RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL SPYCH

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Nicholas Molnar: This begins an interview with Bill Spych on November 28, 2011, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with …

Teofilo Bodre: … Teofilo Bodre …

NM: … And …

Silver Laur: … Silver Laur.

NM: Thank you, Mr. Spych, for coming in today. We are going to just focus this microphone on you, since you are the most important. This picks us up.

Bill Spych: I'm the focus? …

NM: You are the focus.

BS: Thank you, gentlemen, for having me for this auspicious occasion.

SL: When and where were you born?

BS: I was born in the Great State of New Jersey, December 23, 1945, in the capital city of Trenton.

SL: Okay. If you know this, how did your family come to the United States?

BS: They emigrated from Poland.

SL: Do you know more about their background? How did they get to the United States?

BS: Well, their background is, they are … first generation born Americans. … My grandparents came over from Poland, and then, they assimilated into the New Jersey environment.

NM: Did your parents ever discuss with you the motivation for their parents to immigrate to the United States? Did they ever talk about why they immigrated?

BS: Yes, for a better life.

NM: Okay.

BS: All right, yes.

NM: Did your parents meet in New Jersey?

BS: Of course. They were born and raised in Trenton. They were …

NM: In Trenton.

BS: Yes. If you were to look at Trenton geographically, my mother was from South Trenton, my father was from East Trenton and, of course, they were all neighborhoods. They were all like, well, for the sake of the exercise, we'll call them enclaves. You had the Polish enclave, you had the Hungarians, you had the Germans, you had the Italians and all these different enclaves within the City of Trenton, yes.

NM: Could you tell us about growing up in this community?

BS: Growing up? Yes, moving from the urban environment to the suburban environment, yes, that was a big change. …

NM: Where did you live?

BS: I lived in the city.

NM: Okay.

BS: And then, we moved to … what they called, at that time, the township, which would be--in today's parlance--would be the suburbs.

NM: Okay.

BS: And that was a big deal, going from row homes to, now, your own individual home, and that was due to the changing economy at the time. … This is in a post-World War II economy.

BS: Okay.

TB: Could you talk a little bit about your family?

BS: You mean its makeup, in terms of how many siblings?

TB: Exactly. Please, describe your experiences. How many siblings did you have? What do you remember about your parents? What was it like growing up in your family?

BS: Well, [my] parents were those parents of the post-Depression, post-World War II era, and then, you had my siblings. I have a brother and a sister, the sister being older and the brother being younger. What do I remember about my childhood? Your typical childhood, before Neighborhood Watch, before all of these, that you have today, organized sports. Yes, it was just, "Go out, play and do whatever you had to do, and, when the lights came on, be home." … When you got a little bit older and they gave you a watch, they said, "You know how to read or … tell time?" and you said, "Yes." "Well, when the big hand is on this and the little hand is on that, you better be home," see, and then, education was [there]. … Middle schools are after my timeline. Middle schools come later on … as you get into the '70s, and I'm used to elementary school [grades] one through eight, high school [grades] nine through twelve, and then, college, yes, freshmen to senior year.

NM: Growing up, you mentioned you went to Catholic school.

BS: Yes, sir, all twelve years.

NM: Was the Catholic Church a big part of your upbringing?

BS: Well, it was because of the environment that you were in. All right, so, you're asking me, did it impact me?

NM: Yes.

BS: … Well, of course it would, because … you're in that environment for the better part of six hours for each day. So, you times that by the number of days you're in the classroom and, over a twelve-year period, of course it'll impact you, yes.

NM: Did you take part in any church activities?

BS: No, no.

NM: Okay. What about organizations such as the Boy Scouts?

BS: Was I a Boy Scout? Yes, I was, but that was not a church organization, the Boy Scouts of America, which, at one time, were located right here, at the [traffic] circle at where [Routes] 1 and 130 come together. … They have since moved, I believe, yes. [Editor's Note: The Boy Scouts of America relocated its national headquarters from New York City to North Brunswick, New Jersey (although it was referred to as New Brunswick in BSA publications) in 1954. The national headquarters was later moved to Irving, Texas, in 1979.]

NM: What period of time were you a Boy Scout?

BS: That would be through grade six through grade eight.

NM: Okay. Were you ever a Cub Scout?

BS: No, no, … never started with that, just it was straight out Boy Scouts and that ended by eighth grade, because high school's upon us, and then, it's a different transition.

NM: At what point did you move from the row house in Trenton to the suburbs?

BS: In 1950.

NM: In 1950, okay.

BS: Right, at the end of [the year?]. Yes, it would be five years downstream. … Yes, I'm five years old at the time, right.

NM: Just backtracking a bit, did your parents ever talk about what life was like in the United States during the Great Depression and World War II?

BS: Yes.

NM: Could you tell us about that?

BS: On my mother's side, I could tell you what they did, in terms of there were eight children. So, therefore, what they did was, they closed the upper part of the house and they actually lived in the cellar of that particular house, which was located on Center Street in Trenton. … Then, they weathered the storm during that timeline, but they were all able to work right up until World War II. They worked either in the WPA [Works Progress Administration] or the CCC camps, right. [Editor's Note: The Works Progress Administration (WPA), or, after 1939, the Works Project Administration, and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) were agencies created as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. The CCC employed young unemployed males in outdoor conservation projects from 1933 to 1942. The WPA employed millions on public works projects like buildings and roads, as well as in specialized areas, such as the arts, from 1935 to 1943.]

SL: What about your father's side?

BS: My father's side, the same thing. They all did the same thing, basically. It was kind of like the thing that everyone did in that timeline. So, it was one of consolidating resources and it was very family-oriented, where you did things as a family to overcome that … period of time. Then, of course, something showed up and it made all the papers from 1941 to 1945. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych is referring to the United States' involvement in World War II.] You may have read about it, yes.

TB: Was there anyone in your family who was in the military?

BS: They were all in the military. … They were either Army, Navy or Air Force, or that would be Army Air Force at the time. [Editor's Note: The US Air Force was established as a separate branch of the US Armed Forces in 1947. Prior to that, it had been subordinate to the US Army as the US Army Air Forces and, prior to 1941, the US Army Corps.]

TB: Was your dad in the military?

BS: All of them, yes.

SL: That is a pretty big military involvement for your family then, right?

BS: And one was lost. Yes, we had one uncle that was lost. He was lost in Okinawa. He was onboard ship and it was one of the ships that went down, right.

SL: Did your family members talk to you during your childhood about their experiences in World War II?

BS: No.

SL: Nothing?

BS: Nothing. It was very minimal at best, right.

NM: Did your father ever talk about where he served?

BS: They talked, you know. It was the European Theater, and there was a couple that were in the Pacific, but … they really didn't talk much about it in terms of … like what you're looking for today or like what you see today. What you're seeing today is, like, when you watch the History Channel. You'll see things "never before released," right, and they were just, in essence--what I got from them was--it was, in essence, "Move on." … This is prior to PTSD [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder], all the stuff that you see today, all that thing, and I think a lot of them carried it with them, and just like--I don't know, are you familiar with Mr. Unruh?

NM: No.

BS: The gentleman in Camden that shot all those beautiful people? [Editor's Note: On September 6, 1949, World War II veteran Howard Unruh went on a killing spree that left thirteen people dead in Camden. Unruh was later found to have paranoid schizophrenia, hospitalized in Trenton Psychiatric Hospital until 1993, then, transferred to a geriatric unit where he died in October 2009.]

NM: No, I am not familiar.

BS: At the end of World War II, it's like maybe around the area of 1947, '48, he [suffered from] what you would equate to PTSD. He has an M-1 rifle [German Luger pistol] he brings out and he goes down the streets of Camden and he systematically kills individuals that are on the street. … The topper is the kid that's sitting in a barbershop on a hobby horse and he whacks the kid, and that's the one that puts him away. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych is referring to a six-year-old victim, Orris Smith, who was killed by Unruh while getting his hair cut in a barbershop.] He just died recently, within the last four years. He was criminally insane and he was kept at Trenton State [Prison], yes. … He would be the poster child for that timeline, right. So, what you see today is, you see more involvement with, what's this? "Operation Whatever," whatever it is, with Afghanistan and Iraq. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych is referring to the War in Afghanistan, which began in 2001, and the War in Iraq, which began in 2003.] You see more involvement because it's a volunteer force today, as opposed to a conscripted force, right.

TB: Your family comes from a military background.

BS: No.

TB: You said your dad was in the military.

BS: Yes, they're all in, yes, but, wait a minute, … you have to remember the timeline. In World War II, only fifteen percent were what you would call career. The remaining eighty-five percent were your civilian force. … Nobody made a career out of the military.

TB: Okay.

BS: Nobody made a career, okay. They just served their time and said good-bye.

TB: Were they able to take advantage of the GI Bill benefits?

BS: I couldn't tell you that. I have no idea. You mean, did they take [anything] from the World War II [GI Bill]? no idea. I couldn't tell you, no.

NM: Where was the suburb that you moved to in 1950? What was it called?

BS: The suburbs was--actually, it was called the Thropp Farm. … Whoever the developer was, he had bought this farm. It was called the Thropp Farm and we lived on Thropp Avenue and the old farmhouse still existed when we moved into the neighborhood. … Then, from there, they expanded it.

SL: Where was this in relation to the row house you had moved from in Trenton?

BS: I'm east of Trenton. … If you're familiar with Trenton and you go to Trenton, you can go on Broad Street and, if you go out Broad Street, which is, in essence, Route 206, … you would go toward what they would call the White Horse Circle. … It's in-between the Capitol itself, the Capitol Building, and … the White Horse Circle, yes.

NM: Were there a lot of children in the neighborhood? Did you play with the children?

BS: Oh, yes. It was a post-World War II era. I'm the Baby Boomer. I'm the guy causing all these problems. I'm living too long. This is killing me, anyway--I'm taking money away from you, but you keep working, anyway. [laughter]

SL: Did a lot of these children have fathers who served in the war?

BS: They had served. … In my neighborhood, most of the kids, their parents worked for General Motors. My father ended up working for General Motors for fifty years.

NM: There was a General Motors plant nearby.

BS: The plant was in Ewing Township, right next to Mercer Airport, and, during World War II, General Motors made the Grumman TBM, [a torpedo bomber used by the US Navy and Marine Corps during World War II], if you're familiar with airplanes, yes. … They would take them right from the factory, bring them across the road, which was Parkway Avenue, through a ramp

and put them onto the taxiway at Mercer Airport. Then, they were flown either toward the Pacific, in essence--they would be going to San Diego--and that was it.

NM: I just had a question. Did your mother work in any of these wartime factories?

BS: Oh, no, no. She was--you know who June Cleaver is? You ever see *Leave It to Beaver*?

NM: Yes. [Editor's Note: The sitcom *Leave It to Beaver* (1957-1963) is noted for its idyllic depiction of the 1950s nuclear family, particularly Barbara Billingsley as housewife and mother June Cleaver.]

BS: All right. My mom's June Cleaver. Yes, yes, she never worked a day in her life.

NM: Okay.

BS: All right.

SL: Do you have any lasting memories from your school years? Do you remember anything that happened or any interesting things that shaped you during those years?

BS: … I could--of what religious faith are you, sir?

SL: Me? I don't know.

BS: Agnostic?

SL: Agnostic, maybe atheist.

BS: But, if you're agnostic and you're dyslexic, is there really a dog? [laughter] I don't know. Anyway, moving right along off of that, let's see, very, very regimented--come on, man, this is good stuff--very regimented, all right, and, yes, that would be it, the regimentation of it all.

SL: Just the fact that it was regimented in the Catholic faith.

BS: Yes. I could kneel on the hard pews, pray the rosary and, you know, do it for hours, yes, you know.

TB: Did you play any sports?

BS: Yes, track and football.

TB: Track and football.

BS: Yes, [as a] matter-of-fact, ran the state, what do you call it? finals, right here at Rutgers, before they changed the stadium.

TB: What position did you play?

BS: Halfback, and I even played … in the service for a year, kept at it. [laughter]

SL: They had a football team in the Army.

BS: All Army bases had football teams at that time, in the '60s, right. That was under [what was] called Special Services, yes. [Editor's Note: the US Army's Special Services branch organized recreation and entertainment activities for servicemen.]

TB: What year did you graduate high school?

BS: '63, what a beautiful year.

TB: When you were in high school, did the situation in Vietnam come up in class?

BS: In '63? It actually starts in '59, is when Vietnam starts, right. You understand it starts in '59? [Editor's Note: Following the withdrawal of the French in 1956, the US Military Assistance Advisor Group (MAAG) began training South Vietnamese forces. In 1959, two MAAG advisors, Major Dale R. Buis and Master Sergeant Chester M. Ovnand, were killed during a Communist attack on Bien Hoa. For many years, they were considered to be the first Americans killed in the Vietnam War.]

TB: Once we actually get involved.

BS: If you were to go back in time and you were to sit in a classroom in a Catholic school in the '60s, right--I start school in 1959, right, high school, right--it's the beginning of it, it was considered what they call a brushfire war. … If you go back in that timeline, … at any given time, you could look and say there were at least twenty-three, in quotes, "civil wars and/or brushfire wars" going on around the globe. … This was considered a brushfire war. … Of course, who's President? come on, man.

TB: In 1959?

BS: '59; come on, who's President?

NM: Eisenhower.

BS: There you go, all right, and who's getting ready to take the seat?

SL: Kennedy. [Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy, having been elected in November 1960, succeeded President Dwight D. Eisenhower in January 1961.]

BS: All right, there you go.

NM: Just on the topic of …

BS: School?

NM: Yes, in high school. Did they talk about Communism or the Soviet Union?

BS: Of course, yes, of course. The Catholic Church would always talk about Communists. They were the godless people, weren't they, or they were the atheists, right?

NM: This would actually be taught in the classroom.

BS: Oh, absolutely, sure. … What do you think the Catholic religion is about--anybody, nobody? Didn't you do your Catechism? come on. …

NM: I am just thinking--I went to Catholic school and I do not know. [laughter]

BS: Well, come on, man, what did they tell you? … Come on, brother, [laughter] the "Adam and Eve" thing--I still think the three guys that showed up at the barn [the Three Wise Men], I think they were moving product. That's what I think. [laughter] Gold, frankincense and myrrh--come on, give me a break here, give me a break. You'd better edit that out. I'll go right to hell for that. Anyway, yes, sure, they did that. Of course they would talk about it [Communism]. Well, you're going through that era where you would see--we'll use the History Channel as the benchmark--people doing, what is it? They're building fallout bunkers, you know. They played that [up]. How many people really did it, when you really get down to it, you know? and then, you figured it all out after you saw the pictures. "You've got to be kidding me. You might as well turn to the flash, get your X-ray taken, because it's the last one you're going to ever have in your life," you know, but, yes, they talked, sure.

NM: One of the events that happened when you were in late middle school or early high school was the launching of the *Sputnik* satellite. [Editor's Note: The world's first artificial satellite, *Sputnik I*, was launched by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957.]

BS: Yes. All they did was make an announcement. Yes, they just made an announcement that the Russians had launched a satellite and it was now circling … the Earth.

NM: Was it something that …

BS: Left an impression?

NM: Yes.

BS: You've got to be kidding me; no, no, please, please. What do you think you're thinking about when you hit ninth grade? Ah, you've got to be kidding. [laughter] Come on, man--you got any kids?

NM: No. [laughter]

BS: Well, adopt; when they hit fifteen, you tell me what it's all about, okay. [laughter] Let's see, let's talk about raging hormones, come on, man, right.

NM: Teo, do you have any questions about high school?

