RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD M. SNETHEN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Richard M. Snethen on June 29, 2003, in Springville, New York, with Shaun Illingworth and …

Jared Kosch: Jared Kosch.

SI: Mr. Snethen, thank you very much for having us here today and spending this time with us.

Richard Snethen: You're entirely welcome and I'm glad you can pronounce my last name.

SI: I'd like to first ask you a few questions about your family beginning with your father who was from Indiana and who attended Purdue University. From what I understand, going to college in his day would have been pretty rare.

RS: Well, his mother and father left the farm and became custodians of the high school in Indiana, circa 1890, so that all five children could graduate from high school. The three boys, my Uncle Elmer, who is the oldest, then my dad and my Uncle Ed, all three graduated from college. My Uncle Ed was a lawyer, and my Uncle Elmer was a dentist, and my dad was a civil engineer, he graduated from Purdue.

SI: Did his brothers go to Purdue?

RS: No. Uncle Elmer, I'm not sure what dental school he went to, but my Uncle Edward graduated from the University of Michigan, and he was an attorney for the central part of the United States, ASCAP. He worked out of Indianapolis, Indiana.

SI: How many generations was you father's family in Indiana?

RS: I guess only two and they came from Ohio, Kentucky, and South Jersey originally. They came from Alloways Creek, New Jersey.

SI: What about your mother and her family?

RS: My mother was Lena Haskell and she was raised in Northeast, Pennsylvania, which is just about a hundred miles up the road, right on the corner of the lake, and her family came over originally in the early 1600s to Massachusetts and then made the typical progression from Massachusetts, to Vermont, to New York, to Pennsylvania.

SI: How did your parents meet?

RS: Okay. It's kind of an interesting story how they met. My dad graduated from Purdue as a civil engineer and went to work for American Bridge Company, and American Bridge Company, back at that point in time, right at the turn of the century, they had a lot of electric trolley cars that were not just in cities. They were called Inter Urban. Well, there was an Inter Urban trolley car, I always thought it went from Cleveland to Buffalo, but it went from just east of Cleveland to Buffalo, and they were building a new, big, bridge right at the state line, New York/Pennsylvania State line, and my dad was the chief engineer of that construction and he

happened to board with a friend of my mother. She introduced my dad to my mother. After that job, he went down there on a job in Puerto Rico, built a sugar refinery in Puerto Rico, and they kept contact. … When he came back, they got married in 1914. He then left American Bridge and went to work for Bethlehem Fabricators, which was a fabrication company in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and initially, he usually he worked in the field; I mean they built coal collieries and that sort of stuff. Then, he went to the office in Pennsylvania and I was born in Bethlehem, and then, I don't remember Bethlehem, well, I remember it going back, but, I mean, I was too young when we moved to Nutley. He became the office manager of the New York City office of Bethlehem Fabricators, which he worked for. He retired and then was a consultant for them until his death in 1952, actually. So, that's how we got from Indiana to Pennsylvania to New Jersey.

SI: So, you moved to Nutley when you were fairly young?

RS: Yes. I don't remember, but I went all through Nutley Elementary School, Nutley High School.

SI: What was your neighborhood like growing up? What was it like for you to grow up in Nutley, New Jersey?

RS: Oh, it was great. You know, it was a rather nice town, but we still had a lot of open spaces where we could play, I mean, the neighborhood kids. We didn't have organized sports like they have today, but we had a big collection of neighbors and we'd all get together and we'd go down and we'd get some other collection of neighbors and we'd organize a baseball game, or football game, or whatever, the season. So, really it was, even though it was the Depression, I mean, we went through the whole Depression, I was a youngster; well, I was still in high school. It was 1939, it we just barely getting a little better, but for a kid, I mean, I never suffered any.

SI: How did the Great Depression affect your family? It sounds like your father was able to …

RS: Well, my dad had his company, he had work throughout. I mean, there were a lot of people, one of our neighbors got set right out on the road. He lost the job and couldn't pay the bills, I mean, they literally took the furniture out of the house and set it on the curbstone. So [for] some people, it was very, very, very difficult. Now, Betty's mother got paid in script, which wasn't worth anything, you know. A few of the stores would take it, but most of the stores, script was worth, "What's script?" But, no, we always had food and we always had clothes. We didn't have a lot of money. As a matter-of-fact, what we did is collected, you know, glass bottles at that time, were worth two cents. Most of our spending money came by collecting glass bottles and turning them back in, and you can buy a whole strip of candy stuck on a little hunk of paper for a penny, so, that's what we did.

SI: What about going to school in Nutley? What were your favorite subjects and what were you interested in?

RS: Well, I was always interested in math and science. My most difficult subject was English, as a matter-of-fact, that kept me off the honor roll until I was a junior in high school. When I got to be a junior in high school I made the honor roll which I thought was pretty neat. I barely

passed German [laughter], but, I did well in all the sciences and math. As a matter-of-fact I was in the upper ten percent of my class so I didn't, unlike you people, I didn't have to take any tests to go to Rutgers. I was eligible for Rutgers because of the standing in my class.

SI: What about extra curricular activities?

RS: Well, I played football in my senior year. … The varsity center didn't show up and the coach made me run back and forth with both squads, the first squad and the second squad. I said, "This isn't fair. It wasn't me that didn't come to practice." So, I just walked in and turned in my uniform. Interestingly enough, the varsity center got hurt the very next game, the coach came and asked me if could come and I said, "No. I felt I was treated very unfairly and I quit and I'm going to stay quit," but I did play sandlot baseball and football. As I say, unlike today's kids; we would just, we would all get together and we would play, you know. We played tag, man on the mountain, all kinds of games, just ad hoc.

SI: Did you ever like going to the movies and that sort of thing?

RS: Oh, yes. Movies were big, and radio, I built a crystal set, and my dad put a great huge antenna outside for me, so, that worked pretty well. Obviously, eventually, I can remember the first radio we got. It was a big, old, battery-operated radio, all the batteries that my dad had down in the cellar, and we had to string up an antenna, miles of it, outside to get reception. You had three big dials on the radio and had to work these things kind of, very huge old speaker that sat up on the top of it. That was our first radio, that was quite exciting. We'd listen, then by the '30s, they were electric, you know, that go on the regular current, we had our favorite programs, *The Shadow Knows*, and, oh I forgot some of the others. But every afternoon you came home and there was one, Wrigley's Gum sponsored an Indian, they had arrowheads and I got one. You saved up your wrappers and send them in. I got an arrowhead watch fob. I remember that. I can't remember the name of the show now, but, … then we went to the movies, at that time it was twenty cents, and we generally went on Saturday night. Saturday night they started the show at seven o'clock, you saw one picture, then they usually had a bunch of newsreels and shorts, then they would show the second feature, which went from, say like nine to ten, 10:30 something like that, and then they, because it was Saturday you got the third feature. So for your twenty cents you got three full-length pictures, and a couple of little short newsreel, and cartoons and that sort of thing. Oh, they had serials, they had one Red Grange, I forgot what, it was Red Grange and something, and then, they had, it wasn't Hopalong Cassidy because that was after, that was TV, but, it was kind of a western just like the Hopalong Cassidy thing, you know, I mean, it went for weeks and weeks and weeks, to try and keep you coming back, you know. You'd see this one, and then, they'd leave you "to be continued," and then, they want you to come back next week.

SI: Were you in the Boy Scouts or anything like that?

RS: I was in the Boy Scouts, yes. I didn't go, I enjoyed Boy Scouts, but, I was not, I guess I just wasn't that interested in getting all the merit badges and stuff [you needed] to get. I got to be a First Class Scout, that was as far as I got.

SI: Did you go camping with the Boy Scouts?

RS: No, no, our Scout troop was in the Methodist Church and all of our activities were there in the Methodist Church in, I think, it was right off what we call the oval, which was right in the center of town. The library was on one little hill and the high school was over here and the Methodist Church was over here and the fire department was over here, so, we could go out and play, and as Boy Scouts we could go over and play in the oval, but, no, I never went camping. I went camping with my folks, not with the Boy Scouts.

SI: How important was the Methodist Church and religion in your family?

RS: Well, my dad was the superintendent of the Sunday Schools and he was also the, I guess, the trustee you would call him, in charge of the building. He took care of a lot of the things in the church. I guess, he was also involved in the, I think, they made a big expansion on the church while he was there and my mother was in the choir and played the piano. We kids went to Sunday School every Sunday and I would say it was quite important in my upbringing. I belonged to the youth group, you know, in the Methodist Church. Again, all of these things were social, you know. It wasn't just a religious type thing. I mean, it was a social group that we got together and we played cards and, much to the distress of some of the older Methodists who were opposed to dancing, but when I grew up, the majority of Methodists, they didn't really frown too much, we had dances and we played cards. But, I mean, some of the real older ones in the church they were always complaining about the kids going to hell playing cards and dancing.

SI: In the 1930s when Hitler was on the rise in Europe and things were going on Japan could you…

RS: To tell you the truth, as a kid, I wasn't even aware of it. I was aware of Father Coughlin, if you know him, well, he was on the radio and everybody was really upset about him. But Fascists and, really I have to say until I went to college, really almost up until Pearl Harbor, I wasn't really aware of how serious the Fascist movement in Europe was. I mean, I knew about, you know, back in Spain, that was the first thing I knew some Americans who would go on to serve. I guess, it would have been the Communist group, anyway, against the Fascists movement in Spain and, I guess, maybe I even thought they were a little nuts as I look back on it. I mean, you know, I just don't know why in the heck would anybody want to go over to Europe to fight somebody else's battle?

SI: Were those people from Nutley?

RS: Yes, Nutley. This was back, this was before '39, this was '36, '37, along in there, I think. It was right after Franco won, so, you can look that date up, I guess, and then, those people came back to Nutley and we knew them.

SI: What was Nutley like in terms of, was it middle class?

RS: Yes, it was basically commuters for New York City. A few people worked in Newark. We lived at Vreeland Avenue. Are you familiar with Nutley? Some people went to Newark. I don't

think very many went to Passaic, although we used to shop in Passaic once in a while. Most of the time we shopped in Newark. Very seldom, we went to New York. We used to go to the shows, you know, all of [the] radio stations had big time shows. They had the orchestras, you could go in. This is something the Boy Scouts and our church group and just a small group of people would go and you could get tickets and go to the big time names, like Jack Benny and all those people. You had to get tickets way in advance for a lot of them. A lot of those shows, you could just go to New York City and go over to the theater that they played in and they'd be glad to give you tickets so that they have an audience, so you'd clap, you know.

SI: Was going into the City a big part of growing up?

RS: Well, I would say we went to Newark more often than we went to New York City, but, yes, you know, we were more fortunate than a lot of people because my dad had a fairly decent job. I mean, even thought the pay wasn't, money was tight, but we still had more money than most people, let's put it that way. We weren't wealthy, but we were far better off, so we could even go out for dinner you know, like my mom would take my brother and me over to New York City and meet my dad, and then we'd go out for dinner, and then go in one of the programs. We went to all the museums and the art galleries and the zoo in New York City. So cultural entertainment was New York City. Oh, by the way, they used to have an Essex County Orchestra, which was a Works Project Program [WPA] to employ musicians that didn't have any work. As kids we were exposed to a lot of music. They would bring these orchestras right into the high school, or the elementary school, and put on a program, so we did get quite a bit of culture, too, through the school system as well. We had Perry pictures, if you know what they are.

