

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH RAYMOND A. FINLEY, JR.

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Raymond A. Finley, Jr., on June 29, 1995, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler. I would like to start by talking about your parents. Your father, who sounds like he was a remarkably successful man, went to college. Where did he go to college?

Raymond Finley: He went to New York, ... to that free school, Cooper Union.

KP: Did he grow up in New York City?

RF: Newark. ... His father was a builder in Newark and built many of the homes in the southern section of Newark, back in those days.

KP: Do you know why he ended up at Cooper Union?

RF: It was free. ... He went there ... [for] night school, when he was at Newark High School, what is now known as Baringer, but, in those days, [there] ... was only one high school in Newark, and it was called Newark High School. He was terrible in music and whatnot, and so, he was allowed to take math courses. So, he took every math course that existed in high school, and then, he went ... over to Cooper Union and applied. ... From the interviews and whatnot, he thought he could get into the second year. It was a five year course at night. ... He didn't have chemistry though. It was Chemistry I and Chemistry II as part of Cooper Union's program, and he asked, could he not take both chemistries at the same time, so he could start in his second year, because he could [already] do everything in the first year. ... Since he had taken all the math in high school, he was well-qualified. So, he gambled, because they said, "If you flunk either one of those chemistries, you're out." ... [At] Copper Union, since it was a free school, if you flunked, you were out. There was no reprieve. So, ... he passed both chemistries. I think he had 100 in one and a ninety-eight in the other, some ridiculous thing. ... So, he went though in four years, at night, and then, he learned surveying during the day with his sister's husband, Mac Congelton, who was probably one of the best surveyors. I know he was one of the best, and he was young then, because I had him work for me when we built the Garden State Parkway. ... Mac was still surveying in his eighties. So, dad went through Cooper Union, and got his degree, and he went to work for a company called Leonard Construction Company, out of Chicago. They sent him all over the country.

KP: He did not want to work for his father?

RF: No. Well, his father ... also had a sign painting business. ... Engineering wasn't required and that's what he was, a civil engineer. ... His father built homes and he had a sign business. All your advertising signs in those days were hand painted. They didn't have the sheets that they paste up. ... He was fairly successful, the father was, and then, my dad went to work with Leonard, and he built the first nitroglycerin plant in this country, in Nitro, West Virginia. As a matter-of-fact, Nitro got its name, because it [had] a nitroglycerin plant. ... Then, he was out in Coffeyville, Kansas, and, [when] World War I came along, he was in Santo Domingo, building the dock there, which is still there. ... My son sailed down there and saw the dock. ... The Marines ... were occupying Santo Domingo, because there was a revolution going on, so, he lived

with the Marines, but, he was not a Marine. He always admired them. ... When that job was finished, he came back and was subject to the draft in World War I. ... He came down with appendicitis, so, he went to the hospital, and then, that disqualified him. So, he did not serve during World War I, but, he continued with [the] Leonard Construction Company. ... They were doing a job in New Jersey and he had a lot of pile-driving up in ... Edgewater, New Jersey. ... The plant is still there, ... Lever Brothers. I forget which one it was, but, it was up in Edgewater, New Jersey, right on the Hudson River. He had to hire a subcontractor to drive the piles, and there was this company called Linde and Griffith Company. He hired them and they became pretty good friends, and it was a big job. ... [They] were there a long time and he got to know them very well. ... In the meantime, he ... got married. ... When that job was finished, he did not want to go all over the country again. Maybe I was on the way, I'm not sure. ... He went back to surveying and stopped down to talk to Linde and Griffith, who had done the pile-driving. They hired him, so, he went to work for [the] Linde and Griffith Company, at that point. ... Of course, that's the company we have today. He became a part owner in 1928, and was president during World War II, when they ... rebuilt one shipyard and built one new [shipyard] up in the Newark Airport/Newark Bay area and up in the Hackensack River. ... He worked up to, I always forget the year he died, but, he was about seventy-three when he died. ... I was not going to work there, because I was a mechanical engineer. I was off on the ships. ... Mr. Linde, who was a founder of the company, had no children. He didn't marry until he was fifty. [He] said he wasn't going to marry until he was a millionaire and he was right. ... Not having any [children], he kind of kept track of me when I was in the Pacific, through my father. He wrote me a letter, because they had disallowed any relatives, at that time. ... He offered me a job while I was still in the Pacific. I had answered him with that I would try it on a one year agreement. If, at the end of a year, I didn't care for that work, I'd leave, and they would not have wasted too much time. If, at the end of a year, they didn't care for my work, they would let me know, and I would not have wasted too much time. So, that's the way I went to work there. I worked with my father from ... 1945 until he died, and, of course, today, I have two sons in the business, also.

KP: So, your family has a long tradition in construction and engineering.

RF: Yes. ...

KP: Also, there is a long tradition with the Linde-Griffith Construction Company.

RF: Yes, that's right. ...

KP: How did your parents meet? It sounds like your mother had something to do with your father ending up in New Jersey.

RF: Well, no, ... they were both born in New Jersey. My mother was born in Newark. My father was born in Hillsdale. ... As a matter-of-fact, when they looked up his record, ... during the war time period, you had to get birth certificates, they had a tough time verifying it, because all they recorded was, "Boy. Finley." He knew that he had been born up in Hillsdale and he was the one of that family born up there. So, that finally got reconciled and they got a new birth certificate, put [the name], "Raymond A." on it. My mother was born in Jersey City and she was brought up

there. ... She went to the Star of the Sea Academy, down in Long Branch, for schooling. ... Her father was a traveling salesman for a seed company out of Chicago. I'm really not sure how ... those two grandparents met, or the others for that matter. ... His name was Daly, ... Joseph Daly. He traveled all over the eastern seaboard selling seeds, and he also had several patents on things for measuring out seeds, ways of doing it for making the measurements in sales easier. ... He was a very interesting person. I enjoyed him when he would stay with us for the winter, where we lived in Maplewood. ... Dinners were always an hour-and-a-half long, because of the stories he had to tell. He was a natural storyteller. ... They met because the two mothers had somehow gotten together through some organization or club, ... and the kids were brought along several things. So, it was things going on in Newark. To be specific about it, I don't know. ...

KP: There were never stories about their first meeting?

RF: Or, how they met, or anything, except for the fact that the families met, and then, he met my mother, and she was very talented in music, extremely talented. She was a teacher. She went to what was then called the Newark Normal School, and you became a teacher, in those days, after two years, I think it was, at Newark Normal School. So, she taught primary grades, kindergarten, first, [and] second grades, whatever it was. Oddly enough, and we have pictures of it to prove this one, the eighth graders ... had a basketball team in the City of Newark at whatever was the equivalent to junior high school today. I guess it was still ... considered grammar school. ... She was the basketball coach. So, we have a picture of our little mother, who was only five-foot-one, with these boys, who, not to compare to the height we have today, but, were all probably five-ten, five-nine, [and five-eleven, and so forth. ... It was a woman coaching basketball back in ... 1913, 1914, somewheres in there. ...

KP: Did she ever talk about her experiences as a coach and as a teacher?

RF: Oh, yes. She loved teaching the little kids. That was her real forte. What they did, in those days, unlike today, ... they would take, particularly the kindergarten, and first graders, and some second, where they had the slow students, as they'd call them, those that just didn't keep up with the class, ... she would get those [as a] ... a specialty teacher, and such, although they really didn't call her that, she was part of the primary schooling staff. ... She loved teaching the little kids. ... She also was involved with music and she was going to be the first staff pianist for WOR. WOR went on the air in 1922 [and] I was born in 1921. ... They were working on it for about three years prior to getting their license and going on the air, and she was the staff pianist, and then, but, I came along and offset her plans. ... Once I was born, she did not work from that point on. ... Then, my sister came along, fifteen months later, so, she just stayed [at home] and was a mother. She continued her music [though]. ... She played, during World War II, [as] ... part of the USO in Newark, and she would go down ... three or four days a week, to Newark, to the USO building. ... She could play by ear. ... [For example], an Australian boy would come in and he'd have ... a very popular Australian song, at the time. ... She'd never heard it before, so, he sang it, and then, she could blend right in, because she could anticipate what the next notes were going to be. She was extremely talented and loved playing the piano. She played every day. She would plan to get her work done, this is after we moved to Maplewood, and my sister and I were off to school. If we were coming home, say, at three, she would plan to have her work done by two-

thirty [or] two-forty-five, and she'd sit down, [and] play the piano until we came in. ... Some days, we would sit down around the piano with her for a half an hour and she just played. ... During World War II, she played for the USO, and, of course, officers couldn't go into ... the USO. That was for the enlisted personnel. So, once in a while, I'd put my raincoat on, [laughter] which did not have any insignia on it, and then, when I'd come in, I'd put my cap under here, and I'd walk in the back way, because the women working there ... knew who I was, so, I would slip in the back and just have my raincoat on and buttoned, so, they didn't know I was an officer. ... I wouldn't stay long, but, usually [what] was the case, I was just looking for a ride home. [laughter] ... She stayed with music until she died, rather young. She had an aneurysm. ... I guess she was in her late fifties when she died, maybe her early sixties.

KP: After your mother retired from teaching, was she involved in any volunteer organizations besides the USO?

RF: Yes. [When] we grew up, she was part of the, what we called, Girl Mariners. ... That's ... like Girl Seascouts. ... She was involved with that, and, again, her piano playing came in handy, for singing and [being] part of the programs. ... She worked with ... Mrs. Pat Devoe. They were the people that got me into boating, and they lived on our street, that's how my mother got involved with them, ... because she was always doing little tasks, and moving here, and she's small. She ended up with the nickname, "Tugboat." [laughter] ... Pat Devoe, conversely, was about five-eleven and a big woman. ... Mother stayed with that right up to the wartime period, and then, ... [ended up] with the USO. After the war, she had two groups that she worked [for] ... and put on piano evenings for. One was the Little Sisters of the Poor. ... I think, she went to them twice a year, but, she always went to them in December, and she'd bring a big jug of wine along. ... The little nuns would well, drink their little bit of wine and she'd play for them. ... She [also] played for the Veteran's Administration. ... There, ... she wanted to play for them, and they'd want her, but, she was over age. So, she lied about her age and they accepted her. ... She played with them up until the day she died, the December when she died. ... She died a little later than that. It probably happened at the ... Veteran's Administration, where she had a fall and damaged her hip. We think the embolism developed out of that. ... She never had it treated. Most of these veterans were ... World War I veterans [that she was playing for]. ... The World War II veterans weren't there, yet, because this was during the war period that this started. ... Then, she continued with the World War I veterans, because these were usually men who had been gassed. ... She would start to play, and they would sing along on, "A Long Way to Tipperary," and, all of the sudden, this guy up here would start to get very upset. She would blend right into, ... "It's Mary," the George M. Cohan song. ... Then, he'd calm down, and, maybe, this other guy would get a little upset. She was the only entertainer they could let into the violent ward. She had people there to protect her, but, ... these were men that had been gassed, and had [developed] mental disorders. ... She could go in there, and spend two hours with these men, and, as one would get upset, she'd just change the song and blend it right into another song. ... She was constantly flipping from song to song. ... Maybe she'd come back to the same song, but, now, the guy wasn't upset anymore. You wouldn't know what would trigger them. It was unknown and that's why they couldn't let ordinary entertainers in.

KP: Your mother sounds like she was quite remarkable, in terms of her ability in special education and working with people with mental illnesses, the shell shocked.

RF: Yes, that's what they were. ... She enjoyed doing that, [but], it's one of those things you wouldn't want to do every day. ... She would go at least a couple of times a year and continue with that. ... Of course, she always played [the piano]. I mean, every party we went to always ended up around the piano, every party, which we all enjoyed, and which helped me a lot during World War II. ... We would get in a tavern, or something like that, there would always be singing, and I'd end up at the piano with whoever was playing and singing. ... A lot of bar tabs were paid that way. [laughter]

KP: How active were your parents in the church growing up?

RF: Not too active. My father grew up Catholic. My father's [family] ... founded the Blessed Sacrament Church in Newark. ... That was founded in their home, in Homestead Park, ... just east of where the present church is. ... They had Mass said in their home for a year while they built that church. ... So, they were active in the sense that they were involved. He was an altar boy when he was a kid and all that sort of thing. ... After that, other than going, like, to a Communion breakfast, or something like that, they were not too active. ... One reason [was that], when we moved to Maplewood, ... there was not a church, truly, in our whole area of Maplewood. [There] still isn't. You [had to] go to South Orange. ... That's one reason I went to public school. ... There was no way to get to that school, there [in South Orange]. ... I was just as well pleased, myself. ...

KP: So, if your parents had not been in Maplewood, if, say, they had been in South Orange, you might have gone to a Catholic school?

RF: If I was close to one. ... I started school in East Orange, and I went to public school for kindergarten, because the Catholic school had no kindergarten. ... Then, I went over to Blessed Sacrament, in East Orange, a parochial school, for first grade and second grade. ... First grade and second grade, in those days, was in the same classroom. That half was first grade, this half was second grade. They wouldn't let my sister go to kindergarten, which my mother always regretted. ... People didn't have two cars in those days. ... As a matter-of-fact, at that point, I'm not too sure we had one car, because people were very used to public transportation. A lot of the jobs my father went to, he went on the railroad. ... So, whether he had a car then or not, I'm not sure. ... I know we did when we moved to Maplewood. ... I guess we did by the time ... I was five or six. ... We probably had a car, but, ... only one, and he needed that for work. So, I could walk to the public school, but, they weren't going to let my sister walk there. You had to go through a neighborhood that was a little rougher than average, not like they are today, this was in East Orange, ... but, considered [to be rough], the way things were in those days. ... My mother, I guess, didn't want to walk her to school and back every day, because it was a pretty good walk. It was a very long walk. ... So, my sister, then, went to first grade when I was in second grade at the Catholic school, and we moved right after that. ... Then, my mother had my sister repeat a year, because she just felt that she had not gotten that background of kindergarten. ... She was

two years behind me in school from that point on. ... When we moved to Maplewood, we went to public school, there. That was only four or five blocks away.

KP: It sounds like you were pleased to go to public school versus parochial school?

RF: To me, it was just going to school. ... I was too young to make a judgment, one way or the other. ... The one thing my wife always felt was good [about] ... those schools, aside from the religious end, ... was that they usually require them to wear, in effect, a uniform. ... We found that down through the islands, now that we are fortunate enough to be able to travel. You go down to the islands, you maybe be at an Episcopal school, or a Catholic school, or a Methodist school, ... they're all black, of course, but, they all got these little, white shirts and blue pants on. ... They all look the same, so, the economic differences in the kids' families do not show in the kids at school. ... That's one thing I always thought was good, but, a lot of your wealthier people don't like that idea. ... The poorer people, I think, do. ... For kids in school, I think it's a damn good idea. ... Kids that go to military school, or go to many private schools, they wear uniforms for the same reason. ... As far as our personal schooling, it was a school, as far as I was concerned. One [way] or the other, it didn't make any difference, except that if you were bad in a parochial school, you'd put your hand out and, [smacking noise] the ruler came down on your hand. ... They weren't allowed to do that in the public schools.

KP: How did the Great Depression affect your father's work?

RF: We had moved to Maplewood. We moved right at the wrong time. We moved in 1928, and the big Depression came in right on top of us, and he had to re-amortize the house. ... He also, because of that, ... contracted ulcers. So, he was operated on in 1933 for ulcers and so forth. While he was in the hospital, he worked out the mortgage system that is used today. Somebody else was doing the same thing, in the same period, for the same reason. ... Back in those days, 1928-29, if you were buying a house, and, let's say for argument's sake, the house was ... \$30,000 ... and you needed a \$15,000 mortgage, you took out a \$15,000 mortgage, and you were going to pay, ... [I'm] just making up numbers, six percent interest on it, but, you paid ... six percent interest on \$15,000, even though you had paid half of it off. You always were paying interest on what your initial mortgage was. ... So, as a result, you might ... only [have] owed \$1,000 left on your mortgage, and you are paying \$900 interest on \$1,000, or whatever the interest worked out to be. So, my father worked out the direct reduction mortgage, where every time you paid some in, your ... ownership of the house increased. ... So, he took it to banks, and to savings and loans, and he got into a savings and loan down in Newark, Carteret. ... They said, "Where did you get this information?" He said, "What do you mean? I made it up." He had all of his papers with him. ... They said, "We just finished working ... over here with somebody that did the exact same thing." ... That was the beginning of the direct reduction mortgage, at that time. ...

KP: Did your father have a role in implementing it, besides this meeting in Carteret?

RF: Well, someone else had done the same thing as he had. Both of them had done the same thing. ... I don't think he was credited any more than the other person was. ... They both had

worked out the same program. ... All he wanted was to improve his financial situation, because it was rough. ... They did PWA work and WPA work. ... This surveyor I mentioned earlier, ... my uncle Mac, I always admired him, because he wasn't going to be unemployed. ... He went to the ... CCC, ... and they were doing a lot of work that, today, is done by some of the Federal agencies. ... Men went up there working for the government. ... In some places, they were re-routing streams, or doing stuff in the forest, and all sorts of stuff like that. He was a surveyor for them. ... He was never too proud, ... as long as he could have a job. ... He took care of his family, [but], he probably lost his house. ... He did everything he could to keep it, then, finally, did lose his house, but, in the later 1930s. ... He always was willing to work. ... [He] never shirked work, let's put it that way. ... My dad's business was very, very poor, of course, in 1932. ... That was the bottom, as far as our company was concerned, and ... they got through it, but, it was real rough going. ... It was just he, and Linde, and Griffith. ... Nobody else worked in the office. ... They couldn't afford to hire anybody. ... They were just divvying up whatever profits they got between the three of them. ... They got through the 1932-33 period. ... Of course, unions came in during that period. Up until then, they didn't have any unions to speak of, at least. ... Of course, around 1935-36, business began to pick up. ... The powers that be in this country knew that there was a war coming on. ... We'll get into another part of it when I got flying lessons, ... which also showed that they [knew of it]. ... Work began to pick up in 1938-39. Of course, by that time, Germany was starting in on England.

KP: It sounds like Linde-Griffith was very dependent on government contracts in the 1930s to stay in business, the PWA and WPA.

RF: That was the only thing that was during that short period. ... There was other work, whatever it was. For example, there was, they absolutely hated it, but, they took it just because ... they were trying to keep you busy, snowplowing. ... When they first started, a lot of the snowplowing was done with horses. ... When I was growing up in East Orange, those first years, up through second grade, the milk delivery was by horse drawn wagons. ... The bread man came around with ... horses. ... During the winter, they put skis on the wheels, ... so, they kept going with the horses. ... Of course, their biggest thing was the trolley cars. When it hit a car, it demolished it. Those trolley cars were huge and very heavy. ... Everybody went by bus or by trolley through the Newark area and up into the Oranges. ... They took the snowplowing contracts for the City of Newark and hated it, but, they did it because it was work. ... They gave it up as soon as they could.

KP: What kind of construction projects did they do in the 1930s?

RF: Well, the same thing. Their bread and butter business was pile-driving, and then, second to that ... was foundation work. They didn't have as many coffer dams, [but], they did have [some] coffer dams. Are you familiar with a coffer dam, what it is?

KP: No.

RF: That's where you have these steel sheet piles, ... or you could use wood, and you drive them into the ground, and you interlock one into the other. Then, you can dig a hole out in between it.

... You have a hole and the sheeting to hold the earth back. ... That's my specialty with the company now. I don't do regular pile-driving bids. Anybody can do those. ... Now, today, you have to have a professional engineer's license to design and build coffer dams. So, I do most of the coffer dam designs, and making up the sketches, and drawings, and things like that. ... My partners do the pile-driving. ... There are more pile-driving jobs than there are coffer dam jobs, but, one of them you have to have a license to do.

KP: Was Linde involved with either the Newark Airport or the Newark subway?

