RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEA E. TERRY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Lea E. Terry on January 26, 1995, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and …

Kevin McGuire: Kevin McGuire.

KP: I would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your parents and your childhood in Trenton. Your father went to Rider College for a period of time.

Lea E. Terry: He took courses there.

KP: Yes.

LT: Yes. He originally was from Ohio, and had been a coal miner as a child, and worked in the mines, in fact. We went back, since the war, and went to his hometown, after he died. We found that they had a coal ledger in a old window, and it showed that he had worked, he and his father, … how much coal they had gotten, and he got something like ten cents a ton … for mining coal, and he was only about fourteen years old at the time.

KP: Did he ever talk about his days as a coal miner?

LT: No, no, he didn't say [anything]. We have stuff, you know. We have, like, the old lanterns.

KP: The lanterns he used?

LT: That he had, and we had pictures of him.

KP: Why did he leave Ohio?

LT: He got hurt, it got cold, in a basketball game, and, after a basketball game, they never changed clothes, and he came back in a sled from a neighboring town and caught cold in his shoulder. They thought, at first, it was an injury. Then, they found [that] it was cold in his shoulder, and they told him [that] he needed a rest, so, they sent him east, or somewhere, to rest, and he came to Trenton. His sister lived here and he stayed in Trenton. That was it, never went back.

KP: Never went back.

LT: Never went back.

KP: What did he do for a living in Trenton?

LT: He worked as a floor walker in Dunham's Store. … In fact, it's still in Trenton. It's a department store, and he had gone to a church, a Sunday school, and he met the superintendent of

[the] Sunday school, [who] was Mr. Dunham, who owned the store, and he got him the job as a floor walker.

KP: How long did he work for the Dunham Department Store?

LT: Only a short time, just a few years. He also met … a girl at the church, and that happens to be my mother, and they were married, probably, within, oh, maybe five or six years of the time that he came [to New Jersey], and her father owned a grocery store, so, he worked there for awhile. Then, he later worked as a salesman for New Jersey Tobacco Company. He worked for the biscuit company, National Biscuit Company, worked for them. … Finally, I guess during the Depression, he was out of work and he worked as a painter on the side. He got together with another guy and they painted houses.

KP: Did he ever find a permanent job?

LT: Yes, well, … from his painting, he got a job at the paint store, and he was a salesman for the paint store, and he worked in the store, and he worked there until the war, and, when the war came, he got an opportunity to go to Roebling's, and … another fellow from church was the personnel manager of Roebling's. He got him a job … working at Roebling's. He worked in a storeroom for electrical supplies, for electrical maintenance. So, you know, Roebling's was a pretty big factory in those days, and they had a great, big storeroom just for electrical supplies, and, before he retired at seventy, he was running the warehouse.

KP: Which must have been a large operation.

LT: Which was a fair-sized [operation], you know. It was, like, a couple of rooms, but, [a] fair-sized place, but, he retired from there. He died when he was, oh, late, I guess.

KP: Yes, 1975.

LT: Yes, he was born in '88. So, he got cancer and died.

KP: Your father served in the Navy during World War I.

LT: He was on the "Million Dollar Pier" in Atlantic City as a radio operator. It was a secret listening-in station, and people in Atlantic City used to come and see them, and they thought they were just part of the pier, in other words, entertainment, but, they were actually in the Navy, and they listened-in to everything they heard in code on the air. They'd sit, by the hour, and just listen, and, near the end of his stint there, I guess about a year before the war ended, … they had a habit, when they went off duty, that they used to reach up and turn off the aerial, and they'd send, "Rise and shine," over the key, 'cause they weren't allowed to send anything out.

KP: Yes.

LT: They'd just listen. They'd send, "Rise and shine," and it made enough noise to wake the guy that was supposed to take their place. Well, about a year before he left there, he did the rise-and-shine, and reached up, and realized the key was still on. He had sent it out over the air, which was a no-no in those days. So, he was court-martialed, and his roommate did the same thing the next night, and neither of them said anything to each other; they just happened to do it. They were both court-martialed. They were reduced in pay, and they weren't allowed [to go] for advancement for a certain amount of time, but, otherwise, it was all right. He stayed there.

KP: Your father was stationed in Atlantic City throughout the war.

LT: Yes. … He had a chance, at one time, to go to Paris, but, some of his good friends advised him that he was in a good spot where he was, he'd better stay there, [laughter] and he did.

KP: You said that he was stationed on the boardwalk.

LT: Yes, well, the "Million Dollar Pier" was a pier from the boardwalk.

KP: Were they in uniform?

LT: Yes. They were in uniform. The people would see them and they … didn't realize that it was a regular station. They were Navy.

KP: Where was your father quartered?

LT: They had a hotel and he used to talk about it. His best man, when he got married, was one of the guys … from Atlantic City, and he lived in Philadelphia, … and, when we were kids, we used to go see [him], but, no, he talked about the woman who ran it, what a wonderful time they had. They had pictures.

KP: Your father had very fond memories of the First World War.

LT: Yes, he liked them. They had a good time.

KP: Did your father ever join any veterans' groups?

LT: He was in the … American Legion. In fact, in '38, Trenton Post 93 is the one that he was in, and they had three commanders, all in that post. My father was the commander of the Trenton post, a fellow named Barber was the commander of the Mercer County post, and a fellow named Block was State American Legion Commander. So, they were all from 93, at one time, and, at that time, I was in the color guard. … They had a Legion band. The color guard were all from the SAL, which is the Sons of the American Legion, and so, … I carried a gun, a rifle, I should say, in the color guard.

KP: Armistice Day must really stand out in your memories.

LT: Yes, we marched and marched. [laughter]

KP: What did your father think about the coming of World War II?

LT: He didn't say much about it, really. …

KP: He did not lean either way.

LT: No. Well, I guess I was involved in things at the time and, you know, [we] didn't chat much. He'd come home from work, and, [of] course, I was in high school, and … I was also in the Class of '41 from high school. So, my brother was supposed to be from Rutgers University, and I stayed an extra year and played football, so, I ended up graduating in '42. So, I … played football [in] the Fall of '41, when the war started, and, I remember, everybody in the school went to the auditorium and listened to the President's speech after Pearl Harbor, at Trenton High. They all went and listened to it. We heard that, and then, ... I took a course in aeronautics, because they said that, you know, they were gonna get courses for the war. So, several of us were able to switch, and I got out of a typing class [laughter] … that I was using as a fill and got in an aeronautics course, and it was very interesting. … I had high hopes to get into the Air Force, but, you know, when you get drafted, you go where they tell you. Incidentally, the War Department stopped all enlistments in, I guess it was, December 1st of '42, so, the only way you could get into the service, … if you were eighteen, was to be drafted, and then, you could go into any of the branches of the service. You could request, but, it was depending on what they wanted at the time, and you'd go wherever they wanted to put you. If you were seventeen, you could still get in the Navy Air Corps, but, other than that, [nothing else], because, at the time, see, from high school, I went to prep school and played football, and, at prep school, my roommate went in the Air Force. He went in the Navy Air Force, and I couldn't do anything, and I asked them to move my number up, that's all. … That was all.

KP: You decided to go to the Pennington School, a prep school, for a year.

LT: Well, that was because, again, my father said, "The more education you have when you get in the service, the better off you are." So, he felt that [way]. … We didn't have that much money, but, I had worked in a summer camp, and, in that summer camp, I had met the football coach from Pennington Prep, and he had seen me knock a guy down once, threw a block in a game, and he asked me if … I didn't want to go play football for him, and I had played in high school, and so, he took me to Pennington, and I had an interview with the headmaster at Pennington, and the headmaster was one of those gung ho-type fellows. [laughter] They let me in. … What was it? I was to pay two hundred dollars for the year and live there. So, you know, this was kind of unheard of. I guess the tuition, at the time, was nine hundred, but, I was to go for two hundred. It ended up, I was drafted, so, I left after … the first term, first half year, and so, I only paid a hundred dollars, but, I was there for a half a year.

KP: It was rather unique for someone to go from a public school to a prep school in that era. What differences did you notice between Trenton High and Pennington?

LT: Well, you can … get the information from the high school, public high school, if you want to work, but, you can also coast, you know. You can, you know, do as much as you want and go along, where[as] in prep school, you didn't have much chance, because we had [small] classes. I was in an English class with five people. I was in a math class with six. … I was in a physics class, I think there were eight, you know. You were called on every day. You had to know your work and they also gave us a chance to study. They had a forced study period in the evening, and the hallmasters used to walk around to make sure [that] you were studying, so that, you know, it was kind of a forced thing, but, it was good. I enjoyed it and I think it helped me at Rutgers, because I had had that training in studying that I wouldn't have had from high school. [In] high school, … you know, I got along. I did the work and I did what I had to. In those days, Trenton High had a system whereby every Wednesday was study day, and, all day, you studied, and you made out your own schedule. You'd go to homeroom, first thing "Study Wednesday" morning, and you'd make out your schedule for the day, and you followed that schedule. Now, this is the whole school. If you had any Ds or Es, you had to take those subjects twice. Otherwise, you could take physical education … [for] three periods, if you wanted. I mean, you know, it was kind of a lax thing, but, it still made you study, somewhat.

KP: It sounds like Pennington …

LT: Pennington was better.

KP: Your mother was a school teacher.

LT: Yes. [laughter] She was an elementary [school teacher]. She had a nervous breakdown. That's why she stopped teaching, I guess, and then, of course, after they were married, then, she had children. …

KP: Did she continue to teach after becoming a mother?

LT: Yes. She was a substitute. In fact, … I was in an elementary school and she'd be there as a substitute in another class, yes. It was kind of unusual, but, she subbed all over the city. In fact, she subbed all through the war. [Of] course, she'd tell stories, you know, about her sons, you know. The fact that my brother was a pilot, that was always an interesting [thing]. She could tell those stories. She said [that] that used to help her out. [laughter]

KM: How did your parents feel about the fact that you were drafted?

LT: Well, they ... were upset that I … had them push the number up.

KP: They would have preferred it if you could have stayed out of the war for a little while longer.

LT: Yes. Well, they wanted me to stay in school. In fact, as I said, my father was a commander of the Legion, so, he knew enough people, and he had it pushed back a month. So, I was supposed to go in January and he had finagled it so [that] I went in February. I went February 15th and I was to have gone in January. So, to that extent, they didn't like it, but, they realized I was going to go. They didn't … really, you know, worry. After we were overseas, they worried more about me, because I was in the combat areas, whereas my brother was in a prison camp, and they figured, as an officer in a prison camp, he was in pretty good shape, … and that's really what happened, because he got bored stiff. … See, the enlisted men, they made [them] work, but, the officers just sat and had nothing to do, and he started to write a book, you know; he did a lot of different things. … I hadn't told you before, but, … here at Rutgers, he was a card player. He was a bridge player. He and his partner won the championship of the University when he was here, so, you know he was a bridge player, … because you know how they played bridge in the universities, and that didn't help him losing his scholarship, either. [laughter]

KP: You grew up in Trenton, which was then a major industrial center. Which section of Trenton did you live in?

LT: Well, we were about a block from the river, in the western section. Well, if you know Trenton, we were off South Hermitage, but, … it's an area, now, that's not too good.

KP: What was your neighborhood like when you were growing up?

LT: It was fine. It was about, I'd say, low-middle [class]. … You weren't in the middle class or high class. It was, I'd say, middle, maybe low-middle, the area we were in.

KP: Where did most of your neighbors work?

LT: Oh, they worked all over. Gee, I don't even know.

KP: Did most people work in the factories?

LT: Some worked in factories. … The guy across the street was an engineer on a locomotive. Another fellow was a custodian at a church.

KP: There was a range of occupations.

LT: Yes. There were different [kinds].

KP: How many were first-generation immigrants?

LT: I don't think there were any; I don't know. … It was all different. … There were all kinds of people. In fact, the guy around the corner, his father was a bank president. Now, they moved out. When … he was in eighth grade, I guess, he moved out, and moved to Pennington, in fact,

but, his father was one of the vice-presidents of Trenton Trust, where Mary Roebling was. You know, he had a good job, but, they moved. [laughter]

KP: Many of the graduates of Trenton High School that I have spoken with seemed very pleased with the education that they received there.

LT: Oh, yes.

KP: What do you remember about your education in Trenton?

LT: Well, … it was a good education. The teachers were good teachers. They ... made you work, you know. You didn't really have to, you know, break your back, but, you had to do the work.

KP: Did your parents expect you and your brother to go on to college?

LT: Oh, I think so, I think so.

KP: Your brother enrolled at Rutgers first. Why did he choose Rutgers? How much did his decision to come here affect your plans?

LT: Well, I don't know. I wanted to be a math teacher. I wanted to take physical education. I wanted to coach and be a math teacher, and, when I first got out of the service, I found out, at Trenton State, which is nearby, your minor had to be in … science, and so, I applied to Rutgers. I took the tests here. In fact, I wasn't very confident, because I took the tests, I guess over in the engineering building, and, after taking the tests, it was almost two, maybe three weeks, [and] they hadn't said anything. … When I received the note, the next day, I had set up to go for a job at a structural steel place, and I was going to try and work there and take structural drafting at Drexel. I mean, this was all set up, and [then], I was admitted to Rutgers, and so, that all went down the drain. I came here and, in my years here at Rutgers, I planned on math. I took calculus with engineers here and the phys eds used to think I was nuts. You know, I'd be sitting in the back of a phys ed class doing calculus. … They'd think I was crazy, because they had trouble with tests and measurements, [laughter] but, what happened, in those days, I had no advisor. I never talked to anybody until the middle of my senior year. I even practice taught in math. I taught second year algebra and plane geometry at Trenton High, … did my practice teaching and, also, in physical education, but, in the middle of my senior year, I met somebody that was an advisor, and they went over my records. Well, I don't know whether I mentioned it on there, but, I went to the University of Pennsylvania when I was in the Army. I went to ASTP. They had it here at Rutgers, too, I believe, but, I had been sent to the University of Pennsylvania. I was there for two terms and took engineering, and the credits that I gained from there I had transferred here, and I figured [that] I could use those, and I had it all figured out, how I was going to get this math. Well, in the middle of my senior year, they found out that I had duplicated some of the courses. So, I lost some of the credits, and I would have to take five credits, … it was at least five, I guess, in a half a year to get a minor in math, and they talked about the theory of equations and that [sort

of thing], you know, and I had had enough trouble with calculus without going into these courses. So, I said, "Well, what else could I take as a minor?" and, lo and behold, I took a speech course and the second half of "American Lit," and I got a minor in English, and I taught English for fifteen years.

