

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH HERBERT B. GROSS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Herbert B. Gross on October 26, 1994 in Princeton, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and

Travis Richards: Travis Richards.

KP: I guess I'd like to begin by asking you a few questions about your parents. Your parents both came from Hungary?

Herbert Gross: Right.

KP: Why did they immigrate? What pushed them or encouraged them?

HG: My father came from a family of nine children. He was the oldest. ...They lived in a little village and were very poor. ... His father saved up enough money to send him, who was the oldest, to America where the streets were paved with gold. He would make all that money, and then send for the whole family. ... When he ... was 13 years old, he arrived here and knew no one. They didn't have any relatives, and they just had enough money for steerage. ...He got to New York City, and there was a Jewish organization. I don't know the name of it, but they took care of placing people who didn't have relatives here to receive them, and they put him in a boarding house in Philadelphia and got him a job in a cigar factory in Philadelphia. And that's how he came here. My father was never what my grandfather thought he would be. He was never a real earner. My father was more of a student and a scholar and that's how I remember him. He was always reading and reading and reading. He really never was never interested in money, and he never got anyone over, unfortunately, because the entire family then, those children were all married with children, and they were all killed in the ghetto they were in. When the Nazis came in, they had to dig their own trenches, and they were all shot in this one trench. Children three years old, four years old. The reason we know this story, three of the girls who were at the time were 15 up to 19, very beautiful by the way. because we finally got them over here, the Nazis took and didn't kill them. And how they used them you could use your own imagination. ...After the war, my father got them over here to this country, and they're presently living here. But that's how my father came here. And my mother came here from Hungary. She was like two years old, and she has no recollection of the old country. She came from a ... large family too. ...They settled in Trenton. My father met my mother, and my father moved to Trenton. He then got a job as an insurance agent for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. I was born in Trenton, and I have no brothers or sisters. ...

KP: You were an only child?

HG: I was an only child.

KP: You mentioned your father was very scholarly. Did he study the Talmud?

HG: My father, no, no. My father was very scholarly, politically. He was very interested in history and politics. My whole recollection of my father was, and it used to annoy me, why didn't he get out and try to make some money because in the Depression we lost our house. Our

furniture was out in the street when I came home from school. It was a terrible time. ... Now that I look back, I'm sorry that I felt that way. I used to say, why don't you get out and do like other people? But, he was mostly interested in reading, reading, reading, and I always remember him in that light. My mother always catered to that with him and that was, but they were very rough times. Not only for my parents and myself, but it was a deep Depression and when from '30, we lost our house in '33 when I came home from school all of our furniture, in those days they just put your furniture on the street. There was no welfare. There was no help. There were no laws that said you can't put anybody on the street, you got to give me three months or something. And that was the way we mostly existed in those Depression days. So when it came time to go to college, my folks were caring enough to tell me that I should go and not have to worry about taking care of them. So that was, they released me. And friends of mine from high school had obligations to their parents to help them. That's how rugged it was in those days. Anyway, in the class that I associated with, we were, I guess, pretty much lower strata financially. And my friends were the same way.

KP: So you considered yourself very fortunate to be able to go to college?

HG: Yeah, well, Rutgers was a state institution. I forget what the tuition was. I think it was something like 400 dollars, and I think I got some kind of help or aid It cost me like a 150. There was, Sigma Alpha Mu was on campus. It was on Easton Avenue at the time. And someone from Trenton that I knew was a junior there. I knew him only because of high school. He always had a car. He was from a very well-to-do family here, and he got me a job at the Sammy House waiting on tables and cleaning up and everything else, and I got free room and board. ...That's how I went through Rutgers, at the Sammy House on Easton Avenue. So it worked out good, and I was also, because my uncle had a butcher store when I was a kid and I used to work in it, I also was a half-ass butcher, and I got a job at what in those days was a supermarket, was King Arthur on Albany and was a main corner in New Brunswick. While all the other guys were working at drug stores and shoe clerks and all, I was making much more money because butchers were making [more]. So I more or less had ... a good life at Rutgers, because I had free room and board, and I made enough money to take care of my clothes and my books and that's what happened at Rutgers.

KP: You mentioned that your father was very scholarly. Did he join any Zionist organizations or was he active at all in local politics?

HG: He was never interested in local politics. He loved Roosevelt. That was his God. And it turns out that Roosevelt, was, as far as I'm concerned, was a pretty unconcerned person when it came to [the] Holocaust, not [the] Holocaust, but to Jews who were trying to flee Germany because at the time, and when he refused to allow that boat load in and sent them back to the ovens, my father ... became a shattered man because Roosevelt was always his ideal, with the NRA and with what he did for the poor people at the time. When I say he was scholarly, he would read every newspaper. The *New York Times* was his Bible. ...This is my recollection of him. He wasn't interested in sports or anything. It was always world affairs, national affairs.

KP: So he pretty much knew what was going on in the 1930's?

HG: Oh, yeah. I knew what was going on because of him and my mother, too, were very well read and very interested and naturally I was always there to be influenced, in fact. I became influenced.

KP: When did you think that the United States might get involved in the war and when did your father think? Did he think as early as before 1939 that we might be fighting Germany or was it after ...?

HG: We were hoping. We were hoping, but I was hoping. I don't know that my father was hoping. He was pretty much of a pacifist. But I was hoping, and I used to be angry whenever I saw anything with Hitler or what was going on there. I used to be infuriated. In fact, that's why I joined the Marine Corps. I thought it was, you'd get the most action, and I'd get over there and get after them. ...

KP: You mentioned that the Depression hit your family very hard. Did your father lose, was he out of work for long periods of time?

HG: He was never out of work. He worked for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. He had a debit that he would collect ten cents a week, those kind of policies they had, and it was drudging to go because the people who had ten cents a week never had any money. ... We also had a tough time, my father was always lending out ten cents when he couldn't afford it. I remember my mother would get so upset with him because he would get his salary and then this would happen. ... "They're going to pay me, they'll pay me." It's not that they wouldn't, most of them you know couldn't. And that's a kind of, what he did, he was never out of work.

KP: But he made often very little money?

HG: He made very little money.

KP: Your neighborhood, which section of Trenton did you grow up in?

HG: I was born on Market Street. It was called Jew Town. It was a very, very rough area because, it was great in a way because there were Italians. There were Blacks. There were Polish and Jews all mixed in one area. And I thought it was good. I've often told my kids that I think that was one of the best experiences I had.

KP: In what way was it so good? What do you tell your kids?

HG: Well, we used to, there was a YMHA downtown on Stockton Street and a little basketball court. And the competition was fierce when we played...the Italians And also competition was fierce was when one kid would have a fight, and you automatically didn't know who was right or wrong. If he was a Jewish kid, you would just go in and just plow away with the Blacks or against ... It was an experience. And now when I am in Trenton, I meet a lot of the guys, the Italians, the Blacks that I know and we reminisce a lot about ...

KP: So you still stay in touch with some of the people you grew up with?

HG: I don't stay in touch with them, Oh, that I grew up with, Yeah. But just the other day ...in a restaurant, an Italian restaurant, a waiter came up to me and grabbed me by the neck and he said, remember you threw a rock at me. I didn't remember, but he finally told me.

KP: You said most people couldn't go to college. How fortunate were you to be able to go to college from your neighborhood?

HG: What's interesting is, my friends that were in high school and the friends I had that were in high school were pretty much, the academically good students in high school. Trenton High School was a fantastic high school. You could get into any school as well as you could from Lawrenceville or Hun or any of those schools. That's how it was rated in the country. Our graduating class was like 1,000. There was 1,000, and there were 10th, 11th and 12th, so there were 3,000 kids. Fantastic school. And the friends that I had were always interested in going to college. And everyone managed ...

KP: To figure out a way?

HG: ... to get away, to figure out a way. One example, his name's (O'Keen, Martin O'Keen?) and his father was a window cleaner. He used to just go down and get 50 cents, 25 cents cleaning windows in town here. And his father, and he was pre-med. He was a real good student, this O'Keen. He went to Temple. He was pre-med and his father fell off a ladder, and they lost their income. This guy always impressed me tremendously. He got a job with Railway Express from twelve to eight. And this was pre-med. He had labs. He had everything. Twelve to eight. He would sleep three, four hours and go to all his labs and everything else and he was still up there. But I'm trying to tell you ... what kind of effort they put through. Now my fraternity I was in, they were well-to-do guys. The guys from all over. They had cars, and they had the proms and everything else and the fraternity was fairly well-to-do.

KP: So those in fraternities at Rutgers at that time that had some money or their parents had some money?

HG: Well, their parents had some money. In fact, we'd have a meeting where they'd need a new refrigerator, and one of the kids would call his father. He'd say, pop we need a refrigerator. ...The father would send the money. ...A lot of them were very well-to- do.

KP: How did you feel as someone who was working his way through? How did you feel about the students who were so affluent?

HG: I never resented it. What I always disliked, I hated waiting on people. ...I didn't resent them because it wasn't their fault, but I just disliked it. And when they'd have prom weekends the women, their dates would move in and the guys would move out, but then everyone would eat at the fraternity. It used to grim me that I used to have to wait on a guy and his date, you

know, and so forth. But otherwise, I liked them all. In fact, I've heard from them all and everything else. A lot of them have been successful. But the funny part of it is, the guys that were deep in living on Market Street, in Jew town, when we looked around, like when they were in their 40's, 50's, they were the most successful guys. It was amazing how successful. And the one that got me, who was so well-to-do, who got me the job, his family was so well-to-do, he was an heir of the (Fuld?) Estate. I don't know if you ever heard of it. They owned real estate in Newark and all over. ...He was a good friend, and he was nice, but he was a guy who ended up with nothing. He just never accomplished anything. He lived high and all. And then I looked around and saw the O'Keens and the different ones who really became successful, if not necessarily monetarily, but in their life and what they accomplished. I think that the Depression era really brought out ... the winners. Because, the guys that were really working their way, well most all the ones at Rutgers in those days, I don't think they had an easy time, even, unless the few that were at the fraternities. But I know that guys that lived in boarding houses and that lived in the dorms and had scholarships and were swimmers and used to eat at the training tables, football players and all. Those guys were achievers.