RF: ... I think they had some with the subway, but, they practically did all the pile-driving for Newark Airport. ... I spent a lot of time at the airport as a kid. [I] loved it. We'd go down to check on jobs. ... There used to be all old hangars, individual hangars. ... I don't know, maybe one or two of them still exist, somewhere. ... There was one, can't think of the name of the building, but, it's still a very active building. ... Even going into the postwar period, when I was there, we did what is now called the north terminal. The other terminal, I don't know who built that, but, we did all the driving and foundations for the north terminal. We don't do structural, above ground. Most of our work you don't see, I mean, it's all the stuff below ground. ... We did the north terminal, when that was built. The old terminal, ... we probably drove the piles for, as a subcontractor, because, I think, we did about all the pile-driving in that area, in those days. We have more competition today than they had then.

KP: Linde-Griffith was one of the survivors from the Depression?

RF: Yes. ...

KP: Do you think the decision to specialize in pile-drivings and substructural work was one of the keys to survival?

RF: [Yes], because there was nobody else that did it then, and, of course, ... all through the Port of Newark, ... you have to have piles. You build a building without piles, it's going to sink. ...

KP: The airport is built on swampland.

RF: Garbage. Most of it was garbage. It was the garbage dump. As I grew up, I mean, the area that the airport had been [built on], ... everything down there was garbage. ... [If] you dig down about six [or] eight feet today, then, you're back in the garbage. So, that was the Newark garbage dump.

KP: You mentioned in your survey that your father was a Roosevelt Democrat in the 1930s. Had he been a Republican in the 1920s?

RF: Not to my knowledge. I really don't know. I don't believe so, but, I don't really know. ...

KP: How did he feel about Al Smith?

RF: Oh, he liked him. ... I don't know enough about Al Smith to know why he liked him. ... [laughter]

KP: But, you remember him?

RF: Oh, yes. ... I remember him. ...

KP: Going back a little bit to school, what was it like growing up in Maplewood?

RF: Very fine, a very good town. I guess it still is. I get back and look at it, once in a while. When I moved to Chatham, we moved there in 1950, ... October of 1950, ... a lot of our reason[ing] for going into Chatham was [that] ... Maplewood had changed in the war years. It had gotten bigger and little more, 'citified,' shall we say. ... Chatham was a lot like Maplewood was in the 1930s. ... That was a thing that I liked. ... Also, I never had to use it, [but], ... you can see the philosophy of times, [my father] ... always thought we should be near a railroad. So, when he moved out of East Orange and we went to Maplewood, there was a railroad there. If your car broke down, you could get to work. He had a great work ethic. ... So, I moved to Chatham. ... First, I was in Orange, when DLW was there. ... Then, I was in Chatham. ... Now, the railroad is right across the street from me. ... I've probably used it twice in fifty years. ... I wouldn't worry about recommending it to anybody, unless they needed the railroad to go to work. Cars were used strictly as a backup. ... Cars, in those days, were a lot less reliable than they are today. ... Maplewood was a very fine town, very good school system, excellent school system. Far ahead of the others, at its time. I was the Class of '39 and I took a Coast Guard examination. I did the college section, the math ...

KP: This is when you were in high school?

RF: High school. I was a senior in high school. ... We did not have calculus in high school, which they do in a lot of high schools today. We didn't then, but, we had what was called Math IV. We had both solid and plane geometry. ... They were way ahead of a lot of the schools. The unions weren't so strong in those days and, I think, teachers were paid by what they were worth to the school. ... The best salaries were [in] Columbia High School, which is in Maplewood, South Orange and Maplewood. They put a school system together in 1926, I think it was. ... I think we all benefited by it and it's still the same system now. We've just done the same thing in Chatham. Chatham Borough and Chatham Township just put their high schools together, because they couldn't afford what you need today in teaching, either town, by themselves, in order to have the better, advanced stuff, the computers and all this sort of stuff that we need today. Bringing two schools together, we can afford ... to have those things. ... Maplewood first saw that way back in 1926 and made the South Orange/Maplewood school system. ... So that, when I was in college, I was head and shoulders above [the rest]. ... I was above most of [my] ... contemporaries in mathematics and that end of it, primarily. My weakest subject was in English, and part of that was because I ended up in an experimental English class, as a senior in high school, that was primarily studying theater. I mean modern theater, not Shakespeare. ... So, I probably would have ended up in the Coast Guard Academy, instead of Rutgers if I had the Shakespeare, seriously. ... I took the exam to go to the Coast Guard Academy.

KP: So, you had a long love for ships and the sea?

RF: ... I liked the water. ... I couldn't get into Boy Scouts. All the Boy Scout troops were filled in Maplewood. ... They, in effect, said, "Find six more guys and we'll form a patrol," or something like that. Well, I couldn't find any. ... They were all already there when we moved there in 1928. So, I studied the Boy Scout manual. I could pass every test up to first class, I think. I never was tested, so, I don't know. ... I got a waiver to join the Seascouts in 1936. I was fifteen-years-old. ... I got into Seascouts, and loved that, so, I went right up to the top of that. The quartermaster Seascout wears, like, an officer's uniform, versus a sailor's uniform. ... It's equivalent to Eagle Scout, in the Boy Scouts end of it. ... I had no trouble going right up to that. ... About 1937, there was a Dr. Devoe, and his wife, who I mentioned earlier. My mother worked with him [in] the Girl Mariners. He took us out on their boat, a thirty-four foot Marblehead. I still remember it, called the *Patsy D Third*. He took us down in ... Raritan Bay, ... my whole family. I have one sister and the four of us went. ... I liked that. ... It was real good. ... Of course, I was in Seascouting, so, Mrs. Devoe said, "Why don't you write a letter to Captain Emerson Powell?" Emerson Powell was a teacher in the high school. He taught auto mechanics, which, after the war, they changed the name of the course to pre-engineering. I think it's back to auto mechanics again, now. ... He was an excellent mechanic of his own right. ... He was a teacher, a good one. ... So, I wrote him a letter in 1937. He had acquired, though Seascouting, a sixty-five foot diesel yacht called The *Ballantrae*. It was built by the Roebing family for what was then Young-Roebings honeymoon [boat] to Bermuda. ... It was built by a tugboat company, down in Davis, Maryland, in 1926, I believe. ... [A] very heavy boat. ... Fairbanks-Morse was the maker of its, diesel. ... It was longer than your table here, [motioning] at least that long, and stood about the height ... of that cabinet. Four cylinders, the cylinders were this big, [motioning] and it swung a big wheel. ... I was to be the deck steward, on board. They took people out on weekend cruises, ... but, mostly Seascouts. ... Emerson Powell was in the Seascouts, Captain Powell. ... So, he had a lot to do with my life. He was a very strict taskmaster. His language was a little salty for most people, but, not vulgar like today. ... It was more, "Goddamns," and things like that, but, not the vulgarity you get today. ... Of course, he didn't use that language in school, but, on the ship, it was a different ball game. ... So, I went to work with him in 1937 and we cruised to Canada three times, Seascout cruises. One cruise was Girl Mariners and that, ... again, was Pat Devoe. She had her Girl Mariners on the cruise. ... When we cruised girls, we had a tough thing, because there were no bathroom facilities topsides, or, 'heads,' as we call them. So, we had to just have a bucket to urinate in and throw overboard. [laughter] ... So, life was a little bit hard for the crew. ... There were three of us. ... There were four of us, but, the three of us that operated the engines on a shift basis, we all were quartermaster Seascouts. I don't know [if] Swanny, who was the mate, whether he made quartermaster or not. I know he made at least right below that. ... They changed the laws and he had to have a mate on board. ... Swanny was one engineer, Joe Caskey was number two, and Frank Brannen was number three, and I was going to be a deck steward. ... When the law required him to have a mate, Swanny was made the mate and I was made the third engineer. It was an interesting group. ... In 1937, we cruised, and we had seven rescues performed in '37. ... Powell was really a frustrated Coast Guard officer. ... He ended up in that during the war, but, ... he ran the ship like a Coast Guard ship. ... He had all Seascouts most of the time and we had private parties. He was a little bit

different operating. ... When we'd pull into Etan's Neck, he'd go into the Coast Guard station. Of course, we didn't have outboards, or motorboats, and stuff. ... You rowed wherever you went, ... so, we'd row the captain in, and he'd report into the Coast Guard station that he was here, and anchored out there, if they need any help. ... Of course, there weren't marine radios in those days. ... It was all done by signaling and lights, ... semaphore. ... If a guy got in trouble out there, it was because somebody else reported it. ... [If a guy] got in and said, "There's a fire," or something, then, the Coast Guard would go get them, if they didn't see it, because they didn't have the marine radios in the prewar period. ... He lost a son that spring. Kid fell through a dock, got knocked out, and drowned. ... So, Mrs. Powell, who we all called, "Ma," said, "That's the end of cruising. We'll cruise our contracts for 1937," but, at the end of that, she wasn't going to allow any more cruising. ... In 1938, he didn't know what he was going to do, so, [he] ... ran a sailing program out of Rumsen. ... [He'd] take the ship up there and anchor it. ... We had all these Seascouts ships, they had little, small boats. ... We'll confiscate all of those, take care of them, and anchor them out on buoys, and so forth. ... I was the only one he retained, so, I lived with their family, weekends, spring and fall, and all summers from 1937 ... right up to the war. ... That was 1938. ... We ran a sailing program. ... The Seascouts would come down on weekends. ... We would teach them sailing and run races for them. ... [We'd] run programs where they could eat on board. ... Once in a while, [we'd] take a short cruise. We also worked with the Coast Guard, when they had the motorboat races. The Coast Guard only had one boat, and so, Powell, again, volunteered. They took one half of the course, and we took the other half of the course, so, when these racers would flip or crack up, we had a ... small boat for taking men in and out. We surveyed and got it through the Seascouts. ... We would patrol in that and Harvey (Brittle?) came on staff then. ... He would be with me. We'd go in the water to rescue the operators and get their boats out of the way. ... Then, in 1939, Bill Mennen, [of the Mennen company], somehow, Powell got friendly with him. He lived in Fanwood. ... The Mennen estate in Fair Haven, the house burned down. ... It was a huge thing. It burnt to the ground. It was only the foundation left, but, there was a big carriage house up near the road, Batton Road. ... Bill Mennen said, "You could have the use of the property, free, and build a sailing camp there." ... They just turned it over to us, lock, stock, and barrel. We didn't own it. We had complete use of it [and] they paid the taxes. ... We converted the carriage house into the headquarters, quarters for living for the captain and his wife. ... The upper deck, where you'd keep all the tack stuff that you [need] for horses and things like that, that was made into a sail loft. What had been the carriage room ... was made into a mess hall. ... The individual stables, that was the hardest work, because we did all of this work ourselves. ... You had to take all of these boards off that the horses had been pissing on for twenty years, and get rid of all the dirty stuff, and clean it up, and rebuild the inside with all that fresh lumber. ... We ran a sailing camp up there right up until the war. ... We would have five weeks of Seascouts and three weeks of Girl Mariners. ... That's where I met my wife. She came down as one of the Girl Mariners in 1939, ... or 1940, ... as we ran it right up to the war. ... It was interesting, putting that into effect, and, again, this is Powell's ingenuity, to get the camp together so it was usable. The whole idea was to get free labor, so, he went to the ... reform school in New Jersey. ... I can't think of the town. ... [He] went to the reform school, and said, "Look, let me have about a dozen kids that are big enough that they could work. ... I'll work them a half a day, and then, we'll teach them swimming, and sailing, and boating, the other half of the day. In other words, it will be a split." ... Oddly enough, [although] there was no law at that time, ... they sent us half white and half black. ... which was

fine with us, but, I mean, it was interesting. ... I could see today where they would do something like that, because of the various laws, but, there were no laws back in 1938-39. ... That's where we got the kids. ... I guess we got ... [between] eighteen and twenty [kids].

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

RF: ... Of course, we had to cut all the grass down, we had to put all the tents up, ... make repairs to the dock, and all that kind of stuff. ... So, the kids would work half a day, and then, we would teach them half a day. ...

KP: Did you have any trouble with this group of kids, who were from the reform school?

RF: No, not a bit. ... They were thrilled to be out of where they had been, and so, they behaved very well. ... They put on little programs, the last night. ... Of course, the black boys put on something with dance and music. ... They were hilarious to watch. ... They just were great. ... They'd have these songs like, "Who dat say that the preacher don't steal/Raise a ruckus tonight/I caught one in my cornfield/Raise the ruckus tonight," etc. ... They put on all this song and dance, and the other kids would put on things imitating us, and things like that. ... We took them to the Coast Guard station but they weren't qualified enough for us to take them out in a surf-boat. ... We would show them how a surf-boat went out. ... We did let them go through our breaches buoy drill, where you rescue them from the sea, and things like that. ... Some of those kids had never seen the ocean. ... They didn't know what the ocean was. ... No, we never had a bit of trouble with them.

KP: No trouble between the black boys and the white boys?

RF: Oh, no. ... Not a bit. ... They respected each other. ... We never broke up a fight. ... I mean, they were glad to be there, and, I guess, however they handled it out at the reform school. ... I just can't think of the name of the place. ... We never had a bit of trouble with them. ... Again, I say this was the way Powell operated. ... He had no money for doing this work. ... So, he got them, but, then, he would give of himself and his staff, so that the kids got paid in learning. ... A lot of them learned to swim. ... They never knew how to swim. ... So, we'd have a week to ten days, something like that, and then, the camp would be in shape, and, off we'd go with the regular camping program. ... I worked with him right up until the war. ... When I went in the Navy, the things I learned from him and from Seascouts made all the difference in the world. ... I was head and shoulders above the others, as far as experience. ... Even what we called Marlin Spike seamanship, that's the handling of knots, and handling lines, and things like that, I had been doing for three years. ... Most of the kids coming into the Navy. ...

KP: Had not even been on a boat.

RF: That's right. ... They didn't know any of that sort of stuff. ... So, I was in Midshipmen's School and I was made a midshipmen officer almost right away. ... It helped me a great deal. ... It was a wonderful, wonderful education for me.

KP: It almost sounds, though, as if you would not have gotten so involved if your mother had not been so interested.

RF: Yes, but, ... she didn't know anything about boating. She didn't learn to swim until she was fifty. ... She was brought up on the Jersey shore, but, [she never learned]. ...

KP: But, if the Boy Scouts had a place for you, would this interest in the sea have still developed?

RF: It's hard to say. ... I always liked being around the water, and I went to camp, a YMCA camp, and that improved my swimming, of course, but, I got into the canoes and war canoe racing, which, oddly enough, war canoe racing is very similar to the crew I ended up with at Rutgers. ... It just seemed like one thing blended into the other. ...

KP: Did your parents know you were going to college? When you were going through high school, did you expect to go to college?

RF: Yes.

KP: It sounds like the Coast Guard Academy was your first choice.

RF: At that time, it was, yes. As a matter-of-fact, I went to Rutgers because I was called a shoe-in for the next year's class. [In] 1939, there were 5,000 applicants for the Coast Guard Academy. Now, they're going to take about eighty, out of those 5,000. ... Out of that 5,000, they weeded it down to about 2,500 ... to take the exam, roughly half. ... Out of the 2,500 that took the exam, 200 passed the math, and I passed the math. Out of the 200 that passed the math, eighty passed the English. I did not pass the English. ... I needed [a score of] seventy and I got sixty-seven. ... Through Powell, I was being sponsored by Captain Stromburg, from Staten Island. I went over to see Captain Stromburg before the exam. ... He had me write out letters. He had me write out some things for the English [exam]. He said, "Fine, what you've done is fine." Of course, [in] that part of it, my weak point was Shakespeare, ... because I really did not have any real background in Shakespeare. Unfortunately, the examination had quite a bit of it, enough that I missed it ... by those points. ... Captain Stromburg said, "Well, you go to a college, you like Rutgers, for a year, just one year. ... Take the exam again. ... You're a shoe in. ... You'll get that difference made up. ... You know where your weaknesses are." So, I came down to Rutgers, and then, in the fall, I went out for crew. I played basketball. I did go out for basketball at Rutgers, too, but, I wasn't big enough. ... I played a little football in high school, but, ... I didn't grow until my senior year in high school. I was 125 pounds when I was playing football as a sophomore in high school. ... So, I wasn't proficient at it and baseball I loved, but, I wasn't that good. So, I went out for crew in the fall and did quite well, because I'd been rowing boats for three years, as I grew up with Powell. ... Also, Walt Schwanhauser, ... he just died recently, he was on the crew. ... He worked on The *Ballantrae* also. He was at Rutgers and on the ... JV crew, at that time. ... So, I knew Walt, and he knew me, and it made a nice association with Chuck Logg, who was the coach. ... So, I got wrapped up in crew and I tried to get into basketball. I was the last one cut. ... I always felt bad about that, because I love basketball. ... I

didn't make it, but, I went back on the spring crew, and our crew, that year, just developed beautifully, the freshmen crew. ... [During] the season, we were winning our races pretty good.

We only lost one race. ... A kid caught a crab, who, unfortunately, never raced again, too. I felt sorry for the kid, because we were winning. We were a good length on Columbia, and he caught a crab, and they passed us [to] win the race. ... Do you know what I mean when I say a crab?

KP: No.

RF: Well, that's [when] the oar got stuck in the water. When he was retrieving the oar, you're supposed to have the oar flat. ... Well, if you get it a little bit this way, [motioning] and it hits the water, it just cuts right down in the water. ... It goes bang, and hits you in the stomach, and, often, may throw you right out of the boat. That's called catching a crab. Of course, in the meantime, it stops the boat that you're racing. So, this kid caught a crab in a freshman boat. ... In the middle of the season, we had an open date. ... Chuck Logg said, "Okay, we'll have a race between the varsity and the freshmen." Our boat was a freshman boat, and doing quite well, and we won. ... The freshmen beat the varsity, which was a major upset in school. ... The *Targum* comes out with a headline. I don't know how big the *Targum* is today, but, I guess they still have the *Targum*. ...

KP: Yes.

RF: [It] comes out with a headline, "Sensational Frosh Beat Varsity." ... It comes out like on Monday morning, or whatever it was. We go down to crew, we're kinda being a little bit sheepish, because they made such a big thing of it in the *Targum*. ... The varsity says, "Okay, sensations. Let's see what you're going to do today." They were ribbing us, but, we did beat them. ... They were bigger and stronger, but, we were, what they call in rowing terms, ... "smoother." ... We held them pretty good on the start, but, in the middle of the race, we were smoother, and we were, what they'd call, not checking the boat. ... The boat would go like this, [motioning] when you're rowing. If you can get it to glide continuously, you're going to pick up ground [and win]. ... Every time they're starting, you're going to (affect their starting?) the boat up again. ... They had a lot more strength for the finish, and they almost caught us, but, they didn't. ... So, we won in what they call the body of the race, the main part of the race. ... That's the smooth part. ... So, with that, I was all wrapped up in Rutgers, and I never went back to the Coast Guard Academy. ... [I] never took the exam. I stayed at Rutgers.

KP: You had become really involved at Rutgers.

RF: I had become so involved at Rutgers. ... I was not in the fraternity then, but, in Rutgers itself. ... I didn't want to change, so, I stayed. ... That year, next fall, we started out. The coach took the stern four of us and put us right into varsity, as sophomores. ... There were four of us and the coxswain, Herbie Irwin. That's a guy you want to interview, too. ... I didn't know that Herbie was at Iwo Jima [until] just recently, because we were at Iwo Jima. ... I was calling up, soliciting money for the crew, and I called Herbie, trying to get some money out of him. ... Something brought it up. ... This was last year and they were talking about the World War II vets

and stuff like that. ... I can't remember how it came about, but, there is a doctor down by where I keep my sailboat, ... who was a doctor at Iwo Jima, and he and I've talked quite frequently. We were there with our unit, and, it turns out, Herbie, who was the coxswain of our crew, I knew he wasn't in the Marines, but, he was at Iwo Jima. ... So, we got [to] talking about it, and how it went, and so forth. ... He got out of it alive, of course, and didn't get wounded either. ... We had quite a conversation. About ten minutes later, I'm talking to Albert McCleese, who is also involved with the crew. He was on the JV Crew. He was also an engineer ... with me. Al was a flight engineer. He was a mechanical engineer. He went into the Air Corps and became a flight engineer. ... So, I told him about talking to Herbie. He said that Herbie was at Iwo Jima, and I said, "I didn't know that." He said, "Oh, thank God for Iwo Jima." He was a flight engineer on B-29s [flying] out of Saipan bombing Japan. He said, "We got hit on about our fortieth mission," or something like that, and he says, "we were never going to make it back to Saipan. ... The engines were giving us trouble," and I don't know whether they had a fire or not, but, ... "we were going to have to ditch and hope for a rescue. ... But," he says, "Iwo was there now." So, he says, "We made it to Iwo and landed there." So, he says, "We all felt that Iwo Jima saved our lives and I forget how many lives they figured there." That was our only reason for taking Iwo.