KP: What did you teach after that?

LT: Oh, physical education. Well, in fact, during … the time I was teaching English, after the first, I guess, four years, I had all the afternoon classes in the school in physical education, health and physical education, because there were only three phys eds, men, and one was the athletic director and the other guy had been there [for] years, and he was a driver's ed teacher. So, he used to teach driver's ed, [the] athletic director would take care of the athletic director's work in the afternoon, and I was the physical education teacher in the afternoon. I taught English in the morning, physical education in the afternoon. They also put me into guidance, because I had been a football coach. I was a football coach at this time, an assistant coach, and I got along fine with the kids, and they put me into guidance, and so, I was in guidance for, oh, about six years. They finally told me I had to take some courses in guidance, and I worked summers at the Trenton Country Club. I ran the pool at the Trenton Country Club, and it was a pretty good job, and I really couldn't afford to take courses and do that job, and, in the fall and the winter, I was coaching. I coached basketball and football, so, there was really no time to take courses. So, I didn't take any courses and they threw me out of guidance, finally. When they threw me out of guidance, of course, I had English and phys ed. … It was crazy; the year they put me out of guidance, they changed the principal, and they changed the principal within the first week of school, and the man that they made principal was an English teacher, who was also in guidance. So, to replace him, they … put me in to take his guidance job. So, I ended up back in guidance for another year and they hired an English teacher to take his ... English job and my English job, because I had a half a day of English and physical education. So, they hired an English teacher, who took my half ... day of English and his half day of English, and I went … into guidance all morning and phys ed all afternoon, and I went nutty trying to find work to do. [laughter] I told the vice-principal, I says, "If you have any work, then come, you know, let me know," 'cause, in those days, guidance, I used to talk to everybody, and, you know, I'd get everybody … that I had. I had the whole tenth grade class, and it got so that, you know, I needed work to do, really, but, then, the next year, I went back to English, and they got somebody else in guidance. Then, after fifteen years, they put me in full-time phys ed.

KP: You did that until you retired.

LT: Yes, well, … the last seventeen years, I taught forty years, … I was the athletic director. I was department chairman and athletic director, and then, they started to pay for department chairman, and they said [that] I couldn't have both jobs. So, I was just the athletic director and for, ... I guess, the first three years I was athletic director, I taught two classes. I taught the two classes in the morning, and then, I was athletic director. By this time, they had two teachers on a class in phys ed, because of the numbers that we had, and they wouldn't give me health classes, because I might have to go to the phone or do other work. So, I was on the gym floor two

periods [a day], I guess for about three years, and then, we went into double sessions, which is a story in itself. We went into double sessions, and when we did, they said [that] I was full-time phys ed, or full-time … athletic director, and I didn't have any classes at all. You see, when you start school at seven o'clock and you end at five o'clock, and you're in charge of athletics, it runs from seven to five, and there's no way they can tell you to come in late or go [home] early. They used to, but, there was nothing ... I could [do]. I used to come in early. … Double sessions is a nightmare, but, it's good for use of [the] facilities, but, in athletics, it's tough. ... You know, I had to know where the gym classes were going to be when I had a game. I mean, we had games … going on while people were in physical education class. I mean, we [would] have a soccer game going on on the field and a JV football game and we'd have regular classes out there, because they'd be there. …

KP: Did you switch to double sessions in the 1980s?

LT: I don't remember exactly. … Well, sure, I became athletic director … in '72, so, it was about '75 that we went into double sessions, '76. … See, we had two high schools, Hamilton and Steinert, and Steinert went on double sessions the year before we did, and then, when we went on, we stayed on for about four, maybe five years. … During that time, see, the ninth and tenth grades were in the morning, and the eleventh and twelfth were in the afternoon, but, if you had a good athlete who was in tenth grade, you had to finagle it so [that] he went in the afternoon, or went in the morning; I have that backwards. The eleventh and twelfth are in the morning and the ninth and tenth are in the afternoon. … [Of] course, everybody figured, "Well, … as soon as school's out in the morning, then, we can start practice," right, but, you can't, because every teacher had to teach their teaching load and teaching period, and you couldn't coach on your teaching period, and, therefore, you couldn't ... coach until two o'clock. So, the kids who came in the morning had to hang around 'til two o'clock before they could start practicing, and, because of that, then, … we used to have 'em sign a paper to say they had to take study hall, or give 'em permission to go home, or give 'em permission to go to a neighbor's house, which caused all kinds of trouble, … and the same in the morning. [In] the morning, the boys [that] went to school in the afternoon would come to school at eight o'clock and have football practice, but, at ten o'clock, they had to stop, because the teacher had to teach, and then, they'd have two hours to do nothing. … Certainly, [their] parents didn't realize it, but, they should have gone to study hall, but, instead, they went out and got in trouble. [laughter] It was a real hectic situation.

KP: I want to ask you more about your career as a high school teacher later on.

LT: Okay. [laughter]

KP: Going back to your decision to enlist, had you or your brother expected that the United States would enter the war? Did the attack on Pearl Harbor just come out of the blue for you?

LT: Well, we realized it. In fact, … I had had twelfth grade history the year before, and, with all the elections and all of the … Lend-Lease, I had made notebooks, … Lend-Lease and all of this

stuff, and, of course, you know, you realize something was coming up. It was kind of inevitable that it would be a war.

KP: Your parents were Republicans.

LT: Yes.

KP: How did they feel about Roosevelt?

LT: [laughter] Well, my father never said too much. … I don't know, they were kind of upset about the fact that they were putting people to work, and they weren't working, and you'd see them leaning on shovels and that kind of stuff.

KP: You mentioned that you had studied Lend-Lease in school. What did you think of Lend-Lease at the time?

LT: Well, … you know, I felt that they were doing the right thing.

KP: You were not in the Robert Taft school of thought.

LT: No, no, I wasn't an isolationist.

KP: You mentioned that you heard Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" address in school. Do you remember where you were when you heard that Pearl Harbor had been attacked?

LT: Yes. I was in … Asbury Park, at a High Y convention. We were there for the weekend, and we had … been there, we'd been going through meetings, and we'd gone to a church service … that Sunday afternoon, and we got in a car to come home, and the man who was driving the car was also … the director of the camp that I went to in the summer in those days. … When we got in the car, he told us about Pearl Harbor and told us that there was no doubt in his mind that we'd all be in the service … within a year.

KP: He was probably not that far off.

LT: Yes, pretty close.

KP: At that point, you expected that you would soon be in the Armed Forces.

LT: Yes. Well, that … next summer, … I had shorts on and I went in … and registered for the draft. I was eighteen and I remember registering for the draft … in Frenchtown, New Jersey. See, the camp was on the river. Marshall's Island is just south of Frenchtown. … You had to do it in the summer; I couldn't go home. … You did it wherever you were and we registered at the high school in Frenchtown.

KM: What were some of the attitudes of your neighbors in Trenton following the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

LT: Well, there were people who, you know, they were gonna go get in the service right away. [Of] course, I was younger than that. There was nothing I could do … and my brother had already just signed up, [laughter] so, … he was set, but, there were others; there were younger fellows, … older than I was, but, who left and went in the service.

KP: Did your brother ever tell you why he enlisted so early?

LT: No, no, no. Well, see, in those days, you had to have two years of college to get in the Air Force, to fly, and he had completed two years of college. In fact, he was in his third, again, [laughter] but, by all, you know, accounts, he had enough college. ...

KP: Your number was called up, but, you wanted to go in by that time.

LT: Yes.

KP: Which branch of the service did you want to go into?

LT: Well, I asked if the Air Force was open and it wasn't. They just said it wasn't, … and then, I asked for the engineers. Well, I think that just happened. I really don't know. I was put into the engineers. As I later found out, I was lucky not to have been in the infantry. … When I went in, we went to Fort Dix and I was with three fellows … who didn't take the two weeks off. It was funny. See, I'd stopped school [at] the end of January, and so, I didn't go in until the 15th of February. So, one of the fellows that I was gonna go with, … was being drafted with me, we went to New York for a week and spent a week in New York, having a gay time, [laughter] going to hockey games and stuff, movies. So, we'd had enough vacation and we wanted to get [going]. "Let's get on with it." So, when we went to Camden for the draft, … they were going to send everybody back to Trenton, and the three of us said, "We want to go right away," and they took us, … they gave us tickets to go on, by bus, to Fort Dix, and, when we got to Fort Dix, this must not never have happened before, because … they were kind of shocked [that] somebody didn't want their time off. So, when we came, they … gave us a place to go in the barracks, but, they didn't give us clothes. We wore our civilian clothes that first night, and, here, I had shoes that were worn out, … 'cause I'd figured on throwing them away, and [laughter] it was the coldest night of the year, and they just stuck us in the barracks, and then, in the morning, when the next wave came, we got into that.

KP: You reported early.

LT: Yes, we reported [on] the 15th, and the 15th is marked on my record as the day I went in, but, we didn't do anything until the 16th, when the group came.

KM: Your father was in the Navy during World War I. Was he disappointed that you did not join the Navy?

LT: Oh, I don't think so. I don't think so. In fact, [laughter] he thought I had claustrophobia. He thought I'd get claustrophobia if I got into any tight places. … Often, he told me, after I came back, he wondered how I ever got across the ocean. [laughter]

KP: Were you claustrophobic?

LT: I talked myself out of it, I think. Well, you know, you're in situations and you just have to live through it. You do it and I don't know if you know anything at all about a troop ship.

KP: I know that they were very cramped. [laughter]

LT: Well, a troop ship, we were in the … second hold down in the front … of a liner, two thousand troops on board. They had all paratroopers, except [for] the compartment we were in, and the compartment we were in were service troops, and service troops are ordnance, engineers, medics, and so on. They put, in this hole, the cots, if you [could] call 'em a cot; it's about so wide and there's a piece of canvas across. It's tied by rope, it's about six feet long, and they had 'em four high, and … the rack next to it comes down, and, when they're coming down, there's no room to be in between. I mean, there's about an inch, two inches, between the two racks. So, when you put the rack down, you climbed in it and you're in a slot. So, like, there's row after row after row of these cots, and, if you're, say, down the second row, you know, you're there, and you're there for the night, and you're not gonna get out, and, if you've gotta go to the john, you go to the john where you are. You're just not gonna get out. There was no way out, and they had 'em racked that way, and, when you went in at night, you got into your cot, and, in the morning, you put it up, and you went up on deck, and I stayed on deck. [laughter] Luckily, we had a nice trip, because it was in May and the weather was fine. Well, it was only fourteen days, going over, and I'd stay on [deck] and never went down. Some of the guys that went down ended up having to clean and work, you know. In fact, we were the cleanest compartment, so, they let us go to the movies a couple of times, when we went over, and the movie theater was about the size of this room, [eight-by-fourteen]. … That was in the dining hall, and the dining hall was about the size of this room, and they had wooden boards that they … had along the side, and you'd come in, and they'd hand you a tray, and then, you'd get your food on a tray, and you'd work your way around, back and forth, … until you finally finished and you went out the door, so that all these people are eating at the same time, kind of moving, going through, and … that was the mess hall.

KP: You ate standing up.

LT: Yes. You stood up and ate. … There was no other way, unless you wanted to sit on the floor, and they were walking on you, you know. … Then, at night, see, they'd take these down, and then, you'd come in, and everybody'd sit, all close together, and they'd put the movie on. … If you won inspection, they'd let you see a movie. [Of] course, you saw the same movie twice,

but, [laughter] … it was something to do, … and you certainly didn't want to go down in that hold to sleep. Some of them slept on deck.

KP: However, you did not.

LT: No. I slept downstairs. … After I came home and told my father, [laughter] he kind of chuckled [at] the fact that I had done it. [Of] course, you know, you ended up sleeping in holds after that, … you know, when it was cold, … and it was safer down in the hold, you thought.

KM: Besides the movies, what else did you do for entertainment?

LT: [laughter] Going across? nothing.

KP: Did you play cards?

LT: Some played cards. They'd play cards. … They gave us a Red Cross package when we got on the ship, and there was a book in every one, and a lot of guys didn't read the books, and they'd leave 'em around, so, you could, you know, have your choice of what you wanted to read. [Of] course, … I guess I read most of the time.

KM: Were they novels?

LT: Yes, novels. In fact, some of the novels, I thought they were for the soldiers, that I found out later were the best sellers. *Postman Rings Twice*, [*The Postman Always Rings Twice*], I think I read at the time and later found out it was … a best seller, and then, later, it was a movie, but, I mean, it was kind of trashy when I read it, [laughter] and, yet, you know, I thought they were sending this stuff to the soldiers.

KP: After you reported to Fort Dix, you were placed into the ASTP.

LT: No. I went to Fort Dix and, from Fort Dix, I went to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. In Fort Jackson, South Carolina, we came in with a group of eighteen, nineteen-year-olds from the New York/New Jersey area, with maybe six or seven thirty-four-year olders. In other words, guys that they just happened to catch. Everybody else was eighteen, nineteen. So, we're all young, full of everything, [laughter] and … we went into the 26th Division. The 26th Division, 101st Engineers, had turned over three times. They had taken personnel, and made a battalion of engineers, and sent them to the Pacific three times, and we came in as the fourth group to become the 101st Engineers, and they trained us. They were gonna give us our basic training, and the cadre, the people who had originally been in the 101st Engineers, … [were from the] Massachusetts National Guard, and they were the cadre, and they were the ones that trained us. Now, they had trained two other groups. Their original group had been shipped off, and then, they had stayed, and then, they trained two other groups, and, now, they were gonna train us. So, we were with that group. We stayed in Fort Jackson and did basic training, with them as our

cadre, and I don't know how many months we were there, but, then, the whole battalion, or the whole …

KP: Hold that thought. [laughter]

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

LT: … Our battalion and the rest of the division. The division wasn't in Fort Jackson. We were the only ones from the 26th Division in Fort Jackson at the time. They brought the entire division to Camp Gordon, Georgia. We moved, by train, to Camp Gordon, Georgia, which is now, I think, Fort Gordon, I don't know, … well, Fort Jackson, I think. I guess it's Fort Jackson. Camp Jackson became Fort Jackson, and we went to Camp Gordon, and, at Camp Gordon, the whole division was there, so, they were planning divisional maneuvers, but, the only problem here was that this was the first time we really got involved with other YDs, [Yankee Division members], and, when we went on pass into town, … they almost closed the town, because they said [that] YD was "Damned Yankee." They were all from Massachusetts and we're in the middle of Georgia, you know. It was like another war. [laughter] They wanted no part of us. … They even had trouble, the Yankee Division, … with other outfits on the post who said, "Everything was fine until you guys got here," and then, when they got there, they closed all the things in, was it Columbia? Columbia? no, Columbia was South Carolina, Augusta. We were outside of Augusta, Georgia, and Augusta just closed up when the YDs came. So, I was there for I don't know how many months, but, anyway, then, they came up with ASTP, and they interviewed all guys with a certain IQ, I guess, and you had the option, if you wanted to go or not, and, at the time, anything to get out of the South, [laughter] I mean.