BS: Come on, man. You can go with the high school routine, go ahead, go in-depth.

TB: Okay. We were discussing the 1960s era and you just mentioned Kennedy.

BS: But Jack, we're talking about Jack now--not his brother Teddy, not Bobby, but Jack, right?

TB: Yes.

BS: Okay.

TB: How did the Civil Rights Movement impact your life?

BS: It didn't.

TB: It did not impact your life.

BS: No. Think about it--you didn't have a twenty-four/seven news cycle. All you depended [on] … were the three major networks, right, ABC, NBC and CBS. That's all you had and that wasn't the focus in school. It's not like today--a twenty-four/seven news cycle, you're going to hear everything. So, did I know about Selma? Did I know about--let's see, oh, what I do remember is when they torched in, what was it? Watts, remember that. Watts, I always remember the Watts riots, okay, and I do remember--what do you call it?--this is later on, when they torched Newark, by Springfield Avenue. They had the problem in Perth Amboy, I remember that, yes, but the Civil Rights, no; you're talking about Mr. King [Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.] and all, no. … That wasn't even on the horizon, that wasn't even in the picture. No, it was always the great Red [Communist] threat. These guys, they were always coming. [Editor's Note: During a Civil Rights protest in Selma, Alabama, on March 7, 1965, state troopers and volunteer police officers violently broke up the protest, leading to the injuries of at least fifty black and white protestors. On August 11, 1965, racial tension in Los Angeles' South Central neighborhood of Watts erupted in riots after a police officer arrested and beat two black brothers. The violence ensued for six days and resulted in the deaths of thirty-four people. The Newark riots lasted from July 12 to July 17, 1967. They began after the police arrested an African-American cab driver and rumors spread that he had been killed in custody. The riots resulted in over two dozen deaths, over seven hundred injuries, fifteen hundred arrests and property damage exceeding ten million dollars.]

SL: I have become the scapegoat. [laughter]

BS: … Yes, sir, you have become the scapegoat. In that juncture, you've become the scapegoat, because you were the godless people [laughter] that were going to cause the nuclear catastrophe of the world. … You said, "Really? They want to do that? Why would they want to do that?

Didn't they learn anything from Hiroshima and Nagasaki?" and I think they did. [Editor's Note: During World War II, Hiroshima, Japan, was the target of the first atomic raid on August 6, 1945. Nagasaki was attacked on August 9, 1945.] They really knew. So, it became, to me, … a chess game between the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc countries and America, all right. … When you look at that map at that time, what did they control? until you guys, your guys, have a thing called Afghanistan. That becomes their Vietnam, right.

SL: Yes. They were there for ten years, I think.

BS: Eight years.

SL: Yes, eight years. [Editor's Note: The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 and withdrew just over nine years later in February 1989 under pressure from *mujahedin* rebels backed by the US and its allies.]

BS: So, if Alexander the Great said, "I've got to get out of here," and the British get their hat handed to them … after eighty years, and then, the Russians go and play grab-ass with them, right, you go, "What are we doing there?" … They're somewhere in, where, the fourteenth century? and they're still growing poppies, aren't they? Yes, there you go, man, all right. Where we at now, Nick?

NM: How old were you when you graduated from high school?

BS: Seventeen-and-a-half.

NM: Okay, you were seventeen-and-a-half.

BS: Seventeen-and-a half and, thirty days after that, I joined the military--there you go.

NM: Okay. Could you tell us more about your motivations for joining the Army?

BS: Well, that's the only way I'm going to get money to go to school, all right. Well, see, they bring the GI Bill [back]. You've got to remember, the GI Bill now is coming. … By 1959, they're bringing back the GI Bill and it coincides with the Vietnam [War], or we'll call that Indochina, right. [Editor's Note: The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill of Rights, offered funding for college or vocational education, as well as one year of unemployment and loans to buy homes, to returning World War II veterans. The Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 and the Veterans' Readjustment Benefits Act of 1966 provided benefits to Korean and Vietnam War era veterans, respectively. The Commission on Veterans' Pensions, established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in the mid-1950s, chaired by General Omar N. Bradley, investigated veterans' benefits programs and led to President Eisenhower rejecting plans for a new peacetime GI Bill in the late 1950s.]

NM: Okay.

BS: All right, before it becomes Vietnam, French Indochina becomes Vietnam. Now, it's the thing and, if you don't understand what it was all about, with the Pentagon Papers, it shows how complicit the United States was with the French, going back all the way to Roosevelt. [Editor's Note: The Pentagon Papers, officially titled *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: A Study Prepared by the Department of Defense,* first received public attention on the front page of the *New York Times* in 1971. The document, leaked by Daniel Ellsberg, a RAND Corporation analyst at the time, provides a historical account of the United States' involvement with Vietnam and influenced the shift toward public disapproval of the Vietnam War.] That's what that was about, … if you've never read those. So, what's my motivation for joining? That was the motivation, that would be, say, "Hey, they're going to give you money to go to school. So, all you've got to do is do your time."

NM: Did you think that you might be going to Europe or elsewhere in Asia?

BS: No.

NM: Did you think that you might be stationed in the United States?

BS: No, no. … You mean travel the world?

NM: Yes.

BS: You mean like that Navy one [advertisement], "See the world. Join the Navy, see the world," thing? no, no.

NM: Did you consider joining any of the other services, such as the Air Force?

BS: No, no. You mean whether [to] go to the Marines, go to the Navy, go to the Air [Force]?

NM: Yes.

BS: No, no. They offered something that was somewhat of a challenge--so, that would be to leave the airplane in flight--a perfectly good airplane, I might add, yes, sir. So, yes, so, there you go. So, I come here to Newark, beautiful, what's that? Kenny and Broad [Street], which is now going to become--I think it's going to become, what is it?--condominiums, yes. Yes, it used to be a Chrysler dealership, … after it was an Army induction center. Now, you've got to remember now, the draft is still on. It's not a volunteer type thing, okay. So, you've got conscription, right. … You're mixed in with guys that are being drafted and guys that are taking an enlistment, all right. So, there you go. So, you sign for your three years, you go and take your physical, raise your right hand and say, "I," state your name, and then, the rest is history, and you sign your contract and you go--there you go.

TB: How long was a contract for?

BS: Three years, but it ended up being four, but that's all right.

SL: This was three years of active duty. Was there also a Reserve commitment?

BS: Yes, there's a Reserve component to it, at that juncture. How it was is, you actually had a six-year obligation to the United States of America, all right. So, what they would do to you is, when you got out, you were put in what they call Inactive Reserve, and that means they could call you up again.

SL: If they needed to.

BS: If they had to, for the purposes of force structure, but they never really did that to anyone, that I know of. … At the end of six years, you got your diploma [honorable discharge], suitable for framing, and then, that was the end of that, all right.

SL: Where was boot camp?

BS: Boot camp, boot camp would be Fort Dix. Fort Dix was basic and, [also], Advanced Infantry Training [AIT] was at Fort Dix, which is now a big, we'll say a transition base, for guys going away. … At one time, they were going to close Dix, under, was it Base Realignment and Closure, BRAC? [Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission] but, yes, Dix was … basic and AIT. Then, jump school was [Fort] Benning, and then, when you got out of jump school, you were assigned, and then, when I got out of jump school, I was assigned to the 101st [Division] out of Fort Campbell.

TB: Are there any memorable experiences from when you were doing your basic training and your advanced training?

BS: Other than the Earth was my mattress and the stars was my canopy and the many lovely walks through the Pine Barrens? oh, indescribable, yes. [laughter] … You guys say it, I don't understand it--what do you mean? You mean, it's basically two hundred guys, fifty to a room, right--get up in the morning at five, eat at six and do whatever you have to do, up until five o'clock [in the evening], and you repeat that same cycle, basically, five days a week. … If they're nice and they like you, they'll let you go home or you have the weekend off with pay, you know. So, it's a seven-day, basically, twenty-four-hour cycle. They own you twenty-four/seven.

TB: You had weekends off.

BS: Sure, you had weekends off, unless there was something that had to be done. When you're in training, usually, you don't have anything to do on the weekends, other than make your bed, clean the bathroom. You become a very good housewife in a very short time--yes, you know how to run a vacuum cleaner, a buffer, you know, those things. What'd you do this morning? When you got up, what'd you do?

TB: I brushed my teeth and took a shower.

BS: And?

TB: I ate breakfast.

BS: Okay, did you make your bed?

TB: I did.

BS: All right, do you have any wash to do when you get home?

TB: No.

BS: No? but you project to do some whites and colors somewhere in the [future].

TB: I do. [laughter]

BS: All right, there you go, brother. Well, that's the same thing, only picture it with two hundred guys in a barracks, fifty to a room, right, and you have facilities at each end of the hall, right. It's the same thing.

TB: Did boot camp have barracks or squad bays?

BS: No, that would be a barracks. You don't [have], … like, today, they have individual--this is a squad bay. … You're using the term squad bay--that was your living quarters. That would be double bunks, right, and you couldn't walk down the middle, God forbid. You had to walk behind, because you want to keep that shiny, because that's critical, right, and you do that, right, yes. … Think of it like--did you play sports?

TB: I did.

BS: Very good, sir. Think of sports as the same way as the military--you learned to deal with a group of people that you have no knowledge of, but, over time, you get to know them, have a common mission, right. … You have different people from different walks of life--think of it that way. So, you may have come from, I don't know, Kentucky. You may have come from, I don't know, maybe you came from West Germany and you came over. You were on a green card and you got the letter from your neighbors saying you've been drafted. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych is alluding to the fact that draft board members are drawn from the local area.] So, I got a guy that can speak English, he was [born] during the occupation of Germany [after World War II], right, and he's relatively conversant, all right. So, you learned, "Oh, okay, what was your life like?" … You know, you come from the Northeast, so, you had a lot of that interaction where you learned different people, different ways. Like, you asked me, "What was it like in the '50s or the '60s?" How can you relate to that? but, if I say to you, "What was it like in the '80s or the '90s? Can you tell me about [President] Reagan? Can you tell me about [President] Bush I [George H. W. Bush]? You know, can you tell me what impact that had on you?" you know, I don't know, right. Well, it's the same thing. You're getting that interaction from all these different people from different parts of the country, because they came from all different parts for the purposes of doing this particular thing called basic training. So, you went to different bases. At that time, it was, you went to Dix, I think it was [also] Fort Jackson, South Carolina,

some went to Fort Irwin, [California], others went to other bases, Fort Polk, Louisiana, right. So, they went all to different bases and their mission was, all right, you do the basic, and then, after that, you … got what they call an MOS. You know what an MOS is, military occupation specialty? All right, like, in Air Force, it's an AFSC [Air Force Specialty Code], right, okay, same thing. So, now, what did you sign up for? For a lot of guys, it was when they did their basic [training], they automatically went to their school. Mine was airborne infantry. Where am I going? I'm going to AIT, Advanced Infantry Training, all right. So, now, you learned. You learned all the basics--you know how to play with your rifle, you know how to keep your equipment clean, how to march in the middle of the night, how to make a tent, how to dig a hole, you know, all that stuff, right, how to eat out of a can, you know, as opposed to MREs, meals ready to eat, right. So, you do that routine, and then, you moved on to advanced infantry, and then, … you actually began to learn your, in quotes, … "MOS." Then, when you completed that, you went off to beautiful Fort Benning.

NM: Was the transition from civilian life to a more regimented military life easy?

BS: Easy--you went to Catholic school, come on, man.

NM: Yes.

BS: You've got to be kidding.

NM: Yes, I can see how Catholic school would have prepared you for military life.

BS: There's no transition. What could you do to me that they didn't do there? Come on, man, I could stand on my head [and] spit nickels, pal. [laughter] You've got to be kidding me. You realize the corporal punishment you were engaged in, in four years of high school run by the Jesuits and the Augustinian Brothers? You've got to be … kidding me.

NM: I am wondering, I think you mentioned it before …

BS: Go ahead, you're curious, man, go ahead, come on, Nick.

NM: Did you apply for the airborne?

BS: Yes.

NM: Okay.

BS: … It's like declaring your major. You had to say, "I want to do this." Yes, here, here, I brought this. …

NM: Is this your history?

BS: My history, William (Hall?). Wait a minute, hold it, let me get to that page, … where the hell is it? Where the hell is that page? …

TB: I should put together a book with memorabilia.

BS: Oh, here; no, this is Benning, wait a minute. Yes, you actually sign up for it.

NM: Okay.

BS: You actually [do], yes, yes. Where the hell is it? Oh, here it is, here it is, beautiful Broad Street. … This is the First Army area, so, this would be the main station, Newark, at 1006 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey, before we had zip codes--holy shit, I'm old. [laughter] Anyway, yes, it says right here, "My name," your name, "further assignment, Airborne Authorization Army Regulation 601215." So, that's what you signed for; yes, there you go, yes. [Editor's Note: ZIP (Zone Improvement Plan) codes were officially established in 1963 by the United States Postal Service.]

NM: Okay. Were there any other options that you had considered?

BS: No.

NM: Okay.

BS: This is focused purpose--do it.

NM: Okay.

BS: Okay.

NM: Okay.

BS: All right.

NM: I am curious about the 101st Airborne Division.

BS: … Oh, you're jumping way ahead of yourself.

NM: I know I am jumping way ahead.

BS: You're way jumping ahead of yourself.

NM: Did you have any idea that you could potentially be working with helicopters when you joined the airborne?

BS: Helicopters weren't even in the picture.

NM: Okay.

BS: … Actually, helicopters, in that timeline, that was a prototype that they were working on, okay. What you see in those pictures, like the Huey [Bell UH-1 Iroquois] and all that, that's not what made up an aviation company back in the day. … Remember, they were at company strength, all right, not at brigade strength, not at division strength. This was still all a parachutist as a means of delivery, okay, just like the helicopter is a means of delivery, all right. So, that wasn't even in the picture. It was still the Cold War, because of these guys [the Soviet Bloc], all right. So, it was still that it was going to be a traditional force. … The Berlin Wall is still up, you still had troops stationed in Europe, right, from Germany all the way through, all the way back to England, right, and all the way down to Italy, right. You still had guys that were left over from World War II that were still in bases and posts that were still there at the end of World War II, because it was, what? you have the instrument of surrender behind you. It was an unconditional surrender. So, we occupied those Western European nations that were still friendly to us at the end of World War II, right. You remember that, right.

SL: I remember from the books we read.

BS: From the books, that's what I mean, from the books. You remember whatever you were taught, right. So, yes, so, did I think of the use of the helicopter? no, no.

NM: That was not the image.

BS: That wasn't even in the picture. It was still … a typical infantry unit. Your only difference was, you were delivered by an airplane via parachute.

SL: Okay.

BS: Okay, and your training was a little bit challenging--yes, I think I would use that word--it was challenging.

TB: I researched Fort Dix and learned that they had constructed a mock Vietnamese village.

BS: No, no.

TB: Not at the time you came through?

BS: That was Dorothea Dix, gave up the land, okay. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych appears to have mistaken Dorothea Dix, a nineteenth century nurse and advocate for the mentally insane, as the namesake of Fort Dix. Fort Dix is named after Major General John Adams Dix, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the Civil War.] … You've got to remember, Dix and McGuire [Air Force Base] are co-located, right. That used to be Dix Army Airfield. It's only named after McGuire, the ace from the Pacific--no? yes? you've never been on the base, at that thing?

TB: No.