KP: No, I know.

RF: And so, Albert McCleese was saved because of that, and there was Herbie, was there, and we were there, and so forth, all involved with the crew. ... I digress. So, anyway, I stayed at Rutgers.

KP: Where did you live your first year? You mentioned that you had not joined a fraternity.

RF: The corner of Easton and ... corner house. ... Easton goes this way. It's almost the last street. What is the street that goes in front of Queens, this side of Queens?

KP: I think it is Hamilton.

RF: ... Hamilton and Easton. It was the house right on the corner. I was looking at it the other day. I came down here, what did I come down here for? Oh, I was looking at a job. Came down here looking at a job a little further east of here, but, I came through Easton Avenue to get around to get to that job, ... and that's where Herbie Irwin, who was the coxswain of the crew, he was my roommate, and so, we came back in the fall. ... I was out for crew, Herbie was, ... what the heck did he take? Well, it was a literature type course anyway. ... He says, "Well, you big guys," he says, "you can all go out for these sports. ... Us little guys just don't qualify." He says, "We just don't make it." I said, "Well, why don't you come out for crew?" He says, "Well, what do you mean?" I says, "Well, somebody's got to steer the boat." He says, "Gee, I never thought of that." So, he came down, and he became the coxswain of our freshman boat, and the two of us, we roomed together, and then, all afternoon, we'd sit looking at each other as we would be practicing crew. ... [laughter] We ate together at the thing, and then, he went into Alpha Chi Rho and I went into Chi Psi. ... No, he didn't go into Alpha. ... No, he became a Beta. ... Whatchacallit became an Alpha Chi Rho, ... Maggio. ... Course, Maggio, he stayed in the

service, he's another one you can interview. ... He went to the Pacific, I think. ... So, anyway, I digressed on myself there.

KP: That is fine. The digressions are fine.

RF: I lived at the house there on Easton and Hamilton, and then, I went into Chi Psi from that point on.

KP: Why did you decide to join a fraternity?

RF: Well, a lot had to do with Walt Schwanhouse, he rushed me on it, and I was having a little hard time, 'cause the way my father worked education, we went down here to a bank here in New Brunswick, and he put \$1,000 in the bank, and he says, "That's it." He says, "Anything you need over that, you have to get." He says, "This is what I can afford and this is what's there," and so, I had my own checking account. ... There was a base of 250 you had to have in there as a base amount, which I couldn't touch, but, that was just the \$1,000 that I could touch, and so, I waited tables at the fraternity, and I did my junior year, yeah, junior year. Sophomore year, I was made assistant treasurer. Any organization I got into, I always ended up as the treasurer, and I hated the treasurer's job, but, the thing was, that in the fraternity, your junior year, you got everything free, except dues, or something like that, when you were the treasurer. It was the only paid job in the fraternity, in our fraternity, and it was ... a considerable amount of money. ... So, as the assistant treasurer, you didn't get paid, but, that is when I would pinch-hit as a waiter and get some money that way, and then, of course, I was working summers and getting paid then. ... So, with that, I got through the sophomore year, and then, the junior year, it was almost like a freebie, and my senior year, I was president, and I went from treasurer to president, and, of course, now, I'm president and not getting any money. ... [laughter] That was my toughest financial year, ... and so, we went to summer school. ... I guess you knew about that. ... As soon as the war, ... they...

KP: They pressed everything.

RF: Yeah, it was three semesters a year, ... which proved to me that, ... if students could afford it, that that's the way the college should be run, because we had two weeks between semesters, in each case, which is enough vacation time, and we really had a lot of fun that summer.

KP: You did not resent not getting the summer off.

RF: Oh, no, because you knew the war was on. ...

KP: Yeah.

RF: And, you had a purpose. The thing was, you were going to get drafted if you didn't get in something. ... So, I was in the Navy at that point. I'll back up to that phase, but, ... we went to summer school. We set up a summer student council. ... All the things we had in fall. The only thing was, ... they had no athletics. ... We made up our own athletics in the form of pick up

teams, or a group would get together, make a softball team, and challenge another group, and that sort of thing. We all were doing something in athletics, 'cause we were all trying to get in shape, 'cause we knew damn well we were going into the service, and, when Pearl Harbor occurred, December 7, we were juniors. ... Well, let me back up, when I was a sophomore, which is the easiest engineering year, I mean, you got that from talking to your fraternity brothers, and so forth, the sophomore year is the easiest year, and I got through freshman year in fair shape, and the government came through with this civilian pilot training program for flying.

This is why I say they knew there was a war coming on, because, of course, by '39, Hitler was raising hell in Britain, and so, I thought, "Well, that's free, and I'd like to learn to fly," and so, I took it. And so, you got one credit, because you had to go to night school over [at] the engineering building, you know, for weather, navigation, those things. ... You got one college credit. They wouldn't credit you for flying, they credit you just for the school work. ... So, I thought, "Well, I'll take that," and, when you signed up for it, there was a very strict physical, very strict, and, when you signed up for it, if you read the small print, it said, "In the event of war, you will go to the Army or Navy Air Corps." It wasn't a case of [choice], ... you were an enlisted individual.

KP: You knew when you signed. You had looked at the fine print.

RF: That's right. So, Pearl Harbor came in, I had my license then, when Pearl Harbor came in. ... I had just flown for that year, and I am probably one of the few pilots, ... in fact, I know that I am one of the few pilots that has had a forced landing, and had a dead stick landing when the engine quit while you were in the air. ... That all happened in my one year of flying. ...

KP: Go ahead.

RF: Well, anyway, ... it was your choice, Army or Navy. ... So, Dr. Clothier, a very brilliant man and very nice [man]. ... As a matter-of-fact, his daughter was down at the camp that I was running. ... She came down as one of the leaders, when the girls came to camp. ... I got to know her pretty well. ... I didn't date her, but, they used to kid, because we were always together, and ... then, when I was in the Navy, my first assignment at the school, she was in the hospital, not too far, so, I went to see her, once in awhile. ... But, anyway, Dr. Clothier had a convocation, the entire school, and he came in, he said, ... some of the substance was, "Now, I'm not talking to you today to try to keep you in Rutgers." He says, "We know that a lot of you are going to be in the service, ... but" he says, "right now, ... you are all gung-ho about this war, and you are going to run down, you are going to enlist," and he says, "You are going to be in the Army, or Navy, or whatnot, and that's it." He says, "You might not be in right place." He says, "I am going to ask you to take one month." He says, "I can guarantee you right now that, if you enlist," he says, "you'll still be here in school waiting for them to tell you where to go, because they have no place ready for you." So, he says, "It's not a song and dance about ... keeping you here at Rutgers, in that respect. ... The thing that I am talking about is to try to get you so that you go to the right place in the ... services, a place where you'll serve best for you and for the service, ... for the government, the country." And so, I did what he said and I waited. ... So, I went down in February ... [to] the Navy Air Corps here in New Brunswick, and I'm about halfway through. ... Richie Steinberg went down with me. ... He was my roommate. ... (He ... was lost in the war.)

... I went down to New Brunswick and ... I went through the physical. ... The physical wasn't that strenuous. ... Went through the physical, and was filling some papers out, and an officer came out, and he said, "You Finley?" He said, "You're an engineer, aren't you?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "You're in your junior year." I said, "Yes, sir." He says, "We don't want you in the Air Corps. ... We want you as an engineering officer." He says, "We need engineering officers. ... We can make pilots out of guys with one year of college." He says, "We can use you at the end of the junior year. ... You'll be qualified to be an engineering officer, because you would have finished all of your thermodynamics and all that stuff," and he said, "we won't be able to put you any place until you're finished your junior year, anyway." So, he says, "You're then qualified to go in as an engineering officer. ... That's where we need you." So, all right. ... So, he said, "Go over there," and he gave me a note, "over [to] the USS *Wheeling*, in New York." So, I went over here and finished my enlistment there. ... They said, "We'll let you finish school, if we can." He said, "It depends how much our demand is, and so forth, here. ... You'll be earmarked as long as you accelerate," which we did. ... So, we finished school, we were the Class of '43. We actually finished in December of '42. ...

KP: When did you graduate? Did you have a graduation?

RF: Yeah, we had a January graduation. ... They held their graduation like the first week of January, so, it was in '43, but, we actually didn't do anything for two weeks. ... We were just home for Christmas and came back for graduation. ... So, we graduated in '43, but, in January, ... but, I was enlisted in '42. ... I got my orders in October or November of '42 to report to the New York Midshipman's School in the February Class of '43. ... I finished school, did get my degree and everything, and then, I went right over into Midshipman's School. ... This is where all the stuff that Powell had taught me paid off, because the first thing you are doing is you're doing a lot of marching, and then, they called one guy out, [and said], "You take over, and give commands, and march the rest of the ... fellows," and, of course, I'd done it all in Seascouting, so, my command accents and stuff were all proper, and I knew ... "first squad of the rear march, and second squad of the rear march," and all that sort of thing. ... So, then, we took our exams, and, at the end of the first month, which is like an officer's type boot camp, 'cause you're going to class every day, mathematics and such, and then, they had examinations, ... after you pass that, if you didn't pass that, you were still in the Navy, but, you were now going to the other boot camp. ... So, they lost about ten or twelve guys, but, the rest of us all passed that. ... So, then, you [were] assigned as midshipmen. ... You were sworn in as midshipmen, and then, we were assigned. ... I was made a battalion adjutant. ... You gave the orders for all of the maneuvers and things. ... You also got a stateroom. ... The battalion commander got a stateroom, ... up in officer's country, with the officers. ... I got one with the chiefs, on the other end of the ship. So, I didn't have to sleep on the hammocks, or any of that kind of stuff, and I didn't have to have my lights out at ten o'clock, or whenever. ... I was not in that group, as an officer. ... About halfway through that class, whoever was regimental adjutant graduated, so, I was made the regimental adjutant then. The only tough part for the battalion adjutant that replaced me was that he had to stay where he was, because I outranked him. I still kept my room, [laughter] because there were only two rooms for midshipmen. ... The school was the old battleship *Illinois*. ... It had been converted and called the USS *Prairie State*. It was anchored in the Hudson River, so, the engineers were all on the ship, [and] the deck officers all went to Columbia

University. They were in rooms there. ... They called their floors, "decks," and used all nautical terms, but, they lived in regular college student rooms. ... The teachers, quite a few of them were a little bit older. ... Some of them [were] a fair amount older. ... They were probably never going to sea. ... They had an "S" after their USNR that meant specialist, ... a teaching specialist. ... A lot of them had been teachers, but, a lot of them were like me, they were never teachers, I mean by degree. Out of each class, when you finished your midshipmen four months, total, three months as a midshipmen and one month as an apprentice seaman, you graduated as a commissioned officer, you got your orders. Our class was ... 315 [sailors] and we all got orders. ... I was one of ten ordered back to the school to teach. So, my first assignment was right back where I had been for four months, and I was to teach, "Structures and Main Engines," I think they called it. ... So, I was assigned there for a year to teach, which was nice, from a personal standpoint, because my future wife was in nursing school in New Jersey, across the river. ...

KP: Also, you were close to your parents.

RF: My parents, yes. ... So, when I got a leave, I could just take a train to home. ... That was an interesting experience. ... I enjoyed teaching. ... I still do a lot of teaching in boating, with an organization, the United States Power Squadrons. ... So, I was assigned there to teach for a year, one year. ... We taught three classes, each class for four months. ... Then, after that, ... the prize you got, if you want to call it that, you could pick any kind of ship you wanted. ... Not the specific ship ...

KP: But, the type of ship.

RF: But, the type of ship, yes. ... So, I could have been on a battleship, I could have been on a carrier, cruisers. ... A lot of people say, "Why did you pick a destroyer?" On a battleship, there are sixteen engineering officers. ... On a carrier, there's about the same. ... Cruisers are less, maybe eight. ... I'm coming on, ... even though I've had one year under my belt, I was still an ensign. ... I made jg about two months after I left the school. ... [Two or] three months, something like that. ... On the destroyer, there is only three engineering officers, so, you've got a full watch, just like everybody else. ... There are only three of you there, so, you are as important as the other guy, whereas on a battleship, you're going to be a gopher. ... I didn't want to be a gopher, so, I took the destroyer. ... We went to destroyer school, down in Norfolk, [for] ... about three months, I guess. After that, because you were in this privileged group, you were to get a new ship ... that's under construction, to be assigned to that. ... So, after we graduated and finished up destroyer school, then, we went to fire-fighting school, and we went to boiler school, up in Philadelphia. They kept sending us to different schools, while you were waiting for your ship. ... So, after the "As" got theirs, (Adamick?) got his ship, and Alderman got his ship, and so forth. There was another fellow by the name of Morewussell, ... and he and I were talking one evening at dinner. ... I said, "Hell, let's find out how fast they're going to get down this alphabet. ... If they're going to go, 'A-B-C-D,' there is about forty of us here. Christ, the war will be over by the time they find a ship for us." So, we decided to go see the commander of our engineering group, which we did. ... He was the lieutenant commander. ... He said, "I couldn't tell you. ... There is a lot of them being built. ... You might be here for three, four, or five months. ... We

don't know how quickly they'll get the ships ready." We said, "Well, don't they need any engineering officers on the ships that are already out there? The guys must be out there for thirty months and get transferred back for rest and reassignment." He said, "Oh, sure. ... If you want to do that, ... I can take care of that." Morewussell was with me, and he ... turned to me, and said, "If you'll promise me that you'll never tell my wife this conversation took place, ... I'll go with you. ... Let's get to our ships." So, the commander laughed, and so, he got us assigned. ... I never did tell Morewussell's wife. ... I don't know whether he's still alive today or not. ... We went out together. ... He went to the *Hutchings*, and I went to the *Monssen*, and we met in Chicago. ... He lived in Ohio, I think. ... So, we arranged our tickets to ... ride out together. We met in Chicago where I saw an uncle I had seen once in my life. ... He worked with my grandfather, who had since passed away. ... I went out with my uncle while he had his last dinner in Chicago with his wife, and we [took] ... a train out to the West coast. ... We got out there, I was put on standby. ... [To] Morewussell, they said, "Oh, the *Hutchings*. ... Let's check on that. ... Your ship just got hit. ... It's on its way back to this country to be repaired. ... Sit down. ... You'll probably be here for months." So, he went out, and looked for an apartment, and then, sent for his wife. ... He had her come out to the west coast, but, she never knew, unless he told her. ... The *Hutchings* did come in, and they did go back out, I know that much. ... Then, I went to San Francisco ... and a very humorous thing happened. There was a group of us there in San Francisco, waiting for assignment. We had to check in every other day. ... One day, we were all set up, very secret. "Don't tell anybody where you're going, you just go into Room Twelve." We went to Room Twelve, all the blinds are down, and there is a guard outside, and whatnot. ... "What the hell is going on here?" We went in, and they said, "You're going on a ship to ... a destination in the Pacific. ... We can't tell you where you're going, but, you're going out there. From there, your ship will come in, or you'll be assigned to your ship, and so forth. ... Get your baggage. ... We're going to give you these blue tags to put on your baggage, but, we're not going to tell you where we're going to take you on the train either. ... You'll find that out on the train. ... It's going ... to take you to a place where they'll then take you to the ship." So, we get on the bus and we go down to the railroad station after this big secret meeting. ... The redcap comes up and says, "Hi, boys. ... Let me take your bags. ... You're on that special train to San Diego, aren't you?" [laughter] That's how we found out where we were going. ... We were put on a special train, I think it had square wheels, because it stopped for every other train on the way down to San Diego. ... We finally got to San Diego, and we were going on a carrier, the *Windham Bay*. ... We asked [them], "Can't we go ashore?" and they said, "No. ... I don't know. ... You're not supposed to say what ship you are on." "We won't tell anybody." Finally, they said we could go up to the Officer's Club, the Medical Officer's Club, which was right adjacent to where the ships were. ... We had to get a doctor to sponsor us, so, we went to the hospital. ... There are about ten or twelve of us, and [we say], "We need someone to sponsor us into the Officer's Club for the night. ... We're on a special assignment." We wouldn't say what it was, but, so, he signed us all in. ... So, we just spent the evening down there, talking and having some drinks. We came back to the ship [at the end of the night]. ... The *Windham Bay* was the second ship to go from the States to the Solomons area. ...

KP: Without a stop.

RF: ... Yes, nonstop, and without any escort. ... We only had one tentative thing, where they thought they had a sub on sonar. ... Either it wasn't [a sub], or it didn't do anything about us. That made our crossing the Equator a little bit easier, because it happened right at the Equator. ... We went to the Admiralty Islands and went ashore there. ... What the [Navy] did was, ... they put that area, the Admiralties are east of Guadalcanal, (Manus Island) Bougainville and those islands, ... on Philippines time, which meant that ... you were getting up in the dark, and going to work in the dark, and going to bed when it was still light out, because you were on Philippines time. ... That was to eliminate the confusion on orders and stuff, because most of the supply ships and everything else would be coming into that area. ... [They went in] New Guinea ... and we were working on the invasion. ... We got to the Admiralty Islands, on Manus Island, was when Leyte Gulf took place. ... The *Monssen* was in Leyte Gulf. ... She was one of the ships making the torpedo run. ... Then, she was sent back, ... and I don't know how Captain Sanderson got to the Admiralties, but, he was there. ... He and I were on the *Monssen*, same time, same day. ... It was interesting. ... I guess we were there about four or five days and they'd have movies ... at night. ... I guess it was a case ... of getting up at night time, and then, running into daylight about noontime, and working the rest of the day at night, [in the] dark. ... One evening, we were there, looking at the movie, it's outdoors, of course, and one guy turned around, and what the hell's he got? He's got a Jap soldier sitting along side of him. ... He whispers to someone else, and they whisper down the line, and they go up, and they get a guy that's got a gun. ...

KP: You were all Navy people, too.

RF: Yes. ... To arrest the guy. ... It was a Jap soldier and he had just come out of the woods.

KP: He just came and watched the movie?

RF: Yes. ... He figured, this way, he wouldn't get shot. ... Either two guys were going to wrestle him down, or ...

KP: He was just sitting there?

RF: He came in to become a prisoner. ... That happened several times, I understand. ... It was a shock to the guy that was sitting next to him, that's for sure. ... I understand that happened quite frequently, in that period. ... They wanted to quit, they wanted to be taken prisoner, but, they didn't want to get shot in the process. ... So, when they saw something like that, they just sort of snuck in ... there and waited for the movie to end, theoretically, except for the guy ... looked over and there was a Jap. ... I don't know how many Japs were on those islands. ... On Bougainville and Guadalcanal, they still had quite a number of Japs on those islands. These incidents happened quite frequently on those islands.

KP: The Navy is very distant, too, to see a Jap. If you are in the Marines or in the Army, the enemy could be right next to you, but, for the Navy, you are out on a ship.

RF: Oh, yes. ... That's right. ... It isn't quite as personal a war. ... You're fighting equipment against equipment. ...

KP: When you saw this Jap ...

