

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY HODULIK

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

NICHOLAS TRAJANO MOLNAR

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Nicholas Molnar: This begins the third interview with Mr. Henry Hodulik at Green Brook, New Jersey on June 21st, 2012 and thank you Mr. Hodulik for having us here today. In the second interview, you had talked about getting back to England and being debriefed. Could you talk about what types of questions you were asked during the debriefing?

Henry Hodulik: You know it sort of escapes me. I don't remember too much about that interview or whatever, okay. I know that we were whisked away from the boat, what do they call it, LST, and taken to a place in London for ... debriefing. However, it was more information than anything else to my knowledge, okay. They wanted to know from me, or us, what transpired. So, it was pretty much the entire day. They gave us new clothes, and I think I said to you before that the British uniforms were woolen, and I can't stand wool. Anyway, they gave me something wool and I asked for a shirt that was less woolen and they called us. They put us in a hotel, and I don't remember too much about the interview, honest to goodness, I just don't. It was like they were trying to pull something out of me and I don't recall exactly why or what, you know. Anyway, so that would last the whole day and so forth, put us up in a hotel, and then we were on our own for at least a couple of weeks. I did ... a little bit of visiting in the area to see the sights and so forth and so on. ... The war hadn't ended, of course. It was only 1944, and approximately October 1st or something like that, a little bit later perhaps. Yes, it was, and there's still the threat of buzz bombs coming over. They had the V-2 rocket, the Germans, and you could hear, some of the V-2s would land in our area. I can recall one evening that we were dancing, and I love to dance. Anyway, and a rocket came by, and the V-2 was a solid thing till it hit. Awful devastating, and it was a piece of artillery that the Germans had that were, I just can't tell you how deadly it was. Anyway, I experienced one where we were dancing at night, and it was blocks and blocks away, but it seemed like it was very close. ... It must have been a couple of weeks, and then they transferred us to Scotland, and there they put us up in barracks. ... They told us that we were going to go home. ... This was September 1944, the war was still going on, ... but I was going to go home. Why? Because I was an Air Force escapee, and they didn't want us to, I couldn't fly again. They wouldn't let us go back because the rules were, as I remember they told us, that once you got shot down and you were down over there, they don't want you to fly in the same area because you could leak something about the resistance and/or the French people or whoever was hiding us. So, their lives were in danger and they didn't want us to be any cooperation to the Germans, okay. Anyway, so it was a couple of weeks, oh, about a month, we spent up in Scotland, and then, just like that, they put us on a four engine, consolidated, ... it was the type of ship, I'm trying to remember, a Constellation they called it, and it made several stops on the northern route from England to, in effect, Iceland. I don't remember, we didn't stop in Iceland, but in any event, it took us to the northern part of the United States for landing. From there, we skipped to, where was the field, oh gosh--memory. Anyway, before you know it we were back in the United States, myself and my engineer, and how long after that did I get home? It was but a few days, and I came home, and by golly, all my friends showed up, and so forth and so on. You would think that I was some hero, but you know, what did I do? Nothing, okay. ... In any event, I got a lot of attention, and before you know it I had to go to rehab. ... I can't remember off hand, I was home. Where was I placed? I ended up going to Atlantic City to R&R (Rest and Rehab), and I stayed there for about a month, but we came home on weekends. We had to go through medical, and a lot of talking, a lot of searching if I were okay, if I had all my "marbles" if you will, okay? In any event, it was a nice set up. They treated us royally. The name of the hotel was the Normandy, and we would come home weekends. I would drive back,

some guy had a car, and he was a nut. He would drive back to where I lived, or nearby, but he would go fast, you know. I thought he ... needed attention mentally, I think. ... Anyway, I rode with him, and I thought I'd never make it home because he was such a crazy driver that I was just glad to get rid of him. How long? I can't remember exactly how long, but I was there about a month and a half, and I went through the whole bit. ... Then, I was going to be assigned to another group. I was destined to go back to fly in the Pacific, so I had to go for training to fly the "hump." The hump being, I'm sure you've heard of that story, okay, the hump was the route that they took from India to places, other countries, in the South Pacific. And the Hump was short for flights over the Himalaya Mountain Range.

NM: I think it is the Himalayans?