BS: Well, that's named after Mr. McGuire, who was killed in the Pacific, all right. He was the second leading ace of World War II in the Pacific, all right, and he was killed doing something

he shouldn't have been doing, but that's all right. … They named it after him, but … that was an Army Air Corps base. [Editor's Note: Major Thomas B. McGuire, Jr., a Medal of Honor recipient, was the second leading air ace in World War II before he was killed in action on January 7, 1945, in the Philippines. The defunct Fort Dix Army Air Force Base was reopened and renamed in his honor in 1948.] Remember [that] the Army separates itself from … the Air Force in 1947, under Eisenhower [Truman], okay. Then, it becomes the United States Air Force. So, no, the mock Vietnam village, no, that didn't exist in my timeline. The only one I was familiar with was the one at Fort Polk, Louisiana, because Louisiana has a temperature and a climate that's somewhat similar to beautiful Southeast Asia, okay. They didn't have that. … Right through the '60s, all that Dix did was basic training and AIT training, advanced infantry, right.

TB: When were you sent to Louisiana?

BS: No, no, I never [went to Louisiana], I only know about it, no. I went to another fine place. … Where I went to jungle warfare school was Panama. I went to Panama for that. …

TB: Can you expand on that?

BS: It's jungle warfare. It's just, … again, you're going from a normal infantry company of two hundred people, right, and you're fighting as in a platoon environment--now, you're going from that to small teams. By small teams, I mean anywhere from six to twelve [soldiers]. So, you'd be half of my squad, okay--there'd be three other guys. Then, if there'd be twelve, then, it would be a complete team, all right, and then, that would break it down by how you were armed and what you did, all right. … You would go out and you would fight as a team--not as a company size--and you would have a specific target, like, today, I want to take this building away and everybody in it. You would be my target today, all right. I'm not going to capture the City of New Brunswick, I'm going to take 18 Bishop Place and I'm going to take everybody in it and that would be my job for today, all right. So, I would get all the information possible, and then, I would take care of what I had to do that particular day, all right, and, if you were on the hit list, you're no longer in the DNA pool--have a nice day, all right.

TB: Was Panama anything like Vietnam?

BS: No, Panama was tactics. All Panama did was teach you tactics. [In] Panama, what they did was, they gave you situations. It was kind of like this, going into a room and talking about tactics--then, you would actually go out and do it. Then, you would get critiqued on those tactics, right, and then, … they would give you scenarios that, today, we're big with that. They were doing it back then, too, scenario-based, you're going to do something. … "You're going to take a heavily armed unit, all right, or suspected heavily armed unit--how would you do it? Okay, and they're here--how would you approach them? Where would you come from? How would you do it? How would you use … your capability and capacity when you go into an area?" right. Then, you come back and they give you a little patch and they give you a diploma, suitable for framing. …

NM: Was this after your advanced training?

BS: After advanced infantry, you go to jump school.

NM: Okay.

BS: Jump school was four weeks. … In that four weeks, they had what they called zero week, and that was just strictly physical training.

NM: Okay.

BS: Okay. Then, it was ground week. You had, yes, ground week, tower week, jump week, and that's very easy to explain. Ground week was where you learned the ins-and-outs of parachuting and you got the history and you had to memorize that, you know, who the key players were, who were the people. … You know, it was kind of like going to Catholic school. You had to spit this out, right, okay, and you went on to tower week and that's when they took you up the pretty, I don't know whether they do this anymore, put you up the--[Mr. Spych looking through his photo album], where am I? where's the pretty towers?--these pretty towers. It's like going to Coney Island, same thing, Coney Island towers, okay. You go up, they take you to the top. When you hit, it releases you and you came down and you did what they [said]. You learned how to do a PLF, parachute landing fall, all right. … Around the base of that tower was a "soft surface," which is a misnomer, because, sometimes, you didn't get soft surfaces. [laughter] Anyway, … you would do that and you would become proficient in how to do a PLF and coming out of a harness and getting out of the harness, right.

NM: I am trying to determine at what point you went to jungle warfare school.

BS: That was, no, no, I'm way ahead of myself, okay. From jump school, … you're assigned to a unit. You had a choice of--you could either end up at the 82nd, the 101st, you could end up at the 503rd, down at Panama, … or 503rd on Okinawa, the 508th in Panama. You could end up in his part of the world, with Eighth Infantry in Germany, in Mannheim, and there was another outfit in Italy--northern Italy, okay--and they were brigade size and they were not division size. So, I got assigned to, just by the luck of the draw, 101st. I didn't request the 101st. … They would come through, "How many do they need here?" and they would just say, you know, they would do it alphabetically, so, "A through S," or, I don't know, "Q through Z, you guys are going here, you're going there," you know, and that was it. There was no rhyme or reason how they did it. It was just bodies--they wanted bodies somewhere. So, you go to beautiful 101st, okay. So, now, when you go there, you're the new guy. It's kind of like being a freshman, all right, and then, your rite of passage was, once you made eleven jumps and had spelled the letters--there was eleven letters in "paratrooper"--once you've spelled it out and you had eleven jumps, then, you were considered a paratrooper. That was a division thing; that was in-house. That was, like, their rite of passage and, at that juncture, you got what they call, back in the day, "prop blasted" and that was drinking, like going to a fraternity party, all right. They had a helmet that was chromed, with two hand grenades on it, and they'd put various liquids and libations in that and you had to drink it, and then, you were one of the guys. Back in jump school, after your fifth jump, they pinned your wings on you. Then, you went [to a unit]. You were considered, when you left jump school, they would call that a "cherry jumper." That was like breaking the hymen

and you were still, right, … a virgin, and then, finally, you did all your required equipment jumps, and then, you know, you had to do so many night jumps, you had to do so many equipment jumps, blah, blah, blah, and that's how it worked, right.

NM: Okay. You had mentioned previously that, at some point, you played football.

BS: Yes. … That would've been--is that October of '64 or '65?--anyway, it's the fall, at Fort Campbell. Yes, so, they had tryouts and I went out, right, and that lasted all of three months, yes. That lasted three months, yes. That'd be about right, three months, … but that has no rhyme, no reason, because you had to report back to your company every day and continue on. So, it was like the same thing like you would have here--you go to class, you go to football practice. They may adjust your schedule, so [that] you could go to football practice, same thing, all right. … To answer your question, that was Special Services. That was for the morale of the boys, keep them happy, right. Come on, man, what [are] we up to? All right, so, … now, we're actually at the 101st at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, overlooking the Cumberland River or whatever, or what is that? Kentucky Lake, whatever. [Editor's Note: Both bodies of water are in the vicinity of Fort Campbell.] Okay, so, now, we're practice, practice, practice, right. We do field training exercises, we run out at night and play out in the woods and we come back and we do all that stuff, right. We do the routine. We do so many night jumps, you do this, you do field training exercises. We actually did a field training exercise called, you ready? "DESERT STRIKE." How about that? Think about this--flash forward and what do you remember?

TB: Same thing.

BS: DESERT STORM, no, no, DESERT STORM, and what was the other one? There was another one … when they were in Kuwait. …

NM: DESERT SHIELD.

BS: DESERT SHIELD, right; SHIELD and DESERT STORM. [Editor's Note: On August 2, 1990, Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, invaded neighboring Kuwait to secure its oil fields and key location on the Persian Gulf. Operation DESERT SHIELD began on August 7, 1990, when the first US forces arrived in Saudi Arabia, at the request of its leader, King Fahd, who feared an invasion by Iraq. Operation DESERT STORM, the US-led, UN-sanctioned coalition force assault on Iraqi-held territory, began on January 17, 1991, and concluded with a cease-fire negotiated on March 1, 1991.]

SL: For you, there was DESERT STRIKE.

BS: We had DESERT STRIKE, and that was the last of where a division actually acted like a traditional division, infantry, right, division, going in. … I jumped in on a town called … Nipton. How about this, Nipton, California? and, if you look on the map, you'll see it. How do I know it was Nipton, California? You'll never figure it out, right. "Population Twenty-Eight." They missed the DZ, all right; that would be the drop zone. I get out of the airplane, all right, and I'm looking, I'm going, "Holy shit." I'm over the town, right. So, I ended up landing next to a road, by a drainage ditch, and here's this sign, "Welcome to Nipton. Population Twenty-

Eight." [laughter] I go, "Son of a bitch." So, if you go and you get a West Coast map, California and Arizona, … I'm being dropped in Nipton, I have to go east to a place called Searchlight, Searchlight, Arizona, [Nevada]. As a matter-of-fact, that's where the current Senate [Majority Leader], … Harry, "Dingy Harry," what's his name? Reid, is from, the head of the Senate, sitting right now. Harry Reid's from Searchlight, Arizona. [Editor's Note: US Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) was born in Searchlight, Nevada.] So, okay, my job was to capture the post office in Nipton. You say, "Oh, Bill, how you going to do that?" Well, we flew at night, all our gear is on the deck of the [plane], inside the airplane, right. So, we come out of beautiful Campbell and we are flying--you've got to picture this. Did you ever see a picture *Red Dawn;* no, anybody? [Editor's Note: In the 1984 John Milius film *Red Dawn*, the Soviet Union and its Latin American allies invade the United States in the early 1980s. The main characters, a group of American high school students, defend their country using guerilla warfare tactics.]

NM: The one in which the Soviets invade …

BS: Yes, America, right. Well, these people must have thought this was *Red Dawn*, okay, because to take a division and move five thousand people from one place to another takes a whole lot of airplanes, right.

SL: Yes.

BS: And you're going to jump, and you're breaking up as you come to where you're going to go, right. So, if so many guys are jumping in--we'll say, for the sake of the argument, Nipton, California, some are … jumping south of Searchlight, others are jumping in the Mojave [Desert] somewhere, right--these people thought it was the end of the world, right. [laughter] … So, we get out, you do your routine, you go in and you say, "Well, how did you get [out]?" Well, you got out of the airplane--this is [at], like, five o'clock, it's first light, your ass is out of the airplane at first light, right--get on the ground and you say, "Okay, where's the post office?" So, it's at 18 Bishop Place. So, I march to 18 Bishop Place. I sit outside; I wait for the people to come to work. When they come to work, I say, "Hi, how you doing? This is a field training exercise and you've just been captured." Then, I … go, you know, you call it in, right, "We got it." Then, I'll say to you, "Okay, move on now to Searchlight." So, you get on the road and you start doing the walk, and you walk and you're going to walk a long time, and then, maybe …

TB: Did you walk with your packs and everything?

BS: Yes. Well, no, no, see, you guys see those pictures and all--I never, I never, walked with that much equipment in my life. The most I ever had on my back was no more than fifteen pounds, at best, at best, okay. … Even after a while, … as you go further down the road, we got rid of that helmet bullshit, okay. That's a joke. Flak vest? you've got to be kidding. That couldn't stop anything--all that did is make you hot. So, we got rid of the flak vests and helmets, down to soft caps, right, and just load-bearing equipment. Today, they got rucksacks. Rucksacks are much better, but, yes, I never [did that], … no, no, that humping like eighty-five pounds. You've got to be out of your mind. What are you, nuts, you know? No, you just moved. You moved with as light [a load] as you could and you moved. … Before meals ready to eat, what we used to do is, take the tube socks--you know what tube socks [are], no?

TB: Yes.

BS: Long socks, like knee-highs, like [if] you go to Victoria's Secret, it'd be thigh-highs, okay, same thing, all right. … They're, like, up to the knee, … they're black, they were issued to you, right--you could take the tube sock and you could drop your C rations down the thing and tie off both ends and you could tie it on your load-bearing equipment. [Editor's Note: First issued during World War II, C rations were the prepackaged meals given to soldiers when fresh food or unprepared food requiring a mess hall were impractical.] Take a rain jacket--in case you got rain, you could sleep on your rain jacket, all right, or some guys took their poncho and they could put it on their back, right, and the rest is … all your armament, whatever you had, whether you had grenades, bullets, whatever, right, trip flares, all that bullshit, right. Then, you walked, and then, you hooked up, and then, you moved north. Then, we moved … east toward Searchlight, and then, after Searchlight, we moved into the desert, and then, the training exercise is over. We had done whatever thing, right. Then, we go to Las Vegas and it was timed perfect. It was the end of the month, and guess what shows up at the end of the month? come on, boys and girls.

TB: Pay?

BS: You got it. So, they took us to Nellis [Air Force Base]. We partied for three days in Las Vegas, went back to Nellis. From Nellis, we go back to Campbell and that was it. … The reason that leaves an impression, that's the last time we ever worked as a division. Then, we come back, I go to jungle school. … Now, we start seeing guys from the Forces--Special Forces. Now, they're coming in. They're beginning now to train you. You had to scrub from your head anything to do with large unit exercises. Now, you've got to start thinking in terms of small team tactics, and this is where this comes into play. So, they send you off … for four weeks. You come back and, you know, the diploma says I'm an expert, right. I believe that, don't you? … I asked the question, "Well, define an expert." "'Ex' is the former. 'Spurts' a little bit of water comes out of a hose. So, you're an 'Ex-spurt' now." So, okay, then, you sit around, you wait, you pick your nose, and they give you--what was that? … Oh, yes, here it is--you got your special Vietnam orientation. That was it. … Yes, right, you got your orientation, right. … Then, they would tell you, "Go home," and said, "Orders will come down," and so, you don't move as a unit now, right, you got this, no unit. "You just go home, and then, I'll send you;" and you guys don't even know about this, right--we're really going back--they send you a Western Union telegram. Get out of Dodge, right, you get this, right. [laughter] They say to you, "Get your ass to Oakland," right. So, you went over to Philadelphia. I went out of Philly. So, you get on the airplane out of Philly, you fly to beautiful downtown San Francisco, you catch the bus and you go to beautiful downtown … Oakland Army Terminal, right. … Lo and behold, "I know you from;" whatever. … We all came down on what they called, back in the day, what they would call it was a levy. They would just say, "I need ten guys." So, they would go and say, "You ten are going and you'll get a set of orders." So, the commanding general of beautiful downtown Fort Campbell sends you a telegram, says, "You get your ass to Oakland." So, what they did is, they're going to out-process you through Oakland and you're going to go to the "fun country." So, how that worked is, you go in--and you knew things were really bad, because you packaged all the clothing that you brought with you in a cardboard box and you sent it back to your house.

… You said, "All my stuff's going to get to my house." Well, guess what? It never really got there. It went to some, wherever, holding area, storage area, because it never got to my home of record, all right. So, if you'd put anything important in there, I don't know where it is today. … You know, it's in a time capsule for all I know. So, anyway, they got that and they said, "Okay, you're going to be here for at least a week," and then, [what] they would do is, they would take you from Oakland, they'd bus you to Travis [Air Force Base in Fairfield, California], and then, at Travis, you would get on a [plane]. I got on a World Airways 707 out of Travis. From Travis, you went Travis to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. You did the Great Circle Route. So, you flew from California to Alaska. Then, they fueled in Tokyo, and then, they went into Tan Son Nhut. Then, you would go, out of Tan Son Nhut, you would go to--what do you call it?--place they called, for the lack of a better term, Camp Alpha. That was in-processing for in-country, and you actually carried your orders and your complete personnel file with you, not like today, where they have it on, … it looks like a credit card, if you've ever seen. I don't know, have you ever [seen one], no? It's like a swipe card. It's got a chip in it. It's got all your information on it. They don't need to have paper. They just [swipe it], you know, "You're Nick," all right, whatever. So, you carried everything and they in-process you manually. They were still writing airplane tickets, or travel tickets, by hand back then, honest to God, man, not like … you can do today, right--swipe, go to the kiosk, boom, punch everything out and go, all right. So, everything was written out. Then, you would go and they'd say, "Okay, you're going to go over here, sleep tonight, and then, they're going to come get you in the morning and you're going to go to your unit," and then, that's how it went.