RF: I didn't see him. ... I just heard about it there. ... There was a little bit of fuss, and we went over, [to see] what the hell was it? Everybody is curious about what happens. ... Did somebody have a fight? Did somebody pass out? What happened? We didn't expect [to hear], "Well, a Jap just came in and sat in on the movie." [laughter] ... I heard of other incidents where that happened, too. ... So, from there, the *Monssen* came in, and I went on the *Monssen*. ... Then, we went back for the invasion of Lingayen Gulf. ... We went down to New Guinea first, a place called Lai, and ran the practice invasion, just with ships, not with their troops. ... They would take an area that looked like where you were going to invade and you would run a practice invasion, there. ... You'd see the mountain over here, lowlands here, and all that sort of stuff. ... It was just so you got a picture of where you were. ... The landing craft would go in. ... Don't forget, they had landing craft there and stuff like that, but, they didn't have them full of troops. ... I don't remember seeing troops anyway. ... We were going to be laying on the outside as anti-aircraft and the kamikazes had started then. That was the beginning of the kamikazes, was the Philippines. ... We went up, we had the troops for D-plus-two-day. ... We were the only destroyer in the group that we took, ... though we had some patrol craft, PCs. They were small. ... I don't know what they were going to do, other than keep the other ships in line, because they weren't set up for ... any real anti-aircraft. They had a machine gun, but, ... it's like throwing rocks at an airplane. ... So, we were about the only one. The LSTs were so slow that the destroyer, [and] she's a cumbersome vessel running around at six [to] eight knots, ... so, we'd have these zigzags that you were to do. I often wondered how good they were for that kind of convoy, but, that's what we still had to do. ... Then, we would run a zigzag on a zigzag, ... just to have more way, that if something happened, that we could get going quicker. ... The patrol craft would get underneath our radar, so then, we had to keep added watches on, so we didn't hit one of our own ships. We had one Dutch captain as ... we were going up alongside the Philippines. We were already in sight of land, so, they had to know we were coming. We could see them. They must have been able to see us. ... This one Dutch captain put his running lights on, because we were all in pretty close. ... He said, ... "Too close, too close. ... I need my running lights." We're yelling at him to turn them out. So, finally, we told him, "You turn them out or we'll shoot them out." [He said], "No," [so], we took a twenty mm, and shot a couple of shots across his bow, and the lights went out quick. [laughter] ... We had the troops for D-plus-two. ... [There was a] brand new set of destroyers, the twin mount destroyers. We were called 2100s and they were called 2250s. ... They had three mounts with two guns in each mount. We had five mounts with one gun in each mount. ... The kamikazes had started there, and, ... I think, four of them were damaged, out of the five. I think the *English* was the only one that was left. ... So, they were left, and we replaced the five of them, all by ourselves. ... There, the Japs pulled another thing they hadn't done before. ... The freighters, and ... supply ships, and everything else, were anchored off of Lingayen Gulf. ... They, the Japs, were swimming out with dynamite strapped to their chests ... and a big magnet. ... They'd come up to the ship, and the magnet would pull the Jap up next to the ship, and then, they'd pull the cord, and blow the ship up, and themselves, of course. They had no qualms about doing that. ... When we got there on D-plus-two-day, they had hit several of the ships, which I think survived, but, I mean, they had a big hole blown in them, and there was a lot of stuff damaged, and got some men killed, but, I don't think

they sunk. ... Then, at night, ... each ship had their ... whale boat just circling, so that anything they saw, they would shoot at. I was never sure that that was the right answer. I was more inclined to say, "Don't have anything in the water and have the fellows on the ship with the guns. ... If a guy was swimming, he was going to make some kind of turbulence, and then, shoot him," 'cause this way, you always had the wake of the whale boats overlapping, and making waves. So, I think, the guys that shot, I think, were shooting at a wave, ... [laughter] the wakes going together. But, I wasn't the admiral. ... We stayed there, through air attacks there. ... All through this period that I've mentioned up until now, we were part of the slower invasion-type force, and the food was not too good. The only meat we had on board, at that point, the whole time I was aboard til the time we go with the fast carriers, was pork. ... I'll eat pork, I don't have any trouble eating pork, but, I don't like it three times a day. ... I was to the point where I was only eating it once a day. ... The one advantage we had as officers was that we could put in some money of our own, and, when the supplies were brought on board, one thing we would buy was peanut butter and jelly. ... We got the bread, we made the bread, but, we all liked peanut butter and jelly. ... A lot of us were eating one meal, would be almost [all] peanut butter and jelly, just 'cause we were tired of the pork. ... Then, when we were assigned as a squadron to the fast carrier task force, I don't know whether we went into the Fifth Fleet or Third Fleet first, we were with the task force from that point on. ... They had the fliers. That meant you ate well. ... We had very good food from that point on. The only time we ran into a problem, we were still with the Fifth Fleet or the Third Fleet, we went back down, for some reason, I don't remember what, towards New Guinea. ... They sent food out from Australia. ... It was beef and it was beautiful. It was gorgeous looking. ... They brought it on board. It was all frozen, and we put it in our freezers, and our lockers, and whatnot. We had a problem with that, in that the temperature went up. We had all this frozen food in the frozen locker and the refrigeration machines were working great. ... All three engineers were down there, [and we were saying], "What the hell is the matter? [These] damn temperatures." We were getting really scared. ... We did all the tests and everything checked out. ... Spike Russell, who was the chief engineer, and he had been ... a former chief machinists mate, he said, "Maybe we don't have enough air circulating in the freezer boxes." When they sent it aboard, it was all cartoned in strips of wood, all nailed together, and then, in cartons, and packed real well. It made it real easy for packing. ... We took a fan out of one of the officer's staterooms, not ours, one of the others, [laughter] ... and we wired it into the lighting system, because there were lights there. As soon as you got that circulation of the fan going, that temperature went right down like that.

KP: So, you saved the beef.

RF: The only thing the crew didn't like was, we had to bring them ... in, "Get it all out of here now," brought it all out. ... We had them re-store it and break a lot of the wood up. ... We stored it with layers ... [of wood, so that there were] areas for the circulation to take place. We didn't have to keep a fan in there. Technically, a fan is adding heat to the thing, which should make the temperature go up, so, we wanted to get back to the normal way of doing it, but we had to get more air circulation. ... The crew had to come in, and pull a lot of this one, and then, a lot of that. ... They weren't too happy about that. ... But, then, we got the beef. ... The captain ordered steaks for all hands. Great, boy, these beautiful steaks came out. You couldn't cut it with an ax, that was the Australian bully beef. ... The only thing they could do was make stew out of it. ...

So, we had rice and stew. The doctor, by orders, has to put the menu on the bulletin board every day. It's just part of Navy regs. So, it would be up there, whatever breakfast was, and then, it would be lunch was stew and rice, supper was rice and stew. He just reversed the names every day. [laughter] ... We had that for almost two months or three months, something like that, stew and rice and rice and stew. It was better than having the pork though. ... It got a little tiring. So, then, we got back with the carriers. We basically had good food with that. The fellows on the ship had done a very smart thing early, before they had [gone] ... into the Pacific. I think they did it down in Puerto Rico. They bought an ice cream machine. They all pitched in, the crew, a couple of bucks apiece, or something like that. ... When you rescued a pilot, you took him back to his carrier! ...

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

KP: When you rescued a pilot, the initial gift was ice cream from the carrier?

RF: ... We would ask for the powder, because we made our own ice cream, too. ... We got enough powder for making a lot more ice cream than they could give you. That was one of the smart things. ... As a result, on the *Monssen*, ice cream was served every day to the crew. Well, I'll put it this way. One day was for the officers and we could have as much as we wanted. ... Whatever was left over, because we couldn't eat all of what they would manufacture ... was put down in the crews' quarters, and they could buy a big container of ice cream for a nickel. They had to buy it. The next day, the crew all got the ice cream. ... It would take everything the crew could make to feed the crew ice cream, so, the officers didn't get any the other day. So, the crew, actually, if they wanted to spend a nickel every other day, could have ice cream every day, whereas the officers only got it once every other day. ... Having the ice cream like that, that was a real treat. ... The fellows that thought of that, when the ship was first commissioned, were pretty smart. Not too many destroyers had ice cream machines. ... That was real good!

KP: One of the things a lot of people found appealing about the Navy was, in fact, that the food was better than the Army.

RF: Oh, sure. Yes, you also slept in a bunk. ... I went to camp as a kid, and I slept on the ground, and I slept on hikes overnight. ... [I] ate camp food, and so forth, and so on. To me, you do live a lot better on a ship than you do in the Army. I never experienced the Army, so, it's probably unfair to say. ... That was my mental picture of it, at least in a combat situation.

KP: A destroyer is really small. I have been on one or two World War II destroyers in dock and I have been struck at just how small they are.

RF: 350 feet long, something like that.

KP: A warship is designed for fighting, so, it is really close quarters. I really had no conception of it until I had been on a ship.

RF: Oh, yes. The only one that is closer [in size], well, not counting the real little patrol craft, ... is the submarine. I've been on subs and their quarters are even tighter than ours, but, ours were tight, there is no two ways about it. ... In a destroyer, of course, you have a lot of sea way. ... You can have a calm sea, and, just because of the nature of the ship, there is going to be a roll to it. ... We went through ... the center area of one typhoon and on the outer areas of two other typhoons. Every time Halsey came out, we had a typhoon, for some reason.

KP: Which was scarier, the enemy or a typhoon?

RF: Under certain circumstances, they were pretty much running a tie. You kind of had faith in the ship. ... There was an interesting thing that we saw. The Navy didn't like our solution. ... We'd been through two typhoons at this point and, invariably, the typhoons seemed to catch ... the destroyers. ... We used to fuel from the big ships. They carried enough fuel for themselves, plus, the destroyers. ... So, we would go alongside the *New Jersey* or a carrier. ... Once in a while, a cruiser, but, mostly, the carriers and the battleships. ... We would fuel from them. Invariably, the typhoon come along when you were low on fuel, or there was a long typhoon, time-wise, and so, ... you ran low on fuel during the typhoon. ... There was a group of DEs and two destroyers that were lost in the Philippines area. I read the story on the one, where they got down to ten percent fuel. ... They had to take their ballast off. ... What you do is, you fill your tanks up with water when there is no fuel in them, to keep the ship stable. Then, when you are getting ready to fuel from the carrier or battle wagon, you pump that water off, and then, put fuel in those tanks. So, you've got a period of what you might call a semi-unstable condition, where you have only ten percent fuel. When that happens to you in a typhoon, you can be flipped over, and a couple of [the] tin cans did sink, because of that, and they lost the crews. We had a situation like that where we felt ... the ability to pump off the water was so poor. ... Say you have a two-inch pump. I'm not sure if it was a two or three-inch pump, but, it was a smaller pump. It took an hour-and-a-half, or two hours, to get to the fuel. So, we cross connected our system to a larger pump, the fuel transfer pump, which was like a four-inch pump, so, we could take ours off in half an hour, instead of almost two hours, or two-and-a-half hours, whatever it was. ... We were in one of these typhoons. We were right in the middle of it, but, it was a good sea roll, a darn good sea [roll]. ... We had to fuel. So, we had a meeting at the deck. The chief engineer had the forward fueling station [and] I had the aft fueling station. The aft fueling station, even in good weather, because of the wash going alongside from the carrier or the tanker, ... would hit, and that aft fueling station was underwater about half the time. So, only three of us were on the lower deck, myself, a BOS'N mate, and a machinists' mate. ... We had a system that if we saw a wave coming, we'd get down to the deck, and we would grab each other and part of the ship. ... Once in a while, you would end up where you were between two guys and no part of the ship, because of where you were standing. We never got lost over the side, but, we got washed on the deck a couple of time. We got covered. ... We had the fueling system worked out between the three of us. ... [During] the situation with the typhoon, we had a meeting with the bridge, with the captain. He said, "We think we ought to just fuel from the forward fueling station. The aft fueling station is going to be underwater most of the time anyway." ... The main reason being that, with this sea way, if the captain has just one hose, he can maneuver the destroyer alongside and maintain its position better than if he's got two [hoses], because two [hoses are] going to restrict his ability to move the ship. ... We did that. We got alongside. It takes longer to fuel,

'cause you're only using one hose, which we did, but, we did nicely. We got up around ninety-eight percent full, and they said, "Cast off," and we'd cast off. The *Norman Scott* came in behind us and got two fueling hoses over. ... The captain reported to the commanding officer, "Alongside of the tanker, fueling with two hoses and doing nicely." [This] made us look like we were a little bit chicken on the whole thing, and whatnot, but, so be it. ... The next thing we heard was, "We just overrode the tanker and holed port side. ... Request permission to return to Ulithi." The admiral, or commodore, whichever it was, said, "Captain, you chose your method of fueling. Repair at sea." Our method was right, [using] one hose. ... Everybody afterward used one hose, after the *Norman Scott*. ... They had to cut a part out of their upper deck, and put a guy over the side with a rivet gun, and shoot the bolts. ... We all had a gun that we could shoot bolts right through the steel. The steel on a destroyer is only about a quarter of an inch thick, five-sixteenths in some areas, so, it's not too thick. ... The *Norman Scott* had to repair at sea, and then, when they got into calmer waters, they could weld it up. ... Anyway, we proposed this method of changing to the Bureau of Ships. ... "What we were doing is dangerous, when you're doing it in a bad sea condition, and what we've got worked." ... A couple of months later, we got a call [for] the chief engineer and myself to come up to the bridge. The captain said, "I got a letter from [Bureau of] Ships. They don't like what you have. ... Let me read it to you." So, in a very stern way, he reads me this thing. ... It says to, "Cease and desist immediately. Restore the original system," and all of these reasons. "Weld everything up with full welds," and so forth, and so on. ... He read this to us very seriously, [and] said, "I want you to do just what they said. The only thing is, on the welding, make those tack welds, and, if we get in a situation like we were in before, you can clip those tack welds off and put your system back in. ... I know it works in a typhoon." So, we put the system back in, so we could shift it back, if we got in a typhoon.

KP: This was thought of on the spot?

RF: Yes.

KP: In fact, you were going against Navy regulations.

RF: Oh, yes. ... We knew that ... we were probably going against Navy [regulations], ... but, we had a situation develop. ... We had another one ... that they gave us a letter of commendation on. ... We had been having a lot of trouble. ... You have a pressure reduction system on water going through a unit called a reducing unit. ... The way it was made, it's about yea long and about that diameter, and you want high pressure here and low pressure there. ... The way they had it was like a series of baffles in this thing. One hole was up, the next one was down. ... As it goes through, it reduces the pressure. ... As it hit the end, the end is made like this, the last plate is here, the hole is here, [motioning] the water would go out here and impinge on this tapered section. ... After so many months, the water just wore a hole through it, and you'd have to make a whole new unit, or buy a whole new unit, or something. ... This bothered us. ... The chief engineer thought of this. This was his idea, which is why I like what I was lucky to have been sent to this ship. These two guys had been in the Navy. Spike had been in ... for fifteen years and Kenny ten years. So, it was Spike's idea. He said, "If we could get the water to impinge on itself ... and dissipate, ... we're not going to keep wearing these things out. ... [The water] would come down this way, and wear out here. The original one had the water going through like that.

... [motioning] We put these holes in at forty-five degrees, or whatever the angle is.” This is where I, being the trained engineer, a graduate engineer, could sit down [with it]. ... I had taken some books along, so, then, I worked out how big these holes should be, and the angle they should be at, and we made this up. ... This was printed for us on a hospital ship, because we didn’t have that kind of equipment. ... I made the drawing up. ... That’s the curve of the present Navy unit that we ran through the tests. So, as long as my curve stayed above theirs, I wasn’t endangering the equipment it was going through. If mine dropped below that, we would stop the test immediately and say it [didn’t] work, and redesign it.

KP: And, it worked.

RF: And, it worked. So, this was our letter of proposal we received from Buship. ... [showing document] [Reading] “This command has received several reports of failure of the present type of multiple orifice fitting, as a result of erosion of the wall of the discharge chamber, caused by impingement of the stream from the last orifice. A redesign of the multiple orifice fitting is therefore indicated. Any redesign should provide for the dissipation of the energy of flow, without the impingement on the shell of the fitting. The Type Commander appreciates the interest and initiative shown by Lt. jg Holland, US Navy, and Lt. jg Raymond A. Finley, Naval Reserve, in designing and calibrating this new type of multiple orifice.” Those are the little things we would do when we weren’t fighting.

KP: It sounds like your decision to go with the destroyer proved to be correct. You had a lot of room to be creative.

RF: Oh, yes. ... Just like this newspaper shows you, it’s a group that goes from ship to ship. If you’re a tin can sailor, it’s almost like a fraternity. ... Most of the commanding officers like to get a destroyer, if they can. ... They’d all like to end up with a battleship or a carrier. ... The commander of the *Wisconsin* ... must have been a destroyer man, because, when we’d get alongside the *Wisconsin* for fuel, supplies, or whatever, they were very generous to us, very nice. Another thing was [that] you had movies, and you used to trade movies back and forth. Of course, if you got into port where you were not under a blackout, you could show movies on the stern of the ship, on the fantail, as they called it. ... So, you’d swap movies when you’d get alongside ships, particularly the big ships, because they had a bigger supply. ... [The] *New Jersey* and the *Missouri* ... were tough to deal with. ... I was movie officer, too. Everybody has a extra job. ... You’d have to say a B [movie] for a B, and an A [movie] for an A, and so forth. ... The *Wisconsin* was very nice to deal with. ... The *Missouri* was probably the toughest one, and the *New Jersey* was next, ... but, the *Wisconsin* was head and shoulders above the others [concerning] any of that stuff. ... I can remember, I think it was the *Missouri*. ... We were asking for something, and the fellow says, “What do you guys want, everything from us?” He’s yelling at us about it, and we finally just yelled back, “No, we just figured you were one of our supply ships,” or something like that, which they didn’t much appreciate. ... The digressing story on the *Wisconsin*, when I got home, at the end of the war, I had my first leave home, [and] got married, and came back, so, Bobbie lived the life of a Navy wife, for a while. ... On our way back, right after we married, I’m in uniform, and we’re sitting in the dining car. Two gentlemen sitting opposite us, you didn’t get a seat by yourself in those days in a dining car. ... Every seat was

going to be filled. ... These two men were, “dollar a year,” men, as they called them. They were men that took no salary, but, did work for the government. ... One of them was a, “dollar a year,” man, because the other one was working for the state. ... I was telling them different stories like that, and one of the ones [that I told him] was how the [captain of the] *Wisconsin* had duty on a destroyer, because he was so nice to us. I told them about the ice cream and all this sort of stuff. ... The fellow sitting across from us says, “Jesus, I’m glad to hear that one. ... I’m the lieutenant governor of the State of Wisconsin.” [laughter] I said, “I’m damn glad you’re not the lieutenant governor of the State of Missouri.” [laughter] I hadn’t been too kind to the *Missouri*. ... Those were the things that just got effects out of people, when you dealt with other ships.

KP: It sounds like you were very fond of your fellow officers and of your captain.

RF: Oh, yes. ... We had it great. The captain that I came aboard with, Captain Bergen, he’s now since died. I didn’t have the respect for him that I did Captain Sanderson. ... It wasn’t all his fault. ... He was tough on the officers, and, I thought, a little bit senseless at times. For example, we’re down in the Admiralty Islands, Bougainville, and Guadalcanal, [and] you’re below the Equator. It’s very hot. ... For dinner and all meals, you had to have your long sleeve shirt on and a tie. ... So, he wasn’t too popular, just on that. ... Of course, Captain Sandy comes on board now, in the Admiralties, with us, I mean, that’s where I got aboard. ... Captain Sandy’s sitting down there with his sleeves rolled up and no tie. ... He [was] the relieving captain. ... The rest of us had to go by the then captain, which was Captain Bergen. ... The men liked Captain Bergen very much, but, the officers didn’t care for him. I felt sorry for him ... when I learned more about him. He had been in Washington a very long long time, which is unusual. ... He was a commander, and was due for four stripes [to] become a captain, but, he had never had command of a ship. ... He was sent to the *Monssen*. ... The previous captain, can’t think of his name right now, everybody liked him, and he was a very, very fine [captain]! ... They were all Academy men, but, he knew his engineering, he knew his navigation. If something was wrong down in the engine room, he’d be down there. ... [He would] put on a set of coveralls, come down, see if there was anything he could do to help. ... Bergen relieved him and Bergen was the commanding officer during Leyte Gulf. Most of the Leyte Gulf operation was handled by the exec and the torpedo officer, as far as the actual battle. ... Bergen got the Navy Cross, because he was the captain.