TR: How were the fraternities seen at that time? Were they respected?

HG: Yes. In fact, the fraternities ...

TR: Why did you join a fraternity?

HG: Solely to be able to get free room and board. As it turned out..., I enjoyed it....

TR: Do you remember any type of any initiations or anything like that?

HG: Oh, yeah. They were horrible. There were a couple of seniors there that used ... to run us down, get me cigarettes or go down to the store to get me this, get me that. And if you didn't act right, they'd make you assume the position and whack you. And I used to resent that. ...Then, when I became an upper-classman, I think I began sending them around. ... But, there were never any real violent kind of initiation.

TR: Did you have any type of favorite class that you can remember from Rutgers?

HG: Favorite class?

TR: Yeah.

HG: Well, we had a political science course. I'm trying to remember, I just loved this professor. I can't remember his name, but that was my favorite class. ...I had that probably my junior or senior year. I used to really look forward to it.

KP: Did you ever have a class with Arthur Burns?

HG: ... What did he teach?

KP: I think he taught Economics or Political Science.

HG: I think that's it, Burns. Yeah.

KP: He later became chairman of the Federal Reserve.

HG: Is that right? Is that who it was?

KP: Yeah, no. Arthur Burns later became ...

HG: Well, maybe that wasn't it. Maybe that's where I heard the name.

KP: But he taught at Rutgers. Several people remembered Arthur Burns.

HG: Right. Boy, that name sounds so familiar. I probably do remember him from that.

KP: How would you judge your classmates in terms of how they came down in the coming of the war? How many favored intervention? How many opposed intervention?

HG: Well, I think, when December 7th, when they bombed Pearl Harbor, I don't think there was anyone that wasn't interested in just going to war. And there was a whole different feeling. Now my son was of age when, lets see, when was Vietnam?

KP: '68.

HG: He was the age, and he went to Rutgers, by the way, and he's an attorney today, but he was adamantly against the war. And from what I gathered all of his friends were. I was annoyed. I was a typical father. He grew his hair which disgusted me. And he grew a beard. He used to come home, and I'd think, geez, I wish he would go back to school. And he was against... the war, and I was gung ho for ... whatever our government then thought was the thing to do. And the difference was tremendous as compared to 1941 and when I went in '42. What's interesting is, I was at a Giants football game in New York with two of my fraternity brothers, and they made the announcement at the half that the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. And I got furious. I didn't even know where Pearl Harbor was, believe it or not. And I was a senior in college, and I never knew where Pearl Harbor was. But I was angry, and ... I went down to downtown Manhattan. I got in line to join the Marine Corps. And that was December. I was going to graduate in '42. But that was the attitude. Everybody, all ... my fraternity brothers, the guys who were schooled and everything else, they were all looking, where to go, what service. They were going to go too. And they wanted to go fight ... for this country, and it was a very patriotic movement among the college students at Rutgers that I knew. They were all involved in going and where they were going and everything else. As it turns out, I was sorry the next day because I wanted to finish college. And they told me I had to report to Paris Island. They gave me three weeks or something like that. And I went to the Dean and I told him, that you know, it was a passion that ... I wanted to join, but I decided I'd like to wait until I graduated. And he said that

he'll work it out. We had R.O.T.C. at the time at Rutgers. He spoke to the colonel at R.O.T.C., and there were others that did the same thing I did. And then three, four days later, the President came out and said anyone that's in college can finish college. I graduated. I'll never forget this. I graduated at our gymnasium on, on what street is that?

TR: College Avenue.

HG: College Avenue on May 10th. May 11th I was at Quantico, Virginia. That's how much time they gave me.

KP: But backing up just a year or two in 1939, 1940, ... I remember reading in the *Targum* in 1939 that, for example, President Clothier made a talk to the convocation saying that this was Europe's fight and that we should stay out.

HG: You know, I don't remember too much about '39. ...I might have felt differently than the average Rutgers' student because it was a personal thing with me. They were beating up Jews. And as far as I am concerned, I was even thinking of what can we do. I know of some people that went up to Canada to enlist because they were angry about what they were doing with Jews.

KP: Did anyone from Rutgers enlist?

HG: I don't know. None of my friends did.

KP: Did you know anyone from your old neighborhood in Trenton that did?

HG: No. ... I just know ... from what my father would tell me from our synagogue that there were [some] that went up there to enlist. But I didn't know them.

KP: How did you feel about going to chapel, the mandatory chapel?

HG: We had a dean by the name of Metzger. And ... it was compulsory to go on Sunday morning. The first time I went, it was interesting to me. But then he prayed, he ended the prayer with, we ask it in Jesus's name. And I resented that and I decided I wasn't going to go there anymore. Then I was called up to his office. He said, you haven't been going to chapel. I told him why. He said, well, why would you even take an affront to that? He said, when we ask in Jesus's name, we're asking for you and for everyone. He said, you don't have to believe in Jesus. But he said, you can understand that we're concerned and want all our students to be protected, and we're asking for health and whatever in Jesus's name. And I said, well, it just goes against me. I thought this was...

KP: Non-denominational.

HG: ... non-denominational. Just ask it in anyone's name. But why ... just say Jesus's name? And he said, well, you're going to go, and I'm not going to change my method because he was a minister or a preacher. And he said, I'm not going to change my method. And I said, well, I'm

not going to go. I'm going to make an issue of this. And I had an uncle who was a pretty influential guy at the time, and his best friend ... had won the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War I. He captured 89 Germans single-handedly. And he was a very big man. He was commander of the New Jersey Jewish War Veterans. And, I'm trying to think of his name. And, anyway, I called my uncle. I told him, I don't know whether they'll kick me out or what. And he said, why are you making a damn issue of this? He said, stop ... being like your father. I said to him, it just goes against me, and I don't like the idea of it. Ben Kaufman, if you ever want to look into him. He was quite a hero in World War I. And this Ben Kaufman made a few calls to the Governor and so forth and so on. And I never went to chapel.

KP: And did you ever have any more experiences with Dean Metzger?

HG: No, there was only one other experience, and it wasn't me. There was some wild guys in our fraternity house. And it was right on Easton Avenue and people would be passing by. They'd fill bags with water and drop them. ... I wasn't there at the time. I wasn't there that weekend. And I think that either the Dean's wife or sister, or whatever, was walking by and she got it. And we, and I think they closed our fraternity for two weeks or something like that. That's the only other experience I had with Dean Metzger.

KP: You went to college. What did you think you would become after? What were your career [goals]?

HG: I always wanted to be a lawyer. I took political science, and I was interested in that. ... I did apply to law schools, and I was accepted in law schools in 1941 to start in the 1942 class. But then naturally the war came along. ... I went to Penn Law School in '46 on the G.I. Bill of Rights. I got married, and my wife was expecting a baby. I couldn't make it on the G.I. Bill, and I had to stop after a year. That's what happened as far as what I wanted out of school.

TR: Did you have any relationships that you can remember when you were going to Rutgers?

HG: With men or women?

TR: Women.

HG: Yeah, I had a few relationships. By relationships do you mean a lasting relationship?

TR: Well, just dating.

HG: Oh, dating. Oh, yeah, I had a lot of them.

TR: What would you do on a typical date?

HG: What I would try to do and what I accomplished usually wasn't the same thing. But you know, there wasn't much money around. Maybe you would go to a movie. Most of the time, the girls would hang in our club room at the fraternity house. That's why I liked it, too. You had

great records. You'd hang there, more or less, and drink beer. That was the type of relationship. I had one serious relationship, that I thought was serious at the time. And this girl went to Rider College here in Trenton. And I haven't seen her, I think, since my senior year. That was about the only thing.

TR: Did you know any Blacks at Rutgers College at the time. How prevalent were they?

HG: The Blacks? Not at all.

TR: Not at all. Was there a lot of prejudice at the time?

HG: Yes. No, let me say this. Among my friends, or among my, in our fraternity, there was no prejudice against blacks. As I said, there weren't many blacks. But I never heard any outward prejudices of blacks. And those were the days when it wasn't really accepted as and people weren't as outspoken. From what I knew, no one ever said anything. In fact, if anyone ever used a word, what I remember, derogatory, about blacks, they'd be chastised and called on.

TR: Now how about the Japanese in comparison?

HG: I didn't know any Japanese at the time, and naturally, after they bombed Pearl Harbor [and] I was in the Marine Corps. All we said was fucking Japs and this and that. And that was our biggest prejudice.

TR: Can you remember back before Pearl Harbor?

HG: There was none that I know of. There was a big thing in the Marine Corps about blacks becoming Marines. They never had [black] Marines before 1940, I guess it was 1943, '42 or '43. And the Marines were, including myself, were an over-inflated unit where they made you think you were the greatest and the best and the strongest. And I was always a little guy, but I felt when I got out of boot camp I could beat up anybody in the street, you know. They gave you that kind of a complex, that you were the greatest. And then, when Eleanor Roosevelt forced the issue and had blacks in the Marine Corps, it was tremendous anger among the Marines that I knew. And what the hell we should do with it in the Marine Corps.

KP: Now this anger, was this by the regular career Marines or was it widespread, both newly enlisted and ...

HG: When a man goes through boot camp, he's so indoctrinated that he's like a regular blown-up Marine from what I saw.

KP: You even felt that ...?

HG: No, I didn't feel that about blacks coming in.

KP: No, but I mean in terms of being built up as a Marine.

HG: Yeah, oh yeah. I thought ...

KP: You had been to college already.

