewhere in about 1939 or thereabouts.

KP: Did you visit your brother often when he was at Rutgers?

JS: A few times, ... not too often. I, of course, knew about the fraternity and I had met a couple of ... his classmates and such, but, not very often.

KP: Did you and your father go to the football games often?

JS: We did go to the opening of the new stadium in 1937 and, maybe, one or two other games when my brother was down here, but, once again, there wasn't an awful lot of funds for doing that, so, we didn't do much of that.

KP: Did you work at all while growing up?

JS: ... I went to camp for three weeks the first year, five weeks the second year, and ... eight weeks the ... [third] year. The following year, my father made it plain that I wasn't going to be able to go to camp unless I got a job, and I got the job as bugler, which paid half the fee, at that time, so, I was able to go for all that summer. The next year, I wasn't going to be able to pay anything at all, and I put in for the waterfront job, and then, got the assistant waterfront director job at that point, which was full fee. In the senior year, the Boy Scouts were having trouble, so, I had both assistant waterfront director and the bugling job, together, and did that, and, actually, for the last three weeks of that year, out of the eight week season, the then waterfront director got drafted, and I became waterfront director. So, I was bugler, waterfront director, assistant waterfront director, the works, ... and that year, I made some money. It wasn't a great deal, but, I did. The other way that I made money was, for both the junior and senior year, I was a laboratory assistant, working for a chemistry teacher in high school, who, by the way, was my Scoutmaster as well, so, ... that's how I got that job. ... I did lots of chores at home, you know, all of the leaf raking. ... [With] my grandfather, I

would make some money every time leaves had to be raked and burned or snow had to be shoveled. I made some money there and I would also go around the neighborhood and make some more money ... doing that, too. So, as far as a large amount of money, no, but, I did ... well enough, and the lab assistant job paid pretty well.

KP: Did you ever work for your father's company?

JS: Yes, I did. ... I worked for him for two summers, in ... the one immediately after the Boy Scout time, and I worked in the factory. He put me to work, as soon as school was over, ... he had a punch press operation, metal fabrication, that sort of thing, and I was supposed to go and ... work it as fast as I possibly could. He was having difficulty trying to make up his mind as to whether he was paying his people too much or not. So, yes, I worked for him, and I would work during vacations for him, and I also worked, later on, after the war was over, for him, in summertime, in [my] college years, probably more than before, but, I did get some time [in] before.

KP: After you graduated from high school, did you think of enlisting right away or did you want to wait?

JS: I have a very heavy astigmatism and there was no good program that I could get in. So, really, you had to be a perfect physical specimen to get into any of those decent programs, so, I was unable to, and I was aware of that, so, I really didn't have much choice, except to wait for the draft to come along. Of course, having astigmatism did not keep me out of the infantry. [laughter]

KP: You entered Rutgers in September of 1942.

JS: Right.

KP: What was the campus like then? What were some of your initial impressions, compared to when you visited the campus with your father or your brother?

JS: Well, in those days, freshmen wore beanies and went to daily chapel. ... The whole idea was to demean you, to make you realize that you had joined an elite group here in college, and I didn't have any trouble with that. I knew that it was going to happen and it never really bothered me very much. However, in the fraternity, ... we all recognized that, sooner or later, we're all going to have to go in the service, and ... all the talk was trying to get the best deal that you possibly could, ... but, we enjoyed our social times in the fraternity. ... Chi Psi, at that time, was a very strong fraternity in developing allegiance to the fraternity itself, was much more than a social club. Today, it, maybe, is not quite so, so well put together, but, in fact, ... generally, the Greek system today is not ... what I thought it was back in those days. At any rate, you know, I enjoyed my time, ... the first year at Chi Psi. ...

KP: You were able to pledge and join immediately.

JS: Oh, yes, oh, sure. I was initiated and my father swung the badge on me, ... let's see, I guess that was in the beginning of the spring term. You had to go through a term as a freshman, as a

plebe, as it were, wear the beanie and all that, and do all the work in the house, which was okay. It didn't bother me. ... You knew that you were going to make it, and so, yes, I forget exactly when, ... well, I can look on my badge to find out when the exact date was for initiation, but, I'm quite sure it was in the spring.

KP: Did you live in the fraternity house from the beginning?

JS: As a pledge, I lived in the fraternity house, right. No, as I think I may have mentioned to you before, in those days, you could pledge before you came to college and they gave me a pledge button in May of the preceding year, before college shut down. So, I wore the pledge button very proudly back to high school. [laughter]

KP: Do you remember your initiation?

JS: Sure, absolutely.

KP: Did you have to participate in any stunts?

JS: Yes. ... Chi Psi believed in, ... well, I think we were advanced; we did not believe in physical harassment of any kind. ... In the beginning of initiation, you got one paddle, one, and that was all. From there on in, it was intimidation and concern that you might be paddled more, if you didn't shape up and so forth. I found the initiation experience very, very enlightening, very rewarding, and very meaningful, and so, yes, we had a lot of verbal intimidation, but, only that one paddle.

KP: You must have felt as though you were continuing a family tradition.

JS: No question, absolutely, yes, very much so.

KP: Did any of your children continue the tradition?

JS: No. They didn't go to colleges ... where they could. ... None of them went to a college where Chi Psi was. Roger, my only son, went to Bucknell and was pledged to a fraternity, but, my son was a swimmer, and his associations with his swim team buddies were much stronger and greater than anything.

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

JS: ... At Bucknell, you could either live on campus or off campus, and, in his junior and senior year, several of the swimmers lived in an apartment in the middle of town, and they called it Sigma Aqua, [laughter] so, it was a fraternity of sorts.

KP: Some of the men I have interviewed who entered Rutgers in 1942 and 1943 have said that the campus seemed almost deserted, especially before the ASTP arrived on campus. Did you feel as though the campus was deserted?

JS: Well, there wasn't an awful lot of activity, except, I think, ... if you were a fraternity person, you probably felt less of that than others, because the fraternities were the core of the social life of Rutgers when I first came here, in '42. ... The desertion, well, I don't know, I think there was as much of that immediately after the war, because a lot of the guys were commuting, and they would go home over the weekends, and we didn't have quite the same continuity of operations after the war as we did before, but, I became involved and met a girl over at the Coop, and so, you know, to me, it was just as active on the weekends as it was any other time, because I spent a significant amount of time over at NJC.

KP: Among your fraternity brothers, was it common to spend a lot of time over at the Coop?

JS: Well, some yes, ... some no. There were some who were more interested ... in town girls than Coop girls. Some of those tended to think that the Coop girls were snobs and hard to get along with, so, ... they didn't associate with them so much.

KP: What activities, clubs, or teams were you involved with in 1942 and 1943?

JS: Well, I went out for crew. I also had gone out ... for swimming, and Jim Reilly was the coach at that time, ... but, the only stroke that I was any good at at all was breaststroke. I had not been able to make the high school team in breaststroke, and so, I went out for it here, but, there was also a very excellent breastroker here at the time, so, I decided to concentrate on crew. My brother had rowed and, in fact, was on the first crew that rowed in the IRA for Rutgers, and so, I, pretty much, decided to go for crew and did, and I rowed on the freshman crew in 1942, and then, when I came back, after the war, I was varsity for a year, until I got displaced by my roommate, who was bigger and stronger than I, and so, then, I was JV crew in my ultimate junior year, and, [in] senior year, I just dropped crew, because, by that time, I was much more involved with my future wife, and I spent as much time with her as I could.

KP: Many alumni have distinct memories of chapel and Dean Metzger. What are your memories of chapel and Dean Metzger?

JS: ... By the time I came back, I don't think Metzger was here. I really don't have an awful lot [of memories]. The chapel was a bore. I mean, you had to go, and it was a twenty-minute affair, for no reason at all, and I think, in my background and upbringing, I had been trained to, you know, go along with those things that you've got to do and don't worry about it, it's just one of those things, and so, I don't think it bothered me very much. I do feel that I was very upset with the University trying to tell the fraternities how to operate and what to do and what not to do. I looked upon the fraternities as a private organization that should be beholden to civil authority, but, not to ... college authority, and, frankly, to some degree, I still feel that way. ... So, yes, we had problems, but, we were smart enough to keep our house parties closed, and we had a houseboy that we hired for the weekend who would stand at the door, and all the other doors were locked, and if you weren't a Chi Psi, you didn't get in, ... unless you were a friend of a Chi Psi. He'd keep the people standing at the door and if they'd said they were a friend of Jack Schwanhausser, he would get Jack Schwanhausser to come and identify them before he let them in, and so, we were very careful. ... That may sound

snobbish, but, the idea was, we wanted to control it, and it had to do with alcohol and that sort of thing.

KP: Alcohol was not allowed at all.

JS: ... We were pretty fussy about it. The seniors, the Class of '43 guys, that were there when I got there said, "If you're going to drink, you're going to drink out in the parking lot, behind the house, in the car, all right, and, if you don't have a car, well, one of your brothers will have a car, and no liquor in the house." We didn't have any liquor in the house. ... They were very adamant about that. They weren't going to take any chances. ... We did have liquor in the house, ... not on house party weekends; there's no question that we had beer and liquor in the house at other times, but, it was a very controlled situation. ... Well, let's face it, I learned how to drink here, at Chi Psi, in Rutgers. I really had imbibed very little until I came here, and they taught me how, but, it was very carefully controlled, and the idea was exactly that, "Find out what you can handle and what you can't handle, and we'll teach you, and then, you'll know better when you get faced with it," and I think they did a very good job of that.

KP: Did you have any run-ins with the administration in 1942 and 1943?

JS: Not exactly a run-in.

KP: Perhaps differences of opinion between the fraternity and the University?

JS: ... No, I think we had more of those after we came back, because I wasn't in a position, as a pledge, really, to know much about the relationship with the University in '42, '43. So, no, the only problem I ever had with anybody in the administration was with a prof. I had a professor, I always thought I was a pretty smart kid and knew all there was to know about math, and I will never forget what a shock it was for me to get a 4. In those days, it was 1, 2, 3, 4; 1 was the highest mark you could get. I got a 4 in my first six weeks in my math course, and I nearly died, because I was afraid of losing the scholarship and all that sort of thing, and I went to him [to] talk about it, and ... he just showed me the stuff, and then, he said, "I have a feeling that you've been able to bamboozle your high school teachers into giving you good marks, even though you're not performing well," and he was right. [laughter]

KP: What did you think of your instructors in 1942 and 1943?

JS: They were, ... as far as I could see, quite competent. I had no problem with any of them. As I say, I had a little run-in with this guy, ... but, that's all right. He was right, and then, I realized that he was right, and I shaped up. [laughter]

KP: You showed me your draft notice earlier, which was dated January of 1943, and those orders were delayed. Were you able to finish out an entire year at Rutgers?

JS: Well, what happened was, no, I had to leave at spring vacation, because I had to go in in April, ... and I think there was an April vacation, and I worked right up until then, and the University had told me that they would give me full credit for the year.

KP: You got full credit for the year.

JS: I did get full credit for the year, right. I went through until spring break, and then, they said that that had been the case. I later found out that my parents; ... actually, I'd been called up earlier, and the draft notice had gone home, and I was down here, and my father had gone to the draft board and asked for it to be deferred, at least for me to get through the first year, and then, I know he also got in contact with the University, and the University said that if I got through to spring break that they would give me full credit. So, I think he kind of arranged that. [laughter]

KP: When you were a student, Camp Kilmer was right across the river. Do you have any memories of Camp Kilmer's impact on the area?

JS: ... No, I really don't. I went out of Camp Kilmer when I went overseas, of course, but, ... I really don't have any memory of that in that freshman year. Freshman year, between crew, and engineering, and recognizing that I was going to have to put my nose to the grindstone, after Professor Grant gave me the 4, I really didn't have much time for anything. ... I think I was just concentrating on that, and I had a few dates and socials, ... house party weekends and things like that, but, generally speaking, I was very much nose to the grindstone, really not paying much attention to anything else.

KP: Did you work at all during your first year at Rutgers?

JS: No, no. Well, I waited tables in the fraternity ... and that paid part of the board. It didn't pay all of it, but, you know, I was a steady waiter, and so, yes, I guess I should say [that] I worked, yes.

KP: When were you inducted into the Army?

JS: I left April 13, ... 1943. Actually, the induction, I think, was the 7th, a week before, where you put your hand up and swore, but, then, you had a week, but, that's the day that I left.

KP: You initially reported to Fort Dix.

JS: Right.

KP: Which branch of the Army were you assigned to?

JS: The Air Force, and we went to Atlantic City, and I don't think I was in Dix more than a few days, took the AGCT [Army General Classification Test] and, you know, the basic stuff, ... and then, almost immediately, I went down to Atlantic City and was there not very long. We had basic; we marched up and down the boardwalk, we did drill, we did gas mask workout on the beach, and then, we had to ... clean all the sand off the gas masks. I remember that pain in the neck. I also

remember that I was on KP that Easter Sunday morning, in which I cooked three thousand steaks, individually, on a huge cauldron of grease, and as fast as I could throw the steaks in and take them out was how we decided how much they got cooked. [laughter] They all came in GI cans, you know, big garbage cans, in effect. ... So, there were three thousand in the mess and that was my job, Easter Sunday morning. I started [at], like, five-thirty, cooking steaks, and cooked up until eleven o'clock, ... just throwing them in and out as fast as I could, that's all. [laughter] ... Anyhow, then, in May, ... they were setting up [the] ASTP, and we went to what they called a STAR unit, I forget what S-T-A-R stands for, [Specialized Training Army Relocation] but, it was further testing, and it was up in Columbia, on the east side of New York City, and we were there for a few days, taking further tests, and then, we were assigned to the ASTP, and I guess it was later than that, because I remember very well, we arrived at the University of Delaware, in ASTP, on June 14th, Flag Day, of 1943.

KP: You had had some ROTC training at Rutgers.

JS: Yes.

KP: What do you remember about the ROTC?

JS: Well, nothing, just a little close order drill, and handling the weapon, and a few things like that, and some basic information about tactics and so forth, ... but, I really don't remember very much.

KP: Was it useful in terms of your experience in the service?

JS: Only that I knew how to march when I got in the service and some of the others didn't. I mean, I knew, you know, the standard maneuvers for marching, so, ... the drill was easy and boring. [laughter] ... The best part of it was marching up and down, singing songs, on the boardwalk. On the way back and forth from the Traymore Hotel, where I was, to Brigantine Field, which was up at the north end. ... Brigantine was a cinder patch, and we got filthy up there, just marching back and forth. ... Yes, that was kind of a boring period, really didn't get much, so, getting into ASTP was good. We were there, ... at the University of Delaware, for almost a full month before classes started, and we did a lot of PT, physical training, and, once again, I got out the bugle, and I got two or three other guys to blow bugles, and ... I had known a number of bugle calls from my band days, and so, we put together a five or six-man bugle corps, which the colonel who ran the ASTP unit was very happy with. He thought that was pretty good, and I became the company bugler, and it was advantageous, because I was given a pass every weekend, and those who were not on that kind of duty got a pass every other weekend, so, it was worthwhile.