KP: He gets all the blame and the glory.

RF: So, the exec ... got a Silver Star out of it and the torpedo officer got the Bronze Star. The engineering officer got the letter of commendation. ... That was quite a battle. ... There was a big gamble that paid off and worked. ... Captain Sandy was just the opposite. ... Very often, the aft steering would go out. ... It was an engineering problem. ... I’m on the watch, [but], I’d just get back there, and the phone rings. ... “It’s [Captain Bergen]. ... What’s the matter?” I said, “I don’t know yet, Captain, I just got here. ... I’ll call you as soon as we know what’s the matter.” Hung up the phone, and we [got] to pulling this thing apart, the phone rings again. I bet that phone rang three or four times while we’re still trying to find what the problem is. ... So, we finally find it, and [the captain] says, “Repair it immediately.” “Yes, sir.” He didn’t really know ... what kind of problem you could have. Same thing happened with Captain Sanderson, and,

again, I had the watch. ... Same thing, the phone [rang and it was] the captain. ... He starts, "Let me know what your situation is as soon as you know, so I can figure what I want to do." ... "Okay, fine." As soon as we knew what it was, and how long it was going to take, [we'd] call the bridge, and tell the captain it was fine. ... One had faith in his officers, the other didn't.

KP: How long was Captain Bergen on the ship? How long did you serve under him?

RF: I was only on with him for a couple of weeks, I guess perhaps a month. ...

KP: But, long enough to have a clear impression of the differences between the two.

RF: Oh, yes. ... When I came aboard to meet him, I will say that was a fine interview, because that's what it was. He's interviewing me. I was lieutenant jg, so, he said, "I understand you are the new chief engineer." Nobody had said anything about chief engineer until now. ... I said, "No, sir. ... I'm here as an engineering officer. I didn't believe I was to be the chief engineer." He said, "Well, you're the senior man. ... The present chief, ... Mr. Russell, is an ensign, and his assistant is a warrant officer." I said, "Well, has Mr. Russell been running the ship to your satisfaction?" He said, "Yes, sir." I said, "I don't worry too much about stripes and things, in that regard. ... He's got a lot more experience, he knows it. ... I've been on patrol craft, I've been on other ships, but, I haven't ... even been an assistant engineering officer on a destroyer. I've been through destroyer school for engineers, but, I've never been responsible." ... He said, "As long as you are happy, I am happy." It so happened that Spike made jg two weeks after I was onboard, so, from the crew's standpoint, they never knew the difference, the fact that I was actually senior to him. ... We got along very well.

KP: Did he know you had tried to outrank him?

RF: He knew that I outranked him, but, he [also] knew that I had talked to the captain.

KP: He knew the whole thing?

RF: Sure. I told him right off the bat, because I'm coming over with a stripe-and-a-half, and he's got a stripe. So, I said, "You're chief." ... Then, I found out his name was Spike and Kenny Dermam was the other engineer. ... His nickname was Spider. These guys had come up through the ranks.

KP: So, they were both Mustangs?

RF: They were both Mustangs. ... Spike, as I said, had fifteen years in the Navy and Kenny had ten. ... It was great, because they had all this experience, and I was a new boy on the block, as it were. ... We're taking engineering reports. It used to take them a week to make out the monthly report for engineering. They hated it. ... Right away, Kenny said, "You know who is going to be making out the engineering reports now, don't you?" I had never seen an engineering report. ... It was not that complicated. ... When it was due, the first of the month, I'd say, "Well, I have such and such a watch." It wasn't the bridge watch, because we'd have bridge watches as well,

sometimes. ... It was just my engineering watch. ... "Kenny, you cover my engineering watch, and I'll spend a day here, and get these engineering reports [done]." If they just left me alone for the day, I could get the engineering report done, and it was over with. That's when I started this thing that I had showed you. They had never had that before, but, I felt part of my job was education. ... So, I started these reports each month, how many miles we went, how fast we went, how many tons of oil we should have, how many engine miles steamed, 13,000, 20,000 [miles] steamed this year, and so forth. ... I would post [these reports] up on the bulletin board ... for the whole crew to see. ... My little mini engineering report was like a little mini newspaper to them. ... A lot had to do with the fact that you had to watch your water supply. We made our own water, and so, if we got too careless with the water, [or] if we were having trouble, this is a way I could show them that we had a problem. Fortunately, [in] the carriers and the battle wagons, when you went to take a shower, you took a salt water shower first. ... You used the salt water soap and that stuff. ... Then, you went over and got a fresh water rinse. ... We could take full fresh water showers, because we could make enough water for it. ... The funny part was that, when our monthly report was due, as I'm coming up to put it up, there would be a whole gang, a dozen or so guys, waiting to see what the report is. It became something to do, something to look at, something new to read. ... They were always interested in the ... hours underway. That was 701, forty-three in port. Here is 720, none in port. Here is 525, and 218 in port. ... [reading statistics] Those kind of things. They didn't care about the fuel per mile. The engineering group [was] all interested in that, but, the deck guys didn't care about that. ... They did like to see these other things. ... One month, we never got into port for a whole month, we're just chomping around at about twenty-five knots, or thirty knots, for the whole month. ... That was something that they used to enjoy. Then, I would run tests, things I would give [just] to the engineering crew. ... "This steam line, ... [Line A], or whatever it was, just burst. ... It got hit with a shell and it burst in, say, the after engine room. What do you do?" "You're in the after fire room and you guys are up in the forward fire room. ... What would you do if we get hit in the after engine room?" They would all have to work out the problems. ... "What connections? How do we shut off this steam?" ... the hardest thing to teach people in ships. [You] practice this, but, you were hammering this home all the time, because it's completely against human nature. If a steam line breaks in your engine space, the only way you are going to be saved is to go down and lay in the water that is in the bilge. You'll never make it from here to up there. It's 610 pounds of pressure, 850 degrees temperature. When that pipe breaks, it covers that upper deck immediately, and you'll not get through it, because it will sear your lungs. ...

KP: Do not even try.

RF: Don't even try. Go down and pray to God that the guys in the other two compartments will shut off the steam. ... That did happen to the *Mertz*. She took a five-inch shell at the fire room, where the boilers are. ... There is an upper level and a lower level. ... In the upper level, there are two men, and, in the lower level, there are about five. The two men up here were probably killed by the shell to begin with, so, they probably never knew about the steam. ... These other guys all dropped right into the bilge, and they were all saved, because the guys on each side got that steam shut off from the boilers. So, I would put these difficult problems up. Not always the same type of problem, but, different ones, as to, "What do you do if this type of thing happens?" Most of them were geared to trying to save your shipmate. ... You totally had to do that. These guys on

the *Mertz* were all saved. Now, Washington found out we all carried six inches of water in the bilge. ... They sent an order out to cease and desist. I don't know of any ship that ceased. The only answer they had to it was, "Let us go to Washington, and tell you to come out here, and take the water out of the bilge." That's the only thing you could say. ... We figure the six inches of water were not going to sink that ship. That is what their theory was. ... If you got a hit, you already had six inches of water in the bilge. ... Each section is ... compartmentated. ... There are two pictures in here. ... This one here, it's a little hard to see, but, it shows kamikaze damage to a ship in here. ... You can see a whole section of the ship gone here. ... Since it's all compartmentated, the ship will still float as long as you don't get it all the way through. When you catch too much, I just read. ... The doctor that I knew down where I had my boat ... got sunk down in Okinawa. ... She caught five kamikazes and that just broke the ship up. ... There was no way she was going to do anything but sink. ... On that ship, it just broke through bulkheads and ripped too much of it apart. ... Then, your boilers explode and that takes care of another compartment. ... The training was to try to get them to go down. ... It worked, where it was applied properly, where it was possible. An interesting thing with the kamikazes, ... they were trained, when they went against a destroyer, to try to hit her right in behind the bridge here, if they could. ... They would get into an engine room. ... They'd probably kill the captain and do the most damage. ... There was more of a possibility of sinking the ships, but, many of the ships survived. A lot of the people didn't. ... Our doctor got quite concerned about it, so, he had all the officers, the chiefs, and a few selected first class, and we all met in the ward room. He had plasma in a container. ... Spike and I [were] hooked up together. I was to take that, and give him plasma, and then, he had to take the needle and give me plasma. We only gave a couple of ccs, but, the idea was to show that you could give plasma and how you do it. ... You see these guys like Spike, fifteen year Navy men, I'm sitting there, and I have pretty good veins, but, that needle is going like that. [motioning] I said, "Come on, Spike. ... Slow down, slow down." ...

KP: Which is also probably against regulations, too.

RF: I don't know [if] that ... would be, because corpsmen could do it. ... The doctors knew. ... You didn't have to be out there long in the kamikaze thing. We were losing destroyers during the Okinawa campaign. There were more Navy people lost than ... Marines and Army people put together, because of the kamikazes. ... He was afraid he'd get one there behind the bridge. It isolates him. His battle station is up forward, under those guns, ... where the ward room was. ... That's his battle station, which I showed you a picture of, in the back. ... If he's isolated, he can't help the fellows aft. ... This was his thing. So, he took, then, jars of plasma and placed them aft, split them up, so that if we did have that problem, we could probably handle it. ... That, I thought, was a very interesting thing that Maxie worked out. Fortunately, we didn't have to [use it]. We had one operation, an appendix operation. ... Then, we had a Jap. The Japs came up with another thing. We mentioned about the kamikaze, we mentioned about the bombs alongside [the ships], with the dynamite on their chests. Another thing that they had done, which was recorded and sent to us on messages, the doctor is operating on a Jap, a flyer who has been shot down, to save his life. The Jap, being such a fanatic as he was, ... grabs the scalpel and stabs the doctor. ... In one case, he killed the doctor. Other cases, [as] it happened more than once, he wounded the doctor. So, we had shot this Jap down and we had him onboard. He'd been burned around the face, so, we got him onboard, stripped him, and gave him a set of coveralls to put on.

That's the other thing you did with a Jap. ... Even if he was okay, you put a ladder over the side and you stripped him over there, and stood back, because you don't know if he had a dynamite capsule under his body somewhere. ... Then, he gets rid of all his gear. I don't know whether we salvaged it or threw it overboard. I think we just let it go overboard. ... [We] gave him a set of dungarees, or something, to put on and brought him on board. So, we had this ... Jap, and the doctors could operate on his face where he was burned, apply the proper medications, and so forth. ... The captain turned to me and he said, "You stay with the Doc, get the .45, and you have it right on that guy's head the entire time the doctor is working on him. ... If he makes any move at him, you shoot him." So, I'm sitting there, but I have to keep moving around as the doctor is, because I have to be careful I don't shoot the doctor, or that the bullet would go through him and hit the doctor. ... If he was in position there, I would have the gun this way, so that if you were the doctor, [you were in no danger]. ... It so happened the guy didn't do anything. ... Then, we put him under guard back in the sick bay and I would have to feed him. ... I had a little book that was also given to me at the time I was there to guard him for the doctor. ... It was phonetic Japanese. ... I found him laying down and I wanted him to sit up. I looked through the book. Nothing said 'sit up,' no translation, but, there was, 'stand up,' and there was, 'sit down.' ... It was phonetic. ... Of course, I was amazed that he did what I told him. ... I look up phonetic Japanese. ... I said, "Stand up," and he stands up. ... I said, "Sit down," he sits down and we fed him. By the third meal, he just sat up. ... I would say, "Stand up. ... Sit down," real quick, [and] he would just sit up. [laughter] ... I also wish I had kept the book. I put it back to wherever we stored those things.

KP: How long did you have this prisoner of war?

RF: Three days. ... Two days or three days. It wasn't too long, because we're not outfitted to keep them.

KP: You do not know whether he was a kamikaze?

RF: Oh, yes, [he was]. ...

KP: It was a kamikaze who lived to tell about it.

RF: Yes. ... We had another incident. The *Norman Scott* was involved. ... I mentioned that ship before, on the other thing. ... This fellow crashed. It was like a kamikaze that missed. ... He came in, he got through the flack, but, he crashed, right in front of the *Norman Scott*. ... Of course, they swung over and picked him up. ... They went through the same routine of, "Take your clothes off," and so forth. He said, in perfect English, "All right. I'm not going to do anything. I'm not one of those." ... So, they went through it anyway, brought him up, and they took him to the bridge to see the captain. ... [In] perfect English, he said, "I'm a graduate of the University of Michigan. ... I stayed in the United States for several years after graduation. I was going to stay there longer, but, when I saw this happening, ... Japan is my homeland, so, I came home to serve my country. ... When they started this kamikaze nonsense, I thought that might be my only way out. ... I didn't know what they were going to do with me next. ... I didn't want to get into a situation where I was going to have to crash into a ship. I want to live. I didn't buy

this thing.” But, he joined it, with the sole thing that he might be lucky enough to get through the flack and ditch, ... which is what he did. ... He was saved. ... They kept him on board two or three days, something like that. Then, you transfer him to one of the big ships. ...

KP: You had mentioned that on the original ship, one officer who had been at Guadalcanal, on the first *Monssen*, which had been sunk. You related the one story about one of the black steward inmates.

RF: ... Through the port hole. ... He escaped through the ward room port hole. ... The port holes are the same size on this ship, and we tried to put him through that port hole. We could not get him through, no matter what we did. We were afraid that we were going to break his hips, trying to push him through. ... We don't understand how he got out, but, he knows that's how he got out. ... Things happened like that. I've heard of other instances of those things happening. I felt that way when we were working on a boiler, the inside of a boiler ... that we were working on to repair. ... We got into one of these attacks, and I was in the boiler, going in and out. You got a small port to get out. We obviously got in all right, but, when they start ... shooting, and you're inside of a boiler, if you think it's loud when you're on the outside, hearing those shells and five-inch shells going off, inside of a boiler it's amplified, and you want to get the hell out of there as quick as you can. ... I knew what he kind of felt like going through that port hole. I was thinking of him when I went through the opening for the end of the boiler itself to get out from inside while we're under attack. ... So, we worked with the carriers all through that period. It was fifty years ago today that we're talking about. We had a bombardment in Memmoran, where Halsey decided to get rid of an iron and steel works. ... There was a relatively narrow entrance, it was like coming into New York Harbor, but, then, it was a relatively good sized bay, sort of like Chesapeake Bay on the inside, about the size of Chesapeake Bay. ... The entrance was all mined, but, they had taken photographs of the mines, so, we knew where they were. ... We all snuck through the mine field without getting hit. There was a Navy base to the port, and that was what we were concerned about, because there were PT boats in there. We could see them, but, nothing came out, which we were very grateful for, of course. ... We were at battle stations, obviously. ... We were expecting kamikazes as well, but, we didn't get any kamikazes. This was north of Honshu, if I remember correctly. ... So, we cruised in there and the battleships let go. ... There were like four or five big stacks sticking up in the air and all of them went down, except for one. ... Halsey says, “Well, let's do it again.” At that point, I felt like I could shoot Halsey. I wanted to get the hell out of there. So, we turn around and we do the whole thing again. ... They got the rest, the other stacks, and I'm sure there wasn't much left of that plant. Now, an interesting thing was that the night before we went in, two subs went in, through this minefield. ... They were laying on the bottom, one at one end of the bay, one at the other end of the bay. ... We had received orders that, if our ship got hit and sunk, and we were put into the water, don't swim ashore, swim to the middle of the bay. ... They called them lifeguard subs. One of the lifeguard subs would come up, and pick you up, and rescue you. ... I thought it was miraculous that they got in there, but, they did, and we got out okay. We had one air attack, which was not much of an air attack, frankly. It was not a kamikaze. I don't know what the guy was really doing. ... He came in, and we shot at him, and he went away. ... After the war, after the fighting part, I mean, we were still out there. ... When we came back for the occupation, we got a hold of some of their charts, and we found out that there was a string of mines that we didn't know existed at the time

that the bombing took place, that laid between us, the destroyers that were between the mines and the land, and the battlewagon which was on the outboard of us. ... The string of mines was a straight line right between the two of us, [the battlewagon and the destroyers]. ... We never knew they were there and we sailed past it twice. That was just the grace of God, because we didn't know they existed.

KP: Otherwise, it could have been really disastrous.

RF: Whoever ... would have hit [one], the ship would have gone down, probably. ... Whether they would have been rescued by the other ships there, or have to go for the lifeguard subs, nobody knows. ... That was just luck. We found that out afterwards. We took their plot and we took our plot. ... They have what they call a tracing unit, [although] I forget the initials for it. ... It traces your course, the longitude and latitude of it. We kept those. They were like on tracing paper, so, we could make an overlay and see just where we were. We knew where the battlewagons were, relative to us, and then, this line of mines. ... We were glad to get out of there, though. ... Then, we had the bombardment of Tokyo, where we laid between the battlewagons and Japan. You could see Japan. ... An interesting thing is [that] you could see the sixteen-inch shells going over your head. I had seen pictures taken of them, in *Life* magazine, but, we actually could just look up and see them going over. ... At that point, it was ... [either] just before or just after the atomic bomb, ... that we did the shelling of Tokyo. ... Of course, when we first put carrier planes over Tokyo, that was a big shock to the Japanese, 'cause they'd been seeing bombers coming over, but, never small planes. ... The day they launched that first attack was a terrible day. ... [We] never thought we'd get the planes off. It was a heavy sea. It wasn't a typhoon, just a bad storm. We were putting the bow of the destroyer right under, and so forth, and we were doing about twenty-five or thirty knots in this damn thing. The carriers were going up and down, too, but, they would, when they'd release a plane, they had to wait until the bow of the carrier was down and, as it started up, they'd shoot the plane down the runway, so, it was on the upswing, [and] the plane would go off. ... There was rain. ... It was just absolutely miserable. But, the meteorologists were right. It was sunny over Tokyo, so, the Japs didn't know where the hell we came from. They had no idea where it was, and I don't think they even chased us back, [and] chased [us] out. ... They did, on one occasion that I know of, where when they came back out from that raid over Tokyo. We had another set of planes up about three or four thousand feet above. ... Of course, they could talk to each other, and, as they were out, the Japs were chasing them. So, then, as they got past where our planes above were, they would let them know, and then, they would dive down. ... We never had to shoot at a Jap plane coming out of those. ... The planes knocked them down. One other anecdote of that period was the best day of the war, our best week of the ... war in the Pacific. On a Sunday night or a Monday morning, somebody, I don't know who, shot down a Jap plane, and they recovered ... the plane and the pilot, and they got the code book. It was sent over to Halsey and he reviewed it. ... They did some checks on it, and they sent an announcement out ... on a, mikenann is radio frequency that's very short distance, so the Japs can't intercept you. They talked to us all on mikenann saying, "We'll tell you when to go to battle stations. You won't have these interruptions of general quarters, GQ. ... The gongs go off and everything happens, because we've got the code book. We'll know when they're coming, and we'll have planes in the air, so that we really shouldn't have that much shooting. ... We will send you to battle stations." We had a whole

week of it that way. We'd go to battle stations, the planes took care of most of it. What they didn't, we did, and we didn't lose a pilot, we didn't lose a plane, we didn't lose a man. ... The Japs lost everything they threw at us that week. ... That's why I call it the best week of the war, because we would walk to battle stations.

KP: Did you lose any members of your own crew?

RF: Just one. ... It was an accident. ...

-----END TAPE TWO SIDE ONE-----

RF: We had damage to the dome that you have under the ship, that your sonar is in. Sonar is the sounding device, looking for submarines. ... It was leaky, so, this young fellow went down to weld. ... He had about, maybe, a foot, or fourteen inches, of weld to do. ... He was down to about the last half inch or so. ... Whether it was a lurch in the ship [or what], we don't know what caused it, but, he fell over his own electrode and was electrocuted. The supply officer and I got down there first, then, the doctor came, of course, and we did artificial respiration on him for about two hours. The doctor gave him a shot of adrenaline right into his heart muscle, but, we never could get him back. So, he was buried at sea. That's the only man we lost. ... Somebody else went down, and finished the weld, and so forth. We don't really know what caused him to fall over his own electrode.

KP: In many ways, you were very lucky. You have been in several heavy situations.

