

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH HERBERT W. IRWIN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II \* KOREAN WAR \* VIETNAM WAR \* COLD WAR

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Herbert W. Irwin on October 2, 1996 at Rutgers University with Kurt Piehler and ...

Elizabeth Speidel: Elizabeth Speidel.

KP: I'd like to begin by talking about your parents. Starting with your father, who died when you were very young.

Herbert W. Irwin: Yes, he died when I was on the cusp between age seven and age eight. My brother and I have often argued about that. Let's say, when I just became eight years old, he passed away.

KP: What happened?

HI: That's always been a mystery to me.

KP: He died on the job.

HI: No, my father was a machinist on the Erie Railroad. The work that he did mostly, as I recall, was on air brakes on locomotives. He worked in the Round House in Secaucus. That was his job, repairing air brakes. My father's education, he went through eighth grade and grammar school and that was it. Then he went to work. He was very ill for three days and died. I was told that it was gall stones. Didn't occur to me until I was an adult that I never heard of anyone dying of gall stones. So, I really don't know. I just know that he died.

KP: You were very young. What memories do you have of your father?

HI: You see, obviously things were different in those days. My father worked thirteen days out of fourteen. He only had every other Sunday off. He'd go to work early in the morning before we got up, and he'd get back home at about five o'clock. We did see him at meal times, but I didn't see my father much. I have very few memories of him. I remember one time he took my brother and me fishing. That I remember, but I don't remember much else.

KP: So, in other words, you were very young, plus he was a very distant figure, who was at work most of the time.

HI: That's right. That's right. He had very little impact on my life.

KP: Do you know how your parents met? Was there any story?

HI: All I know is that mother told us that he and she were in the same church choir in a Presbyterian church in Clifton. He apparently had a very good tenor voice. They met in this church choir, and were married, I guess, they were married around 1918. I was born in 1921.

KP: How did your father's passing away affect your mother, and you and your brother?

HI: Well, at that point I had two brothers. My older brother was two years older than I. It's strange my birthday was November 14th, still is.

Marie Irwin: I was just going to say.

HI: And will be. His is November 15th because he's two years less one day older than I. My brother somehow was closer to my father. I don't know how it affected [him]. I had a younger brother who was two years old at the time, but it didn't affect me much. It was rather strange. My grandfather, my mother's father, was living with us at the time, and even at that age I had a very close relationship with him.

KP: Because it sounds like he was around.

HI: Oh, yes. He was my mentor. I have great memories of my grandfather. My brother doesn't. I was going to say something else. I forget what it was but ... My mother, as I got older, mentioned to me on more than a few occasions, that it was fortunate that my father died when he did, because if he hadn't, he would have insisted that when I turned sixteen that I would leave school and go to work. Instead, I was allowed to pursue my own dreams and do what I did.

KP: Really, your mother was sure that he would have done this?

HI: That's what she said. Whether ...

KP: It might have changed ...

HI: My mother marched to a different drummer from time to time, too, and some of the things she said were not too appropriate. Boy, I'm going to have to edit this one.

MI: I'm listening carefully, dear.

HI: You remembered.

MI: Yes, I do.

KP: What was your family's financial situation?

HI: Financially, we were poor. My father died in ... 1928. There was no social security. He didn't believe in life insurance. There were no benefits from work. ... He had only worked nineteen years for the Erie Railroad. Had he worked twenty, my mother would have gotten a pension. He worked nineteen, and all she was entitled to was free transportation on the Erie, and that continued, but we had no money. There was a mortgage on the house, so my mother did housework for people in Ramsey. In those days, women also took care of young mothers, who had just given birth to children. That was more prevalent at that time than it is today, and my mother did quite a bit of that.

KP: She wouldn't deliver babies?

HI: Oh, no.

KP: But she would go in afterward?

HI: [She would] take care of the mother and the baby for a few weeks, until things got moving. At that time, of course, most childbirths, at least in Ramsey and that area, took place at home. We talk today about twenty-four hours versus forty-eight hours in the hospital minimum time. They never got to the hospital. It all happened at home

KP: I'm curious who would deliver babies at home?

HI: Oh, the doctor.

KP: That was the common pattern, but it was still done at home.

HI: Oh, yes, the doctor took care of it. The women then stepped in to help the new mother with the baby. [They] also took care of the cooking and stuff for the other family until things got settled in. So, she did that. Then as my brother and I, my older brother and I, Bill, grew, we did everything we could to produce money. We did any work that was available, then whatever we earned, of course, went to the house and food, and that's the way it was in those days.

KP: When did you and your older brother start working? What was your first job? How old were you?

HI: Oh, eight or nine.

KP: It was that early.

HI: Yes, it wasn't organized work. ...

KP: Like you would shovel driveways.

HI: Sure, anything that would come along, we would do.

KP: You were expected to give the money to your family?

HI: Yes. We didn't think about it. You know, it's ... We were not the only ones who did it. You have to remember that we had the stock market crash in 1929. The difference between our family and ... many other families was that we already were poor, and when the crash occurred, a whole bunch of, a large bunch of families joined us, and my young friends all hustled for work and did things, cut grass, you name it. I, for some years, I worked for the local doctor. There were no telephone answering services in those days, so, if he and his wife wanted to go to the movies, there was no television either, I would go to the house and I'd sit there and take care of

the telephone calls. You know, stuff like that, and I'd get paid twenty-five cents an hour, thirty cents an hour.

KP: That's also a fairly responsible job.

HI: Yes. Well, you'd learn responsibility early and you were proud to have the job. It's not like it is today. In those days that I had a job, to get it in the first place was very important, and to hang onto it was more important. I remember coming to Rutgers, it was true of everybody I knew in those days. You know, what were we looking for? We were looking for something to learn here to put us in a position to have some degree of security later. Our heads weren't in the clouds at all. We had to be very practical and we were. All we knew about life was what we had learned in the Depression, and we knew that it was important, one, to get a job, two, to keep it.

KP: You mention that, in a sense, the Depression came early to your family because of your father's death.

HI: Yes, we were already broke.

KP: Did you notice that there was a real change in your community, that a lot of kids ...

HI: Not kids, but adults. Oh, yes, adults, but not kids. The kids just kind of went along, and I don't think anyone ever really thought about it, the changing financial situation. You just adjusted your life to cope with it, didn't even think about it, it was part of growing up, but the adults, a lot of men in Ramsey had been, had involvements with Wall Street, what they did I don't know, but they were pretty well shattered. I remember a few years later, the house that I was born and raised in was at the end of a dirt road surrounded by woods, and years and years before, I don't know who had planned it, whether it was the county, the state, or the town that was going to cut a road through the woods and the front door of my house, which at that point was very old, faced the woods, because there's where that road was going to come through. So, the WPA, of course, needed projects, and I'm sure you're familiar or you've heard about it, but the WPA finally cut this road through. So as a kid, after school, I'd be out in the yard doing things, and I would hear the conversation among the people working on this road.

KP: What did they talk about? Do you remember anything?

HI: Oh, yes. Hard luck, hard luck, that was the theme. It impressed me, too, actually. I don't want that to happen. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to be beholden to anyone else, any firm, anything. I'm going to take care of myself.

KP: You were exposed to professionals who had worked on Wall Street and then lost their jobs?

HI: Yes. They weren't professionals, but they were white-collar workers.

KP: You wanted a profession, or an occupation where you could be independent.

HI: Yes.

KP: Very early.

HI: Oh, yes.

KP: Was your mother able to hold on to the house during the Depression?

HI: Oh, sure.

KP: It sounds like she made enough.

HI: Here's what happened. My grandfather was an optometrist, and he worked for a small firm in Paterson. So as long as ... he continued to live with us, and as long as he was alive, he contributed, not a great deal, but it was enough to keep things going. In those days, my big worry was what happens when he dies? ... He did die in 1933, and then, but by that time my brother Bill and I were older, and my mother was in a better position to generate money, so, with it all, we made it.

KP: You were very lucky. A lot of families didn't.

HI: Well, you know, it's determination. That's all it takes, really. It was a good lesson for us, too. We found out that if we worked hard, the whole bit, you know, Horatio Alger sort of stuff, it worked ... I was lucky, I was blessed with the ability to get good grades in school. I was always at the top of my class, and I had to work for it, but I was there. So, when I started high school, I knew, I aspired to go to one of the military academies, Annapolis or West Point, to me the military was always very attractive.

KP: At what age were you first attracted to the military? Was it when you were in elementary school?

HI: Oh, yes. I remember some people, cleaning out an attic, came and had a pile of books, and we wound up with a pile of books, and one of them was a book about Admiral Dewey and the Navy, 1898, and the Philippines, the whole bit. I'm sure you know all about it. That was the thing that got me started, reading about Admiral Dewey. I thought, "Gee, I'd really like to go to Annapolis." I discussed it with my mother at night. My function in those days was I dried the dishes. She washed, I dried, and we would talk. I'd be drying dishes and tell her what I wanted to do when I grew up. I wanted to go to college, but I thought I'd like to go to Annapolis. So, I started high school, and in those days we had no guidance people, and in my family, my father was dead, my grandfather was dead, and my mother only had three years of high school. She really wasn't too acquainted with education, so I had to make all of my own decisions. So, I decided I was going to take English, history, Latin, and algebra and science, and some friends of the family visited us about that time, and asked me what I was going to do in high school, and I told them, and they said, "Oh, that's wrong. You have to take shop, mechanical drawing, ... because when you're sixteen, you have to go to work," and I said, "No, I'm going to stick it out," so, I did.

KP: It sounds like a lot of pressure from your relatives, and if your father had lived, for you to put your education second to work.

HI: My mother said that many times. I don't know how true it was.

KP: Your relatives certainly thought that, from the comments they made on what you should be taking.

HI: Well, these weren't relatives, they were family friends. The relatives on my father's side pretty much disappeared. My mother didn't get along too well with them, so, I didn't see them much. On my mother's side, I had one aunt who lived in Clifton, who was a graduate of NJC, now you've never heard of NJC.

ES: That's really cool because we're trying to find women who ...

MI: She's dead now.

HI: She and I would chat about things. I liked her a great deal, and Marie got to know her, they were very good friends. But, no, I didn't have any pressure. The pressure I had came from schoolteachers pretty much, and as long as I can remember all I had to do was stub my toe and some schoolteacher would say, "Oh, Herbert, we might have expected that of someone else, but not of you." You know, growing up with that, it can be a prized pain, but it was also a challenge. I was in that challenge. I had to do it right and had to excel academically.

KP: So, your teachers were really pushing for you to go on to college.

HI: No. No, to a limited extent. Schoolteachers were different in those days. They were dedicated people. I never had a schoolteacher who sat down with me and said, "Why don't you go in this direction or that direction?" I had the feeling, always, that what they were trying to do with me, and with others, not just me, was to make us the best we could be and it was up to us to decide what to do. I never asked a schoolteacher for help in connection with anything beyond high school, and looking back I think I did get some help I didn't ask for. When I was a senior in high school I had a few scholarship offers from colleges, and I think that maybe one or two might have had some connection with a schoolteacher, but I didn't know about that. We were pretty much on our own, which I think was pretty good. Once again, we had no guidance counselors, nobody to tell us how to go to college, what to do. What did you do? You got the names and addresses of a whole bunch of colleges and universities and you sat down and wrote them and asked for catalogues, and you got the catalogues and went through them, and the first thing you did was try to find out what kind of scholarships they were offering, and scholarships weren't based on need in those days. They were based on your background, your academic, extracurricular background. So, I had that part worked out. I was the president of the student council of my high school in my junior year. At graduation, I wasn't the top of my class. There was 200 in my class, I was the highest boy, here come the girls, there were four girls ahead of me. Oh, I had sung in the New Jersey All-State Chorus for a couple of years. I was the editor of the high school yearbook.

KP: So, you were something of a man about campus in high school.

HI: Well, the man about campus is sort of the guy who glories in what he's doing. ... I didn't even know what the word resume meant, but looking back what I was trying to do, and I don't know where it came to me from, but I knew I had to do it, was to develop the best resume possible.

KP: With the notion that this would help get you into a college and get you a scholarship.

HI: I suppose so. I can't even say it was that deliberate, but as I look back, yes, that's what I was doing, and I wasn't trying to glory in anything, get pats on the back ... I was just trying to build this thing. It worked.

KP: In your high school, how much of an expectation was there that students would go on to college?

HI: Very little. My class, my recollection is that four boys went to college, few girls did. Four boys, girls really didn't aspire to go to college, a couple did, but then maybe five or six others did, but very few went to college. When I came to Rutgers, in September of '39, the *Targum*, which was the weekly paper, I guess it comes out more often now, had an early article that I came across just a short time ago. It said that ours was the smallest class, smallest entering class, for many, many years, '39 class, and that was because everybody was pretty well battered by the Depression and just couldn't do it.

KP: Ramsey and Bergen County have changed.

HI: Oh, has it ever.

KP: You grew up while there were a number of professionals and office workers and commuters and such.

HI: Commuters, commuters.

KP: It was still somewhat of a rural town.

HI: Oh, yes. Well, the whole area had been a farming area for many, many years. ... Well, how did Ramsey get its name, for example? ... In the 1870s, you know there was a development of railroads in the Northeast. The Erie Railroad ran the main line up through Ramsey, which was then part of Mahwah which had a different name ... Franklin Township I think it was, I forget, and every couple of miles they'd have a station and the station would be at a crossroad, and that would develop in the center of something or other, and you had to give it a name. So, there was a farmer in that area named Captain Ramsey, and there were many apple orchards up there, and Captain Ramsey's big claim to fame was his apple orchard and more so his apple jack, and people came from miles around to buy his apple jack, and they'd go to Ramsey's. ... This is a true story, you don't believe it, okay.

KP: No, I do.

HI: You have a doubt. They named it Ramsey's. [The] proof of it is years later a building and loan association was formed, and it was named The Ramsey's ... Building and Loan Association, relating back to Ramsey's. It still exists, has a different name now, but it would be interesting to check back and prove that one.

KP: I definitely believe you.

HI: Oh, you must.

KP: Any other memories you have of Ramsey, growing up?

HI: Oh, sure. It was a great town, friendly town. We had one or two doctors, one dentist. The school I started in was an old wooden building. At that time it had been condemned as a firetrap. We had the greatest teachers, dedicated women. They weren't there to make money, they were there to teach us. When I was in sixth grade, I had scarlet fever. Back in those days if you had chicken pox, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, whatever, the local health office would tack a sign on your door "Quarantined." So, they tacked a sign on our door, which made some drastic changes in the living arrangements in the house for a while, but I was quarantined. So, what happened, and this was Ramsey, and I think typical of most towns in those days. A few days later, a woman, Mrs. Straut ... delivered a big thing called a "Sunshine Basket," delivered it to the house. People had gotten together and had ... bought and wrapped 50 presents for me to open, one a day, during my quarantine period. Okay? I never forgot it. I never told you about it, Marie [talking to his wife], but I never forgot it, but that typifies Ramsey as I knew it. Just a great town, but Wyckoff, Franklin Lakes, all the other towns were the same.

KP: So, it sounds like you really knew people in the community.

HI: Oh, yes. I was active in my church. As a matter of fact I was so active in my senior year in high school the minister, the Lutheran church minister came around to the house one day to talk to my mother and me, and he said that the congregation would be willing to pay my tuition if I wanted to study for the ministry. I thought about it seriously. Then I thought, now I'm seventeen, and I thought, you know, "You poor guy." I didn't say it to him, but [I thought to myself], "You're wrestling with the Women's Missionary Society, the Ladies' Aid Society, the choir. People are taking shots at your wife for no good reason." I thought I would love to study theology. I would love to preach, but I just couldn't see spending my life doing all that other stuff. I've often said, I kid my clergy friends about that because I say, you know, "I'm really doing the same kind of thing you guys are doing, but I'm getting paid much better."

KP: I have a friend who's an Episcopal priest. He echoes some of what you've said.

HI: And the pay is poor, right?

KP: Yes. He hasn't complained about the pay, but he's complained about some of the politics and the different factions within the church, he likes his church, but he said that is a problem.

HI: But anyway that was Ramsey. It was a great way to live. You've heard of that quote from President Eisenhower, as he grew up in Abilene he really didn't know how poor they were. True. You didn't feel it. You didn't know it.

KP: I was wondering were there any immigrant families in town, or were most people native born Americans?

HI: We had a Catholic Church, that was strange. They had Italian families in the Catholic Church, and then there were others. What we knew about the Catholic Church was that several times of the year the few Catholic kids in our school didn't come to class because of a thing called a holy day, and we also heard that every once in while during the church service they'd all walk outside the church, walk around the church three times and then go back in. So, we had a small group of Italian families, but that's all in terms of, not immigrants necessarily.

KP: A different group.

HI: Yes, right. I never really got to know much about Catholics until I met Marie.

MI: We didn't walk around the church three times.

KP: Were there any black families in town?

HI: Yes, yep. One. Now that, in Ramsey, we had one black family, and the girl, Olive Jennings, was in my class. They lived in sort of a, I wouldn't call it a house, it was more like a big hut on the side of town. I can remember Olive in fifth grade. I remember her in fifth grade because it came Valentine's Day, and back in those days every class had a Valentine's box and you put valentines that were unsigned directed to other people and then you know, who got the most valentines, and I sent a valentine to Olive Jennings, because I knew that she wasn't going to get any because she was black. So, that was fifth grade. I don't remember seeing her later. We had a couple of families from Saddle River that were a little different, more of ridge-runner, hillbilly type, if those terms mean anything to you. Saddle River was not like it is today, believe me. That was it. We had one colored boy in high school. (Bucky Hutton?), his name was. He came from Mahwah. The school loved that guy. He was a great football player, a great singer. Just great.

KP: Do you remember what happened to him?

HI: No, I don't. Well, you see I lost track. You'll probably see about me that, unfortunately, I never look back. I should but I don't. I don't attend reunions. I don't know. I remember, but I don't do anything about it.

KP: So, you never attended any reunions of Ramsey high school?

HI: No. I attended one reunion only, one time, 1956. It was the 10th reunion of the Fifth Marine Division. So, I said to Marie, "Marie, the Fifth Division is going to have a reunion.

They're going to be in the Hotel Commodore in New York. I'll go down on Friday. I'll meet the guys, and then you come down Saturday, and we'll have a great time, and then we'll come home Sunday." Great. So, I went down Friday, got there about noontime. Finally at around five o'clock I met one fellow whom I thought I had known, and he thought maybe he had known me, So, we had dinner. Marie got there Saturday morning, and I said, "Marie, let's go to Chinatown." That was the end of the reunion.

KP: You mentioned your grandfather, who was quite a mentor for you, he was an optometrist?

HI: He was more than that. He was one of the early Boy Scout leaders in the United States, very early. He was active as a Scoutmaster. He was fond of nature, and for quite a while, every Sunday morning when the weather was decent I would finish Sunday school on a Sunday morning. He would meet me outside the church with a knapsack and a sandwich in it, and we'd go down to the railroad station, take the train up to Suffern, Tuxedo, or someplace, and he'd take me for a hike. We did that for a long time, and he didn't deliberately teach me things, I kind of absorbed them. It's funny, I was just going through some old stuff a year or so ago, I came across a pad, a little pad that he had given me many years before with a pencil, and said, "You should sketch things as you see them." I had sketched a tree that a beaver had gnawed at and had dropped or felled. I picked it up by osmosis from him. He was a great person.

KP: You mentioned he was a Boy Scout leader. Were you in the Boy Scouts?

HI: Oh, yes, sure. In those days you became a Tenderfoot when you were twelve, you had to pass a test and that was it. ... My grandfather taught me so much. On my twelfth birthday, which happened to coincide with a Scout meeting, I went to the local Scout meeting and immediately became a Tenderfoot. I knew everything. In a short time, I had risen to the rank of Life Scout, which is just before Eagle, but I never made Eagle. I didn't try.

KP: Really, so you never became an Eagle Scout.