KP: What was the ASTP training you for?

JS: Engineering. ... Effectively, I went all through the engineering thing all over again. Remember, I said to you, earlier, that ... I had not had physics here, because, in those days, physics was a sophomore course, and so, otherwise, I would have been able to argue very strongly that I should have been put in advanced ASTP engineering, but, I didn't, and I breezed through that course, and there was nothing to it. I got 1s in every course, the whole thing. [laughter] I had basic

all over again. It was worthwhile, because when I came back, after the war, it was so deeply ingrained, right, that it was ... all there. There's no question about it.

KP: How long were you stationed at the University of Delaware?

JS: For three terms. ... They were three-month terms. ... We started in July; ... we moved out somewhere in March of '44, because I spent Easter Sunday in Camp Carson. It's very interesting, I can remember these Easter Sundays, because I cooked steaks ... on Easter Sunday, I remember walking into Camp Carson on Easter Sunday morning, or being there, maybe a day or two later, and Easter Sunday morning was also the day we went into Paderborn, after encircling the Ruhr. I had no idea what day it was, and we were on tanks and going in, and I just asked a German girl, "*Welcher Tag ist es?*" "What day is it?" She says, "*Ostersonntag.*" "Oh, my Lord, Easter Sunday." [laughter]

KP: You found the ASTP curriculum to be easy. How well did other candidates perform?

JS: Well, I think if you'd had any appreciable background in engineering or were reasonably decent in math or science, it wasn't difficult. There were some who did have trouble. There were a few who flunked out, not very many.

KP: When you were not in the classroom or studying, what was the ASTP training like? Did you do any physical training or marching?

JS: ... Well, we had very little marching, but, we had two hours of PT every day, and this was a pretty intensive course. They were trying very hard to get us in pretty good physical shape, ... squat jumps, and pushups, and then, running, and all that sort of thing, and ... I'm pretty sure we had two hours a day, three days a week, and one hour a day [on] the others, something like that.

KP: Did you have any other military training while you were in ASTP?

JS: No, no, that was all.

KP: Did you have any contact with the regular students at the University of Delaware?

JS: Well, there weren't very many. The women were [there]. The women's campus was down at the far end, and we had some contact with them, of course, ... but, there were very few males there.

KP: Did you have separate classes?

JS: Oh, yes. The ASTP program was completely separate from ... the rest of the college.

KP: You had been taught by both Rutgers and University of Delaware faculty. Could you see any differences between the professors and their methods of teaching?

JS: ... That's hard to say, because the faculty at Delaware, teaching the course that the Army had put together, they didn't have an awful lot of flexibility. They had to teach what they were told to teach and that became apparent. If anything, they were a little disinterested in what they were teaching, because they would have much rather had an opportunity to broaden it out and to teach more. ... I'd really had only basic stuff in Rutgers, so, it is a little hard to make any kind of a decent comparison. ... In those days, you had a lot of lecture courses, where you'd go into a lecture with one hundred people in a room, and then, you'd have class recitations, and some of the instructors at Rutgers I had were better than others. It's a little hard for me, though, to remember what I did before the war, as opposed to what I did after the war. ...

KP: How disappointed were you when the ASTP program was abruptly disbanded?

JS: Disappointed is not the word. Pissed off is the word. [laughter] ... We were bitter as we could be, because, here, they had said that they needed all these engineers, and they were going to train us, and all that sort of thing. ... I don't think we were as bitter at its immediate breakup as we were when we found out where we were going, which was to be in the infantry, cannon fodder. ... At least that was the attitude. I remember so well ... when we got out to Camp Carson, ... they had a big gathering, and a chaplain gave a speech, and, ... in this speech, ... he stressed, "Infantry, Queen of Battles; she's no glamour girl, but, she gets around," and most of us in the ASTP booed and hissed, and you can imagine that in a military base, that was unforgivable. [laughter] Boy, did we get the business when we got back to the company. "Who was booing? Who was hissing? How dare you do that? What kind of military discipline is that?" [laughter] but, that's the way we felt, but, we got over it.

KP: You mentioned that you stayed in touch with several people from the ASTP unit at the University of Delaware and that several did not make it through the war.

JS: That's right.

KP: You mentioned two men in particular, (Rost?) and ...

JS: (Lindstrom?), yes, Rost and Lindstrom. When we were in ASTP, one or the other of us, and, sometimes, all three of us, when we got a pass, would go up to Philadelphia, and we found a couple of bars that had good bands and good jazz music, and we had a common interest in that, and we'd go ... in early on a Saturday night and go to these places, and we'd nurse a beer or ... a bourbon and beer. I remember, we used to drink that, too, together, and we'd nurse a couple of those all evening long, and we had a lot of fun. ... In those days, of course, there were gyms, or Ys, and places where you could sleep overnight and we would do that. ... Yes, those two guys, I spent a reasonable number of weekends in Philly, with music, with them. ... There was also a ferryboat that left from Wilmington, which wasn't far from the University of Delaware, and would travel upriver ... to Philadelphia, and turn around, and come back down again. ... With Rost, one night, I went on that, and ... there would be girls who would come on over at Penn's Grove, in New Jersey, and, also, at Chester, and the Chester girls were very attractive to us, so, we used to dance, and they had a band on board and all that sort of thing. So, Chester was about halfway up, and about half the guys would leave the boat at Chester, and go off with the gals, and stay overnight with them, and I

remember Rost and I going up one night, and I got off with a gal, and he didn't. [laughter] ... We had to get back in time to stand formation in the morning, though, if we were just ... [out] on an overnight pass, which that was. ... It was very handy, because the Pennsylvania Railroad had a train that left Chester around five in the morning and would get us back in time to stand formation in Newark, Delaware, if you ran up ... from the train station, and I did that several times. ... I had a lot of fun in ASTP, really did.

KP: Except for being in uniform and the physical training, it was like a second year in college.

JS: Very much so. ... Well, you had restrictions as to when ... you could get out and all that, but, ... there was no problem getting a pass to ... anywhere in the town, so, you could do all sorts of things, and we were right there in town. The campus was right alongside of the main drag of Newark, Delaware. ... We had a lot of fun there in town, and then, if you had a pass ... [for] over the weekend, as I say, I had one whenever I wanted one, ... you could go home or you could go on these trips. So, yes, we had a lot of fun. It wasn't really like being in the service. Well, you may have heard the "poop" that all the other Army people or Army-Navy people [had for us], "Take down your service flag, Mother. Your boy's in the ASTP." [laughter]

KP: How many men from the University of Delaware followed you into the 104th Infantry Division?

JS: They all went.

KP: You all went, as a group, to the 104th.

JS: Right, right.

KP: You were not split up and sent to different divisions.

JS: ... No, no. In fact, it was more the other way. The Rutgers people, ... I think, went there, St. Bonaventure's did. There were several colleges that had the ASTP ... and they all went to the 104th.

KP: You mentioned a Rutgers student, a Chi Psi, who was killed in the war, Alfred Gregory. What do you remember about him? How well did you know him?

JS: ... Oh, I knew him pretty well. ... I was a freshman, he was a sophomore pledge. He was pledged toward the end. ... Of course, the minute I came to Rutgers, I was a pledge. I think Al was pledged about midway through the fall term, and was initiated with me, but, didn't move into the house until the beginning of the spring term, if I remember correctly. ... I'm sure that was true. In fact, he may not have ever moved into the house, but, he was one of the pledge brothers, and you get to know those guys pretty well, because, ... when you're going through initiation, you don't get spoken to, and so, you're not supposed to talk to your pledge brothers, but, you do, and the brothers all know that you do. ... So, you get to know them pretty well, and you have a lot in common, and so, that's where I knew Al from, and I wouldn't say he was a buddy-buddy person or anything like

that, but, I knew him well enough, because he was initiated with me, and he, too, was in ASTP and ended up ... in the [same] outfit as I did. ... I didn't know that until, how did I find that out? Somewhere, I ran into him, out in Colorado Springs, and, you know, it's one of those things; ... I heard about it, maybe, through ... "Bones" Lunberg, Class of '24, who still is living, was a great guy for keeping people informed as to where everybody was, and it may be that through "Bones" that I knew, I don't know, but, Al was in a different regiment. He was in the 415th, ... I think. I'm not sure about that, but, anyhow, ... he wasn't, at least, in my battalion. ... I know he wasn't there, so, I really had no way of contacting him. ... The way I found out that he'd been killed was that I got a letter from his father saying that he had been killed, and did I know anything about it? and that was well after the action where he was killed, and, of course, I didn't know anything about it. I only found out later on. Actually, it was very close. It was only about a mile-and-a-half away from this castle ...

KP: In the Netherlands.

JS: No, in Pier, Germany, where he was killed, and, within a few days, I think, December 12th, is it, or 11th, [December 11, 1944], something like that, which is only a couple of days before we were there. You really ... didn't have much of an opportunity to communicate, except through mail, when you were overseas, unless [it was] somebody in your company or, possibly, your battalion; you ... might be able to retain some contact, but, otherwise, practically none.

KP: You mentioned that he was an only child.

JS: Yes.

KP: How did his parents take the loss?

JS: Very hard, very, very hard. ... I remember writing to his father and getting a return letter, and ... [he asked], would I try to find out the circumstances? and, ultimately, I did find out a modicum of what had happened. ...

KP: What were you able to find out?

JS: Just that ... the company in which he'd been in ran into a firefight, and he got hit, that's all, and was killed by a bullet, rather than by shrapnel, and so, I really didn't know anything more than that, during the taking of Pier, and ... you really don't get much more information than that.

KP: What did you think of your infantry training at the time and after you actually entered combat?

JS: ... I'm probably not a very good person to ask that question, because, once again, this bugler thing was worthwhile to me. When I got out to Camp Carson, the first sergeant got up in front of the company, within a matter of a week or two after we were there, and he said, "I'm looking for somebody that can blow the bugle. I need somebody to send to bugler school. Anybody here that can blow the bugle?" Why not? It had been pretty good for me in ASTP, you know. I stuck up my hand and all my buddies said, "Oh, you'll be sorry; never volunteer for anything." That was the

attitude, ... "You don't ever volunteer for anything." Well, you know, I didn't know about that, ... and another guy, by the name of Broncato, was a bugler, and he needed two people to send to bugler school. So, he got these two names, and then, he said, "Okay, come in and see me in the day room, as soon as the formation's over." So, I walked into the day room and he said, "I need two guys to go to bugler school and I don't want any fuck-ups," and he said, "You're to go there and you go there every day." He says, "I'll keep you off KP, but, if you miss bugler school and try to go somewhere else, you're through, and you'll have steady KP from there on after." [laughter] So, he was more worried that somebody wasn't going to go to this bugler school. Okay, so, we went and reported to bugler school, and nobody there could blow the bugle even as well as I could, and the lieutenant who was in charge of this thing found that out, ... after he asked some of these people to blow calls, and he said, "Now, you see that hill over there?" He says, "I want you guys to go over that hill, every day, and stay on the other side and blow in the opposite direction, ... and you, Schwanhausser, you teach these guys how to play the bugle." [laughter] So, ... I got out of an awful lot of training, an awful lot of ...

KP: The forced marches?

JS: Yes. I did some of that, but, not very much, only when the company went as a group or as a body. So, all of this running, and hitting, in your face, and all that kind of stuff, I got very little of, and, frankly, I was worried when I went over, because I wasn't in very good physical shape, not like the rest of them were. When we did go out on some ... night training, ... I was pooped. I couldn't handle it, ... but, anyhow, ... I was an assistant BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle] man, because I was big and could carry the extra belt of ammunition. Two days before combat, we were sitting in Belgium, waiting to go in combat in Holland, two days before combat, the then-communications chief wangled himself a job in battalion, and his best buddy, who slept next to me ... in the garrison, became communications chief, and the best buddy came to me and said, "Look, you're intelligent. How would you like to be a radio operator?" "Anything but a BAR man, sure, I'd be glad to," and, as far as I'm concerned, that's what saved my life.

KP: Really? Why do you say that?

JS: Why do I say that? One hundred and ninety guys in a company, roughly, right; there were six of us who came back without Purple Hearts. I was one. I was one of the only people actually on the frontline, the rest of them were cooks, and even my runners and all of that, they all got Purple Hearts. They all got hit or involved in action, one way or another. Of that original one hundred and eighty, in round figures, seventy of us were killed.

KP: Those are pretty staggering figures. Only seven men came away without being wounded.

JS: Yes, it was, right. Well, I will say that a few wounds were rather superficial. Any time, ... in the infantry, that you can give somebody a citation, you do. I will tell you one where a guy was sitting ... in a room, and there was a big vase on, like, a credenza, and a shell came and hit the top, and knocked the vase off, and cut his head. He got a Purple Heart for that. I mean, you know, that's ridiculous, but, that's what was done.

KP: Why do you think that was?

JS: Oh, because we were a group of guys that ... were, you know, the bottom rung on the totem pole, we were the ones that were doing all the work, and we had a lot of camaraderie, a lot of *esprit de corps*.

KP: You went from the ASTP, which might be considered one of the more privileged branches, to the infantry. It sounds like you thought of the infantry as the bottom rung.

JS: Oh, it was, no question, yes. [laughter] It's the infantry that has to mop up and do all the dirty work, after everybody else ... has taken the glory. You know what we used to say about, he was never my general, ... Patton, right, was, "His guts and my blood," right. You may have heard that before. ... These guys were cowboys and some of our officers were cowboys, too. An infantryman learns to stick together with other infantrymen.

KP: Was every man in Company F, initially, an ASTP refugee?

JS: No, no, I would say about thirty-five to forty percent was ASTP, and the rest were guys that had started off in Oregon ... with the original unit, and all the non-coms, in the beginning, were from that cadre. We were all privates or PFCs. ... Captain Bowman, who was, ultimately, I discovered, ... a good captain, I didn't think so in the beginning, but, I found out, by comparison to other atrocious officers that we had later on, that he was a good captain, and there were four lieutenants, a platoon lieutenant, and a captain, an exec officer. ... I'm not sure that we ever were up to full strength, with six officers, as we should have been; ... at least we went into combat with five, I know that.

KP: You mentioned that you were not that impressed with Captain Frank Bowman in the beginning.

JS: Right.

KP: How did you come to form this initial impression?

JS: Well, as radio operator, I was right alongside of him, and I watched him, especially in Holland, and he, at times, to me, appeared indecisive as to what step to take next, and what to do, and how to move. If I thought he was indecisive, [laughter] that's nothing [compared] to what I was exposed to later on. Captain Bowman was wounded on the drive to Cologne, and we had a succession of inept officers, some of whom came from the Air Corps, and I also had some run-ins with two or three of those officers. I was a feisty, young kid that thought he was smarter than anybody else and had some difficulties with them, but, Bowman, after the Holland Campaign, I became much more comfortable with him. We spent a day in a foxhole together, on the last part of combat, and he was so nervous and upset that he took a can, a C ration can, and mangled it with his hands, ... and I began to have a much better impression of the man, and I could see that it was bothering him to have to send guys into combat ... where they were killed or wounded. ... In the beginning, I didn't see that, but, after a week or two, I did.