RF: Oh, yes, with the kamikazes. Every ship, during that period that I mentioned earlier, where we lost so many people in that particular operation, everybody we relieved had been hit, and everybody that relieved us got hit. We didn't. We were lucky. We attributed it to the ... exec. He was Protestant and I was Catholic. [laughter] When we got into port, we would all get a hold of chaplains. ... I'd have a Mass said. The priest would come on board and hear confessions. We'd go over to a tanker, or ... where ever the priest was, and have a Mass, and George ... Hamm would arrange it for the Protestant boys. ... These landing craft would come from shore to take you. Now, you had 350 ... men and officers on the ship, and 200 would go to church. ... You have to leave one-third of the ship aboard all the time, anyway. One watch always has to be on board. So, if a guy happened to be on watch, you didn't go to church. ... The landing craft fellows said they thought they were coming out for a cruiser, because there were 200 men going to church.

KP: Which is a lot, because, I know, on a lot of ships, there was not the same amount of interest in Mass, or any services.

RF: Yes. Well, George had been sunk once. ... He was the exec, so, he was going to church. ... The guys knew him, and knew that he had been sunk, and so, he had about 100 Protestants go with him, and I'd have 100 Catholics go with me. ... We 200 ... would all go to church, and come back, and [we] felt a lot better about it. ... We weren't sure that was the reason, but, maybe it was. [laughter] We didn't get hit and we saw an awful lot of those ships go back. It was really

sickening. ... One of them looked like a carrier. I don't know how they were steering. They must have been using after-steering and a Boy Scout compass, or something, to find their way home, because there was nothing left above deck. They had an engine room going, and they had a partial stack up, but, it looked like a carrier. ... The whole [superstructure] was gone. They were making their way back by themselves. They had an awful lot of casualties.

KP: How much of it was luck? Was it good seamanship, too, and good leadership on your ship?

RF: I felt a lot of it was. ... You can't equate that, though, to getting hit or not getting hit. ... We had a couple of close calls on the kamikazes, the one I mentioned about the black fellow, I wish I could remember his name, who had been sunk once. ... He was loading .40 millimeters and the one fellow froze. ... He loaded both of them, as much as to say, "You're not going to get me this time." He was going to keep those guns going. ... When you got it down to .40 millimeters, they were pretty close. We had .20 millimeters, too. ... When they were going off, you knew the plane was almost on you. When you were in the engine room, of course, you can't see the plane. ... When we'd hear the five inch [gun] go off, we'd figure [the plane] ... was five miles away. ... When the .40s would go off, we'd figure, now, they getting down around two miles, somehow. ... When you heard the .20s go off, you looked to see where your life jacket was. [laughter] ... They're within a mile then, when the .20s go off.

KP: So, your view of the battle was by noise not by sight?

RF: Well, I was top sides, in some cases. ... I was damage control officer for the aft. ... We got short of officers, after a while. ... They were being transferred off, to replace them on other ships, but, we weren't getting any replacements. So, we were beginning to double up duties. ... I always enjoyed having bridge duty, and ... being up on the bridge, but, I got taken off of that, because we were getting so short on different things. I was doubled up on my general quarters assignment. I had the after engine room and after damage control station. ... If we got hit, or something like that, I was in charge of taking care of the damage. The supply officer, Roy Gustafson and I, Roy actually had one of the guns. He was on the ... sighting unit of the gun. ... He and I ... [had] our regular duty basis. I still had certain engineering duties, but, I also had the duty of decoding. That's why I have all these ... messages. I had access to them. ... The captain called ... [Roy and me] up to the bridge. [He] said, "We're short of officers. I know you both know how to use it. ... You have to do all your regular duties, your regular assignments, your battle stations. ... On top of that, the two of you have to do all of the decoding. ... I don't care how you do it, just do it." ... It was one of those things where Roy said, "I'll take the odd number days, you take the even number days." ... Then, we got the radioman, and said, "Okay, every time you get an, 'urgent,' [message], if it's an odd number day, get Roy. If it's an even number day, you get Ray." No matter what time they got an, 'urgent,' two o'clock in the morning, or whenever it was, you'd get up there and you'd decode it. ... Roy could type. I could type, [too], but, I'm a one finger typer. ... I don't know whether you ever saw the codings, but, they ... come through in five letter groups. ... It's just letters, but, it [comes through,] ... five, and then, space, five. ... You just type continuously. You don't put a space where the space is. ... They just put in five letter groups so that, mentally, you got to the point where you could look at five letters and momentarily remember them, and hit those five, end up at the next five. ... I had to keep

looking, back and forth, because I wasn't a touch typist. ... You'd type it up and you had this machine that had all these discs in it. As you're typing, they are flipping around, and [the message] ... comes out in English. ... Then, you'd type up a copy. I'd usually have one of the radiomen who could type. I'd make up the taped copy. ... I think I have one here that had tape on it [looking through papers]. ... We'd piece it together. ... We would put it out like that, on strips of tape, and then, they would type it out on a sheet like this. This was a carbon copy of the final product. ... We would put it together, the tapes that came out of the machine. ... Of course, where ever you see a letter that is wrong, it's either [a] case of the radioman going by ear, of course, on Morse code, putting in the wrong letter, or, I hit the wrong letter on the decoding machine. ... [It was] one of the two. ... [With] most of them, you got enough out of them that you knew what the message was. We had one radio operator who was absolutely fabulous. He'd sit there with earphones, typing away, and read a magazine at the same time, believe it or not. [laughter] ... He was fabulous. ... When you decoded his, very few of those letters [were wrong]. ... We didn't miss that much, because we were taking our time to decode it. So, usually, when there was an error there, it's usually the radioman got the wrong one ... when he was listening to it on the earphones. ... The number two man was pretty good, but, the first guy, he was the first class. He was fabulous. ... He'd sit there reading ... a magazine called *Collier's*, out in those days, [or] the *Saturday Evening Post*, and what not, that his parents would send him.

KP: Just sit there reading?

RF: Just sit there, reading away. ... [He would] turn the page, and he'd go right back typing. One other story I was going to tell you about was the submarine that we sunk. We actually had three contacts with subs. One we don't think we got, we know we didn't get it. The second one, we think we got, but, they didn't give us credit for it. We felt that we had gotten him. The third one blew up under us. ... We used a system of cat and mouse. Two destroyers would work together. ... If this was a sub [motioning], you'd come in over it, and your sonar would tell you where it was. ... When you get to a certain point, you're no longer getting the sonar reading, but, the other destroyer is over here. He's got his sonar on the sub, but, his radar on you. ... If the sub makes a sudden move before you get to it, he can note it over here. ... He can tell you, "Go to port," [or,] "Go to starboard," and when you should be over it. So, you worked together going after the sub. ... On this one, the low pressure air compressor went out. ... Everything was new when it came on board, but, it had been a piece of equipment we had never serviced the whole time the ship was in operation. It never stopped. ... It just was going all the time. ... So, we had never taken it apart, or taken anything other than the normal oiling and greasing, or whatever the normal maintenance was on it required. ... When it went, we had to go get the book. ... We're down there, ... the chief and I, because everybody is at battle stations. ... We're down standing physically on the skin of the ship, not up on a plate or a deck. We're actually on the skin of the ship to work on this stuff. ... So, I went up to the depth charge fellows. ... I went up the hatch, and stuck my head out, and said, "If you get a call for a shallow charge," that is where they're going to drop the depth charges, but, they're going to go off fifty feet down, ... or thirty feet down, something very shallow, "give a yell down this hatch." We did normally have the hatches closed, but, when we were dealing with a submarine, we weren't worried about aircraft coming down on top of us. ... So, if it was a shallow charge, you are going to get an awful jolt in the destroyer as well as the submarine. ... Then, there was a terrible jolt. I thought it broke my

ankles, that's how much it hurt. ... I came up that ladder, and the kid's up there, and he says, "Honest, Mr. Finley. ... Look at this. They're still here. ... It must have been that the sub blew up." That's what happened. We don't know if it was from previous depth charging that he blew up, because of that, or whether it was a fanatic suicide, where they blew themselves up. ... Then, of course, the debris came up, and the oil, and the rest of that stuff from the sub.

KP: Any bodies come up?

RF: No. ... I think that, in blowing [up], it just blew the bodies up. ... There was enough jolt and stuff there that it felt like it went through us. ... We had evacuated the bow, because we knew he had come up. ... Our sonar told us that. ... We were preparing to ram him, if he showed, but, he hadn't come up high enough on that pass. ... Had he come up earlier, and ... surfaced, we would have rammed him at the bow. The destroyer bow is made for ramming a submarine. It's the only part of the ship that's strong. The rest of it is all thin. ... I didn't see this, but, I saw the results of it. The Japs had what they called a Bocca bomb. ... It was a rocket ship. They carried on the bottom, underneath the Betty. The Betty was our code name for the biggest bomber that they had. ... The Bocca bomb had three rockets. When she'd drop off the Betty, they'd ignite one rocket, and that shot her towards the fleet, or ship, or whatever it was going to try to ... sink. ... Then, about halfway to the ship, he'd set off the second rocket. Of course, it is a guy running it. It's a suicide bomb. ... He's in there steering this thing. ... It's not much bigger ... than the man who is in it. [It was, maybe, four or five feet in diameter.] ... He's now picked his target, and, shortly before he gets to the target, he hits the third one, so, he is going full blast as he hits it. ... Of course, he's got explosives in the bow of this thing, [so], ... it will blow up. One of them hit a destroyer, up forward. It went right through the destroyer and blew up on the other side. [laughter] By the time the detonating ... [mechanism] took place, its speed was so fast [that] it actually went through the skin of the destroyer on the port side, went out the starboard side, and blew up on the other side, leaving this four-foot diameter hole through the bow of the destroyer.

KP: Granted, if it had been a thicker hull ...

RF: Oh, sure. It'd gone off on a cruiser or battleship, maybe even on a carrier. A carrier has got a much thicker skin than a destroyer. So, that is about it, I guess.

KP: We know how the various kamikazes worked, but, when you were in training, did the fleet know about what the various Japanese tactics were? When did you first learn of the kamikazes?

RF: To my knowledge, we first learned about it in the Philippines. ... That is when they began to get desperate. ... They had several big sea battles where they lost most of their ships. ... Of course, they still thought we had two fleets and they wanted to destroy a fleet of ships as best they could. ... The first that I knew of them was down in the first Philippines [battles], the invasion of Leyte Gulf. They were not predominant then, but, they were starting then.

KP: When you were in the Admiralty Islands, when you were told about the kamikazes?

RF: I don't remember now. I don't know whether I heard about it before I got on the *Monssen* or after I got on the *Monssen*. ...

KP: Given Pearl Harbor and the early Japanese successes, were the kamikazes shocking to you at all?

RF: Yes. ... It was a fearsome thing, because you knew some guy's in there steering it. ... It is not going to miss. ... If you shoot out a five-inch shell, you hoped you aimed it right. You hoped it was going to get at the target, but, most of them missed. You knew that. ... We knew ... this was a guy steering it, and I think it made it more frightening, from the standpoint that you knew that he wasn't going to miss, if you didn't knock him down first. ... That was the whole thing, was to put up as much stuff in the air as you could and knock him down before he got to you.

KP: You really thought it was a zero sum, either you are going to hit him or he is going to hit you.

RF: That is right.

KP: In regular combat, you could just move off.

RF: ... In the earlier parts [of the war], you were trying to shoot a plane down. ... He was [just] trying to bomb you. ... Now, the *Franklin*, when she got hit, that was a bomber. ... A lot of people refer to him as a kamikaze, but, he actually flew away. I'm not too sure he flew home, but, he did his job. He might have gotten shot down on the way home. He dropped a bomb on the *Franklin* and it went right into an area that was most vulnerable. It was a perfect hit, because, then, it blew up down there, and there were a lot of gasoline tanks, bombs, ammunition, [and] planes that were down on the lower decks. ... They had a terrible fire. ... She was ready to launch planes. ... [They had] two kinds of planes, [but] I forget which was which, the TBFs, and the SPCs, or something like that. One of them, the wings folded back along side, so, any projectiles they had on the wings were aiming right down into the hull. ... Those got set off by the fire, so, a lot of the damage done to the *Franklin* was from her own planes. The other set of planes, their wings went up over their head like that, and their armament, which was in the wings also, ... shot out in front of her. ... We had to get the hell out of the way, because we were going to get hit by her shells. We could see those going off. ... No ship crossed the bow of the *Franklin*, because you didn't know when some more of these missiles from her own planes were going to come across the bow. ... That night, after that attack, the Japanese did a lot of things that were unusual. ... I would have expected another air attack, figuring they had her. ... She was still on fire and had a lot of smoke. ... They probably thought she was going to sink. I don't know. ... She did get one engine room going, but, I think that was after the *Pittsburgh* ... took her in tow. ... We were left there as the air guard, for antiaircraft purposes. Of course, the *Pittsburgh* would be fighting, too. ... The *Franklin* was dead ... in the water. ... During the night, ... there was this pillar of flames going up, and I thought for sure the Japs would come back, but, they didn't. ... The *Pittsburgh* towed her, and, ... finally, she got an engine room going, and she got back on her own power. Now, they made a big hero's thing of her in the States and put on a big war bond drive. ... Then, about two weeks later, the *Midway* got hit. She got hit with kamikazes,

and she was as badly damaged, I think, as the *Franklin*. It looked like it to us, anyway. ... They didn't make any fuss about that, because they did not want to discourage the people ... [back home], thinking we were losing the war. ... Sometimes, during that kamikaze period, we weren't too sure whether we were winning or losing. ...

KP: The sense on the bridge was that we were taking quite a battering?

RF: We were taking one. Well, we knew, every day, ... you would see a ship that was hit almost every day. ... "How long can we last or how many more planes do they have?" sort of thing. ... We had two men crack up.

KP: Really? Enlisted men?

RF: Yes. One of them was getting his dinner, and the cook, or the cook's helper, whatever, splashed a little [bit of] gravy on him. ... He picked up a fork and stabbed the cook. The other guy was one of the stewards, and he took a meat ax to Hawkins, who was another black steward, and hit him right in the forehead. Fortunately, Hawkins had one of those heads that was about half an inch thick. ... He took a nick out of his head that was a good eighth of an inch or more. ... We just had to put a band-aid on him, [laughter] because it didn't go through the skull. We charged the guy with murder, and sent him back to Pearl Harbor for trial, and I'll be damned if they didn't let him go.

KP: He did not get convicted?

RF: No, we couldn't understand it. ... When we got into the States, he was on the dock waving at us.

KP: Really? He did not even get a lesser sentence?

RF: I don't know what happened. ... All we know is that we had him sent back to Pearl Harbor. We didn't want him on board anymore. ... What his plight was, or [why] he was upset with Hawkins, we don't know.

KP: What about the other one who had stabbed the cook over some spilled gravy?

RF: He was all right.

KP: Did you get him off the ship?

RF: No, he stayed on board. He settled down and they just put him in a different gunnery position. ... The fellow who froze, for example, we had to put him in another spot. ... We put him down below to load ammo from there, but, he was petrified down there. ... He wasn't any good. They finally found some place where he could serve. The guy was ... afraid, but, he also was a little ashamed. ... He wanted to help, but, it was just one of those things that he couldn't control. ... The captain finally found some place where he could do something, hold on to

something, or I don't know what he did [laughter]. ... They had to get him away from being a loader, because he froze, somehow.

KP: Was he a steward?

RF: No.

KP: He was a regular seaman?

RF: He was one of the seamen. I don't know what his job was.

KP: How many seamen did you have and how many stewards did you have, roughly?

RF: We had about three hundred and fifty on board, and we had, ... roughly, about sixteen to eighteen officers. ... Then, there was a group of chiefs. For each department, [you] had a chief, whatnot. ... Then, you had your enlisted personnel for different ratings. ... To break it down to just straight seamen?

KP: Yes.

RF: I don't know what the count would be.

KP: How dependent were you on your chiefs? How good were your chiefs on board?

RF: We had some that were excellent chiefs and we had some poor chiefs. One particularly poor chief ... was with the chief engineer up in the forward engine room. I had Green, ... who was excellent. We wanted to give him a commission, [but], he didn't want it. He was a chief. ... The other chief, that Spike had, ... [showing photograph] was a gold bricker. ... Spike had a hell of a time with him. ... I had Green, who was a relatively new chief. [showing photograph] ... He was an excellent, excellent chief. This guy was a very good chief. ... [The gold brick chief] had the most time in the Navy. ... [Points out individuals in the photographs]. ... A third of them are dead [today], unfortunately.

KP: It sounds like the officers were a very close group.

RF: Oh, yes. We had a couple of fellows that were a little bit of loners, but, the majority of them were pretty all together.

KP: Of the officers and the men, how many were regular Navy were there, would you say? It sounds like you had quite a few regulars.

RF: ... We had several. ... Haus Cook, who was pointed out as one of the gunnery officers, ... went on into the Navy Air Corps. He transferred out of the surface fleet and [went into] the Navy Air Corps. That's when this one took over as the chief gunnery officer. ... [One] fellow was

reserve. ... He was regular Navy, but, he was a Mustang. ... We probably had four [from] Annapolis [and] the rest were reserves.

KP: Of the crew, how many were regular Navy?

RF: I'm not sure what the percentage was on that at all. There's no way of telling the difference there. ... These fellows were all being promoted. ... There were two chiefs I pointed out. They were both regulars. As I said, we thought Green could [have been] an engineering officer. He knew enough about it, but, he didn't want that. ... We had two chiefs on board [who] we would recommend for promotions. ... Kenny Dermont ... was the third engineering officer. When I came aboard, he was a warrant [officer]. ... He had been a chief, he had been made a warrant, and, after I was aboard about six or eight months, he was made an ensign. ... He accepted it. ... These other fellows didn't want it. ... Of course, they liked working with the Mustangs, because they knew they came up through the route that they're going up. ... I never had any trouble with them, and it's probably because Kenny, and Spike, and I got along so well.

KP: Because you just melded very well?

RF: Yes.

KP: So, you had very good relations with your chiefs and with the crew?

RF: Oh, yes. You best have them with your chiefs or you're in trouble. ... The chiefs are the guts of the Navy. There's no two ways about it. ... What happened here, with that chief that I told you was the gold brick chief, Spike Russell said, "I'll rot in the Pacific before that guy gets home." He was so mad, because he had been a chief, and he was an officer now, he was a jg. ... So, I don't know just what we were doing. I don't remember it that well, but, Miller, was his name, ... needed some dental work done. ... There was a little radio island outpost thing. ... It was in a godforsaken [place], probably a radio relay station, or something like that. ... For some reason, we were going by it. ... I don't know how the hell [Spike] ... knew they had a dentist there, but, they did. ... So, a bunch [of us], "We'll take Miller in and get his teeth fixed." In the meantime, he went in and talked to them. He always talked to the captain. ... He said, "We're going to pull out of here and leave this guy. ... Put him to work and keep him out here as long as you can." He told him the whole story. He got back in the whale boat and came back to the ship. ... Off we went and we left Miller out there. [laughter] I don't know whatever happened to him. He was on a Navy base. We just sent papers over there.

KP: [laughter] In other words, he was probably stuck on there for a long time?

RF: He could have been. We have no idea. He also could have gone home the next day, too.

KP: So, this was after the war was over?

RF: Yes, the fighting was over at this point. We were on our way home, I think. That was Spike's war. He was going to rot out there himself before Miller would get home. He was

applying for home. ... He had [enough] time that he could be qualified to go home. ... He was such a goof off. ... My engine room was gorgeous. ... The captain would come down to get a cup [of coffee]. The best coffee on the ship was in the after engine room. The ward room coffee was the lousiest. Those guys would put it on and let it boil all day. It was terrible. ... If you wanted a good cup of coffee, you went to the after engine room. ... When you took supplies on board, you always had some of your engineers in the supply chain. ... When they saw the coffee, they would get a couple of containers of coffee under their arm. ... While they were carrying something else when they went by the hatch, they would raise their arm and the guys down there [would] catch the coffee. ... So, we had sugar, coffee, Canned Cow, for those that wanted cream. We had chocolate to make hot chocolate, and, sometimes, we even got some jellies. If you wanted to make toast, you took the insulation off the nozzles of the generators. You just slid this insulation back, and you'd take the piece of bread and just lean it against those nozzles, with 850 degree steam going through them. ... You made toast real quick. ... If you wanted hot chocolate, you went over to the deairating feed tank and took the water out of the water glass of that and put that in over your hot chocolate. ... The coffee was made by a steam line taken off of the main turbine. ... Running across the control panel, there was a big monel tank there. You had a bag that you put the coffee in, you hung that in, put the water in, and then, just opened up the steam valve off of the main turbines. With that 850 degree steam going there, it made coffee real fast. ... It was good coffee, real good coffee. ... The captain would come down, once in a while, and say, "I'm here for another inspection," but, have a cup of coffee. [laughter] ... Those are the little things, though, that made things work. ... You got that kind of stuff going together.