KP: You were not crazy about the South.

LT: No, no. Well, you would go out to train and it would rain. I mean, you'd take a raincoat. Every day, you took a raincoat, and, you know, in the middle of the day, it would start to rain, you'd put your raincoat on, on orders, and, five minutes later, you'd take it off, and it was nice again, but, the temperature, the climate, was terrible, and, … you know, you had all kinds of problems in the towns. So, you know, I really didn't like it at all.

KP: In terms of problems with the towns, you mentioned that places would close down.

LT: Yes. They … didn't want any part of the Yankee Division.

KP: Were there ever any fist fights?

LT: There were fights … on post, between the YDs and … the fellows who were in other outfits, who said it was their fault, … and it was their fault. They had gotten in trouble, see. … These were all National Guard fellows who had come into the National Guard, you'd figure, several years before, and they were still standing around, doing nothing, and they wanted to go overseas. … The infantry was very eager to go. The outfit I was in was brand new, see, but, these guys

had been there before, and they were ready to go. … I understand, after I left, that the YDs were either in on Normandy or close to it, … but, I was glad to get out of it. … I went to [the] Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina, and it was a star unit, and they said [that] I could go anyplace east of the Mississippi that they happened to send me, and they gave us some tests again, and interviewed us, and, lo and behold, I was sent to the University of Pennsylvania, and they gave us a seventy-five mile Class "A" pass. I could go home, if I wanted to. [Of] course, in those days, you know, you didn't want to go home. [laughter] Philadelphia was a great town for servicemen and, you know, we had a good time in Philadelphia. After the first term, another fellow [and I], we got together and we talked it over and decided it was time we got back in the Army. So, the two of us did absolutely nothing in chemistry and physics [during] the second term.

KP: Which got you back into the Army.

LT: Oh, they threw us out, at the time, but, actually, that helped us, because, when we were thrown out, at the end of the term, there were about twenty-five of us, and they lost my records. [laughter] Everybody else was gone. They had [been] sent out [to] different places and I was still there. I stayed another week, and they finally found my records, and then, they sent me to Belvoir, which is just out of Washington. I went to Belvoir, and they … looked at my record of … what I had done in basic training, and [laughter] I had done everything but fire the .30 caliber machine gun and go through an infiltration course. So, they looked at the course, and they said where I was to go, and I went to a group that had just completed their tenth week in the Army. Well, here, you know, I'd been in the Army almost a year. Well, yes, I'd been in the Army more than a year, 'cause I came in in February, and then, it went all the way around. … This was in the Summer of '44; I'd gone in in February of '43. When I came into this barracks, [laughter] it was kind of a joke. You know, I was with guys who had been in the Army ten weeks, and I'll never forget, the sergeant, … he called out to the men, they'd just come in from Saturday morning inspection, and [he said], … "Is there anyone that hasn't had a pass since the three-day pass?" So, of course, I had just been on furlough. … See, after you finish ASTP, … they give you special orders for seven days vacation, and then, after … the next term, they get another seven days. Well, these were all on special orders, nothing on my permanent record. So, when I went down there, they didn't know when I'd been home last, or if I'd had any passes, or where I had been, see? So, I said, "Well, I never got a three-day pass." "Oh, we can't do anything. Next week, you'll get it." So, the next week, here, I'd been there a week, I'd just come from home, [laughter] I got a three-day pass, and then, after I was there awhile, I guess I was there three weeks, and, during the three weeks, I fired a .30 caliber machine gun, and I went through the infiltration course, on a beautiful, snowy day, and, when I finished that, the next day, they called and said, "You're wanted," and they pulled me right off the field and took me, in a jeep, down to a certain building, and I went in, and they said, "You're on foreign shipment." It was just that fast. I'd finished it, that was it, get rid [of me]. So, they put me in a company that had just come back from bivouac and they were ready to be shipped out. So, I changed from that group to another company. … Oh, they said, "Have you had a furlough, lately?" I didn't know. You know, you never tell them anything. So, I didn't know. So, they gave me nine days. [laughter] This went on my … record. So, then, after the nine days were up, I came back and we were there about a week and shipped out. From there, I went to Shenango. I don't know if you know where

Shenango is, that's Camp Reynolds. It's near Warren, Ohio, Youngstown, Ohio, Sharon, Pennsylvania, right on the border. We were there [for] six weeks, and, of course, they kept saying, "You're going to go West," and they were all service troops there, and they talked about sending us to, you know, the Pacific. You had no idea where you're going, and, … lo and behold, they called us, and we were to go. We went to Patrick Henry. Did you ever hear of Patrick Henry, maybe from other guys? Patrick Henry was a POE [Port of Embarkation] for the Mediterranean, and that's … just out of Norfolk, Virginia, and ... I was at Patrick Henry [for] two weeks, and we shipped from Patrick Henry, and then, we went to Naples.

KP: You went over as a replacement.

LT: Yes.

KP: You did not know which unit you would be sent to.

LT: Well, … my Army spec number, … somebody told me later, was a jackhammer operator, but, I ... was a basic engineer, and, if I had arrived in Naples, probably two weeks before, I might have been in the infantry at Anzio, because, … you know, they kept … taking the guys and moving 'em up, didn't care what they were, putting them in the infantry. They also went into the 36th Division, who were having trouble, and they took everybody, but, I happened to get there just at the right time. The day after I arrived, they broke out of Anzio. … No, the 5th, the 5th of June, they took Rome. Of course, D-Day was the 6th, up the other way, and so, we arrived [on] Memorial Day, so, things were moving, and they were getting off the beachhead. So, they weren't taking replacements and they didn't take anybody. We sat in a replacement depot. I think I was there for about four weeks, and, when … we shipped out of there, we went to these guys who had been above Rome and they pulled 'em back, and they pulled back the 36th Division, the … Third Division, and the 45th Division, and support troops, and I was in the 36th Engineers, then. That's the outfit I came to. I came to Company I, 36th Engineers, First Platoon, Third Squad, and that's where I was to be. I had a squad leader who had landed in Africa. I had an assistant squad leader who had landed in Africa. In the squad, there were two other guys who had been in Africa. Everybody else was a replacement.

KP: What had happened to the squad? Were the replacements there to make up for men who had been killed or wounded?

LT: Well, yes, guys would get killed and that's when [the replacements came in]. … See, in most of your infantry outfits, when you went into a new situation, they were all replacements, you know. The replacements became the sergeants and everything, whereas we still had [several of our original members]. When the war ended, we had one guy still in the squad who [was an original member]. Of those four guys that were there when I went in, in Italy, only one of them lived through the war. Well, I shouldn't say, "Lived;" the others left. I was with them, I don't know how … long, but, we trained there. I trained with them for the invasion. We went out in DUKWs and came in, and we … even went in an LCI and landed on a beach that was mined, and they had us walk in footprints, because it was mined. They killed somebody, and they were all

upset, … so that when you came in, everybody walked in each other's footprints, so that you wouldn't get killed, and, supposedly, practice, and, when we left, … we boarded ship in (Magnoli?), which is a small town just above Naples, … this was an LCI, and we went down into the Bay of Salerno, and we got together there, several of 'em, and then, we went. We were off Corsica the night before the invasion. We boarded ship on the 9th, I think, the 9th of August, we invaded [on] the morning of the 15th of August, and we were swimming off Corsica. They had the ships, you know, a little ways apart, but, well, we were swimming in the … sea, and they put down the ramps that you later had to come off of, but, for something to do, you [could] have a good time swimming. … When we came in, in the invasion, one of these guys didn't get off. He was sick, on the ship. He stayed on. We never saw him again. I have no idea what ever happened to him, but, he was the assistant squad leader, and we got replacements as we went along, as you lost guys. My sergeant, later, was shot. … You see, I say I was in the engineers, and we did engineer work at the beach, and we did engineer work … as we went. We stayed a month on the beach, and then, when we moved up, we did engineer work, but, then, when they want infantry, they'd call us, because we were a regiment, and they could use the regiment [as infantry]. They had been at Anzio. They'd been on the lines at Anzio for, like, a month-and-a-half as infantry. So, they knew that this was a good infantry outfit and, when they needed somebody in a hurry, they pulled this regiment of engineers.

KP: Therefore, you saw your fair share of combat.

LT: Yes. … We were up as infantry, I'd say, over two months, but, not all at once, but, they put us places (where it was quiet?). I mean, I never was in a real, you know, gung ho battle. …

KP: However, enemy soldiers were trying to kill you.

LT: Oh, yes. Well, I was [in] places where I could have been killed, but, we weren't, … like, in a, … well, you can say the invasion; we landed an hour after the first troops. I came in on an LCI. I came down the ramp and stepped off, and the water was up to my neck, and I had a … Bangalore torpedo in one hand and a rifle in the other, and you don't hold a rope. They got a rope there for you, and there's a sailor out there holding the rope, but, you can't get the rope, … you know, you're holding those. … The guy in front of me went under, so, I figured [that] he must have stepped in a hole, so, I went around, and I stayed above water and got up on the beach. The LCI on our left was hit by a mortar, on a ramp, the one on the right hit a mine, and we came through. … As we came up the beach, … they talked about digging in; we were in a small, wooded area, and some of them dug in, but, we heard a big explosion off to our left and, later, found out [that] a mortar had landed in a track vehicle, which is … probably an artillery piece, and … killed, of course, everybody in it, but, you know, the war was on. I think my feeling [was], as I came up the beach, I just, you know, thought, you know, "This is kind of silly." You know, it's like playing games, like kids. You're sneaking into this guy's country, but, then, it woke you up, because here's a pile of Navy guys that had been killed clearing mines, and they were just piled up. You know, so, it wakes you up in a hurry, that things are going on. "This is not for me," but, you go, and, from there, we cleared mines. We left our stuff right where … our stuff we brought in [was] and they started us with bayonets. We started a path up off the beach.

They needed roads, and we worked the road maybe thirty yards, from the dunes, right off the beach, and straight to the highway, and we probed with bayonets.

KP: Did you find any mines?

LT: We didn't find any. We were doing pretty well. They had … a lot of shells booby trapped, but, the areas were taped off. They said, you know, "*Beware (Minen?)*," and, you know, it was in German, but, they had the things all taped off. … Sailors were attached to us, because we ran the beaches, see, and one of the sailors that was attached to us cut across one of these fields and was killed, 'cause he knocked off a shell. … We worked that night, but, the next morning, our sergeant took us out and showed us one of these, and the whole squad stood right around while he showed us how you put the pin back in and take it apart, and, if he'd have made a mistake, we were all dead. I mean, that's the kind of education you got.

KP: That made you pay attention.

LT: Yes. You watched, because it's a funny thing. I don't know if you've talked to any engineers before.

KP: Not many.

LT: But, engineers, they leave the pin. Any time they set a mine, they leave the pin. They put a mine down and the pin is left there by it. So, if you have to deactivate that, you put the pin back in and it's deactivated, and it was just a rule. [laughter] The Germans did it, the Americans did it, everybody did it.

KP: Why?

LT: I don't know. … You didn't have a pocket full of pins, and, to deactivate a mine, you gotta put a pin in the thing, you know, if it's like a booby trap, and you put the pin back in, and then, it's deactivated, but, … it's kind of nutty, but, that's how they work.

KP: When you landed in Southern France, was that the first time that you faced hostile fire?

LT: Yes.

KP: In Italy, you were not exposed to combat.

LT: No. Well, the only thing we ran into … [was] [laughter] when they took us into some area that had mines, and that's what they did on this. They had a fake invasion and they took us in the side of Italy. … They shouldn't have taken it, I guess.

KP: You spent most of your time in Italy training with your new unit.

LT: Yes. I got a Battle Star for Italy, but, I was ... in a replacement depot that was in a combat zone. [laughter] In fact, they gave you … one shell. ... I stood guard by the (Volturno?), in this camp. They gave you one shell to put in that rifle. I mean, come on, you know; that's the last you did that. [Of] course, in the States, you never had ammunition. In the States, the only time you saw ammunition was when you were on the range, and then, you were [only] given so much, and they practically searched you when you left, and they knew how much ammunition you had and what you had to do, and you fired it, and that was it, and you made sure all the rifles … were empty, and that was it, but, after I got into this outfit, you know, [of] course, I was there two weeks, and another guy and I volunteered for the paratroopers, and the only reason we did it was after we heard all these tales. … When you come into an outfit as a replacement, you don't talk, you just keep quiet, you listen, [laughter] and this other fellow that had come in with me, … we decided, "If we're gonna get killed, we might as well get well paid for getting killed," because [of] the way these guys talked. In fact, we were … out back, … they had a little meeting, and a guy … was cleaning a machine gun, and shot two rounds of machine gun [fire], and killed a guy on the other side of the tent, maybe from here to that wall from us, and, you know, it makes you think. You're there, and, … as I say, we volunteered, but, a week later, we thought better of it and went back to the First Sergeant. He said, "I didn't put it in." He says, "I knew you'd be that way." He knew how guys were. [laughter] Yes, we decided [that] we didn't want to.

KP: You were working on the beach for quite a while.

LT: Yes, we ... were there [for] a month.

KP: Did you have a lot of interaction with the sailors or was that pretty minimal?