KP: He had been with you through training.

JS: Right from the beginning, right.

KP: What was his background? What did you know about him?

JS: I knew nothing about him. I knew nothing about his background at the time. He ran a contracting business after he got back out, which I presumed he was doing before. He's still alive, by the way. He's out in Minnesota and I expect to see him in the fall, when we go out to Bloomington.

KP: Do you have any good or bad memories about your other sergeants and lieutenants?

JS: Well, some were good and some were not so good. The squad sergeant that I had ... couldn't speak the English language correctly. I came to respect some of these Southern and Western guys who knew how to fight. They maybe weren't so good with book learning, but, they were excellent leaders and knew how to handle [themselves]. I mean, I guess they'd had experience hunting and things of that type and [had] a little bit more blue-collar background than I had. So, in the beginning, I was disdainful of them, but, as time went on, I became aware that they were pretty damn good.

KP: You went to bugler school during basic training. Did you ever use your bugling talents in the Army?

JS: ... Well, one of the things you had to do ... in bugler school, one day, ... every twelfth day, you became regimental bugler and ... you also ran messages to the different areas. There was a regimental headquarters, and then, the three battalions. ... By the way, that bugler school was a regimental affair, it wasn't a battalion affair, and so, you stood guard at the regimental headquarters, and bugled half a dozen calls a day, ... and ran errands, and that was about it. ...

KP: In many ways, it was a cushy assignment.

JS: Oh, it was. It was a good deal, oh, no question about it. No, my bugling stood me in good stead, right from the beginning. ...

KP: You were in the Second Battalion, which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Cummins.

JS: Right.

KP: What kind of impression did you or anyone else in the battalion have of him?

JS: Yes, we had a good impression of Cummins, ... and I'm not sure where that came from, except that he was a man's man, and he ... felt for his guys, and, ... somehow, you knew that. I don't know what it was. That was the problem with Bowman. He was cold, ... but, Cummins was not. When

he stood up in front of you, you felt attracted to [him] and wanted to follow him, and it took awhile to get to feel that way about Bowman, but, it didn't with Cummins. Cummins was killed in Sindorf, along with Touart, who was ... the regimental commander, and the assistant division commander was also killed. ... A large German artillery shell hit the headquarters.

KP: What did you know about Cummins's background? Was he a regular Army officer? Were any of your commanders regular Army officers?

JS: I believe Cummins was, ... the assistant also was, I can't remember his name, and he's still alive, but, at any rate, he was regular Army. ... A couple of our officers had been non-commissioned officers in the regular Army and had been promoted, and there was a Captain Whitney, who was in G Company, and a Lieutenant Linette, who had been sergeants and stuff and had gone and ... progressed up. Both those guys were very good officers, too. Generally speaking, the officers that went over with the division were pretty good. I can't fault very many of them. ...

KP: The replacements were not as good.

JS: Oh, yes, it was the replacements that were awful, right, and not all of them were awful, but, most of them were, and, of course, one of the problems [is], when you get a replacement officer, you're expecting him to know something about infantry tactics and that sort of thing, and you don't know anything about it unless you've been there, on-the-line and actually doing it. So, they were at a disadvantage, there's no question about that.

KP: I have interviewed infantry veterans who said replacement officers would be killed or seriously wounded only days after joining a unit.

JS: Well, that's true, that's true. ... In the second day of combat, in Holland, Lieutenant Van Giesen, whose picture is here, was killed. ...

KP: He was a replacement officer.

JS: No, no, he was an original officer. Oh, you're talking about the replacements. No, most of the replacements that we got, ... I really shouldn't be so hard on them. I'd have to say about half the replacements we got were okay. It's just that those that were so bad, really stick out.

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. John F. Schwanhausser on April 29, 1995, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Being in combat was dangerous enough, but, an incompetent officer could get you killed in a hurry. Did you realize that at the time?

JS: Yes. Fortunately, ... no matter what kind of officers we got, some of the sergeants, buck sergeants, staff sergeants, and so forth, who had been platoon sergeants or squad sergeants, were able to protect their people from ridiculous orders. ... Either they didn't follow them or they followed them advisedly and didn't do some of the things that the incorrect officers wanted done. I

think I was more concerned about, ... not so much their incompetence on the battlefield, but, their attitudes. I ran into several problems ... with them on that. They weren't very feeling people. ... You know, RHIP, they often felt that "rank had its privileges" and ... they wanted to maintain that differentiation, mostly, I think, because they felt that they weren't strong enough to be natural, good leaders. The competent officers didn't feel that way. They got to know their people, they got to know them well, and they knew what they could expect from them. It was the less competent ones that were afraid to do that. ...

KP: The Army, especially during training, was able to maintain the strict line between officers and enlisted personnel, but, in combat, that line was increasingly blurred.

JS: Oh, absolutely, sure. No, in fact, officers didn't want to be called officers in combat. In fact, I'll give you a little story, one of my runners; I was communications chief, which I got sooner or later, because, remember, I told you the story about that. Well, the guy who replaced him also wangled himself a job. I became communications chief in December, and, at any rate, one night, I sent a runner to find Lieutenant Hardy, and Hardy had always asked that we call him "Judge," rather than, "Lieutenant," right. So, my runner went out and [yelled], "Judge, where are you?" It was quiet, it was dark, no answer. "Judge Hardy, where's Judge Hardy?" no answer. "Hey, Judge Hardy, Judge, where are you, Judge?" no answer. "Lieutenant Hardy?" "Right over here, right over here, Soldier." [laughter] He apparently hadn't heard him or something, but, the minute he said, "Lieutenant," he didn't like that, so, he answered, ... but, Hardy was okay. Hardy ... was a reasonable officer, ... but, they covered their rank, of course, with a piece of paper, and we all did that. No one wanted to be a target. ... That leads me to another story. When I was with Captain Bowman in Holland and ... in the first part of Germany, my voice sounded very much like his, and they would call him on the radio, and I would report. I carried the maps, I knew where we were, I could analyze what kind of progress we'd had. I was, ... I won't say just as knowledgeable, ... because I didn't know what the ultimate plans were, but, I could certainly report back. ... So, when they would ask, I would tell them what was going on and, apparently, that didn't bother Captain Bowman at all, because he never said anything about it. Then, I was able to do that [later on]. ... When Captain Bowman was wounded, we had a lieutenant, Lieutenant Walter F. Linette, that came in and ran the company for awhile and he permitted the same thing, no problem, and was perfectly satisfied with it. Then, we got a Captain Jack T. Harmon, and he was an Air Force guy, and so, I remember very well the first day we went into combat, and about two hours went by, ... in whatever the action was, and he came back to me, and he said, ... "Haven't we heard anything from battalion?" and I said, "Yes," and he said, "Well, why didn't you come see me?" and I said, "Well, I told them what they wanted to know." "You told them?" you know. [laughter] "You told them what they wanted to know? What right have you to be telling battalion?" I said, "Hey, Captain, I'm just doing what I've been doing right from the beginning when they call. I know what's going on. I can read. I've got the maps. I can see." "Well, that's not the way we're going to work with me. I'm going to make those answers." "Okay, fine." So, I had been staying relatively distant from him, you know, only move when I saw him, ... maybe, twenty yards away, something like that. So, from thereon in, I decided, "Well, okay, he wants to answer these phone calls, these radio calls, I guess I'd better stay closer." So, I started to stay ... within two or three yards. "What are you following me for, Sergeant?" and I said, "Because you said you wanted to answer the radio," [laughter] and he said, "Well, don't you realize that that antennae up there is a target?" and I said, "Sure." [laughter] I

said, "I've been a target all the time." "Well, stay away from me." So, you know, it was that kind of idiocy that really annoyed me. So, I later had another major run-in with him, ... but, that's okay.

KP: I am surprised that you were assigned an Air Force officer.

JS: Well, I think they were staff Air Force officers that were no longer needed and they gave them a quick, hurry-up training in infantry tactics and sent them up ... to the front. ... That's all I know. We had three of them, this guy was one, and, generally speaking, they were not very good, although one of them was. One of them was okay. I don't know where Hardy came from. ... He wasn't infantry; he was somewhere else. Infantry officers, as you indicated before, they're cannon fodder. They get killed off real quickly.

KP: You seem to have a lot of respect for General Terry Allen, your division commander. You mentioned that he had been a fall guy for the defeat at Kasserine Pass.

JS: Right.

KP: Did you know this while you were in training?

JS: No, no, didn't know anything about that. No, I only found that out after the war. We wondered why a guy who had had this "Big Red One" Division ... was no longer [there], ... what had caused it, right, and there was a sense, a feeling, that, in some way, he had been demoted, but, I don't think we felt that we had a poor officer.

KP: It seems as though your division's training held up very well.

JS: Yes, it did, yes, it did.

KP: How many other divisions had that much night training?

JS: I have no feel for that. We thought we were unique. [laughter]

KP: You felt that way at the time.

JS: Yes, yes.

KP: What was the relationship like between General Allen and the men of the division?

JS: Well, that's pretty far off. ... I mean, he's kind of a figurehead. About all you hear about that is through the newspapers and stuff that comes out. ...

KP: Some generals were quite colorful, particularly Patton, while others were more self-effacing or bureaucratic. Did you feel that way about him?

JS: No, I think Terry Allen was considered to be a good fighter and I think it's important that we thought that he was interested in saving our skins with the night fight training.

KP: That was your interpretation.

JS: Right, that's the way we looked at it, right.

KP: Night fighting, and even training for night combat, was very difficult, partly because it is dark.

JS: Yes, you can't see a thing. [laughter] Well, yes, but, ... I think I explained this before, what you're really trying to do with night fighting is, ... you can't do much with that, ... except that you can get across an open field, and then, get into the edge of town. Then, you proceed in day fighting, and so, you need both, but, the idea was to protect you from getting mowed down on the way ... into a town, and that was very useful ... on the German plain. ...

KP: You mentioned the chaplain who gave you the speech about, "The Queen of Battle."

JS: Yes, yes.

KP: How much contact did you have with chaplains in the Army?

JS: Very little.

KP: Did you ever go to services while in training?

JS: No, no. ... We had a standard saying, "Punch your TS card and go see the chaplain." You know, when you're unhappy about something, the guy would say, "Hey, I'll punch your TS card. You can go see the chaplain," you know. [laughter]

KP: That was how chaplains were perceived.

JS: From my point of view, yes. [laughter] I'm not so sure that the chaplains in the 104th Division were necessarily representative of chaplains as a whole, but, that's the impression that we had, mostly because of this ridiculous speech this guy gave. [laughter]

KP: What did you think of Colorado? Admittedly, you did not get to see very much of it.

JS: Oh, it's beautiful, really enjoyed it. ... It was hot, and you'd sweat like a dog, and you needed salt, because your ... training uniforms would get all salty, you know, from the perspiration, ... and then, you'd take them home, and they'd be all white in the armpits and everything. It was beautiful country. We could see Pike's Peak from the camp and the Garden of the Gods was a place nearby that I think all of us visited. Broadmoor Hotel was nearby, and that's where there was an ice rink, and, on time off, we would go into the Broadmoor, and, again, with Stuart and Bill Rost, we'd make arrangements, and we'd go ... up there and go skating, and swimming in the Broadmoor Lake in the afternoon, and then, skating at night, and then, back to camp. So, yes, we enjoyed it. ... Also, the

people in Colorado Springs ... had a big auditorium, and they would have a band in there, most Saturday nights, and you could go in and dance and meet people. A bunch of girls would come down there to dance with the servicemen, and so forth, so, we had a lot of fun.

KP: Some of your memories of your military experience are rather pleasant, the USO shows, going to Philadelphia, going to Colorado Springs.

JS: Yes, right.

KP: What did you think of the cross-country trip out to Colorado?

JS: Well, that was interesting, because I'd never seen much of the country before, ... although a troop train is devilishly slow, and devilishly hot, and very uncomfortable sleeping, because we were in old, old Pullman cars, ... no air conditioning or anything like that. ... It was a hassle getting fed, because ... it would be mess time and you'd walk through the kitchen car to the other end. The kitchen car was in the middle of the train, so, [from] the front end of the train, all the guys would march through to the back end of the train, right, and then, they would walk back through the kitchen car, and get served, and go to their seats, and eat. Then, the same thing would happen [again]. The rear end of the train would come up to the front, and the same thing would go on then, and, of course, that took a lot of time, and the food was not the best in the world, [laughter] but, the trip, as far as I was concerned, [was fine], other than the delays. You'd get put on a siding and sit there for hours, and then, suddenly, the train would start to move, and you'd better be ... [laughter] close to the train and catch it quickly, because, when it started to move, it wasn't going to stop. You weren't supposed to get off, but, we did, you know. ... Anyhow, it wasn't bad. I enjoyed those trips.

KP: What did you think of Army food in general?

JS: ... ASTP food was marvelous. We had these sectionalized trays and ... you just don't expect that kind of food in service. That was marvelous. It was well-done, well cooked, very palatable, you know. It was good. ... When we got to the infantry company, that's a different story. We got a single plate and no trays, and you'd start through the line, and you'd hold your plate underneath the edge of the pot, and the mess guy, who would have, let's say, a bunch of potatoes, ... mashed potatoes, and he'd bang the spoon on the edge of the pot, and the potatoes would flop onto the plate, like that, and then, ... at the end, you'd [have] the desert on top, a piece of pie or whatever it was. So, you really had to reverse ... your eating. ... It should have been the other way, but, you couldn't talk to these mess people. They knew how to do it, and that was it, but, anyhow, everything would be in together. So, you kind of got used to eating your dessert first, or recognizing it was going to have gravy, or peas, or something in it, and the other thing was coffee. I was not a coffee drinker at all when I went in service, and, if you didn't drink coffee, you didn't drink in the infantry, and it never had enough cream in it, if you liked cream; it never had enough cream and sugar. So, frankly, I got used to drinking the stuff. ...

KP: Did you become a coffee drinker after the war?

JS: Well, what was very interesting is, I was still drinking coffee with just a little bit of cream and a little bit of sugar, because that's what I'd gotten used to, but, my present wife, when I began to date her, she suggested, at the fraternity, ... "Why don't I try it black? I might like it." So, I tried it black and I haven't had cream and sugar in my coffee since. [laughter]

KP: While you were on-the-line, how many hot meals would you get in an average week? How often would you have to eat K rations?