SI: No.

RS: Okay. Well, Perry pictures are little, they're famous paintings, that come in a little painting, about like that, and you have a book, and then you would get so many of these little paintings, and then you would have to put them in this book, with description of what this painting was and the painter, and so forth. So, we were exposed to quite a bit of art through the Perry pictures. Walter Damrosch and the Symphony Orchestra from over, I think it was NBC, well, anyway, one of the radio companies, he had a program for kids. They just brought the radio into the classroom and we listened to the Walter Damrosch program. He was kind of like the Leonard Bernstein of your day. He was good.

SI: Now, when you were in high school, coming to the end high school, I assume that you always were going to go to college?

RS: Probably, yes. I was in what you would call college preparatory program in high school and I, more or less, had an idea of going to agricultural, see, I always worked with my uncle, my mother's sister's husband. They had a fruit farm just like, my grandfather had a fruit farm in Northeast, and, so I worked on the farm with him and both my mother and dad both came from a farm background, so I was quite taken with the idea of, you know, agriculture, along with the agriculture teacher from Nutley High. Now I didn't take Ag, he came after that, but he was always a strong advocate of Rutgers Ag School.

SI: Was he a Rutgers graduate?

RS: Yes.

SI: In the '30s, you mentioned the Essex County Orchestra was a result of the New Deal, did you see any other results of the New Deal?

RS: That park oval that I was telling you about, okay, the Works Project Administration put it in. It was kind of an old one, you know, dirt went down like this, and so, they put concrete risers and regular wooden benches for the football and the baseball. The football was, the high school sat here, and the football field was around this way from the high school, and they put those bleachers there, and then they had another set of bleachers that they built for the baseball field, which would be towards the library. I can't think of any. There were all kinds of projects that they carried on. I knew a few of the guys that went into the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was, young people that didn't have any work, and they also did a lot of things, not in Nutley as far as I know. But, there were that major Works Project right in the center of town.

JK: Both of your parents were Republican, correct?

RS: Yes.

JK: How did they feel about the New Deal legislation and Franklin Roosevelt in general?

RS: Well, my dad was opposed, obviously. He thought the government was interfering too much with things. My mother was, I think, a little less opposed. I think she was more sympathetic to the idea, well, these people need work, we better hire them. But my dad, it wasn't that he opposed those people having a living, it was just the idea that the government was spending money for something that he didn't think was a government responsibility.

SI: You chose Rutgers because of your teacher and your interest in agriculture?

RS: Well, I went to Rutgers because it was state university and if I went to the Ag School, my tuition was pretty reasonable, between what my dad could give me and what I could earn, I could go. Probably I couldn't (have afforded?) any of the other schools. By the way, I might tell you since I graduated from Rutgers, I've been with a lot of people from Harvard, Princeton, Yale and some of those schools which we kind of think, you know, Rutgers is the dog down at the bottom of it, I'll hold my education up against them, any day of the week. I was well educated and I'm shocked, sometimes, what some of these people would say, you know, when we were in the graduate level course. They act as if this was unheard of, you know, to write a paper or something.

SI: So, did you apply anywhere else?

RS: No. I was accepted, I forget when they figured your class standing, but, as soon as they had the class standing, I applied. Because I knew with my class standing, I didn't know that absolutely sure, that I would be accepted, but, I mean, I knew if I were accepted that would be it.

They would accept me on my high school record and I was accepted right away. I think at that time they were probably having trouble getting students.

SI: Do you think Nutley High School prepared you well for Rutgers?

RS: They prepared me very well, except for written English. I was in the donkey English class when I got to Rutgers. I passed. I didn't have to take any remedial math, or remedial history, or literature, we were well prepared, but, my writing skills, I had to take basic grammar, spelling and what have you until my wife got a hold of me. I don't know, the college didn't need that much (?), but, over the years I think I've gotten to be a fairly decent writer, because she was a graduate of the journalism school and super good grammarian and speller.

SI: What can you tell us about your first days at Rutgers? Tell me about the campus, freshman hazing?

RS: Well, my first experience, I guess, was at the diner down, I think, it was on George Street, anyway, well, the diner's right downtown. Three of us from Nutley were there. We had gone to high school together, we'd gone from elementary school together to high school, and we were sitting in there. Jimmy Young, I don't think he ever went to Rutgers, he was, I don't know, I think he was scheduled to go and he just never made it, but Johnny Thompson was the other fellow, and he was an Ag student. He and I were together from fourth grade in elementary school to graduation at Rutgers, but we were sitting in that diner, I can remember Jimmy Young telling a guy that served us pancakes that he had bear grease in his hair, but, it was typical I think. You had to go through all that week. We were there a week before the regular classes started and we had all these tests that we had to take and I found out that I had to take remedial English, and they took those pictures that I showed you, and generally classified us, you know, and gave us some briefings as to what we were going to do. Then I lived in the dorm for the first semester, and then second semester, I got a job. I joined the ΑΚΠ [Alpha Kappa Pi] Fraternity, which is no longer in existence. It became Alpha Sigma fraternity. I don't feel like I belong, you know. I mean, it's a little bit like Cook College. I feel I'm an Ag student, you know, I'm not Cook College, and that's the way I feel about that fraternity house. But, I joined the fraternity and then I had a job working in the fraternity house to help pay for my board and, as I say, I was probably a little, I was somewhat shy, I was probably a little nervous about it, initially. But I think at the university, you adapt pretty quick, with a nice, friendly group of people, you know what I mean, it wasn't clique-ish, even the fraternity people were, you know, like you hear in some schools where there's one elite group and another elite group and I don't think we had that at Rutgers. We all kind of learned to get along with one another very well.

SI: People have said that a lot of life at Rutgers revolved around the fraternities and that they were very important.

RS: Well, I think they were at that time. Although we had a lot of friends who, there were a lot of kids that lived at, where the heck was it, it was over at the Ag campus, but anyway, it was a place that they gave kids that didn't have a lot of money. Practically, you know, you can have this building and bedding and stuff and I don't know what they did for food, whether they came over, and we had a lot of commuters. The commuters you didn't, you know what I mean, they

were here and then gone, so you didn't have quite as much interaction with the commuters after we had class. I don't think anybody looked down their nose at commuters. I think everybody, you know, accepted everybody else. It didn't make any difference whether you are fraternity, or non-fraternity, or what have, you know. It was a very good experience for me. I think I learned to socialize a lot more. In high school I was kind of a loner.

SI: How did you actually become involved with your fraternity?

RS: Well, I was wrestling and the manager of the wrestling team was an AKΠ and he kept after me and I kept telling him, "Well I don't want to belong to a damn fraternity." Then, they invited me over. I learned to sing all of the college songs. It was great. I mean, it was really a good experience, and, again as I say, they were all just regular guys. They weren't, they didn't try to say, "Well, we're something special, we're AKΠ."

SI: It seems as though each house had special people, like a lot of football players being in the same house…

RS: Well, we had basketball players, lacrosse players, and some wrestlers. Al Sidar, his wife was still pretty big in NJC, or Douglass. She and my wife were, you know, classmates. Al Sidar, I think was a year, I think he might have been a year below me. He was a wrestler. Anyway, there were quite a few wrestlers and there was, I don't know whether he made All-American, but I think he was up to All-American Lacrosse. He was a class ahead of me, Ken Ross.

SI: I also get the impression that there was a split, physical and maybe social also, between the Ag school and the main campus.

RS: Well, we said that there was a coed college with a mile hyphen, and we were on the female side of the mile hyphen. In other words, NJC was here and the Ag school was here. So, my wife had to walk, she took all of her courses at the School of Journalism, which was at the main men's campus, and I had to go to Ag classes, she obviously had some classes at NJC and I had some classes at the men's college. All of my basic math, history, sociology, public speaking, those courses were taught in the men's campus, but, all of the Ag courses were over on the Ag campus, and I don't know, I mean, obviously the group that you're with, you're more social with, so I would have, from that standpoint, yes, sure. Our group of pomology, there were maybe twelve of us, I guess, we were probably closer as Ag students than some of the kids that were taking poultry, dairy farming, and that sort of thing. Or then, go across campus, we were at least all bumping into one another while we're here at a much closer relationship than, in other words, by the time we got to the men's campus, you got a lot more students. So, I'm sure there were many people in my Class of '43, I couldn't tell you that I ever knew them. We all had to go to chapel together, everybody in the Class of '43 had to go to chapel. I don't think we had to go everyday, but we did have to go, and we were all, all the S's sat together so I got to know all the S's pretty well.

SI: What do you remember about chapel? Do you remember any speakers?

RS: Yes, a couple of them were pretty good, Philips was his name, and he came from, I think it was Yale, but he was one of the memorable ones. Most of them you looked around and saw all these old birds looking at you, you know, in the chapel they had all of the deans that were Dutch Reformed ministers, you know, glaring down at you, you figured you had to behave. Yes, some of them were good.

SI: What about the ROTC?

RS: I was in that for two years. I didn't take the advanced ROTC. I'll tell you an interesting little story about my first year. I had all 1s, we didn't use As, we used 1-2-3-4, but, anyway, I had all the highest grades you could get, so I was excused from taking the exam. Well, when I got my report, I failed ROTC. I was flabbergasted. I said, "How can this happen?" I was excused from the exam, but, anyway, it was a clerical mistake. Well, that one sure shook me up, but, I guess that ROTC actually helped me when I got into the military. I think that was the reason that my sergeant asked me to go to OCS.

SI: Did you think in these first few years at Rutgers, while there was a war on in Europe we haven't been attacked yet, did you think we were going to get involved in the war at all?

RS: Well, I was one of the people who said we shouldn't get involved, you know. There was quite a big movement, "We should not be involved in a foreign war after World War I." I must say on December 7th, I changed my mind. I went and volunteered for the Marine Corps. My vision was such that I couldn't get in, the guys that went with me, they all got in. I guess I was lucky, none of them came back, but, no, I was really opposed to war and I tell you, I was really stupid about what was going on, really. I really was very, very naive. It wasn't until I got into the military and afterwards, you know, when you read the history of what happened, oh, my God, you know, I say, "Well, how can I have been so blind?" But, at the time, I just didn't think about it.

SI: Was there a debate going on, on campus?

RS: Oh, big time, big time. I would say, at that time, those who said, "Stay out of Europe" would be the majority. I really think it was a total reversal after Pearl Harbor. I mean, it was, I won't say ninety percent were for peace prior to that, I would say maybe seventy-five percent were vehemently opposed to war in Europe. Pearl Harbor, I would say, we probably shouldn't put figures on it, but I would say ninety-eight percent. That brought the United States, September 11th to you people, was what Pearl Harbor was in World War II. I mean, it just changed everybody, okay, and everyone not just to people in the military, but everyone in the United States was trying to do something to win the war. I mean, it was a complete reversal, as I say, from prior to that.