NM: I have a follow-up question. You mentioned that you went to something called the Vietnam orientation.

BS: Yes.

NM: Could you tell us what that entailed?

BS: Yes. You got [information on] where it was currently being fought in-country, because, now, remember, it's July 1965. I come out of the desert June of 1965, right. … We were in what was called a thirty-day field training exercise. So, I'm gone for thirty days. I come back to Campbell, shake off the sand and--what do you call it?--go to my routine, get a set of orders that's cut on me. I go to jungle school, I come back. Then, they say, "You're going." In the orientation, they tell you where [things are], what units are in-country, what corps area they're in, right, and how it's broken down and where most of the fighting is currently going on, all right. Then, they say, "He's the enemy and this is what he looks like. He's wearing a plaid shirt with this," blah, blah, blah. "You'll see irregulars. You'll see people … in their black, very nice silk, black silk, and then, you'll see the regular NVA, North Vietnamese Army, what they look like. These are the weapons that they're using. These are the tactics we think they've been using, all right. This is what you're going to be up against. You're going to be up against, maybe, hit-and-run stuff or … you've got to look out for … how not to get into an ambush, you know. Why not? Why don't you walk that trail the third time? because the third time ain't a charm. You're dead, brother--have a nice day. You're going home in a bag." … Then, they would go on like that, "And these are the people you'll be dealing with, these are the villages that you might be involved in," all right. So, it was very in-depth, okay, in terms of what you were going to see,

what you might, you know, what to expect. Then, of course, you got all your shots, you know, the cholera, the plague, the whatever, whatever, … all that bullshit, the hemoglobin shots, all that stuff. … Then, they signed you off and you cleared base. You went home, waited for your Western Union telegram--came, you went.

NM: Did they ever give a short history of the conflict in Vietnam?

BS: A short history? No, they were the bad guys, that's all, yes. … Yes, you mean like go into, you don't mean when--what do you called it?--the OSS, under what's that … [Editor's Note: The Office of Strategic Services was a United States intelligence agency formed under Colonel William "Wild Bill" Donovan during World War II. The OSS collaborated with Communist groups in Europe and Asia against the Axis. In Vietnam, OSS officers worked with Ho Chi Minh to develop a human intelligence network, sabotage Japanese infrastructure, conduct guerilla operations and search for downed Allied fliers and POWs. Ho Chi Minh was an influential revolutionary leader who initially fought for Vietnamese independence from French control and, later, against the United States and South Vietnam. He served as the prime minister and president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), as well as the leader of the Communist Viet Cong during the Vietnam War.]

NM: No, no.

BS: You don't mean where they actually went, put the actual picture [out] of the little guy with the little beard and two guys from the OSS, have their arms around him, and you're saying, "Hey, I know that guy. You know, he looks like Ho Chi Minh." … They go, "Yes, that is Ho Chi Minh. He was our ally in the Second World War," and you go, "No shit, he was our ally?" "Yes." We came over there, OSS came in, under what's his name? Bill, "Wild Bill;" come on, the OSS guy, … come on.

NM: I forget his name.

BS: Anyway, he goes there, he makes the deal. He says, goes, "Ho, what do you need?" "We'd like to be our own independent country." "Ho, we know you're a Communist. … We've been following you since 1925 with J. Edgar, all right. What do you want?" "Well, when this is all over, could you tell the French to leave?" … They go, "Yes, no problem. We'll throw them out. They don't need tires for their Michelin tires, no problem. Okay, we'll make a deal with you. You shoot up the Japs, we'll have a great day. Shoot them up, slow them down, you know, do whatever you [can], you got it." End of Second World War, what happens? Come on, boys and girls, who went back to French Indochina?

SL: The French did.

BS: Well, goddamn, how about that? right, and they were called what? not the Viet Cong. What were they called in his time? [Editor's Note: The Viet Cong was the guerilla military branch of the Communist National Liberation Front (NFL). Although commanded by the Central Office for South Vietnam, the Viet Cong relied on North Vietnam for supplies and weapons.]

NM: The Viet Minh.

BS: There you go, there you go. Gee, how about that? All right, so, they welched on the deal, brother, is what they did. They shoved it to them, because the tall Frenchman, you remember [Charles] de Gaulle; you might remember him, right. [Editor's Note: French General Charles de Gaulle led the Free French Forces during World War II and later became the founder and president of the Fifth Republic of France.] He couldn't make the landing at Normandy--he was in London at the time--but he cried, moaned, you know, typical--anybody French?--typical French, cry, piss and moan. … That's what they did and they [the Americans] said, "Well, Ho, guess what? They're coming back and you have a nice day," and then, the rest is history, because, then, the French got … their hat handed to them, in that book by Bernard Fall, *Hell in A Very Small Place*; no? Dien Bien Phu, right. [Editor's Note: Published in 2002, Fall's book addresses the consequences of the 1954 Battle of Dien Bien Phu, in which Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh destroyed the technologically superior French forces. The battle not only ended French imperial ambitions in Vietnam, but also convinced the Vietnamese that similar guerilla tactics might work against the United States.]

NM: Yes.

BS: Where they [the French] said, "Oh, they couldn't get them 105s [the 105-millimeter howitzer] up the hill." We go, "But, you're in a valley." "But, they can't get them guns up that hill." Yes, they did; they dragged them up the hill and they shot the shit out of them, right; no?

NM: I know what you are talking about.

BS: You know what I'm talking about, right. You got it there, right.

NM: Yes.

BS: So, then, the rest is history, right. Then, it starts. … The French get their hat handed to them, and then, the rest is, "Now, we want the South," and then, if you want to read a really good book, it's by the Carnegie Institute, *Lessons in Disaster* [*Lessons in Disaster: McGeorge Bundy and the Path to War in Vietnam* by Gordon M. Goldstein (2008)], all about Jack, you know, Camelot, him. "How was Dallas, Mrs. Kennedy?" no? [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych is referring to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963.]

NM: I know what you were referring to.

BS: … You don't know how Jack got us into that? In *Lessons in Disaster*, … actually, the book was going to be about George McBundy [McGeorge Bundy], okay, and McBundy was one of those faceless bureaucrats that you never, ever hear about, but they have influence on the political process, all right. … Then, how we're now involved, he [Kennedy] becomes President and what does Ike [President Dwight Eisenhower] say to him, no?

NM: No.

BS: "Never get involved in a land war in Southeast Asia." This is the Supreme Allied Commander from World War II telling the next President, "You don't want to do this," okay. … In your readings, … what do you think that was about?

SL: Korea?

BS: No, no, what do you think Vietnam was about?'

SL: When it started?

BS: Prior to.

NM: What I was trying to get at is, what did they tell you the War in Vietnam was about?

BS: Nothing. There's no [explanation]. Wait a minute, no, yours is just to do. Wait a minute, … this isn't a debating club, all right. [laughter] Your Commander-in-Chief in the form of the President has just said, "These troops will in fact leave this part of the world and go there and go do this." What is the military? It is the political might of … the party in power--think about it, right. So, when you use that might, whether it be military or diplomatic, use it wisely, because, if you don't, you're going to step on something and you ain't going to like it, all right. So, it became what, in terms of war wise? How long did it drag out?

NM: It dragged on for a long time, almost a decade.

BS: It'd be 1959 to 1973; that's fourteen years. [Editor's Note: The Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam, better known as the Paris Peace Accords, went into effect on January 27, 1973, leading to the withdrawal of all US combat forces in South Vietnam two months later.] You think somebody got pissed off at the end of this? … Why do you think the draft was done away with? Do you know why? The draft was done away with and they went to a lottery system, and then, they went to an all-volunteer concept, okay, but do you know why the draft went away? [Editor's Note: Beginning in December 1969, the Selective Service System held draft lotteries to determine the order in which young men would be called for induction into the US Armed Forces, replacing the earlier oldest-to-youngest system of conscription.]

SL: They went through all the draftees.

BS: Well, (I had the head thing?). The biggest complainers were those from the Ivy League schools, not Jane Fonda, because I always ask the question, "When did Jane Fonda visit the North? When?"

NM: I do not remember.

BS: It's 1972; I think it's March. [Editor's Note: Jane Fonda went to Hanoi in July 1972.] When do we finally pull [out]? When do we pull out of Vietnam? '73, but what month? It's January, we pull [out]. The vision people have--when they watch the History Channel, of course--they see the embassy in Saigon and the helicopters and the people jumping over the fence, right.

That's '75. … You're coming up on '75. This is when we handed the keys to the kingdom and said, "Here, now, you go fight your war," right. So, it's all over by 1975, right. [Editor's Note: On April 30, 1975, the last US military personnel, US Marines guarding the American Embassy, left Saigon as North Vietnamese forces captured the city, ending the Vietnam War.]

SL: Yes.

BS: Because they come rolling into Saigon, which is now Ho Chi Minh City, right, okay. So, '73, we pull [out]. She's there in '72. She had nothing to do with anything, all right. They knew it was all over, when you read, what do you call it? McNamara. McNamara knew by '68, '69, "We've got to get out of this place," and, as a matter-of-fact, there's another gentleman; you know who Jim Gavin is?

NM: No.

BS: Commanding General, 82nd Airborne, World War II?

SL: No. [Editor's Note: In World War II, Lieutenant General James M. Gavin jumped on all of the 82nd Airborne Division's airborne invasions and commanded the 82nd from the invasion of Holland to the end of the war. In November 1967, he returned from his third trip to Vietnam and, in 1968, published a book, *Crisis Now*, which called for an end to the United States' involvement in Vietnam.]

BS: No? Okay, … he's sent as an emissary to Vietnam to look at it and say [what we should do]. He comes back in '67, he says, "Get your ass out." This is 1967, all right. This is like October of '67. He says, "Get your ass out of Dodge. You're going to lose it, man, you know. You're fighting an unconventional war with conventional troops," okay. So, it goes back to what I said to you, in terms of, we come out of the desert, we're fighting in a conventional way. Then, now, … different divisions are being trained--not every [division], not Army-wide, not service-wide, right, just certain units are being trained to do certain things. … The doctrine didn't change. You still had units that were traditional, at that time. So, now, you're going to send their ass where, walk through the jungle, take a walk in the jungle? Come on, you've got to be kidding me, all right. There's no paved roads in the jungle--I don't know how to break the news to you--you know, off on trails and shit like that, you know; go ahead.

NM: You can ask a follow-up.

BS: Go ahead, you can ask me. [laughter]

TB: At this moment, you are in-country.

BS: I'm in-country, yes, the big time.

TB: Did you have a sweetheart back home?

BS: No. Wait, … you mean like [in] armies of occupation, to have a girlfriend? Wait a minute, you mean like …

TB: Back home.

BS: No, nobody, please, no, no. You had acquaintances, whether they be a paid escort or whether they be a lady that you met. You mean like outside of [base], off post, like in the surrounding cities and towns, the indigenous population--is that what you were asking?

TB: I was thinking about back home.

BS: No, no. You mean, "I'm going to marry you, baby?" [laughter] no, please, high school sweetheart, no.

NM: Did you communicate with your family?

BS: Very little, very little. What are you going to tell them there?

NM: I just …

BS: Have you ever been out of country?

NM: Not in the military.

BS: No, no, on a vacation.

NM: Yes.

BS: Hawaii, where?

NM: Southeast Asia, actually.

BS: South--where? What part of the great …

NM: The Philippines, actually.

BS: The [Philippines], all right, like Cebu City, Manila, out by Clark [a US Air Force base on Luzon Island] and stuff like that? okay, very good. Describe to me 120-degree heat and make me feel it. [laughter]

NM: Hey, not really much to …

BS: Tell me, okay. Tell me about the monsoon, describe to me the monsoon--what's the monsoon like?

NM: It is rain, right.

BS: Yes, but can you [describe it when] you have no [frame of reference]? You're sitting here in the States and you're going back and forth to work every day--it's the first television war--and I tell you, "I can't believe the flies, I can't believe the red ants, I can't believe the mud and I can't believe the thing," all right. … "It's 120 in direct sunlight, it's basically ninety-five to a hundred in the shade. Some days, you would never see the sun, because the canopy of the jungle would be there," right--tough. Describe that for me, and then, when I describe it to you, can you relate to it? and you go, "No, what the fuck you talking about? You know, I'm in Newark, you know, I'm in Trenton, I'm in Elizabeth."

NM: Did you get any communication from your relatives?

BS: Yes, they would send you dry socks and, let me see ,what else did they [send]? oh, and their heart-filled thanks and, every once in a while, you'd get maybe, what, hard candy? "Eh," because, remember, we're still in a post-World War II mindset. This is like, you go, "You've got to be shitting me, man," you know, but the only thing you had going for you was, you knew your timeline. You weren't there for the duration, unless you want it to be, right. You knew you were going to go. There's a date, a date certain that you're definitely leaving--not like today, where they can do that, what's that, stop-loss? They do stop-loss [mandatory extensions of military contracts] now. … You can be in-country, your time is up, but they can say, "No, you're critical to the mission and you're staying," and you have no way out of it, because it's in your contract.

TB: What was your first assignment when you got to Vietnam?

BS: First assignment--to bring my talents and abilities to bear. So, if you're asking me what was my first, like …

TB: Operation.

BS: First operation. My first operation is an operation called WHITE WING/MASHER, yes. [Editor's Note: Operation WHITE WING, conducted from January 28 to March 6, 1966, was a search-and-destroy operation involving American, ARVN and Republic of Korea Army forces in a sweep of the Binh Dinh Province. The original codename, Operation MASHER, was abandoned as too crude.]

TB: Why did they change the name? I know it was Operation MASHER.

BS: Because it was, yes, the use of the word. It was just like [how] I'm used to the term search-and-destroy. If Bishop Place [the location of the interview] was my day today, okay, I did what I had to do--I'm burning you to the ground. I'm going to burn everything to the ground. I'm going to kill your pigs, your chicken, your goat, your water buffalo and I'm burning you out, all right, and I'm going to leave you a message, "Have a nice day," and I'm walking away and, if you didn't leave, well, you got a bad day. [laughter]

TB: What rank were you during this time now?

BS: I'm an E-4 at this juncture. I come out as an E-5.

TB: Okay.

BS: And why, you say why? Where's all the officers? Well, most of the officers weren't even around, because they weren't even trained. I went through four platoon leaders, I went through three commanding company commanders and I want you to think about what I just said to you. I went through four platoon leaders--they went home in a bag. They didn't go home walking, all right. So, somebody wasn't training somebody. So, what you ended up getting was a very new guy, all right, that didn't really know what was going on, all right.

TB: If there was a tragedy with the platoon leaders, would you or someone else just take his place?

BS: You always took their place, yes. You had to step up, all the time. You're always stepping up, because you worked in teams. … I'm working with a six-man squad. Then, I end up with a twelve-man team, all right. So, that's how you worked. You worked in that manner, shape and form, how ever we went in and wherever we had to go, all right, and we wouldn't move. The worst thing I was ever on, picture this--can you picture [it]? You've heard helicopters, right. Can you hear them a distance, way off?

TB: You can.

BS: … Okay. Take that and multiply it by 120 helicopters. … At that juncture, I was in only one operation where we had to [do that]. That was the biggest lift I was ever on, 120. From that juncture on, it was never more than three, two, or, at most ever, four helicopters, at any given time, but a hundred, you think they make a lot of noise, you think they might hear you coming? It's like carrying this boat, right. You ever hear of them boats? Have you ever gone out here on the Raritan, or down here on the bay, and hear those boats when they crank up them diesels? Well, take a military diesel fast boat, all right, and guess what? You think you can hear it coming? There's no surprise element, all right. [Editor's Note: The US Navy conducted operations along the rivers of Southeast Asia using patrol crafts fast (PCFs), also known as "swift boats," vessels designed specifically for use in the Vietnam War.]