JS: On the average, you'd get a hot meal no less than every two days. Sometimes, it was every day, you'd get one hot meal. That's all. I mean, you'd never get two hot meals in a day, almost never, and, usually, it was a meal at the end of the day, ... when you're actually fighting, ... in combat, and you went in prepared with K rations. ... It would depend. Sometimes, they would be able to get up and, sometimes, they wouldn't. In Holland, and in the heaviest combat, later on, we'd go two or three days without a hot meal, but, they would try very hard.

KP: You were impressed that they were trying to take care of you.

JS: Oh, they very definitely did, yes. Well, that was the local mess and it was up to the Captain to try to get that. ... He always wanted his guys to have a hot meal, ... Captain Bowman, if he possibly could. ...

KP: Is that one of the reasons why you were more impressed with him?

JS: ... Yes, a lot of those things, right, a lot of those things.

KP: How many showers would you get when you were on-the-line?

JS: You were lucky if you got one every three weeks, three or four weeks, something like that.

KP: From what I have been told, basically, you were always in your fatigues.

JS: Oh, yes, you stayed in your clothes all the time, yes. ...

KP: You never changed your clothes.

JS: No. Well, the only time, I think I had ... two changes of socks ... in the two weeks we were in Holland, and, from thereon in, well, I made a serious mistake. It was October, and I didn't think it was very cold, and I went into Holland wearing summer underwear, and I froze, and so, I will never forget; ... see, we had our duffle bags, but, they weren't with us. ... We were pulled off the line in Holland and were sent to a rest area, but, we were going to be put in combat in [the] Eschweiler-Weisweiler area. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

We finally got back to our barracks bags, and I had gotten trench foot in Holland, just like almost all of us had, because it's so wet, but, mostly, I was cold. ... I'd had wool ODs on ... and a field jacket, but, the overcoats were so heavy that ... they weren't usable, really, for infantrymen, no way you could do that, but, I remember, ... in early November or somewhere there, we got to our barracks bags, and it was a driving snowstorm, but, it didn't make a bit of difference. I got after those long johns, and got them on, [laughter] and felt warm for the first time in a week-and-a-half. [laughter]

KP: Where was your unit sent after completing its infantry training in Colorado Springs?

JS: We were in Colorado until we went overseas. We came through here, but, that's all.

KP: You were not stationed anywhere else.

JS: No, no. We joined the division in Colorado, and came across the country, in troop trains, ... to Kilmer, and sat in Kilmer for about a week until they got organized, and I was able to go home two or three nights, and I remember telling my parents, ... "So long. I may not be back tomorrow night," because we never knew when we were going to go off. Well, my father was commuting to New York City at the time, and he knew that when the harbor was full of boats, full of ships, that a convoy was about to make up, and then, one day, I didn't get home that night, and, the next morning, the ships were all gone, so, he knew that the convoy had taken off.

KP: You must have really enjoyed seeing your parents before you left.

JS: Yes, it was very nice. ...

KP: How did they feel about you going overseas?

JS: Oh, [it] bothered my mother very, very much, of course, and my father was resigned to it and understood. He didn't display any particular emotion. He was very positive, you know. "This was something you've got to do and that's where it's at."

KP: Your father had not served in the military during World War I.

JS: He was ill. He was not physically able to. He had been deferred for problems that he had had.

KP: What do you remember about your voyage to Europe?

JS: [laughter] All the rumors.

KP: Did you, for example, know where you were going?

JS: Well, we didn't know where we were going to land. We obviously knew we were going to [the] ETO. We were told, partway over, ... in fact, maybe shortly after we left land, that we would be the first troops that would land at Cherbourg, and so, we knew that. It was a huge convoy, I

think something like seven ships by eleven ships, and we were not in the middle, but, somewhere in it, along with two ... or three other troop ships, and the biggest problem, of course, was ... the very poor accommodations. It smelled down below, and it was hot, and so, Stuart Lindstrom and I found each other, and we went around the ship having a lot of fun. The rumors are terrible. So, we decided we would try to find out how fast a rumor would go. So, he and I spent just about an hour, we went to four or five places in the ship, and we had an animated discussion between the two of us in which we allowed as how we had heard that the Germans claimed that they had bombed, that they had gotten, the 104th and had sunk its ship, right, and we did this in three or four locations, and, as I say, we didn't do it for more than an hour. ... Within another hour, it was all over the ship. [laughter] ... We really enjoyed this. This was a fabulous thing. ... Stuart was a very interesting individual, a very wry sense of humor, and we always had a lot of fun together.

KP: Historians have often noted that rumors are rife in the military.

JS: Oh, yes.

KP: Even in the modern Army, with everything from base newspapers to radio communications, there are still rumors.

JS: Oh, sure. Well, ... people are hungry for information of one kind or another and they'll spread. ... You want to be on the gossip, on the latest knowledge. Well, Stuart and I slept ... on deck. They permitted you to do that, if you could find space, so, ... we did.

KP: Did you have any seasickness?

JS: I didn't have any, but, there was plenty of it on board, and that was another reason you didn't want to be down there in the hold. The place stunk, ... but, it was worse on the way back, though, because we hit bad weather on the way back, and I did get sick there. ... On the way back, our company had ... accommodations in midships, but, all the non-coms pulled guard duty throughout the ship, and all of the PFCs worked in the kitchen, ... and that was true, I think, of the whole Second Battalion, is the way that worked. ... My post, unfortunately, was way up near the fo'c'sle, and, you know, guys were getting sick all over the place, and ... you'd have to stand a two-hour or four-hour shift in that stench. It's difficult ... not to be affected yourself, so, yes, I got sick, not very often, but, I did get sick.

KP: Were any ships in your convoy sunk by U-boats? Were there any U-boat scares?

JS: ... Plenty of U-boat scares, and, in fact, maybe that's what happened; one night, there was all kinds of signals, and noise, and such and the whole convoy shifted direction, changed direction. Maybe that's when they decided we were going to Cherbourg, I don't know. Yes, there were plenty of scares and plenty of rumors and the little destroyer escorts that were with us would fly around all through the convoy. ... We had a baby flat top ... on the convoy as well, ... and planes would take off from that, every so often, and scout around, ... but, I don't know of any actual sinkings or anything.

KP: Was the ship a converted ocean liner?

JS: Yes, yes, it was a big one. I was going to say the *George Washington*, but, that's the one we came back on, but, it was either the *Gripsholm*, or the *Kungholm*, or one of those large ones. ... My understanding is that about two-thirds of the division was on that ship, and then, another third of it was on another ship.

KP: What did most of the men in your unit do to pass the time?

JS: When?

KP: On board the ship.

JS: Go around and start rumors. [laughter] No, just not much of anything; there were guys that were playing penny-ante poker, and cards, and a few things like that, but, I was not much of a card player. ... As I say, I spent most of the time with Stuart, just batting the fat and talking about different things, but, I don't remember anything outstanding that we did to get the time passed away.

KP: Did they show movies aboard the ship?

JS: I don't recall. ... There may have been and ... maybe I even saw them. I really just don't know. ... That's not my recollection.

KP: When did you land in Cherbourg?

JS: In September, September 11th, [September 7th], I think it was, and we immediately debarked and went to a staging area, where we set up camp, ... pup tents and stuff in the fields, and I became ... regimental bugler. ... Well, as I indicated before, I probably knew the calls better than anyone, [laughter] and then, ... we marched across the peninsula to Barneville, ... where we embarked on forty-and-eights to go up to the front. Forty-and-eights are railroad cars. ...

KP: How long were you stationed in the staging area before you went up to the line?

JS: ... Well, what did I say, September 11th? and we were committed ... October 19th, 18th, 17th, somewhere in there, so, a month. ...

KP: Did you continue training?

JS: Oh, yes, yes.

KP: What did they show you there that you had not learned in Colorado?

JS: Well, they showed us the hedgerows, and, you know, we saw what you had to do ... to fight in the hedgerow country, even though we weren't going to fight in the hedgerow country, but, there wasn't an awful lot ... of training. One of the things that was interesting about being in camp there

was that it rained every day. ... The rainstorms would come in off the ocean, and you'd get wet, and then, the sun would come out, you'd get dry again. [laughter] ...

KP: Did you meet any French civilians there?

JS: ... Not when we were actually in the staging area, although some guys did get some passes to go into the few towns that were there. However, on the way from Valognes, which was near Cherbourg, to Barneville, we walked across the peninsula and met a number of farmers that came out and offered us cider, which was like dynamite, and we all had the "GIs" after having any of that stuff. [laughter] We soon learned not to drink cider. So, it was like laxative, that's all. ... They tended to be pretty raunchy, pretty dirty, sloppy, ... as opposed to similar kinds of people when we got in[to] Germany; they were very neat, very clean. ... In Germany, there wasn't an inch of space that wasn't productively used. The crops were right up to the cobblestones on the road and, generally speaking, the Germans were much neater and cleaner. ...

KP: Whereas the French were much more ...

JS: ... Sloppy, filthy. ... They just looked dirty, that's all.

KP: Did you expect that when you arrived in France?

JS: I didn't have any expectations, I don't think. I think we were surprised that they were as sloppy looking as they were, but, it wasn't until we got to Germany that we had anything to contrast it with, so, then, we realized how sloppy they were.

KP: Your unit arrived in the Netherlands in November of 1944.

JS: In the Netherlands, we were there in October.

KP: In many ways, October 1944 to February 1945 was the bloodiest period of combat after the D-Day assaults.

JS: Right. From November 17th until December 13th was when we were fighting through the Aachen-Eschweiler-Stolberg area, up to Pier, and Schophoven, and ... Kassel, and that was the heaviest fighting that we had seen. ... I shouldn't say much heavier than it was in Holland. ... In Holland, it was just as heavy, just as hard ... to move the Germans, in fact, maybe even more so, because there was very ... little movement you could make in Holland. You had to go along the dikes, because, ... if you tried to dig in in the fields, they'd fill up with water right away. ... The only place you could dig in was [the] dikes, and a couple of the guys dug in in the dikes, and then, the dikes caved in on them. ... We had at least one person who suffocated from that.

KP: What are your initial memories of combat? Do you remember the first time you came under hostile fire?

JS: Not a specific memory. ... If you were where I was, the first fire that you would experience is more artillery than anything else. ... It was up and down. You'd fall flat on your face in order to get down low. ... [It was] just something that you had to endure to move ahead and you just did [it], that's all.

KP: Were you prepared for what an artillery assault would be like? Is there any way to prepare someone for that?

JS: Yes, ... we'd had some experience in training. There was an obstacle course that, even though I went to bugler school, I'd had to go through, and that's where they had live ammunition shooting over the top, and you were worming your way underneath it. We had been told that there would be mortar bursts and that the reason you went down low was that if a shell hit, usually, it would go up like that, so, if you were standing there, you'd get hit, but, you might be able to avoid it if you were underneath. ... We had had some rounds that didn't have bursts, that were just noise rounds, to let you know, and we'd had some training in that. So, it wasn't ... surprising to run into the noise and the problems of it. We'd had some training, out in Colorado, on that.

KP: Do you remember the first person your unit lost and how he was killed?

JS: Yes, I do. The first night, we went ... into position to jump off in the morning, and we dug in, and my job, as radio operator, was to keep my ears open, and, frankly, it scared me the first time, because I fell asleep, but, when you have a radio on, ... the radios that we had, there was always a rush, a continual rush, "Shhhhhh," and it would stop when someone was about to speak, and I fell asleep, and woke up, and scared the daylights out of myself. ... What I found was that my brain was conditioned so that I would wake up when the rush stopped and I would catch the transmission.

KP: You got used to listening for the pause.

JS: I got used to listening and, actually, being able to sleep at the same time. ... I worried about that, but, as far as I know, I never failed, [laughter] but, you asked about the first night. We went in, and we dug in, and I didn't dig a deep hole. I dug a trench. ... Suddenly, after about an hour or two after we had all dug in, I heard, "Halt, halt, halt." "Bang." What had happened was, ... one of our guys had been so unnerved by being sent up to combat, and another fellow had gotten up out of the hole to take a leak, and he went across, and the other fellow told him to, "Halt, halt, halt," but, he killed him. ... He shot him. What he was supposed to say is, "Halt, who goes there? What's the password?" ... That was our standard procedure, and he apparently got [confused], but, it happened so fast, he was obviously very much on edge. ...

KP: What happened to him?

JS: They took him out, sent him back. No, he obviously wasn't going to be able to handle it.

KP: Was he ever disciplined?

JS: I have no idea.

KP: Did anyone else prove unable to handle combat early on?

JS: Yes, different people at different times. Sometimes, it would grow on you. You'd handle a couple of weeks of it, and then, you know, "I feel like a fugitive from the law of averages" type of thing, and then, you just feel that there wasn't any more you could take, and, yes, we sent people back when we noticed that they were getting too uptight. It didn't happen very often, but, it did happen.

KP: Radios were quite heavy then, but, it sounds as though you appreciated being a radioman.

JS: Oh, yes. ... Well, see, an assistant BAR man, all you do is, ... you go where the Browning Automatic Rifle is ... and that's right up on the front. ... The BAR man is supposed to lay down a field of fire. Well, if you're the assistant BAR man, you're carrying the ammunition for him and you bring that to him. Anything off the frontline platoon is much safer. ... To move to company headquarters, rather than have to be in a fighting platoon, is obviously much safer. I'm here today as proof of that.

KP: In the infantry, on-the-line, you also knew very little about what was happening.

JS: That's true. Yes, I probably knew more about what was going on with the company than anybody else, because I had the communications hub, ... but, there was no question that the guy who's an infantryman and a rifleman, he knows nothing. All he knows is that he stands up, and gets shot at, and hopes that he kills the guy that shot at him, ... so [that] they can go ahead.

KP: You mentioned that you had a close call with an artillery barrage. In fact, you lost some of your hearing.

JS: Yes, and that wasn't the only one; I had two. Two or three days into combat, in November, I was in a large shell hole, a bombshell hole, and there were four other guys in the hole there with me. We had taken cover in that hole. ... Captain Bowman went forward, and he said, "Come on, Sergeant, let's go," and I started to climb out of that hole, and, as I did, I heard something coming in, and I fell flat on my face, right on the top edge of the hole, or maybe a little bit on the down side, and, you know, it happened, and I was okay, so, I got up and followed the Captain, didn't think anything more of it, but, the radio began to fail, ... not right then, but, a couple hours later. ... I needed a new battery, so, I called one of my runners, and I said, "Get back to battalion headquarters, get me a new battery, because it's dying, and we've got to have it." So, he went back and, about three-quarters of an hour later, he came back with a new battery. I took off the radio [cover] to replace the battery. ... The battery's in the bottom half of the radio and I couldn't get it off. Well, there was a piece of shrapnel that had gone through four inches of battery and was sticking out on my side and I found out later that those guys in that hole were all killed. So, once again, ... [I was] just lucky, that's all. I mean, here's a piece of shrapnel. ... The radio literally saved my life.

KP: You did not view this forty pounds as a burden.

JS: No, no, not at all, not at all. [laughter]

KP: You had three close calls with artillery.