SI: Before Pearl Harbor did you know anyone who went to, Canada or England to join?

RS: No, I honestly don't. I can't remember, I had some friend in Nutley High School that went into the service. I don't think they went in out of … it was a place to get a job, you know, they

went because, "Okay, I can get thirty dollars a month," at that time that was what a private's pay was, plus food.

SI: Was the prewar draft, the draft before Pearl Harbor, was that any concern, or were you exempt?

RS: No, I wasn't. Even at, you know, I was allowed to finish my schooling by the draft board. They didn't draft me, then I was exempt because I was on the farm with my brother for a year, so I really didn't go in until the end of 1944, but I was allowed to complete. I went to the draft board and told them that I was on an accelerated program, and so, they allowed me to stay and finish. I shouldn't say I would have never worried about the draft board. I wasn't, because I really didn't give it any thought, you know what I mean? It was one of those things that if it happens, it happens. Prior to our entrance into the war, I don't think they drafted college kids at all. I don't think there was any question of my being drafted in '39, or '40, '41. They started drafting big time after '41.

SI: So, where were you and what were you doing when Pearl Harbor was attacked? When did you find out?

RS: Well, I was sitting at home with my girlfriend, shouldn't say that too loud now, but it came over the radio. It was a real shock, I mean, it was a real shock. We heard rumbles, you know, just prior to this thing. There was a lot of talk about the Japanese and the Americans and that they were negotiating, and so forth, and so forth. So, there was some, maybe very minor indication that there might be trouble. I don't think anyone could visualize, or have thought of the attack on Pearl Harbor, so, it was really upsetting, very upsetting.

SI: Do you remember in the days and weeks after the attack, were there any fears of a second attack on the mainland?

RS: Oh, yes, even in New York City, you know, here we are on the East Coast, I mean, it was irrational, obviously. I'm sure a lot of us on the East Coast thought at any moment we're going to get attacked, and, I guess, if you were on the West Coast that was even worse. I don't suppose we were, you know, terribly frightened, but it was considered a possibility.

SI: At Rutgers was there a rush of people to get in the service or …

RS: The fellows that I went with were from Nutley, they weren't from Rutgers. Five of us went to the Marine Corps recruiting station in Newark, and, as I say, I wear glasses and at that time the Marines were still on a real strict recruiting stuff, and, I mean, if you didn't have 20/20 vision, forget it. I was rejected. So, then I decided, well, if I can't be a Marine, I guess, I'll finish school. All of those guys went through the Solomons, the last one was in Okinawa, but it was terrible. They went up to the islands.

SI: Was there any reason that you had your mind set on going in the Marines?

RS: Oh, yes, typical kid …

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RS: The Army was kind of a dumping ground, actually, the Navy to some degree and the Marines were, that was goal, you know, that's the top of the heap. So, I thought, "Well, I'll join the Marines." When I couldn't get in, I said, "Well I'll guess I'll go to school." [laughter]

SI: Can you describe a little bit how the war changed Rutgers in terms of things being cancelled, people leaving?

RS: Horrible. Number one, we were in blackout, at night there were no lights. Obviously, between volunteers and draft, some draft boards, apparently, didn't care whether you were in school or not. I mean, if your number came up, you were up. So, we looked, you know, you could see the evaporation of students. I mean, we didn't have as many, and, obviously, I was on an accelerated program. I took most all of the subjects that I would normally have taken in the fall and in the winter at the men's college, while I was going to the Ag school for the Ag courses, I took all of those in the summer time. I think I went two summers, I can't remember exactly how that worked, but, anyway, by the time January 1943 came, I had completed all of my college work. But, there were a lot of social activities that were cancelled, although we still had our Military Ball and we still had the guest speaker program, which was always good. They always had very good people, like the one year they had Wendell Willkie. (?) I say the blackout was the main thing I remember that being, this is an aside, a kind of a funny little incident. My friend, Ernie Race, who was a fraternity brother, he had a friend in the fire department who knew when the blackout signal, when they rang it. When they sounded the sirens everybody had to get off the street, and if you had a house you had take in anybody that came to your door, you had to let anybody in because they had to get off the street. So, he would find out when they were going to have a blackout or, not a blackout, what did they call it? Drill, you know, maybe it was an air raid drill. But, anyway, we would go up to NJC, so when they sounded this thing we'd tear into the girls' dorm. The girls lived in houses. I don't know whether they still do or not, but they had rows of houses and they lived in the house and the living room was, you know, common ground. We didn't get in the bedrooms or anything. Well, finally the girls' college must have got smart because they made the ruling then, they had a kind of a common building right in the center of these things for all of the girls, so, if the siren went off, you had to go over to that building. Well, that cut all the fun out of it. [laughter]

JK: In between Pearl Harbor and when you graduated, were you involved in any of the war efforts on the home front?

RS: Yes, you know, we all collected metal and we had to live by the rationing board, and I don't know, but I donated some money for war bonds, too. I can't remember. I really have trouble thinking about that far, to tell you the truth, but I do know that we were all, we were all involved, I mean, everybody, even little kids. I mean, it was quite a unique situation. I can't ever remember where everybody came together. Now, the Depression, people came together, too, you know, people helped one another a great deal in the Depression, but it wasn't quite the same. It didn't have necessity, I guess was the closest word I can think of, in other words, in World War II it seemed there was a necessity for everybody to do as much as they possibly could do

themselves. I mean, ladies were rolling up bandages and making all kinds of things. As you know, a lot of women took jobs in factories, which was, you know, with the exception of sewing and that kind of thing, back then women didn't work in a factory. But, they went into the munitions factories, they went into the, you know, military hardware factories to help fill up the places where the men left for war. There weren't replacement men.

SI: In between leaving Rutgers and going to the service …

RS: My brother and I had a farm in central New York and I was exempt for one year, and then I was drafted. So, I went on the farm in January of 1943 and I finished all of 1943 on a farm and practically all of 1944, I was officially drafted, I think, like in October of '44, but, I was actually inducted in December of 1944.

SI: So, was this a farm you were just working on or was it …

RS: No, my brother and I owned this farm.

SI: Oh, you owned the farm. Okay. What did you produce on the farm?

RS: Well, it was a dairy farm. I was a pomology major, but we ended up on a dairy farm.

SI: How did that come about?

RS: Well, my brother was also interested in farming. Now, he didn't go on to college, he was a welder, and, really, I don't know how the whole thing did end up that we ended up there. He was telling me, he said, "Well, I'd like to farm with you." Well, I said, "Well, I don't know. It's pretty tough to buy a fruit farm." So, it was partly economics, the dairy farm was within our financial being of borrowing the money, primarily borrowing the money. So, that's where we started our married life and she [daughter] was born when we were on the farm.

SI: Were you producing for local consumption or …

RS: New York City. Our milk went to Edmonton, New York, and then it was loaded up, back in those days, on railroad cars and sent down to the City, but it was fluid milk, I mean, it was for bottling. Some of the milk was for butter and cheese. Our dairy produced milk for bottling.

SI: Did you have any other employees?

RS: No, just my brother, well, and a neighbor. We exchanged help for major jobs like silo filling and that we would help. There were four farmers, we would help fill all four silos, they would help out, and maple syrup time we worked with two other farmers, tap the trees and boil sap. No, we didn't have any, there was no hired help.

SI: Can you tell us about the process of getting into the military, what your induction was like, getting classified?

RS: Well, I started as I told you in October, I think it was, I can't remember the date, but it was probably late October. I had to go to Albany, New York and they put me through physical tests and psychological tests, and this stuff, and then I was classified 1-A, and I was in. Technically, I was in the Army, but I didn't go officially until December. Then, I went back to Albany, and then, now it was, I guess, that was military doctors at that first one. The first one was a preliminary examination. Then I went in December and, at that point, I was sworn into the United States Army. Then we were taken to Fort Dix, and then we went through the typical replacement center testing and issuing of clothing, and so forth. I don't know whether I wrote and told you about the first day. Coming from the farm I knew how take the slab off bacon. So, I got KP and a master sergeant, who was in charge of the kitchen, he says, "Anybody know how to take slab off bacon?" I said, "I do." "Okay." Well, my God, I had a mountain, because this was to feed the replacements, you know, we were like three thousand guys there. Well, I had to cut that stuff all night long. I never saw so much bacon in my life, learned the first rule in the Army, "you never volunteer for anything." So, I went through all of the tests and they qualified me as an infantryman and I was sent then to Camp Croft, South Carolina, and that's where I took my basic training, and I was made a squad leader, and I think, primarily, because I had ROTC. I think they said, "Well, this guy knows a little more than the rest of them," that way, so I was a squad leader, and after the ten weeks of training, I had to tell you one more story. You probably get bored stiff with these stories. But we were out for the final thing, you go out on a forced hike, and then you're in a field for ten days, and then you come back. While we were out there, oh, it was pitch black, and the guys always liked me because I, you know, you can't use a compass like this to go over there, you got to have something doing that. I knew the stars so I was, they liked me. Well, there were no stars, and it was pitch black and I told them, I said, "Okay, well, the only thing we can do if we don't want to get lost," I said, "You grab a hold of my belt, the next guy grab a hold," and I said to them, "All of you got a hold and don't let go, because," I said, "It's dark enough, somebody could get really lost out here." I said, "If we all get lost together, they're going to find us." We stepped on a skunk and he got everyone of us. Oh, my God, did we stink. That was terrible, you know, no change of clothes, I mean, we had it for the rest of the time. Well, now, I'll finish my story. Here we are on a forced march back to camp, and, my God, now by this time, they'd been putting us through the whole works, I mean, people, and we were in relatively good shape, but we were tired. Well, we got within, oh, you could see our campground, and the sergeant comes up and he says, "Right shoulder, arms! Pull those chins in," and then, just then, the regimental band started, and do you believe it, those guys as tired as we were, we marched into that camp. I mean, boy, that band just, that was really, oh, and then they had a big party for us. Now we were soldiers, because we passed our basic training, but I will never forget that band. I mean, you're kind of almost dragging, you know, and then all of sudden, now you're standing up and parading, you parade march right into the camp. That's when my master sergeant, right after that, gave, they were sending the trainees out to various units, and my master sergeant came to me and he said, "Have you applied to OCS?" And I say, "I haven't applied for anything." I told him, "I'm just waiting." He said, "Well," now, he was a tough old bird, anyway, he says, "You will apply." I said, "Well, if you say so." So, I applied, and then I had to go through all this physical stuff again, you know what I mean? They'd take you through the psychological and physical exams and, so then I went to Fort Benning, Georgia, which is the infantry training school, and also, right next door is the parachute school. Boy, if you didn't think that was tough. Those parachute guys gave us hell. You know, if we got in a fight, that was the end of it. So, those guys just, they just made life miserable for