TB: Did you work closely with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam?

BS: Yes, I worked with them. … It was the Eighth ARVN Airborne. I worked with them for two weeks and that was just to show them tactics and that was the end of that; no, not a good group to work with.

TB: It was just training.

BS: You trained them in the field. It was like OJT, [on-the-job training], "Come on, I'm going to show you something today." So, again, if 18 Bishop Place was my target for today, you're going to become, also, my training exercise and I'm going to train you. I'm going to show you what to look for, what to do, and you're going to do it in real time and in real conditions, all right.

This isn't going to be a scenario-based thing--it's going to be a real deal, all right, yes. … They weren't a very good soldier at all. They had a tendency to think they were on a walk, like they were going to take a little hike in the woods, and it didn't work out too well and a lot of them got nailed on that, in that particular mindset, right; so, another kid in the Philippines?

MN: Excuse me?

BS: Born and raised in the Philippines?

NM: No.

BS: No; parents?

NM: My mother.

BS: So, you remember Mrs. Marcos? She loved shoes, you know. She loved shoes, and Doris Duke loved her, too. She used to bring her here on her airplane. [Editor's Note: Imelda R. Marcos was the wife of Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos. The luxuries she flaunted, including a collection of thousands of dress shoes, became symbols of the excesses of the Marcos regime.]

NM: I saw the documentary on her. I did want to ask …

BS: Go ahead, sir.

NM: You mentioned that this Operation MASHER/WHITE WING was a search-and-destroy type mission.

BS: Yes.

NM: Could you tell us about your experience as an infantryman during this type of operation? Could you go into that a little bit more?

BS: What do you want to know? You want to know the tactics used?

NM: Yes, on a search-and-destroy mission.

BS: You're inserted. You're in, like, a given area--I'm inserted into New Brunswick, okay. … You would brief it the following day or two days prior to [when] you're going to come in and they would tell you, "You're going to come in echelon right, echelon left. You're going to be in this LZ, landing zone," blah, blah, blah. "Yes, right." "You're going to get out of the helicopter, you're going to get off at three o'clock, get off at nine o'clock. You're going to work your way towards this village. We see dams, dikes. There's a body of water. You're going to rally here and we're going to move out of here and we're going to move into this area, right. We consider it hot." They'll tell you, you know, "We consider the LZ hot." There might be a preemptive strike. Artillery, they might hit it, or they might hit it with napalm. They might hit it with … some kind

of air cover. "Then, you're going to come in. Then, you're going to move through. Then, at the end of the day, you're going to be such-and-such. This is where we want to be, and then, we're going to move on and we'll go in and we'll take everything down in front of it. Anything you see in front of you, take it down. It's considered hostile," and it was called a target of opportunity, and then, of course, you had your favorite radio guy. … Then, they would tell you what you had on station that particular day. They would say to you, "You've got three fast movers [jets]," sitting, you know, somewhere out in space, "and he's loaded with," and they would tell you. … He could have napalm, he could have clusters, he could have anything, right. … They'd say to you, "You're going to have--six miles back--you're going to have," maybe, an artillery unit, you know. So, you might have 105, you might have eight-inch, and you'd say, "Okay, got to get into the net to call it and go for it." "And, if you see a target of opportunity," and that was always the favorite, target of opportunity, "then, just take it out. That's it."

TB: Were there any challenges during this operation?

BS: What do you mean by a challenge?

TB: Did you have any problems with your fellow soldiers, any who refused to take orders or any miscommunications?

BS: Wait a minute--err, wait a minute--let me see if I got this right. You've got to go back--you volunteered for the airborne.

TB: You did.

BS: Okay, so, everybody that's in an airborne unit is what? a volunteer, right. So, you're held to a higher standard, right. It keeps going, you know, whether you go Ranger, sports, right; nobody, no.

TB: Okay.

BS: No, no. You're talking about somebody saying, "I don't want to do this?" No, it didn't work that way.

NM: On these types of search-and-destroy missions, you were going into villages. Was there any contact with the civilian population?

BS: Oh, of course, all the time.

NM: Could you tell us some of your experiences?

BS: Just move them out. They weren't considered hostile unless they showed hostile intent. No, they were just moved, you know. They didn't particularly like us, as always, you know. Armies of [occupation], you know, if they showed up here in Jersey, you wouldn't like them, right. You'd be pissed off, right--same thing--and they were kind of, like, shocked at the noise and

some of the stuff that happened in there, especially in their rice paddies, the mess we made in those rice paddies, unreal, yes.

NM: In a large operation, such as the one we are discussing, how long was an operation like that?

BS: Operation could last--the longest I was ever in the field was forty-seven days.

NM: Okay.

BS: That was the longest I was ever in the field, all right, and the shortest I was ever in the field was fourteen days, all right. So, usually, you could go two weeks, and the other one, the last one, was an exception to the rule, the forty-seven days, because of what transpired, and, yes, that was it. Then, you'd come back and shower, shave, smile and sleep on your cot, and wait for the next one to show up. So, you may get a couple days off, but you were going out and there was always, they did these; [laughter] we did night ambushes, which was a real [thrill]. That was a real thrill, and, yes, we'd go out, outside the "green line" [the defensive perimeter]. It was a green line. In An Khe, … around An Khe, there was, like, an area that was totally mined with [M18A1] Claymores and other various projectiles and you would go outside that line and you would run these night ambushes out into--you'd go out about maybe a mile-and-a-half to two miles in different quadrants. … That was to keep you, as they would say, "On your toes;" think about that one.

TB: While you were back in the rear …

BS: "Back in the rear," I love that--there was never a rear.

TB: No.

BS: No, there's no rear. There was no demarcating. No, I was never [in a rear area].

TB: Did you guys have any R&R? Were you able to travel anywhere for R&R?

BS: You could do in-country R&R and most of the guys either went to Saigon [or] I went to Nha Trang, which was on the beach. … It was beautiful French barracks on the beach, nice. It was like, think of Pensacola and the white sands of Pensacola, that it was that kind of, like, real bright, nice, white sand in the South China Sea. … I did two weeks in Bangkok.

TB: Did the USO put on any shows?

BS: USO, beautiful--you mean like the shows, the doughnut girls and stuff like [that]? [Editor's Note: The United Service Organizations, or USO, is an organization that has provided recreation and entertainment to US servicemen and women since World War II. The term "doughnut girls" is often used to describe Salvation Army volunteers who provided coffee and doughnuts to US servicemen and women.]

TB: Yes.

BS: I never saw a show in my life, and, supposedly, … there's that one where they have Bob Hope and it was Ann Margaret, I believe it was, and somebody else and that supposedly took place in An Khe. [Editor's Note: Bob Hope and the USO organized shows that traveled to Vietnam to perform at large bases during the Christmas season.] I never saw it. That was all PR, man, come on. A lot of units didn't see anything and a lot of them, they went to the more secure bases. They went to, like, the big ones, like, they went to Tan Son Nhut, they went to Da Nang. … They did a couple in Okinawa. They did some in the Philippines at Clark [Air Force Base]. What's that one? Is that Cebu City, C-E-B-U?

NM: Subic Bay?

BS: No, no, Cebu, C-E-B-U, Cebu, right, there, did Hawaii, that's all. That's so out of context, that whole thing, you know, and I don't think they're bringing you back to view this if you're in the field. No, they ain't bringing you back, brother, trust me.

NM: What other types of missions did you participate in? Were the majority search-and-destroy?

BS: Every one was a search-and-destroy. There was no; what? Well, what am I thinking of? … psych ops--you mean to be your buddy, you mean a goodwill tour? No, no, there's no goodwill tours here, no. Yes, if you go on … up north … [Mr. Spych produces a map.]

TB: Did you have this map with you?

BS: No, no. … You know how I got this map? This was the Time-Life issue. They did a whole series. Time-Life did a thing on the Vietnam War and that's where that picture of (thing?) is, oh, and the boys--Donovan, "Wild Bill" Donovan, that's it, OSS, yes. He's the guy that makes the deal. Yes, here's Nha Trang; that's on the beach. That's where I was for the thing. Then, I'm here, An Khe. … This is the II Corps area, up here, okay, up here. An Khe's in the II Corps area. I started down here, out of beautiful Bien Hoa, and I end up in An Khe, but Qui Nhon was a supply base that was huge. … So, he went there--Hope went to Qui Nhon. That was a huge, secured Air Force base there and they had Army MACV [US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam] stuff, but, yes, then, Nha Trang was in-country and that was beautiful. That was like you were home, like you're down [at] the beach in Florida, you know, like down in Jupiter or down in Ft. Lauderdale, absolutely beautiful. They had lifeguards, they had … surfboards--everything's beautiful, you know, just like you see in [the 1979 Francis Ford Coppola film] *Apocalypse Now*, you know. Anyway, … you asked [about] the missions. Plei Me was a Special Forces camp, all right. … We ran missions out of there, and then, of course, we crossed into--we were never there--we crossed into beautiful downtown Cambodia, because, how was I briefed on that? … "We believe they have Chinese advisors." "Right, yes," and I never thought Chinese were that tall, even though the basketball guy [Yao Ming is from China], but that was my first time I ever saw a Chinaman taller than six feet, yes, very interesting, all right. So, there, he was here, helping them out. That was their version of their Special Force. So, we were--what

is that?--we were … two-and-a-half miles inside the border, yes, two-and-a half miles inside the border, doing that routine.

NM: Was this on a search-and-destroy-type mission?

BS: No, this was a go-find-out, that would be. We'll use their words--this was reconnaissance, "Find them, look. Try not to make contact, but, if you do, you'd better get rid of them, because they're going to be a problem." All right, so, that was the name of that game. So, what they did is, they dropped us off on a riverbed, we moved in--yes, that would be two-and-a-half miles--to a grid coordinate where they thought they were at, and they were there, and then, we came back, got on the helicopters and came back, came back to Plei Me, and then, got a debrief and the rest is history.

TB: I am assuming there was some contact.

BS: Oh, yes, there was contact. There was contact. … So, yes, we did that routine. That was done. Then, the one I alluded to, CRAZY HORSE, that was the big one. That was in May of '66. That was a lot of fun. [Editor's Note: From May 16 to June 5, 1966, First Brigade, First Cavalry Division conducted Operation CRAZY HORSE in the Binh Dinh Province, between Vinh Thanh and Soui Ca Valley on the Bong Son Plain, in conjunction with the ROK Tiger Division and ARVN units. The operation began with a spoiling attack on Viet Cong forces massing to assault the newly established Vinh Thanh CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) base and led into a search-and-destroy operation.]

TB: Were you still in the same unit during Operation CRAZY HORSE?

BS: Yes, I'm still in it, yes, because I went from the 101st [to] the 173rd to the First Cav. So, now, I'm up to the First Cav now, okay. So, this is CRAZY HORSE, in the Central Highlands, and this is, shit, this is--who are these guys? … I want to say it's the 29th NVA, and they were good. These guys were good and they were really [determined]. They put up a definitive battle and, yes, that was a big one. We lost how many of the guys? My guys are on--I've got two walls [panels of the Vietnam Memorial]. I've got [Panel] 70 and [Panel] 90. … My guys are on 70. I've got fourteen guys on 70 and I've got another ten on 90 on the Wall, yes.

TB: Could you talk a little about your relationship with other soldiers in your unit?

BS: It was lovely. They loved me, yes.

TB: Do you keep in touch with anyone from your unit?

BS: … Yes, I just left them. I was just with them. … We were just down in--what do you call it?--Washington Memorial, or, yes, Veterans Day, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, yes. We've been meeting since 1969, yes, before the Wall, before Reagan said, "Build that wall," you know, "Mr. Gorbachev," you know; anyway, yes.

TB: Was it in particular due to you being an NCO that they loved you?

BS: No, no, has nothing to do [with that]. No, no, even if you were--I don't care if you were a major, I never called you by your [rank]. You understand what goes on in the field, right? Nobody has rank in the field, all right. You can be anything--you can be a four-star general--but, when you're in the field, I'm calling you by your first name. So, if I need Nick, I call, "Nick." I don't say, "Hey, Captain." If I just did that, you know what I did for Nick? You know how I helped Nick through life? I just put a bull's-eye on the back of Nick's back, all right. So, it was Nick, all right. … Wait a minute, let me break my arm and pat myself on the back--I was very good at what I did. See, I have everything. Okay, I have nothing missing. I've got a couple dents and dings, but I've got everything, all right. I mean, I've got both legs, I've got all my toes, I've got all my fingers and I can still see, all right. I was very good at what I did, all right, and I got home.

TB: Would you consider your skill level to be so high because of your training?

BS: No, it's because I believed that--I always had this in my mind--"I'm going home, you ain't." You got that, right? You got the part about, "You ain't?" "I'm going home, you ain't," okay, and that's how. That was my mantra through the whole thing. I knew I had time to do, okay, and I'm getting home and I'm doing whatever it takes to get home. … It's like going to school, all that training, how do you apply it to when you go into your particular field. So, with your political science degree, I don't know, what are you going to get involved in, State Department? I don't know, public administration? I have no idea, teaching? I have no idea--so, take all of that and apply it. So, if you didn't learn that and you went in-country, into the bush, and you didn't know how to do that stuff, well, could be shame on you. … Mom and Dad are getting a letter or a nice telegram and you're going home in a bag, all right, and there were some people, they were very good stateside, but, when you put them in that situation, they weren't good. … They looked nice in a uniform, but, when it came to doing the job, they ain't doing the job. So, that's me. So, I'm home, all right. I'm going to collect Social Security this year. [laughter] Dude, I did it last night, online.

NM: There is one other thing I wanted to follow up on.

BS: Go ahead, sir.

NM: You mentioned, on Operation CRAZY HORSE …

BS: Crazy Horse.

NM: You encountered North Vietnamese.

BS: NVA, that's the real army.

NM: You encountered NVA personnel. Could you tell us about the difference? On most of your search-and-destroy missions, you encountered …

BS: Irregulars. … You did the irregular guys and you had what they call PAVN, Popular Army of North Vietnam [People's Army of North Vietnam], all right. They were like--think of them as the early day National Guard and Reservists of the '60s and the '70s--not the Reservists and the Guards you see today, that they use as a back--did I say that?--again, … backdoor draft, okay, because they're using those resources and they're taking them, actually, away from what their mission really is. … Yes, the irregulars and the PAVN were, like, … their homegrown people. The NVA were a … highly trained force, very well-disciplined, very good in the use of firepower. They knew how to flank you, they knew how to put down a base of fire. They were very good and they knew how to move-and-shoot. They were very good at move-and-shoot. Oh, yes, they were very good.

NM: Was there a difference in the quality of the weapons that they had?

BS: Oh, it was the old, … normal AK-47, just like ours was the M-16, you know. That was the [norm]. Then, you had … some of the leftover stuff from the French that they had, but they were very good, right, very good at--what do you call it?--tactics, and they were a challenge. … They fought you, you know. They were good, very good.

NM: Was this type of mission, when you encountered the NVA, defined as a search-and-destroy mission?