LT: Well, … they'd come in. The first night, we unloaded ships. … First night, we unloaded a ship that was about fifty yards off shore into DUKWs. We took the ammunition, picked it up, and put it in a DUKW, and then, the DUKW went up to [the beach], and, about half way through the night, there was an air raid, and … I'll never forget, … the Sergeant said, this guy wanted to swim to shore, he says, "Hey, I don't want to get hit, blown up." He [the Sergeant] says, "If you dive in, and you swim to shore, and you run as fast as you can, if they hit this ship, you're dead, [laughter] no matter how fast you run." So, he stayed; he said [that] he'd stay there. Of course, they didn't hit us, but, then, that was the only night we had to unload. … Actually, the first [day], we worked from the time we came in that morning, we worked through to the next morning, and they gave us a little time off the next morning, but, then, when we worked, … they'd bring the ships [in], … the landing craft that a tank would be in, [LST], they'd have a truck in, … well, I guess they didn't have trucks in [at] first. They'd back the truck down, and then, they'd bring these in, and they were taking cargo nets off the ships and putting 'em in these ships that would pull up, and then, … we'd take these things and throw 'em on the trucks, and then, the trucks'd go to the dump. We did that [for] a long time, several weeks, and then, they started to use DUKWs. They'd take the DUKWs out to the ships, and they'd put the nets into the DUKW, and then, the DUKW would ride across the beach. They had trouble with stealing. Some of the guys were stealing supplies and stuff, and so, they had MPs on the beach, [laughter] to keep 'em from stealing. … If they brought through a PX ration, … they'd have an MP on the

DUKW, minding the stuff 'til they took it off, 'cause that's cigarettes and guys would sell cigarettes. You know, we went into Aries and Toulon within the first couple of days after they'd taken it, 'cause … I got a pass … from the beach, and we ... went up and went into those towns, and the towns, of course, at that time, you know, you could swap on anything. You could swap a pack of cigarettes for wine. [Of] course, within, I guess, weeks, everything went up. [laughter] That happened in every place. …

KP: It sounds as if your duty on the beach, after the initial invasion, was not very frightening.

LT: No, no. The beach was easy, unless you … cut corners. You could get blown up by mines. There were mines. Nobody cleaned up the mines. I mean, we cleaned the place to walk through, and they had tape in the other places, but, nobody went out and …

KP: … Tried to disarm them.

LT: … Cleared the mines, no. In fact, they could still be there, as far as these guys were concerned. [laughter]

KP: Where were you moved to after you cleaned up the beach?

LT: Well, we were in a convoy, and we moved up, and we got caught up to the division in (Vesoul?), the town of Vesoul, and, when we first got there, ... I guess we were in a wooded section, and they were fighting for Vesoul, and then, of course, now, we were combat engineers, and we didn't get a bridge job there, and we didn't do anything for, I guess, … a short period of time, and then, … as we moved on, we … worked on bridges, we worked on roads, made roads, and that kind of stuff. We didn't … get into any real problems until October. Now, you figure, in October, we went into a section and they had us building a road. You know, this is up near the town of Bruyeres. We went into that section, and, this one day, we ... had sledgehammers, and we were making small ones [rocks] out of big ones, making a road, doing engineer work. The next day, we went up as infantry. When they took us up as infantry, we were supposed to take a section of [the] woods. They took two platoons, and we sat on a hill, and this I remember, because it was October 13th, Friday the 13th. We were sitting on this hill, and they're shelling the area that they were going into, and the area that they shelled, I heard the Captain, he was on the phone to me, calling me, "I want another fifteen minutes of artillery [laughter] before we're taking 'em in there," [laughter] and they shelled some more, and then, we pushed off, and went into this area, and took it, took the woods, and then, we started to dig in, because we had to set up, and we dug in about ten yards back from the edge of the woods. This is because of air bursts. When they fire artillery in, they hit the trees and that kills you, and, if you're back far enough, you won't get that, and a guy named Terry in the other squad was killed with an air burst, right through the helmet, right straight down, and we were in those woods [for] two nights. The next night, they moved. … I was assigned to go out in front. There were about three houses and I was assigned to go out. It was supposed to be an artillery observation post, and they needed somebody to guard the observers, and I went out with another guy, and, I guess, we went out at night and went in, and then, we were there during the day, and you could see the town and see

Bruyeres on the far side, and you could see the Germans leaving the town. … They had horses, horse drawn artillery, and this artillery observer fired, had 'em fire smoke, and they were going by a cemetery, that you could see 'em go by, and the smoke landed up in the cemetery, and then, he gave 'em the coordinates to change it, … and he fired in front and in back of this artillery that was going down this road, and we watched 'em knock it out. He just brought it in and these guys are running all over. I mean, I had never been in a position like that, you know.

KP: Where you could observe the action?

LT: Yes. … I don't know how far off it was, but, they had binoculars and stuff, so [that] you could look close, and, [of] course, they were interested in any tanks or anything up there, and a guy observed a tank, and it was [at] a corner, and they came in with airplanes, [laughter] and they bombed the section while we were out there, and I was downstairs in that same building, and it was a kitchen. We were in the second floor, and I went down to the kitchen, and the people who lived there stayed in the cellar, and the woman came up with a child, and, while I was in the kitchen, they shelled, and I knocked this girl down, and the mother grabbed her and took her down [into] the cellar again, and we never saw 'em again, but, mostly, the civilian people would stay away, you know. It broke the window in the kitchen where we were. … They had landed a shell in the yard. … They probably were figuring that, you know, somebody could see [them], to do what they'd been doing to 'em, so, they were gonna shoot. Well, the next day, or the next night, I guess it was, we were there, and we were still out in that house, and the infantry came through in the middle of the night and moved out, and it was the Japanese-American group, and they went off to the left side, and they went down, there was a wooded section on the left, and they went across, and ... we pulled out after they had [passed through]. … At dawn, we went back, and we pulled out, and they took our place. They were the 36th Division, and they moved out to take Bruyeres. … I have a book, by the way, of World War II, chronological, of every front [and] what happened each day. [Of] course, you know, I look on it, like, when we took those woods, you know. It was quiet on our front. [laughter] … They don't have everything in there, but, they cover the [main battles].

KP: Yes.

LT: You know, … that's not an action, that was just a little thing, but, then, we pulled back from there, and we were back, … [for] a couple of weeks, doing engineer work, and then, we went up as infantry again, and we were … on the side of an area, I don't even know where it was, but, it ... wasn't too far from that section, and we were there for several days, and they called, and we had to go on a combat patrol. We went out with a tank and the tank is like a magnet. I mean, as soon as they hear a tank, they shoot at it, and, of course, you stay as far away from the tank as you can, unless you're under it, [laughter] but, then, … we moved forward, to barbed wire, and we saw … the Germans walking into this. Nobody fired at them as they came in, and then, we got orders to pull back, and then, of course, they fired … to just get back, and we pulled out. … They hit somebody on the tank, but, other than that, nobody else was hurt, but, that was supposed to be a combat patrol, and, when we came back from that, two days later, … about two days later, we went up, supposedly to have an attack on another section. We went out with a recon troop.

… We went with a squad of recon troops, and we went down a road, and [laughter] I was second scout, and we were going along the road, and I guess we were on the left side, and we were crossing. The Sergeant … went out on the road to say something, and … he got hit, and he got hit right in the road, and a medic went out to take care of him, and the medic said, "I need help," and I went out to pick him up, and I figured, "That was it," you know. You know [that] they hit him right there, and we picked him up and put him on the side, and they never fired when we put him on the side. They may not have seen him. They may have just fired, and he just happened to get hit, but, that's when we lost the Sergeant, and he later lost the lower part of his leg, because they claim they didn't get him back fast enough. We got him out of there, and I was with the group that took him back, we took him back, and then, we came back up. They left us there all night and they left our squad there. The rest of them pulled back and they left us out there all night. There was a roadblock, see, and … they must have had the roadblock covered, and we sat in foxholes on the side of the road that we had dug, and we were there all night, and [at] about, oh, the middle of the night, a jeep came up the road. Well, there's a standing thing, you know; you let anybody go that way, but, nobody comes back, see, and this jeep went by all the holes. [laughter] The holes are on the side of the road and the jeep's still going. He was headed for that road, back in there. The guy in the last hole called to him and they stopped. They were bringing us supper. [laughter] They had rations for us and they almost let 'em go, but, then, they backed back, and they gave us rations. …

KP: Were the rations warm or cold?

LT: No, they were cold. They were just cans, … and then, they went on back … down the road and left us, and, the next morning, … a guy came walking up the hill, a German came walking up the hill, and … one of the guys called to him from one of the foxholes and told him to keep walking. … He spoke German. He told him to, "Keep walking and don't put your hands up," see, because, if he put his hands up, then, they knew we were there. See, if he just walked with his hands down, you know, [we would be fine]. … He came on, and then, they later took him back. … What had happened is, the Germans had pulled back, so, we pulled back out and left. …

KP: With a prisoner.

LT: Yes, with a prisoner, [laughter] but, … there were situations where, you know, you'd sit, and then, you'd go on patrols, at night, and time just went very slowly.

KP: Where was your unit in December, during the Battle of the Bulge?

LT: We built a bridge. We were at (Kussenhausen?). We had come … across the Vosges into Strasbourg and gone south. We reinforced a bridge [to the] south. They had to make it "Army level," I guess. We put … extra boards, you know, big girders, on this bridge, to make it so it would hold tanks, and we worked on that, and then, we went north, and we ... were in a town for a week and didn't do a thing. That was … a week off, and then, we moved up to a town called (Kutchenhausen?), and, from Kutchenhausen, we worked forward. … Wissembourg was right

on the German border, this is north of Strasbourg, and there was a bridge out, and we built the Bailey bridge. When they first had problems there, we built a Bailey, and then, they asked us to build a fixed bridge. They wanted to get the Bailey off. Christmas Eve, we rolled the Bailey off, and they stored it back up, and they told us [that] we'd fix it up, so that we didn't have to work Christmas Day, and we had the bridge all set. … [Then], they had us training, because they were worried about what was going on on the other front. They were watching and they put on more guards around the town, because … there were Germans in GI uniforms. So, they had … more security in the town than they usually had, and, from that, … we trained a bit, but, then, New Year's Day, they put us up as infantry, and we got our junk, and we went up, and we went through Wissembourg, up into the hills. … The infantry was gonna pull back, and they set us up, and we were to blow stuff as … they went out. They went out, and they left us there, and, as we pulled back, we dropped trees on roads and things, and, New Year's night, as we backed up, they blew up the bridge that we finished … Christmas Eve. They blew that up, and then, we pulled back, and then, we … went into a town. We went back and they sent us back up in the town of (Lembauch?). Now, I have no idea where it is. All I know is, it's a town in front of the Maginot Line, and they put our company in there, and they put a squad on the left, and a squad in the front, and a squad over on the right. I happened to be in the squad that was out front, and, oh, no, wait, they put a platoon … on the left, they put a platoon out front, and a platoon on this side. We were there one night, and, the next day, they took the two side platoons and put 'em back, and they took two of the squads from the platoon out front and put one squad on each side, and somebody later told us that they were told [laughter] [that] they didn't want to waste a company. They didn't mind wasting a platoon. We were outposting the Maginot Line. … So, it ended up [being] just our platoon out there. We were there two weeks, and, during that time, Germans came down the road one day, and we had mines in the road, and they stood and … looked at the mines, and a guy in one of our houses, out front, who had been told not to fire, fired on them, and … one of the Germans got into town, and the rest of 'em left, and he didn't hit anybody. He used a BAR, and a BAR rides up, and a BAR, unless you know it pretty well, will ride up on you, and he missed them. So, this guy got into town, and then, they spent quite a while trying to find him. … Finally, he was running away, and they shot him, as he was going away, but, that kind of put everybody on edge, and we were in that town, then, another, about, three days when the infantry came to replace us, and they came in, he said it was a company. That's all they had left, but, they … put about three guys where we had a squad, each place where we had a [squad]. The infantry had been someplace else, and they had gotten all beat up, and then, they were putting them back here, just to cover, and we pulled out and left, and then, … they claim they backed up a ways. You know, you never know, but, then, we went to another place where we were on the side of a hill, and we were on the side of that hill for a couple of weeks. About that time, I got the crabs and I had been having trouble. I finally went on sick call, and [laughter] they finally let me go back, and I took two showers. I took a shower when I got back and changed clothes, threw everything away, and put a set of clothes on, and then, the next morning, I took another shower, and I got rid of 'em, but, it took two sets of clothes, … and then, I was back up. … We were up there, I guess, for another week and pulled out. When we pulled out of there, I don't know, they put us in another section, and we tried to take a hill, and we had trouble taking the hill, and a guy got hit … in the hole with me. … He got hit in the arm. The two of us are laying in the bottom

of the hole, and he got hit in the arm, and I'm laying next to him, [laughter] and … I never saw him again. He was … one of the four guys.

KP: From the original unit?

LT: Yes. He was the third … guy. One guy didn't get [in on] the invasion, one guy got hit in the road, and this guy got hit, and there was still one guy left, and he was there when the war ended. …

KP: Was this in your squad or your platoon?

LT: Squad.

KP: There was only one survivor from your squad.

LT: One guy from Africa.

KP: Out of how many?

LT: Fifteen, I guess, in a squad.

KP: Was your squad always at full strength?

LT: No, no. Every once in awhile, they'd send you somebody. … Then, we pulled back, after this. After we were on the lines, then, where they pulled us back and they regrouped, … they changed us from the 36th Engineers to the 36th Engineer Group, and they changed it to A Company, B Company, and C Company. So, instead of being in I Company, I was in C Company, in the 2828th Engineers. They changed the First Battalion … of the regiment to the 2826th Engineers, they changed the second one to the 2827th, and we were in the 2828th, … but, it was all under the 36th Engineer Group, so, I guess they still kept a colonel in charge of it, but, then, they broke it down. … They regrouped. We were back off the lines, quite a ways. … In fact, I … hitchhiked with another guy to see the sergeant who had gotten hit. … He lost the lower part of his leg, and I went back to see him, and we were back then, and then, when we went back up, we were back [for] almost a month, and we went back up to Haguenau. We were south of Haguenau ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. Lea E. Terry on January 26, 1995, with Kurt Piehler and …

KM: Kevin McGuire.

KP: Please, continue.