anybody who was in infantry OCS, not on base, but, I mean, when you're off base. … So, I went to Fort Benning and went through the training and got my commission. I guess, I was commissioned in August of '45. I got done in the spring of '45, when I went to OCS, and I graduated from OCS in '45, and then I had a couple of weeks off, ten days actually, ten days furlough at home, and I came back to Nutley, because my wife was living with her mother at that time in Ridgewood, and she and Pam came over to Nutley and we spent ten days in Nutley, and then I was stationed in Camp Blanding, Florida. … We had an old Oldsmobile and all the tires were bad. I went to the Nutley rationing board and they would give me the certificate to get tires, but no garage had that size tire. So, I had to start off, well, and those had inner tubes, not like today's tires. Well, we'd go down the road, I think we had thirteen flat tires between Nutley and Camp Blanding, Florida, but we made it, and we were in Middleburg, Florida. It was a little, it was back in those old days they had, instead of motels, they had cabins, that was a kind of a common little tourist thing, the equivalent of a motel today. Well, this guy had just taken these cabins and converted them to (rattle?) units for the military. So, fortunately, he had one, and, so we rented one of these, which was about, oh, five miles from the camp itself. … I was initially a platoon leader, I think it was Company C, but maybe it was Company D, but I can't remember now, but, anyway, I was made a platoon leader, and then the battalion commander, who was a colonel, came up to me one day and he said, "Would you be the company commander of this company?" Now, what do you say? So, I got to be the company commander of this training company, and I was sitting at my desk, this was October, (?) but anyway, on of those last days in October. I was the officer of the day, but you were working at night, and I'm sorting through some of the papers and, holy smokes, there's my name, and it says, "Report to Fort Holabird, Maryland, November 1st." Well, there was no possible way I could get from Florida to Maryland, so I was really concerned about this. When I went to the rationing board, I asked to have tires. I said, "This car, I had thirteen flat tires getting here." "Oh, we'll give you three tires." Oh, wonderful, because I had gone to the gas station and the guy had written up the thing, that all five tires, there weren't any of them that were labeled to be used as far as he was concerned. These guys were a bunch of old farmers. They said, "Well we'll give three tires." So, I said to them, "Well, that's a little bit like putting three shoes on a horse, isn't it?" "Well, son, you got a point, but we only give three tires." So, I got three tires and told the garage guy to change them for me. I said, "You know more about it then I do, pick the best of the two, one for the spare." Well, we got to Fayetteville, was it North Carolina? First, South Carolina, anyway Fayetteville, and I had a flat tire, pulled in a Mobil station and I told the guy, I said, "Boy, I've been changing these damned tires, every (?)." "Well, you can get a new tire, you got orders don't you?" I said, "I sure do, and I'm way late." So, he said, "Well, don't go anywhere, give me a minute." So, he went in, I don't know, to a telephone, the guy comes up in a taxicab. Apparently, the chairman of the rationing board was also the owner of the taxi company, so he came up and told me to jump in here, "Lieutenant," he says, "we just got time. I told the girls to write it up," he says, "we'll go down and get it." So he tears me back down to the downtown part of Fayetteville, and they gave me the papers, and, in the meantime, the fellow in the garage was putting the tire on because he knew that we were going to get the paper work. So, now we have four brand new tires to ride on. So we made it into Baltimore that night, maybe, it was the next day, anyway, it was about seven o'clock at night. I figured, "Well, I got to report right in, I'm already like three days late," and they had no idea that I was coming, none whatever. The sergeant that was sitting at the desk, he said, " Well, I can't find your name anyplace." He said, "Why don't you come back tomorrow morning and we'll straighten it up?" I said, "That's fine

with me, just so long as you write down that I was here." He says, "I got you," he said, "You don't have to worry. We've got you." He said, "I don't think anybody knows you're coming." It took them, well, it takes a while anyway, just the processing. See, they have to clear you for top-secret work before they can really start the training, so I killed about two or three weeks sitting around waiting for the clearing. They had my paper work saying that I was supposed to be there, but it wasn't there. It took them about four days to find out that I was really supposed to be there. So that was another funny little incident that happened in the course of things. Then we went through Counter-Intelligence Corps School. We learned how to break in. We used to break into the Coke machines and take a dollar's worth of nickels. At those times they didn't have machines that made change. You'd break in and take a dollar's worth of change and leave a dollar bill. I don't suppose by the time we were there the coke people, I mean, it probably had happened right along, so it probably wasn't any surprise, but we always thought that was a pretty good thing.

SI: The Counter-Intelligence Corps training was there?

RS: Yes. Counter-Intelligence Corps training was at Fort Holabird, Maryland, and you had to go through, well, a lot of it was like any military training, you had to go through some of the physical, you know, disarming and jujitsu and that kind of stuff. But, they taught you how to break in and enter, without leaving any evidence that you broke in, and, surprisingly, you get trained. You know, like if you came in here, the first thing you'd have to do is measure all of these so that when you left every item would have been right back in the exact position that it was in, so that if anybody looked they would not have known that you were there. So, breaking and entering was one of the courses, and then we had to do surveillance. They would assign one person to be, you didn't know was going to be assigned, but then they would say, "Now, that's the person," and then you would have to go with the idea that that person shouldn't be able to detect you, and all this. … Well, it was all intelligence-type training. Police work, they had a lot of former policemen that were the instructors. … One of the things about Holabird that I remember, it was the worst camp for officers' club in the world. It was a Signal Corps; this was the signal corps headquarters. It was like Fort Benning for the infantry. They'd made, now this is the only camp that I was ever in where they made transient officers, meaning those officers that were coming in and out, not eligible for the main officers' club. We weren't allowed. They had a darn old Quonset hut, with beat up old furniture and a Wurlitzer Organ, and I paid more officers' club dues at Holabird, than I paid anywhere else including Manila, and I was entitled to go to. I mean, it isn't the one the generals go to, the one in Manila, you know, that officers' club was really big time. Well, I paid less money, when in the Philippines, for the officers' club, than at Holabird where we had this rotten, I mean, really rotten club, and once we finished training, we decided we were entitled on our last night, to go to the officers' club. We had a guy, we called him "the big Swede" and he was about like this. He came from Minnesota. So, he walks up to the door and the officer looks at the door, said, "You boys can't come in here. This is only for resident officers." Big Swede says to him, he says, "Well, son, you either are going to let us in or we're going to come in," so he says, "Now, which way do you want it, the easy way or the hard way?" Well, I guess, the guy had good enough sense to see that this was just going to be an all out war if he didn't let him in. So he let us in, and everything went nice, I mean, nobody complained. … Well, then, some got a little drunk, … boy, I thought sure we were dead in the water, because they started calling around and making remarks to some of the colonels and high

rank. But we got out of there in fairly good order, but, oh, boy, I sat down, that whole night I kept thinking, oh, boy, here comes the military police, … but when I got on the troop train I said, "Well, we're safe now. They're not going to come after us." So, we got on the troop train and we were headed for Fort Lewis, Washington, that was our departure point to go to Japan. … We had a big layover in Chicago, but, I didn't do anything special there, but, when we got on the train, I think it was a Northern Pacific, but, anyway one of those trains, that go out of Chicago across, kind of, the northern part of the United States. We got to Bismarck, North Dakota, at four o'clock in the morning, and back then these were steam engines, you know, because they had to be serviced. They had to get water and all this kind of stuff, and so, the troop master came in and said, "Well, boys you can go into the railroad station and local people have something for you." This is at four o'clock in the morning. We walked in and this station was, oh, much bigger than this house, and it was, it had tables lined up the whole length of this station. They had turkey, they had ham, they had roast beef, they had doughnuts, they had cake, they had, you name it, they had it, and they said they had never missed a troop train that came through Bismarck, and again, the big Swede, typical, we're having all this wonderful food and he says, "Well," he says, "the thing wrong with this is that I didn't have a shot of whiskey to go with it," and the guy that was standing over to the side, one of the civilian people, said, "Well, I guess they won't close me down. Come on with me," and he took us up to the tavern and gave, obviously it wasn't the whole troop train didn't go up, but the guys that were collected in that little group when he said, "Come with me," there's maybe twenty of us, and pours a shot glass up for everybody. Says, "Okay, boys, now you've had your shot of whiskey," he said, "we'd better get back so you can get on the train." Well, I thought that was wonderful, those people. We got on to Fort [Lewis], Washington, and, I guess, we were a couple of days there, and we were all ready to board the troop ship, as a matter-of-fact, we were on, we already had boarded, and then the orders came to disembark, and I couldn't figure out, "Well, now what?" So, we all got down onto the wharf, and they got us by rank, you know, by units and got us all lined up, and we all had to take eight sulfa pills. Now, those pills were about like that and then you had to go through this line, take the pills and take a slug of water out of your canteen, and then the guy looked in your mouth to make sure that you'd swallowed. Well, come to find out, somebody had come down with meningitis. Now, why they couldn't give us those pills on the boat, that I don't know, but we all had to get off. Well, then we got back on; it was a rather uneventful trip to Japan. I was made, … actually there were people that were going to really take care of, they made me mess officer, just for something to do, and I was at this kind of general meeting. … This was an Army transport ship, so, the troops were under Army, the transport command. The ship itself was operated by the Navy. So you really had kind of two separate things, but anyway, so I was with the Army transport people. Now they'd done this for, you know, years and, they're smoking cigars and pipes and we're down in this mess hall, and just going out into the Puget Sound, the ship really rolled. I mean, it would go up like this, and then it would come down and the salt and pepper shakers, and the sugar bowl and stuff were flying around and, man, the smoke is getting to me, I didn't smoke at that time. I don't smoke now, but I did smoke at one time. So, man, I said, "If this meeting lasts too much longer I'm going to be sick," because it was really getting to me, … but I was able to get upside and that was the only early event for me. The only other event we had, one of the Navy ships that was out at sea had a sailor that was sick and they didn't have a doctor. They had a corpsman, but they didn't have a doctor, so they had to transfer this kid from the Navy ship to our troop transport which had a hospital, the whole thing. So, anyway, to do this, our ship went around the Navy ship, dumping oil out the back end,