HI: No, I dropped it. I should have, but ... There were some things that appeared to me to be insurmountable, and once again there's a great difference between then and now. If I were in that situation now, I'd go to somebody and say, "I need help," but in those days you didn't do that. One merit badge that I had to get was camping. ... One requirement was you had to spend fifty nights under canvas, in other words, in a tent somewhere, and I didn't know how I could work that one out. Another was swimming, but really, in order for me to do that, I had to have access to a swimming facility and I didn't have any. You know a couple of things that I just couldn't figure out.

KP: Which now seems that those would be one of the easier things as a Boy Scout to do.

HI: Oh, yes. Sure. You hop in the car and go somewhere, and all that stuff. We didn't do that. We didn't have a car.

KP: Did you have a phone?

HI: Oh, yes.

KP: You had a phone.

HI: Yes.

KP: You mentioned you were very intrigued by the military.

HI: Oh, yes.

KP: What happened to your plans of going to the academies? Did you ever apply?

HI: Oh, I'm full of stories believe me. I wrote to [BUPERS], the Bureau of Navy Personnel for information about Annapolis and the War Department, that's what they called it in those days for West Point. Science was not my strong suit. I finally decided instead of Annapolis, which was focused more on science, engineering that sort of thing, I would go for West Point. So, I wrote a letter to my local congressman to try to start the process going. Once again, it was different, there was no advice, you didn't go somewhere and say, "How do I do this?" You figured it out yourself and did it. So, I wrote to him, Jay Parnell Thomas, who later went to prison. ... I had to take a physical. Meanwhile, I had checked in school, I remember going to one of my math teachers and showing her the requirements, the math requirements for West Point, to make sure that I had covered everything in school, and oh, yes, I'm set. So, I had to go to New York City for a physical, and I didn't pass that physical. I had flat feet. Now, you can't leave it there, bear in mind I had top grades with the exception of four girls in my senior year, president of the student council my junior year, editor of the yearbook, you name it, I had that resume. I really had it. Okay. A fellow in Ramsey high school, who was a year ahead of me, whose father worked for the local post office and was very active in local politics, that fellow got an appointment from Jay Parnell Thomas to Annapolis. In order for him to get that appointment after he finished high school, he had to go to Admiral Farragut [Academy] for a year to brush up to get qualified. So, he got an appointment to Annapolis the same year that I made the application to West Point. This will all come together. Okay, no guidance people. I'm a senior in high school, I'm trying to figure out what I'm going to do. What kind of career do I want? What's the best thing? Let's go around town and talk to the people in different professions and so on, and find out about it because we didn't have any books about it. I even went to the local funeral director. So, among other people I went to the local lawyer, who had also been my Sunday school teacher from time to time. I didn't get a chance to ask him about the practice of law. He controlled the conversation by, you know, "What are you going to do?" He asked me if I had ever thought of going to Rutgers? I said, "No." As a matter-of-fact, I was on the verge of getting a four-year scholarship from Muhlenberg.

KP: Which is a Lutheran school.

HI: Yes, right.

KP: That would have made perfect sense.

HI: Well, ... my minister might have mentioned Muhlenberg, or I knew that he had gone there, so I figured try this one. ... I knew that that was going to happen, so when the lawyer asked me about, ... I had already been turned down by this West Point thing, and he asked me about Rutgers. He controlled the conversation, and he asked me to step inside, called his secretary. A few minutes later I was given an envelope and told to take it to my local state senator in Rutherford. I called the senator and made an appointment, went down, gave him the envelope. We had a chat. Several days later I got a letter from Rutgers, "You've been awarded a state scholarship." It's funny, about a week after that I received application forms. I got the scholarship before I applied.

KP: So, you never took the exam for the state scholarship.

HI: No, but this lawyer's son, who was a year behind me in high school, the following year got an appointment to Annapolis.

KP: Oh.

HI: Looking back, of course I could be paranoid. Looking back, I think what that lawyer was trying to do was to get rid of some of the guilt. At least he got rid of me. Meanwhile the one guy's son got in Annapolis, then this other guy got Annapolis, and meanwhile, as between Navy and the Marine Corps, where do you think flat feet would be a greater problem? I would suppose the Marine Corps. [It] never had a problem. My feet were as perfect as could be.

KP: Also during the war, there was a remarkable lessening of some of those standards because people have described not getting into the Air Force because some of their teeth were not straight.

HI: Well, you see. The point I'm making is that if I had had flat feet I would have had a problem.

KP: Yes.

HI: I didn't have flat feet.

KP: Oh.

HI: I didn't, and I didn't have the problem, but that's how we got rid of Herb Irwin, so we could keep these spots open for the favorite sons.

KP: I'm very intrigued by your going around town asking for advice about various occupations because you were doing this very systematically. Do you have any memories from these different career talks?

HI: Well, you see ... I can remember talking to the funeral director. We never really got into the funeral business. We got to talk more about higher education and what kind of a school I would prefer to go to, a big one or a little one. I can remember even to this day he said, "What would

you rather be, a big frog in a small pond or a small frog in a big pond?” At that point, this Rutgers thing had developed, everything was happening at the same time. See, with Muhlenberg, I learned that they had a new scholarship program. They were ... awarding six four-year scholarships and each one honoring the name of someone who had been involved in Muhlenberg history. You had to take an exam. So another fellow and I, ... we went to Allentown, his father drove us, and we took an eight hour written exam and came back. ... There were about 150 fellows, young boys, who took the exam from Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York, and I received the letter a while later and he did too, to come back for an oral interview. So, we went back. They didn't have 150, they weeded out a great many, but they put us all in the library, and on one end of the library was a door, like an execution chamber. So, eventually my turn came, and I went in a big room, a circle of chairs, a faculty member in each chair, and in the middle of the circle one chair, that was my chair. I sat down. They started asking me questions, and it was funny, my history teacher for whom I had great respect, a fellow by the name of Carl Lehr, who had also gone to Muhlenberg; he and I would talk from time to time about books to read. We went around the circle, and one professor said, “Do you read much?” I said, “Yes.” “How much do you read?” ... I told him, “Two or three books a week.” Somebody else [asked], “What's the last book that you read?” I wish that I could tell you what it was, [*The Tragic Era* by Claude Bowers]. It had to do with the Reconstruction period, and it was excellent, and I had just finished it. My history professor had suggested that I read it. I read it. There I was. “What was the last book that you read?” It happened to be because he was the head of the history department, and he had urged my history teacher to read it.

KP: You gave him exactly the answer he was looking for without even knowing he was looking for it.

HI: Yes. Well, a short time later I received a letter from Muhlenberg saying, “If you're offered the scholarship will you take it?” I wrote back and I said, “Yes.” There I really needed some advice, and I didn't have it because now I had this scholarship in my hands and said I'd take it. Rutgers comes along, big frog, small frog. Rutgers, in those days, student body of less than 2000, was still a big pond compared to Muhlenberg, and I figured I'd rather be a little frog in a big pond, so I came here.

KP: Had you considered any other schools?

HI: Oh, sure. Tusculum, some place in the south offered me a scholarship. I had a letter from NYU, also Columbia. They hadn't developed the scholarships yet, but looking back I think they might have. Later, I regretted that I hadn't tried Princeton or Harvard, but that was much later. The reason I didn't try Ivy League schools was I knew that I had to live and I didn't know how I could afford to live in one of those places, whether work would be available. I had a hunch that somehow I could work it out in New Brunswick, which turned out to be true. One of the problems with Muhlenberg was, well, there were several problems, one was that ... I found out these six scholarship recipients had certain parameters that they had to observe. You couldn't join a fraternity, you couldn't ... concentrate on any one specific group or activity. You were supposed to be the focal point of all sorts of things to generate activity within the college in general. I didn't like that. Then another thing, I found out that a couple of guys on the Ramsey

high school basketball team got full scholarships with room and board, and they hadn't even gone out to Allentown. I had knocked my brains out in an eight-hour exam, that oral business, the whole thing, and I figured, you know, this isn't fair. I put it all together. I came here.

ES: What were your first impressions when you got here?

HI: Several things. ... Back up a little bit, military. I think this probably came from my grandfather. I always believed in rules and following rules, doing what you're told, obedience. My grandfather was German, and I liked it. Okay, I get to Rutgers. I have a handbook. At Rutgers, you're a freshman you have to wear a dink. I don't know whether they do it any more. I don't suppose they do. You had a little pin on your dink that gives your name, you had to say "Hello," to everybody. So, I did. That was funny because a month or two later I could hear buzzing behind me, "What's he running for?" I wasn't running for anything. It says to say, "Hello," to everybody, so I did, okay? Rutgers, it was great. New Brunswick was a quiet, friendly area. Rutgers, looking back, reminded me of southern county seat, where there's a courthouse and everything is kind of quiet. Flies are buzzing and stuff like that. Nothing special is happening. New Brunswick was like that, just a lovely place. My professors ... Professor Heald, Mark M. Heald, you never heard of him or you didn't know him, but he's one of your predecessors. He taught a course Contemporary Civilization. I don't know whether you still have it, but it was required of the liberal arts students. I thought it was the greatest. It taught me how to think. It started with the creation, the different theories of creation, and carried us all the way through, giving the broad picture all the way through to, well, we didn't go through to Nazism. We didn't know much about that at the time, but close to it, World War I. That's where we stopped. ... Many times we would hit a point and he would [say], "What is the significance of it? What does it mean?" In high school and grammar school I had just been taught to memorize, but now I was being taught to think. So, Professor Heald and my English Prof. I forget his name, but it was great. The problem I had, like every scholarship student, I guess, I was scared. I had to maintain a certain average to maintain the scholarship, and the first semester I didn't know ... anything or anything else, but I did okay. I liked Rutgers. It was good. Good friends. I couldn't join a fraternity. In those days, I don't know what it's like now, but fraternities were big in those days. They had rushing and you'd be invited to lunch or you'd be invited to dinner. I accepted all the invitations because every time I went to a fraternity house it was one meal I didn't have to pay for. A little bit of fraud there because I knew I wasn't going to join. I couldn't afford it.

KP: Where did you initially live?

HI: At 146 Hamilton Street. I came down, got the scholarship. Time passed. In the summertime I came down. My mother and I came down. I figured ... I'd have to have time to find a place to live. So, I went to Queens and got a list of places. The first place I went to was a place called (Stoleman's?) across from Queens on the other side. It was a lunch affair. It's probably gone now, but they had some rooms in the second floor, and they were taken. So, we wound up on 146 Hamilton Street, and I lived there for two years. It was very nice. It cost me three-fifty a month.

ES: You talked about the dink you had to wear when you got here as a freshman and you were a member of Crown and Scroll.

HI: How did you know that?

ES: It was in your pre-interview survey.

HI: Did I put that in there?

KP: Yes.

HI: Oh, okay.

ES: One of the requirements, or one of the activities of that group was fostering the rivalry between freshman and sophomore classes. ... That's not like that at all here now. There's no rivalry between the freshman and sophomores. Even in the *Targum* there's a picture of a freshman hog-tied to a tree outside of NJC.

HI: Really. Oh no, we had it. We had it. It was fun. It was fun. We'll probably talk about crew, when we get to that I can tell you more about the rivalry.

ES: We can go there right now if you like.

HI: Really, you want to switch over to crew? Let me say this ... [looking at tapes in bookcase] William Prout, Bill Prout, have you interviewed him?

KP: I didn't personally, but one of my interns did.

HI: I'm sorry I shouldn't even be poking.

MI: I was going to say that's being nosy.

HI: Yes, I know. I just happened to glance at it.

KP: He lives out in Arizona.

HI: He got to be a Colonel in the army.

KP: Yes.

HI: Okay, I took everything very seriously, which I think is what you should do. I get down here. I find out, this is orientation week, I find out that every able-bodied member of the freshman class is supposed to sign up for some athletic activity. Okay, I was 5'7", I weighed about 110 pounds. I couldn't play football very well. I was trying to figure out, "What in blazes am I going to do?" Well, my roommate, he was all set. His name was Ray Finley. Ray was about six feet tall. He came from, I don't know, but he spent a lot of time at the Shore. He

wanted to go out for the Rutgers crew. I didn't even really know much about what a crew was. He wanted to be the stroke of the crew. Okay, so the day came when every member of the freshman class was supposed to report for some activity. Now, I was thinking about fencing. I was trying to figure out something I could do. I gave up. Ray was going up to the gym to check on the crew. I went along with him. Now we're up in the gym, a whole bunch of fellows. They were all six feet tall or taller and me. The coach looks over at me and says, "You will be the coxswain." ... "Well, okay."

KP: Did you even know what it was?

HI: No. Okay, so we start out a little bit in the gym and then down to the river, and in those days they didn't have the boathouse. ... There was a trucking company terminal and we used that. So, we get down there and in old tub called a gig, and we started with that. Then we graduated from the gig to a regular, to the oldest, but a regular shell. Every afternoon, we're out there rowing. Ray did get the assignment ... initially, to be stroke and we're roommates. After a few weeks I began to complain. I'd get back to my room and the base of my spine hurt, and I figured it out. Every time these guys take a stroke the boat leaps forward, and the back of my seat whacks me in the tail and it hurts. I thought I could get a cushion or some kind of padding there for the shell. That wouldn't look good. How do we work that out? I gave it a lot of thought. It dawned on me. I don't know whether you've ever seen a shell, but the seats slide back and forth and the oarsmen have their feet in holders. They lace their feet in. Every time an oarsmen reaches forward, if he bangs that seat too hard and pushes on his feet, he stops the shell, and you get that bump. I figured let's change that so I have a more comfortable ride. ... This is true. Every afternoon we're out on the river, the coach is there in his launch with the big megaphone, and he's concentrating on varsity, not paying much attention to us. The coxswain is really like a sub-coach. So, I'm out there with the crew, calling the shots. We'll do this, we'll do that. I didn't know anymore about it than they did. I'm trying to work things out so they don't lurch, and we started to work it out, and the ride became more comfortable. ... In the process, I realized, now I'm sitting in the stern of the boat, on each side, every time they'd take a stroke, there are four eddies or whirlpools, one from each blade, okay? And I see the set, and we move forward and there's another set. ... I realized that as we were working this lurching problem out, the distance between these sets increased, which meant that we were gaining distance when the oars were out of the water. See it so far, okay? They called it Frosh-Soph Week. Frosh-Soph Week. Freshman crew were going to race the crew of sophomores. Well, we beat the pants off them. ... Coach takes another look at us. A week or so later he decides, "Well, let's put the freshman against the varsity." He did, and we beat them. So then a week or two or more passed, this is still in the fall, ... or maybe it was in the early spring, I forget what, the coach put me in the varsity shell just for a couple of days. ... It was an experiment because I'm still a freshman coxswain, not the varsity. Well, that spring our freshman crew really did a job. I forget where we started out, up in Massachusetts. We traveled quite a bit but we had a great year. ... For sophomore year the coach put Ray and the three oarsmen behind him, numbers five, six, seven, eight and me in the varsity shell. That was the '41 crew. We used that same technique and we beat the pants off everybody. Except Princeton, and that was my fault. ... But we had a great year and that's what caused us to be invited to replace Navy. We even wound up at Christmas time in New Orleans. The Sugar Bowl Festival was and still is, every

year at that time, and the Sugar Bowl is more than a football game, a whole bunch of things including a crew race. We were invited there and we won. Does that answer your question?

ES: Yes.

HI: Okay.

KP: It sounds like you got to travel quite a bit with the crew.

HI: Yes.

KP: Had you traveled much before college?

HI: No. No.

KP: You must of really had a blast going to these different places in the country.

HI: I did, I did. It was great. I had a great time here. Rutgers offered a great deal. I didn't deliberately take advantage of it. It kind of fell my way. You know, looking back I've been very fortunate with things, the way things have happened. I didn't go out and make them happen, they just did. Rutgers, it was great. I was still the dishwasher. Where was I when war was declared? World War II? Well, Chris Maggio and Bob Akeson had gotten jobs as waiters in a Hungarian restaurant in the middle of town, a little restaurant, and they knew I was looking for something. ... They found out they needed a dishwasher, so they got me the job. When war was declared I was in the kitchen of that Hungarian restaurant up to my elbows in dishwater. You know they didn't have dishwashers in those days. I was the dishwasher. A little radio on the shelf, and I'm listening to President Roosevelt's famous speech to Congress. I'm scrubbing pots and pans.

ES: Going back to when war was declared. Did you notice a big difference in the life at Rutgers?

HI: Yes, okay. Initially, we were products of the Depression as I said before. ... My thought was, and I think that was the thought of everyone, I'm going to have four years ... of education here. I have to get a job. I want security. That was the important thing, and whatever job I get I'm going to knock my brains out to keep it. That was the beginning '39, '40. Let's head into the military, okay? My Spanish professor, one thing that he required was that we use the Spanish edition of *Reader's Digest*. *Reader's Digest*, at that time had a number of articles on the problems in Europe, and he would get beyond Spanish to discussing these things and trying to drill us that we have to think about it. I can remember how forceful he was about talking about Dunkirk. Now, I don't know if it makes so much of an impact today, Dunkirk, but at the time the British forces were being driven to the shore of the English Channel, and they were in bad shape, and there was this big rescue operation across the Channel to bring 'em back to England, to regroup. You have that? When I was a freshman I was on the debating team. What was the subject that year? Isolation. That probably doesn't mean more to you than just a word, but it was very real at that time. Quoting George Washington, you know foreign, it wasn't

intervention, I forget what it was. The question was: Should we involve ourselves in the affairs of other countries 3000 miles away? And 3000 miles away was a lot farther than it is today. Should we involve ourselves at all or should we isolate ourselves? We really worked on that one. My first debate was down in Princeton. I forget which side I took, you know you were assigned sides. We beat them, by the way. That is what we were thinking about, freshman year, isolation. Sophomore year, getting into it. Junior year, we know by junior year ... we had declared war. So, we forgot all about everything else. ... The only thing we could think about was what branch of the service did we shoot for, you know, what do we do? We still worked hard with our subjects, our studies, but we didn't think anymore about getting jobs. We thought about the military.

KP: Going back to your debates. When your class was welcomed to Rutgers. I've read in the *Targum* that President Clothier gave a talk where he said this war's not worth you guys dying over. He gave a very anti-interventionist talk, but he would change his line very quickly. What do you remember about the different perspectives on entering the war?

HI: The students didn't pay any attention to it. It was like talking about something that was happening on Mars. Now a lot of faculty members gave it a lot of thought, you know, pro and con. I don't remember President Clothier's ... speech, and probably because if he got into that subject I didn't listen. I really didn't, it was so foreign we just didn't think about it, and even, well, when war was declared, then we got more serious, but our thinking wasn't so much about what's happening here, what's happening there, who's right and who's wrong. Our thinking was should I shoot for the Air Force or the Navy? Do I want to be a deck officer? ... How about ROTC? That sort of thing. What am I going to do?

KP: So, it sounds like even though you were debating this issue, it was a very abstract issue.

HI: Yes.

KP: That you weren't emotionally invested in either side.

HI: Not in the least. It was just the thing to do.

KP: Going through college, you're not the first one to express those sentiments. How often would you read a paper? How often would you keep track of current events when it wasn't in the classroom?

HI: That's a good question. It's not how often did I read a paper, it's did I read a paper at all? I think the answer is I didn't, unless I happened ... Oh, it comes back to me. If I happened to pick up a paper, of course, I'd read it, but did I go out to buy a paper? No. Well, several reasons. One was, of course, I didn't have any great interest, and the other is that I hung on to every cent I could because money was so tight. But I can remember the summer between my junior and senior years ... I tutored a kid. He was a Rutgers Prep student. His name was Sebolt. S-E-B-O-L-T. Conrad Sebolt. His father was a local contractor, and I tutored this kid in the usual: Latin, English, history, and math. When the summer came, the father wanted me to stay on to tutor his son that summer, and he gave me a job working in this gravel pit. I was the

checker. I did all sorts of things. He gave me the job so I would stay on and teach his son. Every morning the steam shovel operator would pick me up in the middle of the town to drive to the pit. So, I would have breakfast in the middle of town, and I always picked up the *New York Times* and read it when I was having breakfast. That was the first time I deliberately picked up a paper to read. I remember reading about Stalingrad, in particular, during that period.