LT: Oh, Haguenau? We went into Haguenau and … I was on a bridge party. It was the approach party for a Bailey bridge and we went into, … it was an old military school in Haguenau. It was on the river. The river was about the size of a normal canal, but, as we pulled into the yard, we walked. We parked back under cover. We didn't know where we were, and we walked through this, [it] was like a courtyard, and we were told [that] this is where they were gonna build a bridge. Well, we didn't have enough room between these two pillars, so, we set a charge on one of the … pillars. We were gonna blow it out, and, as we were there, we met some fellows in a house or in one of these buildings, and it was the infantry, and they had a machine gun set up, right there. He says, "You know, across the river, we have two other outposts over there, and that's it." … We're on the front. Well, when we blew up this pier, we got artillery fire. They fired at us. So, then, after that was blown, we had to go back and get a truck and come up, and … we had the parts that you put down to … put the Bailey on, and, … about six of us, we were on the approach party. We set up the rollers and it was just about dusk when we were doing it. … The infantry, by the way, said, … if we're building a bridge, they're not staying here, and they left. I don't know where they went, but, they said, [laughter] you know, they didn't want to be [near us]. We were like a magnet, you know, and the unusual part was, we were building the bridge on a road that really didn't exist. The road was up about two blocks away and that's where the Germans probably thought we'd build a bridge. The bridge was out there, too. Well, this bridge was built. … We started at dusk and put the rollers up, and the company came, and they put up the Bailey. [At] about one o'clock at night, the artillery started and you could hear it. This was around March 13th. The artillery started, and they shelled for, I'd say, maybe twenty, twenty-five minutes, they shelled, and shelled, and shelled, and, about this time, the infantry came up, and the infantry came through, and they crossed on foot bridges, and we were still working on the bridge. We finished the bridge [at] just about dawn, and, as we finished the bridge, the tanks came up, and it made you feel, you know, so good to see something that you actually did and it actually helped. Most of the time, when you did things, engineer jobs, you finished the job, and you left, and that was it.

KP: You had no idea what you had done.

LT: We had no idea what was going [on] and what was happening. We later found out [that] that was a big push, that they were pushing north, and they were coming across, and they were cutting off a section, and it was within, what? a matter of a few weeks that Remagen broke, and they got across. … Oh, it was probably about that time that they sent out one of our squads to the edge of the Rhine, with a truck of Bailey parts and a crane, and, in a wooded area, they just made a lot of noise, and they got shelled. They were … faking a crossing of the Rhine. … That's how they faked it, by making noise, and that's the closest we came to crossing the Rhine. …

KP: Your unit did not cross the Rhine.

LT: No. Well, we later did, but, we later went across on, … they had a bridge across at, what was it? Mannheim and Ludwigshafen, the town across from it, and they were on river barges, and the bridge was put across on river barges. We later crossed on that. … From there, we went to

(Sackenheim?), outside of Mannheim, and then, later, we went to Mosbach. We worked the bridge outside of Mosbach. [laughter] … Somebody built the bridge, and, when they built the bridge, they built it about twenty yards off the road, and it was very muddy at this time, and … they brought an armored division across. Well, an armored division going … across a bridge that was a treadway bridge, pneumatic treadway, and they had trouble, except with the tanks, going across the area, and … the MPs were stopping all Army vehicles that weren't jeeps or regular Army vehicles, that were civilian vehicles. … They'd make them not go, and I remember, we were working, one of the days, and a general came up in a Plymouth, I guess, and … we heard him speaking to the MP, and the MP told him, "No," that he couldn't cross, and we started to leave. We started to get out of the way, because we wanted to get back, and … this general stepped out of the car, and he says, "Come on, fellows. We're gonna push this car through," and … this guy's a two-star general. He came out, and he got that car in there, and it got stuck, and we were all behind it, and he's in there, riding in the mud, [laughter] and we pushed the car on to the bridge, and he turned and thanked us, got back in his vehicle, and off he went. If he'd stayed in that vehicle, no way would anybody [have] helped him, but, he got out and helped, and, of course, the MP was kind of angry, I guess, because he was trying to stop him. … The Army had a few American cars that they brought over. Most of the cars that they were stopping were foreign cars and the guys, what they did, see, they'd paint 'em … brown. [laughter] They'd just confiscate them. You know, they [would] find a car. There ... were plenty of cars around, but, see, nobody had gas, and the Army, … you know, we used to burn gas … to keep warm while we were peeling potatoes. You'd burn a can.

KP: You would take it from your allotment.

LT: Yes. … We had plenty of gas. …

KP: It must have been a strange contrast between this abundance of gas and the gas rationing I am sure that your parents must have told you about.

LT: Well, we heard about it. … [In] fact, in there, there's a gas coupon, but, yes, we had plenty of gas. … I'll never forget peeling potatoes, and, when we'd peel a potato, you'd throw it in the water, it was freezing, and there were four guys peeling potatoes, and the water's starting to freeze between the time you'd throw the potato in, and you're peeling them outside, doing this, so, you know it's cold, but, you're doing it over a can of gas. … [Of] course, I got burned on gas in Italy. … I threw gas. We were burning out some mosquitoes, and we had thrown the gas, and then, they lit it, and they burned it, and then, they were going to do it again, and, when they went to do it again, when I threw it out, it came back up and got on my hands, and I laid down and banged it out, and they took me to the medics right away. Actually, I had no repercussions at all, except, I was very leery about gas from then on. [laughter]

KM: Many of the memoirs of World War II veterans that I have read seem to agree that the average soldier's life was one of long stretches of boredom cut by short intervals of intense action. How did you and your squad members deal with the boredom?

LT: Well, we used to play cards a lot. … We had one deck of pinochle cards and, if you won, you played. So, the two guys who continued to win would play, and then, the other guys would switch off after [each game]. … We gambled, but, we never gambled within the squad. It was just a standing thing.

KP: It was a rule.

LT: That was a standing thing. You never gambled … in the squad. If you wanted to gamble, you could go with, you know, some other squad, or gamble with somebody else, … shooting craps. … [Of] course, you only got paid once a month, and you couldn't do anything with it anyway, so, I used to lose it. [laughter] I'd lose it before I got back to where I was staying, most of the time. … I think I got twenty-four dollars. … The rest, I was sending home. I was buying a bond a month and I had ten dollars, … which I got extra for being overseas. I think I got sixty bucks, see, so that the ten dollars extra, I had sent home immediately, and then, I bought a bond a month, a twenty-five dollar bond, I guess it was, or [maybe] it was a fifty, I don't know. It was a bond a month, anyway, and all I drew was twenty-four, until later, when I made sergeant, and then, I wasted a lot of money, [laughter] but, during the war, I really didn't waste much. … What used to be funny is, they'd come with PX, and they'd say, "Well, there's PX and they have this, this, and this," and you'd have to … put in for it, and then, they'd draw lots to see who could buy it, because so many people would want watches, and they'd get, say, maybe, one watch for the company, and they'd draw lots. … No, it was boring at times, and, of course, see, this is the advantage in the engineers. The engineers … was such a variety of jobs. It was like being an athletic director, you know. There were so many things [that] you had to do. … As an example, we went out one day, and I told you about that town where we were sitting over night, and then, we pulled back. Well, the next day, as engineers, we went up to clear the mines that were around that, and they were blowing them, and two guys got killed. Two guys got killed; … not in our squad, in another squad from our platoon. Two guys got killed, because a guy picked up a ramp mine. Now, a ramp mine is a mine that goes off when you pick it up or when you press down on it and they had been given orders to use TNT. You put a block of TNT by it, and you take off, and you blow it up. You don't pick 'em up. They had picked up a whole mess of them and they had 'em all packed, racked up. They went back to get another one and, "Bang-o," two of them are dead. They picked the guy up in a bushel basket. I mean, he was gone. There was nothing left. … Mines are bad, but, that's the thing

KP: It sounds like you had a healthy respect for what mines could do.

LT: Yes. That's the thing; you learn. … There were so many different jobs and so many different things that you did that you got bored, but, you liked to be bored in some ways, rather than being [in danger]. … One day, … when we were on the lines, we were in a shack, and they came in, and they said, "I want somebody to go on a patrol," and (nobody said a thing?), and (he said?), "Put the cards out and you draw for it." Okay, that guy won, off he goes. Well, the guy that went, he left. They … were taking mines out to try and blow something up, and they got caught down a hill and almost got killed, and they almost killed the whole [unit]. They all got back, but, they almost didn't get back. About five minutes after … the other guys left, another

guy had come in, a sergeant, and he says to me, "Come on," and he took me, and I went out with a sergeant and the company commander, and the three of us went out on a patrol by ourselves. Well, come on, that wasn't real healthy, but, we just went out and walked and looked, and they had a map, and they were trying to figure out something. They didn't tell me. I was there for protection, for their protection. They just took me along, but, here, I said [that] I wouldn't go on this, and they drew for it, and, the next thing you know, they just tell you, "You go." … I can tell you a story; this is interesting, really. The first time I had KP in the Army was at Fort Jackson. When I went on KP, they told another fellow and I to go wash some pots, and we went into the mess hall next door, and we washed the pots, and we did a good job, I thought, of washing the pots. Well, [at] about four o'clock that afternoon, I heard the mess sergeant say to the exec officer, "Yes, we can go now," and they took the four KPs, and they took us over to the company commander, and they stood us in front of the company commander, and the exec officer said, "These are the men, sir," and he turned to the mess sergeant, and he says, "What's the matter, Sergeant?" He says, "These four men were gold bricking on KP." Well, this is the first time I'd run into this, see, and he says, "Do you have anything to say?" and I said, "Yes, sir. I was assigned to do this and I did it." He looked me right in the eye, this captain, and he said, "The Sergeant said [that] you were gold bricking. Now, you're gold bricking. Now, is there anything else?" So, I learned right then, black is white, and you do what you're told, and you keep your big mouth shut. … Then, he said, "You will dig holes, six-by-six-by-six, tonight, when you get off KP." He said, "I don't care when you get off. You do it," four holes, and they had 'em taped out, and, at nine o'clock, we got off KP, and they gave us shovels, and we started to dig. At about two-thirty in the morning, we were down maybe four feet, we were supposed to go six, we're in a foot of water, you know, and one guy hit a stump, and we're having all kinds of trouble. So, we finally … said, "The heck with this," and we took the tools, and we washed 'em off in the … lavatory, and took 'em back, and put 'em … by the supply room. The next morning, they woke us all up. It's the same as usual. We went out with the company. Nobody said a word and, that night, when we stood formation for retreat, the First Sergeant said, "The four men that dug the holes last night will fill 'em up before they leave the company area." So, instead of having supper, the four of us went and got the tools and we … filled 'em in, so [that] nobody could (see what happened?), 'cause it was a habit that they used to make 'em bury something, and then, find it, you know. You'd dig 'em that deep, and then, you'd bury it, and then, they'd tell you to dig it up and find it. So, we went, filled the hole, but, that's when I learned, and, later on, I was in ASTP, and I stood in a formation in ASTP, and the first sergeant was bawling out the company, and the guy behind me said something, and the Sergeant came over, and he called me everything in the book and out of the book. He thought I was the one that said it, and I never said a word, and, two days later, I ran into the Sergeant in the hall in the dorm, and I said, "Sergeant, I'd like to talk to you," and he kind of looked at me, and I said, "You had the wrong guy the other day. … It wasn't me." He looked at me and he says, "You're a good soldier." That's all he said. [laughter] You learned to keep your mouth shut, [laughter] but, … you know, they're little stories, but, they're the thing, and I used to tell these stories in school, because I'd get kids, you know, … they had to say it. … When you want 'em to keep quiet, they got upset, and they'd get in more trouble by talking [than] if they [would] keep quiet and talk to you later, but, that's one thing about the Army I learned, you just kept quiet, you didn't push, but, then, … I could go on. … Finally, after we did this stuff at Mosbach, we were attached to the … Tenth Armored. We

had never been … with armor. So, we were attached, our company was attached, to the Tenth Armored, the spearhead, going south, … and we went through Ulm. We got right near Ulm and the spearhead stopped, because there were three bridges out. So, they called for us and we went up. … The first bridge was a treadway, we put that on, and then, during the night, we put in a pneumatic pontoon bridge, across the Danube, and then, there was a canal on the other side, and they had to wait for Bailey parts. So, we went back to where we were staying. We used to stay a town behind 'em, but, here's … the whole spearhead of armor in the town, sitting there, and they left a squad to fix the approaches on the bridge, and they brought up a bulldozer, and the guy had a bulldozer, and he was working on the approaches when, all of a sudden, they heard a convoy come. So, the guys kept quiet, and this convoy came up, four trucks, American vehicles with German soldiers, and the German guy got off the vehicle, and they could hear him talking, you know. They'd tell him which way, and they brought the vehicles down, and the four vehicles went across the bridge, see, and the guys that were there brought the bulldozer down, and drove it onto the bridge, and left it there, in the middle, on the bridge, see, and then, they sent somebody back to get somebody from the armored outfit. They said, "There's a bunch of Germans up here. They're stuck," because the next bridge was out, see. So, here they were, stuck, and these guys just stayed there, and they pinned them down. They wouldn't let 'em come back. They'd shoot at 'em, and they had the bulldozer stopped, so [that] they couldn't get back, [laughter] and the armor wouldn't come. They said [that] they can't fight without orders. [laughter] So, they … radioed back, and the armored infantry came, and they picked up about forty Germans. They captured forty Germans and took 'em in, but, that was in the *Stars and Stripes*, that the first … convoy over a new bridge that the 36th Engineers made was German. [laughter] Yes, that was unusual, but, then, that was at Ulm. We later … went all the way down to Fussen. We had an experience. From Fussen, I came back, and … we cleared vehicles off the road, because the armor'd go through, and they'd shoot stuff up, and they'd just leave it, and so, the engineers, we'd go as far as we went, and then, we'd come back, and we'd clear the roads for the supplies. … We went back and cleared, and then, the next day, … it was on that trip back that I first saw so many Germans. We were … in one truck, one squad, and, as we pulled up, we saw this GI with a Thompson sub-machine gun. The Germans were four abreast, and we drove past 'em, a half mile, and there was another GI on the side of 'em with a Thompson, and there was another GI in front of 'em, another half mile up. So, there were a mile of Germans, four abreast, three GIs walking 'em back. They were prisoners. We just kept right on going, you know, but, … see, they wanted to eat, and, as long as the Americans had 'em, they'd take 'em back … as far as they could, and then, they'd … feed them, but, that's what would happen, see, because the war was almost over. … It was like two weeks to go and, you know, they just … didn't want to fight. In fact, there was a situation, a couple of days before, where … we had been in a town, and we always rode a town behind the armor, and, when they'd stop, … the guys would get itchy, and they'd go for rides and stuff, and they rode up to the town, and these two infantry guys were there, from the armored infantry, and they had five prisoners, and they talked one of the guys from our outfit into taking them, and he said, "What you can do [is], … you can guard us and, tomorrow morning, we'll take these guys over," but, he said, you know, "We want to get some sleep. We haven't had any sleep." So, they took one jeep, and took the two Americans back, and put 'em in a building, and then, guarded 'em, because they didn't want 'em to leave, because they wanted them to take these Germans. They took the five Germans and they walked them in front

of the jeep. When they got back, one town later, they had a hundred. They just kept coming in, and they'd say [that] they were soldiers, and they'd come in, and they put 'em in a barn in the town we were in, and, the next morning, they took these two guys over and said, "Here's your prisoners," and they almost died. [laughter] I mean, they had 'em, they were there. [The] two of 'em, they had a hundred [prisoners], and, of course, then, that was their responsibility. We went on, but, this is … why, you know, they wanted to give up. There was no sense shooting at 'em. The war was, by all practical purposes, … over.