made like a great, huge circle, and then it got to the outside of this circle that they had made, and then they lowered a small boat, when I say a small boat, it was a fairly good sized boat, but, I think there were twelve men in it, I think all of these were the Navy personnel from our ship. I think, there were twelve people in this boat, and they lowered it down, and they have got to do the same thing with the other boat, but, anyway, these two little boats come right out into kind of halfway, in between the ships, and we could see them. They picked up this kid that was sick. He was in a stretcher, they picked him up over their heads like this, and then they just transferred him over on the one boat, to ours, and they got him over and they brought him up. About two hours after … they had done this, they said, "Well, we want to give you a report, Seaman So and So, is fine. He had appendicitis and, that we've removed his appendix." That was pretty neat, but other than that, God, it was a terrible time, you know, just dull, riding out there, the ocean is flatter than a pancake, or, at least, when we were there it was, and we got to Yokohama, Japan, and then I was stationed in the general headquarters in Tokyo, which was right across from the Emperor's. Counter-Intelligence Corps building was here, and the Emperor's moat was right here, and I bought a bamboo pole and silk fishing thread and a hook and I caught goldfish. My God, they had goldfish like this in the Emperor's moat. I didn't keep any. I fished them out and threw them back, but I caught fish in the Emperor's moat. Oh, I went around Japan. Japan was really bombed, I mean, they had a lot of wood buildings and they firebombed them. I mean, well, the Daichi building, which is MacArthur's headquarters, was a big concrete, steel building that was still intact, and pretty good shape. The house that we had was a stone building so that was in good shape. Then, they finally got around to us, saying what we were going to do. I was in Japan, I think about a month, then they assigned those bigger fellows in the picture and myself to, well, one ended up in Okinawa, but we were to go to the Philippines, or Okinawa, and this one guy, all I can remember is his first name now, George. He was a great blues man. Boy, did he love his layover in Chicago. I think he meant to hit every blues place in Chicago. Well, he said, he didn't mind going, Okinawa apparently was going to be a one man isolated situation, so, nobody really wanted it, but he said, "Okay, give me a record player and a blues collection and I'll do it." So, they did. They gave him one of those battery, I guess maybe it was windup, but anyway, an old Victrola record player. So, we dropped him off in Okinawa, and then we went on to the Philippines, and when I got to the Philippines, the fellow that was in charge of the San Fernando, Pampanga, now there's two San Fernandos in the Philippines, one of the way north, it's called San Fernando, San Fernando, and then, where I was is in the central Philippines, well, he was leaving, the commanding officer was leaving, so they assigned me as the commanding officer. That was real good, that was a cushy deal, because I forget how many men I had with me, eight, nine, and then we had a civilian staff of five. But, basically, most of all the house care staff was done by the Filipinos. My secretarial work was all done by a Filipino who was my secretary, and because we were so few, when they go down to the supply area to get our stuff, the guy would say, "Well, could you use a couple of steaks?" or, "We got a turkey." So, we got all kinds of, you know, there wasn't enough for one of the bigger units, but we were so small, "hey you guys could probably use this." So, we really, my colonel said, "Jesus, you live better than I do." That and trading off C rations for local, well, all the local chickens were terrible, but, we thought they were better than C rations. They were all these fighting cock-type chicken, tough, oh, boy, they were tough. You'd boil them and boil them and boil them, and then … We were near Clark Air Force base, which at that time was Army, I mean, there was no Air Force then. Well, the doctors found that we had jeeps. I actually had a car, a 1939, 1940 Plymouth, it was a military, you know, military [vehicle]. We had jeeps, and then we had trucks, a couple of

trucks, but we didn't need them all the time, so my boys were always trading the doctors for medicinal alcohol for the use of the jeep. Now, medicinal alcohol was colored blue so we wouldn't drink it. Well, can't remember which one was a "sneaky Pete" or a "salty dog," but one was pineapple juice mixed with this stuff, which turned out green, and the other was grapefruit juice mixed with this stuff, which turned out green, too. I mean, it was horrible looking stuff, but, as I told them, I'd rather they drink that than any of the local, you know, wood alcohol was bad. I mean, a lot of the stuff that the natives were selling was really wood alcohol. I told them, "Don't drink." I said if you, plus the fact, it's long enough now, I guess it won't make any difference. We had what was called confidential funds. I could go to any unit paymaster and say, "I need up to ten thousand dollars," and he had to give it to me, no question. I mean, he couldn't say, "Well, what are you going to use it for?" or, "No, I can't give you that much," or what have you. I never obviously, never got ten thousand dollars, but I did have to entertain. We had five provinces that I was in charge of checking, so, we entertained the governors of these provinces, and so we had some liquor, you know. I got confidential funds and bought good either Australian or American, liquor and beer. We got some rations. We had some beer rations from the Army, but I used to tell the guys, I said, "You know I don't want you just drinking it up like it was soda water, or anything, but if you want to drink once in a while you can help yourself to that reserve." But, we had to pay a few of our informants. We actually paid them for their information, but, most of the stuff that was in that folder was collected just by cooperative Filipinos, you know what I mean, most of them. We had one, he didn't care. He would have worked without pay, but he worked without pay, but he worked. He was a stringer for the *New York Times* and he wasn't getting paid. He only got paid for what he sent in, you know, and I knew he was having a hard time so I just told him, I said, "Well, look, you're one of the better informants that we have." I mean, he was more objective, number one, because civilians have a bad tendency to exaggerate stuff, so, we paid him. We paid some banker in Cabanatuan just so he'd keep us somewhat informed about the economic situation, but most of the other people were unpaid. I got two interesting little stories and I'll quit. Now, this was, I'm a second lieutenant, so I'm pretty low down on the totem pole. This came from general headquarters, that we are to investigate the security of Clark Air Force Base. Well, how many ranks are above me, you know, I can't go muscling around over there at Clark Air Force Base, but those were my orders, and why they sent us (ground forces), I don't know. The Air Force had CIC, and why they didn't say, "we'll send in a unit of Air Force people," I don't know, but here we are, ground forces going into Air Force and if you know military protocol, I'm the guy that could be left hanging high and dry when this thing goes all bust. But I had two border patrolmen who were pretty good and I told them, I said, "Well, I'm going over there and talk to the military police commandant and find out and I'll drop hints," and I dropped big hints. I went over there and said, "Well, how's your security?" Now, if some jackass, he didn't know my rank because we didn't wear them, but if some guy comes and shows you his credentials as a Counter-Intelligence Corps and he starts asking you about your security, if you got any brains at all you're going to think something has got to be up. But this guy, I don't know, all right I kept going and I wouldn't say that he might have a problem, or that he would look in very carefully, or anything. I guess I got to go and start the next step. So, I went back and I told these two guys, I said, "Well, now you be as careful as you can, but, you got to be thorough because no matter how this one turns out we're the guys that could get stuck." They said, "Okay, Lieutenant, we know." So, they went over. They'd have brought an airplane back, honest to God, they'd have brought an airplane back if they could have carried it. They got in; they got ammunition, they

got bombs, they got smoke bombs, they had, oh, God, I don't know. They had a little trailer behind this truck, and they had the truck and the trailer clear full of stuff. Well, now what do you do? Well, I wrote up the report. You can't call it "secure." They had one guy, this compound was a mile on each side, four miles, they had one man walking one mile on this fence, and another, so they had, you know, four guys watching this thing and the Filipinos had cut millions of holes in the fence, that they were guarding.

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

SI: This continues an interview with Mr. Richard M. Snethen on June 29, 2003, in Springville, New York, with Shaun Illingworth and Jared Kosch. Please continue.

RS: So, anyway, they brought all the stuff back and I wrote up the official report that we had, of what we had collected, and what we had found, and I'm still scared to death because I figured, well, when the ground forces relayed this to the Air Force and, you know? But nothing seemed to happen and, finally, word came down that they had wanted us to discontinue and forget the investigation. Boy, did I take a big sigh of relief with that, and now we got all this "evidence," that nobody knows what to do with. So one thing we did, we went out on our boat down there, we shot up all the .30 caliber ammunition and we dumped over some bombs, and, in the meantime, my two agents that were involved with this said they would help get rid of some of the stuff. Well, I didn't have any idea what they were going to do. Well, all of a sudden, this Filipino constabulary was just down the road from our post, all of a sudden, you'd have thought World War II had started all over again. My God, gunfire's going off and everything. So, I called the constabulary on the phone and I said, "What's going on down there?" "Oh," the guy said, "We're being invaded by the Hukbalahap." I said, "My God, that just doesn't seem possible." I said, "Okay." So, I told my boys, I said, "Well, I better go down there and find out what's really going on before we call up headquarters and tell them that we got troubles." So, I said, "Well, you turn on all the lights," and I said, "For God's sake, don't shoot anybody unless you're absolutely certain they're going to shoot at you." I said, "Something isn't right about this." … I said, "So, it might just be somebody off the street come here." So, I said, "Just don't," I said, "Make sure you're protected," and I said, "You have my authorization to shoot if you think you're going to be shot at." Well, I got in a jeep and I went down, God, smoke all over the place, and I said, "Judas priest, I guess he's right," but there was no gunfire coming this way, it was all over here. So, I went down and, I yelled, "Hold your fire, I'm coming in." So, they quit shooting and I went down and the commandant was there and I said to him, "Where are these Hukbalahap?" "Oh," he said, "We've killed twenty of them and I think they've retreated." "Well," I said, "Let me see the twenty." Well, he said, "Well, they're out there." Well, I never did see these twenty, and there weren't twenty, actually. So, anyway I told them, I said, "Well, I don't know where all the smoke came from and I don't know, I don't think there are that many Hukbalahaps around." I said, "I don't think you really have anything more to worry about, that calmed things down a little bit." So, I went back and, come to find out, my two border control agents that were just about to go home had decided they'd have a little fun. So they had taken a jeep and all these smoke bombs that we had confiscated from Clark Air Force Base, and they just rode down the road, throwing them on both sides of the road for about two miles, and these idiots started shooting. They thought they were being invaded, so they immediately started to shoot, and once they started to shoot, nobody knew who they were shooting at. It's a wonder they

didn't kill some civilians. Nobody, actually, nobody got killed. Well, I had to write it up and I told those guys, I said, "Geez, I hope we don't get burned on this," because I didn't say "who," I said, "There were smoke bombs released in the air and the Philippine Constabulary considered it to be an invasion." You should have seen the report the Philippine Constabulary sent about this thing. "There were a thousand Hukbalahap involved, twenty of whom were killed." You know, it was just, and this is why I say a lot of the Filipinos they could embellish, that they're really out of this world. Then, you have my story about my history where, just before I came home, I had to give a speech about the Hukbalahap, and now was the lowest rank, this was actually the preliminary to forming a counter intelligence [force], not CIC, but the CIA, in Langley, Virginia. Well, this was the beginning, they hadn't formed it yet. You see, you still have military intelligence, and the State Department intelligence, and none of them were working, you know, nobody had told the other side what they were doing. So this whole thing was to develop a central intelligence agency. Now the lowest rank that was going to be there was a major, other than the people that were presenting, like some of us, so, I prepared this thing and I didn't put the, by the way, I didn't put "secret" on it. That was my colonel's doing. I told them, you know, it could have been confidential, it would have been fine, but he put secret on the thing. Technically, I guess, it's clear by this time, but it was way over classified. But, to make a long story short, I got down there and now, I can't remember my speech professor's name, but he was a character, and one of the things he always used to get on me about was my "urinal stance." He said, "You're not at a urinal, get out of that urinal stance," and I said, "Okay," and then, "Don't wear your glasses when you're giving a speech." But I can't see clearly across the room if I don't have my glasses on. But following the good prof's orders, I put my glasses in my case, and I went through my presentation and I said, "Well, now if anybody had a question I'll try to answer it for you," and this guy stood up and was way in the back of the room, all I could see was silver, and so, I said, "Oh, God, he's probably a colonel." So, I addressed him as colonel. So, I said, "Well, Colonel," I said, "this is what I found." Well, we chatted back and forth a little bit, and then, at the end of the meeting, he comes up to the podium, by God, he's a one star general. I've been calling him Colonel, you know, all along. He never mentioned it. He just came up and he said, "Lieutenant, I want to tell you I was over here in 1917 and what you're telling me is the same thing I had in 1917." So, that was the way I ended my career, and, as I say, he was more interested in the Hukbalahap situation than rank. Now he told, now I don't know whether this is true or not, but this is the story he told me. He said, "Do you know why the Army had a .45 caliber pistol as the normal issue?" I said, "No, I guess I don't." He said, "Well," he said, "I'll tell you. The Zulus," and they're still causing trouble down there in Mindanao, at the southernmost island in the Philippines. He said, "The Zulus would bind themselves up with these vines, and then get high on some one of their drugs," and he said, "A regular rifle, or a .38, would go right through them, and didn't stop them at all," he said, "they'd keep right on coming. That's when they got the .45, because a .45 is such a slow, the projectile moved so slow, when it hit, It'd knock them down." Now, whether that's true or not, I don't know, but that's the story he told me at that meeting. He was impressed that things were practically the same, in terms of these small bands of insurrectionists, I'd guess you'd call them. In some ways, I'd be a Hukbalahap, if I were one of those peasants, it's a feudal system; bad, big time in the Philippines. Most of the people that owned all the land live in Manila, and then they farm out these barrios. They have a barrio lieutenant, who is in charge, and all of the people work during the rice season. They plant rice and that all goes to the landlord, and then they give them, during the dry season, they can grow a few beans and they do get a little rice for food, but,