KP: But otherwise ...

HI: I didn't.

KP: The *Targum* was the main newspaper that you read. The *Targum* didn't have a lot of national news or international news or even local news.

HI: Oh, the *Targum*. When I came to Rutgers, I initially, I wanted to study journalism.

KP: So, that's what you thought you'd like to do.

HI: Yep. That was it. So, I signed up for the *Targum*. I wrote a couple of things, no big deals. I got a job at the same time with the New Jersey Press Association. That's impressive, isn't it? Well, the New Jersey Press Association had, and maybe still does, had an office in those days in Winants Hall. Their function was to check all the legislation that came through Trenton and advise all of the member newspapers in the state. ... The focal point was you read the legislation to find out what the local municipalities had to publish, legal publishing in local newspapers, you know, legal advertisements. ... One fellow, he was a junior, he was assigned to read all the legislation to find out or get information about these legal ads and my job was to run the mimeograph machine and fold all the stuff, stuff the envelopes, and mail them, but I worked for the ... I hate to tell you this about the faculty in those days, but the members of the school of journalism, some of the faculty members used to hang around there, and this will probably be edited out, but they were the biggest bunch of clods that I ever came across. After seeing them for a while, I figured that's not for me.

KP: So you changed from journalism, partly because you got some experience in it and realized ...

HI: I didn't want it.

KP: So what then did you think you'd want to do?

HI: Psychology. Yep. So the head of the psychology department was a woman, which was strange but it was a woman. I made an appointment to see her to discuss psychology. So, I went to her office, and she wasn't there. She was sick and I didn't go back. So that took care of the psychology part. Then I got a job with Professor Kull. He was one of your predecessors. He was head of the history department in those days. This is all through the NYA.

KP: So you had an NYA job?

HI: Oh yes.

KP: The whole four years.

HI: Yes. One place or another. They all paid the same, forty cents an hour, but that was good. So, I started doing work for Professor Kull and I just gravitated toward history, more history than political science, but history.

KP: Did you think you wanted to go to law school? Or that came later.

HI: ... When I was a kid there were two professions in Ramsey, only two professions ... that were active. There was the doctor, and there were a couple of lawyers. I really didn't know the difference between them, except that, of course, doctors took care of the human body and lawyers did something else. I was more under the impression that lawyers took care of the soul, S-O-U-L. There was something about becoming a professional that was interesting. I preferred the military, but still, now you had this profession business. The local doctor and I were very close. He didn't have any children for quite a while, and when he did he had a daughter. I didn't have a father. So, when father/son dinners came up and things like that happened he would take me. ... This was part of my trek. I discussed medicine with him. He pointed out how expensive it was, and I just couldn't handle that one, so I forgot it. The law kept working in the background, and I began to think, as time went on, that I'm becoming, accidentally, more prepared for the law than anything else. But how I got into the law, you ready for this one? Okay. We did Iwo Jima. What happened to me. March, of my junior year, there was a great deal of activity here. Different boards from different branches of the service were coming to Rutgers to interview and sign up students for officer training. Every one required a physical. They thinned them out, but the ones that were selected went into officer training, and they were kind of put on a shelf for these various branches of service. Well, the Army didn't because we had ROTC, so they already had the breeding ground for that, and everybody was enthused about ROTC. First two years were mandatory, the last two years were optional. If you took them then you became a second lieutenant in the Army. I had too many other things I had to take care of, so I didn't opt for that. Although, I wanted to, I just didn't. So, now we have the Navy coming in with the V-7 program, that's deck officer, V-5, aviation, and some others. I would have given my right arm to become a Navy pilot. ... They announced that the Navy, three weeks from now, the Navy is sending a board in to examine people for the V-5 program. I thought, "This is mine," so I knew that we had to take a physical. I figured what I should do is get a physical before, find out what my problems are, and I hate to admit it, but if see if I could fake them if I had any. Well, back in those days if you went to a local doctor it cost two dollars and I didn't have two dollars to spare. Money was different in those days and I couldn't spare it. I thought about this. I've got to work something out. All of the sudden they announced the Marine Corps is sending a board around next week. Now the Marine Corps was a great mystery in those days. We knew that the Marine Corps had done something in China years before, and they were involved in Haiti and Central America, but we couldn't figure out why, but we did know one thing, that they had tough physical requirements. I figured I've got it made. I'm going to get a free physical. So, I went to the Marine Corps. Got my physical. In the process though, they check one thing and then you wait; check another thing and then you wait. Meanwhile, while

you're waiting, they have propaganda around and you read it. Next thing I know I'm standing there with my hand up being sworn into the Marine Corps. So, I forgot about the Navy entirely.

KP: You never got around to the Navy physical.

HI: No. No. It wasn't until the following February. At that point I'm at boot camp at Parris Island, crawling around in the sand with your rifle ... tail down, the way you have to do it, and I hear this plane buzzing overhead, and it hits me, "I'm not supposed to be down here. I'm supposed to be up there." I never did get up there. Anyway, ... the Marine Corps, what they did, they had a correspondence course, and they recommended that everyone in the officer training program get involved with it. So, I did. In the Fall of '42, I took care of it. December 1, of '42, I received a letter from the Marine Corps. It was the last nice letter I ever received from the Marine Corps, a very nice one. They said, "Due to the exigencies of the situation," now that had to do with Guadalcanal, "We have to expedite our training program," because they had lost a lot of people. So, they gave three dates that I could start my active duty, one was December 31 of 1942, another was February, and the third was June. "Pick a date and tell us why, give your reason." So, I picked June and my reason, which I thought was very reasonable at the time, was I'm a senior in college. Believe it or not, I said it and I would like to finish and graduate. Boy, how naive can you be? December 20th, I received orders from the Marine Corps, "You will report to Parris Island December 31st." So, that was it. I went around to the Dean, Dean Metzger. We had a rule in those days that if you were yanked out of college by the draft board, or any other reason, mostly draft, and you had finished seven semesters and one day of your eighth semester and your grades were good, you'd get a degree. My grades were good. I figured out that I lacked thirteen class hours. That's all I needed.

KP: It wasn't even a full semester.

HI: No, I was on the edge. I went down to see the Dean, but once again this was the way life was, and we knew it and we accepted it. [The] dean said, "Sorry, Irwin, rules are rules," and he handed me a piece of paper and said, "Would you like to resign?" I wrote out my resignation and gave it to him, and thanked him. Rules are rules. You don't get into the gray areas. You don't shade them. You don't do all that other stuff. You take it. So, I left. I didn't get my degree. Okay. The military, the Marine Corps and stuff, Iwo, that's over. [At] Iwo, as I'm sure you've read, we took quite a licking in that operation. From Iwo we were supposed to go to Guam and set up a new base camp, but we were so beat up that we went back to our old base camp on the island of Hawaii, the big island. We just sat around for six weeks or so picking up replacements and stuff, trying to get regrouped. They were very good, different groups. [They] shipped beer to us like you wouldn't believe from the West Coast and other stuff, too. They treated us well. I always had breakfast every morning with the same few people. One morning I was sitting there with the battalion surgeon, everyone else was gone ... I said, "You know, Doc, the war's going to be over soon." Iwo was 700 miles south of Kyushu, which was Japan. ... "Sure as shootin' we're going to hit Japan," and we were great optimists, "and then the war's going to be over. What are you going to do, Doc?" Not are you going to live? What are you going to do? Well, he was thinking of going to Alaska to practice medicine. I said, "I have seven semesters of history and political science, don't have a degree. That and a nickel will get me a cup of coffee." I said, "I don't know." Oh, but at that point, I loved the Marine Corps.

MI: Believe me he loves the Marine Corps

HI: And I knew that I was going to receive a decoration for Iwo. Everything was working for me and I had seriously considered staying in. That was it for me. So, anyway, he said, "My brother has the same college background you have except he finished, and he went to Harvard Law School. He has a real good job with a law firm in Buffalo," and we talked about it. I said, "That sounds good, Doc. Where's Harvard?" I knew it was either in New Haven or Cambridge. I wasn't that dumb. I wasn't sure. So, I went back to my tent. "Harvard Law School ... please send me information," as I did when I was a senior in high school. I couldn't have cared less. A few weeks later I get a letter from Harvard Law School: "Dear Lieutenant Irwin, if you will have your undergraduate school send a transcript of your record," and so on, and under that, in shaky handwriting, was a note. "Lieutenant Irwin, we here in Cambridge are very interested in what you people are doing out there. We would appreciate it if you would write us and tell us about it." We were a cocky bunch. I looked at that and I said to myself, "Okay I'll write Rutgers and ask them to send a transcript up. I don't know how I can pay for it, but I'll do it." But this guy, some 4F sitting in the stacks of the Harvard Law School library, he signed W. A. Seavey, he wants to know what the war's about. I'll tell him. Now I was always a good writer. I sat down and I wrote a letter. Now you couldn't identify your location and we had just finished Iwo, so that's what I told him about, and how the Fifth Marine Division was saving the world for the future of all people. [I] wrote a letter to Rutgers [and] said, "I'll arrange somehow to pay for this." ... Rutgers wrote back, "We took care of that; there's no charge," and so on. Once again, I couldn't have cared less. Two weeks pass, I get a letter from Harvard Law School. [The letter said], "You're admitted to the first class available to you when you return to the United States." I put it in my seabag. You want more of this story?

KP: Oh, no, keep going.

ES: Yes, definitely.

HI: ... This picks up the war, part too, if you're interested in it. We got squared away. Then, we knew something was cooking. We were completely reorganized. We got to the point where we had loaded our ships in Hilo, the seaport on the big island. We always loaded our own ships. We wanted them loaded in such a way ... that the stuff would come out of the holds the way we wanted it. Anyway, we were all loaded. They dropped the bomb. Wow, because we were not enthused about it. We didn't know what we were going to do, but we weren't enthused about it. Dropped the bomb, we held our breath. We dropped the second bomb and then all of a sudden the war's over. ... As an aside, of course, you weren't here when that happened, but the country as a matter-of-fact I think the Western world, but mostly the United States just whooped it up, one tremendous celebration. What did we do? It was eerie. At that point, our division had been reinforced with men. We had roughly, I would say, 16,000 Marines at our camp on Hawaii, and it was a bustling camp, troops marching, vehicles back and forth, activity, really a busy place until that moment. That camp went silent, nothing moved. I would look out of my tent to see if I saw anybody else. I didn't. It was spooky. Commanding General ordered the division band out to go to regimental areas. Celebrate. The band didn't have an audience. Some of the PR people

were trying to get the fellows to pose for the celebration. They couldn't do it. It was strange. And when today I think of that squabble at the Smithsonian about the Enola Gay. That's me. If it weren't for that bomb, I wouldn't be here because we found out that we were going to lead off the assault on Japan. The Fifth Division was, and we did go to sea anyway because we were packed up. ... We went up to Sasebo, which is the northern ... port in Kyushu. Our function was to dismantle the weaponry and so on. We found out what they had for us, and we would have been surprised. ... We would have won. The United States would have won, but over thousands and thousands of bodies on the beach. Now how'd I get into that one? Oh, okay. The practice of law. Now, I'm in Japan, by this time I'm Company Executive Officer. One night I was there in the battalion office. We had occupied naval barracks. I had a hunch it was similar to Annapolis, the place that we took over. It was quite a place, Naval. Our battalion, of course, had an office. I was down there and Colonel Shephard, the battalion commander, and I were sitting at different desks writing letters. He put down his pen and looked to me and he said, "You're going to stay in the Corps, aren't you Irwin?" and I looked at him, and you know how things flash past you? In an instant, I looked at the colonel and I thought, "You poor guy. You've given your life to the Corps." He had a different battalion on Iwo. He had two battalions shot out from under him. Every night the orders that went from division to regiment to battalion were the same, "Move forward." On Iwo, there was nothing else you could do but just keep moving forward. One night Colonel (Shepherd?) got the order, "Move forward." He said, "I can't." Well, in the Marine Corps you don't do that. He was removed immediately. I looked at him and I said to myself, "You're going to come up for promotion; you're going to be passed over. You're going to be in here a couple more years, you're going to come up for promotion again, you're going to be passed over. You're out." I said to myself, "I can't put my life on such a gamble. I can't do it." Two words, "I can't," that's all he said. That finished him. I said, "Colonel, I'm going to law school." Okay. Interesting thing, sort of postscript to this one. ... It's always been tough to get into Harvard Law School. It's tough to get out. I didn't think much about it until about maybe eight or ten years ago. How did I get into Harvard Law School without a college degree? Bear in mind with my story, I don't have a college degree. How did it happen? Well, the West Publishing Company is the biggest legal publishing company in the United States. You probably have some stuff here. Every month I get blurbs and stuff from West, and I just throw them away. Several years ago I got one and for some reason I opened it and read it. It was about the autobiography of Erwin Griswold. Now Dean Griswold was the dean of Harvard Law School when I was there. I also had him for taxation course. Later he became Solicitor General of the United States and was very active in the Watergate thing, several of my professors were. One of my classmates Elliot Richardson was.

KP: Oh, yes.

HI: Anyway, Dean Griswold had written his autobiography and West was publishing it. They reproduced one paragraph from his book and it went something like this, ... "Who was this 4-F graduate student?" "One of the most beloved law professors ever, Professor Seavey." Great. I never identified myself to him.

KP: You found out though who it was.

HI: When I got up there, I found out who it was. I had him for two courses, but I never talked to him. Well, classes up there [are] so large you really don't get a chance, unless you make a point, you don't talk to the professor. So, this is Griswold [in his book excerpt], "Professor Seavey came to me one day and said, "We're getting a lot of mail from people in the military overseas. How would it be if I would send a personal note with every reply?" Griswold thought it would be a good idea and he said, "Professor Seavey came to me one day with a letter he had received from a young Marine lieutenant written in a foxhole on Iwo Jima, and he showed me the letter and he said "You know this is the kind of person we want here, don't you think?" Griswold said, "I agree." It had to be. It had to be my letter.

KP: That's a great admission story of Harvard Law.

HI: Now did I get my degree? Yes.

MI: He did graduate from here.

KP: Yes, Yes. You graduated Class of '46. Did they take credits from Harvard?

HI: No, what happened was ...

KP: Or is there even a story ...

HI: Yes, there's a story. I can go on all day with these stories, but anyway there is a story. January, okay, I got home. We got back to San Diego, Christmas Eve morning of 1945. That in itself was a story. I was Company Commander, and I had about 500 Marines in my company at that point. I had picked them up here and there. It's this whole big story. Anyway, ... we get up to Camp Pendleton at noontime Christmas Eve day. Now the Marine Corps is very rigid about uniform requirements off the base. All the warehouses were closed at Camp Pendleton. The personnel had gone to celebrate Christmas, so what do we do? So a few of us got together, and we broke into a couple of warehouses. For three days we conducted a uniform issue. Those green skivvy shirts. That's all I ever got out of that uniform issue. Marie never saw them until we were married.

MI: I will never forget them, just a disaster.

HI: Okay, so middle of January I'm finally home. I figured, well, I'm admitted to law school. I'm set there. I have three and a half months of leave time coming to me. I had everything working for me, didn't have to worry about coming down here and washing dishes. I was getting paid. So, I came down middle of January, snow on the ground. It had to be a couple of thousand GIs milling around, wanting to enter under the GI Bill. So, I came and went into Queens, sat down with somebody and said, "I'm here for my eighth semester." The fellow said, "Okay." What military schools did you go to?" He said, "We give you credit for that." So, I gave him the list, and he went out and came back and said, "Okay, we checked it and you're one credit short." I said, "Fine, sign me up." [He said], "Wait just a minute." ... He came back a few minutes later, and said, "We've rechecked, and we found out that we missed one public speaking course. Now that's a two credit course. Now ... you're one credit over." Now, he

knew and I knew that I had taken public speaking courses, but I hadn't taken that course. They were trying to get rid of me. I said, "What do I do next?" He said, "Well, come down in June and attend commencement." Well, I got a job with a trucking company, an over-the-road trucking company, waiting to go to law school. So, in June, the day before graduation, I hitched a ride on one of the trucks that was going south, got off at the New Brunswick Circle. I don't suppose you have it here anymore. [I] hitched into town, stayed overnight at the Beta House, picked up a cap and gown at the bookstore, went to commencement, took the cap and gown back, hopped the train and went home. Got my degree.

KP: Since we're talking about Rutgers again, what were your impressions of ROTC at the time? Did you try and stay in the advanced?

HI: Oh, okay. The feeling about ROTC in those days was far different from the feeling that you have read about and you, perhaps, you experienced from the '60s and '70s. We were all for it. It was mandatory. We had uniforms that were furnished to us. I don't know whether we had to buy our shoes or whether they were furnished, but it was part of it. I never heard any complaints about it. We had class work. We had drill once a week and we also had a rifle range, of sorts. I gave serious thought toward staying in and getting my commission, but I had become so involved with the crew and I needed so much time to earn money [that] was principally [used] to eat. ... I didn't have time for it. So, I figured, "Well I'm going to let this go and let's see what happens." Let's see, '39 to '40 ... to '41, by the time the decision making period arrived, I could see that things were developing that if I didn't go that route something else would happen. We were very much in favor of ROTC. In those days half of the students commuted. They'd come up in the train, either way, in uniforms every Tuesday. It was just part of it. I was trying to think, I had a hunch you'd ask me about this. I was wondering, did we drill with rifles? No, I don't think we did. I don't know.

KP: There's a picture in the yearbook of drilling with rifles.

HI: Really, I guess we did then.

KP: No, I've seen it. There's pictures of the encampment. I know in the Class of '42 yearbook there are pictures of people in the advanced ROTC.

HI: Oh, advanced, yes, they would do it, but I'm just thinking ...

KP: Yes, I don't ...

HI: I don't know. I did find out. See, I went December 20th of '42 I got my orders. Ten days later I was in Parris Island. You've probably heard about Parris Island. Believe me, it's everything you've heard, but I realized very quickly that what I learned here in ROTC was nothing compared to what we should have learned.

KP: Would you have stayed with ROTC if you had known war was such a certainty? You think that that would have affected your decision differently?

HI: I don't think so. ... It was just a general feeling. It was going to happen.

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

KP: So, you were just saying that it wouldn't have affected your decision at all.

HI: No, because I still had the basic problems of supporting myself, room and board. In those days, those were the biggest problems, biggest considerations, that all of us had, room and board, mostly, food.

KP: You did a number of jobs. You had NYA jobs all the way through.

HI: Well, I had NYA jobs, I played the piano in dance bands, not in the later period, but in the earlier period. I had done that when I was in high school. We used to sneak up into Suffern, New York, where you could play in gin mills at younger ages. You could get a dollar an hour back in those days.

KP: That's actually very good money.

HI: Versus forty cents an hour for an adult, yes, we were doing okay. I did that and washed dishes, and tutored, whatever I could do. We all did it.

KP: When you say you tutored, did you tutor Rutgers students or did you tutor high school students?

HI: High school students.

KP: You told us before we began the interview about how you came to the Beta house and the great story, which I'd like to get on the record.

HI: Well, Pete Cartmell was a Beta, and he was on the crew. Some of the other people involved with the crew were Betas, and, at that point, truly, the Beta house, it wasn't the biggest, fanciest house, but it was ... the most respected house on campus. Once again, fraternity life in those days was different from what I have read. Alcohol just didn't happen at a fraternity house. Females, if they entered the house at all, stayed in the living room or whatever you want to call it. That's the way it was. So anyway, let's see, we did the Poughkeepsie thing the summer between my sophomore and junior year. It was sort of in conjunction with ... A couple of the Betas asked me if I would like to join. I said, "Yes, but I can't afford it." Well, somehow they had talked it over and in those days members of every house, some worked as waiters and some in the kitchen. They offered me a job as a dishwasher. I said, "Fine." It's not what you do or what you wear, it's who you are, I've always felt. Whether I'm washing dishes in the kitchen or whatever.