JS: Well, no, there were two serious ones. The other was during the day of December 13th, when my company attacked a "château at Mullenark" near Schophoven. We had tried a night attack, but were pinned down out in the open field when we failed to get into the château before dawn. The Captain and I quickly dug trenches in the depression alongside the approach road, it was too shallow and wet to dig real foxholes, and lay down in them. I was carrying a carbine (small rifle) along with the radio on my back and lay it near the right side of the trench. We were subject to small mortar fire several times during the day and had some very, very loud and very close explosions of mortar shells very near to us, spraying us with mud, causing our ears to ring extendedly, but not wounding us. We lay there all day and after it got dark, we got up and moved to a nearby town that we knew had been captured the day before. When I went to retrieve the carbine, there was a hole about a foot-and-a-half from the right edge of my trench and the carbine had been blown over me and to the other side of the trench. Clearly, my hearing was damaged by these very close explosions.

KP: Did you have any close calls with other types of fire?

JS: Small arms fire, you mean? If I did, ... they're not in my memory very much. You know, those two are enough. There may have been other times when it was tight and tough and ... I just don't remember them very much.

KP: You mentioned that you had a carbine for protection.

JS: I did, at that time, yes.

KP: Did you ever have to fire your weapon?

JS: No, and that was one of the advantages, that I felt, about being a radio operator; I never really had to fire at the Germans. There were plenty of times when I was instrumental in calling fire, but, ... I could say, without equivocation, that I didn't kill anybody, directly.

KP: Some historians have wondered about how many men in an average infantry platoon actually fired their weapon. There have been claims that some did not really shoot their weapon.

JS: ... Oh, you mean because they didn't want to fire?

KP: Did not want to fire, could not fire, for various reasons.

JS: If that's true, I don't have any direct incident that I can tell you about. In fact, the incidents are more in the other direction, ... that people would fire ... when it might not have been justified.

KP: Getting men to fire was not a problem.

JS: Not that I know of, no. ...

KP: The Captain never complained that certain men were not firing.

JS: ... Well, the Captain would complain, every so often, that they weren't moving fast enough, ... I mean, they were pinned down by fire, and legitimately so, but, generally speaking, ... when he ordered them to move, they would move. ... I think he relied on his squad sergeants to do that, and that's really a squad sergeant job, to see that his squad does what it's supposed to do, and, generally speaking, I think they did that pretty well.

KP: Did all of the squad sergeants survive the war?

JS: Oh, not by a long shot. My original squad sergeant was killed in Marburg. ... In fact, we lost two first sergeants; we lost all three platoon sergeants. ... I don't think that more than a handful of the squad sergeants were left at the end of the war.

KP: We discussed replacement officers earlier. What about replacement enlisted men?

JS: Well, we had to teach them in a hurry what it was all about and, generally speaking, the guys in the squad would do that pretty well. They were no better or worse than the original guys, except that they didn't have any experience, and we only had it because we'd been there awhile.

KP: What did experience teach you? What could you learn only by being on-the-line?

JS: ... When it was stupid to stand up and get shot at and when it wasn't stupid to stand up and get shot at. You'd have a feel, after awhile, for how effective the enemy fire was, and to learn how to quickly seek cover, which, you would think, would be just natural, but, it isn't. I mean, that's, generally speaking, what the experienced rifleman learns, is how to get out of the way of fire quickly, and so, if a replacement learns that fast, he becomes an experienced rifleman.

KP: If he does not ...

JS: If he doesn't, he becomes a casualty.

KP: How would you rate the medical care for casualties in the field?

JS: We had a bunch of very excellent medics that would do everything that they possibly could to take care of guys and get them back and, generally speaking, I think they were quite effective at doing that. The biggest problem was that the Germans would fire on the medics as much as they would fire on the soldiers. ...

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

JS: They got wounded themselves, a number of times.

KP: Were any of the medics that you knew killed?

JS: Yes.

KP: You mentioned that the Germans did not respect the red cross of the Medical Corps.

JS: Well, I think that's right, especially toward the end of the war, and toward the end of the war, the only ones that were fighting, really fighting hard, were the SS, the *Schutzstaffel*, but, they would also shoot their own guys in the back if they didn't fight. ... They were holding what little there was left at the end of the war. I don't think that was true so much in the major fighting. ... It's always much more difficult to be on the offensive than it is to be on the defensive, and so, that's why we had so many casualties. ... In many ways, the only way you find out ... where the enemy is and where he's firing from is to put up a target, which is a human. ... If they were good marksmen, you know, ... it's a matter of whose turn it is to be the point, ... which is what they used to call it, and that's simply a matter of standing up and getting shot at, find out where the firing's coming from. That's not very easy to determine. I mean, you can hear it, but, you can't always see it, ... but, some people are better at locating that than others. That's why I had respect for some of these hunters, these guys from [the] backwoods. ... They were good. ... They were very adept at that and they were also fearless in a different way than most. If they saw a target and they were pretty sure they could get it, they would go after it and, in most cases, they would get it. ...

KP: You had trained for night attacks. When was your first night attack?

JS: The second night in Holland. ... There was a farm. ... We were way back here, near a dike, and we knew that the Germans were in there, because they were firing from there, and so, the first night, we shut down and didn't, and then, we launched a night attack to get it, and it was successful. ... I forget which squad it was, but, a couple of squads went [in] and cleaned the Germans out. So, it was almost immediate.

KP: That must have given the squads a great deal of confidence.

JS: Oh, yes, sure, yes.

KP: Did you take any prisoners during that first assault?

JS: Can't tell you that, [I] don't know.

KP: How many prisoners would you usually capture?

JS: It would depend. ... In Holland, they didn't give up very much and, in Germany, up until the 15th of December, they didn't give up very much. After that, I think the Germans recognized they were beaten themselves, ... most of the rank-and-file Germans, ... so, we had several times where they would give up and wave a white flag, or come up this way.

KP: They would raise their hands and surrender.

JS: Right, and we, generally speaking, would try to take them. ... On the way to Cologne, we took many, many prisoners, especially with this night fighting. We'd get in ... in the edge of the town, at night, and then, we'd start fighting our way through, and they would give up.

KP: When did you realize that there was a significant difference between the SS and the regular *Wehrmacht* soldiers?

JS: I really don't know. It was very clear after we crossed the Rhine, but, it was true before that, too, probably on the way to Cologne, ... after the Bulge was reduced and after we started on the way to Cologne. ... Well, that's when they began to surrender. ... What you found out was that the rank-and-file soldier would surrender, but, the SS guy wouldn't.

KP: In other words, sometimes you could take a position relatively easily, but, then, if you came across SS troops, you would be back to hard slogging.

JS: Right, right, oh, yes. A smart SS trooper, well placed, in defilade, in a good spot, where he could hold up the column, could be very effective.

KP: How much support would your unit get from armored units or the Air Force?

JS: ... We got a reasonable amount of air support, not in Holland, because the weather was so poor, but, later on, in Germany, on the way to Pier and Schophoven, we got good support from the Air Force. The only trouble was, the Air Force was notoriously inaccurate ... with its bombing and we had a lot of casualties caused by our own people and that was true with some of our artillery as well. ... The artillery would try to lay down a field of fire close to where you were advancing and, you know, a slight miscalculation there meant that you were hit by your own fire. So, there's no question, we had a lot of guys killed by our own people.

KP: You were on-the-line for two hundred days. Were you ever given a pass?

JS: Well, the two hundred days, the division was committed for two hundred days, okay. When you're ... in combat, even if your division is actually up, and ... most of it is triangular, let's say you're in a corps with two other divisions, okay, one-third of the time, your division will be back, okay. Then, when you are up and committed, one-third of the time, your regiment is not committed, and then, when your regiment is committed, one-third of the time, your battalion isn't committed, and, similarly, when your battalion is committed, one-third of the time, your company is not committed. So, two hundred days of combat probably only means about seventy-five to eighty days of actual, aggressive fighting with the infantry. ... We were attached to [the] Third Armored and they formed task forces, [in] which we rode on tanks and jeeps, and then, those things moved as much as fifty, sixty miles in a day. That's when we would run into Germans well entrenched somewhere. I recall, once, when we were zipping up into town, the three lead tanks, all three, were knocked out almost simultaneously, because there was an excellent German tanker placed [there], and he fired three rounds and got three of them. Well, then, we dismounted the

doughs, (short for doughboys) and tried to get up there, and there were enough infantry then, and the guy was well placed, but, we couldn't get at him. They brought in the Air Force. We tried to get up with a bazooka and couldn't get anywhere near him. They brought in the Air Force and skip-bombed that out of the way. Well, now, ... whenever you can bring in airplanes to knock out a tank like that, you've got overwhelming support and firepower and there's no question in my mind that that's the basic reason the United States and the Allies won; it was the huge amount of power and of facilities that we had that we could throw at them.

KP: You were confident that you had overwhelming firepower.

JS: Yes, not so much in Holland, but, later on, yes, yes, especially toward the end. ... Once we broke out of the bridgehead at Remagen, ... it was a foregone conclusion. It was just a matter of how long it was going to take us, that's all, and, I think, even after the Bulge, we felt that way. ... Well, in fact, interestingly enough, ... one night, when we were waiting for the Bulge to be reduced, there was patrol activity, and we sent out a patrol to ... find some Germans in some holes and bring them back, and we did, and we found a lieutenant, and ... people were right up there to interrogate him, and I was there when the interrogation was going on. ... This guy wanted to see our automatic artillery, because he couldn't believe that the barrages that we had laid down, from time-to-time, could possibly be from just a lot of artillery. He figured it had to be automatic, so, he wanted to see our automatic artillery. ... So, the point is, we ... had huge amounts of it. The night we broke out of the bridgehead, we were ... all right together. That's another night where my hearing didn't ... get helped any, either, because we were right there and the artillery was right [there]. We were all jammed into this bridgehead, and then, broke out the next morning.

[TAPE PAUSED]

KP: Did you ever encounter any civilians in Holland?

JS: They were very helpful. They were most anxious to help us, in any way that they possibly could.

KP: When you were moving through, they were in a very dangerous and exposed position.

JS: Right.

KP: Did you know of any incidents where civilians were killed?

JS: Oh, sure, no question about it. Some of the barrages that we laid down to move into towns had to kill some of them, and, yes, we knew that they were killed, and they realized it, and the Dutch, of course, recognized that it had to happen, it was terrible that it did happen, but, they recognized that it was going to happen. ... That was true, later on, in all of the areas that we went through, although, generally speaking, the people would try to move away from where the action was and, generally, were fairly successful at that, not toward the end of the war. When we broke out of the bridgehead, forget it. There were people all over the place.

KP: During the Battle of the Bulge, was your unit in the vicinity of the battle?

JS: Just to the north of it.

KP: How much did you know about the battle at the time?

JS: We were well advised.

KP: You knew what was happening.

JS: Yes, yes, no, we knew. ... We had good information. We knew that we were sticking out here, and the Bulge was down there, and, "Those yo-yos in the south better get it reduced pretty fast," you know, that sort of a thing, but, we also realized that the front was going to be quiet while all the action was down there, and we were just happy that we were not where the action was.

KP: You mentioned that your unit accelerated its patrolling.

JS: Yes, right. Well, we wanted to find out what kind of strength they had over there and that's all. ... I mean, you never knew where there might be another salient that they would start, right, so, you wanted to find out what kind of capability they had.

KP: Did elements of your unit ever fall prey to German patrolling activity?

JS: Not that I know of.

KP: Your particular company tended to be the one that went out on patrol, not the other way around.

JS: Right. No, the Germans were in defensive defilade and ... they just waited for us to move and shot us as we came.

KP: That was the bulk of their battlefield actions, as you confronted them.

JS: Right, as far as we could see. ... They had excellent intelligence. I know that, [from] this POW, they knew that it was the 104th; they even knew ... some of the officers' names. So, where they got that, I have no idea, but, they did.

KP: One of the men in your unit was captured in the Battle of Mullenark Chateau (a moated, castle-like structure near Schophoven).

JS: Yes, right.

KP: That battle really stands out in your mind.

JS: Well, because I was out getting shot at all day long, ... and, also, because, that night, we were pretty well decimated, ... oh, we must have had ten, twelve killed and many more wounded that day, and we were very disorganized, and so, when we pulled out that night, ... it was important to try to find out where everybody was, because we did not have good communications, and, as communications chief, that was my job. So, I ran back and forth, twice, between Pier and Schophoven, trying to reestablish communications, and getting things going, and carrying radios, and getting battalion headquarters on line. ... The Germans were still laying down artillery fire, and that was the night I got ... the Bronze Star, for that action of trying to get things reestablished, and, ultimately, we did. We got things reestablished and we got the company reasonably well assembled in one area.

KP: What exactly had you done to earn the Bronze Star?

JS: Just running back and forth on a road that was ... subject to fire, to get equipment and men back to where they belong, that's all.

KP: How scared were you? Were you doing this mostly on adrenalin?

JS: Adrenalin.

KP: When you look back on it, are you surprised that you did this or had you just got used to this type of thing?

JS: No, no, I wasn't [surprised]. It was something that had to be done. ... I really wasn't that concerned about artillery fire. It was an open area. If you'd been in a tree area, that's another thing, but, you can hear artillery coming, and you fall flat on your face. Unless it's a very close or direct hit, you're pretty safe.

KP: You would rather be in a wooded area when facing small arms fire.

JS: Well, for small arms fire, yes.

KP: However, for artillery, you would much rather be in an open area.

JS: Oh, tree bursts. ... The shell hits up there, and it splays it all down, and there's no way you can get away from it. See, ... as I think I said before, when a shell hits here, it tends to go out like that. Well, there's an umbrella, there's a safety area in there, ... unless you get a direct hit or unless you're where it comes down, ... and, by that time, frequently, it's spent. You might get a scratch. You're not going to get a serious wound. ... You're more or less safe that way, but, in a tree burst, forget it, that's ... all directly down.

KP: How was your buddy captured in that battle?

JS: ... Well, he was a runner, and the Captain sent him up to find out where the second squad was, and it was dark, and he couldn't find the second squad. What he found was Germans. [laughter]

KP: He basically walked into them.

JS: Well, he was wounded by mortar fire, ... and then, he tried to get up and go. ... I think he became disoriented, and he tried to get up and go, and he was wounded, and he couldn't move very well, and the Germans grabbed him and pulled him ... into the chateau.

KP: What happened to him after he was captured?

JS: He was taken back to a hospital. They repaired him, and did a reasonably decent job of patching up his wounds, and sent him to a prisoner of war camp.

KP: You mentioned that he had a hard time.

JS: Well, he was starved ... in the prisoner of war camp and I think he was very worried that he wouldn't be treated properly, ... when he began to not have any food. Slim was always the first and last guy in the chow line. By that, I mean, ... back in garrison, he would be among the first five guys that would ... get through the chow line, and he'd run to it, and then, he'd get back on the tail end of it if there was any seconds. So, I think ... the food deprivation probably bothered him a great deal.