KP: You do need to find other ways of doing things.

RF: They stored all of this stuff behind the electrical panels, because everyone was scared to death of getting electrocuted, if they went ... behind the electrical panels. ... All your supplies for this coffee, and hot chocolate, and stuff, were stored in little containers that they made up behind the electrical panels, because there's nobody that would go down there and steal it.

KP: Did every ship do that?

RF: I have no idea. ... That was the only major vessel I was on. ... I visited many destroyers, ... when you would pull into port. ... I'd get up on the radar antenna area and I had a little book with all the destroyers that I had friends on. ... As I'd come in with the binoculars, I'd pick up the ship's numbers. If I saw one of those, then, after we got anchored, I'd get on the radio, or have a signalman signal over that ship, [and say], "Is Lt. Alderman on board? ... Tell him Lt. Finley would like to have him come over for dinner." We would run the whale boat over, and deliver him to our ship, and have him ... as a guest for dinner. ... Sometimes, you didn't have time for dinner. Sometimes, you were just in and out, but, you would have a chance to say, "Hello," or something like that. ... The only time you had a chance to see anybody is when you got back into a port. You can see from the number of hours at sea, we didn't have any time at port.

KP: Did you have any shore leave, for the crew?

RF: There was no place to go. ... The shore leave would be [that] you pull into Ulithi, and you would load up ... one-third of the crew who had shore leave, take a couple of boat loads in. ... I never did know where they stored it, but, down below, they stored the beer. ... There would be three cans allocated for each man. That would be loaded into the whale boat. I used to hate this duty, because you would be the shore patrol officer. You would go ashore and you would have all the beer stored up. ... You would open it up, and, now, you have to get three cans to each man. ... Of course, there is always something left. You wanted your three, and, now, ... you either did one of two things. ... Either ... you took your three and you ran away, you got the hell out of there, and, whoever jumped on top of the pile would get the extra beer, or you'd start throwing the beer up in the air and let guys catch it. It is hard to say which was the safer way for the officer. ... You had them all by yourself, and you had a hundred and some odd guys there, and you had three hundred cans of beer to get distributed. ... You would be on a little atoll and ... you would feel it. ... Three cans of beer would give you a little bit of a drinking reaction, because you hadn't been drinking for weeks and months, at times. Some of the ships had some hard liquor, but, it was frowned upon. Most of them just had the beer. ... The kids that didn't drink, they'd collect their three and they would sell those cans to the other guys for a buck. ... We sold cigarettes. We used to get cigarettes for the equivalent of five cents a pack. They were only sold by the carton, fifty cents a carton. ... The supply officer and I were gabbing one night, and I said, ... "I wonder if I could get a Baby Ruth, a candy bar?" It cost a nickel. ... I [asked] why he couldn't just sell them three for ten [cents]. ... Before we left the States, the A&P were selling candy three for ten [cents]. ... He said, "We can't do it. With what we get charged for it, I'd have to charge a nickel." I said, "Well, we got a lot of guys that smoke." I smoked then, too. I said, "If they are getting the benefit of fifty cents a carton for cigarettes, what would it do if we charged them sixty cents a carton? Would we pick up enough money that we could sell the candy three for ten [cents]?" So, we sat there, and calculated, and calculated. He says, "Well, it's close enough," so, then, we sold candy three for ten [cents] for the guys that didn't smoke. Of course, anybody could buy it, but, it was primarily for the guys that didn't smoke.

KP: You mentioned that you were detached from your task force, that towards the end of the war, you were sent up to the Aleutians?

RF: Yes, we got detached. We thought we were going home. ... The orders were sent up that we were going home. ... Spike Russell was the chief engineer. He was being sent home ahead [of us], with all the orders of what the ship needed for maintenance and for other supplies. Each officer had given him a list. [showing pictures of Spike leaving the cruiser and getting awards]. ... Spike was sent home, and so, I was chief engineer then. ... We, then, get orders to go to Adak in the Aleutians, and we figured, from there, we're going home, but, the orders were to do a shipping sweep, any Japanese ship was sunk, because they were all fishing out there. ... We didn't like that assignment, because you were sinking civilian ships, in effect. We only reported one of them. ... We were to sink anything in sight.

KP: You were not to distinguish between civilian fishing ships and warships?

RF: They wanted to cut off the food supply. A lot of it was to knock out the maritime part of the Japanese Navy. There were ships that were out there just to sink Japanese ships, just to cut off

their food supply. ... It is just like the Germans did with us, with torpedoing our ships going across the ... Atlantic, torpedoing them, that were just freighters. ... Then, we were to join with a fleet unit, out of the Aleutians, for a bombardment of Paramashiro, which is an airfield. ... *Luce* was that other destroyer I was trying to think of. I'll tell you about that later. ... We went through the shipping sweep, and did that job, and then, we got up to Paramashiro. We met with the other ships, a cruiser, the *Baltimore*, or something like that. I forget which one it was. ... We go through this bombardment of the airfield at Paramashiro, and, since we think we're going home, the captain decided, "Well, let's get rid of the ammunition." So, instead of shooting the regular two guns, all five guns are going rapid fire. We're shooting like crazy, and ... the Japs start shooting back, which we had gotten a little bit used to. ... These others weren't used to it, so, as soon as ... [the Japs] started to shoot back, they called off the bombardment, and said, "Get out of here." ... One shell went over a ship, and, ... when I told the captain about it, he said, "Are you sure?" I said, "I saw it explode. It was on the other side of us." He said, "Well, why didn't you tell me?" I said, "We were in the middle of this thing." There was a battle going on and ... I was up on deck as a damage control officer on that one. ... Anyway, we went on, then, to the Aleutians and (Adak?), and that is when the war ended. So, we feel that we did the last bombardment of Japan, ... the captain and I were talking about that the last time I saw him.

KP: What date was that?

RF: I don't know. I'd have to get the log. ...

KP: Was it after the atomic bombings?

RF: Oh, yes. ... This was well after both Hiroshima and ... Nagasaki. ... It was after the bombardment of Tokyo and all that. ... As I said, we thought we were going home, so, we shot all our ammunition, but, when we got to Adak, they said, "Load ammunition." We didn't understand that at all. We never did get the orders. We just found out what they were. ... We were to go to Russia and bring the Russians in. ... As far as we know, that was the last bombardment of World War II.

KP: Had you thought of making the Navy a career?

RF: Oh, yes, very seriously. It was a big decision, as far as I was concerned. ... I was offered a permanent commission by the captain, while we were ... on our way home to Pearl Harbor. ... After ... Adak, when we went back to Japan, and joined our group. ... We were there two or three weeks at Northern Honshu and Hokkaido, for occupation duty, and then, we were separated from the fleet, from that unit. They stayed out there, and, when they felt everything was under control, they could spare us, and we went home by ourselves. ... The captain called me up to the bridge when we were in Hokkaido and said, "I have the authority to offer you a permanent commission in the United States Navy." ... I said, "Well, let me think it over. ... How soon do you have to know?" He [replied], "I'd like to get it done this week." I gave a lot of thought to it. I didn't have anybody to talk to, family wise, ... and I wasn't married then. ... I went up, and talked to him again about it, and he said, "Well, you have to realize the separation from family. My son was born in the Philippines. ... I didn't see him until such and such a time." ... No, I guess his

son was born in China, and then, his daughter was born in the Philippines. ... He said, "I didn't see [them] for long periods that I was away on patrols, ... [even] before the war. ... You are going to have those kind of separations." ... I guess that was the main reason that I didn't take it.

KP: You were engaged at this time?

RF: Yes. ... I had been engaged for almost three years.

KP: If you were not engaged, the decision might have gone the other way.

RF: It could have, yes. It would have been more likely. If I was not dating or involved, I think it probably would have gone the other way, because I wouldn't have been thinking of family or anything. We were engaged before I went overseas.

KP: You stayed involved with the sea.

RF: Oh, yes. ... The United States Power Squadron, which is a boating organization, I'm still involved with. I got back into that, as a matter-of-fact, after Bobbie and I got back, after we left the Navy. We drove home ... in a 1934 Ford [that we had bought] for \$350. I put new brakes in it, and rebuilt the engine, and we drove home. ... Then, I went to work, and we, right away, looked for a boat. We saw this little sneak box and I bought it for \$100. ... It had been sitting in the sun for two or three years during the war, so, it needed a fair [amount of] repair. ... I spent my first week of vacation fixing it all up, and then, we sailed it the second week. We sailed it the next year, and then, after that, ... [Bobbie] was pregnant, and our first son was born in July. ... I sold the boat for \$350 and bought our first television set. ... [laughter] A ten-inch RCA. ... It was a good set, but, God, was it heavy. ... Then, Jim came along, about sixteen months later, and we moved to Chatham. That is how we keep track of how long we have lived in Chatham. ... We moved in, three weeks after we moved in, she had Jim. ... That was 1950. ... We've been in two different homes in Chatham.

KP: You still live in Chatham?

RF: Still live in Chatham. The first house ... was a resale. We stayed in that thirteen years, and we had the one we're in now, we had that built. ... We've been in that now ... about thirty-two years.

KP: I just want to back up a little bit to Rutgers. You had mentioned that you had signed up for the CPT. Did you have a sense that we were going to war and that aviation was what you wanted to do, or did you just want to learn how to fly? Was flying always intriguing to you?

RF: ... Flying had been intriguing to me.

KP: You had spent a lot of time in Newark Airport.

RF: Yes, and Frank Hawks was my idol, and so forth. ... I was always intrigued with flying. ... I didn't take the advanced course, because that's my junior year, and junior year in engineering is a real tough year. ... If you are going to flunk out or repeat, you're gonna repeat the junior year. ... There are a lot of labs, three nights of labs. ... I didn't want to challenge myself to taking the aerobatics my junior year. As far as the war is concerned, yes, it was, I think, on people's minds that it could happen, simply because of what was happening to Great Britain. The battle of '39 in Great Britain was terrible. ... Of course, Pearl Harbor was '41, but, there's two years in there that things were going on in Europe with Hitler.

KP: What was the belief of you and most of your classmates in '39, '40, and '41. Did you think the United States should get involved? Were you figuring we might get involved, but, we preferred not to?

RF: I think your last [idea] ... is probably the right answer. I don't think anybody was saying, "Let's go to war," but, I think everybody felt it was going to happen. But, when is going to be the thing, and, of course, the Japanese answered it for us. ... You had the Eagle Squadron operating, which were American pilots flying with the British. ...

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

KP: You were discussing how people were going off to join the ...

RF: Eagle Squadron. There was a tendency towards the air support, because that was the only [way]. ... I don't know of anybody who volunteered to go over and be a foot soldier with the British.

KP: Did you know anybody personally who volunteered to join either the Canadian or the British Air Forces?

RF: Yeah. ... I couldn't give you a name now, but, I knew of a couple of fellows that ... went to Canada. ... One or two of them, I think, were from Rutgers. I can't remember who they were. I just remember the incident occurring. ... I think that we all kind of felt it was going to happen. ... I think Pearl Harbor was a shock, but, I don't think the idea that we were going to get into the war was as much of a shock as Pearl Harbor.

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

RF: I was in here, at Rutgers. I was in the fraternity house. It was a Sunday morning, and I remember listening on the radio, to ... President Roosevelt. [What] I'll always remember is it was the first time I think I heard the word dastardly. ... I wondered whether he meant bastardly. [laughter] I was there, and it was quite a shock, there was no two ways about that. ... As I told you earlier, I thought the president of the university did a terrific job to calm [us]. ... Some guys ran off right away, but, that was the minority. ...

KP: Most of you figured that you would stay and finish your degrees, if you could?

RF: ... There were some that, I'm sure, left after, say, the end of January, or something, because they were just that way about it. ... At least, then, they had time, he made them give ... (thought?) to, "Should I be in the Army? Should I be in the Navy? Should I be in the artillery?" ... They were at least going to make a judgment that they weren't going to be mad about later. They had time to think about it. ... See, I was a corporal in the ROTC as a sophomore and they wanted me to continue in the Army. ...

KP: You decided not to?

RF: Oh, no, real quick.

KP: Why?

RF: Well, I just ... figured that if I was going to be in something like that, I liked the idea of having a bunk and three meals a day. [laughter]

KP: So, that entered into it.

RF: Yes, I'd rather be on a ship. So, oh, no, there was no question about that. When I went down, you know, I started with the Navy Air Corps, because I had the obligation from flying. ... I never thought about ... staying in the Army. I was a pretty good shot, but, that's immaterial.

KP: You had mentioned that you had a roommate who was killed during the war.

RF: Oh, yeah, Wiffy Steinburg. [Wiffy's true name was Richard Steinburg, Rutgers Class of 1943.] He went down with me. It was funny, because Wiffy ... was trying to memorize the eye chart while I was taking it. [laughter] ... Those guys knew what was going on, 'cause he was going to have to take his glasses off. ... Of course, as soon as he stepped in front of it, they took his glasses off, and they changed the chart. [laughter] So, he said, "All right. You win." ... He stayed in school with us, rather than wait, because, with his eye defect, he knew he wasn't going to get into officer's training school, probably. ... He enlisted after ... graduation and he went into the Army Air Corps. ... He went out to Oklahoma, or some place like that, to gunnery school, and he became a gunnery sergeant for the Air Corps, for the bombers. ... I understand he became, I don't think he was ever commissioned, but, I think he went up, as far as a sergeant is concerned, where he was the gun control officer on the B-29s. ... He had been on a raid out of Saipan, over Japan, with his plane. They came back in, safe and sound. ... The next bomber about to leave, the gunnery officer became ill. 'Course, he was a non-commissioned officer. ... He was sick, and they asked for a volunteer, and Dick volunteered. ... The name of that plane was the *Leading Lady*. All the planes were given names. ... I got this from his brother-in-law, after he was killed. As the matter-of-fact, at that point, we thought he might be a prisoner. ... The *Leading Lady* took off, went on her bomb run, and got hit with a kamikaze. ... They saw three parachutes come out. When I say, 'they,' I don't know, I'm assuming another bomber. ... I got this story from his brother-in-law, who was in the Navy, on Saipan. ... The two of them had been together out there, even though they were in different branches. ... He said, "We don't

know whether Whif,” as his nickname was, ... “was one of the ones that parachuted out or whether he was one of the ones that was killed,” because the plane went down. When we got there for occupation, ... our communications officer was going into Tokyo with some ship papers, ... I don’t know what they were. The captain was sending him, instead of going himself. So, we said, “Well, they at least had lists of prisoners of war in Tokyo,” so, I put Dick Steinburg’s name in ... as a potential prisoner of war. The captain had a classmate that he knew was a prisoner of war and he wanted to see if he was alive. There were five names that the officer took in and he did locate four. Dick Steinburg was the one that was not located. ... In my wedding, Dick would have been my best man. ... [My best man was] my father. That is a tradition that started, a very short lived tradition, ... during the war. If you had a man that you had planned to be the best man, couldn’t make it, you’d have your father stand in for him. In some cases, he couldn’t make it because he was overseas, or in the hospital, or something (nixed him and he?) never got back. ... My father was the best man, standing in for Dick. ... As I said, that was just the tradition that happened during the wartime period.

KP: I had never heard of that tradition.

RF: ... We got home on October 1st. We’d been engaged for almost two years. ... I called my wife, or fiancée at that point, and I said, “Let’s get married. ... You come out and be a Navy wife.” She said, “We’ll talk about it when you get home.” I thought, “Oh, geez. What happened while I was away? We’ll talk about it. Two years, I’ve been behaving myself and everything else.” So, I got home and we had a date the first night. ... One thing we had never done all throughout our courtship was to go up into the Orange Mountain Reservation. There’s an area where they have the deer and you can park there. ... It became a bit of a, not a lover’s lane, in the sense of it being buried down in the woods, because it was right off the road, but, a lot of the guys used to go down there to smooch and stuff. ... We went up there, and stopped, and talked about getting married. ... Of course, I was still in uniform. The police officer came along, and said, “(You can’t do this?).” ... I told him, “Officer, ... I just got back in the United States ... four days ago,” ’cause it was a four day trip cross country on the train. You didn’t fly. Whatever flew across country had to have a ... number one priority, or something, but, certainly, not me. ... I said, “We’re trying to decide whether to get married or not.” ... He said, “I’m not supposed to let you stay here, but, I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’m going to make the patrol around backwards now. ... [When] I get back here, I’ll have to ask you to leave. ... It will take me about ten or fifteen minutes, anyway.” So, we decided to get married in that time frame. ... Then, we had to put it together, so, I sent a telegram to the captain requesting five days additional leave, which he granted. So, we got married on October 20th, and our honeymoon was a four day trip across [the country]. That’s when I ran into those fellows I told you about, ... the lieutenant governor of Wisconsin.

KP: On the train?

RF: Was on the train ride back.

KP: When did you propose?

RF: Oh, good lord.

KP: Did you propose by mail or when you were on duty in New York?

RF: No. Yeah, I gave her the ring then, in New York.

KP: Had you thought of getting married then?

RF: [We were] very close to getting married when I was in Norfolk. I knew I was going over, probably in a couple of weeks. ... She came down [with] O.B. Alderman's wife. ... Any time O.B.'s wife came to see him, she would come down and stay over a weekend, or something. ... Kids didn't live together, or room together, in those days. So, like, when I was stationed in New York, and Bobbie came to spend a weekend with me, she would stay overnight in the Aldermans' apartment. I was in an apartment with three other guys around the corner. ... We didn't live on the ship. We put ourselves up in an apartment. As a matter-of-fact, we had to use the food money that the Navy gave us for our rent, and take the rent money and use that to eat with, just the reverse of what they gave us. ... Four guys would get together to rent an apartment, and so forth. ... That was when we were teaching. ... I went and saw the priest down there, the chaplain, and we talked about it. ... He said, "Well, we'll let you know." ... I went back and we gave some more thought about it. She was willing, and I thought, "Well, you know, maybe I'm being silly. ... I'm going away and we only have about ten or twelve days together," 'cause I didn't know what was going to happen when I got to the West Coast. I had my orders. ... We didn't do it. We decided that we were being silly, so, we waited. ... So, then, she was a Navy wife until the following April 22, 1946, October 20, 1945 to April 22, 1946.

KP: May of 1946?