MI: He does very well at it, too.

HI: I still do it. I'm me. I said, "Fine." The interesting part about that is that every year in the Beta house, I'm sure it was throughout others, too, a steward is appointed for the following year. Now, he's the fellow who runs the dining room. He buys the food, hires the help, the whole bit, plans the menu. ... I was there for my junior year, working in the kitchen, so they used to say that anybody interested in being steward for the next year could be interviewed at a certain time and place. So, I figured I'll take a crack at it. My argument was that I've been in the kitchen all year. I see all the leftover food coming back. I know what the fellows want. I know what they don't want, and I know how we could do it and save money. So, I got the job. First fraternity meeting in the fall I was proud. I announced, as the steward, that I had managed to pay off the balance due on the kitchen range and everything's going along well, whereupon a few of the fellows blasted me for reducing the quality of the food in order to make money for the house. Got the picture? At that point I decided I would never go into the restaurant business, but that's how it happened.

KP: You made an astute observation about how important fraternities were to Rutgers. They really dominated. A lot of the key office holders were fraternity members; for example, the *Targum*, the student government.

HI: Well, it apparently had been that way, but when I came in '39 ... you could see something was happening. The non-fraternity students were becoming loosely aligned as the *Scarlet Barbs*, barbarians. There was a senior named Howard Crosby who was very active in that area. You probably heard of him.

KP: Oh, yes.

HI: Howard Crosby. Obviously, they called him Bing Crosby ... That [the *Scarlet Barbs*] was developing. Now, the *Targum*, I don't think the fraternities ran the *Targum*. Joe Barbash was very big in the *Targum*. I don't know. I don't think the fraternities had very much to do with that, but the fraternities had a great deal of control in other places, student council, that sort of thing and fraternities also controlled class officers. I remember my freshman class elected a president. You know, you pick this business up, you don't get it directly, but the class president that year was a fellow from the Chi Phi house. He was elected because it was that year for the Chi Phi house to get it. So, you become a little cynical about politics, but I saw it. It was a learning experience.

KP: You mentioned the run-in you had with Dean Metzger in terms of graduation. Did you have any other encounters with Dean Metzger? In a strange way he was a very colorful figure although, I was told, he was also very stern Calvinist.

HI: Yes, he was, but it was sort of expected of him. Colorful, I never saw that part of him.

KP: I wouldn't say colorful, but he was just so stern at times.

HI: Oh, yes, he was stern.

KP: He used to even refer to himself in the third person, as "The Dean."

HI: That I didn't notice, but as I said before I didn't anticipate his answer because he was Dean Metzger. I kind of figured it's going to happen because that's the way it is. All he did was confirm it, so I figured "Okay, that's it." What bugged me was that when I started getting mail, "member of the Class of '46." I figured, "Good God, how far are you going to push this thing? I've been here for seven semesters as the Class of '43, don't do that to me." Somebody must have heard me say that because eventually they changed it.

KP: And so you identify with the Class of '43.

HI: Yes. ... My class had a 50th reunion in 1993. I didn't go and several fellows called me. I began to think about it. I left in hurry. I barely had time to say good-bye. Got the orders on December 20th, "Report December 31st." Meanwhile, Christmas vacation is starting. I have, maybe, two to three days, that was it, I'm gone. Okay. Compare that with graduation time. You party, you're doing things, your bull sessions. You're talking about the way it was, the way it's going to be and you're reaffirming relationships, the whole thing, and a lot of them continue on, they last. I had nothing. I just got that slice, I'm gone. In no time at all, two weeks, I'm in a whole new world. In Parris Island, you start the bonding process with your fellow inmates, but the bonding comes quickly, believe me, it does. That's part of the Marine Corps, too, because the bonding is there for the entire Corps. So, very quickly all of this was replaced by something else and that was it.

KP: One of the things my students and I picked up in reading the *Targum*, in fact the big dominant theme for the Class of '42, they had the sense that they were being hurried through. That carried on to the Class of '43 and other classes, week-to-week people were disappearing very quickly and you were one of those people who I'm sure in January and February people were saying, "What ever happened to Herb Irwin?"

HI: I'm sure, I'm sure, but once again in anticipation of this, I was thinking, I was trying to figure out, who in my class was called out before I was, and I couldn't think of a single person. I think I was one of the first to be called, but starting in January, it started to happen. ...

ES: You talked of your fondness of the Beta house, and what it as like when you first got there. Was there hazing?

HI: You mean Hell Week. Hell Week was, thank God, for freshman. I didn't become a pledge until I was a junior, so, I was an observer.

KP: So, you didn't have to go through the pledge like the first-year people would have had to go through.

HI: I didn't go through that, no. It just wasn't done.

KP: How interesting.

HI: It was not an option, it just wasn't done. Among other things, in Hell Week, whatever is happening to you that continues into your class as well. If you're wearing something ridiculous, you wear it to class. It wasn't something that happened when you were in the fraternity house. As a junior, it just wouldn't have worked. Memories of Rutgers ...

KP: I guess one memory my students often enjoy, and it was all very innocent as you described it, but what about dating women from the Coop, did you date at all?

HI: No, I didn't because Marie is here.

MI: It's all right.

HI: I didn't because I couldn't afford to. I just couldn't afford to do it, so, it's something you don't think about. You know, when you start that you're going to put in four years and you're going to do it. If you do it well, it's going to take care of you for a lot longer than four years. So, if there are some things you'd like to do during that period, but you can't, you just don't do them. But then I did in my senior year, I did date one girl from the Coop. She was a freshman.

MI: Was that Lois?

HI: Yes, that was Lois. See that? But that was it. Dating, in those days, of course, was so different from what it is today. You wouldn't understand. If you had a date with a girl from the Coop, you took her back to her house and there was a curfew time and that was it. Well, it was different.

KP: We've heard a number of descriptions.

HI: It was different.

KP: You mentioned that you wanted to be a flier for the Navy, ideally.

HI: Oh, yes.

KP: I'm curious, when you went for your free physical with the Marines, and you're reading this propaganda, what struck you about Marines? You had not intended to be a Marine, and you didn't even really know that much about it.

HI: The uniform.

KP: Really.

HI: ... I have a hunch that one of the things that caught my eye, initially, was a colored photograph of a Marine with his sword and the whole bit, in a dress uniform, which I never bought one.

KP: But it is a very impressive uniform.

HI: Oh, yes. I don't know. It could be the mystery. It could be the fact that Marines were regarded as an elite military group, which we were. It could be those things. I don't know. I didn't have any desire to join the Marine Corps. I didn't even think about it, but then I got there, and I figured, "Hey, you know, this is pretty good. I like it," and I did like it.

KP: I'm just curious about your expectations. It sounds like when you were taking the train down, you didn't know what to expect. You had only a vague idea about the Marines.

HI: No idea. Just this, that the Marines would go where others wouldn't; they would do things that others had no desire to do.

KP: But you didn't even know what those things were.

HI: That's right. That was the mystery part.

KP: Yes.

HI: And I was young enough not to care. I figured, "Okay, I'm going to take a crack at this one and see how it goes."

KP: You were ordered to report on December 31st, where did you report to?

HI: Parris Island.

KP: Were you responsible for arranging your own transportation?

HI: I got my orders and in the orders there was something I was to take to my local railroad station, which I did. The station agent in Ramsey gave me a whole flock of tickets. And so I ... rode the Erie to Jersey City, took the ferry boat across to New York Penn Station, Pennsylvania down to Union Station in Washington and then I forget what line it was next. I had the schedule, and I just followed the schedule on down. Let's see, I left early one morning, and then somewhere past Virginia. At nighttime I slept in the coach. Early the next morning I was in Beauford, South Carolina. ... By that time there were a few fellows going to boot camp and then they came aboard, they got us off and put us on another little train, and took us to another location, Port Royal. Remember Port Royal?

MI: Yes.

HI: And then they loaded us on cattle cars. That was funny because they had cattle cars. It was a big cattle trailer used for carrying cattle with a tractor. So, we get off this train. Every fella had a little suitcase, of sorts, and we got on this trailer, still half of us were on the ground, but there wasn't any other trailer, but then we found out what the Marine Corps was like. We all got on that trailer. ... They took us across the causeway onto Parris Island. Then going through, and this was the daily occurrence ... everybody yelling, "You'll be sorry." In no time at all, it took us about two days to get our haircut and do our physicals and get our uniforms issued, dungarees,

the white uniforms and we were at it. Inside of a week or less, I could have been a million miles from New Brunswick it was so remote.

KP: In enlisting in the Marines, were you targeted for an OCS slot?

HI: Yes.

KP: Were you going through Parris Island as any other entry Marine?

HI: No.

KP: You were under separate ...

HI: We were different and here's the difference. You've probably heard the term DI, drill instructor. They are men from Mars. Our DIs took great relish in giving it to us because they knew they would never be able to do it later, and they really ... but it was good. This story repeats itself over and over again and it keeps coming up. Domestic violence, you hear about and so on, where there is abuse and the victim says, "Thank you." When we finished with Sergeant Krauss, his name was Krauss, at the end of the time when we were put aboard the train to go to Quantico for officer training, there were tears in the eyes of many of the guys. They're going to miss Sergeant Krauss and he was a good guy, by the way. Anyway, Parris Island, I would recommend it for anybody.

KP: I'm curious what were your initial impressions of Parris Island, particularly those first two days where you're going through the Marine routine, which is similar to the Army, all the services had essentially the same routine?

HI: Our routine was different, I promise, I guarantee. ... I said earlier that when I was in school in Ramsey and the teacher would say, "I would expect this of anyone else, Herbert, but not of you." ... I had always maintained a high profile and going down to Parris Island, I said to myself, "You're going to maintain a low profile. You're going to get through this thing somehow." I just concentrated. I didn't think of things from one day to the next. I wrote letters home and stuff, but I just concentrated on the here and now, to do the best I could and keep a low profile. Okay, now, that is the best way to get along in the Marine Corps.

KP: You figured that out fairly early.

HI: Yes, before I got there.

KP: It seems what you learned very quickly reinforced that.

HI: Well, it worked well. It did work well for me. I did okay, but that's the way you do things. Would I recommend the Marine Corps to you? No. I'll tell you why; Harvard Law School. Now bear in mind that I had spent close to four years in the Marine Corps. In the Marine Corps you're brainwashed pretty well. Now, I get out of the Marine Corps, a few months pass, I'm in Harvard Law School. First class, law school, contracts, Professor Fuller. No preparation,

nothing. He doesn't say, "I'm Professor Lon Fuller and this is what you're going to be doing for the next semester." Oh, no. He looks at the seating chart, "Mr. So and So, would you state the first case?" Wow. That was a shock. This poor guy did state the first case and then, worst of all, Professor Fuller says, "What do you think of the judge's opinion?" Well, that's blasphemy. In the Marine Corps did anybody ask me what I thought of General Keller E. Rockey position on Iwo? You don't question authority. You don't question a court, a judge. Well, there were several other Marines in my class and we all had the same problem, trying to loosen up and look at things from an undisciplined point of view. ...

KP: It's interesting that you used the term brainwashed. I don't want to put too much stock in that particular term, but I interviewed someone who was Class of '42, Herbert Gross, who mentioned that after his training he was so brainwashed or so into being a Marine. He was shocked out of it a little bit when the first bombs started dropping. He sort of realized, "I could get killed in this." He said he was so charged up as a Marine, from training, that he could take on the world and you felt that ...

HI: Oh, sure.

KP: That you could do anything.

HI: "It's not going to hit me." Yes, that's right. As a matter of fact, the Marine Corps had a movie, a training film, designed for that purpose, just to point out to you that you're not going to get hit.

KP: You're going to be the one that makes it through.

HI: Yes.

KP: The guys in your Parris Island group, that were training with you, what were their backgrounds?

HI: College.

KP: They were all college. Any schools you remember?

HI: Yes. Notre Dame, University of Missouri, Holy Cross, scattered.

KP: Did they all make it through Parris Island or did some people just not make it? Did some have an easier time than others?

HI: We had one fellow. They all made it, I think. One seemed to crack up. He looked like a Marine, he's tall, rugged, and the DI immediately made him the guide-on bearer for our platoon. He came from Colgate, but he started doing weird things. I forget what exactly, but we all said, "You know, I wonder if he's going to make it?" but the rest of us all made it. Quantico was different. There was a wash-out rate there, officer training, as a matter-of-fact, one of the fellows I went to Quantico with from Rutgers washed out.

KP: Do you remember who it was?

HI: Yes, but he's nameless.

KP: Oh, okay.

HI: He's nameless because I've come across his name recently several times in alumni stuff, so I'd just as soon not mention.

KP: No, no. That's fine. You mentioned that you all loved your DI after you were gone. Do you remember anything of his background?

HI: Sergeant Krauss. The only thing that I ever got from his background, he had a bunch of gold teeth [on] one side of his mouth. On one occasion, after we had been there for quite some time, he let his hair down and he told us how he got his gold teeth. He had committed some misdeed and was put in the brig and the guards in the brig were Navy people. Well, for a sailor to go in a Marine brig, or a Marine to go in a Navy brig, is sure death, or was. So, these Navy guards used to hold horse races in the brig and the horses were the Marines and if they didn't do whatever they were supposed to, they beat them with billy clubs. He got whacked, his jaw was broken, teeth knocked out. That's all I heard from Krauss. ... In the Marine Corps, in Parris Island, every drill instructor has his own way of counting cadence. It's not like in the Army where it's "Hup, two, three," not that. It's more like a tobacco auctioneer, if you ever heard a tobacco auction. They used to be on commercials years ago, on radio. ... It's a chant. Every DI has a different chant and ours, of course, had a very distinctive chant and they'd march us to the mess hall every morning for breakfast. It'd be pitch black. We'd get up at 5:30, and by the time we finished breakfast it was still black. You'd be standing in formation outside and you'd hear the other units coming from other places, and you could tell what units, which was which, from the chants. I finished Quantico. Ten of us were sent down to Fort Benning, infantry school, for some advanced training and then, eventually, after three months there, I was sent to Camp Elliot outside of San Diego. I was awaiting transfer to Pendleton for the formation of the Fifth Division. So, I was in Camp Elliot a few days and my quarters were on the second ... floor of a bachelor officer quarter place. It was just a barracks building, double-deck bunks, you know, nothing fancy. It was about ... quarter to five this one afternoon and the troops were marching in from the field and I heard this chant. I said, "Wow." So, I ran down, went out in the street and waited. There is Second Lieutenant Krauss marching a platoon in from the field. Well, I followed him to wherever he dismissed his unit, went up, greeted him. He and I went to the officers' club. The officers' club in a place like that is nothing more than a barroom, of sorts. We sat there drinking beer until about ten o' clock at night. One of the most interesting nights I've had.

KP: Was Krauss a Southerner, or from a different part of the country?

HI: I would guess Chicago.

KP: Really.

HI: Yes. See, interesting that you mentioned that. Once again in thinking about this, it hit me. Most of the non-coms in the Marine Corps, in the training sections at least, were Southerners. You started to ask me a question.

KP: That was one of the questions. Also, how much older was he?

HI: Krauss. I would guess thirty.

KP: So, he was older.

HI: He was old.

KP: But not old, old; thirty is still ...

HI: Well ...

KP: A lot of people have said that thirty in the Marines, or any of the services, was considered very old.

HI: In our company we had an Indian who was thirty-six. We treated him like he ... He was rough and tough, but we treated him like he was an invalid. Would you like to know about Indians in the Marine Corps?

KP: He was with you in Parris Island?

HI: No, the Indian ... that was in my company later.

KP: We'll get to that. We are very curious. You mentioned Parris Island, there was much more of a washout rate.

HI: No, Quantico.

KP: Excuse me.

HI: Parris Island. For us, there was one possible [washout], that was that fellow from Colgate, but the rest, we made it.

KP: It sounds like Parris Island was very effective and they weren't looking to wash you out. What was the difference between Parris Island versus officers ...

HI: Well, first of all, Parris Island, you have to remember we were minimum age twenty-one. A couple of fellows were older, maybe twenty-five, twenty-six. Okay? We were all accustomed to living away from home. You think of Parris Island, even today, you think of kids, eighteen years old, first time away from home. ... [They] had no idea what they were in for. We had the mental set. We knew what we were in for. We were more mature. We were able to handle it.

So, that's why there was hardly any washout, if any, in Parris Island. Now, Quantico was a horse of another color. What they had to do was to convert us into officers who would be effective leaders. One of the most important elements was command presence. You had to demonstrate command presence. In other words, you had to be able to have other people follow you. You had to be able to make decisions that made sense, that sort of thing. I forget what the washout rate was, but it, we had a fairly good washout. ... Well, at Quantico we had double-decker bunks and the fellow who shared my double-decker bunk, Nick Lentz his name was, second lieutenant. After we were commissioned then we had access to the officers' club at Quantico. I didn't drink so, I never went to the officers' club, but a lot of the fellows did go and Nick would go. So, one night Nick went to the officers' club with some other fellows. The next morning he was gone. What had happened from what I gathered, inside your cap, garrison cap, you had your card. We all had to have cards printed, calling cards. It was part of the ...

KP: Even though the war was on ...

HI: Oh, yes. As a matter-of-fact, one of the courses in Quantico was in military etiquette. Never used any of it, but we had the course. One of the things was you had to have cards printed. I still have my cards. ... But his card was in his cap and, apparently, he went out, couldn't find his cap when he was coming back to the barracks, so, he took somebody else's cap. Unfortunately, for him, no one else had taken his cap. He just hadn't seen it. It was some other place and it was found. We never saw the guy again. He had taken somebody else's property without permission. He was out. In those days, if you bounced a check. ... When we were commissioned we were paid by check. So, we all opened checking accounts at the First National Bank of Quantico. If you bounced a check at Quantico, you were out. I don't know the other reasons for washing people out, but I do know ...

KP: You got the sense that if you were going to make it, you really had to work for it because they were looking to wash people out.

HI: Yes. You had to work for it.

KP: I'm curious, what did you learn in your etiquette class?

HI: Oh, the etiquette class. For example, you're transferred to a new post, so, when you go to the post, you report in, but then you have to visit your commanding officer and other sub-commanding officers. Every time you visit one of them, in the foyer of each house will be a table with a little vase, or something, and very surreptitiously, you put the card in it so no one sees you doing it. Now, that's what we were taught. It never happened.

KP: But they were still teaching you as if the war wasn't happening, at least in that class.

HI: [In] 1943 I had a course in military etiquette, believe me.

KP: Any other great etiquette things that ...

HI: I don't remember any because it didn't make sense. It didn't make sense. You took the course. I think it was more a familiarization course. I don't think we had any quiz or examination in it.

KP: Looking back at your training at both Parris Island and then Quantico, what were the most effective things you learned versus the ineffective or unnecessary things you might have learned? Particularly, when you got to Iwo Jima, and you were really glad to have learned certain things.

HI: You know, that's a hard one to answer because the way the Marine Corps handled it. I've often told people when you go to Parris Island, they would take you apart and then they would put you back together their way. Then as you continued on in officer training and other advanced training, it became so much a part of you that you didn't even think about it. I don't ever relate anything, I don't ever remember relating anything I did to what I learned in Quantico. I just learned it. We would start classes at Quantico, I'm talking about getting up, morning exercise, breakfast, the whole bit, we would start class work at 7:30, between 7:30 and 8:00. We finished at ten o'clock at night. The only difference was we'd stop at ... noon on Saturdays. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were off. So, you could see it was so concentrated that, and that's part of the point I was trying to make about the difference between this and law school. We didn't even think and when I got to law school and realized I had to start thinking again, it was disaster. Oh, I made it, but I'll tell you it was a struggle.

KP: Even as an officer, you didn't think partially on your own?

HI: As an officer; as a junior officer, now, there is a difference. As a junior officer, you receive orders, you give orders, receive orders, give orders. That's it. As long as it's done properly, that's it.