BS: It certainly is, sir. They're all search-and-destroy. Then, we got rid of that term. You've got to remember, after '66, it goes away, because … the newspaper guys go out with a unit that's going to go maybe three miles from a base camp that's secured and you see the guy with the zippo lighter lighting them off. … You're going, "You've got to be shitting me, man, c'mon," you know, and that's what they would do. You've got to remember, some of that film you see is … already preempted by, "Who's going to do it? When are they going to do it?" It's all pre-assigned. It wasn't in the moment. The ones that are in the moment, where you see the camera fall down, you hear all kinds of shouting and shit like that, all right, and, remember, they're still not training to a small team environment. They're still doing the traditional Army way of doing things. Even the Marines were still doing a lot of traditional stuff, all right, and you're going, "What are you doing? You know, marching in straight lines--are you nuts? Are you crazy?" right, and you leave yourself open. Ah, just, it's amazing to me. It's just like when you watch this shit today--you know, they're running down the street. Let me put it to you this way, if I were in that particular part of the world and I come to your block, your house, I'm not knocking on your door. Trust me, I'm not knocking on your door. I'm backing up, right, and I'm going to ask where the artillery's at or where the nearest tank is and I'm taking out your whole block. That's the way it is. I'm not walking down, saying [Mr. Spych knocks], "Could you please come with me?" It ain't working for me, all right, because it don't work that way, and, in the jungle, it don't work that way. [laughter] … I'll ask the question--what's the darkest room you've ever been in in your life, gentlemen, darkest room you ever been in in your life, a closet, a cellar, what?

SL: No windows, no sunlight.

BS: No ambient light whatsoever. Take that, multiply it maybe by three times that darkness, at night, in the jungle. You've got a canopy and you're sitting there and you're sitting there for hours on end. Ha, you think that'll work on your head a little bit? [laughter]

NM: You determined that there was a problem in training on a larger scale.

BS: On the larger scale? yes, back in the States.

NM: For your unit, when you got replacements.

BS: Yes.

NM: How would you try to get replacements acclimated to this environment?

BS: Well, so many outfits, before they actually came to a line unit, they actually did in-house training, in-country, they would have to go through. … They would do an orientation into [Vietnam], and not all divisions did that, all right. We did it, okay. We would do it, all right, and then, you would go through it. … Before a guy would go out, he would have to demonstrate that he had that capability and, yes, they never did anything until when you start telling me about the make-believe Vietnam village, in whether it was Dix, whether it was in Fort Polk, wherever they put them, right. … The horse is out of the barn, all right. Westmoreland was from a different time and different place. You've got to remember who Westmoreland was. He's now theater commander, right; no? William Westmoreland, right, okay, he's from a World War II mindset and a Korean [War] mindset. [Editor's Note: General William Westmoreland served as an artillery officer, at one time attached to the 82nd Airborne Division, in World War II and commanded the 101st in 1958. He commanded Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) from June 1964 to July 1968, when he became Chief of Staff of the US Army.] He never fought in a jungle, all right. So, they didn't use [jungle warfare veterans]. There were people still in the military at that time that had fought in the Pacific with the 503rd, the Eleventh Airborne; no, anybody? Eleventh Airborne, Los Banos, no, in the Philippines, they liberated the prisoners? [Editor's Note: During World War II, Japanese forces interned more than two thousand civilians, mostly Americans, at Los Banos, a town on Luzon in the Philippines, forty miles southeast of Manila. Concerned that the Japanese might massacre the internees, the Allies planned a combined amphibious, ground and airborne raid to liberate them. The 11th Airborne Division, along with the 503rd Regimental Combat Team, was one of only two American airborne units in the Pacific. While the 503rd was involved in the liberation of Corregidor, the 11th joined with Filipino guerillas and an amphibious tractor unit to free all of the internees on February 23, 1945.]

NM: Yes.

BS: All right. That's the 503rd. … They jumped on Corregidor, all that. You still had guys in the active military, because, remember now, we're [in] 1963, '64. The war's only been over twenty years. For the sake of the exercise, you still had WWII guys in uniform that were staying to thirty, right. They never tapped them for their knowledge. I had a guy in my unit that was actually with Merrill's Marauders, in the States. [Editor's Note: The 5307th Composite Unit

(Provisional), nicknamed Merrill's Marauders after its commander, General Frank Merrill, operated behind enemy lines in extensive jungle fighting in the China-Burma-India Theater.] He was in Merrill's Marauders. I'm going, "Who's that?" you know, right. He was going to stay for the thirty, right. Did he have a mindset? yes. He knew how to fight in the jungle. All right, you don't … go walking through, you know, cutting with your machete, going through sugar cane fields, through the elephant [grass]--that's bullshit, you know. "Where do I go? How do I get there? What's the easiest way to get through?" all right. … Don't make your job so [difficult] that you're beat when you get there and, now, you're going to take on who? They've been watching you for the last seven hours and they say, you know, like, in football, you got tired legs--well, you got tired legs, boys and girls--and they're going to kick your ass; no, no?

TB: Absolutely.

BS: Absolutely right, so, agree with me, say, "Yes, all right;" go ahead, sir. …

NM: You mentioned that you had some contact with the South Vietnamese Army. You were training some of the airborne units.

BS: That was the Eighth ARVN Airborne and they were out of--well, actually, … they cohabitated with us at An Khe for a while. … Yes, they were, right, … a little bit above, because they had a common bond in terms of being airborne, but, other than that, they were still, to me, an ARVN unit, all right, and tactics were poor, the NCOs were poor, some of their officers were questionable, right. So, yes, you took them at face value and you distanced yourself. So, the training went as planned, "Done, see you, but, if I see you, just keep walking, all right. I'm not really going to depend on you when everything goes down, all right, or when the shit hits the fan, you know."

NM: Did you work with any of the Republic of Korea units?

BS: Yes, sir, the Tiger Division, and I even have a war story about them, yes. We were behind them in the Highlands, all right--in that, the Highlands, what I mean is, in the Corps II area, it was. We called it "Happy Valley," not to be associated with Penn State, okay. That was the Black Virgin Mountains [Núi Bà Đen]. That was to the north of An Khe. I think it was thirteen miles to the north, okay. They were out in front of us on a sweep, all right. So, to show you how they had evolved from Korea, you talk to a Korean War veteran, he'll tell you the ROK guys sucked--Republic of Korea Army, right. All right, they were terrible. They were just now starting to evolve in time. Now, we go fast-forward to the '60s. So, the Tiger Division's out in front of us, an element of the Tiger Division. They're on a sweep. Their radio operator gets hit. We get a call back, say, "Sit down wherever you are. Wait," and they called it "an administrative hold," all right. So, okay, we sat for a day-and-a-half and we … get up and start moving. All right, so, we start moving in the general direction of where they were, all right. We get to where they were and where they were was a prairie and it was still smoking. It was, at one time, a village, a village the size of--let me see, how could I do it?--maybe from, … is Hamilton over here? Hamilton, … this is Stone, go maybe one more. What's the one after Stone, where the busses are? past the busses and make a square. It was a village about that size. There was nothing there, all right, and what had transpired was, the feedback we got was, they'd gone in,

their RTO [radio-telephone operator] got hit and they went into the village and said, asked them the proverbial question, "Are there any VC here?" They said, "No." They said, "Have a nice day." They dropped back and they just took everything out and that was it. So, yes, that was my only contact with the Tiger Division, because there was two--think it was the White Horse was one and the Tiger was the other, right. [Editor's Note: The Republic of Korea's Capital Infantry Division, also known as the Tiger Division, arrived in Vietnam in the Fall of 1965. The ROK Ninth Infantry Division, or White Horse Division, arrived in the Fall of 1966.]

TB: Is this where you earned your Air Medal?

BS: No. [laughter] … No, the Air Medal, if you go in and you read the history of Vietnam, you'll hear [about] the 105 guys; you familiar with the F-105 [Thunderchief], the fighter? They would get a hundred-mission patch. All the guys that went up north and flew a hundred missions, they got a hundred-mission patch. Well, I never got the hundred-mission patch--I had ninety-nine combat assaults, ninety-nine, right, never made the hundred. "How do you know that, Bill?" Well, they used to post it … in our, in quotes, "dining area"--you would call it a mess hall, back in the day--and they would say, you know, "This unit has made," dat-dat, dat-dat, right, and they tell you. … My last day in-country, that was the number that was still posted in the mess hall on the wall, right. So, I made ninety-nine helicopter assaults, for real, honest to God, [laughter] and what they did was--it was post [after], okay, I got my [medal]. You know, like, they show you these guys lined up and they pin your things, ribbons, on you and all that shit? You know how I got my ribbons? I got them in a box from St. Louis, a box, oh, I don't know, maybe six-by-two inches thick, and they had all the stuff in it and they had the thing wrapped up. "These are your awards and decorations and that's that." I didn't have a parade, … nobody pinned anything on you. … They sent it to you and they gave you a laundry list of things, that, "Where you were, based on your DD Form 214," blah, blah, blah, "and that these are the things and these are the operations that you participated in," dat-dat-dat, "and you have this," and that's how that came about. … No commanding general came, shook my hand and said, "Thanks," because we'll get to that very shortly, after we get past CRAZY HORSE, and then, there's the last one. The last operation is, it's actually the air offensive going through the summer and into the fall. … I want to say they called it Operation CROCKETT, was the name, I believe that was the name of that one, okay, but it was the air offensive, and then, that ends it for me. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych may have misremembered the name of his last operation. Operation CROCKETT was a Marine Corps operation from May 13 to July 16, 1967, in Quảng Trị Province.] … What I did was, there had been people that, … when you had less than thirty days to go in-country, you could opt out and not have to go out anymore and you could stay inside the base camp. Well, there were actually guys that were shot by snipers in the base camp--seriously, no shit. … This is kind of, like, ironic and it's kind of, like, funny at the same time. There was a gentleman--you know how they made latrines? You know what a latrine is, right? Okay, you know how they made latrines? Made famous in [the 1986 Oliver Stone film] *Platoon*, I think it was, burning shit, they would take a fifty-five-gallon drum and cut it in half, and then, they would place it under stations, like it would be, … like, Johnny on the Spot, and they would have an actual toilet seat, right, and that's where you took care of your physiological needs, all right. … Then, they would burn that with, either, … mogas [motor gasoline], aviation, whatever they burned it with, right. … They would take the rocket tubes off the 7.62s [7.62-millimeter minigun?] and they would put them in a thing and they would become your urinal and they

would be outside. Isn't this nice? All right, you like this, right? and they would bury them and … they would cut out the bottom of the casing that … the rockets came in and that was your urinal, commonly called a "piss tube." All right, so, that's a true thing, and they would have them strategically placed. So, flashing forward, the gentleman is taking care of his physiological needs, reading whatever magazine or whatever newspaper it was. He goes to depart out of this, because it's inside of what they call a general purpose tent. It was covered, so [that] you wouldn't have the glaring sun, God forbid, and he walks out--right between the horns. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych indicates that he was shot between the eyes.] So, I figured, "I'll hang out with the guys that have all the weapons, because I feel safer if I can, you know, inflict harm on you, because I'm going to go home, all right." So, I stayed out and what they did was, I said, "I want you to send somebody out to tell me I'm going home and I want it within twenty-four hours of those orders," and that's what they did for me. So, I was out, up north. [They] sent out a helicopter, they said, "You're going home." I grabbed my gear, threw it on the airplane--I threw it on the helicopter--and there's, I have it in my office at home, … if you look it up online, Joe Kline, I don't know if you've ever seen any of his artwork--no, Joe Kline? You type in Joe Kline, there's a painting called "Magic Carpet Ride," and it shows a guy sitting on a helicopter, you know, feet hanging out, off the side, on the skid, smiling, and he's going home. [Editor's Note: Vietnam veteran and artist Joe Kline paints primarily American military aviation history scenes.] Well, I have it in my office, okay, because, "I'm going home." Whether you want to call it Steppenwolf and "Magic Carpet Ride," that's great. [Editor's Note: The rock band Steppenwolf released the song *Magic Carpet Ride* in 1968.] … Okay, so, they come out to get me--I'm going home. They drop me off at the green line. I walk in, go to my, in quotes, "my platoon tent." I go and grab my gear. I go down to the company clerk. He says, "Here's your orders," dat-dat-dat, "Sign for this." I signed for that and it said on the back of my orders, "Upon receipt of these orders, you will return … back to the Continental United States within forty-eight hours of receipt of these orders." So, I turned all my gear in before the evening was out, had an alfresco dinner, you know, outside, you know, and then, I showered, shaved. … They said, "Go out to the airfield," went out to the airfield. I climbed on a Caribou, Caribou flew me from [the base]--a Caribou, of course, being a twin-engine. At that time, the Army still had them, but, then, later on, they went to the Air Force, because they didn't want to reinvent the Army Air Corps. [Editor's Note: The US Army used Canadian de Havilland DHC-4 Caribou, designated the CV-2 by the Army, as transport aircraft in Vietnam. Following the Johnson-McConnell Agreement on April 6, 1966, in which the Army agreed to give up its fixed-wing aircraft and the Air Force renounced its domain over most rotary wing aircraft, the Air Force operated the Caribou as the C-7.] So, the twin took me from there to Pleiku and, Pleiku, they dropped me off at a holding area. I walked off the airplane, and then, they issued me a set of khakis that would be summer wear, right, and you went into this briefing tent and they said to you, "Tomorrow morning," at such-and-such a time, "it'll be at 0141, a four-engine jet transport Air Force type is going to land on the tarmac. He's going to land over there and he's going to taxi here. He's going to turn around, drop the tailgate and you people are going to climb on and this thing is out of here. He is not shutting down." You're not going to go to the jet way and they're not going to do a TSA pat down, okay. "You're just going to climb on the tailgate, get out of here and you're gone." All right, so, my flight, the next morning, he came in, did exactly what they told us, rolled out to the end, turned around, dropped the gate, we climbed onboard. Now, climbed onboard, there were fifty-five of us. They were all, "I'm ETS-ing. I'm terminating my services. I'm done." …

TB: How long has it been?

BS: It's been a year now. … It's been a year now, right. My timeframe is up, boom, I'm going home. All right, there's fifty-five guys that are climbing on this airplane at this juncture in Pleiku and we're going back to the States, all right, or, as they would say, "going back to the world," right. All right, so, you've got fifty-five guys, all from different units. I'm from this unit, he's from another unit, … he's from the Livingston Campus, you're from the New Brunswick Campus, you're over at the--what do you call it? …

TB: Douglass?

BS: No, not Douglass.

TB: Cook?

BS: Cook, you're over at Cook. You've been here four years, but you're graduating with the degree that says Rutgers, and it may have a sub thing, but you're over at Piscataway Campus, I don't know. You were over, I don't know, Kilmer, I don't know, but, okay, you were in Newark, but … we all went to Rutgers, right. So, there's fifty-five guys that have no contact with me, or fifty-four other guys. … "I've never served with you," or, you know, "Oh, I remember you when you were in the States," or, … "You were with the 101st, in whatever company, right, but I didn't serve with you in-country." So, we all climb onboard. So, we go from there to Clark in the Philippines. We refuel in Clark and we go from Clark to Tachikawa in Japan. From Tachikawa, we go direct, Travis. I'm home, right, in under thirty-six hours. It only takes thirteen hours to go from Philly to Hawaii, so, for the sake of the exercise, add another five grand to that, right. I'm home under, actually, twenty-four hours, all right. So, where was I twenty-four hours ago?

TB: Vietnam.