HH: Yes, Himalayans. That was the hump, and it was, from what I understand, it was pretty tough duty. Anyway, I started training for that, was assigned to a group out of Reno, Nevada flying C-46s. I was radio operator there, and Reno, you know, another gambling town, and we were there for a while, but the base was in Reno. We got off the base to go gamble and stuff like that. Anyway, the training there took over, that was the flying episode, okay, and then they transferred me down to Nashville for further training, Nashville, Tennessee. I told you, I made a statement that I used to like to dance, especially jitterbug, and every chance I got, I would go dancing. Anyway, I did so much of it that I caught an awful cold, and it turned into pneumonia, and I ended up in a hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. From there, the crew that I was with in that C-46 ... was destined to go to the Pacific, they left without me because I couldn't fly, okay, and they grounded me. ... I just didn't make that trip, imagine that, because of dancing I ended up with pneumonia. ... I wasn't too sorrowful about it, ... I didn't have to go right away. So, from ... the hospital, they put me back in the barracks. I recovered somewhat, and then they said, "Well, you can't fly now because you're in bad shape," so they transferred me to another group down in La Junta, Colorado, where I was assigned as a line chief repairing radios in P-47 fighter planes. I was a chief on the line. Man, I didn't know anything about radios and electronics. I didn't like it at all, anyway, but they put me in charge, and then, it was such of a goof-off job that I found myself doing nothing. So, as a result, one of the guys said to me, "Look, why don't we get a job, we got so much time on our hands." So, I got a job as a milk man. ... I delivered milk in the morning, get up about four o'clock, deliver milk, and after that, go back to the barracks and do my job as a radio mechanic. I stayed there, now we're talking about, that has to be in about June, July, August, I was in the flight line. ... I got to tell you that it was an absolutely marvelous duty. I did some traveling, we did some vacationing, went to Pike's Peak, Colorado, went out on a farm, rode a horse for the first time in God knows when, and it was just a nice duty. ...

NM: Can I ask some follow up questions?

HH: Sure.

NM: Can you talk about your family's reaction to you returning home? At what point did your family know that you were okay?

HH: ... Nick, as soon as I was able to, after we were liberated and back to England, I got a message to my mom and my sisters and my brother was in the service, but that I was okay and everybody just, in that album, I think there's a telegram saying that. ... That had to be about the middle of September or early October that my family knew about it, okay, and of course everybody in town knew about it because I was missing in action. There was a lot of press about, you know, the guy was missing in action, ... and there's stories going around that when I was missing in action, they had a star on the emblem in the high school, and that star kept falling down. Somebody uses it as an omen that, you know, something is wrong here, or he's okay. So anyway, that's when the school found out about it. I had a lot of interviews, I had to talk to the kids in school, talked to the Rotary Club, tried to sell war bonds; stuff like that, you know.

NM: Can you talk about that experience. How would you sell war bonds? Did the Army tell you to?

HH: Yes, like for example, the Rotary Club, I was invited as a guest, and so forth and so on, and you know they were still selling war bonds, the government was, okay, and I was asked to talk about selling war bonds to the people in Buffalo Tank where I worked. So, I addressed, for some reason or another, I addressed all the workers in the shop as well as the office personnel, too, and talked to them how important the war was, "that everybody still has to do their part." It's not over, and don't forget this was, we hadn't defeated the Germans yet okay. This was, the Battle of the Bulge hasn't happened, and so forth and so on. We're talking about October, November. So that's how I was just recruited to talk about, somebody had the idea that maybe, and I guess I did do something, but I'm not so sure what the results were except that I did talk to people, okay. Now, how good I was, I don't know. I was just a kid, you know, so to speak, but it was an exposure.

NM: If it is okay, can you tell me more about your experience in Atlantic City?

HH: Sure, Nick. It was more to, if I needed the help to get over the experience of combat, if you will. Now, when I was, during the war, and there were times when I would wake up startled, because I thought that somebody, the bombs were dropping around me, okay. I felt a little bit, I was on edge a lot, you know, because of what happened. One of the trips we made was with my family to Coatesville, Pennsylvania, and the people that we stayed with lived near a train route. ... I recall being in bed sleeping, and a train went by, and I became startled, and I started screaming. I don't know why, but I did start screaming. ... This was the type of stuff that I had a problem with, and I think that that's what they tried to do in Atlantic City, to overcome the nervousness, the anxiety, the mental part of it, and so forth. ... That's what they tried to do and they did. Honest to goodness, they were so very good to us. ... They fed you well, they were always polite, it was just a, it was what you call a very good R&R, rest and recreation. Does that answer your question?