KM: Was this when you realized that the war was over?

LT: Yes, just about. … In fact, I had hoped to go near Moosburg. I found out, later, that my brother was [there], that there were prison camps around, and my brother was relatively close. … My captain, … his brother was a prisoner, too, but, he was able to take a jeep and go try and find him. He never found him, either. …

KP: Did you ever make contact with your brother?

LT: No, I never saw him over there.

KP: You did not see him again until you got home.

LT: No. In fact, after I got home, and he had gone to college and gotten married, he came east, I guess. I didn't see him, I guess, until after he graduated from college. He didn't come east in-between, no. I went to Pittsburgh to see him, 'cause he went to work for Westinghouse. I saw him there. … From there, we did a little work on a bridge in the Alps and it'd have been bad if they (ever had to fight down?), because we were in the Alps. … We were on a road. … We had to work on a road. … I guess it was near the time [that] the war was over. … They had bombed a railroad … in the Alps, and … they hit the town, too, and the town was flat, and we took a bulldozer and made a … road. … Nobody knew where the road was. That was the road and we had to haul gravel from, we found a gravel place, a regular [place]. They had the stone and the whole works. They put it to work. [laughter] Somebody worked on it and we took trucks. We went down a two-mile hill, into the Inn Valley, and we hauled gravel up this two-mile hill to fix this road. Well, the last day … of the war, a half-track went out of control going down that hill with black recon troops and they hit a mine on the side of the road. … Trying to stop it, you know, they hit into the side, but, they hit a mine, and it blew up, and our company sent men to clean up the mess, these guys, and, here, this is the day the war's over, and these guys are all killed. On the hill, as you came down, you get about halfway down, it would turn and come back, and, on the run out that they usually have, it was all mined. They had mines all there, so, if you went down the hill and you lost your brakes, you were gonna blow up anyway. About eight years ago, my wife and I went to Europe, and we … went up that hill, and I warned the bus driver, before he went up the hill, that it was a high hill, and he had trouble on the hill with the bus, and they knew that I had fought in that area, had been in it, and they took me back to Mittenwald, and Mittenwald wasn't on the tour. It was a bus tour and Mittenwald wasn't on it. He took a road around Mittenwald, and that's where we were the day the war ended, … the

driver and the woman in charge, see, and they later said, "Did I recognize any of it?" [I] didn't recognize a thing. They had a superhighway that went through there.

KM: When the war ended in Europe, were you concerned at all that you might be sent to the Pacific Theater?

LT: Yes, we were … slated for it. In fact, the guys with high points had transferred out, and we were regrouping, and it wasn't until, [of] course, … when the war ended in September, but, before that, whether it was September or October, it was around then, [I do not know], but, anyway, they had already sent the high point guys to other outfits, and then, we were slated to go back through the States, you know. So, … probably, a lot of guys would never have made it. [laughter] I think they'd have taken off if they got in the States, but, then, they had already shipped some of them down through France. … Some of them, I guess, were already on the way when the war ended, but, yes, we kind of worried about it, but, [of] course, we worked as occupation troops for awhile, and that was not bad. I mean, in fact, I went through the town of Oberammergau, which, I found out after I got home, was famous.

KP: At the time, you did not know.

LT: At the time, I didn't know anything about it. All I knew was that we went through Oberammergau, and we were working the roads, and we'd go out in a jeep in the morning, with a two-and-a-half-ton truck, and we'd take a pick, and we'd dig on the roads … for the holes, and then, we'd start a fire on the side of the road and put tar and gravel [together], and we'd take the tar and gravel and patch these places. [Of] course, the first thing we did when we went out in the morning, they'd take the jeep, go get a keg of beer, and come back, and put that on the back of the jeep. So, we proceeded to work the road and drink beer, and I had a wonderful time, and we did this for about a week, and we kept going through Oberammergau, and it wasn't until I got home that our next-door neighbor said, "Oh, did you get to Oberammergau?" and I said, "Yes," [laughter] and then, I found out it was famous, and, when we went back, we went to Oberammergau.

KP: What other responsibilities did you have while on occupation duty?

LT: Well, we guarded prisoners, when they did work, sometimes. We had done that and we had some prisoners make a road over in Mittenwald. They did a horrible job, but, they dug it all up, and they thought the Americans were crazy, 'cause they made 'em dig it up, and then, they brought stuff, and they used a cement mixer and put a fire under the cement mixer, put tar in the cement mixer, to mix the tar and gravel. I mean, come on, it's a cement mixer, but, that's what they used, and then, they used that on the road. We had a steam engine, we had a roller, a steam engine, you know, … that ran a roller. We had all kinds of tools that were theirs. Later, we were in the town of Donauworth, … I can show you a picture, and, in the town of Donauworth, we were assigned a German engineer outfit that built bridges for trains, and there was a bridge out just south of Donauworth, and our company was supposed to guard these guys when they worked. Well, you didn't need guards. They were all from the Russian Zone. They … weren't

going to leave anyplace, but, … if they knew somebody was coming to look, they'd send the guy out with an empty rifle, to stand there, to make sure [no one escaped], you know, as the guard, but, they used block and tackle, they used ropes, they used all kinds of methods. I saw 'em take ropes and take these … big logs, they'd take them up in the air, and then, drop them, and they were using those as a pile-driver, to build a railroad bridge, and it was the most primitive way of building a bridge that there ever was, but, the Germans were doing it, and the Germans were building that bridge, and, one day, they came, and they wanted somebody to ride a motorcycle to Rosenheim. Now, Rosenheim is down beyond Munich and they asked me if I wanted to go. I go, "All right." So, I went with two Germans, I didn't speak German, and I went with two Germans, an empty rifle, … maybe two days worth of C rations, and I'm in the side car, and these two guys are on a motorcycle, [laughter] and we take off. We went to Augsburg. … I guess, in Augsburg, we stopped for lunch, and they went into a regular restaurant, we had lunch, and then, we went on to Munich. They took me into a place in Munich, and, oh, Munich was flat, and it's way back, in amongst these things, and they were getting parts for a car or a truck, and they got the parts. See, these were the guys from this engineer outfit. Then, … we got to Rosenheim, and, when we got to Rosenheim, they took me up the side of a hill, and there was a big sign, says, "Allied Persons, Off Limits," and I hit the guy, pointed to the sign, you know. So, he took me in, all Germans. He came to this place. … They got … off the thing, and they shined their boots, and they got all shined and went in. That was their headquarters, and they … came back with magazines that we probably wouldn't get for another month, but, they had all these magazines that they had been given for their company, and they put 'em away, and then, they went down to get gasoline, and the guy gave them a hard time, and they came back and explained to me that they couldn't get the gas, and I grabbed the rifle, and I walked over and said, "Hey, Joe." [laughter] We got the gas, [laughter] and they came back, and … they brought me back to a camp. See, part of their company, I guess, was down there, too, but, they brought me back for a place where I was to stay. They wanted me to go out with them. They wanted me to go out that night with them in the town; no way. … They … brought me back there, and then, the two of them took off. Wherever they went, I don't know, but, the next morning, they came and picked me up, and we went back to Donauworth the next day, but, that was quite an experience, to be, you know, with these Germans, and, here, they're supposed to be prisoners, and they couldn't ride the roads, see. As we rode, we had to stop at all the roadblocks, and, at the roadblocks, they'd look over at me, and I'd say, "Hi," and they'd go, "Okay." I had a paper that said it was okay. Nobody ever looked at the paper. … I'd say, "Hi," and that's all, and, as long as there was a GI in the trucks, they'd rather have a GI in the truck, they couldn't go anyplace, unless somebody got 'em through the roadblock.

KP: Just a short time before, the Germans had been trying to kill you.

LT: Yes.

KP: Did that seem strange to you, at the time?

LT: No. … The one experience I had, … they didn't have a barber in the outfit, and they got this German to be a barber, and the guys were all getting shaves, and this guy shaved me, and … it

was the only shave I ever had in my life by anybody, and I never want another one. The guy came up my neck. I just thought, you know, [laughter] a week ago, you'd have shot him, and here he is, coming up your neck with a razor. [laughter] Yes, that was quite an experience. When we went back to see Abe, that was the sergeant who was shot, there were Germans in the hospital where he was, and the guy with me got a little excited, 'cause we carried pistols. We each had a loaded pistol in our pocket. … You know, when you're hitchhiking across the country, you gotta have something, and we had pistols in our pockets when we were eating in this hotel, and this German walked in, and this other guy, he got up, [laughter] and then, he finally eased up. It was all right, but, you know, you're surprised to see him. [Of] course, at that time, the war was still on.

KP: When did you make sergeant? Was the war still on or was it after the war?

LT: Just after the war.

KP: Just after the war.

LT: Yes, when they started to take the guys away. … One of the guys had told me, later, the guy who was the sergeant, … we had had a corporal get hit when we were trying to take a hill, and he later told me, he didn't realize when I made sergeant, he said [that] he, at this time, became the first sergeant in the company, and he had said [that] he didn't realize that I was interested or he'd have made me corporal at that time, but, he had made another guy [corporal], but, it didn't matter. I always thought it was very relaxing in the Army. You know, they told you what to wear, what to put on, where to go, who to shoot, you know. You really didn't have to think much. …

KM: Were you tempted to re-enlist?

LT: No. [laughter] They asked me and I'm glad I didn't, because of Korea. See, a lot of the guys re-enlisted, and they ended up in Korea, but, I remember, when I came back home, I went to Kilmer, right here, and … they told us, at Kilmer, that … they were going to take the Jersey guys to Monmouth in two days, but, I had already called home and said, "We won't be there. We can't go, because we have to get discharged." So, the next morning, I knew I wasn't going to [go to Fort Monmouth]. I went under the fence, [laughter] went out, went under the fence, hitchhiked to Trenton, and my mother, when I got home, the first thing, she says, "You're AWOL," [laughter] and they brought me back … in the car, and they said, "What gate?" I said, "No gate. Let's go up along the side here," and I went back under the fence the same way. Well, of course, you didn't want to get in trouble, but, you know, nobody was looking for anybody at that time, and it was good to be back. We left Marseilles, … boarded a ship [on] the 8th, I guess it was, the 8th of December, and everybody figured we're gonna be in New York, you know, for Christmas. We arrived the 27th. My birthday's the 26th. So, I was disgusted, you know, when we got back, and the Atlantic was as rough as it had ever been. …

KP: As opposed to your voyage going over.

LT: Yes. … Coming home, we had all the room in the world. … We were on a Liberty ship, and the Liberty ship is built like a bath tub, just like a bath tub, and there was no weight, and so, we're on top of the water. So, every time the wave would go up and the screw would go out, it'd go, "Blrrr," and then, it would go under. It was … a hectic thing. This past year, we crossed the ocean, my wife and I, on the *Royal Princess*, on a Princess cruise, and I convinced my wife [that] she should do it. We went through two storms. We had been to Iceland, and, coming from Iceland to New York, we ran into two storms, and the waves were twenty foot high, and they wouldn't let you on deck, see, and, when, at night, I slept fine, she had an awful time. … You could hear the front, you know, when it hit the wave, "Blrrr," and the whole ship (moved?), and this is the way it was when we came home. The waves were terrible. My wife says she'll never do it again.

KP: However, this reminded you of your return home on the Liberty ship.

LT: Yes. I have pictures. I have video and I took pictures of the ship going up into the horizon. When you see it in the living room, [laughter] you almost get seasick watching it.

KM: When you finally returned home from the war, were there any changes in your neighborhood, or in America in general, that shocked you?

LT: Well, a good friend of mine had been killed in Italy, that I had tried to look up when I was in Italy. At the time, no, but, I didn't stay, see. Although I came here, I stayed here at Rutgers, I lived in the Y. In fact, I lived in Kilmer for about two days and the guy with me says, "No, we're not going to do this. We gotta find another place." So, we went to the Y, and I knew somebody in the Y, and we went to the Y, and we stayed in the Y, and we both worked. I worked in the boys' department and he worked in the phys ed department. Incidentally, the guy that I roomed with is Al Sasser, and they have a Sasser Award that they give every year in soccer, and he's the guy I roomed with. He played soccer. … Let me show you. You've heard enough, I think. I'd like to show you, … that's the patch, ... the shoulder patch. That is for the invasion and an arrowhead, I don't know if you've ever seen 'em, … that's on the … discharge. That's the soccer team and that's Al Sasser. That's Al Sasser, right here. He's dead now. He died. He was my best man.

KM: That picture was taken right next to the student center.

LT: That's in front of … the gym. Oh, have you contacted Will Noden, by any chance?

KP: I do not know, off-hand. Is he a member of the Class of 1949?

LT: '49 or '50.

KP: Yes.

LT: Let me show … you something; see, there I am, at camp. Will Noden is this guy. He was a judge. He pitched on the baseball team here at Rutgers and one of these kids is Schwartzkopf. Now, I don't know which one it is, but, one of them is Gen. Schwartzkopf, at that camp, that year. I have no idea which one, but, he told me. There I am. Did you know Dick Kramer? Here's Sasser. You know, Dick Kramer was … here for quite awhile after the war. Geez, I don't even see him now. …

KM: Your team did very well that year.