HG: I was at college and everything. They indoctrinated you so that there that was nothing like the Marine Corps. I should look down on the army. I should look down on the navy. We'd see them. They were like nothing compared to a Marine. I used go on liberty in Washington. And I've never saw a Marine who wasn't, we called it, a field scarf. Your tie, we called a field scarf. And they call it two blocked, which means you always had your, everything was perfectly ironed and everything was there. And we used to see soldiers with their shirts undone and with their hats and lapels and everything else. And we never saw a Marine, I think if anybody ever saw a Marine doing that, another Marine would go up to him and do it. That's a kind of a esprit d' corp if you will, that they instilled on them. And that was there. And as far as prejudice is concerned, ... the only time, and it was really anger, when she was going to allow blacks in the service. I and quite a few of my friends in the Marine Corps didn't agree with that. But the only time I saw blacks in the service was, is when we were ... aboard ship, and they were the stewards, as far as connecting with the Marine Corps.

KP: You mentioned you graduated and the next day you took ...

HG: The next day.

KP: The next day you took the train down to Quantico?

HG: Right.

KP: Had you traveled much before you joined the Marines?

HG: No.

KP: Had you been to Washington or?

HG: Oh, yeah, I went to Washington with our high school class ... and field trips and everything else, but, no, I was never that sophisticated travelling wise ...

KP: What was it like to report to Quantico the next day? What were your experiences like those first few days of induction?

HG: Well, I couldn't wait till I got there. And when we got off the train, they lined us up. We had a sergeant that I said to myself, what the hell am I doing here? This is wild. He talked to us like we were the worst dirt that ever lived, and he'd come up and put his nose right in your face, and he'd practically spit when he spoke to you. And if you didn't stand right and all. They marched us to get our clothes and everything else. And it was a hassle. And they degraded you. And they belittled you. And they abused you. This was my first experience.

And they shaved my head and everything else. And I thought, oh, boy, this isn't what I thought. I thought we were going to go to war and not do this. But it was ten weeks of the most fierce, and I can never remember in combat having the fierce abuse of your body. But it wasn't abuse. It was really building you up that we went through for that ten weeks. And as a result, what's interesting, everybody got very close. We all became close. And everything was alphabetical. Griffith, Gold, Haley. Haley was an All-American tackle at U.C.L.A. Big Irishman. Fantastic Marine, too. And this Griffith, did you ever hear of, here's an interesting story. Griffith's Shoe Polish. Have you ever heard of it? Griffith's Shoe Polish? Well that's who he was, and he was absolutely unbelievable. Griffith the third he was. And he was Gri and I was Gro so that's why we got friendly. And when he pulled up, everybody came in a train and everything else. He was late. And he pulled up. They had like a Pierce Arrow with the lights on. And he got out in front of our barracks. We had a sergeant by the name of Dumbrowski who I don't think went to sixth grade. He always would say, you's guys. You's guys. And this Griffith used to say to him, Sergeant, you guys. Not you's. You don't say [yous]. Well he used to steam this guy up. And nobody ever talked back to a drill sergeant or anything else... But he just was, I think, he was intent on getting thrown out of the Marine Corps, which he did. And then it was such a terrible blow to him that he was in Washington, I think, and became a commander in the Navy, and he was stationed in Washington the whole war. I guess it was through his father. But, he was a thorn in the lieutenant's side, our drill master and everything else. It was an interesting ten weeks.

KP: What other vivid memories do you have ...? Do you have vivid memories of the marches or bayonet drills?

HG: Oh, yeah. It was just like you didn't think you could make it anymore. You used to have a full pack, and they'd make you go on a march. Your...drill sergeant would have nothing on his back. All he would have would be a walking stick that he would whack you with. And now he would run. He would say, double-time. And you would have to run. And you would run. You would start to hate him and say, that son of a bitch, he's not carrying anything. And ... when you think about it, it was really a gruelling, torturous ten weeks. And they used to degrade you. I used to scrub the toilets with tooth brushes. You know, all of that stuff. This guy Haley. I always told my kids about this. He called [the] rifle his gun. And they said at the very beginning, when we were doing orientation with weapons, this is not a gun. It's a rifle. So one day he made a statement about his gun. And we were supposed to go on liberty for the weekend. And he was down in the barracks right where everyone walks up and in and out and everything else. And he stood there with full shirt, with the field scarf and with his hat, everything and [he had his]... rifle, shoes and socks, no underwear. Completely bare. And he stood there and said, this is my rifle. This is my gun. This is my rifle. This is my gun. And I remember this mountain of a man who could have killed that G.I. He had to do that like for three hours when everyone was walking through. But what was interesting, you hated them. You hated them. And, boy, after that ten weeks and you graduated. They came out and said, we're buying you beers. The drill sergeants and the G.I.s and they were like and all of a sudden you forgot everything. They were hugging you, and you were hugging them. ... You realized they did it, they had a job to do.

KP: How many people walked out of training? Did most make it through?

HG: We had three platoons. In fact, I just had my 52nd Marine Corps reunion. I think they had it in Puerto Rico this year. I didn't go down. And the reason I didn't go down, I didn't go to the 50th either, is because, they sent you a roster of my company, of my boot camp company. And out of them I think there was maybe, out of like 120 guys, I think there were like 20-25 alive. A lot of them died after the war. But a good percentage of them ... were killed because where they sent me, they'd send each year the asterisks of the guys that weren't killed in action. We had quite a few that were killed.

KP: How many didn't make it through training?

HG: How many?

KP: Most people made it then?

HG: Most of them made it, because most of them wanted it. Most of them were there for only one reason, they weren't drafted. They were all volunteers. And most of them were, everyone was a college graduate. Most of them were good athletes at college and what they really had was the cream of the crop and they had their pick. You know I was so excited when I got in. And the few others, like [Ronald] Jarvis. When he got in, we just hugged. This is how excited it was that we were picked to be, you know, to do it. So actually you didn't have that many. He stood out in my mind, this Griffith because he was pulling things all over. If you got a second, I'll tell you what he did.

KP: Oh, no, take your time.

HG: When they busted him and he was out, he had to wait a week or so before they let him go, and he was going into the Navy. They had him doing every kind of dirty job you can imagine Before every liberty on Saturday, you had to go through an obstacle course. And if everything wasn't clean before you left, your pack or your rifle or everything, you couldn't go on liberty. And we all lined up, and there was this rope hanging over a bar. And there was a mud hole and what you had to do was run with your pack, jump, grab that rope and get across to the other side. If you ever went into that water, you weren't going on liberty because you'd be spending the whole day, they'd come back and inspect every two hours to see if it was clean. And boy you were saying, boy, I hope I make it, I hope I make it. They had him working on a work detail to where he was working around there and everything. And he was sitting there on the side and saying, hi, guys, and all this. And Dumbrowski looked at him and said, boy, I'll be glad when he is gone. He had put machine gun grease on the rope. And he stood there like this. And the first guy goes, ... and he slides down into the mud. Yeah!, he'd go. And this Dumbrowski was such a torturous guy, he made the next five guys ...

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

HG: So the first five guys and ...and Dumbrowski says, see what he did? You all love it. Everybody loved it. All of us loved this guy. He was something. He used to take us, he was, I guess so wealthy when he did go home, but before he busted out, we'd go to Washington. He would pick up the tab for everything. You know, he'd take four or five of us, and he'd pick up the tab. We'd go to the fine restaurants. And he loved women. He was always calling this guy, he knew or his father knew to fix him up. Anyway, he said, you like him so much, that's your buddy, go. He goes, oh Sarge, come on. Go. And the first five guys, and then he was sliding around laughing, and he was having a good time. All of a sudden the sergeant said, alright, those five, he said, are gone. He said, but you know, when I count, and I'm going to do it very slowly, when I count three, you're all dismissed and go get that son of a bitch. All these guys were running, and he was running. They finally caught him, and they threw him into the mud hole, and he was laughing the whole time. He couldn't care less. But that's the kind of guy he was.

KP: Your ten week training, was that to train you to be an officer or was that ...?

HG: To be an officer. See, I had two years of R.O.T.C. and when they interviewed us, in fact they came to our college, the Marine Corps. And they interviewed. And there were a quite a few guys that they interviewed. And I think they only, they took, I think, three of us. Two or three. I know Jarvis was one. There might have been two of us.

KP: So you were a very small group that went from Rutgers?

HG: Yes. Most of the, you know, I don't know that the Marine Corps was that popular to join at that time. Because when I was telling friends, you know, [they'd say,] you've got to be crazy.

KP: I read that the Marine Corps before the World War was sort of old guys in their 40's with tatoos.

HG: Oh rough, yeah, rough. But...not with the group I had, because all I had, an [older?] second lieutenant.... Most of my old platoon and later my company were all young, young guys. When I say young, I'm talking eighteen, nineteen years old.

KP: You mentioned you had been R.O.T.C. for two years. Had you thought of staying on for another two years?

HG: In the Marine Corps?

KP: No. In the R.O.T.C.

HG: In the R.O.T.C.? No, I didn't. I didn't think of that because that wasn't my intention at all. I just wanted to go to law school. I wanted enough time to be making money, and I knew I needed money for law school. In fact, I don't know if I even liked it that much. I really never enjoyed the military until I got into the Marines Corp.

KP: After you finished you training in Quantico what happened to you then?

HG: I was shipped out to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina which was then called tent city. And that's what it was. It was one big muddy tent city. We all lived in tents. And I was assigned to the first air drone battalion. And I had no troops. We had nothing. We only had, this captain was our company commander. They didn't have a colonel yet. ... They had a few first sergeants. And then one day, I was there about a week, we got notice that our company, a company of boots coming up from Paris Island, green, were to be picked up at the train station. And we were to meet them and they were to be assigned to us. And that's when I met my first platoon. ..We took them out. We then trained them In fact, I was training myself at that time, because I was still green. And we trained for quite a few months. ...Very quickly we became quite a good, prepared company and then a battalion. Then the colonels came, and it became a good company. I had machine gun company.