NM: Were there other soldiers in Atlantic City who were suffering from these ailments as well?

HH: I would say that, in a lot of cases, they were probably worse than I was because, you know, that was the purpose of R&R, to get the guys. ... We were not guys that were in the infantry, and so forth. I was with the Air Force group, and primarily with that kind of guy, you know,

when you think about a bunch of guys that had a lot of missions, I didn't, but some of these guys had a lot of missions. ... They were real, they had a problem because constant being in the air and being exposed to enemy fire, "ack-ack," and artillery, and fighter pilots, and stuff like that and then, witnessing, these guys witnessing their buddies getting shot down, you know, their plane being blown up in front of them and so forth. ... Of course, even when I was on the ground, you'd see a lot of that, you know, the ships would be going over, and before you know it, the bloody airplanes, they would explode in the air. ...

NM: After you come back to the States, you go to La Junta, Colorado.

HH: La Junta. L-A J-U-N-T-A, La Junta, Colorado.

NM: Did you have any contact with your brother who was in the Navy?

HH: Yes, I did. Incidentally, I should tell you this. I got a letter yesterday in the mail, one of the remaining helpers that I knew, a guy by the name of Maurice Quillien, he was one of the guys that helped house me in France, he died a couple of weeks ago. Now, he was one of the only remaining; he has a brother who is younger. This guy had to be eighty-six. ... He just died, but he was ill for quite a while they tell me. His name was Maurice Quillien, and he came here to visit with us back in 1979, I think it was, with his wife and daughter. So, there's only one left, and that's his brother, and I haven't heard from his brother. In the meantime, I'm going to try to call him. I have a friend who's a French-Canadian, speaks fluent French, and on a couple occasions, he called these people in France, and talked to them in French so they understood. So I asked him, I gave him, I called him, told him about Maurice dying, and I asked him to come over ... so we could talk to his brother, shortly, on the phone, okay.

NM: Did you have contact with your brother in the Navy?

HH: Oh, yes, well, my brother was in the Navy was on a destroyer, on several destroyers, and he also, he was in World War II, and he got called back when the Korean War, began and he was also on a ship then. Now, let's see, ... I was in touch with him periodically. I'd write to him, but he wrote to me and so forth, only short messages, but when I was in La Junta, Colorado, as I said, we had a lot of time on our hands. ... I would make money delivering milk, and my goal was to stock up on liquor, and have a big party when, and my brother promised to come by and visit with me in La Junta, okay. So I had, my locker, foot locker, was full with liquor and it was overflowing. So, I had told everybody in my unit there that my brother is coming and we're going to have a big party. Now, my brother, he ends up, now this is 1945, yes, my brother is in San Francisco. He wanted to go home on leave. So, the stinker, you'd think he would come back the southern route. ... He goes the northern route all the way to home. Now, he goes home, and I'm sitting there with this foot locker of liquor waiting for him to show up so we can have a good party, and the stinker never showed up, okay. So, that's the story. Now, my brother, yes, when I left, when I was finished with La Junta, my brother, I said I was going to visit him. So, I had got my orders to go on leave, and I would get discharged, now this is December of '44, no, November of '44. Now, that's pretty early, '44, now I'm going to get discharged. I don't understand that, why am I? Anyway, my brother is back in the States. He's stationed in Virginia. What was the name of the base? Anyway, I hitchhiked from, I wanted to do this on

my own, I hitchhiked from Colorado all the way across, you know, all the way to the East Coast to the base where he is. ... It's a famous base in Virginia. In any event, so I said I was going to meet him there, okay. Now, he didn't know, I didn't know when I was going to get there. In any event, I hitchhiked all the way across to the East Coast. Now, I hitched during the day and at night. Sometimes I would be stranded in a mountain some place, and hitchhiking with my overcoat on. ... I could have taken public transportation, and I just didn't. I was very stubborn about it. I was going to hitchhike. ... I made it across the country to whatever you call it. When I got to his base, I looked him up, and ... they told me he was in the brig. He was locked up because he was drunk some place and they couldn't get him out. So, I went to his commanding officer and pleaded, "Hey, I'm only here for a couple of days, I want to see my brother. I haven't seen him in years." They let him out, and we went out, and drank, and had a good time, and dinner, and stuff like that. The next morning, I just got up, and before you know it, started hitchhiking back to New Jersey, and I did, and all the way. ... That's quite an experience, you know, to hitchhike, and a serviceman generally got a ride in a hurry if you looked like you weren't going to beat him up or somebody up, okay. That's the way I got home. Well, now that was, had to be in November of '44. ...