it's really a bad situation. So, if somebody said to me, "I'll give you a water buffalo and a piece of land if you want to join my group," I probably would join. You know, you can see why those people would do that. I mean, they're absolutely poverty stricken. Well, when I got ready to come home I was visualizing another big, old, long boat trip, and so I saw my commanding officer, the colonel, I said, "God, I wished I didn't have to go home by boat." He said, "Well, I'll try to get you a flight home on a airplane." So, he wrote that letter down there that said our lives would be in danger if we went on a boat. So, we were able to fly home. So, we went to Kwajalein, and when we landed at Kwajalein, it was dark, and we were sitting in a Quonset hut eating breakfast and you looked out at the end of the runway. Here are all the tails of these airplanes sticking up out of the water. So, I said to the guy that was in charge of the mess hall, I said, "Boy, things must have been tough around here in World War II." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, look at all those planes." He said, "They didn't come from World War II," he says, "This runway is a half a mile too short." He said, "The plane would have to go off the end of the runway and hope to get the lift in the drop between the cliff and the ocean." Well, I wished I hadn't known that, but, anyway, we went off and, well, I tell you, we just hovered over that water for, it seemed like forever. I mean, the plane went just like that, and then the plane kind of steadied, but it didn't go up. I mean, it just kind of glided, and then, gradually, we took, we got up here. We got to Hawaii, and we were on standby so that we couldn't do anything. We had to stay … right at the hangar because they were waiting for a tailwind. At that point in time, we still had propeller driven planes, and they couldn't make California unless they had a tailwind, so we were there and, as I say, Honolulu made a very bad [layover], they came and told us we have two hours, "You can go downtown in Honolulu for two hours, but you have got to be back here because we may get the wind we're looking for." Where I was in Honolulu was really a despicable place as far as I'm concerned. Nothing but whores on the road and tattoo parlors. I don't know whether it's still that way or not, but I was glad to get back on the base, to tell you the truth, and finally we got on the plane and I remember when we got out on the Pacific Ocean someplace, the captain of the plane came on and said, "We've reached the point of no return," meaning we either made California or we went in the drink. Fortunately, we made it.

JK: The trip from the Philippines, was that the first time you were ever on a plane before?

RS: No. I'd been on planes. I flew from Columbus, Georgia, to New York when I got out of the, when I finished my Officer Candidate School, that was on a civilian flight from Columbus, Georgia. This was on a military transport, they didn't have seats. I mean, you just had benches and, but it was still a lot better than the boat. The boat was, that was thirteen days we were out on the boat, and we flew home and, well, actual flying time was probably, maybe, thirty-six hours or something like that. As we went from the Philippines to Kwajalein, and we left in daylight and we were in there, I'd say, in the middle of the night sometime, four. We arrived there at four o'clock in the morning, and then, Kwajalein to Hawaii had to be just about as long, and the long part was from Honolulu to California, that was the longest of the trip. Well, gentlemen, if you have any other questions you'd like to ask me, I'll be glad to try to answer them.

SI: Just some general questions about your job in the Philippines. It seems like you had a wide range of responsibilities, investigating a lot of different …

RS: The main one was to find out the economic system in these five provinces, which varied from very rural rice production, to mahogany lumbering, to fairly urban conditions in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija. No even though Manila, I had the province that Manila was in, we had agents in Manila, I didn't have to cover the city itself. That was handled by our unit that was assigned just to Manila, but there were all kinds, you know, varied businesses in the urban parts. Most of it was rural, and, so we had to report on the economic conditions, and then we also had to report on the, see, when MacArthur left the Philippines, now General MacArthur was a tin god to the Filipinos, If he said, "Squat," they squat. Had only he had said, "All of you will turn in your weapons," before he left to go to Japan, they would have turned them in, I'm sure, but he didn't do that, so we had the Hukbalahap, which was a Communist associated group, who were theoretically, what do they call the fighters that were, like the French Freedom fighter, you know?

SI: Resistance?

RS: Yes. So, they were one of those groups. Then, there were the USAFE, which was called the United States Armed Forces of the Pacific, and they really were, they did more really than the Hukbalahap, but they were still a resistance group at that time. There were a couple of other ones, I can't recall their names, but now all of these groups just had all their weapons, so they just became burglars, you know, thieves. They'd come into town and say, "well, to protect you we need so many bags of rice, and so many chickens" and basically, there wasn't that much money for them to steal, but they would get, and it didn't really make much difference which one, not one. As a matter-of-fact, it didn't make difference. (?) There was a little sawmill barrio occupied by the Hukbalahap at night and by the Philippine Constabulary in the daytime, and I honestly can't say the Philippine Constabulary were anything better then. I mean, technically, they were supposedly the police force of the island, but I mean, it was terrible what they did to those people. Each side was taking what they wanted from them. So, that was one of the jobs. This is an aside, because you'd be interested in this one. The Philippine Army finally decided they had to do something. Now, Igorots are from the northernmost part of Luzon Island, they were headhunters. I mean, they're the people that shrunk the heads down. Well, … they had a unit of these guys in the Philippine Army, and they brought these guys in. I mean, they didn't just stop one. When the Hukbalahap retreated, … you know, the Philippine Constabulary would come in during the daytime and get to the edge of the woods, and if the Hukbalahap were in the woods that was the end of it, and, at night, it was vice versa. The Hukbalahaps came in and they didn't chase the Constabulary, except down the road. Well, the Igorots, they went right out into the woods after them. I mean, that stopped, that stopped the Hukbalahap, and once the Hukbalahaps were stopped, then the Constabulary had no reason to come back. Well, I was up there, and there was an American, who was in charge of the sawmill, logging operation, and he had been in 1917, he was a soldier, and he stayed in the Philippines and married a Filipino. He was captured and imprisoned in Santo Tomas prison, and went from 210 pounds to 125 pounds, but, fortunately he recovered well. But, anyway, I was up there, and so the captain of the Igorot contingent asked me if I'd like to come and join their party. … So, holy cow, we got up there, here's this little dog, about like this, just a (hound?), come to find out what they do is they ferment rice, and this little dog would starve to the point that it will eat this fermented rice. I mean, it's just awful, and then they had these clubs, and it was kind of brutal, actually, what they did. I mean, they just, I think the dog was dead before it's whacked, but, they whipped this dog

around a circle with these sticks, and then they roast the dog, entrails and all. I mean, and then, they opened it up, and they took the entrails out, and they're passing them around. Well, I got my turn, and I'm thinking, "Now how do I get away with this?" Because you know … they're very offended if you don't [eat], when you are offered food, and this is true of the Filipino culture, if they offer you food and you refuse, that's an insult. It's not that you don't like the food, and therefore you pass it, it's you don't like them. So, I figure, I'm going to have, you know, I wasn't really looking forward to this, but he told me, "Lieutenant, I know you don't want that." Well, he didn't know I was a lieutenant, … "I know you don't want that." Well, he passed it to the guy that was standing next to me, which I thought was very nice of him because I would have tried a little bit of it. This was a big celebration for them, this dog feasting. Then the other thing that they ate over there, what they called a *balut*, which was an egg that had been incubated, that it was just (formed?). You could tell they were the embryonic chick, right there, and they ate those. That was like beer and hot dogs at festivals, I mean, these *baluts*, they had them by the bucketful. So, that was my major, [duty] was to keep the headquarters informed of what was happening specifically in our area, and Nuevo Ecija, and Luzon province, were primarily rural provinces. Bataan, we didn't get down on Bataan. Bataan was almost a deserted place after that Bataan Death March. So, we'd get down there just once in a while, just to check to make sure what is going on. We didn't really do too much down there, and then Pampanga, where we were, was banana plantation, and … you know, light industry type of business. So, that's what I did. This young boy from Kearny, New Jersey, I've got his name down there, but I can't remember his name, he and Pop Alvarez, the Filipino scout, those two worked for me. The boy from Kearny, maybe he was only there, like maybe three months, two months, but anyway, he and Pop Alvarez got General Wainwright's sword back, and then they sent me the picture, so that I knew that they got it. … The picture was the presentation to our commanding colonel.

SI: You mentioned earlier that one of the ways you collected this information was through informants and …

RS: We had, for example, the banker in Cabanatuan was a pretty good informant on what the economic conditions were, how much the peso was worth, really worth, and that sort of thing. We had the *New York Times* stringer, now he could give us a lot more insight into what was happening with these guerilla units, because he could get in, he was a Filipino and he was recognized as a reporter, and they liked to get written up if they could, and so, he could get in and he could find out what was going on. You know, how much stuff they'd stolen from the United States Army, because this is, all the materials were US Army stuff, and they always were breaking into military dumps where ammunition and stuff were stolen.