LT: Yes. Well, I don't know. ... I had never played lacrosse in my life and this was … a crazy thing. Well, … when we came, we had a speech; we got a speech. The coach came to phys ed class and asked if any of us would like to play lacrosse, and he told us about lacrosse, … and he said there were opportunities, because not too many knew how [to play], and so, Sasser and I, in the class, were the only two who, neither of us played before, decided, from the phys ed class, that we'd go out, and we spent hour after hour out [in] back of the gym, on the wall, just throwing the ball, learning [how] to throw and catch the ball. So, I played [for] four years. I had a wonderful time. …

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

KP: How effective was your training? You mentioned that you have fond memories of Camp Jackson, but, how well were you taught your job, especially since the engineers performed many sophisticated tasks?

LT: Yes, well, you learned a lot, because, you know, … what happened, see, when I went to Belvoir, they were doing a lot of the things that I had already done, and it was humorous to me, because, you know, these guys … were like professional teachers, at Belvoir. I had gone through with kind of a ...

KP: Cadre?

LT: Yes, and it was different, but, they … would have a bridge set up, all built, up on land, and then, they'd have big signs that told [you] what each thing was. I'll never forget, I stood right in front of one of these signs, the Sergeant looks down and says, "Soldier, what's this?" you know, and I laughed. [laughter] He said, "Don't laugh. … There's men here who can't read that sign." [laughter] It was a C clamp, see, but, we had built a bridge. I knew the parts and, later, we were working on bridges. … They'd put a "dead man" in at … the end of a bridge. When you bring a rope across to hold it, … you know, instead of tying it to a tree, … if there's no tree, there's no place to put it, so, they would tell you how to put three logs in the ground, and then, bury another log there, and you'd wrap the rope around the log that you're burying, and then, you'd wrap it around each of these, and then, go out, and, you know, just set it up, so [that] you'd have something that'll hold a bridge. … When I went to Belvoir to train, they'd have all these things set up, and they'd go from place to place, and they would train 'em. It got so that the cadre used to ask me what to do next, [laughter] because, you know, I'd done all these things, and we'd done

'em on, really, maneuvers, ourselves, and, here, they weren't all too sure of what they were doing, either. [laughter] No, I felt that they prepared you well. They prepared you well.

KP: Before the interview began, you mentioned that you saw Joe Louis during the war.

LT: Yes. That was in Italy.

KP: How did that come about?

LT: Well, we were at a party, and we were going to have a party in Naples, and this USO show was there, and … he was on the stage for it, and he came out and spoke. Later, I saw Billy Kahn, … who later fought Joe Louis. I saw him in Garmisch, in the … Olympic ice rink. [Of] course, they didn't have ice, but, that's where they held the show, and he sparred with somebody for three rounds, and then, they came home, and they had the … Louis-Billy Kahn fight, but, … I saw Jack Benny, too. [I] saw Jack Benny, I think, in Augsburg. … In Italy, we saw some shows. We used to go to the movies every night in Italy. … That's the only entertainment they [had]. Everybody sat on the ground, and … they had a tremendous screen, and [it] would be, like, for … an acre. … Guys would be sitting, you know, because that's the only thing you had to do. There was nothing else, 'cause you couldn't leave. You couldn't go anyplace.

KP: How much contact did you have with the civilian population in Italy and France? You mentioned that you interacted quite a bit with German civilians after the war.

LT: In Italy, … the only time we did anything, I went to Pompeii, once. A lot of Pompeii and a lot of … Naples was off limits, but, I stayed away from civilians in Italy. …

KP: Why?

LT: Well, [in] Italy, the morals were awful. I saw men pimp … for their wives, you know. They were hungry. They wanted food, and, for a can of C rations, you could go [get] whatever you wanted, and the kids, of course, were bumming cigarettes all the time. "Cigarette for Papa," you know, that's what they used to say. Another thing, too, when … you'd eat, … we ate, then, out of mess kits, in Italy. We were out in fields, but, there were always kids there, and, when you're finished eating, they always had a garbage can to put the slop in, and the little kids would get a number ten can, and put a wire on it, and have it, and they'd hold it and want you to dump anything you had left in your mess kit into their can, and they'd be begging. … Them guys would just dump it in the big thing, and then, the kids would … swoop down and get it out of there. … A lot of guys would dump it in their cans, but, the kids … were hungry. They were hungry, you know. Later, I saw even the Germans [do this]. The Germans liked the coffee. You know, when they made GI coffee, they just put the coffee in a can. They've got a can, … just like a garbage can, and they throw the coffee in, and then, they put the water in, and they boil it. That's it; put some cold water in to … settle the grounds and that's your coffee. Well, when they finished, here's about that much grounds in the bottom, and the German people would come and

scoop that out, and off they'd go. They'd have coffee for a week or longer that way, because the coffee they had at the end of the war was terrible.

KP: What about the French?

LT: The only contacts we had [with the] French [were], … they were sometimes in the houses, 'cause we were allowed to sleep in [the] houses where they were. See, in Germany, when you moved into a house, the Germans moved out. … The guy'd come in and … they'd tell 'em, "You've got a half hour. Get your belongings, we're coming in. We'll be here a week," you know. We'd take, like, a row of houses, and there was a kid in our squad, … he was a German-Jewish boy, and his father had been beaten in Karlsruhe, I think it was, and he had gotten his parents into France. He'd got to France and he got his parents to France. Then, he'd gotten out of … another section of France. He got his parents there. Then, he got into Britain and [had] gotten his parents there. Then, he got to the United States and [had] gotten in, and then, they drafted him. … When he was in Italy, they sent him to Anzio and they found out, after they sent him, that he wasn't a citizen. So, they brought him down to Naples and, in one day, they made him a citizen and sent him back. That's how he became a citizen, [laughter] but, he used to, at first, love to kick the people out of [their] houses. They used him as an interpreter, and … one of the officers would take him, and they'd go tell the people to get out. … He got so [that] he didn't like it. He didn't like to do that. He didn't feel [that] they were the people that he wanted to get. He wanted to get the ones that had hurt his father, but, he didn't really want to get these poor people, and … he used to say to me, sometimes, you know, "Tell 'em not to beat this stuff up," and we'd get into homes, and, sometimes, some guys didn't care, you know. They'd beat stuff up, but, they did that one time, and the Captain took care of it. He put us out in the woods. … The next time we went someplace, we lived in the woods. He says, "You're going to learn [that when] you go into houses, you have to appreciate it," and they'd take care of things.

KP: Did your squadmate ever return to Karlsruhe?

LT: We never got there. When the war ended, … he had more points than I had, so, I don't know where he went, because, see, when the war ended, the guys went out pretty fast, and we got [new] guys in, and I guess it was in late October or so, … not too far along after I took that motorbike ride, that I left, because I had sixty-nine points, and they put me in an outfit that had seventy or more. … I went to that outfit, and then, they found out that I didn't [have] enough, and then, they transferred me to another [unit]. I went to the 79th Division. They put you in the infantry, because there was plenty of room, and then, I finally came home with the 90th Division, and, from the 90th Division, … we were up near [the] Czech border, way up. We were living in a pottery. This was a whole infantry regiment [that] was in a pottery, on the first floor, … and they [the Czech workers] were working, and the guys would go up at night and … [laughter] steal the stuff, the pottery. … Then, they'd send home twice as much, because of breakage, [laughter] but, it was terrible. They were working, and then, these guys are stealing. It was ... just a crime. The people in France used to get upset when we took stuff. We'd take stuff because we needed it for a bridge. We'd go into a lumber mill, and we'd take these great, big logs, see, and we'd come in with a crane and put 'em on the trucks, and the French would be

blowing their tops, and the Captain … used to write out a little slip and say, "Here you are. [laughter] You tell 'em about it later." [laughter] So, they probably got paid, but, much later.

KP: Did you requisition materials in Germany?

LT: Oh, you just took it.

KP: You did not bother with receipts.

LT: No. They weren't around. You weren't allowed to talk to 'em. You didn't want to talk to 'em before it was over, but, that you saw in that sheet.

KP: Yes.

LT: I don't know, … do you have a thing to take pictures? … Had you seen that before? …

KP: No. I knew about the non-fraternization order, but, I never actually saw them.

LT: Well, that was a thing. In fact, if you want it, you can have it. It's in here. … Yes, and I got two, if you want. We really don't need that. … Yes, those things, … they're in pretty good shape, really. There's a guy that I was with who lives out in Michigan. He lived in a section of Michigan [where] they don't have phones, and, within the past three weeks, they got phones, and he called me. I went to see him … about ten years ago, my wife and I, and we called and said we'd come, and his wife said that, when it happened, he cried. I mean, … he's not that kind of guy. Let me show you, I'll show you his picture, … this guy. He's now lost one lower part of one leg. This is, of course, me. This is how we used to go, … when we were in Germany, when we were riding behind the … armor. [Can you] see the machine gun up here? … Of course, we all had rifles with us. This is the guy that was from Africa, Pugh. His name was Pugh. … This, of course, is … near Mosbach and this is … where we were when the war ended. By the way, there was, … this was May 6th, about four inches of snow. This is the house we lived in. Back here, there's pictures, … here, this is a bridge. That's the bridge that I told you [about], we blew out the thing and there were houses across the way. ... [laughter] This is the bridge we built that night and this is when they were taking it down. It was a triple-single. See, bridges depend on the distance across. If it's a short one, you use a single. If it's … a little further, you use a double, two. Then, usually, they go to two-and-two at the top, and … this is two and one next to it, so, it was a triple-single. It was only one high. In Trenton, … north of Trenton, the bridge washed out at Yardley, Pennsylvania, during a flood back in '55, and they put a Bailey across, and they made a double-triple, so [that] they could put the thing across the top. They had it three high, but, it was only two wide, because of the [distance], but, that's a Bailey bridge. There's an entrance, like someone had put a sign, entrance into Germany, but, this is when we were back on rest. … This is the Jewish boy.

KP: He is the one who went into the houses.

LT: Yes, Eric. These ... were taken when we were back. … That's a Thompson. That's the outfits we wore. [laughter] This is a whole group of 'em. I don't know what [these are]. This is the town of Baccarrat in France. [laughter] They aimed for a bridge and they hit the … church next door. … I did this book right. This is the guy that … lost his leg. … There's a bridge. We were building a bridge. I guess they didn't put the … picture of the bridge [in], but, that's when we were working on a bridge. That's the guy from Michigan. See, it was near Epinal and ... I took a bath. They had [a] public bath there and we went to take a bath. I hadn't had a bath in I don't know how long. You had to take a whore's bath, you know, out of the helmet or, say, out of a sink or something. You never got showers. … We went on the lines that time. We went from there. That was a church. Oh, that's the thing from ASTP. [laughter] That's the first term. Oh, there's the bridge. That's the thing that we wore coming into Southern France, on our shoulder. … There's Vesuvius and there's the bridge we built. … That was at Pompeii. Oh, that's ASTP. There's my brother and father. I never met any of the guys from ASTP after I left. [laughter] That's when I first went in, the recruit. This guy I was friendly with, but, he was from Syracuse.

KP: You never ran into any of the men from your ASTP class again.

LT: No, none of them at all. … That's in high school. [laughter] I was the center at Trenton, but, no, oh, there, that's the cold. That was in the … *New York Daily News*. That was a picture when we came home. That was the *Alfred Moore*. This is a thing they gave us, the *Alfred Moore*, the dear *Alfred Moore*, boy, oh, boy, what a ship, the cold hello. … That's when … I took pictures of the Statue of Liberty and I did that again when we came home this time. [laughter] My wife will tell me I talk too much.

KM: Not at all.

LT: Okay. There's the May Get Inn Theater. [laughter] … That's a theater. That's in Marseilles. We called it "May Get Inn." … There's another guy I was friendly with, a guy named (Westfall?), but, I never saw him again. … We guarded prisoners when I was with the infantry. ... That's our company sign; look at the Battle Stars, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight Battle Stars, and the arrowhead at the top, but, they came in [on] several invasions, see. … That was the company and you'll see [that] it's C Company. It says, "C Company." So, that was because we were in the 2828th. … I had a pass to Switzerland and they charged us forty dollars, forty dollars, one week, all your food, all your transportation, all your lodging, forty dollars.

KP: Now …

LT: [laughter] You couldn't even get one day, … yes. Oh, … there's the company sign again. … See, that's after the war's over, and one of the guys got to Paris, and I got the pictures from him.

KP: Did you ever get into Paris?

LT: Yes, that's a story in itself. See, … they sent me to a bridge school in Epinay. Epinay is just south of Reims. They sent me to this bridge school with five other guys. We went in a two-and-a-half-ton truck. … At the time, we were living in (Seafelt?), Austria, and we got … to Epinay, and we went to school for a week. So, we're ready to go back home. So, we got to the truck and an officer said, "How many of you guys have been to Paris?" Nobody had been, so, he said, "Let's go to Paris." Well, you know, … "Let's go." So, he took us to Paris in a truck. It was seventy-five miles in the wrong direction from where we were, and, when we got there, he let us off on a corner, around the corner from a leave center, and he didn't give us anything in writing, but, he told us to tell 'em that we'd just come in by train and that the officer was gonna pick 'em up in three days, at such-and-such a corner, which was right there, and, in three days, he was gonna pick 'em up in a truck, pick us all up in a truck. So, the five of us went in and we told 'em the story. They gave us each passes for three days. [laughter] They gave us a thing to get food at the GI leave center and we'd be there for three [days]. So, I had three days in Paris and, three days later, he met us and took us back to the Army. When I was there, in (Pigau?), I met a guy from Trenton that I used to see at Cadwalader Park, selling ice cream, and I saw him, and I called to him. I said, "Aren't you from Trenton?" He says, "Yes." We sat and we talked for two hours. This was the only guy I had seen. I had seen a guy when I first went to Italy. I saw a guy that I knew from high school, and I thought, you know, I'd see guys all the time, but, I never saw another guy until I saw this guy, and we sat and talked for about two hours. About, oh, I don't know how many years ago, I went into a liquor store in Trenton and there's this guy. He owns it. He and his brother own it, and, when I got what I was gonna get and I put it on the counter, he looked up at me, and I said, "Have you ever been to Paris?" "Yes," he says. He says, "In fact, when I was in Paris, I met some guy and we talked for two hours." I says, "I'm the guy." [laughter] I got discounts for liquor for about six years, until he went out of business. Yes, he was thrilled. In fact, the book I said I have about the war, I loaned [to] them, because he'd been in the Fourth Division and his brother was a recon man. He was in the recon troops. … The infantry was bad, the recon troops were worse. He lived through it, but, his brother was there, and they took this book, and they loved me.