BS: There you go, right. You got this right, and I wasn't sitting in some place where they were talking to me and saying, "Everything's going to be all right," blah, blah, blah. "You're going to go back with your guys," blah, blah, blah. No, I'm going as an individual, because my orders came down, I'm out, right, but where was I before I got those orders? I was sitting out in a forward base, picking my nose, waiting, saying, "Don't kill me yet," you know, and I come back, bah-boom-boom. … In less than twenty-four hours, I'm climbing on airplanes taking me back to the States. So, I'm back in San Francisco. I'm actually back in Oakland, because they flew us into Travis and they bussed us to Oakland, all right. This is where it gets real good. So, it goes, you go from Travis Air Force Base, just outside of Vacaville, California, to beautiful Oakland Army Transfer Station to be discharged. Come in, again, they do the routine. Fifty-five guys showed up, "We've got to out-process these gentlemen, okay." So, they tell you, "Go get a shower. They're going to re-issue your uniform," blah, blah, blah, "and, tomorrow morning, you're going to have breakfast and we're going to start processing you out. You will be done at the end of the day before four o'clock. Close of business, you'll be gone. You'll be out of here, right, okay. … You're going to get this beautiful envelope with all of your stuff in it. It's like a basket of cheer. This has got everything you ever wanted to know. It's got your DD Form 214, all the shit in there that you need. You've got even your airplane ticket to go back to your home

or wherever." Mine was Newark, right. So, I'm going to be flying from San Francisco to beautiful downtown Newark, right, and then, I'm going to go back to Trenton, right, all right. So, you go in, you get a night's sleep, okay. You get up in the morning, you have breakfast. Then, you go down to the gymnasium and you sit in the bleachers, all right. So, now, you're going to have what they call your out briefing, and this is when it gets really good. They come in and they bring in the recruiter--he was the first one, I always remember that. I'm only going to give you the three guys that came into play at their thing. They bring in the recruiter and the recruiter says--and I love that word, "behoove"--he said, "It would behoove you to reenlist at this duty station," and you're looking at the guy, you go, "What are you smoking, man? You're out of your mind," right. So, he gets boo-ed. What are they going to do to us? There's fifty-five of us; we're all ETS-ing. "What? Are you going to put us in jail? What are you going to do?" right. Okay, then, the next one comes in and, of course, we get the chaplain. So, he tries to be universal, "We're on a mission from God," like the Blues Brothers, and all this other good stuff, right. So, we got that. That ends. Then, we get the last, the third guy. That's the one that leaves the impression; number three leaves the impression on me. He's a civilian acting like he's in the military and he's a doctor and he's a shrink, right. So, he has to be paying off his loans that he had through ROTC, all right. So, he's got to do it for X number of years. So, he's the guy that's going to talk to you. So, he comes in and his opening remark was--because we were kind of, like, using disparaging words to certain people that were in that gymnasium, right, and what do you call it? So, anyway, he comes in and his opening remark was, "I'm looking at fifty-five time bombs," and he goes [on], and that kind of, like, "Oh, all right, what's this guy talking about? Let's give him an ear, all right." So, we give him an ear. So, he goes on to his thing, … just like I quizzed you, he said, "Where were you twenty-four hours ago? What were you doing?" … He says, "You know, I see a 25th, I see the Cav, I see the 101st, I see guys from the 82nd, I see guys from the Fourth Infantry, you know, all over the country, right, okay," blah, blah, blah, all right. So, he goes, and, of course, you get, you know, some dummy raises his hand. … He says, "You didn't have any decompression time," all right, and I'll use modern words, as opposed to what he might have said, all right. "So, you didn't have any decompression time," says, "Yes." He said, "For some of you heroes, it's going to happen real quick. Within the year, you're going to go off the edge. You're going to explode and you're going to wonder, 'Why? What happened?' all right. Some of you guys may have been right there and this is just going to push you over, okay. For you other people, it'll be three years, five years, fifteen years, may even be thirty years." He says, "Something's going to trigger you. It's going to be a sound, it's going to be a smell, you're going to see something and you're going to go," no? You ever seen [the 1982 Ken Finkleman film] *Airplane II*, Dean Wormer? He snapped like that, all right. That's how they're going to go. So, if you go back and look from the timeframe when it begins to when it ends, and then, … the post-Vietnam era, did you ever read anything about guys going over the side, losing it?

SL: After Vietnam?

BS: Yes.

SL: There were a lot of them.

BS: Where they come home, they kill the old lady, right? or they're walking down the street and they're in Chinatown and one guy whacks a young girl, right? for whatever reason, right, Oriental woman, no, no, anybody? No, you never read [that]?

SL: No.

NM: I have.

BS: You know, you're born '83 or whatever. … You know, there was a guy right in Dix that came home, found his wife in the bed with another guy, whacked them both. He didn't get anything out of it. The judge was sympathetic, all right, and … this is before you get [the] PTSD thing, right. So, this guy goes on and on, all right. So, that leaves an impression with the Polish kid here, right. So, you go, "All right," you think about that. So, you go through, they process you, you know, ASU [US Army service uniform], this, that, the other thing, they give you a medical debrief, they give you some shots, they see if you have any--maladies, would that be the proper word? "Any physical maladies, contact the VA," which was up here in beautiful Newark, at Washington Place, all right. So, of course, like I always tell people, if you want to die, go to a VA hospital and just ask for the bag and the toe tag, because you're going to die, but, anyway, did I say that? Pardon me, that's so unprofessional, but, anyway, do that routine, and then, you go home, right. You go. The next morning, they give you your airplane ticket, "Have a nice day." Another event takes place, very outstanding, to this day, like it was yesterday; … you come out of the building and the taxicabs are all lined up, because they know that these guys are all being discharged and they're taking you to beautiful downtown San Francisco International. Come out the door, there's a guy that I had seen in the PX, the post exchange, right, and he was buying stuff. So, he comes out of processing and he's, like, right in the area where you would, like, catch a bus. So, he starts undressing. He's getting out of his uniform, he's putting on a pair of khakis, puts on a nice shirt, folds his uniform up, real nice, right. He lays it at the foot of, like, a parking bumper, all right, salutes it, gets in the cab and drives away. That left an impression on me forever. I said, you know, "Whoa, holy shit, look at this," you know. So, you get there, boom. So, you get out of there, you go to the airport, climb on the airplane, you get home and who meets you at the airplane? Come on, anybody?

SL: Mom?

BS: Mom and Dad, right, okay, and what does Mom and Dad ask you when you get home? What do you think they ask you?

SL: Something like, "How was it?"

BS: No, it didn't work that way. Go ahead; no, "What are you going to do now?"

SL: You are going to work.

BS: … That was the next question, … "What are you going to do for a job now that you're back?"

SL: You were twenty.

BS: I'm twenty-one. I turned twenty-one. I'm twenty-one. "What are you going to do?" Let me see if I got this right.

SL: Did you use your GI Bill benefits?

BS: Yes, I used my GI Bill, but that's beside the point, … but think about what I just said to you. "What are you going to do?" "What the?"

TB: Take a nap.

BS: "I'm going to go take a nap," yes. "I'm getting laid."

SL: Just got back into town, come on.

BS: You know, right. … Now, wait a minute, we'll even use it--it's now forty-eight hours, plus the four-hour, five-hour ride coming back from the thing. So, now, I'm downstream fifty-five [hours], okay. When people go on a vacation, I just got back from Hawaii [on] September 23rd, I'm still finishing up my journal from Hawaii, right. That was, what? I'm in November now, right. It's two months removed, right. I'm still talking about it, right, and I was only there ten days. [laughter]

SL: You were in Vietnam almost ten months, I think.

BS: No, no. Yes, we'll leave it at that, yes. That's good. No, okay, here we go; that's another one. You say to somebody, "Can you picture, or can you imagine in your mind, a day becomes a week, a week becomes a month and a month becomes a year, when time slows down?" In the jungle, it was like time slowed down. Sometimes, you didn't even know what day it was; sometimes, you forgot the month it was, all right. Think about that; … how do you relay that to somebody that's never done something like that? You can't. I could tell you all day and all night. It's like I asked you, "The darkest room, you know, … you can't even see your hand at night, right?" All right, you know, it's like, "What is it? What are you waiting for?" "I'm waiting for the first light to come," all right, but I did some of my best work at night, you know. So, you say, you go, "Oh," you know. … I'm, what, sixty-six now? I'll be sixty-six, December. I would have been sixty-seven, but I was sick a year. … Okay, you asked me to come in a thing; it's like I can recall events as if it were, like, yesterday. Isn't that sad? All right, so, I always asked myself, "Think of the guys today--you've got guys that are pulling five, six tours--what do you think they're going to be like ten years from now?" [laughter] Don't go to McDonalds, don't go to the checkout, because one of these guys is going to light up on you, all right. You don't think so, Nick?

NM: I understand where …

BS: Where you're going with this?

NM: … Where you are going with this.

BS: All right. Today, they put nice names on things, you know. It was, what? the "shell shock," it was the "thousand-mile stare," it was whatever, right, and it's PTSD now, right, okay. What do you think? What do you think? You think you might have a problem? … You know, like, we're talking about this timeline and I can remember it and I can remember certain things. There are certain things I'll never share with anybody, okay, because it's none of their damn business, … but, yes, I can give you an overview, but I can remember things that--ask me what I had for breakfast, I don't know, two days ago. I don't know, all right, but I can tell you about certain things, that they were watershed or benchmark events, that you go, "Holy shit," all right, and how it carried over in your life, all right. So, then, you go, "Okay, what about that after?" all right, and then, they tell you, "Well, go to the VA." Well, what are you going to do for me? You know, "Doc, I'm having terrible dreams." "You'll get over it." "Really? No shit, I'll get over it. Okay, whatever you say, Doc," all right, boom, boom, boom. There are other guys--all right, if you go down to, what is that, Chester County VA hospital?--there are guys that I don't know what year they're in. They could be in '66, they could be in '67--they ain't never leaving. They're my age now; they ain't never leaving. Okay, they're in the medical ward, all right, and they ain't coming home. They're still there, right. [Editor's Note: Mr. Spych may be referring to the Coatesville Veterans Administration Hospital in Chester County, Pennsylvania.] So, they do all this stuff and you go, "Wow," and you guys, I have to thank you guys for doing this.

TB: It is therapeutic.

BS: Yes.

TB: Do you feel comfortable sharing some traumatic events with your soldier friends?

BS: No, no, not even them. Oh, wait a minute, I could give you one; … check that, I misspoke. My executive officer, it took him--when is the Wall? The Wall goes [up in] '80 and they open the Wall '82, is it, or '84? Is it '82, and then, '84, right? … '80, they talk about it, '82, they break ground, '84, it's complete. It took him ten years to get there, 1994, okay. He could not--he could physically not--approach the, what do you call it? the panels. No shit, he would just go, he would just break down. … He would literally collapse. He couldn't take it, all right. How about that, huh? [Editor's Note: In April 1979, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., a non-profit organization founded by Vietnam veteran Jan Scruggs, began raising funds for a national memorial. In July 1980, Congress established a site near the Lincoln Memorial and assigned authority for the monument to the National Park Service. In May 1981, a design by architect Maya Ying Lin was selected and, in March 1982, construction began. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated and opened in November 1982.]

NM: You mentioned that you continue to meet with some of the men.

BS: Oh, yes, we agreed. … We did it informally. … '67, '68, we met out in California, went down to Tijuana, got our picture taken on the donkey painted like a zebra. It was good. That was good. Yes, we did that, and then, we agreed we'd meet every year, either Memorial Day or on Veterans Day, preferably on Veterans Day, but we've been doing pretty good with … both

events. … We had a good turnout this time also, had a great dinner, all that, you know, and, of course, the lies, you know, typical. You know, the war stories get better. You know, "We changed the world," right.

NM: For some of the members of this group that you meet with, was this stress something they had to deal with?

BS: No. … We're now the, in quotes, "Senior citizens," right. We're the earlier part of the Baby Boomer generation and, yes, now, … we're more reflective than more pissed off than we were before, you know, because it was … different then, in terms of, just getting your educational benefits, you had to fight like you couldn't believe. It took a Congressman to get my stuff released, all right. It's unreal.

NM: Can you tell us about this experience?

BS: All right. The experience is, you go in, like now--I don't know, you go to the bursar's office, right, okay. You say you're on the GI Bill; well, no, back then, because they hadn't transitioned, there, they were falling behind. They had this GI Bill, they had a lead-time in which now to say, "As you get military people into your system, former military people [who] are on GI Bill, you will get your money," all right, but that wasn't the fact. You had to pre-pay the expense, and then, your checks would come, right. … Then, of course, they were slow in the disbursement of those checks, because, depending on what VA office you worked with, they wouldn't send it to the veteran, they would have to send it to the school and it would have to be in the name of the veteran and the school you're going to, whoever that may be, all right. So, you had a very hard time getting your monies, all right. That's an experience. You know about money, because you know if it's, for the sake of the exercise, at Rutgers, we'll say it's at the graduate level, we'll say it's a thousand dollars a credit. So, you tell that to somebody that, you know, doesn't have a job and he's on the GI Bill and he just got out of the military, he's got maybe some money saved, say, now, "You've got fifteen credits--you got fifteen grand?" "No." "No. Well, how much can you give me?" "Well, I can't give you anything. My Uncle Sam's going to take care of this for me, all right," and it doesn't happen. So, it becomes somewhat of a sticking point and that's what happened early on … and a lot of guys didn't make use. As a matter-of-fact, some of the guys I was with never went back to school. They let everything go by the boards, because you only have ten years from the time you're discharged until the time … your benefits are gone, all right, and then, I think, one time, they extended it. I forget, I think they extended it for three more years, for our group, all right, and then, … if you had anything leftover, you could use it up for whatever you wanted to use it for, right.

NM: How soon after your discharge did you decide that you wanted to attend college?

BS: Almost immediately, yes, and then, that was a long [time] that process goes [on], and then, we get into the flying routine, and then, we had extra money for that. So, yes, we get into the flying routine and that, to me, was the--what do you call it?--was the equalizer, because, without that, I think I would have been in McDonalds with my Uzi, yes.

NM: I just want to backtrack about your time at Rutgers.

BS: Yes, sir.

NM: Was Rutgers-Camden the primary school that you attended?

BS: Yes.

NM: When did you enroll?

BS: When did I enroll?

NM: What year?

BS: That would be '72, and then, I just finished my master's in 2011. I'm more proud of that than anything else, and I went back and … finished my master's in two years, brother.

TB: Wow. Were you able to use your GI Bill benefits for that?

BS: No, that was out of my pocket, sir. No, no, that was out of my pocket. [laughter] At this juncture, it's out of my pocket, yes.

NM: Before you attended Rutgers-Camden, did you work? Could you tell us about what it was like to work during this period?

BS: What it was like to work? Let's see, I don't know.

NM: Was it hard to find a job?

BS: As a matter-of-fact, it was, sir. What skill did I have? I'm twenty-one, right--what do I have?

SL: Just the military experience.

BS: And think of that timeline. They didn't have, you know, [a policy where] you get credit for your military experience--think of the timeline. So, what did I have to offer? … "Blindfolded, I can strip a weapon. Yes, I can recite all my general orders. [laughter] … I can show you how to run down a block at night and [have] nobody see you. Yes, what do you want me to do?" "Come on, kid." [laughter] So, no, … you had no discernible skills that you could use in society at that time. So, you took whatever you took. I was pumping gas at the airport, all right. So, there you go, you know.

TB: What made you choose political science?

BS: I always liked history. History was … always, like, a baseline for me, all right, yes. History was the thing, … because history and politics are, … I always say, like, it's the three ugly sisters--it's economics, religion and politics that run the world. … At any given time, … I don't

even know, do they still use the word "iron triangle?" The iron triangle was always in operation. All right, think about it, take today, all right--is politics running something right now, whether it's on the international arena or the domestic? All right, so, it's economics, are we in a problem right now?

TB: Absolutely.