KP: Did you have an experienced sergeant or did you have a newly commissioned sergeant for your platoon?

HG: No, I had a commissioned, one thing they did, they always gave you an ... experienced, commissioned. At least in our experience, ... they were all old-timers.

KP: So you had a sergeant who really ...

HG: Who really knew the stuff. He used to lead me, ... but very, very G.I., very militarily. "I would suggest, sir."

KP: And you usually followed his suggestions?

HG: Yeah, well sure. But, you'd be surprised how the men became, really became good Marines within three months. We had real extensive training.

KP: What was it like to be in the South during the war when you went on leave and so forth?

HG: Here's something interesting. You were talking about race. There was Wilson, North Carolina was a ...

KP: I've been to Wilson.

HG: Were you?

KP: I have friends that live near Wilson.

HG: It was near Jacksonville, North Carolina where Camp Lejeune was. ... They used to have, for officers, they used to have, they had a country club there. ...They would invite the officers from our battalion They would have a country club dance, and they'd have all these southern belles there that their fathers were members and everything else. We'd get on a bus to go. One time we got on a bus to go, and there was this Marine, a black Marine. ... That's when they had

just come in. This black Marine, he was dressed beautifully, starched and everything else. He got on the bus, and when we started to go, the bus driver got up and said to him, get to the back of the bus. And I think this Marine was from up north ... and he said, what are you talking about? He said, your black. Get to the back of the bus. So, the back of the bus was pretty well filled, and there were a few seats that weren't filled and he said, get back there. And he said, I'm not taking off. You guys are not going until you get to the back of the bus. When he got up to get to the back of the bus, two or three Marines got up and took those seats. They got up from the front, and they took those seats. These were enlisted men. And as an officer, I was concerned about taking a stand. But I was so glad what they did. And he said, there is no seat there. And he said to the enlisted men, get up. I saw what you did. Get in the seat. And they said, you know what we are going to do to you? You make us get up and give a seat to a black man? No way. And he said, and if you keep this up, let's work him over. And I thought, boy, I'm sorry I'm here. Because I was an officer. And I didn't want to interfere. And he said, okay. The bus driver said. And he got out and he came back with a cop. ... And this cop said, now look, this is our rules down here. This is the way we do things down here. If you don't like it get off the bus. And they wouldn't. They wouldn't get up. They said, you can't make me give up my seat. They said, okay then you get off the bus to the black guy, the cop. It was sad, because the black guy said, wait a minute, hold it, thanks anyway, he said. And he got off the bus. It was an experience that I wasn't used to being from New Jersey. But he would not move. They would not move the bus.

KP: Even though you were a Marine? You were sitting there, you were serving in the Marines.

HG: You know, I don't know what we should have done. I've often thought about what should I have done. And all I would have gotten as an officer, I would have gotten in trouble for breaking the rules of North Carolina and if those guys ever worked, a couple of them wanted to grab the bus driver. And I thought, oh, if this happens, you know, I'm going to have to stop this because it could have been in trouble with the local community. ... One man said, no Marine goes to the back of the bus. I don't care what color he is. That's what started it. Don't go. And that's what started the whole thing.

KP: Really? It was one of the white Marines that said ...

HG: The white Marines. I don't know if they cared about blacks, but they cared that no Marine should go to the back of the bus.

KP: Do you have any other memories of the South?

HG: Well, naturally, ... [there were] for colored only toilets and drinking things [water fountains] and luncheonettes and everything else. But you know something, and I always considered myself very liberal, I got used to it, and I accepted it. And today I say to myself, boy if I were the same guy, and I know my son wouldn't have accepted it.

KP: But you in a sense adapted to the ...?

HG: Well, I was, you know at the time, I don't know whether I ... wasn't enough of a, I just didn't want to make waves, I guess.

KP: Plus you had a war going on. Did you have that eagerness to get overseas?

HG: Overseas?

KP: Yeah. To fight.

HG: Did I what?

KP: When you were in North Carolina did you really want to get through the training and fight?

HG: Did I want to then? Yeah, but ... I didn't know I was going to go over to Japan. ... I had, when we went into Kuala Lumpur, there were three companies in our battalion. There was C company, B company and A company. And I was B company. And C company, maybe you heard of him, his name was (Jack Cohen?). He was an honorable mention tackle at [the] University of Pennsylvania. He and (Frances X. Reagon?). I guess you guys never heard of them. They were real big football names. (Frances X. Reagon?) was also a Marine in our outfit. In fact, he was my company commander when I was in boot camp. And this Cohen was a gung ho, when I tell you, its like almost a movie of a Marine. This guy was like, and it was great for this other guy ... (Fay?), who was the other company commander and myself, because when the colonel would ask for a volunteer to do something. We would go like this. He would always do this [raise his hand], and his men would ask to be transferred. My men and (Fay's?) men would ask to be transferred to his, the ones that were gung ho, and the ones that were gung ho, when we were going overseas they were always sitting on the decks. Instead of playing poker or something, they were sharpening bayonets. They were sharpening their knives. You know this was their mentality, and they were mostly southern guys Young southern guys ... really wanted to be in (Cohen's?) outfit because they felt they would get the most. Then there were guys in Cohen's outfit that wanted to be in mine or this other guy (Fay's).

KP: How many southerners did you have in your unit and how many northerners?

HG: We had mostly southerners and a lot of them were hillbillies.

KP: Did all of them know how to read?

HG: No, they all knew how to read. Oh no, they all knew how to read. I don't think in those days they would take anyone in the Marine Corps that didn't know how to read. They had to volunteer too. It was select, but they were real gung ho guys that wanted action.

KP: What did they think of the fact that you were a Jewish officer? Did they give it much thought or?

HG: I never heard anything.

KP: You never heard any remarks?

HG: I heard one remark the whole time I was in the Marine Corps. And they all knew I was Jewish. I had a major who went to VMI [Virginia Military Institute], a real typical southern military guy, and when we landed in Kwajalein after everything was over, we stayed there until they were going to pull us out. ... He came and lived with my company, the officers of my company. And I had ...three second lieutenants, and a first lieutenant, and myself. So there was five of us. I was a captain then, and he was a major. And all of a sudden he comes in and throws his gear down. And he had someone bring him in a cot, and he said, I'm moving in with you guys. And it was great. Everything was fine. After he was living there a week, we were all at night reading and lying in our bunks and mail-call came. ...He got up. He opens his letter, and he read, and he burst out laughing. He said, listen to this, he said, this is from my wife. ... He read, it's just horrible what that Eleanor Roosevelt has done to Marine Corps. Now she's letting in Niggers. Now he's reading us this, and he knew I was Jewish, and he said, and she said, the only reason she's able to do that is because those kikes in Washington give her the power. ...She said that. And he laughed. He said, what do you think of that? Now he was a major, and the Marine Corps was different than I guess possibly the Army, no captain ever said to a major anything untort. ... These other guys all looked up. They were all my friends. They were officers with me for years. They all looked up. ... And he said, what do you think of that? I said, I would expect that from a fucking whore. He looked up and he said to me, what did you say? I said, I said your wife is a fucking, dumb bigoted whore. And he said to me, if we weren't in the service, I kick the shit out of you. And I said to him, why don't we just forget it? We won't report each other. Let's go outside. And he said, we're going outside, but were going to the colonel. And we had an Italian colonel, his name was Negri and we went to him. And he said, I want to report this man. He said, for showing disrespect and calling my wife, who he doesn't even know, a fucking whore. This colonel looked and he said, why did you do that? And I told him the story. And he said, major step outside. And the major ... turned around and stepped outside. And he said to me, you know ... you shouldn't have done that in front of your officers, he said, but I know just where you are coming from, he said, I've been called a fucking wop, he said. I know just where you are coming from. He said, what would you like? I said, I like my outfit. Could you transfer him? And he said, I couldn't do that. Would you like a transfer? I said, yes. And I got transferred. But that was my only experience I ever had with it. But I never heard any anti-semitism except that. This guy (Cohen?) was Jewish, and he was like everybody in the whole battalion, you know, he got so many medals and everything else, he was ... so respected and everything else. That might have been the reason why the whole battalion was so accepting.

KP: ... I remember talking to some alumni from Rutgers, and they said that a lot of them expected Jews to have horns practically.

HG: Yeah, well ... I've heard that. I've never run into that.

KP: After you finished training your men in Camp Lejeune, where did your unit go to next?

HG: We went to San Diego by train, and it was such a long trip. ... Every three hours we had to let the troops out and had to march them and exercise them and everything else. And it was, I'd say it must have been like a week on the train. Then we went to the San Diego base, and we were stationed there for three months which was fantastic. We had that the town of San Diego, I talking for the officers, it was quite a life for all the guys. All the gals there and everything. That was great. Then from there we were ... shipped out. We went on a troop ship to Oahu.

KP: Before leaving California, did you find as a Marine Corps officer that you, what was the pecking order in terms of getting dates and sort of civilians. Were the Marines more looked up to then say the Army?

HG: We thought so. And lots of times you'd walk into a bar, and you couldn't buy a drink. Then there'd be a lot of soldiers and sailors around and some civilian would come up, boy you guys are ... because at the time it was Guadalcanal. We got all the publicity for, and Wake Island and every thing. We got all the publicity for this. We were all heroes and nobody was even overseas yet.

KP: You mentioned that on the troop ship that you had some gung ho people who were sharpening their bayonets?

HG: They'd sit out there on the decks, yeah. They'd loved it.

KP: What did other men do?

HG: They'd play poker.

KP: High stakes poker?