KP: He was not necessarily being mistreated, but, he was afraid of not having any food.

JS: Well, the whole thing. That's all part of it, ... less mistreatment than it was [being] weakened from not having enough nourishment.

KP: Before we began the interview, you showed me the grave markers of several men from your unit who were killed. Could you tell me what happened to some of them? You mentioned Alfred Gregory.

JS: Well, he wasn't in my company. He was the [fraternity] brother. ... We kind of covered him before, but, all I know is what happened to him.

KP: James Held?

JS: Held ... was a guy that was killed, interestingly enough, by the fellow who said, "Halt, halt, halt."

KP: Friendly fire.

JS: Right.

KP: Benny Sutton?

JS: Benny was in the weapons platoon and I really don't have much information on how Benny was hit. I really don't know.

KP: Matthew Roshetko?

JS: ... Roshetko was killed in Holland, when he was advancing along a dike, and the Germans had it zeroed in with artillery fire, and I think he moved out of a relatively ... protected area and was hit by ... rifle fire. I don't know too many ... of the circumstances on this. I will tell you one, though, that bothered me. On the drive to Cologne, ... as I said, they were taking prisoners, and we had a sergeant who was a real *gung-ho* [guy], a good sergeant, but, a rather vicious individual, and ... the Germans had been firing at his squad members, and they finally gave up, and, ... like My Lai, ... after they gave up, he came in, and searched them, and took their valuables. He told them to run and shot them in the back.

KP: They were Germans who had surrendered.

JS: Right, and I saw that happen, and it was very distressing. ... You know, there's just no call for that. These guys had given up.

KP: It was clear that they had surrendered.

JS: It was clear that they'd given up, but, ... there's no question, they had wounded and hurt some of his squad members. There's no question about that, but, that's the fortunes of war.

KP: The Germans had not done ...

JS: ... Anything more than you would expect them to do as good soldiers, right.

KP: They had not mutilated any bodies or anything like that.

JS: Right, no, no, ... but, they had ... wounded or killed a couple of his guys. So, you know, it was trial and tribulation and very vindictive to do something like that. Two weeks later, there's a sequel, [laughter] ... he was in a firefight, and he was a little bit too sure of what he could do and what he couldn't do, and he decided to look up over the top of ... the cover that he was in, and a sniper got him, right between the eyes, right cold, right there. ... After that action was over, a couple of hours later, I didn't see that, but, I saw the body ... with that, and I couldn't help but think, at the time, that ... that was poetic justice, or whatever you want to call it, that he had been that way.

KP: Were you surprised by the execution of these prisoners?

JS: Yes, yes,

KP: That was not normal.

JS: No, no, not the norm. It may have happened other times.

KP: However, in your own experience ...

JS: I never saw it any other time, no.

KP: Once you entered Germany, what was your initial attitude toward German civilians? From your photo albums, I get the impression that there was quite a bit of fraternization after the war.

JS: ... Well, to begin with, I don't think we saw very many. We would send them back as prisoners, so, we really didn't get too much chance to chat with them until the war ... was nearly over. However, toward the end of the war, there was no place to send them, we were so busy moving, ... that you just had a chance to talk with them, and you never quite trusted them, because you never knew how strongly they felt about that, but, by that time, it was relatively safe, and you could talk with Germans. ... What my relative told me was not unlike the same stories that I'd heard before, "National pride," ... you know, Hitler appealed to that. ... "By the time we realized we had a monster on our hands, it was too late to do anything about it." I'm not really sure that's true, but, that was ... the feeling.

KP: European Theater veterans often tell me how amused they were by how few "Nazis" there were in Germany.

JS: Oh, sure, oh, sure.

KP: All of a sudden, no one was a Nazi.

JS: Oh, of course, ... and so, you knew very well [they were lying]. Well, some were active Nazis, and, occasionally, you would identify such [persons], but, you'd have some civilians coming [and] telling you that, "He was a Nazi, and I'm not, but, he was," [laughter] and that sort of thing, and maybe it was true, because there were many, many unwilling Germans, I'm sure.

KP: Did your unit take part in liberating any slave labor or concentration camps?

JS: Yes, Nordhausen Camp. ... We went through and the bodies were there.

KP: Did you find it disturbing or had you been hardened to that sort of thing by being in combat?

JS: It was very disturbing. ... Even though we thought the SS was inhumane, and we recognized that, but, we hadn't thought that there would be enough inhumanity that that sort of thing would have happened. No, it was ... quite a shock, ... but, there's no question we were hardened by that time.

KP: As a German-American, even though you were very Americanized, your grandparents had emigrated from Germany and you had relatives living in Germany. Was there any tension in your attitude towards Germany?

JS: No, I don't think so, but, as I told you before, I didn't want to see them, I didn't want to talk to them. They were my enemy, and, regardless of how they got that way, they were, and I, frankly, didn't trust any Germans, although, sure, I fraternized to some degree. [laughter] ... I think I had less hard feelings, because, fairly early on, I'd heard this business of, "Well, many of us don't want the war," you know, and I wanted to think that, especially wanted to think that of my relatives. ... I didn't hold any grudges, but, then, again, I lived through it, and ... I had avoided shooting anybody. ...

KP: Were you ambivalent about killing another person?

JS: Oh, absolutely. I didn't want to do that at all.

KP: Even though you were in the infantry?

JS: Oh, I was in the infantry against my will. [laughter]

KP: If you could have chosen any branch of the service or corps within a service, what would you have preferred?

JS: ... The Navy. No question, I would have been in the Navy. I asked for the Navy and they weren't taking anyone in the Navy the day that I went. They had all the naval people they needed. Well, after all, with my waterfront background, and experience, and all that sort of thing, I'd much rather be in the Navy.

KP: Did you have a preference for serving in the Pacific or European Theater?

JS: Well, I think, as it turned out, you knew that the Pacific War was much more difficult to fight than the European War, but, I'm not so sure I knew that at the time. So, yes, I was glad that I was in Europe, rather than the Pacific.

KP: You were glad to be in Europe.

JS: Oh, yes.

KP: You did not say to yourself, "I would rather be fighting the Japanese."

JS: No, Lord, no. By that time, you knew how difficult the Japanese fighting was. ... I guess that became quite clear after the European War was over and we'd gotten more information about the other side. We got reasonably decent information about what else was going on in the world, and so forth, and the war, ... *Stars and Stripes*.

KP: You read *Stars and Stripes* while on-the-line.

JS: Oh, yes, oh, sure. ... Well, I mean, when you say, "On-the-line," probably when we were in reserve. ... On-the-line is when you're actually committed. ...

KP: I am probably using it in a more general sense. I am not as familiar with the clear definition and use of the term.

JS: Of course. Well, on-the-line, from my point of view, is, ... you're engaged in active combat. Then, as I pointed out to you, even in the company, you might be in ... company reserve. So, yes, you're on-the-line, [laughter] but, you're not quite on-the-line. ...

KP: How did you feel about people who were in the rear, who were not in the infantry, at the time? You might have a more balanced view now.

JS: Yes, envy, and, in some cases, where we saw them, "Wangle their way," I think was the words that I used, ... you lost respect for them for doing that, for not sticking with it. On the other hand, had I been in that position, I'm not sure I wouldn't have tried, [laughter] ... although the communications chief job was something that I wanted, and I was satisfied with. At the end of the war, shortly after active combat ... [ended], and this is part of my unhappiness with officers, the Captain called me into the company headquarters in Kreuma (pronounced "Croyma"), and he said, "Sergeant, ... you were insubordinate on the frontline and I want you to take a bust," and my immediate reaction was, if he wanted me to take a bust, in other words, give up my stripes voluntarily, then, he didn't have enough of a case to take me to court-martial, or he was reluctant to take me to court-martial. So, I said, "Well, sir, Captain, I won't take a bust. I don't think I was insubordinate, sir." [laughter] ... "Well, that day that you stuck so close to me," and he referred to this incident that I talked about.

KP: He was the Air Corps replacement.

JS: Yes, this is the Air Corps replacement, and I said, "Well, I don't consider that insubordinate in any way," and he says, "Well, there was another incident, that you were insubordinate to Lieutenant Gault," and that's another incident which I'll relay to you, and I said, "I don't believe that was insubordinate, either," and I didn't explain this to him, but, so that you understand what I'm talking about, the communications chief gets signal equipment, ... and that includes flashlights. One day, I got six flashlights, and I immediately distributed them to some guys ... in the squads on the frontline, and I had a lieutenant come to me, and he said, "Sergeant, ... I understand you got some flashlights today," and I said, "Yes, sir, I did," and he said, "Well, I want one of them," and I said, "My understanding, sir, is that you don't get supplied through me, you get supplied through the officers' headquarters, and so, that's where you have to go get a flashlight." ... He said, "I don't think you understood." He said, "I want one," and I said, "And I'm not sure you understood my answer," and I said, "That's not where you get them from," and he said, ... "Suppose I order you to go get one?" ... I said, "Well, I hope you don't do that, because you should not do that," and he said, "Well, I'm ordering you to get one," and I said, "And I'm refusing to get one." [laughter] So, you know, it was that fast. ...

KP: In terms of Army procedure ...

JS: I was right and I knew I was right.

KP: That was why you were being so stubborn.

JS: ... That's right, yes. "This guy's not going to push me around. Who the hell does he think he is?" You know what I mean? ... "It's the guys on the front that need those flashlights, not some goddamn officer. He can get his own flashlight when he needs it and he doesn't need it anywhere near as much as they do." So, okay, "Well," he said, "you don't sound to me like you have very much respect for me." I said, "Lieutenant, if the shoe fits, you put it on." [laughter] ... I don't think he was used to dealing with somebody who would be as feisty as that, and so, I didn't hear anything more about it until this incident, and I said, "Well, sir, ... Lieutenant Gault was not correct. He gave me an order that he should not have given me." He said, "Yes, but, you refused that order," and I said, "That's correct. ... I think I'm within my rights to refuse an order that's not a correct order." "Well, we'll see about that," right, so, he says, "So, you're not going to take a bust?" and then, I said, "No." ... "Well," he said, "I'll see you in court-martial." Okay, well, I had figured that I had a pretty good case, ... but, I was worried. ... I was in F Company. I went to the next town, where I knew Easy Company was quartered, and ... Lieutenant Linette, I think I mentioned him before, was there, and I went to see Lieutenant Linette, asked to see him, and he said, "Okay, Sergeant, ... I understand," and I told him [about] both of these incidents. He said, "I want you to do something for me. ... I want you to go back to Captain Harmon, and you ask ... to see him, and ... you go in, and you tell him that if he proceeds with a court-martial against you, I will be your advocate," and I said, "Well, gee, don't you think you ought to do that?" I said, "After all, this is your call." He said, "I think you have the guts to do that," [laughter] and I said, "Okay." So, I did, and he was absolutely furious, the Captain, as you might imagine, and he sent me out of ... the dayroom, the office. So, I did it, but, I also knew that Lieutenant Linette would be my advocate, so, I also knew I was pretty safe. Two days later, Harmon called me in again, and I said, "Oh, boy, here it comes," and he said, "Sergeant, ... I've changed my mind about you. ... You have a lot of ... get-up-and-go. ... I like the way you handled yourself in this thing," you know, and I'm saying [to myself], "Bullshit." [laughter] ... So, he says, "I'm going to recommend you for a battlefield commission," and I said, "What does that mean?" "Well, you'll go back, and you'll have training, and you'll become a second lieutenant," and I said, "Sir, you may not understand this, but, I don't want to be a second lieutenant. They are cannon fodder and, if we're going ... to Japan, ... I don't want to be an officer. ... I like being a communications chief and, frankly, I want to hold onto the job." "Wow, I can't understand, you don't want to be an officer?" I said, "No, sir." [laughter] Well, once again, he lost, you see, and, this time, he wasn't as furious, but, he was angry. ...

KP: He was trying to get you out of the company.

JS: He was trying to get me out of ... the company, right. Yes, he didn't want me. So, I was still there, like it or not. [laughter]

KP: When did this take place?

JS: This was in Germany, in Kreuma, ... maybe a week after the cessation of hostilities, and then, we went to other locations, and one thing that I did do, we went to a little town by the name of Lettin, and the order came down from the top that anybody who had seen any combat was to be

written up for a citation. Well, they knew that I could type, they knew that I could use language, and so, I was put on the detail of typing up citations, with a German typewriter. I spent two or three weeks doing nothing but interviewing guys and typing up citations for things that they had done.

KP: You must have heard a lot of stories.

JS: Oh, yes, yes. Well, I can't remember any of them, because what we did was embellish them, you know. [laughter] Well, you have to. ... By that time, we knew, ... we didn't know, but, we understood, that there was going to be a point system and that there would be points given for these things ... and, besides which, the order had come down. We were ordered to do this. So, in some cases, we embellished the story so well that we put it in for a Bronze Star and it would come back as a Silver Star. [laughter] ... It was fun, too.

KP: In doing this oral history project, I quickly learned to be a little more skeptical of documents.

JS: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Yes, you don't want to believe everything you see in a citation. ... I mean, I don't say that it isn't inflated, but, ... the chances of it being inflated are very strong. ... So, you asked me how I got my citation, my buddy interviewed me, and I interviewed him, and we wrote up citations for each other. [laughter] ...

KP: You mentioned earlier that you were very eager to return home after the war ended in May. You had no desire to be on occupation duty.

JS: No. We knew that we had only gone into combat later than many and the inference was that we were going to go to Japan. So, if I was going to go to Japan, I sure as hell hoped I was going to go back through the country at least, where I could ... see my family and friends before I had to be tooting off to Japan. So, I was anxious to get back that way, and then, of course, I recall when we were here and the tremendous relief on V-J Day, just tremendous.

KP: Where were you on V-J Day?

JS: I was home on furlough, and I had a date that night with a gal, and went over, and picked her up, and I said, "We're going down to Newark and celebrate."

KP: What happened in Newark on V-J Day?

JS: Well, the first thing I did was drive and we had a little gas [that] my aunt had saved. I borrowed my aunt's car, that's the only way I got around, and we drove down to ... a parking garage in Newark, and ... maybe we were going to go to the movies, maybe we were going to walk around and see what people were doing, and so forth. The first thing that happened, I drove in [with] the uniform, of course, and the guy said, "Go, park. It doesn't cost you anything." [laughter] ... We then got out of the car, and we walked onto Broad Street in Newark, and one girl came up and said, ... "Soldier, my husband's coming home," gave me a big hug and all that kind of stuff. You know, we had a lot of fun and, no, we just walked up and down the street for the rest of the evening, and just watched the crowds, and enjoyed ... thinking that I wasn't going to have to go into combat

anymore. The girl was nobody that I was serious about. It was a girl I was dating, a nice gal that I'd known in high school, but, no big deal. I was never going to marry her, but, I had a lot of fun with her.

KP: How often did you correspond with your parents?