KP: You went to Fort Benning after Quantico. Fort Benning's an Army base in advanced infantry. Were you part of a Marine Corps contingent that was training?

HI: No, no. There was ten of us. Ten of us were sent down there. After my freshman year at Rutgers, I spent the summer cutting grass and doing stuff like that in Ramsey, trying to accumulate money toward my sophomore year. The end of my sophomore, first, I had a stint at that Poughkeepsie Regatta, which was somewhere around three or four weeks, and then a good friend of mine from high school got me a job on the Erie Railroad Signal Department. That's impressive, isn't it?

ES: Oh, yes.

HI: I thought you'd be impressed. What I did was if they had to lay a cable under tracks or something like that, I was the guy with that eight prong fork who dug the ballast out ... At any rate I worked for the Signal Department. So, in the Marine Corps your job experience on the Erie Railroad Signal Department [was utilized]. When I finished Quantico, the Marine Corps sent ten of us down to the Army Infantry Signal School at Fort Benning.

KP: And what did you learn?

HI: Communications. This is infantry communications, not the fancy stuff.

KP: Yes, because other people who went to Signal Corps went to other places. There were different training bases.

HI: Oh, yes. This was infantry. This has to do with maintaining communications in battle, setting up communications on the beachhead, the whole thing, and it's radio and wire communications

KP: And the ten of you trained as a group?

HI: No, well, yes, we were part of ...

KP: But you were subsumed within the larger Army training.

HI: Yes.

KP: What was it like to be a Marine on one of the largest Army training bases, particularly in World War II? Did you notice any differences?

HI: Oh, yes, sure. Well, first of all, "What is that uniform?" "What are you doing here?" Shortly after I got there, my hair had gotten a little long so I went to the barber and sat down in a chair. As I said, we were very cocky. I was. I'd never been there before. I sat down in a chair, and I said, "I think I'll have it a little close this time." The barber, he was a private, he said, "Yes, sir." Now, there's a mirror in front of me. He starts here [the back of his head] with the electric razor, clippers, goes down this way, and all of a sudden I see that I am bald right in the middle. I see it in the mirror. I said, "You might as well take the rest off." I didn't leave the post for three months with that hair. It finally grew back. I always ... paranoia again, I always had the idea that if I hadn't been a Marine it might have been a little different. ... We got along well together. There were some things that created problems, not serious problems, but little clashes. For example, in the Marine Corps, you never salute a person, or you never salute unless you're covered. In other words, unless you have a cap or a hat on. If you're uncovered you don't salute. You can think of movies the Marine is reporting to his Commanding Officer and he goes in and he stands at attention. The officer is sitting at the desk. You can see that scene. ... If he were Army he would salute. Marine Corps, he doesn't. So now, those little things at Fort Benning, you're outside and for some reason you don't have a cap on; a private or PFC comes by and he salutes, what do you do?

KP: And you're trained not to salute.

HI: Oh, yes, "don't." So, my thought was, I have a choice, either I salute and forget it, or I go up to the guy and explain why I'm not saluting. I saluted.

KP: ... It's a slight difference but a significant one.

HI: Oh, yes.

KP: What about some of the other differences that you observed?

HI: We had a company commander. He wasn't really a company commander because we were all lieutenants and captains in our group and this guy was a captain. He was more of an administrative officer, but I can remember having him speak to us one time, as a group. I forget, there was a problem and he wanted to get the problem resolved. ... He pointed out that it really had to be resolved because if he couldn't get it resolved he was going to be transferred out of there and put in some combat unit. I figured, "Good God, we were looking for combat units and this guy was trying to avoid it." These are little things. The big things, it was good. It was okay.

KP: What did you think of the training that you got in the Army versus the Marines?

HI: The only difference, if any, that maybe the Army was a little more casual. You can never use the word casual when you talk about the Marine training. Interesting point, we had a map reading course at Fort Benning. I had enough map reading courses, starting with ROTC, every time I turned around there was included a map reading course. The instructor for the map reading course was one of my fraternity brothers and classmates from Rutgers, Lenny Briggs, ... but he was the instructor. We pulled stunts. Of course, we had full use of the officers' club. At Fort Benning, they also had OCS and some of the guys from ... I don't know what happened with this ROTC business, but instead of immediately becoming second lieutenants upon graduation, a lot of the guys had to go to Fort Benning OCS, and one of them was another fellow from the Beta house, ... Bob Goodwin. I came across Bob and he was just a private training at OCS and it was hot down there. So, I arranged to get Bob into the officers' club swimming pool. ... I forget how we swung the deal, but he came over to where I was barracked, put his bathing suit on and once in a bathing suit you can't tell what your rank is, so that was his claim to fame at Fort Benning.

KP: You mentioned how sort of spartan a lot of the officers' clubs were, but at Fort Benning ...

HI: Well, that was fancy.

KP: Fort Benning I heard is somewhat of a country club.

HI: Well, you see every fixed unit, and I can just talk for the Marine Corps, but I think it's true with any group. Every fixed unit in the Marine Corps had an officers' club, if it [was] just a bar. You have to start with the fact that enlisted could only drink beer, officers could drink whiskey and wine. Okay. It really didn't work that way because I would see that my guys would get other stuff besides beer. We all did. In the Marines ... rank was very important, in some respects, but teamwork was more important and your unit was a team and you treated them as a team. We didn't stand on protocol.

KP: Which differs from the Navy.

HI: Oh, indeed, indeed.

KP: In the Navy, really, even in battle, there's a real hierarchy in those big ships.

HI: Oh, well, have I seen that. In the Marine Corps, it's way different. How'd we drift into this point? Oh, officers' clubs. So, sometimes an officers' club could be just a big tent, a supply tent, or it could be a fancy building. The ones that I saw were more supply tents. The funny thing about officers' [clubs], they called them officers' wine mess. The officers' clubs, the people who were in charge of them, had to keep the supplies coming in, the liquor, the wine, whatever, and if you were overseas you got your stuff tax free. There was a tax consequence back at that time, you got it tax free. It's much cheaper. So, when we were about ready to leave Hawaii, several officers from our division were sent back to the United States to buy liquor for each of the regiments, which was a fine thing. Now, the 26th Marines that were on the island of Hawaii, each regiment had its own brig lockup, and that was a tent surrounded with a single apron barbed wire fence and there'd be a search light over it. It worked. So, the 26th Marines, in anticipation of their supply, put up another big tent, a big one, with a double apron barbed wire fence and several search lights, and the liquor was delivered. Some guy, named Wilson, had come up with a great idea, a lot of people came up with great ideas for fighting wars, and he had a great idea, he invented the Wilson drum. It was a fifty-five gallon oil drum and on each end was a knob. The idea was you would put your supply, the stuff you wanted to get ashore, in the drum and it would be designed so that it would float. It could be nudged onto shore by a landing craft and then the tank, or whatever, ashore could run a cable down, two cables, and put one on each knob, and tow it ashore. These were quite the thing for a little bit. Well, the 26th Marines put all their liquor supply in Wilson drums. The liquor was hauled from Hilo, run in by ship off of Hilo, seventy miles to our camp, put in the drums under guard and stored, guard maintained at all times. Finally, we ship out. Now, we're going to Japan. They move the stuff, under guard, into trucks. The trucks, with a military escort, down to the dock, put aboard ship, and locked up in the ship's brig. Get to Japan. They unload the ship's brig, under guard, to where the 26th are based. Finally, get to open the Wilson drums. They're loaded with stationery.

KP: So somewhere in that ...

HI: ... Well, I'll tell you something, there was a howl like you can't believe. Which was typical of the Marine Corps, to pull a stunt like that. No one ever solved it.

KP: They never figured out where the point ...

HI: No.

ES: You talked about the difference between the Army and the Marines, but what was your impression of the difference between the Navy and the Marine Corps? ...

HI: The Navy gave no thought, the officer personnel appeared to give no thought, at all, to the enlisted personnel.

KP: And you detected that as an officer.

HI: Did I ever. I thought it was awful because we were teams, we took care of our ...

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

KP: How was it impressed on you to take care of your men?

HI: I think it was partly Marine tradition, but no one ever said, "This is Marine tradition." You just knew that that's the way it is. When the chips are down and there are often times the chips are down and everybody is working for everybody else, it has to be there. The Navy personnel that I saw, the officers were here and the enlisted were there and that was that. I didn't like it.

KP: And you sensed that the officers were not as concerned about their men. Were there ever any specific things you saw?

HI: No.

KP: But that was just the general sense.

HI: They just didn't. They didn't show any concern at all.

KP: A lot of the sailors felt that way, too.

HI: I often wonder if they knew their names. ... As soon as we shipped out, initially, from the time I shipped out until the time the war was over, a day never went that I didn't censor the mail of my people. It was miserable. I didn't like it, but if you want to get to know somebody you read his mail.

KP: What did you learn from people's mail?

HI: I learned that I wasn't the least bit interested in reading somebody else's mail, believe me. It's like reading some lurid account of something awful that happens. You can really, wow, you can really get excited by it, and maybe the first five or ten, but after a while it gets to be old hat. You're just tired of it. You don't want to read it anymore. ... The interesting part was some of the stunts the guys tried to pull, initially, to tell the addressees where they were. We hope we caught them all.

KP: So, what were some of those?

HI: Well, the standard one, initially, was the seaport, the first one we got to, which was Hilo, Hawaii, so all the letters in the beginning, H-'-l-o. "H'lo, Aunt Mary."

KP: Because people have talked about writing in code. They developed codes, numerical codes and so forth. Some of the less sophisticated ones were pretty ...

HI: Yes, the ones we picked were totally unsophisticated. I remember one time, Johnny Castlemen and I were sitting in our tent. It was late at night and we were censoring mail. ... He came across a letter. The guy, who wrote the letter, really cut into the censors for delaying their mail and all that sort of stuff. We got somebody to go to that guy's tent and he was asleep, yank him out and we made him sit there while we finished censoring the mail. Censoring was a pain. I had a bout with mononucleosis, you know, the kissing disease. Can you imagine? I've tried to explain this to Marie over the years and I haven't been able to. But I got it.

KP: When did you get it? When you were in Hawaii?

HI: Yes. It was, I guess, maybe November of '44. October, November. I began to feel lousy. I'd wake up in the morning feeling great. Then about five minutes later, whoa, I felt horrible. Not physically, mentally depressed. I couldn't figure that out. There was no reason for it and I knew that if I went to sickbay, they'd give me an APC and that'd be it. I figured it has to be more than that. So, I put myself in a position where I ... deliberately ran up my temperature. I got it up there and I got a corpsman, our battalion corpsman, to take my temperature. They stuck me in an ambulance and took me to ... We had a navy hospital attached to us, took me over there. They ran tests on me after a couple of days ... This mononucleosis was a new thing for most people. They finally determined that that's what it was and the only cure was rest. So, I thought, "This is great." A few days later ... the battalion sent me a Scott radio, which was a good radio receiver in those days, and I could pick up broadcast from stateside. People would come to see me and it got to a point where I didn't want anymore people to come see me. So, I spoke to one of the corpsmen. They put me in a private room. It was just an old wooden hospital, nothing fancy. One of the corpsmen said he'd take care of it. The next day the colonel came to see me. Now, that was unusual for a colonel to come visit a second lieutenant and he sat on my bed and put his hand on my shoulder. In the Marine Corps, a colonel doesn't do that. I couldn't figure this one out. ... I thanked the colonel for coming to see me. Whatever the corpsmen put on the door made it look like I was dying and the word got out. When it turned out I wasn't dying, the company commander decided if I'm going to lie around and goof all day I could at least censor mail. So, he arranged to have all the company mail sent over to me. So, I got a hold of the doctor and he decided, no, that interferes with my rest, so I didn't censor it.

KP: What would people write home? We've actually just a read a book about mail.

HI: Oh, really.

KP: Yes, of letters women wrote during the war. What did people write? Were there any surprises?

HI: Well, of course, I didn't read the mail coming in, I just read the mail going out. ... It was mostly just the usual stuff, "I think about you. How are things?" and you always get the couple of hahas. It's just that sort of thing. In censoring, I didn't read it to get the thought of what the writer was trying to say. ... I wanted to get it done quickly. I was just looking for anything that might be bad.

KP: Going back. We sort of got on to this conversation by talking about Fort Benning and the Army, but you also went to Fleet, a Navy ...

HI: Fleet Marine Force.

KP: Yes.

HI: Well, the Fleet Marine Force, that could be a bit of a misnomer. It sounds impressive, but in those days there were two things that a person could do, two kinds of assignments that he could get in the Marine Corps. One is sea duty. That is where he's assigned to a cruiser or a battleship and that is the real fancy kind of duty, but to my mind I didn't want any part of it. You were just messengers. Your unit manned several of the guns aboard the ship, but that was it. That was one. The other was the Fleet Marine Force. Fleet Marine Force is, you might say, the infantry of the Marine Corps, but it's not infantry so much. We were specialists in ship-to-shore operations, in landing. In approaching a target, preparing to get ashore, getting ashore, and taking the target. Our function was not to stay there for a long period of time or to do, for example, to land in Southern Italy and march all the way up, or fight all the way up, as the Army did. I much preferred what we did. It was hit and run. I felt sorry for the poor guys in Europe. That was misery.

KP: You sensed that the fact that even though you were in the very bloody, I mean Iwo Jima was among the bloodiest, the fact that once it's over you could get on a ship and leave. Whereas, in the Army, a lot of people say that there's no getting off the watch. You might get a pass, but that's it.

HI: Yes, it's not over. They started in North Africa and then they went to Sicily and on up the boot, and from there to southern France. Meanwhile, the units of D-Day ... it just goes on and on and on. That's not for me. I'd much prefer to hit hard and, if you make it, that's it. It's over and you can kind of goof around for a bit.

KP: Now you went to the Naval Communication School.

HI: Army. Army Communication School.

KP: In Los Angeles, you didn't go ...

HI: No, I didn't go. No, I was assigned from there to the Fifth Marine Division, Fifth Signal Company.

KP: And when was that, that you joined your division?

HI: I would say the late Fall of '43. I went up to Pendleton to join the division. Let's see. Yes, it had to be.

KP: What was your rank?

HI: Second lieutenant.

KP: And what were your initial responsibilities when you got to Camp Pendleton?

HI: Platoon leader, and as the junior platoon leader, you become the mess officer, things like that. I can never get away from washing dishes. ... First time in a training battalion and then from the training battalion onto the Fifth, directly, and then my function had to do more, I always had a platoon, but my function had to do more with maintaining communications with division headquarters. It was an interesting job.

KP: No, it sounds very interesting. That was the responsibility of your platoon.

HI: Yes.

KP: They would be very much like a Signal Company in the Army.

HI: Yes.

KP: They would lay the wires.

HI: No, they would have other units.

KP: Really, you would not lay the wire?

HI: Not in the Division Signal Company. Now battalion regiment, the unit would be responsible for radio, wire, maintaining communications, the whole bit, one single unit, a platoon. Friends of mine had those platoons, different regiments, but in division you had separate, we were all together in a single company, but it was a separate unit for radio, separate for wire, separate for code, encoding messages, decoding messages, that sort of thing.

KP: So, what were your specific responsibilities of your unit, and what you had to oversee, since there were these separate units. What were your specific tasks?

HI: My specific task was to make sure that everything flowed smoothly. That's a general statement isn't it?

KP: But it also sounds like you were responsible, if something went wrong, you were the person to figure it out and solve it.

HI: Well, sort of. Except that, let's say something went wrong with the wire telephone system, then I wouldn't fix it, someone else did it. I would have a part in it.

KP: You mentioned that you got to know your platoon very well. What were their backgrounds?

HI: Average age was less than eighteen. ... Just for curiosity, I checked one time. It came out to seventeen point something. Kids. All gung-ho. They felt that where they were was not what they were looking for. They had to be right up, smack in the front of everything, on the front line and coming back from Iwo, one by one, board the ship they came to me and said, "Lieutenant Irwin, would you forget what I said before?"

KP: So, you had guys that wanted to be transferred out and go out on the frontline assault, and not that you were that far back, to say the least.

HI: Oh, no.

KP: But they really wanted to be.

HI: You had to be out there. You had to hear those shots whistling by, as long as they didn't hit you. Then when they realized what that they were hitting ...

KP: What about the relationship, a lot of people, who had been junior officers, have talked about their relationships with their sergeants and their other NCOs.

HI: Oh, very good.

KP: What was your sergeant's background?

HI: Let's see, my platoon sergeant (Nicholson?), who got a field commission on Iwo by the way. He had been in the Marine Corps for quite a while ... I imagine seven or eight years. His background before? I don't know what he did. (Achburn?), the thing I remember about (Achburn?), he was under Nick. He had been married three times to the same person and on Hawaii, (Achburn?) took up with some gal, who worked in a laundry down in Hilo. She announced that she was going to have their child, which caused some confusion for (Achburn?). I said, "Don't worry about it, Ach. I'll go to the division legal officer and see what I can find out for you." So, I did, and I have a hunch, that to this day, the division legal officer thought that I was talking about myself. So that was (Achburn?). Winters. Winters, he was the best educated. I don't know what he did before the war. Winters was the only one of my NCOs who fell apart on Iwo.

KP: When you say fell apart, what happened to him?

HI: He just hid in the dugout for a couple of days.

KP: And just froze up.

HI: Froze.

KP: Did he ever snap out of it?

HI: Oh, yes. Did I do anything about it? No.

KP: So eventually he just ...

HI: Didn't even talk about it.

KP: Then he ended up performing very effectively. It sounds like he ...

HI: Yes. You know different people have different limits and that was his limit. I have a hunch that if he ever hit that limit again, he would have gone past it. You do something and it's wrong. You think about it, and you say, "If I could only do it over again I'd make it next time." He would have, so, why press it?

ES: What were other reactions among your men?

HI: It's hard to say.

KP: Did anyone else freeze up in your unit?

HI: Yes. I had a captain assigned to me, and he froze up. In that case, I mentioned it to the colonel. I figured with Winters ... with a captain it was more important because he was in a position [where] he could have greater responsibilities at a later time. I thought the colonel should know about it. What the colonel did, I don't know, but at least I mentioned it to him. Did I pray?

KP: There has been a slogan, there are no atheists in foxholes.

HI: Johnny Castlemen was the only guy who said that he didn't pray. Johnny Castlemen lied.

KP: As a unit, what was the nature of your training as a platoon and as a division? How long did you train?

HI: Constantly. Constantly. All you do is train. It's on and on and on. It's part of what you're doing and you don't mind it. I reached a point where I did mind it. Now the thread through this whole conversation, I think, I'm sure you picked it up is that what I did even struggling to get through this place [Rutgers] in terms of economics and what others with me did, we accepted, we understood, that's the way it was. We didn't mind. The reason I say that is, the war's over. We're in Japan. I'm the company executive officer at this point. One of my functions is to prepare a training schedule, you mention training that's why I brought this up, a training schedule each week for the company. Okay. I said to myself, "None of these guys in the company is going to stay in the Corps. We're all going home. Things are happening back there ... in the United States, and there are things these people should know about. They should know about the GI Bill of Rights, GI insurance, and a list." So, I prepared a schedule, training schedule. I forget what it was, mortgage loans, college, higher education, whatever. I had to give it to the company commander. His name was Woodrow Wilson Gill. Now, that tells you something. Nice guy. He came from the South. You know, in the South they're more inclined to name people that way, and also, you could tell, roughly, when he was born. He had been in

the Corps for quite some time. So, I gave to Captain Gill. He looked at it and went like this with a pencil [X'd out the schedule]. He rolled out a Marine record book. Every Marine has a record book. The company first sergeant always keeps these record books among other things. A Marine, from time to time, is checked on the essentials of Marine training, field fortification, field sanitation, you name it, it's there. ... He handed it to me, and he said, "Here, as long as these people are in the Marine Corps, they're going to do this." ... So I said, "Yes, sir." So, I made a training schedule, you know, foxhole digging. Now, that is something you don't have to learn. Field fortifications, the whole bit, and he was very pleased with it. So, when that week came up, which was the following week, I arranged to have all sorts of details for everybody in the company. The guys working in the telephone, "You get out there." One of our functions was to help the Japanese rehabilitate their telephone, "Get out there and do it," and close order drill, that was a lot better than learning to dig a foxhole. But that was the training. Training is constant.