HG: They'd lie around and read and everything. They lived like, ... When I used to go down there, now the officers were above deck and you had a state room and everything else. You had a ward room where you ate. And these men used to live in a hold They were converted troop ships to where each little hammock was as close to the other and there would be hundreds in this hold. Guys would get seasick. ... It was vile. So most of the guys used to come on deck just to get fresh air. It was a long, long zig zagging trip because there were subs and everything. And then we ended up ... at Pearl Harbor and we were stationed at Camp Catlin waiting for the next invasion.

KP: And how long did you remain in Hawaii, approximately?

HG: Maybe four months.

KP: So you spent some time in Hawaii?

HG: Oh it was the greatest. They used to have whore houses for the men that were inspected and were regulated. And besides, everybody was very easy on us because we were going

overseas. And our colonel was easy, let the men enjoy and all. ... I think I had more casualties on my men in Honolulu then overseas. They would get into fights ... I'd have to go down to sick bay, and this guy's nose was broken and another guy was in stitches and all. They were just rough necks, ... but the officers had a great officer's club, and there were all these nurses at Pearl Harbor Hospital. ... We were attached to the fourth naval district. There were Navy officers that came to our officer's club, and then we used to go to theirs and all, but ... most of the women that were dated were the native girls. When I say native I mean they were Japanese and Hawaiian and Chinese.

KP: So you could bring a date of Japanese dissent to the officer's club? There wasn't much thought given?

HG: Oh yeah, they were Americans. Now in California they put them all in compounds, but here I think they would have had to put up half the population.

KP: What kind of training did you do in Hawaii with your men?

HG: I used to, about 20 miles, 25 miles from Camp Catlin, I used to get my troops in 6x6's, and we used to drive about 25 miles out to the ocean and beach and we used to fire machine guns. And do different exercises with machine guns and train that way. That's what I did. Now I don't know what the others in the battalion did. My company was a machine gun.

KP: What did you think combat would be like? Had you ever watched any war films?

HG: I watched them, and I couldn't wait. I couldn't wait until the first time I heard a bomb drop, and boy I wanted to get the hell out of there. (laughter)

KP: Had you seen movies like *All Quiet on the Western Front*?

HG: Oh sure. More than that I saw ..., back when I was still in the states, it was a Marine Corps picture, I forget the name of it. John Wayne was in it and everything. And boy, I really was gung ho. But we were all psyched up to be gung ho. And then after that first ..., bang, I never, never looked forward or wanted or was ...

KP: You had mentioned when the bomb first dropped it was very vivid.

HG: When we landed on Roi and Namur [Islands], I don't know whether we didn't have any plane cover or what, but the Japs came over and were bombing, and I know every, I know I did, I had my head ... so deep in a hole. It was frightening. I realized this is not like in the movies. And after that my whole experience, I was always very careful. I was never a hero, which I saw some of the guys were.

KP: You mentioned one of your company commanders, Cohen, was really gung ho.

HG: Yeah, he must have enjoyed it. In fact, you know, I haven't spoken to this guy in years and because the three of us, this Jack Fay and Cohen and myself were the company commanders. We were all very close throughout a couple of years when we were in the same outfit. And he had, he was a sweet easy going guy. He cared when one of his men got [it], but he was just a guy, I guess, that was tuned up or his psyche was such that he wasn't frightened. I know Fay and I had a whole different attitude. And the people in our outfit were happy they were in our outfit because we were never, you know. It's interesting, this Cohen came out of the service, and he didn't know what he was going to do. He was a poor boy from Pennsylvania. And he ended up being one of the top executives of RCA Records in California. And he got very big. ... I spoke to him last December. When they sent out the Marine Corps reunion, they gave his phone number and I called him. He lives in Naples, Florida, and I called him. And he was so excited to hear from me. I asked him, why are you not going to the reunion? He said everybody's dead. And I said, well maybe you and I ought to get together. This year, this December we are going to get together.

KP: When you are down in Florida?

HG: Yeah, yeah. This Jack Fay, who was an attorney and we all three of us were very close, I used to see him on television. He swore in Eisenhower. He was a clerk on the Supreme Court. He was president of the University of Vermont. He was president of one of the biggest, of Chubb I think. He became very, very big after the war. So both of them did. It's interesting.

KP: What was the first assault that you took part in?

HG: It was Kwajalein.

KP: Kwajalein.

HG: ...It was early in the war. We took both, we were in both islands.

KP: And how heavily defended were they?

HG: I wasn't in the first waves. I didn't come in until maybe the second or third day. By that time there were trenches, trenches all around that island. And in every trench there were hundreds of dead Japanese. Most of them, that we noticed, weren't killed by Marines. They killed themselves. They were in positions of, not kamikaze. It was a ritual, I guess, if they were going to be captured, they killed themselves. But there were thousands lying on the beach and in trenches when we got in. When we got in. And then there were tremendous bombings and skirmishes.

KP: So your first memory of combat is being bombed?

HG: Being bombed.

KP: And there is not much you can do when you are being bombed?

HG: All you do is just dig deeper in. Yeah.

KP: What about your men? How did they react? Did you have any sense, were the gung ho types still gung ho or did that sober a lot of them?

HG: No, they seemed to react. You know it's hard to tell. A lot of guys won't be honest enough to tell you they're scared shitless. I was frightened. Later on I was very frightened. But a lot of people won't admit it. I didn't admit it then.

KP: It's only in looking back that you realize how ...

HG: After I came home, I said to my wife, geez, I was scared stiff. But I don't know how, none of them showed that. They were ...

KP: And you couldn't show it because you were an officer.

HG: I couldn't show it, and they didn't show it. And maybe they didn't feel it the way I did. Maybe I was just overly, overly careful.

KP: What did it smell like when you landed on Kwajalein?

HG: Oh, and it was hot. And the smell, and the stink. ...It permeated. Even after we got bulldozers later on and buried them, and we covered them up and everything. It just came right up through the ground. The whole island smelled like... a big ... I thought it was the smell of the Japanese. But it was just the smell of death.

KP: Did you do any skirmishing or have any contact at Kwajalein with the enemy?

HG: Did I have any contact myself?

KP: Yeah. Your unit in Kwajalein. In that first assault that took place.

HG: No, we came in and set up. My people set up the machine guns. We thought there was going to be a counter-attack, because don't forget that was pretty early in the war, and we weren't that strong as far as our air cover or as far as the Navy was concerned, because we hadn't destroyed their Navy yet. I know at Wake, it was right before that and we had destroyed [a] good part of their

KP: How long did you remain on Kwajalein?

HG: We were supposed to be relieved. We were supposed to be the assault troops, and we were supposed to be relieved within ... three, four weeks. But we weren't. I don't know whether they couldn't get relief to us or what, but we were there maybe five months. And it was a boring, terribly boring, drawn out, every day kind of existence.

KP: Because the island was secured fairly quickly?

HG: The island was secured sure, well, the way that the Marine Corps, the assaults were always done on a basis of, you had a time element to where you had to clean up the whole island. They would give you like two days, three days. Then you'd be over that, naturally. Maybe it would take five days.

KP: After the island had been secured, what did you do in those five months with your men?

HG: Well, we tried to keep them busy with drilling and with so forth. But mostly it got to be so lackadaisical that no one wore anything but their pants that they used to cut off and were short. You went around bare-footed and just survived, played volley ball. Then after a couple months they got some films in. ...We just stood. But they were always concerned about, and then they built a strip, the Seebes came in and built a strip. And then there were fighter pilots here, that we were more comfortable with because we had planes right on Kwajalein.

KP: Did you have any bombings in those five months?

HG: Yes. They were coming in.

KP: So you would had periodic air raids?

HG: ...No, not in the five months, maybe in the first six weeks, after that we didn't. And then it just got, you know, tiresome and boring. And you wrote letters, and you received letters.

TR: Were you anxious to get back into the battle?

HG: No, after that I was never anxious.

TR: Were the men?

HG: First of all, I didn't talk to the men on a personal basis. As far as I knew Jack Fay felt like I did. We were honest with each other. Some of our lieutenants, this guy Harper, felt like I did. But you had some, I don't know whether they were just talking or whether they really didn't feel. I always said to myself, and there is a Jewish expression, schmuck. I love the word. And I used to say to Jack Fay, who was not Jewish, by the way. And he used to say to me, oh, those schmucks that want to go back.

KP: You were finally taken off of Kwajalein. Where were you sent to next?

HG: We were then sent to the island of Hawaii.

KP: So you went back to Hawaii.

HG: Went back to Hawaii. And we got replacements for the troops that ... left us and then we trained. Then we really trained. We got fresh, green troops. And we trained. That was hard work what we were doing there. Getting ready again, for the next invasion... That also was a great life, because it was good living. A lot of women, a lot of whiskey, a lot of steaks.

KP: So you have very fond memories of your time in Hawaii?

HG: I want to tell you this, except for the few days that were uncomfortable because someone was shooting or bombing, I think it was, it is strange to say this, but I had such a wonderful time for four years. The guys, I loved my friends and ... I was young and there were a lot of women and wine. And they treated you like, when we got back to Hawaii, the people there treated us, when we came back we were invited, they invited three officers, these plantation owners. They would invite three officers for a week of rest. And you'd be their guest in their homes. And they had these sugar plantations, acres and acres, and they had this beautiful home that they lived in. And they must have had, like, twenty servants. That's the way they were living. ...The wife of this one guy was from North Carolina. Beautiful, beautiful woman, much younger than him. I don't know if this was his second or third. He was an old rummy, but he was worth, I guess, millions. And they entertained us. Then they'd have their friends at a dinner party. And the table could seat about 30 people in this beautiful home. And every single one of these wives were much younger than the husbands. And they loved Marines. And so that was the best week I ever spent there.

KP: Some of you grew up with not very much money and had to work your way through college. What was it like in all these experiences in the service to see people with a lot of money and in a sense a very different world? Someone could take a whole group out to dinner or these plantations.