RF: Yes. ... Then, we drove the car home. She enjoyed being a Navy wife. She enjoyed that very much. We had a lot of fun there, because there was no pressure then. ... We all lived in these Hamaja Huts and they were really quite nice, 'cause you had a living room/dining room combination, you had two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen. ... The hut was made so that it was a bulkhead right through the middle of it. One family had this side and the other family had that side. That was in San Diego. We de-commissioned the ship. I was made executive officer then, for the de-commissioning. ... Two instances that happened that were interesting, relative to that. During the war, there was a unit that you needed in engineering for getting the water out of your oil. ... The decontamination unit, or oil separators, they called them. ... Ours were wearing out, and you had spares, but, we used up the spares. ... We were borrowing from other ships that had an extra one, and so forth. ... We kept putting orders in. We put orders in ... in two different sections of the Philippines, we put them in at Ulithi. ... Then, we'd be gone for a month or two, and we'd get back, and [we'd] ask, "Did we get our oil separators?" "Well, you weren't here and we gave them to another ship." All this sort of stuff went on. ... "We forwarded them to where you were." Of course, we never got back there. ... Just like our Christmas packages [that] we got for Easter. I had four or three Christmas packages. ... I only kept one. The others I just threw out in the garbage, because they were rotten. I mean they'd been laying in the Philippines for three months or four months. ... We kept putting in more orders and more orders and we never

could get back to the same place to get them. So, here we are, sitting in San Diego, and this truck pulls up. ... He starts putting these things [on the ship], and I'm [saying], "What the hell is this?" I'm exec at this point. He says, "I've got an order here for twelve [oil separators]." ... [laughter] All these orders kept following us around and they just kept adding all the orders together. Then, all of a sudden, we get twelve of them at one time when all we need is four, ... put two new ones in and two spares. ... I signed the order. ... I got a go cart, and I put four on the *Monssen*, and I took the others around to other destroyers. "How are you fixed for oil purifiers? Sign here," and I got rid of the other four in the fleet, all being de-commissioned. ... Then, the other thing was, I was sitting in the ward room and a guy comes on board. "You're Lt. Finley?" "Yes." He says, "I'm," whatever operation in the Navy had to do with narcotics. ... "You were issued a narcotics kit, with morphine. ... There were six units in that thing." I said, "That's correct." He said, "You only gave four of them back." ... "One of them you used on a Jap prisoner." "Where is the other one?" [laughter] That is how they kept on the morphine. ... I said, "It's in the Pacific Ocean." He says, "What happened?" so, I told him. The Jap was brought on board and we decided to give him morphine. I took one out, and, as I opened it up, the unit fell on the deck, after I opened it up for the needle. ... It slipped out of my hands and it fell on the deck. It was no longer sterile. I threw it over the side and I took a separate one, opened it, and I jabbed it into the Jap.

KP: You actually injected him with morphine?

RF: Yeah, as long as he had no head injury. He had an injury in his head, but, not a ... [bad] one, one that would break in under the skull. So, I gave him a shot of morphine. ... I threw the other one over the side. He said, "Well, it's too bad you didn't report that." I said, "We're in the middle of a war out there. Who's worrying about a little piece of morphine going over the side." [laughter] Good God, ... I was utterly amazed that they came back to ask that question.

KP: Do you think this is something they would do in the peace time Navy, versus the war time Navy, this concern with this one missing vial of morphine?

RF: ... I couldn't really put myself into that fellow's [situation]. ... I sure didn't think about it [then]. ... You just shot this guy down, and you've got him there as a wounded person, and you give him the morphine. ... What the hell, if you drop one, you throw it away.

KP: Was the de-commissioning sad at all?

RF: Not too bad. ... I was sad when I saw her being torn apart. ... I thought about going on board and asking for my desk, and then, I thought better of it. ... If I got the desk, and even if I paid them for it, I knew I wouldn't get the bell, that's what I would have liked to have had. ... As soon as the boat has got those orders on it, somebody confiscates the bell. They are worth something. ... I thought about asking for my desk, and then, I thought "What would I really do with it?" ... I'd end up putting it in the cellar, and it would sit there, and get rusty. I wouldn't use it. ... I didn't use it much when I was on the ship, because we had an engineers' office. ... I ran the office, because I did all the calculating and stuff, when I was with Kenny and Spike. ... I had all my stuff in there, so, I very seldom used the desk, except for storage.

KP: Did you and your fiancée write to each other at all?

RF: Yes. We found out that I wrote more than she did, just recently. ... She has them all up the attic, all the letters, and we were going through [the] letters one night, recently. ... Pat, our daughter, who's working on cleaning up the attic, she is the one that told me, "You wrote almost two letters for every one mom wrote you." [laughter] That is the way it works now. She spends two dollars for every one I get. So, that is about it.

KP: Just one or two other Rutgers related questions. How good was the engineering instruction? It sounds like you really thrived on it.

RF: Well, the best way I can put it is that I was in a class of 350 ... at Midshipmen's School. ... I was number thirty-two.

KP: And, you attribute a lot of that to your instruction?

RF: Oh, sure. ... It was all engineering. It was nothing but our whole course pushed down into three months. ... I felt very good about it, because ... these were engineering graduates from schools all over the eastern half of the United States. Notre Dame got some, I think, and then, there was a West Coast school, too. ... We had Cornell. ... The fellow that was number one in the class, Joe Adamick, he was sent back to teach. The other thing was, which was kind of an honor, too, was the picking of the ten men that were going to be assigned back to teach. Now, Alderman, who I showed you his picture of the fellow from (Orlando?), he was one hundred and twenty fifth in his class, and, yet, he was picked to teach. ... He was twenty-eight, I was twenty-two. ... He had been in the industry for six or seven years. ... I guess they looked to see what his strong points were, out of his exams and tests. ... He taught boilers and auxiliary equipment. I taught main engines and ... construction. ... I was [in the] C&M department. He was in boilers and auxiliary, the B&A department. I had construction of the ship and main engines of the ship as the part that I taught in the Midshipmen's School. ... He ultimately may have had experience in boilers and things like that, that they felt would outweigh the fact that his grades were lower. ... The number one man in the class was picked, and a couple of the others that were in the top ten. They picked ten from each class, and then, the other ten go on to sea. ... That was an interesting experience, too. ... As I've said, I've done a lot of teaching since. ... I got along very well.

KP: You enjoyed being an instructor?

RF: Oh, yes, I enjoyed it. The little course I teach now, because I don't have time to teach a full course in nautical education, is [for] the United States Power Squadron, ... that I'm affiliated with now. I went up to chief commander of that. That was a tremendous experience. I had two years as chief commander. I traveled all over the United States, at their expense, of course. ... I've taken every course they've had, including the semester of navigation. ... I teach a little course that takes only three lessons, three nights. It is called the 'Skipper Saver Course,' and it's primarily for wives. ... It came about because a man was fishing down in Florida. ... He was

about twenty miles out in his skiff and his wife was there. She didn't know anything about boats, didn't care about boats, but, she liked being with her husband. She didn't get seasick and so forth. So, she'd take a book, and she's reading a book, and he drops over dead. ... She didn't know how to start the engine, she didn't know how to use the radio. She knew nothing. She drifted for, I don't know, it was two or three days, and then, a fisherman found her. ... The Power Squadron unit down there said this should never happen to any wife. ... They put together this course. It kind of got knocked around, [with] a lot of variations to it. We finally made a national course out of it. It's only like three lessons, but, it's to teach them how to start an engine, and the simple things from the standpoint of pilot or navigation, particularly if you are twenty miles out, is to know how to read a compass enough to find the United States and what direction you are going in. ... [We teach them] how to use a marine radio. ... Every year, we hear some woman gets on the radio when we are out cruising. ... We hear her calling for help, but, she doesn't know enough to release the transmit button, so, she can hear. On a marine radio, unlike a telephone, you have to push the button to transmit and release it to hear. ... Of course, everybody and his uncle is telling the lady to release [the button], but, she can't hear it, because she isn't releasing it. ... It's silly to even say anything. ... Finally, usually, you wait, and hope you hear a click, and, maybe, you call the lady. ... You very quickly say how you handle the microphone and [to] release [the button]. ... Once you get that across to her, then, she can tell you what her troubles are. ... I have a little toy radio [for my class]. I bring my own marine radio in, so they can actually use a marine radio for a couple of quick minor calls, because it is not a legal transmittal and I am in a school. ... We used a nautical radio system, and it could interfere with a police radio, because they are on similar frequencies. ... I usually pick a frequency that I think is safe, and so, I give them a little bit of that. ... Then, I have these toy radios, where you go through the whole thing, like you are talking to the Coast Guard and whatnot. I teach them basic knots, and the part that they [get] the most out of, it sounds silly, is just how to throw a line so it doesn't tangle. ... I've had girl after girl that has taken this little course come up and say, "Boy, ... I'm the best one at throwing lines in the whole marina," and stuff like that. [laughter] But, it is also a case of how to start the engine and how to get home safe. You're not trying to make a navigator out of them or anything like that. ... We do go over the charts. ... They look at the charts, they know what all these funny lines are on there, at least what they are. Not that they are going to use them, but, at least they know what they are. ... How to use a compass enough to find land again and ask for help, particularly if they have a husband that is collapsed there. ... It doesn't have to be a heart attack. The guy can have a gastronomic upset, ... [where there] is tremendous pain, and he just can't function. ... He might be able to tell you how to go up and start it, but, we go through the whole thing. It is a nice little booklet and the girls get a lot out of it. ...

KP: Well, is there anything I forgot to ask you about Rutgers, or your World War II experiences?

RF: I thought, education-wise, I've been always very, very pleased with the education that I got here. ... I've kept in touch with the crew and I've been on their board. ... I've [been] doing some money raising. ... As I said, our crew, we also rowed up at Poughkipsie, which is a four mile race. ... I still have affiliation with them there and I donate to it, too. ... I've been asked to a couple of affairs. It must be because I donated, because I don't know why I was asked. ... [laughter] I assume it's because I donated. ... I've been very pleased with the education that I

received. My son went here, too, and graduated from Rutgers. ... He didn't get involved, ... unfortunately. ... He's a part of the baby boomers and they became a bit. ... Fortunately, he survived it. ... I don't know whether you are a baby boomer or not.

KP: Yes, I am. None of your sons served in the military?

RF: No. Ray had flat feet. Jim just was never called. ... I wish they had, even if it was only for a year or two. ... Ray was called and he was turned down for flat feet. ... I never quite understood the flat feet thing. He didn't have trouble walking, or sailing, or doing things all his life. ... He is too old now. Ray is forty-five now and Jim is forty-four.

KP: Having a son that went to Rutgers, how did you see the Rutgers he went to change from yours?

RF: Oh, yes, there was a big change. I enjoyed his first years, but, I didn't enjoy his last years. We actually grew apart there, for a while. ... He got married before he graduated, which we opposed, ... in the sense that we didn't sanction it, but, we didn't fight it. ... We went through with the wedding and [with] the divorce [that] ended up. He did have one child by that marriage. ... He's married again and the wife he married ... was divorced. ... She has a son which he's helped [raise], and he is in college now. He hopes to go to Rutgers. He's in junior college now. If he can get through and get his associate degree, he should be able to get into Rutgers. There is tremendous differences, as far as I am concerned. Whether I would have come here today or not, I don't know. My daughter, Peggy, went to Baldwin-Wallace. I don't know how. Baldwin-Wallace, in Ohio, today, is like Rutgers was when I went to Rutgers. The buildings are similar, the space is similar. It's got a nice small stadium. They work with the Cleveland Browns, ... [who] built the stadium for them. It's got Astroturf, which I don't like. ... Cleveland did that, because if Cleveland is playing a team that has Astroturf, they'll practice on Baldwin-Wallace's field, that they built. ... If they don't, they have a field behind the stadium, which is grass, to practice and play on, if they play at home, where they have grass. The whole tenure ... at Baldwin-Wallace was like Rutgers was when I was here. ... On our fiftieth anniversary of graduation, we got back. We had a wonderful turnout. ... I was amazed [at] how well ... so many of the men looked.

KP: You are not the first one to comment that people look great on their fiftieth.

RF: I was amazed. I expected to see a lot more fat men. We're all a little bit overweight, but, not tremendously overweight. ... They all did well in business. I didn't hear of anybody crying the blues. As I said, I don't know how I would feel, because I'm in a different period of life relative to what it is today at schools. ... Patricia, ... our other daughter, went to Fairleigh-Dickinson, and she was a day student. She lived home and went there. ... [She] has physical problems that don't show, but, she couldn't stay away at school. Our other son went to Rhode Island School of Design, which had got a tremendous reputation which I hope they never ask me to endorse. [laughter] That's the most expensive of the four schools, and the one I have the least respect for. It's an art school, to begin with, primarily art. ... It has some architecture, I believe, too, but, everybody tells me what a good school it is.

KP: You are a little more skeptical now? [laughter]

RF: Well, I don't think Jim got the same education that Ray got at Rutgers. I know he didn't get what I got at Rutgers. I think Jim is doing well, but, I think he's in the wrong school to begin with. ... He was going to be an artist and that sort of stuff. He is an artist, ... a good artist, but, he'd be better off if he went into civil engineering, or something. ... That's what he's working at now. 'Course, I'm working in civil now, too, and I took my PE exam in civil, not in mechanical. ... If I ever got in a court case, I could say that I took my professional engineers' exam in civil engineering, even though when I came back, I went to Newark College of Engineering at night to take strength materials over. I told the professor there, "I want to take the course over, because this is the guts of the business I'm going into, the heavy construction business." ... Whereas I had it, and I passed, ... I said, "I'm not going to take your labs. I'm not looking for the credits. ... I want to go through it and know it better than I know it now." He was very nice with me and he used a [different] credit system. The other guys in the class ... probably hated my guts, because, as a result, I was knocking off hundreds all the way through. Of course, my attitude was different. I was older and everything else. He used to give out extra credit points. I had one professor in Rutgers who did that, my last year, so, I didn't need to take any final exams. I had a hundred extra credit points already. I never had that happen, except these two instances. I never had it available, except for those two courses. ... The bridge engineering course that I took from ... the International Correspondence School, ICS, that was superb. ... Again, I didn't take it for a certificate, because I didn't feel I needed the certificate.

KP: Did you use any GI Bill money to take these two courses?

RF: Yeah. ... I can't remember which one I used some GI Bill money for. I think it was the International Correspondence Course. I think I applied it to that, because I couldn't take it in both, and I was taking them simultaneously. ... [With] the International Correspondence School, I did all the book work. I didn't do the drawings and stuff like that. I didn't care about that. I knew I could handle that. ... When I took my PE exam, as you know, on that exam, you can take anything you want. I don't know if they allow computers or not today, but, you could take a calculator. ... You could take all the books you want. Guys would come in with suitcases [full] of books, as did I. But, I did more looking up to check things in the ICS booklets, which were more of a pamphlet thing, [which] ... I had bound into three notebooks. ... The fellow across the street from me was taking the same exam in New York, and he used ... those, again, instead of the college textbooks. ... ICS teaches on the basis that, "Here is the basic theory. Let me tell you what it is, but, you don't derive it. It's been derived, it's been proven, just accept it. ... That is what you are going to use. That is it." It is good [because] you learn how to use it and that is what they teach. When I was in college, you derived the formula. ... I guess it is better, education wise, but, when I got to a practical standpoint, the other was by far superior. So, I used that for that sort of thing. ... I took my PE exam, and I got through it the first time, but, I took it in civil engineering. ... There was an element of luck on that exam, because there is a new exam made every year. ... They give you the last five years' exams to look at, so you know what others have done. ... They make up a new exam every year. ... When I got those five, there were one or two in there, one in particular, that I would not have passed. It had a heavy, heavy load ... of

reinforced concrete design, which I don't do any of now. I never have done much, [but], I have done some. ... I did it thirty years ago. ... Today, if I got it, I'd have to get books out to do it. ... Once in a while, I did a little bit of it, but, it is not much. ... That exam would have been very, very difficult for me to pass. There was another one that I could have probably passed without taking all this review stuff, because, for some reason, whoever made that up was very strong on pile driving, which is the main business I am in. ... That would have been relatively easy to do. ... So, it is a little bit of the luck of the draw on that exam, but, it is a good exam. ... It is a fair exam, but, it does include chemistry and electrical engineering as well. Everybody gets that. ... Rutgers runs a review course at Newark and I took that. ... That is almost essential to do it. ... Taking electrical engineering, you just hadn't done it, because I had a war in there and everything else. I'm out of school ten years when I am doing this. ... You need some way of reviewing and it is not that expensive. ... It's ten ... or twelve weeks, something like that. They have a different professor each night. ... It is a full course each night that you cover. ... That is almost essential to take that exam. ... I was very pleased to pass the civil engineering exam even though I was a mechanical engineer. I was very pleased with what I got out of Rutgers.

KP: Did you use a VA mortgage to buy your first house?

RF: No. ... That one, I took over, it was the same percent mortgage. It had been unusual, 'cause being that I am Catholic, that the Masons held the mortgage. ... It was a four percent mortgage. The guy was kidding me. He said, "Boy, you're going to be an easy one to foreclose on." ... It was in Orange. I bought it used, [although] most houses are used. ... I bought the house from a fellow that I knew. ... I had looked at a house in Chatham, which they are now getting a couple of hundred thousand [dollars] for. ... The fellow wanted twelve thousand dollars. ... I was looking for ten thousand, ten thousand five hundred, which they were selling houses for in those days. ... I heard that this friend of mine had a house in Orange. ... [It] had been in his family, and his price was twelve thousand five hundred, but, I had a hundred dollars a month of income from the second floor, because he had converted it to two family. So, that's the one I bought. ... I didn't particularly care for Orange. I didn't care for it then and I don't care for it [even] more now. ... I figured to stay there for seven years. I figured we'd have our kids there and whatnot. By the time they needed school, I'd be out of Orange. ... After three-and-a-half years, I'd had it with being a landlord. ... I sold it and was back ... looking for houses in Chatham again. ... I'm looking in this house, and I said, "What do you want for this house?" [He said], "Seventeen five." I said, ... "Do the Wrigleys live next door?" He said, "Yes. How did you know that?" I said, "I almost bought this house." ... I'm back in the same house that I didn't buy in Chatham three-and-a-half years earlier at ... thirteen [thousand dollars]. ... Now, it is up to seventeen. So, I said, ... "I really want to buy it, [but], I am limited. ... I'll give you fifteen [thousand dollars] for it." Dismay was on his face. He said, "I can't do it." I said, "I don't know. Can't you do any better?" He said, "You are the third person who has come in and given me an offer of fifteen thousand. ... It has got to be the right number, but, ... I can't sell it [to] you and I've told two other people that they can't have it." I said, "Make it fifteen one," and he sold it to me. [laughter] ... So, I bought that then, and, I think, I sold it for twenty. ... Now, they are getting over two hundred thousand for it. ...

[Tape Paused]

KP: You were talking about a Rutgers man.

RF: Jack Everett, who was killed, and I have lost track of his family, so, I don't know, maybe through the Alumni Association there'd be some contact, but, Jack was in the ROTC. He went over, awful nice guy, first class. ... If you'll look in our year book, you'll see his name several times. He was at the top of just about everything and he was on the crew, too, but, he was on the chubby side, so, he never got above JV, ... but, he would walk down every day when we would take the bus, and that sort of stuff. ... Anyway, to make a long story short, he was in charge of a platoon, or whatever second lieutenants had. He and Pete Cartmell, Johnny Thompson, that whole group, went over to England, and the Colonel came up, [said], "Are you ready for combat?" and everybody said, "Yes, sir, yes, sir, yes, sir." He goes to Jack, "No, sir. ... I just don't think I'm ready for combat now." So, to make a long story short, this happened over a period of about a month, which is starting to get very close to D-Day, and so, the Colonel comes down, and works with Jack, and so, then, finally, Jack says, "Yes, sir, we're ready," and, shortly after that, it was D-Day anyway, the invasion, and, at some point, and I don't know which part in France, where the line was like that, the Germans were kind of pocketed, and there, at the head of that line, is Jack's platoon, and the Germans surrender. ... I got this information from Johnny Thompson, who I mentioned earlier, and the Germans surrenders and Jack, and the sergeant, and private, go up to take the surrender, and a fanatic German, at point blank, cuts the three of them down with a machine gun. I understand that the men, then, just charged then and wiped out the Germans, didn't take any prisoners, but, Jack was killed. The sergeant survived, and Johnny Thompson ... was in the hospital with the sergeant, so, that's how he got the story, and he related it to me, and Jake's the one who had three Purple Hearts, when he was back in the service. He says, "The rest of the guys can take it from here," but, Jack was revered by his men.

KP: I can imagine.

RF: When I was in France, I went to the cemetery, and I looked up to see if Jack was there, and he wasn't. I ended up on the Normandy Foundation Board ... as a result of inquiring about Jack. ... They invited me to come over for V-E Day. ... I said, "I don't want to be with these guys who did all that stuff in Europe," and they say, "Well, what were you with?" and I say, "I was over in Okinawa." ... Didn't make any sense, so, I didn't go, but, Jack, some comment might be made. ...

KP: One of our project's goals is to create a memorial book of everyone from Rutgers. ...

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