NM: Where were you when you heard that the war was over? Could you recall that experience and talk about it?

HH: In Europe, it was May 8th, 1945. Gee, I don't remember.

NM: When the atomic bombs were dropped, do you remember where you were?

HH: That was August ... 1945.

NM: Were you out of the Army at that point?

HH: Oh, yes. ...

NM: I am just going to back track a little bit. Do any moments stand out from your experience hitchhiking across the United States?

HH: Yes, just so many things, funny you should say it, you know, it's difficult when you find out you're all alone. Now this is, I remember saying in the middle of the night, ... colder than the dickens, in the middle of the night, and somebody just dropped me off and I had to go out on my own. ... What was difficult about it, you were alone and you had no money to get out of here. This was at night, and no cars coming by, so I was saying to myself, "Hey, how long are you going to stand here," and so forth. I had no choice but to stand there waiting for somebody to come by, and you know, somebody, a truck driver came by, that's how I got home. ... I was not what you call afraid, but I was apprehensive as to how I was going to get home, but everybody that I experienced on that particular adventure, everybody was kind to me, you know, so I just took it for granted, you know.

NM: Did you have any plans for what you would do after you left the service, after you were discharged?

HH: Yes, well I didn't have any plans definitely, but I had, the employment I had before I went in the service was still open for me, so I knew I had a job. ... The boss I had, Andy McIver-- what a man! He was beautiful guy. As soon as I got home, he approached me, and he said, "Come on back to work," so I had a job, but I wanted to do something on my own for just a short period of time, and I think I told you that, that I wanted to work on the golf range. When I was in high school, I used to work on a golf range, down here in Bound Brook, you know ... right on 22, right down the road. Well I worked there. When I come back, I wanted to go back, and just hang out, and this was, now I wanted to do something there, and I did. I took care of the place, you know, cleaned the golf boxes if you will, the tee off place. ... I stayed there for a couple of weeks, and before you know it, I was back on my job in Buffalo Tank, and what did I do when I went back? Same job I had when I left ... although I was promoted. ... When I left, I was a clerk, purchasing clerk, and I went back to that job when I got home, and I enjoyed it, and I enjoyed all my colleagues at Buffalo Tank. They were very, very good to me. They would always send me cigarettes while in the service. They would always write to me. It was just a marvelous relationship with an employer, and I could hear from some of the people almost anytime, particularly the younger people. ... Of course, my boss was always good, but I got more cigarettes from them than you can possibly think of, always got cigarettes, and/or food. Okay, that's about it. For me, when I look back, nothing was difficult for me, you know. I didn't struggle with anything, I just didn't. Everything was just sort of handed to me if you will, okay, or, I don't know, maybe it was my character or whatever, or something else, I don't know, but it wasn't, it wasn't difficult for me. I didn't then find employment difficult, always had something to eat, always had another place to go.

NM: Did you use the GI Bill benefits at all after you left?

HH: Yes, I did.

NM: Could you talk about how you used them?

HH: Yes, I enrolled in night school because I lacked certain credits to go to a major college. I tried to get in to Pace Institute. I didn't have the experience. I wrote to, oh I tried to get into a lot of places, okay, one of which is the, a very strong financial organization. In any event, I tried to get in, and I couldn't get into college because I lacked the credits, okay, so I enrolled in night school. ... I started out by the normal, English, you know, things that you required, and so forth. Nick, it took me eight years to get my degree. I got my degree in Business Administration with an Associate in accounting, okay. So, it took me eight years. In the meantime, we had three children. ... Eventually, going to school and raising a family already, that was the difficult part. I can recall, you know, trying to do homework and then taking care of kids, and when I come home from school, I would worry about whether I was going to pass the course and so forth, so I go right back to working, okay. It was difficult. It was difficult for me because it was a grind. I had a job, had a family, and that part, you know, you had to toe the line. When I said things didn't come difficult for me, well now it was difficult because I had a job and I was responsible. I had the kids, my wife, and my folks lived across the street. So, yes, I went through the GI Bill, and I finally got my degree after eight years, okay. It took me, whatever I did, I finally

graduated in 1955. It was University College, ... the night school, that is to say the night courses I took, and I graduated from Rutgers University College.