HG: Well, you say to yourself, because I guess you're young and your ambitious, you say to yourself, I'm going to make it, and I'm going to have this. And that's what you really say. I want a beautiful home. I want beautiful cars, and I want to have everything. And I think that's what most of the guys felt. I didn't feel any deprivations. I felt, boy, I'm going to make this. I'm going to have it.

KP: You mentioned you enjoyed Hawaii, and then where was your unit sent to next?

HG: We then went to, this was a tough one, Okinawa. And that was a tough operation. Anyway, my battalion had a tough ... assignment. ... There was, I don't know if you've ever heard of Naha. It was a city in Okinawa that they told us about. It was a city with big office buildings with everything, very sophisticated. When I was in Okinawa for about, I'd say five weeks and my company, I had ... a machine gun company that was right above the ... strip that they built. I think for B-29s. They built an air field strip for B-29s. And at night ... The war was over on Okinawa as far as we were concerned because the guys were out. They were eating out. They were outside. They weren't in the fox holes. They weren't anything. At night, the minute the sun came down, they'd come out of hills, they'd come out of caves. Thousands of them. They'd come out of caves, fanatically. And they would attack. And I could tell you a very interesting

story. And I didn't think I ever had anything to tell you. In fact, I haven't even gone over this in my mind for a long time. I had a cousin, my mother's brother's son who, I went in in 1942 and I didn't see him. And in '45 ... I never heard from him or anything or else, and in '45, I used to write home to mother, how's, Ed? How's Pike? How's this one? How's that one? Everyone was in the service. And my mother said to me about Pike, his name was Harold, his nickname was Pike, that ... he got married in '42, and he was shipped overseas and he's in the Air Corps. And that's all I knew about Pike. I had a perimeter of machine guns completely around this mountain in Naha. And I had communications up to my C.P. [command post] where I was living great because I had a C.P. that was reinforced with sand bags and everything else and my bunk was in there and my telephone operator was in there and my runner was in there. And I would have a report every four hours from the guns. And we had discipline. They couldn't call and couldn't talk on the phones other than that. So every four hours, ... During the day, there was [no] need for it because everybody, as I said, was out playing volleyball. They were doing whatever they wanted. The minute the sun came down, they would man their guns. And my sergeant said to me, Jesus, you see that outfit. That's an ... Army Air Corps outfit. He said, look what they're doing. He said, I don't believe it. They're setting up tents. I said, they're setting up tents? ... No one had tents. You were dug in. And ... I said, maybe you ought to go down there, I said, and tell them that at night they don't know that at night they are going to come out, and they are fanatical bonsai nuts. So he goes down and he comes back and he said to me that the captain or the major or who ever the hell it was said, he's well aware. They've had combat training and everything else. And he didn't even want to hear anything. So nothing happened and they were in their tents for like four or five nights. And then one night they came out. And they shot the shit out of these guys. And these Air Corps guys weren't even trained for combat. They were radio operators on B-29's, and they were navigators and you know everything else. And mechanics. And all of a sudden I got a, and we knew what was happening down there because I could see what was happening. And that was that. In the morning, I get a phone call from one of my guns. He said, captain ... there's a dogface here ... that ... is petrified. He's ran and snuck into our placement... And he's been lying here. When we started to talk to him, he asked me if any of us ever knew of a Herb Gross, a Captain Herb Gross. And he said..., that's our company commander. And he said, how can I talk to him? He said, one minute, ... I hadn't heard from this guy and he said, Herb. I said, Pike, what's happening? He said, I don't believe what happened. He said, they killed everybody but me. He thought everyone was dead but him. He said, I've never seen such horrible things, he said. And I said, how did you get here? He said, well for three, four days I saw machine gun placements around, and I knew there were Marines, and I knew they knew how to protect themselves, he said. He said ..., the only time I ever fired a rifle was on a range, he said. And I don't think I fired twenty rounds in my whole life. And neither have any of us. That's how prepared and that's how snafued it was. Instead of them getting the word and having a Marine detachment or somebody there to be able to protect them. And that's what happened. And a good part of that outfit was shot up. Anyway, he wouldn't go back. And I brought him up to my C.P. there, and he lived with me for two weeks, for three weeks. And he would not go back. I said, Pike, you're going to really be court marshalled. They think your dead or missing or anything like that. He said, I don't care if they court marshall me. He said, I don't care. I'm not going back. We don't know what to do. I'm staying. I see you guys. You know what to do with your guns and everything else. He said, I'm staying here. So he was so frightened, he was so petrified, talk about fear, that he was so petrified that it affected

his bowels. And he couldn't control himself. And he was living in my C.P. And I said, Pike, listen, I can't take this anymore. He would never know when he was going. He ended up being a very sick guy from it. And I said, I've got to take you down. I said, I've got to take you down to your officer, I said, and let's explain what's happened. You were sick and you didn't know where you were. We'll make up something. So I put him in the jeep. It was during the day, you could drive around, there was nothing. So we went down and I went to see his commanding officer ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with Herbert B. Gross on October 26, 1994 in Princeton New Jersey with Kurt Piehler

TR: and Travis Richards.

KP: And continue your story about your friend Pike.

HG: ...He was really sick. He was continually, he couldn't control himself and this major said, don't even worry about it, he said, because I've lost so many men. He said, could you take him to the base hospital here. And I dropped him off at the hospital, and he was so sick that they shipped him out. They shipped him to Australia to a hospital there and then he came home. For two years after that he had colitis. He had everything else. And when I took him to the hospital, the doctor explained to me, he said, let me tell you I have a lot of this. He said, some people it effects their minds. I've got guys who are off their mind from fright. He said, it's unbelievable how frightened they get. He said it effected him ... in his bowels, the fright and that's what happened to him. But I got a letter from my mother about a week later, and it said, I've got sad news for you. She said, cousin Pike is missing in action. (laughter) And his wife is mourning with his kid that he never saw. I quickly wrote a letter and said, he's not missing in action. That he's okay.

KP: And you knew Pike from?

HG: Since I was a kid. ... His father and my mother were brother and sister. They lived in the same ... house as us on Market Street in Trenton.

KP: Did his experience sort of confirm why you were especially glad that you were a Marine?

HG: Did what?

KP: In terms of being a Marine. That you had made the right choice to be with the Marines?

HG: Oh, I felt I made the right choice.

KP: Did that confirm that you could see that this was really screwed up?

HG: Yeah, ... they had made some bad decisions to where I think the army was more careful about life than the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps just went in from, I wasn't in Tarawa, but I understand that they knew that the tides weren't working. They still went in. They didn't care. They went in. They don't need as much artillery cover, because the army is very careful to keep under artillery cover. That was a lot of our feelings, that they wanted it fast, they wanted to get in fast and get the publicity that they were such a tremendous fighting outfit.

KP: Did you remember any other of your experiences at Okinawa?

HG: I started to tell you about Naha. So one day I said to this other guy, this other lieutenant, I said, lets take a, I want to see Naha. I said, Jesus I've heard so much about it. We saw pictures before we went in. South Naha and east the office buildings and everything else. And we drove and we went were riding. And I said, I wonder where in the hell it is. And we saw somebody, I said, where's Naha? He said, you are in it. That's how that city was flattened. I don't think there was a building higher than that chimney. That was an experience to me. I couldn't believe. Then we drove and drove and drove and everything was rubble. That's how they completely

KP: And you had looked at pictures of a modern ...?

HG: I thought, I'm going to go a bar there. I'd go have lunch or something, and it was completely devastated.

KP: Was your unit deployed anywhere else in Okinawa during it's mission?

HG: No, during that mission we were

KP: You were mainly at the command post?

HG: Yeah.

KP: Did you serve on any other islands?

HG: No....., now when you were in you and you had so many points in order to be rotated and be able to go home, you had to have so many combat things, you had to have so many years involved and the accumulated the points. I had enough points to where I was really, I think, one of the senior people to go home because I was over so long. And then they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and four days after that I think I was one of the first Marines off the island. I left.

KP: What was your reaction to the dropping of the atomic bomb?

HG: I was thrilled because we thought ... that from there we were so close we were going to go into Japan.

KP: Had you been doing any preparations for an assault on Japan?

HG: No, but they were talking about, and my Colonel was saying that we're ... probably going to the mainland. That was the only talk. As far as prepared, we were pretty well prepared because we were so well trained for Okinawa and this was just a stepping stone. In fact, they had their airstrips. Everything was built there. If you look on a map, you'll see how close it was.

KP: Your unit, did you lose any men in combat?

HG: Yes, and we also lost in suicide, two suicides.

KP: Two members of your unit committed suicide?

HG: One officer.

KP: Do you have any ...?

HG: I haven't the slightest. Put his gun in his mouth one night.

KP: While he was in combat?

HG: No, no, combat was over.

KP: Really? At what point during the war were the suicides?

HG: One was after we were in Okinawa maybe for five, six days, and they found him with his gun in his mouth. No one saw him do it. ...He was an enlisted man. And this officer, after it was over. Even after. See there were so many Japanese that came out of the caves and the mountains that you never thought it was over. You thought it was over and all of a sudden that night, they'd come and cut throats and do everything like that. So it was after that.

KP: Was your perimeter ever infiltrated? Your machine gun perimeter?

HG: Never.

KP: But you would have contact with the Japanese at night?

HG: ... They never came up to where we were...

KP: But your men?

HG: ...Yes, there were a few instances where they were, but they were mostly trying ... not to get to us, but get to ... the airstrip and troops that were much easier marks. We were all dug- in and built-in.

KP: So you and your men were fairly secure in Okinawa?

HG: Yes.

KP: How well did you sleep?

HG: When? I'd took afternoon naps.

KP: So you would sleep during the day?

HG: Oh no, I slept at night too.

KP: Did you ever go to services while you were in the Marines?

HG: No, I was never a very religious person. And it never occurred to me that they had services. But I never went.

KP: Did you ever have any contact with chaplains?

HG: Oh yeah I used to play gin with a chaplain, and he was a lousy gin player too.