KP: Even for guys who are going to get shipped home.

HI: You see, the reason for that is this, if you don't train them, what are they going to do? You have to keep them busy. ... It sounds like I'm talking about pieces of machinery, or animals, or something, but you have a responsibility to keep them busy.

KP: You're not the first to observe this to me. Your men, did they ever get in trouble when they were on leave?

HI: Did they? [laughing]

KP: Particularly on places like Hawaii where Honolulu, from what I read, you could really get in trouble.

HI: Honolulu, oh, yes, you could, but we weren't there. Whenever we were out into Pearl Harbor, we'd have liberty in Honolulu for a day or two ...

KP: In a day or two you could really ...

HI: Oh, yes ...

KP: You could end up in jail or ...

HI: It started. It was funny. Camp Pendleton. They had bachelor officers' quarters, they were pretty nice. All double rooms, pretty good. For a while, my roommate was a Baptist chaplain and he would complain and complain about the fact that they had dancing in different locations on Camp Pendleton on Saturday nights. My men, hardly a Monday went by, when we were in California, that I didn't have to bail somebody out. [They] went up to Hollywood and you know what happens up there. They delighted in taking on the homosexuals. If I ever told the chaplain what my guys were doing I don't know what he would have done. Yes, that was the function we all had. We always had somebody getting into trouble on a weekend in California. In Hawaii, we didn't have any problems. The Second Marine Division did before. The Second Division

had made the operation on Tarawa. They had a bunch of Indians. Indians, it's true because I had a bunch of Indians, too, they can't drink. They can't hold it. Back with the Second Division, [they] went back to Tarawa for a while, and then they left for Saipan, and we moved into their camp. But while they were on the big island, several times the Indians went out and got drunk. There were a number of Orientals in the area. Several times they shot at places and killed people. That created a situation that was so bad [that] when we arrived, we were not welcome. We were welcome, shortly after that. It was okay. As a matter-of-fact, I can tell you what happened when we finished Iwo, what the people on Hawaii did for us. But that was a problem. Our guys were pretty good. I didn't have anybody wind up in jail for any long period of time. In Japan, some of my Indians got involved in some kind of a theft, having to do with a railroad that ran past that us. I don't know what the details were, but they were tried and they had a court martial. They were tried. The thing that helped them was they look alike.

KP: So, they could never prove.

HI: So, they could never prove who did what that got off scott-free. In today's world, I suppose, they'd hang 'em, but in those days it was different.

KP: You mentioned rooming with this Baptist chaplain. How often, when you were in the military, did you attend services? What role did the chaplain play in your division or further down the line?

HI: Interesting question. Of course, I started out, I'm Protestant ... looking back I would have to call myself a bigoted Protestant, okay. You get in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps is more Catholic than Protestant, Irish, Polish, Italians. That's the reason. Crazy people.

MI: You're looking for trouble.

HI: At boot camp, I remember Joe (Spinelli?). He was one of the older fellows. He had been a cop in Bayonne. He was at boot camp. He got me to go to Catholic mass one morning, one Sunday morning I went with him, once. Couldn't figure out what was going on, but I went. ... I went to Protestant services one other time. From that point on, I didn't attend church services for the rest of the war, but I did get to know chaplains. Camp Pendleton, I had that Baptist chaplain. Then I became friendly with another Protestant chaplain. I remember we went down to Tijuana one day, it was a Saturday or a Sunday. As soon as we got there and he saw what was going on, he went to the men's room and took the cross off his collar. Not that [there] ... was anything wrong that he intended to do, but it just wasn't the place to be carrying a cross. Anyway on Iwo, we had a Catholic priest, Father Suva. He was attached to us for quite a while. ...

KP: Was he attached specifically to your platoon?

HI: No, to our battalion. I got to know Father Suva. We were in California. Father Suva came to me one time and said, "... I have these two bottles of wine [that] are consecrated. I want to take them with me, but I don't have the facilities for it." So, I got a hold of Johnny Castlemen, that name keeps coming up. He was a character. In Johnny's platoon, he had one guy who had been a cabinetmaker. So, we cut him in. This cabinetmaker made a cabin for the cabinet, lined

it in velvet, bottles in the cabinet. We put the cabinet in something else. Then we had a company icebox, and we were going to take it with us, I don't know why, but it was part of the gear. So, everything wound up in the company icebox. We shipped out, this is from California, time passed. Now, we've been in Hawaii for quite some time, Father Suva wants his wine. So, we opened the company icebox, start unfolding things, finally, get to that cabinet, it's empty. 26th Marines. Okay, so we didn't say anything. We apologized to Father Suva. We didn't say anything. We nosed around and, finally, we were able to point the finger at two of the guys in the company. We checked; we found out they were both Catholic. We called them in. Now, this is pure justice. We called them in. We told them what they did. That's all. They were deathly sick. You're not Catholic, either one?

ES: I am.

HI: Okay. The blood and body of Christ, okay.

KP: They hadn't realized.

HI: No, we didn't have to do another thing. The punishment.

ES: The Catholic guilt descends.

HI: Father Suva, he chewed tobacco. He played poker, smoked cigars. Everybody loved him, including me. He said mass on the hood of his jeep on the top of Mount Suribachi. Wonderful person. When you talk about religion, this is what I learned. I went in as a bigot. I didn't think I was at the time, but I'm sure I was, okay. By the time I finished, went to law school, and met Marie, who's ...

MI: Irish Catholic

HI: Catholic. That's the worst kind. Boston or Cambridge Irish Catholic.

MI: Oh, you're really ...

HI: And we decided we were going to get married. We had to go around and see the parish priest.

MI: Oh, gosh.

HI: And I was, in effect, told that I should sign a paper that we would raise our children Catholic. I had no problem with it because I had developed so much respect for what I had seen with Father Suva and some of the other Catholic clergy, ... and I realized that you are what you're born into be, pretty much. Why am I not a Jew? Because I wasn't born to Jewish parents. If I were born to Jewish parents, I'd be an ardent Jew today. As a matter-of-fact, some days, sometimes, when I think about Judaism, I say to myself, "Gee, isn't that better?" Anyway, I'm not. I'm Lutheran. I'm not too sure what I am, really. Anyway, that's the answer to your question, I think.

KP: No, that's very interesting. You have referred to the Indians as not being to hold their liquor, but I think there's more to the story. You mentioned you had the old man of the unit, who was thirty-six.

HI: Well, what happened there; the Indians got in the Marine Corps. In the Fifth Division, there were Navajo Indians scattered throughout the division. The commanding general or his staff decided that all of the Indians should be taken out of the units that they were in and they were riflemen, whatever they were, and put together to preserve their language. So, of all the platoon leaders in the Fifth Division, I got the Indians. At that point, I had two platoons. I had my white platoon and the Indians. I had about thirty-five or thirty-six Indians.

KP: And they were Navajo.

HI: Navajo. And I wished that I had done more to get to know these guys. It's fascinating looking back, but once again, we took everything on a day-to-day basis, and I'm sorry I didn't do better.

KP: It's just interesting because the war was very significant for a lot of Indians. Particularly the Navajo. They play this crucial role.

HI: Oh, they did, as "talkers."

KP: Yes, exactly.

HI: They were important, but one thing about the Navajos, they loved Hawaii. Grass, green grass, water, things growing. They related it to their reservations and, oh, boy, they just wanted to ...

KP: You mentioned that you wanted to learn more about the Navajo, but what did you learn? Because growing up in New Jersey, there aren't very many Indians.

HI: Oh, yes, we had one Indian family in Ramsey, by the way. We did, really, named Smith.

KP: But this is a very different group, coming off a very isolated reservation. What did you learn about them?

HI: Well, a few things. When they were assigned, we had ... tent decks ... that we weren't using. Of course, the tent decks that we weren't using were the worst tent decks that we had. So, we had to put up tents. How many Indians in a tent? Six, maybe. [There were] five or six tents. We put 'em up and the Indians arrived. They arrived, maybe, on a Wednesday, or so. I met them in formation, and, among other things, I told them that we would have battalion commander's inspection Saturday morning and that I expected their tents to shine. Now, I had heard about Indians and Indians, I heard, were not the ... cleanest people around. They had these crummy tent decks. Saturday morning, I guess, maybe 7:30 in the morning, I decided to go down, [and] make sure everything was ship-shape. They had taken these tent decks and they

shone. They did a beautiful [job]. They built rifle racks. I couldn't believe what they had done. It was great, so that was the first thing I spotted with them. As far as military courtesy was concerned, if they saluted at all, they didn't know how to. As a matter-of-fact, most times they didn't. We didn't care. They were a good bunch. Time passed, we're back. The war's over. Back at Camp Pendleton, I had told Colonel Shephard I was going to law school, now I'm still in the Marine Corps. War's over, back at Camp Pendleton. I still had some doubts. I was walking down the area street one day, and two of my Indians were coming toward me. As they approached, they said, "Hi, Irwin," and I went, "Hi." Less than a minute later, I'm standing in front of a major, who is reaming me out. Now, by this time I'm a senior first lieutenant, [he was] reaming me out for not requiring them to salute, the whole bit. That was the final nail. If I had any doubts about staying in the Marine Corps that took care of them.

KP: And you didn't mind that they had just said, "Hi, Irwin."

HI: That's the way they were. A salute, okay, it's ceremonial. Yes, it is, but there is also an element of respect. I would much prefer the respect than a ceremonial motion or gesture. What I got from them was respect.

KP: It sounds like you had a sense that they had proven themselves.

HI: Sure, they had.

KP: You didn't have to go through that discipline, training.

HI: Our guys had proven themselves. We didn't have to do that. I figured, oh brother, I had heard stories about peacetime Marine Corps, and I'm sure it's true, where when you stood inspection, among other things, before you did you had to iron your shoelaces. You would shine the soles of your shoes, all of that stuff. I began to think of all the unnecessary stuff, and probably was more the Marine Corps than any other military group. ... I thought, you know, that's not for me.

KP: It's interesting that you make these observations because there was a real concern that when the war ended, in fact, trying to keep readiness up there and a reemphasis on discipline and other things, which sounded like, for a lot of front-line people, the term, I think, was chicken-shit.

HI: Yes.

KP: You really resented this.

HI: It's necessary, and it isn't. It isn't necessary for the ones who are seasoned, the ones who have been through it. But how do you develop the ones who haven't? You have to have that for them. Now, how do you draw the line? I don't know how you do it. All I knew was, at that point, I didn't want to go back to that. I didn't want to do it.

KP: Before going to Iwo Jima, I guess, one question is your ocean voyages, particularly to Hawaii. I take it, that was your first, really, time at sea except for probably one of the ferries.

HI: The Staten Island Ferry.

KP: Yes. The ferry from Jersey City to New York.

HI: I was a seagoing ferryboat rider.

KP: I assumed you shipped out on a Navy ship.

HI: No, troop transport. Well, okay, Navy. There were three groups that operated ships, the Merchant Marine, the Coast Guard, and the Navy. I don't think we were ever on any Merchant Marine ships, but Coast Guard and/or Navy. This was troop transport. It was a seven-day trip. Actually, that didn't involve any training. It was just a matter of getting from San Diego to Hilo. I didn't give it much thought. I don't even know what I did during the time. I didn't have much contact with my platoon because I didn't need it.

KP: They were below deck, I assume.

HI: Yes, we were, too. Well, our quarters were better. Yes. Every troop ship. ... Well, the first was a troop ship, and the others were APAs, assault personnel. For officers, we always had double or triple deck bunks and the bunks had mattresses, they were very comfortable. The troops were down below in five or six level canvas bunks and the odor [was horrible].

KP: I've heard.

HI: You've heard.

KP: Some very graphic descriptions, actually.

HI: So, there's no point in my explaining it. We would have to stand the duty from time to time and when you had the duty, you would go into each troop compartment and also into each hold, cargo hold. I can still remember going into the troop compartments, and you go down a ladder and, wow. Then you're up and over and another ladder and, wow, again. Yes. It wasn't the *Queen Mary*, that's for sure. Going to Iwo, we left Hilo New Year's Day 1945, and the plan. ... Yes, 1945. We did a dry run on the island of Maui. By a dry run and only our division did this, we didn't have any naval gunfire or anything, but just our ships anchored off the Lahaina Roads and ... we made a run to the beach, unloaded our ships, slept on the beach, the following day loaded our ships and took off to Pearl Harbor and we stayed there a day or two. Then the convoy took off from Pearl and the idea was we were to get lost. So, we didn't surface again until February 15th, I think it was, at Saipan. We pulled into Saipan, stayed overnight, just anchored. I didn't even get off the ship. The following day, took off again, and three days later February 19th, on Iwo. So, I was aboard that ship, except for that run to Lahaina Roads, from January 1st to February 19th.

KP: That's a long time.

HI: Got to know it well. But we didn't think of that, you know? I'll tell you what I did. It hurt me later. When you're aboard ship, you train, I was assigned the fantail of the ship, and every day I'd meet my platoon for a couple of hours, aside from that [we did] nothing. The boredom could drive you crazy. So, every time I stopped at Pearl Harbor, I'd pick up a book or two. They had this Viking portable library, small books that you could put in your gear. I got the Viking portable Shakespeare. I also have the Viking portable Dorothy Parker. I go to extremes. I would read, but I also learned to turn my mind off. I could go for hours with nothing, and my mind just wouldn't be working. That was okay aboard ship, but when I got to law school, every once in a while, my first year, my mind would slip into idle. I'd look at my notebook and suddenly realize that I hadn't taken any notes for fifteen, twenty minutes.

KP: You had spent some time in Hawaii on training. Do you have any memories of Hawaii?

HI: Yes. Well, different memories, our camp was on the slopes of the Mauna Kea volcano, that was at that time one of the two big volcanoes in the islands. The other was Mauna Loa. They were both on the island of Hawaii, but [on the slopes of] Mauna Kea, the Parker Ranch, cattle ranch, was there. ... This was an enormous cattle ranch. [The Parker Ranch is the second largest cattle ranch in the world. The King Ranch in Texas is the largest.] Cattle [were] all over the place. We ate lamb and mutton from New Zealand. We never did get any of the Parker cattle. One time ... General Rockey. General Rockey had two aides and his junior aide, I got to know him aboard one of the ships, he came to me one Saturday, and he said, "The General has some friends who run a plantation," I think it was sugar, ... "and they would like to entertain a couple of junior officers for the weekend. Want to go?" So, I said, "Sure." So, he and I took off and we had a very pleasant weekend. Two things happened, that night they decided to get into poker and they cleaned me out. We played until four in the morning. The other thing it rained Sunday morning and the owner's wife was a professor of psychology at the University of Hawaii. For fun she decided to give us aptitude tests, which was fun. Now the war's over, I'm in Japan, and in the mail I get the results of my aptitude test.

KP: What was your aptitude according to the test?

HI: Public administration. What in the world that means, I don't know, but public administration it was. Hawaii, the greatest memory I have, is in the military, radio transmissions are sent normally in code. You have padding at the beginning of a message and at the end of a message. ... Padding will be, maybe, a short sentence, or something like that, followed by, normally, two Xs and then you have the coded message, and at the end you have two Xs and then some more padding. ... It works sort of to throw somebody else off the track. Well, you could send all sorts of messages in the padding. We had a captain with us, Bill Olney. We were on Hawaii and his wife, back stateside, was having a baby. So, how did Bill find out when the baby was born? It came through in padding. Iwo is drawing to a close and some people [were] handling radio transmissions from Iwo back to Hilo, where we had a rear base, if you want to call it that. We had maybe ten people handling that base just for communications. Word went back that we'd be leaving Iwo and we would arrive back in Hilo on a certain date. We didn't, we arrived a week later. When we arrived, I can just tell you what happened with our ship, but it was the entire division, what was left of it. Ship tied up. We got off the ship, went through an area that was like a canvas tunnel or bigger than that, where people were serving coffee and

doughnuts and stuff. Then they took us over to a sighting, we got on sugar cane flatcars, a long train ... and this train took off and all along the way people were giving us pies, cakes, cookies, fruit, beer, the whole trip. I can remember the train had to stop, we were on a trestle, and there were people way down below and they yelled up to us. One of the fellows had a piece of line, a piece of cord, or rope, or something like that and he dropped it down, the one end down, and hauled up a few bottles of beer. They couldn't have done more to greet us. Then we found out that a week before that entire island had done the same thing, had baked the same cookies, pies, whatever, gathered the same fruit, thinking we were going to arrive, but we didn't. I never found out what they did with it. That didn't deter them from doing it again. Great people.

KP: So, it sounds like you had very fond memories of Hawaii.

HI: Yes.

KP: Which a lot of people have ...

HI: Well, it's unfortunate for Marie because everybody wants to go to Hawaii. I don't because my memories are so good that whatever I see just won't be the same.

KP: I guess before talking about your experiences in Iwo Jima, I'd be curious, you've talked quite a bit about your NCOs and the men in your unit, and you've referred, I think, to some of the officers you had immediate contact with, and then other officers, I guess, your division commander General ...

HI: General Rockey.

KP: Yes, did you ever have any contact with him, and what was his general reputation among officers? Because I've learned even for people who never saw their division commander, they often had various reputations.

HI: I'm just trying to think of reputations in the Marine Corps. There was one General, he was the corps commander. By corps I mean the Fifth Amphibious Corps, which consisted of the Fourth and Fifth Marine Divisions and then the Third came in a bit later. The corps commander was H.M. Smith.

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

KP: And you were saying about General Smith.

HI: H.M. Smith, yes. He was called Howlin' Mad Smith. I'm sure you've come across him before. He was our corps commander. He had a reputation of, I can't tell you what it was. Let's see how can I explain? I think in this context, in terms of my initial reaction at law school. Part of, if you want to call it brainwashing, or whatever indoctrination in the Marine Corps is that your commanding officer is right, you didn't question, you didn't challenge, you didn't judge or evaluate. He was the General, therefore, he's right. You like that one, huh? That's very contrary to today's philosophy all over, but that's the way it was.

KP: The reason it's also sort of interesting interviewing people from different services, I get the sense that they didn't think that way. They would follow orders, but they would question a lot of stuff, and complain a lot, too.

HI: ... Okay, let's go back. Let's go back to Guadalcanal. General [Alexander] Vandergrift. He was God, later became Commandant. Commandant in the Marine Corps is super God. Who followed Vandergrift? I don't know who had Tarawa. Saipan, yes. We had Richard Smith. Oh, Howlin' Mad Smith, he had one of the divisions on Saipan, I forget who had the other one, and then Richard Smith was in the middle, he had the Army. I think it was the 27th or the 127th. I don't know whether you're familiar with the Saipan operation, but there was a problem there. They started, sort of, at one end of the island and went to the other end. One Marine division on one side, the other Marine division on the other side, Army in the middle. They had two basic problems, and we all pointed fingers at this General Richard Smith. Number one is that when you finish your day's work, if you want to call it that, you have this sort of a formation, you have your troops, then you have a few troops out forward, spotters or whatever. In the Marine Corps when you button up for the evening, you button up on your most forward troops. In the Army, they pull the troops back and it turned out that what happened was then each of the Marine divisions had an exposed flank. That created a problem. The other was that in the Marine Corps, we remove our dead as quickly as possible. The Army didn't, and that creates a morale problem. So, the only criticism I've ever heard was of General Richard Smith, but all the others, General Rockey, no.

KP: What about your battalion commander?

HI: The other one, this Colonel Shephard. ... No one criticized him. He said, "I can't." I never heard a bad thing about him. Never.

KP: And it sounds like you, generally, except when you got back to the rear, you liked the leadership of your division and of your battalion overall.

HI: Yes, but when I got back to the real Marine Corps.