NM: You mentioned that you lived across the street from your parents. Did you use the GI Bill for a mortgage on that home?

HH: No, the boss that I had, the President of Buffalo Tank, had a friend who was a builder, and they talked me into having a home built across the street from my folks, and to get the lot was a problem, but in any event, I did get the lot and it was across the street. My folks had property also across the street, so I signed a contract with this contractor, and he gave me a four percent mortgage then. Now, Nick, I'm marveling. I say to myself, that was a private loan. I had to pay him fifty bucks a month, but, you know, four percent, interest rates today are lower than they were then. Four percent and it's lower than that now right now. You can get a loan, if you qualify, for 3.58 percent, something like that, right now, okay. That's amazing. Imagine if you had money today, and you want to try something. ... God, you can buy a house if you have a good job and so forth, and a couple of bucks. That's amazing that the interest rate today is less than, I thought that was a fabulous rate, and it was, four percent, fifty bucks a month, okay, and that included interest and principal. Anyway, yes, that's the story. You asked me the question, did I get a mortgage. Yes, I got a mortgage but it was easy for me. ... I didn't have to go through the bank and all that to qualify. ... The guy gave me a loan. He did a lousy job of construction, incidentally, but I had a house.

NM: I wanted to ask you briefly about your time at Rutgers. Did any moments stand out during your time there while you were juggling your family, your job, and school?

HH: Yes, you know, the good Lord, he blessed me all my life, but when it comes to studying ... it didn't come easy. I had to work real hard at it to get by in my classes, and so forth and so on. So, I was not what you call a brilliant student. I wasn't outstanding. I was just an average guy, and the accounting courses that I took, ... accounting can be awfully boring and tough because, you know, debits and credits, ... accounts all over the place, oh boy. If you're talking about double entry accounting, it was, for me, it was difficult. ... You'd get an assignment that you had to do so and so over the weekend, okay. Well, sometimes it would take me into the middle of the night to make it. I had to put in a lot of time. I can recall one experience, my folks went away for the weekend some place to Coatesville, Pennsylvania, and my sisters weren't home. Nobody was home for that weekend. I boarded myself in, so to speak, and just ate and did the homework and this accounting assignment that I got, which was difficult. Now you asked me do I remember something, that's one that I had a terrible time with, okay. I passed it, but it was just not easy, okay, so yes. ... I think I told you a story about, I had speech class, and one of the, it was when Eisenhower was running for president, and this is public speaking. Now, I was never a good public speaker, I was terribly nervous ... getting in front of a crowd and so forth and so on, but this particular time, this public speaking class, I was not a fan of this professor, and he was not a fan of mine, or I wasn't a fan of his. Anyway, he would ask me to get up and give my talk about, I was an Eisenhower fan, okay, and I was part of his political team in the class. In any event, he says, "Mr. Hoodlik," and I somehow or other, I backed up and said, "Professor, would you pronounce my name properly, please," and I said to him sarcastically, "How do you pronounce H-O-G?" He says, "Hog." "How would you pronounce H-O-D?" "Hod." "Now put

the U-L-I-K on it." "Hodulik. Not 'Hoodlik.'" ... Well, he got so upset with me that I think he almost flunked me because I embarrassed him, but he was a public speaker. ... That stood out in my mind all these years, okay. You want to know about experiences, that's it. ... But getting to class on time, doing your homework, and so forth, does anything stand out in my mind--yes, it was tough for me.

NM: After the war is over, you mentioned your brother was called back to serve during the Korean War. Was there any concern that you may be called back into the service?

HH: No, I was not a, I did sign up for reserves, but I didn't follow through, so no, and I had a family already so that was another situation. ...

NM: After the war, since you built your house after the war, was there a lot of similar construction going on in Green Brook at the time?

HH: I was in Dunellen.