KP: What denomination was this chaplain you played gin with?

HG: What commission?

KP: What denomination? Was he Jewish, Catholic, Protestant?

HG: Oh no, he wasn't. There were no Jewish chaplains in the Marine Corps. There weren't that many Jews. I don't know whether he was Protestant or Catholic to tell you the truth, but he was a great guy.

KP: Did any of your men ever go to services?

HG: Not too often. They were all like me.

KP: Did you ever have any problem with the food, particularly any restrictions?

HG: The food? As far as Kosher?

KP: Kosher, yeah.

HG: I was never Kosher.

KP: Was your family Kosher?

HG: My family was.

KP: But you didn't have any problem?

HG: I didn't have any problem, because I never observed it. But, I know there were some guys that ... observed it, but they were absolved so to speak. So they loved spam, they loved ham.

KP: What was your reaction to the Japanese as you sort of saw it? You saw their dead bodies. Did you ever have any contact with prisoners of war?

HG: Yes, yes. I really hated them. And the dead bodies I felt nothing for. Nothing more, they were just

KP: Was there anything about seeing them close at hand?

HG: Yeah, yeah I used to resent them. And I think the rest of my men did. They'd have them in the compound. See very few, very few surrendered. You couldn't get them to surrender. ...We used to go in with flame throwers into these caves because they were coming out at night, and we never knew who was in what. And we wouldn't send a man in because he could get killed if he went in. So we'd just get a flamethrower and every once in a while one would run out on fire. But some surrendered. We had a compound right near ... us that must of had twenty or 25. You see they were trying to get information, and intelligence wanted us to capture them and we were getting all these orders. My colonel would call me, we got to get them, men are shooting them..., they wouldn't even let them surrender. They'd come out and they'd shoot them. My men never shot them.

KP: There were units that...

HG: ...but there were units that just wouldn't let them surrender. And they really wanted them because they wanted to get information and intelligence.

KP: Did any of the men in your unit ever collect souvenirs from the Japanese soldiers?

HG: Yeah. I did. Everyone did. And they used to sell them to the Navy when they came in. They'd sell them for steaks, for beer, for whiskey. Then I'll tell you something funny. They went into business. Now this was my outfit. I don't know what the others did. They used to get parachute cloth, cut it up, draw a big red circle and sell them as Japanese flags. Every Japanese had around his waist a Japanese flag, and his writings on them, like his family would write good luck and everything like that. ...The minute a Jap was killed the first thing he would lose would be his ... flag, his rifle. If he was an officer his sword. And there was a big thing going on. I had a Japanese rifle. I had the Japanese flag. I had the most gorgeous sword you've ever seen that I wouldn't sell there. I could of got a lot of money in Honolulu.

KP: Do you still have them?

HG: No, my son treasured them. And when we moved ... to this house about twenty years ago, my wife with all of my golf trophies, with all my what's her name, everything went. And we had

a garage sale. And my son to this day has never forgiven me because he loved those trophies, but they're gone.

KP: One of things, and I meant to ask this earlier, I talked to someone from the Navy, and he said whenever he took army troops aboard a ship, they'd always have problems. The army would break into things, stores, and ... discipline would be a bigger problem, where as with the Marines they never had to worry. Were your men fairly well behaved aboard ship?

HG: Oh yeah, well there was very strict discipline. In other words, between me and my men there was never a question that they would ever steal or if they would steal they knew there'd be a punishment, or in any way if they were unruly, they had to really tow the line. And I think there was much more discipline in the Marine Corps. There was much more respect between an enlisted man and an officer in the Marine Corps, I think than what I've seen as an enlisted man in the army or even in the navy, sailors were It was a whole different mind set.

TR: Why do you think that's so?

HG: I don't know. I know I was frightened. I know when I saw a corporal when I was a private, when I saw a corporal it was like I would never even waver, especially an officer and that's the way we were indoctrinated. ... Even the way they carried them, even the way they dressed when they went out on liberty or anything. It was a whole different They looked like a whole different breed in those days. I don't know what it is like now.

KP: I have a second cousin who married to a now retired Marine colonel. I should talk to him and You went home from Okinawa, and you left shortly after the bomb had dropped. You went back to Hawaii?

HG: I flew back to Honolulu, and then they put me on a LST ... and believe this or not, I had a twenty day trip from Honolulu to San Francisco going back. I was commanding officer of the troops going back which was a pain in the ass because I felt that I was really relieved that I was (...?) and then I had this job of three weeks to see if they were fed properly, and they were washed properly, you know that they had bathing facilities and everything else. I had a hard time with the captain of the LST who I outranked, but you don't outrank him, because when he's captain of the ship, he's captain of the ship. I didn't feel he treated the troops right from their exercise or for anything else. So, it was a pretty harrowing trip for me.

KP: Did you ever experience bad weather aboard any of the ships? Typhoons or anything?

HG: When we were in Okinawa, before we went in, there was a typhoon and there were the kamikaze attacks. These attacks and the whole harbor of Okinawa was full of ships, troop ships and everything else. I happened to be, my outfit was on an LST, which is a small ship. So these kamikazes would never pick us as a target because if they were going to get something, they wanted to get something. But everyone looked when it was coming down like it was you. You were sure it was you. It was coming down and you know it could be 300 yards or 400 yards away. ... That was also a very traumatic experience for me. My men were on the machine guns

on the LST shooting at the planes, but it was harrowing to say the least. And we used to pick ... up guys ... whose ships were hit maybe 500 yards away, 1,000 yards away. They were all in bad shape and bloody and full of oil and everything.

KP: How long were you in the bay?

HG: We were in the bay about four days.

KP: And your unit was using the machine guns on the LSTs?

HG: On the LST.

KP: How frightened were you of the kamikazes?

HG: Frightened because it looked like they were coming, everyone looked like it was coming at you. And it was a scene that I should have really digested because ... the action was all over the skies. Every ship was shooting 40 millimeters, 20 millimeters into these planes, and you'd see them hit the water. ...It was quite a scene, but I never took advantage of it because I was so concerned that they were

KP: They were, in fact, trying to kill you. Before you had gone to Okinawa, did you know about the kamikazes?

HG: No. That was new. We never even heard of a kamikaze.

KP: So what was your sort of experience?

HG: The first one I saw that was coming down, I thought he was shot down, and he ... just couldn't control it, and he had to hit. He hit a ship. But then we realized that they were aiming. This was like their last ditch. This was their last hurrah.

KP: Have you ever been back to Japan?

HG: Yes. We went through the whole Orient my wife and I. ...We spent a month a month, going all through. Went to China, went all around. And I didn't feel any deep, you know, deep hatred, deep feeling.

KP: Did you ever buy a Japanese car?

HG: I own a Mercedes and a BMW. No, that's not Japanese. Oh wait, I'll tell you why I said that. I get needled a lot because I bought German cars, and I would never go to Germany. I went all around France, Italy [and] Switzerland when we traveled. I'd never go into Germany. I just had that ... feeling that I didn't want to go there. And yet my friends ask, why do you have a BMW and Mercedes?

KP: Do you have regrets that you didn't get to fight against Germany?

HG: Yes.

KP: You would have rather fought that?

HG: That was my reason [for] ... enlist[ing] in the Marine Corps. I never knew that the Marine Corps was going to be in the Pacific then. That was early in the war. It was 1941 when I enlisted.

KP: So you may well have enlisted in another branch?

HG: I don't think I would have enlisted in the Marine Corps, no. If I knew, I think I would have enlisted somewhere where I could go to Germany. And my father asked me why did you join the Marine Corps? I said, because I want to go fight the Germans. He said, well I can understand that, and then I went there.

KP: Were your parents very worried about you?

HG: I imagine they were.

KP: Did they write to you often?

HG: Yes. They wrote often, and I never had a steady girlfriend or anything like that. When mail came guys would [be] getting all these letters. ... Somebody sent me a subscription of the *Trenton Times*, and it would come and it was three months old and then I'd get a few letters from my mother and that was it.

KP: Your mother was a housewife?

HG: Yes.

KP: Did she ever work outside of the home?

HG: No.

KP: When you came home you mentioned that you decided you were going to law school and you had been accepted. So was it automatic that you would go to Penn Law school?

HG: Well I could have gone to, I was accepted at Cornell. I was accepted at Harvard, by the way, which was quite exciting to me. But I was broke, and I was on the, the only thing I had was the G.I. Bill of Rights, so I had to live home and everything.

KP: ... You still wanted to go into law even though ...?

HG: Oh yeah, I never wanted to stay in the Marine Corps.

KP: You never gave it much thought?

HG: Oh, I gave it thought. I wouldn't in a million years.

KP: Had you thought of another career besides law?

HG: No.

KP: At that point you wanted ...?

HG: Right.

KP: How did you do your first year of law school?

HG: Very well. I was a much better student than I ever was when I was an undergraduate because I really worked hard at it. I think now the guys that were there seemed to have an easier time. I was really a grind. And my friend who went to Penn Law School with me who was my attorney, he just retired. All these years, he was always doing crossword puzzles in the *New York Times* and everything else, ... and he ended up as a law review. He had that kind of a mind. He could read a brief and boy like this he would pick up everything. But I liked it and everything else.

HG: So you very much would have liked to become a lawyer?