KP: Yes. It's sort of a simple question, but what did you think of the enemy? What did you think of the Japanese? What were you were expecting? What had you been told about the Japanese? What were your images?

HI: It's funny, it works both ways. We were told that the Japanese, see, we were brainwashed. [We were told] if you were taken prisoners, what did they do to us as their prisoners? They will strip skin from our bodies, torture us, they'll eventually kill us. It's better to die in combat than to be taken. That was the general tenor, that the Japanese were totally inhumane and they're mostly against Marines because of Guadalcanal ... and some of the other operations there. When we landed in Sasebo, Sasebo had been strange. It was a big city, but it had been completely demolished with our bombs, conventional bombs, with the exception of one Catholic church that stood. It was weird. Anyway, three days later, columns of people came streaming down from the hillside. We found out that they had been told that the Marines were coming in

and that we would torture them, we would rape them and kill them. They found out that we weren't going to do that. With us, with the Japanese on Iwo, they had ... about 33,000. I have the intelligence report here if you want to see it.

KP: Yes, I would.

HI: ... Okay, 33,000. I don't know how many prisoners we took, less than a hundred. They didn't want to be taken prisoner. Several reasons. One was religious, of course, and what would we do to them. ...

KP: You've alluded to the intelligence briefing. What were you briefed on the Iwo assault? How accurate was that?

HI: We weren't told anything. I have the report. It was a report done for the staff, the Commanding General's staff. It was also distributed, but I doubt that it was read thoroughly. It's just a matter of interest to see what we thought we had coming, or [what] we were going to come across. Well, wait a minute, now, there's a little more than that. We were told that it was going to be a piece of cake, nothing to it. [We were going to] be there a few days, take it, and then we could leave, and we were going to go to Guam. As a matter-of-fact I had a map of our camp in Guam, the division camp. On the map, I even had the location where we'd be. Along a little stream there. Oh, it was nice. Never did get to see it.

KP: So you were told this. In terms of D-Day, for the assault at Iwo Jima, what do you remember from the assault?

HI: Of course, I wasn't with the first wave.

KP: Yes, but you were onboard ship.

HI: Yes, we were very busy, extremely busy with Division Headquarters at that point.

KP: So you were initially with Division Headquarters when it was still shipboard.

HI: Yes.

KP: And what were your duties?

HI: Just to keep the communications moving.

KP: And when did you transfer onto land?

HI: Oh, it was a bit later. I can't tell you exactly when.

KP: But was it the first day of the assault.

HI: Yes.

KP: How did you go ashore?

HI: Landing craft. It was just a landing craft, and they get you to the beach and drop the ...

KP: But you didn't have to wade in. It sounds like you got fairly close to the ...

HI: The landing craft even for the first troops. It didn't matter if you were first or fiftieth. If the beaches were in such a condition that the landing craft could get up to the beach, it did and it would. We didn't have any trouble with landing craft on that beach. Tarawa was a horse of a different color. They got hung up on that reef.

KP: For a lot of people, their first experience with combat is among the most memorable, even if it was not, to say, the most dangerous. This was your first battle. What were your initial impressions? What were the different emotions you were experiencing at the time?

HI: I don't know except that, I hope I make it through the day. Then when I went to sleep that night, I figured, I hope I wake up the next morning, and then when I woke up the following morning, it was the same, I repeated, I hope I make it. That was it.

KP: Because there were people in your unit, you described a sergeant who couldn't perform.

HI: Yes. Right.

KP: There were a lot of different ranges of reaction.

HI: Oh, sure. It's a personal thing.

KP: Do you think your reaction was partly because you were an officer, that you were very focused on your job?

HI: I don't think so.

KP: You think it was just individual.

HI: Yes, it was just the individual. Bear in mind, I had a captain who couldn't function.

KP: During your first day on the island itself, did you take any casualties?

HI: Not many, not many. It wasn't bad for us. As a matter-of-fact, we didn't have the kind of casualties that some of the rifle troops had as they pushed forward. There's where the casualties really started to mount up.

KP: How far were you from the front line?

HI: I would guess, maybe half mile. I don't know.

KP: In the whole island assault, how many in your unit were killed and wounded enough that they were taken off the island, do you remember roughly?

HI: No. For us it wasn't bad.

KP: So, most of your unit got off the island.

HI: Yes. It wasn't like the rifle troops. You see, one of the problems, and very little has ever been said about it, is this, they had a good plan. We had trained troops. We had trained artillery, trained rifle there. So, what they did was to get what they called ship's platoons. These are fellows almost fresh out of boot camp, and they put them aboard the various APs, and their function was to unload the ships. That's all they were supposed to do. That would relieve the rifle troops from that function, so, the rifle troops could be free to do what they had to do. Well, the fighting ... was much more difficult than was anticipated and they started pulling in replacements. Where did they get the replacements from? These green, untrained ship's platoons. So, they would pull them off the ship, put them ashore, line them up. ... So and so, you three, or you four will go to, and on they go. They report. They don't know the first thing about the finer points of combat. Little things, like if there's a rock that you're going to take shelter from, which side of the rock do you fire from? Which side of a tree do you fire from? All these fine points of killing people, but all these fine points, these guys didn't know, and that's when the real slaughter started.

KP: That they didn't expect to need as many.

HI: That they didn't expect to be used.

KP: And if they were available.

HI: They threw them in. Sure.

KP: I never heard that emphasized on Iwo.

HI: I'll probably get thrown out of the Marine Corps for that.

KP: They had been through boot camp.

HI: What does boot camp teach you? Boot camp: close order drill, mostly close order drill; a little bit on the bayonet course; a lot of physical fitness. Now, normally from boot camp you go on. If you're going to be in the rifle troops, on the East Coast, from Parris Island, you go up to Camp Lejune. That's for advanced infantry training. There you learn, squad and platoon tactics and individual squad, platoon tactics. You get a lot of that, and then you're assigned to your permanent company, platoon, and you're trained, and it's there. ... These guys went from San Diego boot camp, we had two boot camps, San Diego and Parris Island, they went from San Diego to some holding place. Maybe they had a little bit of training on aboard ships, as ship's platoons. Interesting point.

ES: Did you remember seeing those green men as they came back?

HI: Did I see them?

ES: Yes.

HI: No, it's all what I heard, but we knew it was happening. It had to be.

KP: What about your unit? Were you ever used in a way that wasn't anticipated?

HI: No, we were about to be, and then we weren't.

KP: So, they were to throw you in the line at one point.

HI: Yes. Although, there was no line, up front.

KP: Yes. How often did you or men in your unit fire your weapons? Because it sounds like your principle job was not to fire your weapons.

HI: ... Of course, an officer doesn't fire his weapons, unless somebody's shooting at him.

KP: Well, maybe I should put it this way: How close [to] where people were shooting? It was getting pretty close.

HI: On a few occasions, yes.

KP: Where your men really had to open up?

HI: No, no, not in that respect. You're talking about up front fighting. We were not up front, as such.

KP: But there were Japanese infiltrated through the lines, I've read.

HI: Didn't happen often.

KP: Really, that's often overstated?

HI: You've read that?

KP: I've read that.

HI: The only infiltration that took place, of course, there could have been a few, was one night the Japanese in the northern part of the island, about 200 of them made a *bansai* charge. Did you read about that? Okay. They came south. The leader of the charge was riding a bicycle. The leader was a Japanese admiral. I have these two stories. ... He was riding a bike, an admiral. ...

Well, the reason we took the island was for the Air Force, and the Air Force came in, and oh, they were fancy. They had their own pyramidal tents. We were living in holes in the ground. They had their pyramidal tents and everything else. No guards, nothing. No sentries. No outposts. The Japanese went right through them. I don't know if they killed any. I think they killed a few. I don't know what they did. They made a mess of the place.

KP: You noticed that about the Air Corps, being a little lax about ground ...

HI: Oh, gee, the Air Corps. My company had the greatest bunch of thieves in the Marine Corps. We were famous. Now Iwo was cold and raw, and all we had were dungarees, the clothes on our backs. A couple of our guys found that the Air Corps had a dump and in the dump they had cases and cases of fur lined leather jackets and a couple of these guys stole these jackets. They kept warm. The word got out, and, gradually, the guys in our company became more and more outfitted with these jackets. Now, I was itching to get my hands on a jacket, but I'm an officer. I can't.

KP: But you will tolerate your men getting them.

HI: Oh, we never asked questions. So, when he shows up with a jacket, "Oh, isn't that nice." Two of the guys in my platoon were really itching to get jackets, but for some reason they could never get up to that dump. Well, one night I had to get a message over to the Fifth Motor Transport Battalion, and I checked the map, and I got a bright idea. I called these two guys. Now, as an officer ... I wasn't able to abet anyone in the commission of a crime ... I knew my limits. So, I called them in. I said, "Now, I want you take this over to the Fifth Motor Transport." ... I had a crude map. I said, "Now, here is the route you're going to take," and I traced my finger on the map. When I got to the dump, I held it there and then I moved on and that was all.

KP: They didn't need much more coaxing.

HI: I didn't say a word. A couple hours later, one of them, Nance, came running up and he was out of breath. "Lieutenant Irwin, Lieutenant Irwin." [I said] "What's up?" [He said], "They shot Yuenger." "They did? What happened?" Well, what happened was they delivered the message and they were coming back. Stupid. They parked the jeep near the dump, went in, looked for jackets. I guess they got them and they were coming out when the Air Force sentry, at that point they had sentries, didn't even yell, "Halt, who's there?" He just shot. These guys, instead of running around and going away from the jeep and sneaking back to it, ran right to the jeep. So, the sentry saw them and fired some more. Put a couple of holes in the back of the jeep, but among other things he clipped Yuenger across the elbow and the slug split his knuckle. So, I said, "Well, where's Yuenger now?" "Well, I took him to the ... field hospital." Okay. So, I figured a few days before, our battalion commander at that time was Major Auralt. Now, we were eating two meals a day and C Rations and they're not like today's C Rations. These C Rations were either stew, hash, or something else that was worse. ... We got two a day. Major Auralt had gotten a carton of ten-in-one rations, marmalade, egg, powdered eggs, that you could eat. It was great. Somebody stole his ten-in-one rations and we knew that. So, I'm thinking ... Yuenger's in the field hospital, it happened to him because he was trying to steal a jacket. The

major, he lost his ten-in-one rations. What's going to happen? The Major's going to hang these guys. The following morning I was sitting on a log, or something and the battalion adjutant came by and we had a chat. He said, "Oh I saw in the morning report that one of your guys was in the field hospital." I said, "Yes." He said, "What happened?" I said, "I sent him over to Fifth Motor Transport last night and coming back he got shot." He says, "You know it's a funny thing the other day I had to go over there and coming back a Nip sniper started shooting at me," and he said, "You know, it could have been the same guy." I said, "It could have been." So, I said, "What do we do now?" He said, "I guess we put him in for a Purple Heart." I said, "Oh, ... how do we do that?" He said, "Well, I'll take care of it." So, Yuenger got a Purple Heart. A couple days later, by that time I was living in a dugout, my own private dugout and ... I crawled into the dugout and in the middle, on the dirt floor, was a burlap sack we used for sandbags and in it was a leather fur-lined Air Force jacket, my size. I never asked where it came from. Months pass. We're coming back. The war's over. We have a points system, and you get so many points for this and so many for that. Yuenger got an extra five points for his Purple Heart. He was on the first detail coming back, poor Nance didn't get any because he didn't get a Purple Heart. He stayed behind. I'm going off the track, I should stop this.

KP: The Purple Heart story's a great one because we've learned from the oral histories not to take everything written down on paper quite as literal. Basically, the motto is, "Don't believe everything you read." In fact, this is a classic example.

HI: Well, I have more stories for that sometime, if you want them.

KP: You mentioned in terms of you eating a lot of C Rations. How often when you were on the line, when you were on Iwo, would you get a hot meal?

HI: Well ...

KP: Or were you always on C Rations?

HI: We were always on C Rations, but what you did, if you could, was and if you could work it out, the company mess sergeant would try to do it, get his hands on a fifty-five-gallon drum. They were always around. You could always get them. Fill it with water, dump whole bunch of cans of C-rations in, build a fire underneath, and heat them up. We did that.

KP: What about the medical care? What were your observations on Iwo in terms of people in your unit but also on the front in terms of medical care they could receive?

HI: That's hard to say. I don't know. They did the best they could. My platoon sergeant, Nick, the colonel recommended him for a field commission. I thought it was great. So there was a lull, I figured, well, in order for him to qualify at that point, there were shortcuts for everything. I just had to take him to the field hospital and have him get a physical, believe it or not. So, I took him. The field hospital that I took him to ... you've seen "MASH" on television and this was a very primitive "MASH." Of course, the personnel were all male. We didn't have nurses and stuff, and I'll tell you about that, though, but the doctor I saw there was a doctor I played chess with from time-to-time, [I] told him why were there. He just took one look at Nick, and

said, "Can you still breathe?" Nick said, "Yes." "Anybody who can still breathe on this place is fit." That was the end of his physical. Speaking of the male/female. Our assistant division signal officer, Major I can't think of his last name, he was hit with some shrapnel and he got it where he sits down, below the base of his spine. In the field hospital, they were trying to figure out how to bandage it. I don't know how in the world they managed this one, but they got their hands on a sanitary napkin. I think the nearest female was thousands of miles away, but ...

KP: They had one.

HI: They just happened to have one. We had a hospital ship with us, so, there might have been some nurses on the ship. I guess that is what it was. We gave him a hard time.

KP: Anything else about Iwo that strikes you as important?

HI: No. You see, you've read about it. Anything I would say about that stuff would be repetitious. It's all there.

KP: Well, I guess several questions maybe point towards, there's even been controversy about it. I guess one of them is the flag raising. Did you witness any of the two flag raisings that they had on Iwo?

HI: Would you like to read a letter?

KP: If you have one.

HI: Just happen to have one. I get two papers a day. *The New York Times*, which I read at breakfast and then this one I read at lunch. ... Marie and I read *USA Today*. I like both papers for the puzzle. Here is a letter. This is the original. Here are photocopies of the letter and if you can't read them, I have it transcribed.

KP: Oh, great. Oh, so this is the flag raising. You wrote back to your ...

HI: My mother.

KP: Your mother, who I'm sure was very worried about you.

HI: I think so.

ES: You had two other, both of your brothers were in ...

HI: They were in the Navy.

ES: They were in the Navy. How was your mom reacting to that? How was it for her at home?

HI: I don't know because we were all so far away. We don't know. Would you like to read this?

KP: Yes, I could read it on the tape or we could add this to the transcript.

HI: Oh, no. I just wanted to know if, your first name is ...

ES: Elizabeth.

HI: Elizabeth. If she would like to read it.

KP: Yes. I'm hogging the letter. You witnessed the flag raising?

HI: No, I can't say I did. You're familiar enough with Iwo Jima to know the shape and so on of it. It's shaped like a turtle. The southern part is this Mount Suribachi, which was about 520 feet high, highest point on the island. The landing plan was that the Fourth Marine Division would go in on the right. We'd go in on the left, and the left would include Mount Suribachi and the 28th Regiment, the 28th Marines were assigned to take Mount Suribachi. Now, the Japanese had artillery spotters on Mount Suribachi and then on the far right, beyond the Fourth Marine Division were the Japanese. ... The shots were being called from Suribachi to the Japanese on the other end of the island, and they were having fun with us. It made it very difficult. The 28th finally go to the top. From time to time I could see them working their way up. I remember asking myself, it was a drizzly day, the sides of that mountain, if you want to call it that, were wet, slippery and I remember asking myself, "What in the world makes a man do that?" Then I answered it right away, "*Espirit de corps.*" I watched them go up, but I didn't see a flag coming up. It didn't matter to me or any of us at that time. What mattered was that there was a flag there, which meant that the spotters couldn't see us anymore. ... Our safety margin had increased.

KP: In terms of artillery. You experienced artillery barrages then?

HI: Yes.

KP: Which you were saying about digging a foxhole. People have told me that you didn't have to convince men to dig fox holes deeper.

HI: Twenty or thirty feet, that's fine. As a matter-of-fact, we had a bunch of clothes in our ... I had one foxhole ... one location for a couple of days, two days maybe. I remember going back to it and finding a piece of shrapnel about that long in the bottom of my foxhole. I knew one of the clowns in our company had put it there. Sense of humor.

KP: I'm wondering if you've seen any of the movies about Iwo Jima?

HI: John Wayne.

KP: What do you think of the accounts of Iwo Jima? What do you think is understood well about the battle? And what is misunderstood?

HI: I don't think anything is understood or misunderstood. You have to remember that this was a battle that didn't involve any strategy, any tactics, anything of the sort. It was simply go in there, hit them hard, and that's it. It was sheer force. There were other battles, I'm trying to think of other battles in World War II that the Marines fought where strategy and tactics were important, I can't think of any. Every one involved sheer force. In officer training we were taught about making feints, all that sort of F-E-I-N-T-S ... misleading the enemy and working around the back. You couldn't do it, so any movie that is made simply shows people trying to get up the beach, off the beach, and then fighting in the cave area. It's really nothing. It was just force. It was an interesting time in my life.

KP: Did you ever get a shower on Iwo?

HI: A shower?

KP: Yes. That's one of the things people on the line often commented about.

HI: You mean, did I ever change my clothes, including my underwear? No.

KP: Not until you got back on the ship?

HI: Oh, we went down to the beach on the far side of the island once, just to go in. As I recall we didn't take any clothes off. They were as dirty as I was, underneath. I don't remember but it was just to try to get some of the grime and dirt off. It's called "operation plan." It's marked "Top Secret." Does it make you drool?

KP: I know they have them in the National Archives, but I know there are not that many copies out there.

HI: This is called C-2. C-2 is intelligence special study, enemy situation.

KP: And you hung onto those?

HI: No.

KP: Well, a lot of people sort of got rid of everything.

HI: Marie will tell you I'm a pack rat. As a matter-of-fact, we were not permitted to keep diaries. I think you probably know that.

KP: Yes, which a lot of people broke that because we've xeroxed diaries for the Special Collection.

HI: Well, I didn't break it.

KP: You did not keep a diary.

HI: I wanted to, but I didn't because we were ordered not to. So, instead I asked my mother, who was kind of careless, oh, gee, I'm going to edit this thing, about keeping things. I asked her if she would, when she finished a letter, put it in a box somewhere and save it for me. The war's over and I'm back home for a brief period of time. I figured I'm not even going to mention that. I knew she didn't do it. Time passed. Just a few years ago, my brother, Bill, came across a box, and in it was this letter and all of the other letters from Scout camp. I have them all.

KP: Oh, wow.

HI: So I don't need a diary. I have all those letters.

KP: How many letters?

HI: Oh, a pile of them. Some day I'm going to have to go through them and sort them. ...

KP: Going back, instead of going back to Guam you ended up going back, after the Iwo assault, back ...

HI: Back to the big island, yes, Hawaii.

KP: You mentioned talking to different officers. What did you learn about the people who had been in rifle companies, officers and even men? Did you learn anything about the assault?

HI: Yes. We didn't talk about it that much, little bits and pieces. Oh, little things like one of the guys I went through Parris Island with and Quantico with, Hendrix. He was quite a guy. He played football for one of the bigger, larger universities. I don't think, he wasn't Notre Dame. We had practically the entire Notre Dame football team in our unit at Quantico. ... Hendricks, he was the kind of guy that everyone thought the world of. On Iwo, he was wounded and taken to a field hospital and he should have been taken off the island. He insisted on going back to his unit because they needed him. He went back and he was killed. You know, these were the things that you picked up. You didn't get the nitty-gritty, the little details. These are things you don't talk about. Funny thing about ... Well, you can't call them a celebration, whatever it is, the recognition given to Iwo in the past year or two. Public Broadcasting has a video, I have a copy of it, but the people on that videotape are all from the Third Marine Division. Now, the ones who took the island were from the Fourth and Fifth. The ones who lasted long enough to make a video tape were from the Third. ...