JS: My mother, ... as soon as I left, wrote me a daily letter, ... without fail, every day. Sometimes, I'd get five or six of them all together, but, she wrote me a letter every day, and I wrote as often as I could, which, on the average, was, maybe, about once a week. She saved them all. Recently, I read them all through and she saved every letter that I ever wrote from the time I was in service and had them all for me. Well, see, she didn't know what ... kind of memories she might want to remember, so, she saved them all, and I have them today, and then, when I read those letters, I found out what a snot I was. [laughter]

KP: Really?

JS: Oh, really. It was fascinating to go back and read them. ... I'd put them away, and I'd never done anything much here, but, ... going back to the 104th Division things and things like that, here and recently, and we've made a couple of moves, family wise, and I found some time, I decided, before I went back over to Germany for this reunion, that I would go re-read those letters and see if I could be reminded of things, and I did. ... It took me a couple of days to read them all.

KP: What struck you about the letters?

JS: Well, to begin with, I was infatuated with girls. ... I wasn't a very popular person in high school, and so forth, and that came through, because most of the time, before I went overseas, I would talk about my exploits with different people, ... but, then, when I got over there, what came through was that I wasn't about to be pushed around by my officers and others, and I was very bitter about the whole thing, that, here, I had been a college type person, and, here I was, stuck in the infantry, I mean, the "Infantry, Queen of Battles," you know, all that stuff, ... the bottom of the pile.

KP: You thought that was nonsense, the "Queen of Battles" line.

JS: Oh, absolutely. ... Oh, that was sheer idiocy to say that. ... That might go with somebody who was *gung-ho*, but, ... what bothered me was that he misread ... the attitudes of all us ASTP guys who had just been given the shaft, and he didn't understand. He was trying, in his way, to make us *gung-ho* and failed miserably. [laughter]

KP: Do you think you would have harbored less resentment if you had not been in the ASTP, if you had been drafted directly into the infantry?

JS: Yes, no question about it.

KP: You were given these expectations, then, all of a sudden, the opportunity vanished.

JS: Right, that's right, no, there's no question, I would have been much less resentful, ... no question about that at all.

KP: There was quite a bit of fraternization between some of the men in your unit and the German civilians.

JS: At the end of the war. ...

KP: You were probably very amused when you saw that article that is in your clipping book that said, "GIs are spurning German women."

JS: Oh, I was, yes.

KP: From the pictures you showed me, it seems like that was anything but the case.

JS: ... We were in Lettin, in heartland Germany. We were on the Mulde River, ... east of Leipzig, Halle. ... We met up with the Russians, by the way, at Torgau, ... which was not far from there, and so, you know, this is a part of central Germany that really hadn't felt much of the war. You're out in the country and they didn't get bombed. ... Unless there had been firefights or action, they hadn't felt anything. So, they didn't have any animosities toward Americans, besides which, their men had been away for a long time. ...

KP: Did you meet any Soviet soldiers?

JS: I didn't meet any. When I say, "We," 104th Division met [them]. Units of our division met units of [the Red Army]. ... In Halle, I had a pass back to Halle one night, and we saw some absolutely crazy, wild Russians. ... I mean, most of us were anxious to get back home and resume life. We weren't ... wild and we weren't drunk. I mean, some were, but, not very many, and so, these guys were nuts.

KP: What did you think of the Soviets at the time? Did you even give them much thought?

JS: Really didn't get enough contact. ... You know, we were allies. They were pushing from one side and we were pushing from the other; more power to them if they got there first. It was very distressing to us, however, to move out of territory that we had occupied and give it to the ... [Russians] and we saw that. We were part of moving out of that territory ...

KP: ... And turning it over to the Soviets.

JS: Right, what ... was East Germany and, now, it's unified, but, in the area west of Berlin, that was given back to the Russians.

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. John F. Schwanhausser on April 29, 1995, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler. Did you ever consider staying in the military?

JS: Not for an instant.

KP: You mentioned that you were displeased at having to give up territory to the Soviet Union. Were you aware of Patton's comments on the matter at the time, "Now that we have beaten the Germans, we can take on the Soviets?" Do you think most GIs at that time would have supported that?

JS: Well, my sense of that would have been, at the time, ... "Hey, come on, ... I don't see any sense in fighting them, too." They were our Allies. They had kept the Germans occupied on the Eastern Front while we pushed on the Western Front, but, it did bother me, as I indicated before, to move out of the territory that we'd taken. Why should we give that up to the Russians? Not that I had any love for the Russians, but, they'd done their part, we'd done our part, we should stay where we are.

KP: The line should be ...

JS: ... Wherever we met, right.

KP: You had no visions of a military career. You were very happy to become a civilian again.

JS: Very much. I remember, when I was discharged, you had to go through this thing and you had to go through a pitch ... from a recruiting sergeant. I remember the recruiting sergeant looking at me and he says, "Okay, I've got to do my job, just let me talk." [laughter] I said, "Don't waste your breath." I had told him that, "Don't waste your breath." There's no way that I want any part of it, not even the Reserves, no way, no part of it.

KP: You did not even want to stay in the Reserves.

JS: I wanted out. ... I'd had enough. [laughter]

KP: What do you think you learned from being in the Army, both positively and negatively?

JS: I learned a lot about people. I went into service an insufferable snob; I came out a less insufferable snob. [laughter] I found out that people on the bottom weren't ... as incompetent as I thought they were, that they, generally speaking, knew what they were doing, and that was very useful to me, later on, in my corporate career, because I always tried to find out what the guy on the bottom thought about what we were doing and how we were doing it. ...

KP: In other words, the lineman at PSE&G might know more than you think he does.

JS: Right, right, absolutely, they did. ... What bothered me especially was that much of the management group in PSE&G was ... former Navy officers and I'm not sure that you learn it quite

in the same way in the Navy that you do in the infantry. In the infantry, you can't avoid being down there in the muck and dirt with the guy. ...

KP: ... With the hillbilly from West Virginia.

JS: Right, and you can't in the Navy, much more, I'm sure, and so, I was disturbed at some of what I considered to be incorrect handling of people in the company. ... I was a maverick in service; I continued to be a maverick. [laughter]

KP: If you had gone into the Navy ...

JS: I don't think I would have learned it anywhere near as well, no.

KP: That was a very conscious lesson that you had learned.

JS: Yes, very definitely.

KP: I quickly learned from interviewing Navy veterans, both officers and enlisted men, that there was a deep chasm between the two groups.

JS: ... Right, but, you can't have that on the front, ... especially when you've got these replacement officers. They didn't know enough, and they recognized that they didn't know enough, and they recognized that the squad sergeants and the guys who had been there, in combat, did know more than they did, so, the smart ones relied on those ... non-commissioned officers and ... worked with them to make it work.

KP: You returned to Rutgers after the war. Had you considered going elsewhere?

JS: [Yes], very much. In fact, I came back to Rutgers and tried to get my scholarship back, because I'd earned it, ... I figured, rather than use the GI Bill of Rights, and they wouldn't give it to me. I remember sitting here with Dean ...

KP: Crosby?

JS: No, not Easterling, either. It was somebody, I don't know, Dean Holland. Anyhow, I remember sitting [there], trying to reinstate that scholarship, and, "No way." He said, "What do you want that for? You want to let somebody else have that." I said, "No, I don't. I want it. I might want to go on and use ... my GI Bill for a Masters degree," and, well, I couldn't get it, and then, ... I forget what the situation was, I was thinking of going to Stevens, and I think I had a conversation with somebody at Stevens, and the reaction was, "Hey, you were at Rutgers before, why don't you just go back there," you know. "Don't make changes; don't make waves," and ... I didn't have much time. I got out in November of '45. I took two or three weeks to come back. Rather than take all the money and come back the fastest way possible, I came back by bus with a couple of my buddies, and so, I got back, and then, ... I came down here to apply, and there wasn't an awful lot of time until February, when I was going to go back in. ... However, I will say that ... part of the

reason that I don't have any great love for Rutgers is the way they treated me when I came back. I had, as I think I indicated, been a reasonably decent student and I knew I had this engineering by the tail.

KP: Both times.

JS: Yes. ... I knew I was not going to have a great ... problem getting back into it, and so, Holland it was, Dean Holland, ... and we agreed that even though [I] would not normally have enough time to get into the Class of '48 that he would permit me ... to take extra courses during the summer, and instead of taking just two, or whatever it was, he would let me take more, and, if I did that, I would be able to catch up with the Class of '48, and go solidly, and get out in '48. When I came to sign up for those courses in the summer school, he wouldn't permit it. I was very angry about that, because, here, again, I was being further delayed. So, he said, "Well, what you should do is take a whole bunch of extra other courses," and so forth, and I said, "Yes, ... you mean arts courses and all that sort of thing," ... and I said, "sure, and what does that do when I want to go after my Masters? That uses more of my entitlement. That's not what I want to do." "Well, that's what I'm advising you to do." So, I'll tell you what I did. I came for a couple of courses in the summer, and then, I dropped out for a semester and worked, and then, came back. ... I was, frankly, very bitter. ... He said, "Well, the workload would be too much. You might not be able to make it." I said, "You let me decide that and, if I don't make it, then, you were right and I'm wrong." ...

KP: Do you think you would have been so bold with Dean Holland if you had not been a GI?

JS: No.

KP: You probably would have been ...

JS: ... Much more subservient. I was much more subservient when I first came to Rutgers, but, hey, come on, when I came back, I'd fought a war, and I knew I'd fought a war. [laughter]

KP: Do you think Dean Holland or other faculty members failed to recognize that change?

JS: I have no idea. ... In fact, my father was angry at that, too, because ... I came back and I felt real good. I said, "Gee, this is marvelous. I'll take a full course in this semester, I'm going to be able to take a couple of extra courses in summertime, and I'll be able to go full time and get out in '48, so, I will only have lost two years," right, and ... that was the whole emphasis, ... to get my life back on track. So, when they said, "No," he called them up and he couldn't persuade them, either. So, I said, "Screw this. I'm going to drop out." "Oh, you should never [do that]; don't ever do that," I remember the Dean telling me. "Don't do that, that's wrong," and I said, "No, it's not wrong. [laughter] You promised me that you would do this, and you're not holding up your end of the bargain, and I've got to make the best use of my opportunities, so, I'm going to go out and make some money, rather than go to college. To hell with it; I don't need to do that." "Oh, terrible;" ... my reaction was, "Who the hell are you, telling me what to do?" [laughter]

KP: Several alumni have mentioned that the Rutgers School of Engineering over-enrolled students after the war and was in danger of losing its accreditation. To rectify the situation, between 1948 and 1949, they basically flunked out a large number of students. The curriculum became progressively more demanding anyway, but, there was also the notion that it was a conscious act by the administration. Did you feel that way?

JS: Well, it was difficult. I had problems in the junior year, when I finally did come back. My average steadily went down, from, I forget what it was, but, it was a very good average. After that first problem with Professor Grant, I shaped up, and I got good marks after that, and, when I came back, I got good marks, but, the junior year was tough. ...

KP: You did have a tough time.

JS: Oh, yes. Oh, I had a tough time, but, that wouldn't have happened if I'd been permitted to go the way I wanted to. I would have had that tough time, but, it would have been a year earlier, but, at any rate, no, I had difficulty with it. On the other hand, I still made Tau Bate [Tau Beta Pi], which is another reason that I'm not very happy with Rutgers, because the Tau Bate bids went out, and I had a very good friend who had made Tau Bate in the junior year, ... but, I didn't get a bid, and I said to Wally, ... "What was the level?" and I saw a guy who I thought had a lower average than I did that got the bid, and I wanted it on my record. It was something ... that's pretty nice to talk about, and so, I asked Wally, and Wally said, "Your name didn't even come up," and I said, "No kidding, my name didn't even come up?" ... So, I went back, and I calculated my average, and I went to the guy that I thought had a lower average, and I asked him, ... "What was your average?" and he told me, and, sure enough, it was lower, right. So, I went back to Wally, and I said, "Look, now I know that he's lower," and he said, "Look, Jack, ... that all comes out of the Engineering Office. ... There's nothing I can do about that. ... We act on the recommendations that we get." ... I said, "Well, isn't it supposed to be by grade?" "Yes, it is," and he said, "If we don't like a person, we can hold him out, but, we rarely do, but, we sure as hell wouldn't have held you out," and so, I went back, and I asked the secretary, and I said, ... "I have a feeling that someone who has a lower average than I do got in, got a bid," and she said, "Oh, no, that can't be. It couldn't have happened. We check those things two or three times," and I said, "Fine, okay." I said, "I won't tell you what I calculated [my average] to be, but, will you tell me what you calculated it to be?" "Oh, it couldn't be wrong." I said, "Just do me a favor and calculate it." "Okay," so, she went over; she did it three times, obviously, and she came back, and she said, ... "We have made a mistake ... and that's terrible." She says, "Do you realize that you would have been considered for Tau Bate?" and I said, "That's exactly why I'm here, Miss." [laughter] So, they did give me the Tau Bate key, but, ... after I should have gotten it. So, I didn't get the recognition while I was here. So, you know, Rutgers has not handled me well over the years. [laughter]

KP: I wish one of my students could be here. Some things never change at Rutgers.

JS: Well, it's on the tape. [laughter]

KP: Did you live in the Chi Psi house when you returned to Rutgers?

JS: Yes.

KP: How did you like being back on campus and in the fraternity?

JS: It was fine, it was great. I enjoyed all the time that I spent at Chi Psi.

KP: What about the relationship between the veterans and the traditional college students, the eighteen and nineteen-year-olds?

JS: Well, we had some problems, because we were very much more mature, very much more interested in studying, and getting out, and getting started again. They were more interested in partying, besides which, some of the people that had gotten in in the years while we were away, the solid tradition that I had expected would have been kept up, like I felt when I first got here, wasn't as solid as it was. ... We did have some cleavages in the group. We had too many, in the first place. We ended up with three in a room, which really is too much, and so, yes, we had some cleavages, and they tended to break out along the [lines of the] veterans and the non-veterans.

KP: There was a veteran/non-veteran schism.

JS: Yes, oh, sure, yes, but, the veterans were in control, because they were older, and had been initiated sooner, and first, and so forth, ... but, it wasn't serious, ... but, it wasn't the best.

KP: You have remained quite active with Chi Psi.

JS: Yes, in the Alpha Rho Memorial Foundation, right.

KP: You mentioned that the Greek system at Rutgers has declined since your day.

JS: Yes.

KP: When do you think the decline in the Greek system started?

JS: The '60s, no question about it, ... very, very obvious; we began to have all kinds of trouble. ... In the '50s, they still had a pretty good bunch of guys, and, sure, there were some aberrations, here and there, but, in the '60s, somewhere along in there, it got appreciably worse. Also, I was active until about '56, '57, and, by then, my family was growing, and my priorities were such that I had to drop out, ... and I didn't come back into it again until [the] early 1970s. ... Chi Psi has a memorial foundation, which has funds, the income from which we use to help kids with scholarship prizes, incentive awards, that sort of thing, and that's what I came back into, not in the actual operation of the Alpha Rho Chapter.