KP: At the time, but I couldn't afford it. And I was offered a tremendous opportunity. The main reason I quit was [that] I was offered a tremendous opportunity in that a guy that I went to law school with him, his name was Pratt, whose father owned Pratt's Frozen Foods. I don't know if you have ever heard of it. I think they sold out to Bird's Eye or Seabrook. But they were a big frozen food company. At the time it was Bird's Eye and Pratt and Snowcrop. This guy was in my class and his father used to come down. They lived in New England. He used to come down and visit, and he used to take me out to dinner with him. And this guy reminded me of that guy Griffith, the shoe polish guy. He was always after every, every hotshot girl and everything in Philly. And the father said to me, I wish you had some influence on him. If you could get him through. He said, I don't want him to practice law, I just want him to have a legal education ... when he goes into the business. He said, get him through, and I'll owe you, he said to me. And I used to say to him, I'd say Bert, listen you got to get on this thing. You've got to study. And no, let's go out. Let's go out. He almost got me to flunk out. So then when he flunked out after the first term, the father came down, and he said to me, I know you tried. He said, I might have something good for you. He said, call me. So I waited a week, and I called him. ...He said, I'll give you the New Jersey franchise, all of New Jersey, for Pratt's Frozen Foods. He said, and you'll be the exclusive distributor. I said, well I don't have any money. And he said, I will give you all ... the product on consignment so you'll have it in your inventory, and then you sell it, 30 days later you'll give me the money. And I'll sign the notes for you for refrigerated trucks, and

that's how I started. And I left, and I went into that business. ...It turned out very good. In fact, Bird's Eye was the name. People used to think Bird's Eye was synonymous with frozen foods..., but that was our big competitor. You know, we were struggling against Bird's Eye and then General Foods bought Bird's Eye, and then they gave me, then I got Bird's Eye. And that's when the company, I really hit all that. So that's what happened there. In the meantime my best buddy finished law school, and we were always going to be partners, you know, and he became my lawyer.

KP: You mentioned that a pregnancy interrupted. How did you meet your wife?

HG: Before I went overseas, she was going to Trenton State, and we lived in an apartment on Greenwood Avenue. Her grandmother and grandfather lived in an apartment below that and she used come to her grandmother and grandfather's and visit. And that's how I met her before the war.

KP: So you knew her before the war, but you weren't very serious before the war?

HG: No.

KP: When did you meet her again?

HG: The day I came home.

KP: Where was she?

HG: She lived in New Brunswick, and I called her. And that's what happened. It just took a few months, and we were married.

KP: You mentioned that you've gone to several Marine Corps reunions?

HG: I never went to one.

KP: No, you just get the list.

HG: No, I never went to one. They always had it so far away and everything that I just never bothered. Then when I wanted to go, there was no one left.

KP: Did you join any veteran's organizations?

HG: No. I never liked them. The American Legion, a good friend of my fathers was the commander of it here, and they were after me and I said, no I didn't want to do it. The Jewish War Veterans were after me, and I said, I wasn't interested.

KP: You became quite active in Trenton organizations during your career.

HG: Yes.

KP: So you were in many ways a joiner?

HG: I was a joiner, but not for anything as far as a war veteran thing.

KP: When did you talk about the war? Did it take you a few years to talk about the war?

HG: I've never really spoken about it as much as I have with you believe it or not. And my kid, my son, was always asking me, tell me did you ever kill a Jap before, and I said, No, I never even fired at one in anger. He used to get so angry at me. But I just never talked about it.

KP: So you never personally shot anyone during the war?

HG: No. I might have fired at [them]. But I never knew that I shot anyone.

KP: During the Korean War were you concerned that you might be called up?

HG: Boy, we're going into things that I put away deep. During the Korean War, when I came out of the Marine Corps, I was separated, not discharged as a captain. And they would not discharge me. I asked for a discharge, and they would not discharge me. They said, you are in the reserves. And I was very uncomfortable with that. Because I had four years of it, and I had enough, and I wanted to get on with my life. A lot of guys I know ... wanted to stay in because they were in the reserve. They were captain. They'd be a major in a few years, and they'd end up being a lieutenant colonel. I think Jarvis is a full colonel.

KP: Wallace Kaenzig ended up being becoming a general.

HG: Right, right and you know you could do it in the reserve by going for two weeks every year and then you got a pension. And they explained all that to me. And a lot of these guys, I don't know whether they liked the two weeks away or whether they I think they were mostly interested in retiring as a colonel or something like that, and they would have a good retirement fund. I just wasn't interested, and I didn't want to take two weeks off of my life. Never dreaming about Korea. Then I got a few phone calls from a few guys that were in the outfit with me, a few officers. They said, Jesus Christ I just got called up for Korea. The lawyer that I told you, (Art Kelsey?), I went to Penn Law School with, was called back to Korea, and he had four years, not in the Marine Corps, but in the Army, and he was called back. ...I was trying to get the hell out and to resign. ...There was an adjutant in Washington who was my major when I was a second lieutenant whose name was Bill Moses, and his father was commandant of the Marine Corp at the time, who was General Moses, and we kept in touch with each other. And I called him up in Washington and I said, Bill, what do I do? How the hell do I get out of this? I said, I got a kid. I said, one on the way. I'm in a business that's thriving. I can't. I just can't go. What can I do? He said, I'm going to give you a tip, but don't ever tell anybody I told you. I said, what? And he said, write a letter to the commandant of the fourth naval district in Philadelphia, which is within your area, and tell him that you don't want to have any part of the Marine Corps, that you think the

way they run a war is they don't care about lives. They don't care about anything. All they care about is publicity, and the generals want to get their privates killed. Write him that letter, he said, you'll be out. And I wrote it. And I got a letter back, that they are putting this letter in my file that will be in my record and blemish a beautiful record in the Marine Corps. This letter he wrote was two pages. How I ruined my whole career, ... and we are not court martialing you for this letter, because it is not a court-martial offense. However we don't want you in the Marine Corps anymore than you want to be in the Marine Corps. And that's how I got out. And it was interesting because quite a few went back to Korea, of guys in my class.

KP: What happened? Did they all make it?

HG: I don't know, but I know a lot of them from my high school. I used to be in touch with this Major Moses, and he told me this went back that one went back, (Bradigan?) went back, quite a few were called back, and they were interrupted.

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask?

HG: I think you covered everything.

KP: ... Two general questions, you mentioned earlier that your son opposed the Vietnam War.

HG: Yeah.

KP: You said initially you were very supportive of America's involvement?

HG: I was supportive of it, yes, because I still had the mind set that my country right or wrong, and ... if you are an American, they call you, you go. And that's what I told my son. He didn't oppose it. He wasn't one of these ones that went out and opposed it openly. He just told me, I don't think it's a good war, and I don't want to fight. He said, you went into a war that you had a reason, and I don't have a reason. He wasn't going to go to Canada or anything. And the reason he didn't go was because he got a high number. He would have gone.

KP: But he was not looking forward to it if he had been enlisted?

HG: He told me he didn't want to go. He wanted to go to law school. ... He didn't want to be interrupted.

KP: ... You sort of implied that the Vietnam War wasn't a great idea. Did you think it during the war or only looking back say in the late 70's?

HG: To tell you the truth, I didn't know ... till after it was over, what a bad idea it was. I don't think most Americans did, and as far as I'm concerned, I thought communism, I still think to this day it's discouraging, I thought they were fighting communism. But it was a different situation.

KP: You had grown up in Trenton and spent most of your career in Trenton. How has the city changed?

HG: Well you wouldn't recognize the home I brought my children up in. [It was in] a beautiful area, a beautiful section. It just deteriorated. Trenton is nothing but a crime ridden, dope ridden, ghetto. The stores are empty and destroyed and the businesses are, property is not worth much.

KP: Why do think Trenton took such a turn down given the fact that it is the state capital?

HG: Given the fact that it is the state capital it should never have taken a turn down like that. But people moved out. ...I moved to Princeton twenty some years ago, and I didn't like the neighborhood. And not because I didn't like blacks that were moving in. I just saw the houses deteriorating, the lawns, the way they looked and the way things happened to be. And I said, I got to get out of here, and that's what I did.

KP: Trenton also had a mayor who had been in for, I think, over 30 years, Arthur Holland. Why do you think Trenton couldn't ...?

HG: ... Because I thought that unfortunately, unfortunately, the people who made Trenton and kept Trenton up, left. They left it, and they left it to the people who are on welfare and who are not as educated and not as productive. ...They left it, and it ran down. I sold my house. It was the most beautiful home and everything, the grounds were kept up, and I spent so much for landscaping and everything was so beautiful. And I sold it and moved here. And two years later if you ever saw it, if I ever took a picture of it, you wouldn't have believed it. You wouldn't believe what it looked like. ... I had a back yard like this. The guy that bought it had old stoves, old ranges, old boilers, it was a scrap yard. And how the neighbors ... stood it, I don't know. But they didn't stand it. They left. And then one left, and then one left, and then one left and that's what happened. You couldn't do business down there. You were afraid. Store keepers wouldn't be there. They would be afraid to be open and be alone. ... The doors would be locked and say buzz if you want to come in. I mean how could you do business like that?

KP: And your business was ... based in Trenton. Did you have concerns about crime with your business?

HG: In my business?

KP: Yeah.

HG: No, not then. ... For many years I owned liquor stores. I owned three liquor stores. One in Hamilton, one in Ewing, and one in Trenton. ... And about ten years ago I sold out. But I was always on the outskirts.

KP: So your business wasn't actually based in Trenton?

HG: No. The one that was based in Trenton, I sold. When I saw the hand writing on the wall, I sold it.

KP: That was in the 70's?

HG: No, that was in the 60's.

KP: That was your frozen food distributorship.

HG: Yeah, but I owned liquor stores then, too. I bought liquor stores.

TR: When did you retire?

HG: When did I retire? I'm not retired yet. I'm in the soft serve equipment business for soft serve yogurt, milk shakes and ice cream. I have milk shakes in school systems. I have yogurt and soft serve ice cream in hospitals and industries in Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. I put in the equipment and [I have] rental programs, and ... my people service the equipment.

KP: And where is your business based out of?

HG: The offices are in Pennsylvania.

KP: Well, thank you very much. I can't think of anything else.

HG: It was nice reminiscing. I have been thinking about things I have never thought about before. My wife always said [to me], your so quiet and secretive. Tell me about this. Tell me about that, and I just never let go.

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