KP: That's an interesting point. Often those who do survive are the ones that tell the story.

HI: Yes, you have to live to make it.

KP: Being in communications, did you have a better sense of how the battle was going just compared to someone on the front line?

HI: No.

KP: You didn't.

HI: No, I'll tell you, you have to sort of be there to understand. I wish I could know what to compare it to. It was sort of a cleansing operation. You have all these units and they're trying to find the Japanese to get rid of them. It's not that there is any hill to take or any line to crack ... there were no distinguishing features of this operation. If you recall, there was a network of tunnels. They moved freely within this network. We didn't know. It made it very difficult.

KP: It was a very well defended island. It was one of the few where the Japanese took less casualties than the attacker, of all the island assaults.

HI: ... That island was bombed seventy, seventy-seven days, I forget what it was. Constant bombing. As a matter-of-fact, it was funny. In preparation for the operation, we were all given maps of island X. This is back on Hawaii, and all of our training and planning had to do with island X, which was shaped like a turtle with a volcano at the southern end. Well, Honolulu advertiser one day published a picture of this island that the Air Force was bombing on the front page. I think I still have a copy of that picture, but on the front page it was "Island X."

KP: So, you knew before hand by reading the local paper where you were going?

HI: Well, yes, we didn't ... even think about it . You know, you wonder, with all of this, of course it's hindsight now, but with all of this, why didn't we think ... We had never heard of Iwo Jima. It was a crummy little place up in the Bonin Islands ... "So, okay, it's another island. So what?" If it had been Wake or Truk, those were the ones that we thought about. We bypassed that, but we didn't, we didn't give much thought to Iwo, it was just a little dot in the ocean, and it was going to be a piece of cake and nothing to it.

ES: What were your reactions when you got there? All your men must have been so surprised at the amount of force the Japanese had.

HI: That's a good question, but you get a stupid answer. We didn't think about it. We really didn't. I'm going to be amazed. You say you're going to transcribe this? It's going to be quite a book you know, but I'm surprised at a lot of the answers I've given you, but they're true, they're correct. These are things that I didn't think about, other people didn't think about. We didn't relate them to things as we would today. It was a whole different world.

KP: No, a lot of people have said that, for example, in the infantry you only see above the next hill, and that's your world. So, I'm also not surprised.

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

HI: Africa was the land of mystery. What did we know about Africa? We saw King Kong in the movies. I think that's probably about the best thing. The Pacific, we didn't know a blessed thing about the Pacific. Nothing. We knew that aborigines lived there somewhere and there were these primitive cultures. What did we know about Japan? Not much. All that we knew about Japan was that Japan manufactured inferior products. Japan manufactured inferior

products. With their slanted, squinty eyes, their vision was poor and their pilots couldn't really fly airplanes too well. Oh, we knew a bunch of stuff like that.

KP: Before Pearl Harbor that was your impression of Japan?

HI: It wasn't, really. These were just little bits and pieces that you heard. You didn't think about it. ... Had we thought about the Manchurian operation, but we didn't anymore than we paid a great deal of attention to what Hitler was doing in Europe. We didn't pay attention. This goes back to isolationism.

KP: You were part of the occupation duty, you've alluded to it already.

HI: In Japan.

KP: In Japan. You alluded to some problem your men had, though apparently it wasn't unique to the occupation. You also referred to how the Japanese expected you to ...

HI: Oh, yes. We were going to rape them.

KP: You mentioned how devastated it was. How long were you on occupation duty? What were your responsibilities besides keeping your unit as a cohesive unit?

HI: That was about it, really. ... The early part of September we landed in Sasebo Harbor, just about the same time as they took care of the paperwork on the *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay and we left a little after Thanksgiving Day. Since, the war was over we could travel faster by ship. We didn't have to maintain darkness and all that stuff, but it still took us quite a while to get from there back to San Diego. ... What did I do? Well, we were there to occupy. We had several functions. One was to demolish their armament, another was to help repair their communications. We didn't have a lot of work to do, so, we spent a great part of our time training. By training, it's just going over the same stuff, over and over again, getting ready for the next war. The division headquarters decided it would be a good idea if we set up some sort of school. I think this was a "keep busy" kind of thing. ... A kind of a school for any of the personnel that wanted to do it. So, I volunteered to teach mathematics. I forget what it was. I think it was college algebra, I'm not sure, and I had a class, both sides of the spectrum. A couple people couldn't spell algebra, and another guy was way ahead of me in math. You know, it was just to keep busy. We played volleyball, too.

KP: How long were you in Japan?

HI: Well, let's see. Most of September, October, ... Close to three months.

KP: Was there any tension between the Japanese and the Americans?

HI: No. We were the conquerors. We were the victors at that point. ... It worked well. We didn't do anything to be the conquerors, nor did they do anything to create problems. It kind of worked out well. Several times with one or two other people I would visit a Japanese family.

They had very little food, so whenever we visited with a Japanese family ... well, all we had were C or K rations, but we would take along some rations. We would eat them. ... They normally wouldn't eat our food. I can remember visiting one family and there was a little girl, I guess she was maybe seven or eight years old at most, who tried to explain to us, but she couldn't speak English, ... about these things that flew up there and dropped things and made noise and fire. This little girl had gone through a number of bombing episodes and she was trying to tell us about them. I could sympathize with the Japanese people. They were totally devastated economically. It was cold. They were scratching. I'll never forget. I left Japan, let's say December 1st, a month and a half later ... I hopped a train, went to Boston, over to Cambridge to check on myself at law school. In the South Station, while I was waiting for a train to come back, I saw all of these college girls, mostly from Radcliffe I guess, fur coats, fur boots, slushing around this little. ... I looked at them and I thought about the Japanese women I had seen not too long ago, threadbare, freezing. I figured, you know, what a crazy world this is.

KP: Have you been surprised how well the Japanese have done since the war?

HI: No.

KP: You really saw Japan at probably one of its lowest points in its history, totally devastated country.

HI: Yep. I'm not surprised. ... Why am I not surprised? One thing: We used to think of the Japanese as ... great copiers. That's what they did. They copied other people's stuff and to a great extent they still do it, but they are also innovators, and I didn't learn about this until quite a bit later, but their standards are so different. Their standards are conducive to what they've accomplished. ... Organization, the way, I'm going to get away from this one because you have to get into the area of sociology and it's a whole different thing to open up. But to answer your question, no, I'm not surprised. I got out of that fast, not fast enough.

KP: You talked about how you had thought about staying in the military, but you had been accepted into Harvard Law School. How crucial do you think the GI Bill was in choosing to leave the military and go to school?

HI: Oh, look at me. I came to Rutgers with a four-year scholarship, ... tuition in those days was 200 dollars a year, and it covered tuition and fees. Fees were 132 dollars a year and fees included admission to football games, which I rarely went to, but that's what I came with and I had to work like blazes. Not just me, so many of us, worked like dogs to make it. We had this great ambition, great desire to do it. Harvard Law School, tuition, fees, books, stationery, pencils, and erasers, you name it, plus a single fifty dollars a month, which in those days was pretty good. It's the equivalent of somewhere around \$750 a month today. When we married, it got up to sixty-five dollars a month. I had a free ride. The GI Bill, for me was the greatest thing in the world. I'm sure you've asked that question before and you've gotten the same answer.

KP: Because I get the impression, but for the GI Bill you might not have become a lawyer.

HI: That's right.

KP: You may have drifted into another occupation.

HI: Well, I'll tell you what I did. I came home on leave just before I shipped out. By this time I had finished Fort Benning. I was in the Fifth Division. I was in the Signal Company. I was thinking ahead to when the war was over. I always like to have a few things available. So, I went to the AT&T office at 40 Worth Street in New York for an interview. I said, "I'm in the Marine Corps ... and some day the war will be over and I would be interested in a job," and, well, you know, great, here comes an act of stupidity. [The] war's over, I get to law school. I'm really not too sure if I want to be a lawyer, and I thought about the telephone company. Now in Ramsey, the most respected men when I was growing up were men who worked for the telephone company, white-collar workers, commuted everyday, each one of them had a car, great. Instead going back to 40 Worth Street, as I should have, I went to Newark, New Jersey Bell. ... I filled out a form. They sent me to a vice-president on the seventh floor. Well, he was a wishy-washy character. Now, here I am still in uniform, still gung ho Marine, and I'm dealing with this guy and he's dealing with me. If we ever rubbed each other the wrong way, I mentioned law school. He ended by saying, "I suggest going to law school." I might be with the phone company, or retired probably today, if it hadn't been for him. I went back on downstairs. I took some kind of a test, and I scored a 100 on it. It was a long test. I scored a 100 in it. They told me they'd call me. Eventually, they did and I would start out collecting coins from coin machines. So, I figured, "No, I'll go to law school."

KP: It sounds like you were an ambivalent law student and lawyer, that you still had your doubts about the law as a career.

HI: Yes.

KP: I have a good friend who went through law school as a solo practitioner. I have very vivid memories of how much he hated law school his first year.

HI: Join the crowd.

KP: Particularly the required curriculum, which some of it is interesting and some of it is deadly boring.

HI: Yes.

KP: What was it like to be at Harvard Law School? Especially your first year, what sticks out?

HI: Well, actually it was trying to get the feel of things. My mind had been developed into this rigid, conformist kind of thing. That was completely contrary to the way law school, not just Harvard, any law school operates. ... I spent a lot of time trying to dope myself out. One thing I realized is that a lot of the guys in my class, who came from legal families, had an edge because the things that we were talking about in class, they were completely familiar with, and I wasn't, and others were just as unfamiliar as I. I didn't like it. As a matter-of-fact, I had to report to the Brooklyn Navy Yard April 6, 1946, my terminal leave was over, so, I had to report for transfer to

inactive duty. That was the procedure. So, I went down and I had to take a physical. Then I had an interview with somebody, a captain, who urged me to stay in. I said, "No, I'm going to law school." It's passed up to a major. He comes from Rutgers. He also came from Ramsey High School. His name was Vince Kramer.

KP: Oh, yes.

HI: Vince Kramer.

KP: You knew Vince Kramer?

HI: Oh, sure.

KP: Oh, you know Vince Kramer. I interviewed Vince Kramer.

HI: Oh, yes. He has a completely different story about his post war activities.

KP: Well, his war-time activities were interesting, but his post war were...

HI: Were more so. Anyway ...

KP: He really wanted you to stay.

HI: Yes. He urged me to stay. I said, "No, I'm going to law school." He sent me up to the Commandant of the Navy Yard, Colonel Waller. Now, I had known Colonel Waller from the Fifth Division. He was the regimental commander. We had a chat, and he urged me to stay. He finally said, "I'll make a deal with you. I'll give you six months. If you come back anytime within the six month period, you go on active duty. You won't lose any seniority. It'll all be the same." I won't get paid for the time I'm in law school, so, okay, that's fine. In those days, Harvard didn't have the standard two semester things as we have today to accommodate returning veterans. They had three terms a year and no vacation periods. Well, you get a week between terms.

KP: But a week isn't ...

HI: No, that was fine for us because I lost a few years and we were all trying to make up time. So, I started in June and went through the summer. By the time the summer was over, I really had serious doubts. I didn't like it. Now October 6th was six months from April 6th. I'll never forget the night of October 5th. I couldn't sleep. What do I do? Do I go back to Brooklyn Navy Yard? I stayed. I figured the thing that kept me there was that I had never quit anything. I just couldn't see quitting.

KP: But it was touch and go. You thought about quitting quite a bit.

HI: Oh, yes, but then a bit later, a promotion came through for me and I was promoted to Captain in the Marine Corps, inactive. So, I had to go over to the Boston Navy Yard, in

connection with that, and I got over there and I could smell the same smells and hear the same noises and all that stuff, and I said to myself, "Maybe it's just as well."

KP: You met your wife up in Boston, Cambridge. I guess one of the questions is how did you meet?

HI: Well, she was lucky. Well, that was funny. It was April of 1947.

MI: It was the 5th, in case you've forgotten.

HI: What's that?

MI: It was the 5th in case you've forgotten.

HI: Oh, I forgot. Anyway, I really wasn't happy with law school and I figured I need a breather. So, I thought I would go back to Ramsey just for a weekend and kind of regroup. Well, one of the fellows living where I lived, Bob Somebody-or-other, he was in his last year of law school, I mentioned to him that I was going to go back to Ramsey. I guess he misunderstood and didn't think I was coming back. Well, he was going to get married shortly and this was on a Friday we had the conversation. ... Friday night he got a hold of me and said, "How would it be if you would have dinner with my bride to be and me in Boston at the Parker House." So I figured, "All right that's a pleasant change, I'll take a crack at that." So, instead of hopping a train early to get back to Ramsey, I stayed and had lunch with them. At the same time, a fellow who sat next to me in class, Lou Hindenlang called me and said, "How would you like to come to dinner at our place tonight?" He was married to Etsey. "A friend is coming over and maybe the four of us could have dinner." I said, "Sure." So, I went over. Marie was the friend.

MI: I didn't know he was going to be there.

HI: I walked her home and she proposed to me that night.

MI: God, the reason he's not a Catholic is because he couldn't go to confession.

HI: I'm lucky I don't have to go to confession because, see, I can say things like that. Anyway we met. ...

KP: You were in a sense 'fixed up.'

HI: Not really, that wasn't the intention.

KP: It wasn't intentional.

MI: Oh, no.

HI: It was just a pleasant evening, but then we dated again. We kept dating. Oh, we had good things. They had an officers' club in conjunction with the Boston Navy Yard, and it wasn't a

fancy officers' club. It was set up primarily for students who were reserve Naval officers to give them a chance to have a good time inexpensively. It was in the Fargo Building, wasn't it, Marie? Yes, Fargo Building in Boston. ... It was just a place with drinks and refreshments and music, a band and stuff, very inexpensive. We used to go there or we'd go to the Esplanade for the Boston Pops, stuff like that. They were free, but if you wanted a chair you paid a dime and you'd get a chair. Then the following January we got married. This coming January is going to be forty-nine years.

KP: And soon fifty.

HI: Are we still on tape?

KP: Yes.

HI: What do you do? See, I have these. These are precious. One question is what value would they have to my progeny down the line? I wonder. I'd like them to go someplace where they would be of use and where they would be treated properly. ...

KP: I guess, one of my questions, I could keep going, but I think ...

HI: Well, I can, too.

KP: I think Mrs. Irwin probably could use a lunch break. Are there any thoughts in terms of, I guess maybe one general question. You obviously stayed through law school and you're still practicing law even if it's something against your will.

HI: I'll tell you what happened. In law school, I spent a lot of time involved in, you might say introspection. A lot of the guys in my class wanted to go to Washington or Wall Street. Christian Herder, Jr. was in my class. His father was Secretary of State. Justice Black's son, Elliot Richardson, I could go on. Brewster, was it Kingman or Kingsly Brewster, who later became president of Yale University, then after that, Ambassador to England? And then me. I decided I wanted to, I had two thoughts. One was to practice law in a country town and grow with it. The other was to go to Honolulu.

KP: You never would have thought of if you hadn't been in the military, I take it.

HI: Oh, no. I had made contacts through a friend of mine in the Corps, Dick (Haley?). Dick's wife, (Serilla?) was married to the niece of the president of the Hawaiian Territorial Senate at that time. Dick and I had spent Christmas [with] this person, the senator lived in Hilo, and we spent Christmas, three or four days with the senator and his wife. So, I established contacts and I thought maybe I'll go back there and practice. Well, I really didn't have many options. Marie and I were married on January 25th of '48.

MI: 24th.

HI: 24th.

MI: Mother of ...

HI: I'm in trouble.

KP: You're in big trouble.

HI: Our son was born on October 21st of 1948.

MI: Boy, you are really something else.

HI: Wasn't he born on October 21st?

MI: Yes, he was.

HI: Okay, as a matter-of-fact when he was three days old I took nine roses to Marie, and people asked her, "Why nine roses today?" She said, "We're married nine months, today." Nine months had more significance in those days than it does now.

MI: You forgot to tell him I was a Catholic girl, too.

HI: Yes, and I was a Protestant bigot, but, anyway. When we found out that Marie, I was still in law school, was going to present us with a baby, I figured I better buckle down and forget Honolulu. Let's get back to New Jersey and go to work. So, we wound up in Pompton Plains. I've been there. When did we move to the Plains? '56.

MI: '52.

HI: Well, that was Riverdale, '51.

MI: No, he was in the second grade.

HI: I was fortunate that I could shape my law practice to fit and this doesn't mean we were rich, or anything of the sort and it took a lot of effort to develop the practice when you do it by yourself.

KP: Oh, no. I've heard it from my friend. The first few years you're sort of waiting for people to walk in the door.

HI: Well, I was able to do it my way, which made it good. In 1951, I became a magistrate of Riverdale, which is a whole different thing to talk about. Let me get into that with you in a minute, briefly. ... I was municipal judge, really. I sat in that spot for three years. Then in 1960, I became municipal judge of Pequannock Township, which includes Pompton Plains, and then, eventually, Jefferson Township, and where else? Riverdale. I spent a total of thirty-three years as a municipal judge, and retired from that in 1990.

MI: He was the youngest judge in New Jersey, twenty-nine years old.

HI: But an interesting thing. I have a couple of books that I'd love to write. One is I'd love to put what I told you on paper.

KP: This will be put on paper, so ...

HI: Okay.

KP: And you can feel free to add to it to.

HI: I can copyright it, too. Anyway, New Jersey adopted its present constitution in 1947. It's under the constitution, the new ... court system went into effect October 15, 1948. I became a magistrate in 1951. Now, under the old court system, local justice was dispensed by justices of the peace, police, recorders, all lay people. Lawyers didn't participate much and it was a weird system. Jersey justice was known throughout the country as being very bad. So, I started in 1951 and I worked on the development of the municipal court system and I didn't realize what had happened until I decided to retire and started to look back. I saw this great evolution of a system that is really working well and came out of nowhere. Someday if you are interested in that segment.

KP: We should probably do a follow-up interview.

HI: I have a lot to tell you.

KP: It's interesting because I've been doing another, sort of mini, oral history project with the lawyer Alan Lowenstien.

HI: Oh, yes, sure.

KP: He's talked about the development of New Jersey justice. In fact, NJ had one of the worst court systems in the country.

HI: We did indeed.

KP: To now it's probably the premier system ...

HI: Arthur Vanderbilt's system was copied by Japan, to a point. Oh, I think the European system is better than what we have here, but, anyway.

KP: But for the fifty states we're definitely one of the top five, if not the top.

HI: Oh indeed we are. Sometime if you're interested in taking a look at that, I'm available.

KP: You've joined a number of veterans' organizations.

HI: Oh, sure. As a matter-of-fact, if you look at my license plate, you'll see a Marine emblem on the plate. That's because I joined the Marine Corps League and I joined the Marine Corps League so I could get the license plate, also, the American Legion and the VFW.

KP: Are you active in any? You mentioned your only reunion was your Marine Corps.

HI: Just that one effort and it didn't work.

KP: So, you've never been active in your local Legion post?

HI: Oh, I was commander of the post in town back in 1960. But how I got to be commander, I was out washing the car one day, this is spring of '60, and one of the fellows of the post drove by. So, we had a chat. He said he had just come from a meeting at the post home. They were picking the slate of officers for the next year. They were having a problem. I said, "Oh?" He said, "How would you like to be chaplain?" I said, "Well, does it involve any work?" He said, "No." I said, "Okay, I'll be chaplain." A couple weeks later, same routine, washing the car, he drives up. We get into conversation. He said, "[We're] having a real problem." "What's that?" "We can't find anyone to be commander." Had about 110 fellows in the post. [I said], "Have you tried everybody?" "Yes. How about you?" "Are you sure you've tried everybody else?" "Yep." I said, "Okay." So, I became the commander. After a year as commander of that post, I never went back to another meeting. Why do you ask about veterans' organizations?

KP: Well, it's interesting because some people have been very active and some people haven't. Some people never join them.

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

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