BS: Well, you think we're in the hole fifteen trill; try maybe eighty-four trillion dollars--but that's all right, what do I know? … Then, you have religion. Does religion come into play? Let me see, the Arab Spring--hmm, let me think about that for a moment, right--and then, if you look through the world or the theocracies that go on, "No? Yes? Maybe? What do you think?" You think [Hamid] Karzai's [involved]? What do you think? You think religion is mixed with that? You think maybe, in Mexico, the Catholic Church plays a big part … in the way they run their show? How about in South America, you think there's a big [connection]? All right, what do you think? …

TB: Poli. sci. was a natural.

BS: Yes, because you could be reflective. You could go back and say, "Let me ask about that," and then, for me, it was [that] you go back and you look and you go, "Well, how many times did I go back to the same place," like you said, … "the rear?" There was no rear, okay; there were no lines of demarcation. … It wasn't a traditional march to Hanoi, you know. Well, how far did you go? Well, you went as far north as--what is that, the 13th?--whatever it is.

TB: 38th? [Editor's Note: The Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was established at approximately the 17th Parallel.]

BS: The 38th Parallel is Korea; 13th, I think it's the 13th Parallel. So, it's the DMZ. That's the Iron Triangle [a VC stronghold formed by the Saigon River, the Tinh River and Route 13], that's the DMZ shit. Anyway, you never went beyond that, right. There may have been special operations that went into, like--what was that?--the Son Tay thing, with the prisoner of war camp, all that, but they never went [in force]. [Editor's Note: On November 21, 1970, a force led by US Special Forces raided a reported POW camp at Son Tay, in the Hanoi area, but found no POWs at the site.] They'd say, "I'm going to [Hanoi]," you know, like in [the 1970 Franklin J. Schaffner film] *Patton.* You ever see *Patton*? No, you never saw *Patton*, with George C. Scott? Oh, then, you missed the whole line. Anyway, you're never going to take Hanoi. We're not going to go and do away [with the North] and … it was like, "Was it really declared?" you know. Then, the Gulf of Tonkin, all that bullshit, when you look back and you go, "You got to be kidding me," you know. Sometimes, when you get off the helicopter, you say the same damn thing, "You've got to be shitting me--I'm back in the same place? I thought we took this place," you know, all right.

TB: Was there a specific job you were thinking of when you were doing political science?

BS: No.

TB: It was just, "This is what I am interested in."

BS: "I've just got to go get into the academic world. I've just got to. This is going to be my savior, man," you know, and then, I got into the aviation routine and that was the big savior. There, there you go.

NM: Could you just tell us a little bit about Rutgers?

BS: Well, you want me to give a testimonial?

NM: No. What was Rutgers-Camden like?

BS: It was an evolving campus, not like you see it today. It was in the inner city, in the fifth poorest city in the--what do you call it?--in the Great State of New Jersey, in the Camden County area, in particular the City of Camden. Let me see, that would be at the juncture where Angelo Errichetti was caught up in Abscam with Pete Harrison, then Senator from the Great State of New Jersey, with the Arab sheiks, and then, from there, it all went downhill. [Editor's Note: Harrison A. "Pete" Williams, Jr. (1919-2001), a Democrat, served as a Representative from New Jersey in the US House of Representatives from 1953 to 1957 and the US Senate from 1959 to 1982. Williams resigned from the Senate after being convicted for taking bribes during the FBI's Abscam sting operation in the early 1980s. Camden Mayor and NJ State Senator Angelo J. Errichetti was also convicted in the scandal.] RCA left, which later becomes General Electric, which later becomes Lockheed Martin, and, now, the building is condos. … Rutgers owns everything from the bridge down to the river, down to Campbell Field, right, and they were in a partnership with; what do you call it? So, yes, … it's a commuter campus. It's not like here, okay. So, it's an asphalt campus and you just go and I liked that, where I'm not one for groups. I'm more of a solitary individual. I find solace in that, all right.

TB: There was no social life.

BS: No, there was not. It was just, "Go, do what you got to do," you know. … The object here is to get an education, unlike Penn State, anyway. Did I say that? pardon me.

TB: Did you join any veterans' organizations, like the VFW?

BS: No, no, wrong guy. [laughter] I'm not a member of the DAV, I'm not a member of the VFW, American Legion, Vietnam [Veterans of America]; … I'm not a joiner, boys and girls. No, it gets old for me, you know, move on. It's like, this is very therapeutic. Maybe somebody will see this and say, "Oh, I can relate to that," or like the gentleman that just wrote the book from Yale, what was it? *What It's Like to Go To War*. It's a new book. It just came out. I just read it and he touched on things and it was very similar in terms of some of his experiences, and it's like, … you're removed how many years now? Are we removed forty-three years? We're removed forty-three years from the event, but he's writing it like [it were yesterday], and it's amazing how he has the recollection of it and you can recall certain things, you know, "No? Yes? Maybe?" Aren't there events in your life, I don't know, you scored one in the big game, I

don't know, or, you know, she was beautiful, she was a C cup, I don't know, you couldn't believe it? I don't know--no, no? …

NM: You graduate in 1976.

BS: That's good.

NM: You mentioned that you eventually got into flying.

BS: Yes. I'm flying in the meantime. … As I'm pumping gas, I'm flying, too. So, I get my private pilot's, I get my commercial, I get my instrument, I get my multi-engine, I get my flight instructor, I get my ATP [airline transport pilot license], I get--blah, blah, blah, right.

SL: The whole deal.

BS: Yes, right here, dude--I got them all.

SL: You started this in the 1970s.

BS: No, actually, it starts in the Summer of '67.

SL: Okay, while you were in the service.

BS: No, I'm out. I'm out, man, yes. So, the Summer of '67, I … go out to Mercer Airport and I worked for an outfit called Trenton Aviation, who I later flight instruct for, … yes, and that starts it and the rest is history, you know. You go and there's Orville and there's Wilbur--wait a minute, come on, might as well. Who else sees these things? … There you go, the whole thing.

SL: What do we have here?

BS: … Yes, I belong to that. Yes, I belong to that. I'm a life member, and I belong to this.

TB: The 101st Airborne Division Association, 506th Airborne Association.

BS: Yes, there you go, all the way, every day.

NM: It began as a hobby.

BS: No, flying isn't a hobby--it's the real deal.

NM: No, your training. You were interested in it.

BS: Yes, with the intent of staying in aviation.

NM: Okay, you did have the intent of staying in aviation.

BS: … Right, but you always have to have a fallback position, right. … You understand what you just read, okay, you understand the back of them.

SL: I did not read the back.

BS: Okay, the back gives you your limitations. …

SL: That is what you are allowed to fly.

BS: I'm allowed to fly, right. My last fleet airplane was the Boeing 737.

SL: Wow, you flew them.

BS: Yes, and the 72[7] and the [McDonnell-Douglas] MD-88, yes, man.

SL: Those are big planes.

BS: Well, the MD-88's a DC-9. The 727 is the DC-3 of the modern jet age era, okay, yes, and then, of course, … see, just like a lot of people don't know we have memorandums of agreement with foreign countries, I taught in Saudi Arabia. … Yes, so, there's a lot of things that people don't know, what goes on with our illustrious government.

NM: Could you tell us about your career in aviation?

BS: Yes. My career in aviation, oh, … it's been illustrious. Actually, that's why I get a paycheck every thirty days. … Yes, it starts off as a flight instructor with the then Trenton Aviation, which was out of Mercer Airport, and it goes on from there to an outfit called Summit Airlines, which was run by the DuPonts. … They were an all-cargo airline out of Philly, flying automotive parts and other various parts for various car manufacturers out of Philly, and they flew an airplane called a Convair 440. … In the meantime, I would continue to do the flight instructing and all that good stuff and flew it down. Then, comes deregulation--that would be, what, 1980? Actually, it starts in 1978, right, okay, 1978. That was Teddy "Don't Call Me The Beaver" Kennedy, then, it was Cannon and Alfred Kahn. They do deregulation, if you're familiar with that timeframe, where, now, they deregulate the airlines. They go from Civil Aeronautics Board, now, to anybody can be an airline. [Editor's Note: After airline deregulation became a major political issue in the early 1970s, the United States Senate Judiciary Committee investigated the industry from an antitrust perspective in 1975, under the leadership of Senator Ted Kennedy. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter named Alfred Kahn, a Cornell economics professor and proponent of deregulation, to chair the Civil Aeronautics Board. In February 1978, Senator Howard Cannon introduced a deregulation bill. In October 1978, the Airline Deregulation Act was signed into law by President Carter, which gradually reduced the Civil Aeronautics Board's regulatory powers until the board was fully eliminated in January 1985.] So, then, you see the advent of People's Express [People Express Airlines], New York Air, all the different names that come in, and all you had to do is have maybe one or two airplanes [and] you could become an airline. So, then, you begin to see competition against Pan American, Eastern, Trans World, all the legacy airlines, Delta, right. So, then, that's when I come in. I get

hired by [one], flying along, doing that, flight instruction, flying night cargo, building time, and then, I get--what do you call it?--picked up by People's Express, out of Newark, and then, a short time later, I get a letter from [the Federal Aviation Administration], because I had put in for the FAA and I get hired by the FAA out of Miami. So, I go from Jersey to Miami, down. At that juncture, it's the largest office in the nine regions of the FAA. So, I get hired there as an aviation safety inspector, and then, … from there, we go back … to the Eastern region and I get duty to … what they called the MOA, the memorandum of agreement, Saudi Airlines. So, I'm teaching their pilots in Riyadh and Jeddah, and then, I'm on that until I get transferred back to Atlanta, and then, I go on an outfit called … Atlantic South[east] Airlines, ASA. Then, I go from there to the international office out of Miami, and then, I'm doing Central America and South America. So, I'm doing Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama. Then, I'm doing Chile, Argentina and I'm doing some of the French, out in the Bahamas, the French Bahamas, out that way, and then, I come out of there, I get transferred back to Atlanta and … my last duty station is Delta. I do the Delta, what they call a CMO, certificate managing office, and my fleet, … I'm managing the 727 fleet as they're retiring it. Then, I go to the 88 fleet, which is nothing more than a DC-9, looks like a lawn dart, if you look at it from underneath, when it comes over flying, right. It's the elongated body, it's the engines are on the fuselage, okay. Then, … from there, I go to the 73, and then, that's how I finish up, with the 73. That's it. So, I get that, I get a retirement, "See you, have a nice day and send me my check." Now, I'm sitting in a room with you three guys.

TB: What is next?

BS: I finished the thing I just did. I did the master's thing and, what I did was, there's an outfit there, right now, they're doing, down in Atlantic City, Next Generation Air Park [Next Generation Air Transportation System], and that's all, you know, the satellite technology, the GPS stuff, right. … So, they now have a course at Atlantic County Community College that's geared to the Next Generation, yes, the airway system, all right. So, I'm trying to get a spot as an adjunct, to teach, bring all this knowledge [to bear] and see if I can pull that off, … yes, because Rutgers doesn't do anything along those lines. It seems more in these two-year programs that they're doing it, right, and then, they have a couple of schools that, like, you have Embry-Riddle [Aeronautical University], down in Florida, … Purdue has an aviation program, there's one over here in New York--I think it's called Vance College [Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology]. It's over in Flushing. … Everything is geared to aviation. So, yes, we're going to [try that], because you can't walk through the door; … even in a community college, you've got to have at least a master's to get picked up. You can't teach without a master's. So, I figured, "Let me go back and do that." So, I did. So, that was nice. McCormick came down, you know, short kind of a guy, wears heels, vertically challenged, but, you know, he handed it to me, you know, but, then, … he's going to come back as a three-hundred-thousand-dollar--how is that kind of a professor is he going to be? What am I thinking of?

NM: History?

BS: Yes, but, no, no, … it begins with the "E," come on.

NM: *Emeritus*?

BS: … It's *emeritus.* He's going to come back as a three-hundred-thousand-dollar *emeritus* professor, okay, and he's collecting a paycheck, and then, we've got the highest [paid] state employee right down the street here, Greggy, and we just lost to UConn over the weekend, right. We got our clock cleaned on that guy, right. [Editor's Note: Dr. Richard L. McCormick served as Rutgers University President from 2002 to 2012. Greg Schiano served as Rutgers University's head football coach from 2001 to 2012.]

NM: They will know when we did the interview.

BS: Well, that's all right. … If you want my address, these guys got it, yes, no problem, come packing--anyway. [laughter]

NM: Do you have any other questions?

BS: Come on, what else do you want to know, man?

SL: Were you ever married?

BS: Oh, yes, sure, married, have three children. They're all productive individuals in society.

SL: When did you marry?

BS: When did I marry? Let me see, I married in 1969, yes.

SL: Pretty early, almost when you came back from Vietnam.

BS: Yes. I'm twenty-three at the time, yes, there you go.

TB: How did you meet her?

BS: At a dance at [the college] which is now the College of New Jersey, which was Trenton State at the time. For you that do not know, … every county had state teacher colleges, at one time. There was Trenton State Teachers College, Glassboro State Teachers College, you actually had one in Newark, right, and they changed. Glassboro became Rowan and, if you have a hundred million dollars, amortized every ten years, you can have your name put on the marquee at that college and it's now Rowan because he wanted to have a college where they did engineering. Hank Rowan is from Burlington County. He has an outfit called Inductotherm and they do a lot of mechanical engineering devices and some nuclear stuff, right. So, he had [the funds], right, for you that didn't know that. See that, there are twenty-one counties. What are our state colors, by the way?

TB: State?

BS: State colors. Do you know our state colors?

TB: Off yellow with an emblem in the middle.

BS: Really? What's our state bird? … What's on the flag of the Great State of New Jersey, what two words?

TB: On the seal?

BS: No, not the seal, come on, "Liberty and Prosperity." …

NM: Is there anything you want to add?

BS: No. … The timeline, okay, of coming back to the States, no decompression time, that carries over. If you can appreciate that timeline when you came back and the timeline it takes for you to shake this thing, right, is a very protracted period of time, all right. So, then, if you flash forward to today, maybe you'll appreciate what these guys [went through], what they're going to end up doing, all right. I don't know. There's more outreach to them than in my generation and that's a good thing, all right.

TB: Thanks to the Vietnam veterans.

BS: No. Half of them don't understand it, anyway, but that's beside the point, but, yes, I don't know whether it's thanks to that. No, I think it's more in the public [eye]. It became more in the public eye with Herbert Walker, with DESERT STRIKE, DESERT SHIELD?

TB: DESERT SHIELD?

BS: Yes, DESERT STRIKE, DESERT SHIELD, right, coming back and knowing that you now have an all-[volunteer military], because less than--what is it?--less than two percent of the US population serve actively in the military.

TB: I think it is one.

BS: Is it one? okay, so, one. The President's offspring says, "Go to the mall and shop." So, it becomes, like, you have no relationship to that. It's like, when you see somebody, go, "Oh, okay, all right, yes." This may give you an appreciation for that, I have no idea, in terms of, "What was that guy doing? Where was he at, you know? … What baggage may he be carrying later on down the road?" and, "I could appreciate that. I saw that. I understand that," no, maybe, Nick?

NM: Maybe.

BS: Maybe? … I don't know. You know, you don't know. You know, you could just put it out there. … I think this is great--you've got my vote. You've got my vote when it comes to this. …

NM: Thank you, Mr. Spych [Dr. Molnar pronounces the name "Sp-ike"].

BS: No, that would be Spych [pronounced "Sp-itch"].

NM: Thank you for coming in.

BS: Is it Molinari?

NM: [laughter] Molnar.

BS: Molar. [laughter]

NM: We can end the interview.

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

Reviewed by Taylor McKay 3/1/12
Reviewed by Kara McCloskey 3/1/12
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/12/12
Reviewed by Bill Spych 1/4/13