SI: Were there any concerns about any one group like the …

RS: Well, the Hukbalahap were obviously, remember we were very, very conscious about Communists, and so, the Communist Front organizations got far more attention. We didn't do as much, for example the USAFE were doing the same thing that the Huks were doing. I mean, they were going in the villages and stealing them blind. But because they had really done more in World War II to help, you know, the Americans to reinvade the Philippines, I think they overlooked a lot of stuff, you know, they weren't as concerned about that as they were about Huks. So you'll notice in all of my papers that we talked about the Hukbalahap movement here,

there, Luzon and all of these places. It was very big in Nueva Ecija. Rizal province, I think the USAFE had more swing there, I think they chased the Huks out. But, I mean, they were doing the same thing in Rizal that the Huks were doing in Nueva Ecija. Oh, I have another friend who knows the story about when I first came over there. I had a heck of a time with the Spanish derivation of all the stuff. I was way up … some place, and this guy came up to me and he says, and the guy didn't know I was a lieutenant. I forgot what they did call me, but, he said, "There's an American owl in the woods." My God, how did an American owl get in? Well, come to find out, he was saying AWOL, "an American AWOL was in the bushes." … We had a lot of troops that deserted, … but it wasn't, I didn't bother following it up, but I got a kick out of that, at the American owl. Well, then I had a terrible time with Angel, sounds like ungel. Well, Angel Garcia, … in my reports you'll find Angel spelled U-N-G-E-L. So, I finally learned it was angel, and I had an American Filipino, who could still speak, now Tagalog was the national language, but, every island had its own dialect. I mean, they all spoke Tagalog, and they could all understand one another, like if you were from the northern island maybe down, halfway down, they could understand one another, but if they got below that point, the northern people couldn't understand because Tagalog had that much difference in the way it was pronounced. Most of all of them could speak Spanish. So, my border patrolman, who worked on New Mexico and Arizona borders, they were very good because they had good command of Spanish. I was illiterate as far as the language is ... I mean, they didn't speak English too bad, but I did have … Pop Alvarez. He could understand Tagalog from one island all the way down, I mean, he was really very, very linguistic. So, if we needed an interpreter, we had a good one, and I usually liked to take one of the border patrolmen with me when I went out up country because you got in some places where they didn't speak English, I mean, it was strictly Spanish. If you couldn't understand Spanish you were in trouble. One night I got lost on the road in Rizal, and I don't know which one, whether they were Huks, or USAFEs, or what they were, but, they had a roadblock (there?), and it was, we were on a little lane, rice paddy on either side of us, so this guy comes up with a carbine and my agent had taken our carbine out and I had a hand grenade and I said, " Well, let's not do it. Let's just be rational. Just wait and see what the heck happened. We can always start doing something there if we need to." This guy comes up and sticks a big gun right in my nose. God, I tell you, the gun looks damn big when you're looking at it like that. Well, then he yells to these guys, "Yankee, Yankees," and so then my border patrolman started talking to them, because he didn't understand English, told them that we got lost. So, this guy says, "Okay," in Spanish, told him we could go up and there was turn around. See, we were on a, there was no place to turn around. We were just hoping they'd find someplace because we knew we were going in the wrong direction. So, he let us turn around and we got out of there, but it was kind of scary.

SI: By your estimation, how well was the Philippines coming along, in terms of rebuilding, from the war?

RS: I tell you, I read the papers today, I think the Philippines is exactly like they were when I was there; nothing but a feudal state, where all kinds of people are trying to make their own lives better, and trying to do it with a gun, which I don't think they're going to be able to do. You know, there's no way that the Muslim population, which I would believe is in Mindanao, there's no way they can ever get enough force to really establish a Muslim State in Mindanao. It isn't ever going to happen, and the same way in Luzon. You can have all, there's no way, they'll

keep forever going, to get that power structure in Manila changed. Now, Ramon Magsaysay I don't, that was probably way long before your time, he was the president. I think had he been able to live, he got killed in an airplane crash, but I think had he lived, I think he was one of the few politicians that I know about in the Philippines that was honestly going to change. He was going to change. He was going to have the Philippine government buy a lot of the property, rice fields and so forth, and get them to be communal property rather than some rich person in Manila just leading the local population, and this is why I say, I mean, I haven't been over there but, from what I read in the paper, I can't see, and I tell you the guy from 1917 was telling me it was the same in 1944, '45, '46, that was in '46 because that was just before I came home. That in 1946, the conditions that I was reporting were the same that he had in 1917, and what I read in the papers today I see exactly the same as when I was there. I mean, okay, there are Muslims down there that are, but, it's the same thing. I mean, it's one little group trying to make themselves better, and they haven't got a snowball's chance of ever beating the power structure. Sometimes I wish I could have gone back. They were very nice people, wealthy and poor alike. I found them to be very, very nice people.

SI: You never went back?

RS: No, no, I've never did.

SI: So, most of the people had positive feelings towards Americans?

RS: Oh, yes. We were highly; I'll tell you there were two places we were most highly respected were the Philippines and Japan. I tell you, the Japanese people thought, you know, here you went in, we were really conquerors, but, we really did honestly try and this is why I'm very distressed with our present policy. I think we've gone into Afghanistan and tore up a country and left them high and dry, and we're doing the same thing in Iraq. Where in the Philippines we really were trying to help them restore their economy. We were. That was part of my job, was to get this information so that they could use it to help reestablish business and reestablish farming, and in Japan it was the same way. I mean, Japan, … I got to see Hiroshima, I mean it was just, you know, total destruction of a big industrial area. Tokyo was, I mean, for miles and miles it was just nothing, and we honestly were, I mean the military was set up as a quasi government to help get the Japanese organized and get their water and sewage and we were doing, and I tell you the Japanese people really thought that we were very, very good, and the same way with the Philippines. I'm sure there were some Japanese people that didn't like us and I'm sure there were some Filipinos that didn't like us, but I never met … them, you know. I mean, I was always treated, well, it was just like that guy, he yelled, "Yankees," and, man, from then on we didn't have a thing to worry about. I was in the Masonic Order and I went to the lodge in Manila and the master of it, now they did their ritual work in Tagalog, but, they were maybe four or five of us Americans that were there and he stood up and he said to other officers, he said, "I wonder if you would mind doing the ritual in English for our American friends," and they change right over, just like that, and it was, I mean, the ritual was perfect in English. I can't say what it was in Tagalog because I couldn't understand it, but I thought that was quite (?). When I left, the guy that we rented the house from gave my wife an ivory brooch. I forget what he gave me, he gave me something, but they were very friendly people. They really thought the Americans were trying to do right by them, which wasn't always the case. I mean, I'm sure

when I was there we worked, but, I mean, prior, when it was a Commonwealth, I'm sure there were a lot of American businesses that were over there trying to rip them off. But they were really quite, they thought Americans, partly because of the liberation, obviously. … The Japanese had an opportunity; again they blew it, because when the Japanese invaded the Philippines, the Philippines was sick and tired of Americans. Had they come in and been any kind of human beings with those people, I think the Philippines … probably would have accepted them, but the jackasses came in there and knocked the hell out of them. I mean, they were brutal. The Japanese occupation was terrible. So what happened, they just fanned the flames of all these little resistance groups. Have you read the *Ghost Soldiers*? Okay, well, remember the lady that was getting messages in and out? This would be typical. I mean, the citizenry would go to all kinds of things to help American troops to get back, and try and help the people that were in the prisons. I mean, they jeopardized their own lives to do it. … I would say by having the Japanese precede us, we came back and we really did, I got to give the United States credit here, because we really did try the best we could. I mean, we had all of those service organizations and things that came in and, you know, agricultural specialists, business people who came to help reestablish, but, the Philippines they were relatively well established community prior to the war.

SI: Can you tell us about Independence Day in the Philippines?

RS: That was really big. General MacArthur came back from Japan to the Independence Day, and when I say my unit, I don't mean specifically my little detachment, but the entire 1125th Counter-Intelligence Corps had the responsibility of protecting General MacArthur. Well, that was a pretty difficult thing because if we had [anyone] to shoot him it was going to be pretty hard to keep his itinerary, where he is going to travel and stuff. Oh, boy, we were scared to death, and they had all of the dignitaries, you know, from all the countries of the world, and all of the natives got dressed in their typical native attire, and as my friend used to say, "there's nothing more beautiful than a young Filipino, and if the Filipinos would only take care of their women as good as they take care of their water buffalo there'd be a lot of pretty old women." I don't know, it was true, you know, the young girls were just absolutely stunning. Well, they had all these people parading. Then they had all of the delegation of foreign delegations come in, and then MacArthur was up on the main. They had all of those people sitting in the bleachers behind him, and then he was up on the main thing along with, I think it was President Roxas, was the president at that time, anyway the President of the Philippines. Then, they had the formal ceremony of lowering the American flag and raising the Filipino flag, and you saw some of the pictures where the flag ran at half-staff, and then they went up. Now, the Philippine Army Counter-Intelligence Corps officer gave me a medal, this medal. I always thought it was the Philippine Independence Medal, but this medal doesn't look like the Philippine Independence Medal. That ribbon technically is a piece of paper. My kid, when they made this thing up for me there was no ribbon. I am officially entitled to this, but I wrote to the Philippine Embassy about getting the medal because I was going to go to the elementary school, and I thought, well, kids ought to see what the ribbons that are on my uniform actually stand for, and so, as I say, I always thought it was the Philippine Independence Medal, but then when I got it on the internet, it's obvious that it is not, and I got this letter from the military attaché saying that I wasn't entitled to the Independence Medal because I wasn't in the Liberation Army. In other words, I wasn't there prior to the cessation of hostilities, but we were apparently issued the ribbon. He

didn't say it, that we were, but I know I was given, I was given a ribbon. I had a medal, one of these, that was given to me by the Counter-Intelligence Corps officer, he was the commanding officer of the Counter-Intelligence Corp fn the Philippine Army, and he gave me a medal, one of these, and this thing and it had, I'm sure it had a ribbon at one time, and that's why I tell you that little black thing with the star on it, I had no idea, but I think maybe that might have been the ribbon, this was attached to it.

SI: It doesn't say anything on the back of the medal?

RS: I think it just says, (?) July 4, 1946.

SI: Could it be the Philippines Independence Medal?

RS: I think it was some sort of a medal that they gave to people who attended the ceremony. That's my only guess now. I mean, as I said, I always thought it was the Philippine Independence Medal; well, it was a Philippine Independence medal, but it's not, apparently, not the "military" Philippine Independence Medal. But it was a really big deal, and I thought it was very impressive, I mean, and MacArthur was. You know, we call him "Dugout Doug," because he left the Philippines when everybody else was going to get hung out to dry, he got in, and, I guess, in a way it was all right, but he's a, was a strange, strange man. This is second hand information, I wasn't one of the ones that stood in the corridors of the hotel, Manila Hotel, where he stayed, but we had guys stationed all, you know, all around. He knew that we were Counter-Intelligence Corps, I mean, he would walk right by them and … he never said, "hello," he never said anything. Now, his staff did, I mean, they'd said "good morning," but MacArthur himself never said a word to any of us.

SI: Please continue.

RS: He made sure that we all were, were there, when he got ready to go back to Japan. So here we are, the whole

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

RS: Of regular unit of soldiers, you know, my people, I was their commanding officer, but we were more like a bunch of friends and our jobs were such that we weren't used to being lined up in formation, but there we are, standing out there, and MacArthur comes out and he walks up the, they had a little flight of stairs for him to get up into the plane. He walks up these steps, turns around on the top of the thing and he says, "I salute the Counter-Intelligence Corps for the wonderful security they presented." Snapped, turn around, and walked into the plane. That's the only thing he ever said to anybody in the Counter-Intelligence Corps the whole damned time he was there, which was about three or four days, but the Filipinos, man, they thought he was next to God. I mean, he was, as I say, had he just told the Filipinos to put down their guns at the end just before he went to Japan, could have saved a lot of grief, I'll tell you. … He probably didn't even think about it, you know, but all of us that had to deal with it afterwards wished he had, because there was no way if the United States had made it an edict to do that, there would have been an uprising, but had he done it, I think they would have done it.