KP: Do you feel any bond with the current fraternity members?

JS: Very little, very little. I would like to feel more, but, ... well, I've gotten to the point now where I'm less interested in maintaining that fraternity bond than I was. We have ... a home in

Virginia now, where we are becoming more and more established. ... We have found a church that we're very comfortable with and very pleased with. ... I retired ... at age sixty in 1985, and it's been ten years now, and we didn't find ... much in the Poconos. I retired to the Poconos, actually, first, and then, because one of my daughters went to Virginia, UVA, and got a job down in the Virginia area, went down there, and so, I bought a piece of property. Now, she's in Hawaii, [laughter] but, anyhow, ... we have found associations down there, and I can't do anything real for Chi Psi here, in New Jersey, when I'm in Virginia, and we're going to spend more and more time down there.

KP: You belong to two veterans' associations. When did you begin to have an interest in World War II? Was it only recently?

JS: Recent, yes.

KP: You did not join a veterans' organization when you returned.

JS: No, no. The only reason that I came back is, this fellow, this prisoner of war guy, looked me up, through Rutgers, got hold of me, and, you know, he had been one of my runners. ... The communications chief ... [was] in charge of the runners and that stuff, and so, I got back, and, frankly, I went to the first reunion ... somewhere in the mid '80s, not really expecting that I was going to enjoy it. ... He had tried to get me to go to Chicago, that year, it was in Chicago, and Jane and I said, "I don't want to go to Chicago," but, the next one was here, in Virginia. He lives in Virginia and it was going to be ... just outside of Washington. So, I said to Jane, "Well, I can't really refuse him, let's go, let's find out, let's get it over with. We'll go ... for a couple of days," and, come to find out, we liked it. We enjoyed it. ... I mean, I won't say I want to go to a reunion on a regular basis, and I've been to two since that time, and I'm not sure I'll go to one after this one, but, ... it wasn't a bunch of rabble rousing, carousing guys, ... and we're all much older now; we're all seventy or older. ...

KP: Do you think the restrained atmosphere of your reunion is partly because your unit had such a large number of ASTP men?

JS: No. I look at the people who are active ... in the veterans' organization and there's about an equivalent number from both groups. Maybe that's not so, maybe there's more ASTP guys ... than not ASTP, but, there's still ... a good mix.

KP: Instead of going to work for your father's company, you went to work for PSE&G. Did you expect to spend your career there?

JS: Not when I went, but, after I decided not to go with my dad, I began to work a little more effectively ... [toward promotion]. ... I was always working toward promotion at PSE&G, but, I'm not a very political person, and I don't like to get ahead on that sort of thing, so, I didn't play the game, but, ultimately, I became a division manager, which was pretty much my goal, and was satisfied with that. ... It's a whole other story, but, I'd had a run-in ... with a former Navy officer [laughter] ... who tried to tell me how to do my job when he was not in my direct command, and I

used a similar kind of reaction to him as I did to the officer when I said, "If the shoe fits, put it on," and I never really got along too well with him, and, unfortunately, he became my boss. ... Then, he got a promotion and was no longer my boss, and I was very happy with that, but, then, circumstances changed, again, and he came back and was again my boss. So, I had about had it in PSE&G when the time came and my daughter had a growing family and was anxious to move into the house that we had in Summit. So, I could see my way clear ... to get out, get out from underneath this guy.

KP: When you started at PSE&G, it was a very powerful company. Actually, it is still a powerful company.

JS: Well, it was in the big growth days of utility companies, ... right.

KP: Back then, PSE&G not only had utilities, but, it also ran the trolley and bus system in Newark.

JS: Right.

KP: I get the sense that PSE&G was a very hierarchical company, partly due to the nature of its business. Utilities are not as competitive as other industries.

JS: Yes. In the field, in the distribution division, where most of my background was and where I worked up to being a division manager, ... I joined the company in '49 and became division manager in '73, you have less of the political maneuvering, and it's a reasonably well-organized operation, not too many levels, ... but, the general office operation of PSE&G, as I discovered it, when I went there in '77, when they transferred me in there to run all the transmission-distribution-engineering groups, that was a political hotbed, and it's a bunch of little fiefdoms, and each vice-president has their own little cadre. It's much less so now. They have done ... some real cutting and slashing in PSE&G over the last few years.

KP: You saw a need for this.

JS: Oh, absolutely. ... If I had stayed a year or two, I would have been right in tune with the new policy; so many of the things that I was advocating and saying, and no one was listening, the new guy did. [laughter] ... So, what happened is okay, and, interestingly enough, one of my protégés is, today, a senior vice-president, so, I'm very happy with that.

KP: You are quite proud of those aspects of your career.

JS: Well, especially ... Bill Budney being a senior vice-president, yes. Yes, I started him off. I gave him his original training in distribution engineering and had a lot to do ... with his movement.

KP: What were your engineering responsibilities?

JS: Well, basically, I was a planner. I designed the electrical distribution system for Essex County for about five or six years, in a very heavy growth period, where it was difficult to know where the

new loads were going to come, and how much, and all that sort of thing. I got that job because I had a boss who was doing a very inept job of that, and ... the then division manager, I don't know how he found out that I could do this, but, there were various ways that he did. So, he restructured the company, the organization and the division, and gave me the complete planning process, and told me that it was my responsibility to get rid of all these overloads that we were having, and that's when this other guy came in, and he moved in as a substation engineer, and he came down and told me what I was to do. ... Just to give you some numbers, we had about five hundred circuits in the division, of which two hundred were overloaded, of which one hundred were badly overloaded, and so, what I had to do first was to get those one hundred badly overloaded ones taken care of, and he came in, the guy that I had a run-in with, ... and tried to tell me that I was going to also do the lower one hundred at the same time, and I said, "It's just not possible. There's no way we can do all that," and I said, "I know they're there, and I know we have a problem, but, you're just going to have to live with it in your organization and substation. You're just going to have to be overloaded in those, because there's no way that it can be done any other way, with the people that I have to work with, and the amount that I can put in, and the money I can get." ... His immediate reaction was, "Well, we'll see about that," and he marched over to see the division manager, ... to tell him I'd been insubordinate, and the division manager said, "You keep your nose out of it. He's going to do it, not you. He's going to do it." [laughter] So, that, as you can imagine, ... didn't sit well with him. ... He had come from another division, where the planning had been done in a different way and I had the con in this division and a complete con, and the boss had confidence in me, and ... I was fortunate. I was successful in getting rid of all those overloads in two, three years. ... That is an achievement that I'm very proud of.

KP: Do you have any regrets about not going into your father's company?

JS: No. In my father's company, I wouldn't have had a nice pension, like I have now. That was always a very important factor, the fact that there was a pension there, and, if you kept your nose clean and did your job right, at least didn't screw up, you could look forward to that. That's not necessarily true today, but, it was then, when I was going through it.

KP: I have been told that there was an element of paternalism at PSE&G.

JS: Oh, sure, oh, sure, a lot of nepotism, too. There still is a lot of nepotism. I'm seeing names in the PS news that are names of my compatriots and, obviously, they're their kids. ... No way that I would do that, ... but, it is much more difficult. They are going through a tough time; the utility industry is going through a major change now. It is becoming competitive and they are having to shape up.

KP: The industry had been protected until recently.

JS: Yes, and I always thought that we could have done much better, that we could have been much more efficient, which is the same thing, ... but, we had all these little fiefdoms.

KP: How did you meet your wife?

JS: When I came back from service and started here in February of '46, I decided I was looking for somebody to spend the rest of my life with. So, I went over to the Coop and went to a couple of dances that they had. Jameson basement was used for that. ... My future wife came over and asked me to dance. So, I danced with her, ... and she was not a very good dancer, and I wasn't dancing with her for more than two minutes, and somebody else cut in, a girl, so, I danced with her. ... She was an excellent dancer, but, not much of a person, but, I didn't see that in the beginning. So, for a year-and-a-half, I diddled around, trying to convince this girl that I was a catch, and then, ... I realized that wasn't going to fly, so, I began to go around a little bit. My future wife had been such a poor dancer, I really wasn't that interested in going back to her, but, anyhow, ... for a house party weekend, in those days, you had to vacate the house and go sleep somewhere else. So, there was a guy in my classes who had a place in the Quad, and I knew that it wasn't going to be used, and I asked, could I sleep in his room? "Sure," he said, "if you get me a date with a girl in the Coop." Oh, okay, why not? That's easy to do, and he was a nerd, a real nerd, and so, ... I tried and couldn't get anybody else, so, I got my future wife, and she agreed to go on this date, and then, the nerd said, "Well, let's make it a double date. You know, I don't know the girl very well," and I said, "Well, I don't know her very well either, but, that's okay. Sure, all right, we'll double," and we went to the, I guess it was called the Strand Theater at that time, and we had to wait some time for the second show or something. We carried on a conversation, and I looked at this girl that I had given a dirty deal to, [laughter] sticking her with this nerd, you know, and I looked at my date, and I came to the conclusion that I was there with the wrong person. [laughter] So, it was just before vacation, and I ... went up and saw my wife and dated her in Rockaway, New Jersey, and I didn't seriously look at anybody from thereon in.

KP: That must still amuse your wife and yourself.

JS: Oh, yes, oh, yes. We've told the story several times. [laughter]

KP: You have a son. Did he ever serve in the military?

JS: No. It was a very difficult time. He was in college, and they needed people for Vietnam, and there was going to be a draft, and he had to, you know, sign up for the draft, and he told me that if he got called, with a low number, that he was going to go to Canada, and that was a very, very distressing time for me, at that time, because, you know, ... I had done what I had to do, and I expected him to do what he had to do. ... We talked about it, not very deeply, but, we did, and he said, "Nope, I am going to go to Canada." Well, fortunately, his number was low, so, we didn't ever have to make that decision. ...

KP: You wanted him to serve if he was called up.

JS: Absolutely. If he got called, he had to go, and that's the way I felt, and that's what happened to me, and I expected him to do the same thing.

KP: Would you have wanted him to enlist?

JS: Oh, no, Lord, no. There's no sense in enlisting, you know.

KP: You did not want him to volunteer.

JS: Oh, no, no, and he wouldn't have. He was very deep in swimming at the time, at Bucknell, and was co-captain ... of the team that senior year. I don't know whether that was the senior year or junior year, but, I do remember that he made some remarks like that. It was very hurtful.

KP: What about your daughters?

JS: I have three daughters; none of them ever thought about anything like service, no. They've all gone ... to college. Sarah went to Cedar Crest and married a Rutgers graduate, ... who had been a high school boyfriend. ... Carolyn, the second one, went to UVA and ... was never very much of a social person, but, she lived "on the lawn" at UVA. I don't know whether you know what that means, ... okay. In her senior year, she also was co-captain of the UVA swim team, and then, she wanted to go to New York City and be involved in the financial world. ... [After] she was over there for about six to eight months, she realized that, no, that was too cutthroat, she really didn't want that, so, she decided to go back and get her Masters at Penn State for counseling, which she did, and she quit the job in New York City, in the finance [sector], and took a summer job ... as a counselor at a camp. ... While she was there, she met, believe it or not, a waterfront director and married him. [laughter] ... The third one had more of a problem. ... It was a high school sweetheart type of thing, and she married, and I think Barbara had the idea ... [of] the white picket fence and all that sort of thing. Well, unfortunately, her husband became involved with drugs and couldn't control them and she finally decided she had to divorce him. She did, and she's remarried now, and is, ... and will be for the next two years, the assistant swim team coach at Miami University. ...

KP: Your family really gravitated towards swimming.

JS: Yes, and what's interesting is, the oldest daughter never was much of a swimmer. We didn't get into the swim club soon enough for her to do much in the way of swimming. While she might have been a reasonably decent swimmer, she probably wouldn't have been as good as the other three. At any rate, she has a daughter now who is in swimming. [laughter]

KP: Are you disappointed that none of your children went to Rutgers?

JS: No, no, see, because I don't have that good a feeling about Rutgers anyhow, as you have understood from the interview here. No, I'm very pleased with the choices that they made. I think UVA is tremendous. Roger went to Bucknell, again, on a swimming deal, not a scholarship, but, he went early decision to Bucknell, liked the guys that were out there, had a good time, and Barbara, through Rutgers and through a Chi Psi, Bob Galbraith, who, at the time, was diving coach at Penn State, and Barbara was not as good a swimmer as Roger and Carolyn, but, she did get to Penn State; ... she got on that campus because she was a swimmer. So, that was good.

KP: What was it like to be back in Holland and Germany? Had you been back there before your recent trip?

JS: Well, the Rutgers Crew, in 1947, had a student exchange deal with a student from Leiden University and we went over there. ... I went over as the starboard spare, oarsman, and ... the crew rowed in England and in Brussels, and we took a trip through Holland on a junk. ... When I was back there, I took a side trip. We had a half a day, and I took a side trip to the Henri-Chapelle Cemetery, which I took, not these pictures, but, other pictures of the graves. They were nowhere near as well put together at that time, just wooden crosses and so forth, and I visited the graves. ... Al was not there. He was at Margraten, and I didn't know that, but, Lindstrom and Rost were there, and so, I have pictures of their graves that I took. ... When we went through certain portions of Holland on the train, I was able to recognize some places that I had been. ...

KP: What was that like?

JS: ... Oh, that was quite interesting, because, you know, you go riding by on a railroad train and see an area that, only a couple of years before, you'd been fighting through, ... but, I haven't been back since, until this last trip. ... There have been opportunities, but, the veterans' organization's not been anything that I was particularly anxious to develop. I really only developed [it] because this runner called me. ...

KP: It seems as though you do not necessarily block out these memories, but, you do not often want to reflect on them.

JS: That's correct. In fact, the kids have said that they have learned a lot more about my wartime experiences recently, when I have talked to them. It was very interesting; my grandson, my son's son, had an assignment from school in which he was to talk to a former World War II person, so, of course, he immediately thought of me, and he called me up on the telephone, and we had about a half-hour interview, and he did a surprisingly accurate job of reflecting some of the things that I told him and put them in ... the stuff, and he said he did very well in class, because almost nobody in the class had anybody who had been in active combat. ...

KP: Most of the men I have interviewed were not in combat. Their experiences are also very interesting.

JS: Oh, sure.

KP: However, infantrymen, especially those with college experience, are rare.

JS: Yes, well, you know, most guys got in programs, in special programs, and I was not privy to that, because of these things; I wore safety glasses all through the war. ...

KP: Is there anything that I forgot to ask about?

JS: [laughter] ... No, I think I've given you most of my recollections and experiences, and you've also gotten a lot of background about my family and that sort of thing, which I hadn't expected, though which I have no problem with talking about.

KP: It has been a very enjoyable interview. Thank you very much.

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 8/8/03

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 8/12/03

Reviewed by John F. Schwanhausser 9/10/03