KP: When you were in combat with your squad or your company, did everyone in your unit fire their rifle?

LT: It depended.

KP: Yes.

LT: It depended. There were times and it … was a situation where it depended on what you were doing, you know. Most of the time, you didn't just sit and watch. You know, you watched and you watched spaces, you know. You didn't see anybody. I mean, combat could be nothing, because you'd sit for hours before anything happened. The worst part of combat, I found, was night, 'cause the Army, in the States, used to go two on and four off and two on. … Overseas, … it was four hours on and four hours off and four hours on and four hours off. So, you're up four hours, watching, and then, you'd sleep [for] four hours, and they'd always have to shake me hard

to get me up, because I was usually awake when they came to wake me up, [laughter] and you didn't want to get up. ... I fired one night, and they kidded me afterward, but, … they said they thought it was a machine gun, I fired so fast. I thought I heard something at the edge of the woods, and … I fired three [rounds], and then, I fired regular, … and I thought he was getting away, … but, of course, there was nothing there, [laughter] but, they kidded me. They thought ... somebody [had] slipped, hit the machine gun, and [it] went, "Brrrrrp," … 'cause I fired the first three so fast. [laughter]

KP: Were there any soldiers in your unit who either refused to fire their weapon or earned a reputation as being trigger happy?

LT: No. Well, they used to kid sometimes. I know a guy [who] shot a guy one time and … they yelled at him for [continuing to shoot him]. … He says, "He's still moving," and the guy kept shooting him, but, he was a … guy who was a prisoner who was brought overseas. He had gotten out of a prison and had come overseas to be cleared and he was all right. You know, he was there. … I happened to hear the story. You know, probably, most of the people didn't know it, but, … that day that that happened was the time we were taking the woods, and he was one of the scouts, and … this guy had been hit, and … somebody said, "Why are you shooting him?" He says, "He's still moving," but, no, as a rule, no.

KP: You joined the American Legion.

LT: Yes, only [because of] my father. … You know, my father had me in the Legion before I got out of the service, I guess, and I had been in it always. I never go to meetings. I like the magazines. The magazines are tremendous. In fact, I go through it every time and, if there's something interesting, I read it. If there's not, you know, many times it doesn't [interest me], that's it, I read the cartoons or something, but, two or three months ago, they had an article about the ship that went down at Pearl Harbor that nobody knows about. Was it the *Utah*? … The *Arizona* went down and they have all kinds of memorials. Well, the *Utah* [also] went down. The *Utah* was a target ship. The *Utah* happened to be in the berth where an aircraft carrier was supposed [to be]. [Have] you heard the story?

KP: Yes.

LT: … Where an aircraft carrier was supposed to be, and so, it was the first ship sunk, and they have a memorial for it in the Navy Yard, and you have to get permission from the Navy to get into the Navy Yard, and you have to get it a month in advance. So, if you go to Hawaii and want to see that ship, you can't see it, because … you don't have permission. … Through this article, it said something about getting the Park Commission possession of the land, so that people can go see it, but, that article was in the Legion magazine. They also had an article about Moosburg Christmas and what they had done at Christmas time in Moosburg, and, because my brother had been there, I was interested, but, these prisoners had … gotten so many things, … they gave presents to everyone. … The Germans, … the officers of the camp, came and they let 'em sit in the front row to see this. They put on a show, and they had so many each hour, and they put on a

show, and they gave everybody presents, and they gave the Germans presents, and the Germans were so amazed that the Americans would give 'em presents, even though, you know, they were making them stinkers. … They were terrible to 'em, but, you know, that was a good article, and then, the third article was about the census. It went back and told about the last census and what's gonna happen in the United States, but, … you know, that's the way magazines are. You know, sometimes you find something and sometimes you don't.

KP: You used your GI Bill benefits to fund your education. Did the GI Bill make the difference between attending or not attending college at Rutgers?

LT: I had planned, probably, on going to Springfield and doing Y work. See, I had worked for nine years at a Y camp. … Well, we didn't have the money and, with the GI Bill, it was fine. So, Rutgers was great. [Of] course, as far as athletics, you know, I always liked athletics and taking physical education. I'm involved with it. I went out for football. … I was out for football when Fred Fitch came and made the speech about lacrosse. I had been out [for] about a week. … A guy named Talon, from New Brunswick, was one of the centers. I went out for center, and I guess, [for] about a week, I was out, and we were in skivvies, at the time, and I probably would have played the next fall, but, if you didn't go to spring practice, the fall was no possibility. So, I went out for lacrosse, or soccer, to stay in shape and I told them that. I told Dockat when I went out, I said, "I'm here to stay in shape for lacrosse," … and then, one year, I was a sub, and the next year, I played. I played the whole year, and we won the Eastern Intercollegiate Championship, the second year I played soccer, and that was '48, I guess. … The next year, I was practice teaching, and Dockat's my advisor, so, I'm practice teaching in Trenton, and I have an opportunity to work with football. He wants me to come back up here to practice soccer, so [that] I can play on the [team]. I says, you know, "This is my livelihood. I'm gonna be a teacher and I'm gonna coach. I don't see [myself] coming all the way back up here to practice." So, I gave up soccer, and I think he was always kind of upset 'cause I did, but, that's the way it was, and I coached the whole fall at Trenton High, and one of the guys I was coaching with was a guy … named Krickling, who was a kicker for [the] University of Pennsylvania. … I went to a couple of fraternities, … people asked me to go, but, I wasn't interested in fraternity life. … You got all that in sports. You know, you traveled with 'em, you had fun with 'em. … I stayed here for, what? the first spring and summer, and then, I commuted from then on.

KP: You commuted from Trenton.

LT: From Trenton, and I commuted on the train and used to catch a bus in the morning, and then, I got married in … [the] fall of my senior year, when I was practice teaching, [laughter] took the weekend off and got married.

KP: How did you meet your wife?

LT: I brought her here, … on a blind date, to Rutgers, to a dance, on the 15th of February, which is when I entered the Army. I told her [that] both wars started the same day. That's when I met her. I took her on a blind date, and we came to a dance here at the gym, and she was funny. I

took her home from the date and … she asked me to go to a dinner dance the next week. [laughter] She … didn't want to take the guy she was going with, so, she thought she'd try me, and she invited me to go to that, and we've been going together ever since. [laughter] Well, she's in phys ed, too. She taught [for] thirty years in the City of Trenton as a phys ed [teacher]. Yes, she's retired with thirty years and I'm retired with forty, so, you know, we're making out pretty well, you know, with pension and Social Security, too. So, I had four kids. …

KP: It sounds like you both enjoyed teaching.

LT: Oh, yes. She wouldn't have quit. She only quit because she got her thirty years, [laughter] and she still liked it. … Who's the guy who played basketball from Trenton two years ago? Oh, I forget his name. He was a good basketball player at Rutgers, Worthey, remember him? Worthey? all right. She had Worthey in class when he was in junior high school, and she had co-ed classes, see, boys and girls, and he'd come into class and say, "Mrs. Terry, what do you want done?" and he'd open the windows, he'd put away equipment, do anything. She said [that] she never had to worry when he was in a class, and, if anybody didn't behave, he'd take care of it, but, she said, "No, he was great," and she was told by the basketball coach in junior high that he was the best athlete that they'd ever had at that level in basketball. He's now playing on a pro team in Trenton.

KP: Wow.

LT: Yes.

KP: Do you still live in Trenton?

LT: Yes. We never moved. We put all [of] our kids in private school and stayed there. We're in an area that's so-so.

KP: Why have you remained so loyal to Trenton?

LT: Well, … we've always lived there. We enjoy it. I stick up for it always and my wife … thinks we should have moved. … We're Protestant, and we sent three of the kids to Villa Victoria, which is a Catholic school, and our son went to Notre Dame High School, which is a Catholic school. He went to Hun for two years, but, then, he went to Notre Dame. He played football, and then, he went to Trenton State. I thought he'd play there, but, he didn't. When he got in[to] college, he wanted no part of football. … He took engineering technology, mechanical engineering technology, and works for the State. He is in building codes. He is the guy for Trenton, for the State of New Jersey, who takes the building codes, and goes over them, and checks with people [about] how to change 'em, and then, they work with other states on the building codes. That's what he's worked up to. He first was in new house warrantee work, and he was in that [for] awhile, and then, he got into this, but, he's got a good job.

KM: Did any of your children serve in the military?

LT: No.

KM: Did you encourage them to do so?

LT: No. Well, that was up to them. They didn't want to. I used to kid 'em about it, but, … he's probably better off. … They were all of the age where they weren't involved, see, with 'Nam. … Well, one of our daughters is a phys ed [teacher], another is a kindergarten teacher, and another's a nurse, and then, John works for the state, … and they all live around Trenton. So, when we … had Christmas dinner, … there were seventeen there. We [have] got seven grandchildren.

KP: Are you and your wife still active in the Presbyterian Church?

LT: Yes. I'm the treasurer of our church. [laughter]

KP: Is your church in Trenton?

LT: … Yes, it's in Trenton. It's right on the border of Trenton and Ewing. … There are only about five hundred members, but, … we have an endowment of about a million-and-a-half or so. We get a buck or two. [laughter] … I don't take care of the trust, some other guy takes care of the trust. … He keeps one to keep the money in the trust, rather than put it in the bank, because, in the bank, when I have it to spend, … you make nothing on it. So, I let him keep it, and we say [that] we have so much, but, most of it's in trust. Right now, we say [that] we have 50,000 dollars, but, of that, I think I only have about fifteen. I get about fifteen that we're working on, but, when I get low, then, I tell him, and he lets me take some out of the trust fund, but, it's an interesting job, after being an athletic director. See, an athletic director, unless you know one or you've done it, you know, it's the kind of job [where] you just keep busy. I mean, I had told them, when they put me on … as a full-time athletic director, that if I didn't have enough work, I wanted to be able to go back to the classroom. [laughter] I never had to worry [about it], but, I mean, there's just so many things, you know. You gotta take care of security. I mean, can you imagine having to have security at a tennis match? Well, we had to have security at a tennis match. The tennis courts are in … a poor area and the kids used to come and hoot and holler and run around. So, I had a female teacher that I put on as security, and she used to stand there and keep the kids away, so that they could play the tennis matches without [distraction]. … They had a basketball court there and they'd come [and] play basketball, right when you're having a match. So, you had to have somebody there. … Well, when I first started, I didn't think I'd have to stay at everything all the time. They [only] … had somebody there for varsity games. One of the first years, when the girls started; [of] course, I was there when the girls began, so, with the influx of girls, you doubled the number of contests. You doubled everything. So, we had a field hockey game. [The] first field hockey game we had was with Bordentown. They came and they played the … varsity game. When the varsity game was over, they started to play the JV game, and I said to the coach, "I'll see you," and I went, got in the car and went home. [I] come to find out the next day, the neighborhood kids wouldn't let the other team on the bus. The bus was parked

there. The coach had an awful time. She finally got the kids away and got the other team on the bus. So, right then, that's it. … Anything goes on, you gotta be there. So, I'm there one Saturday morning, … we're playing freshman soccer with Brick Township, and the game's over, and the Brick kids are getting in the bus to go home, and I'm standing on the side, talking to one of the parents from Brick, and I look over, and here's three little kids throwing rocks at the bus. I mean, you never know. … We got 'em. We got their names. We told Grice Middle School and Grice penalized them, you know, which is a junior high. … They're just little things, but, there's so many things, so that, when I retired, my wife says, "What are you gonna do?" you know. This guy had been trying to get rid of the treasurer's job for five years, so, I got into it. Now, I've had it six years; I'm ready to get rid of it, too. [laughter] … I wrote W-2s, and I'd type 'em for, … what is it? thirty-two people, … because the nursery school is a part of the church, and, … now, I'm the treasurer of the nursery school, too. … Now, I have payday tomorrow for the nursery school for fourteen people. I wrote the checks yesterday … morning, but, I always write 'em early, so [that] I don't have to worry about [them at] the last minute, and I … pay the church every two weeks, on a Friday. I usually write the checks on Monday. You know, you can put 'em in the book. You know, they're not gonna get the money. … I don't know if you know anything about the government; … when you take taxes out of people's money, the government wants the money, and, … as soon as you pay the people, you gotta give the government the money, and I got in trouble two years ago. I got fined $200 for not paying the government. The church paid it, but, I didn't know the rule. I thought the rule was by the month, and it was by a quarter, and I hadn't paid 'em right. They … fined me $200. We took that out of [the] interest. [laughter]

KP: Is there anything that we forgot to ask?

LT: No, I don't think [so]. I didn't tell you anything. [laughter]

KP: You have told us quite a bit.

LT: It was interesting and I just talked.

KP: Kevin, do you have anymore questions?

KM: I have just one more, if it is all right.

LT: Sure.

KM: You mentioned earlier that you had fought alongside Japanese-American soldiers.

LT: Yes.

KM: Was there any animosity among your comrades towards the Nisei?

LT: Not that I knew of.

KM: None?

LT: No. They went through us that day and they were there. … In fact, we ran into them another time and there was no problem at all. … They were a very good outfit. It was part of the 36th Division and, as a rule, the 36th Division was awful. I mean, … now, I told you about that bridge where we blew the thing; … that was the 36th Division. Now, if it had been the Third Division, the guy wouldn't have left. The guy would have stayed there. See, [in] the 36th, they give you nothing. They put you right at the edge and you do it. The Third Division would say, "All right, I want this bridge by such-and-such a time. We'll cover for you," and they'll go out and take the land, say, in front, and then, you can build a bridge. You don't have to worry, but, that was just the difference in outfits. Anytime we got with the 36th, you know, you'd get in some kind of trouble.

KP: Did the Nisei regiment have a reputation for being a crack outfit?

LT: They were good. They were good, yes.

KP: You knew they were good at the time.

LT: Yes, they were good. In fact, there was a TV program I saw about them, about Bruyeres, and it was all about Bruyeres and how they took Bruyeres. I thought about it, "Yes, well, we helped them." [laughter]

KP: Do you think that most people realize what an engineering regiment did or how much combat they saw?

LT: No, I don't think so, no.

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 8/16/01
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 8/21/01
Reviewed by Lea Terry 9/01