SI: Now, coming back to the United States, can you tell us about the process of getting out of the service, getting in the reserves?

RS: I went to Fort Ord, Camp Ord, anyway, that was where I got separated. That was in the early part of November, but my official separation was December 4th, or something like that, 1946. I was in … just about two years of service, and, then they asked me if I would serve in the reserve and I signed up for the reserve. So I was separated from active duty service to reserve status and I must say, I took a few courses, kind of doing at home, you know, courses and that was it. But a friend of mine who came, we were both served in the military, we were together from training in CIC School until we came home. He and I went from Fort Ord to Oakland, California, where a friend of my family lived and we stayed overnight there, and then we got on the train and came home and, I think, we were five days on the train. He lived in Philadelphia, and I came on to Newark, and then, after I was home, I went to Woodstown, New Jersey, and I had a job as an Ag teacher in Woodstown before I was officially out of the service in December of '46. Unless there's something else specific you can think of and you want to know about, mustering out with our separation was about the same going in, you know, you had to go through a bunch of tests and medical exams.

SI: Why did you join the reserves and for how long?

RS: Well, you know, I just thought it was the thing to do at the time, and then they, my commission was changed from infantry to intelligence. In other words, I became a second lieutenant military intelligence in the reserves, and I thought I was going to go to Korea. I was teaching, at that time, I was in, probably in Bridgeton. I taught Ag in Woodstown and Bridgeton before I moved up here, and I was called up for a physical, and so forth, and I went to Fort Dix and I went through the physical and I really thought I was going to be back in active duty, because they were calling a lot of reserve people up at that time, but, I guess, they didn't need any intelligence officers because they never called me up. I went up and did my tour … I don't know they ever heard that they weren't going to call me. I mean, I think it just kind of ended there as I recall. It was a day I went up and they took a day to do all the stuff, we went through there, and I don't even know whether they told me they'd let me know, but I'm assuming that they would have let me know, you know, but I can't recall the details of what happened at the end of that, but I thought for sure I was going, which wouldn't have been the end of the world. By then I had a little bigger family, and I think family wise, it would have been a lot more. My wife had enough trouble, she had one little girl there, you know, the whole time I was away. She got a job, worked for a mailing list company, but, initially, my pay was thirty dollars a month. I guess, I did get to fifty dollars, but, so then, when, I was an officer I got paid. I actually took a cut in pay to be a schoolteacher. It's going to be approximate figures now, because I'm thinking I made thirty-nine hundred dollars when I was in the Army. I made thirty-seven hundred dollars when I was, the first year, and I got paid more than the high school principal, because as an Ag teacher I worked twelve months and he only worked ten. So I was like the highest paid high school teacher. I think the superintendent got more money than I did, but, and some of those teachers were poor. They were outraged. It was a disgrace what they did to teachers at the end of World War II. I mean, teachers that had been teaching way back in the Depression days, there were still some teachers that were making seven hundred dollars a year. … It really was

disgraceful. I mean, a sewing machine factory hired people and those women were making twenty-five hundred dollars a year. So, that was, I guess, my tale.

JK: May I ask about your wife a little bit, because she was a Rutgers graduate?

RS: Would you like to talk to her?

JK: Either way.

RS: Her memory isn't, if you would like to talk to her?

JK: I just thought maybe it would be maybe a nice way to wrap things up a bit.

RS: Well,

SI: How you met, that sort of thing.

RS: Okay, all right. Our meeting is quite interesting, actually, to us anyway. She, Mary Elizabeth King, Betty, was a graduate of Ridgewood schools, period, and she graduated in June of '39, by the way, I graduated from high school in January 1939. I went to Drake Business School in between, a little aside, but okay. So, Betty went to NJC with a full scholarship between the State and the Women's Federated, Federated Women's club of Ridgewood, New Jersey and the State of New Jersey. Now, she was a WPA worker. She was a youth, whatever the hell they call that, youth, group …

SI: National Youth Administration?

RS: Yes, so she had a job. So between those, that's how she was able to go to school. She always likes to say that she was one of the first ones to integrate Rutgers because she and a few other girls took journalism, and the School of Journalism was part of Rutgers College. So, the first time we met was, the Dean of Women had a mandatory dance for the girls, you know, they all had to be in their formals, and go through the proper protocol for the day, and obviously they had to have dates. Now, the girls ate in a place called Cooper Union, and they ate in, by the way, Louis (Lasagna?), who was a pharmacologist in my class, well, his father was the chef of the NJC mess, and the girls all had these tables and this one girl, who was the waitress for their table, also their friend, her name was Dusty Rhodes. Well, she went with a fraternity brother of mine. So these girls are all scouting around for somebody to go to this dance with them, so Dusty becomes the negotiator. So she got and I can't remember my wife's [friend's name], (Rodenberg?) was her last name, but anyway, Dusty aligned me up with Miss (Rodenberg?), and a fraternity brother of mine by the name of Freddie (?) was my wife's blind date. So we all go to this thing. Now I don't know how liberal we are on this tape, but this young lady was in a white dress, no straps and, I mean, she was, Betty Grable was a big thing about that time, well, this one had Betty Grable beat a hundred miles to one, and here I am saying to myself, "My God, here I am," now, actually, I have to call her Miss (Rodenberg?), because I can't really think of her first name. She was a nice girl. I shouldn't be discourteous to her, but I'm thinking of myself, "Now how come Freddie, that jerk, got a good one and I get stuck with this lemon?" Well, in the

course of the evening, Miss Rodenberg asked me, “Oh, I’m going to take you over and introduce you to my roommate." Well, come to find out, her roommate is this gorgeous babe I’ve been watching all night, you know. So, I must have been kind of letting my eyes pop out of my head and she said to me, “Take a good look, buster." Well, I’m thinking, “Wait a minute now,” and I said, “I guess I will." Then, I’m lost for words and I always had Wild Cherry Lifesavers, so I reached in my pocket and got them out, “How about a Wild Cherry Lifesaver?" So, that’s the standard; our fiftieth wedding anniversary, I couldn’t find a Wild Cherry Lifesaver in town any place, and I couldn’t figure out what was going on. Our kids had a surprise party for us, and one of the favors was a roll of Wild Cherry Lifesavers. … No we didn’t go, I mean, that was our first meeting, but, oh, I saw her after that, you know, because I went around with another friend from the same table. I went with her for maybe eight, nine months, I guess, and my fraternity house needed some chaperones. [We needed] some parent to come, so I asked my dad and mom if they would come down and chaperone and they were tickled to death to come. Well, at this point I haven’t even asked Betty Becker, not this Betty, but Betty Becker, I do know this girl’s name, Betty Becker, who I had been going with now for six months, is she would be my date to this Military Ball, that’s right, at Rutgers now, the Military Ball. Well, she didn’t know and I said, “ Well, look, Betty,” I said, “My folks are coming down to be chaperones to this dance." I said, “I’ll feel like an absolute idiot if they come down and I don’t have a date." “Well, I’ll let you know.” Well, she kept putting me off and putting me off and finally I put it to her. I said, “Either tell me yes or no.” I said, “We’re getting too close." This is what, maybe three weeks before the thing, maybe even less, I don’t know. So, she said, “No.” Well, then I’m thinking, “Oh, my God, what do I do now?” Well, Ernie was still going with Dusty Rhoades. So, I told Ernie, I said, “Just ask Dusty if there’s anybody over there that I could get for a date to this thing.” Betty’s (my Betty) boyfriend had gone in the service and, I guess, she kind of felt it wasn’t right, you know, to date or anything, but under the circumstances, because my parents were coming down and I was desperate, she would condescend to do this. In the meantime, Bob Cornell with a classmate of ours, who was also in the School of Journalism, had apparently asked Betty to go and she said, “Oh, no, I’m not going because of my boyfriend’s is in the service.” Well, now Betty Becker was waiting for this other guy to ask and he never asked her, and so she got to go with some other guy. Well now, when we all ended up at the Military Ball it just so happened that … all three couples are in the cloakroom at the same time. Man, if you don’t think there was ice in the air, I can remember Bob Cornell, “Well, Miss King, I didn’t think you were coming to the dance,” and Betty Becker was redder than a beet because she had turned me down. As I say, it was a rather strange thing. Well, from that little incident, we started going together and at the end, I’m trying to think of, at that time, we got engaged in December of '42, so I think this was, had to be the Spring of '42, because the Spring of '41, so the spring, the Military Ball was in the Spring of '42 and we got engaged to be married in December of '42. No, that can’t be right, we got married in '43, yes, that would be right. So, we were engaged in December of 1942, and we got married in June 1943. I had already graduated in January. We didn’t get married in Ridgewood, we got married in a little town in New York, which was right next to where our farm was in Morris, New York. We got married in the Baptist Church and a kind of an interesting little thing; because my mother was a strong Methodist and I don’t think she’d have thought we were married properly, so she, unbeknownst to us, invited the Methodist minister to participate in the ceremony. Fortunately, the Methodist and the Baptist minister in this little town were friends and, I guess, they just took it in good stride. So we got married. I

think it stuck. We just celebrated our sixtieth wedding anniversary last Wednesday, had a wonderful time.

SI: Congratulations.

RS: Actually I'm not exactly sure she knew it was her sixtieth. … We really had a wonderful time.

SI: Is there anything else you'd like to put on the tape?

RS: Well, I suppose I ought to say I have five wonderful children, and a wonderful wife, and we all get along pretty well. None of them went to Rutgers, but, every one of them can sing *On the Banks* and they can sing, *Sing a Song of Colleges*. Oh … do they still sing, "The Dutch Company is the best company," at Rutgers?

SI: No.

RS: [singing] "When they roll out the big bass drum, then you'll know that the Dutch have come, for the Dutch company is the best company that ever came over from old Germany." Now, during the war we couldn't sing that.

SI: I've heard that.

RS: Because of the Dutch, that was one of our famous songs. "Sing a song of colleges, I'll tell you where to go." Know that one?

SI: No.

RS: Well, I'm going to have to sing that for you, too.

SI: Oh, go ahead.

RS: [singing] "Sing a song of colleges, I'll tell you where to go. Oxford for her knowledge; Cornell to learn to row, Yale for her gall darn luck, Rutgers for her men. NJC for pretty girls, for rivals NYU. Sing a song of colleges a dying mother said, "Don't send my boy to Princeton; I'd rather see him dead, but send my boy to Rutgers, or even to Cornell, but as for Pennsylvania, he's better off in hell. To hell, to hell with Pennsylvania, to hell, to hell with Pennsylvania, to hell, to hell with Pennsylvania, to hell with the U of P, PU." Okay, that's enough and they can all sing that, all five of them. [laughter]

SI: Is there anything else?

JK: That's a good place to leave it.

RS: All right, okay. I thank you very much for your patience. You've been very good.

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

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