NM: Was there new construction in Dunellen that you saw?

HH: Yes, there was construction, yes. If somebody had a loan or could get a loan, yes, they would build something right away. Yes, is that what you wanted?

NM: After World War II, there was a lot of construction. I was just wondering if the population in Dunellen grew at all.

HH: ... Dunellen is a mile square, and it has limited, always did have limited land. My folks ... they had land but they never developed it, okay. My folks were not what you'd call entrepreneurs, and so forth and so on, and neither was I at that point. If I can just talk, back away a little from Dunellen, Piscataway, for example, or even, no matter where, these houses went up. There were builders who were just dying to get in and start building houses. You can go in some place in Piscataway and there was, and Green Brook, right down here on Green Brook Road, where, and I know some of the guys who were the builders. They just bought the land and built, and built, and built, and wherever they could get a permit, and so forth, from the township and so forth, they built, and that was, yes, there was a lot of construction in areas where, mostly small homes, something that didn't take an awful heavy financing, and I know some of the guys, ... personal friends of mine, were builders.

NM: Is there anything that you want to cover that we may have missed?

HH: Not really. ... Something that I think I'm particularly proud of, before the war, this is in 1943, early '43, there were eleven of us good friends, and we had a party before we went. A couple of guys did not get drafted, but they were accepted in the Air Force. One of them was Lou Denkovic the other guy was Al Marva. Anyway, okay, we had a party, eleven guys, in I think it was November of '43, or early November, and we all pledged that we were going to meet on the day the war ended, and that we will have a party every year. This is the pledge we took, eleven of us. Two guys got killed in the war, and that is Al Marva and Lou Denkovic. Lou was

a P-38 pilot flying in the South Pacific, killed on a mission. Al Marva was a B-17 pilot in England, killed--crash landed in England. I, myself, was in a B-26, and I got shot, anyway. The other guys, they were all over the place, okay. ... Eleven guys, all tight from the standpoint of friendship. There were eleven of us, okay. There are only two left; myself and a guy by the name of Frannie Zupko. All the rest of them are gone. Now, my friend Frannie Zupko, before, and this is a long story now, okay, before the war, we were all going to school at night trying to make up some of the classes and Frannie Zupko was the driver of a 1941 Chevrolet that his sister had--was brand new. We were late for class one evening, and going to Rutgers at night, and the classes started at a quarter to six. We're driving over and I said, "Fran, we're going to be late for class. You got to go faster." I don't know if you're familiar with Piscataway. Anyway, South Washington Avenue, he's going up South Washington Avenue to Cornell Farms, and he's going eighty-three miles an hour. I remember looking at the speedometer, okay, and he couldn't make that little turn at the top of the hill. He hit a ditch, and the car flipped over on its side, and then, engine to back over four or five times, okay, ended up in a field. All five of us were thrown out of the car. No safety belts on, no nothing, okay. We all ended up in a hospital, and I remember lying in the ditch, and I was complaining about my back, the other guy was moaning. I could hear the car, this is a long story, and the wheels are spinning, and the horn is on, and a woman comes over, and she said, "They're all dead." I said, "Lady, I'm not dead." Anyway, make a long story short, now Frannie Zupko was 4F. Now, he's the guy that's one of the guys remaining and me. He never got in the service. ... He's ninety years old, ninety and two months. He's three months older than I am, and what's my point? My point is, is there anything about the end of the war? Yes, that's the story that I have to tell you about, okay. He's the only one, and he and myself are the only ones living out of the "eleven."

NM: When you were going to night school, were there a lot of veterans who were going to school with you?

HH: Oh, yes, similar circumstances that I had. There were guys on the GI Bill going to school. I would say, yes, night school was pretty busy, and, you know, I don't know if you're familiar with New Brunswick at all, but you know, J&J was one of the buildings that I had classes in right next door to a big building where they were making gauze, you know, for bandages and stuff like that. ... You could hear the machines running like the dickens while we're in class.

NM: Is there anything else you want to say before we conclude the interview?

HH: Nick, the album that I have, and of course ... it was put together by my granddaughter and my daughter because I didn't record anything until my granddaughter had a project. ... She said, "Grandpa, will you do so and so," and that's how I got involved in it, okay, otherwise probably nothing would be written, okay. Now, I said to you, at the end of my story, I never did, I got to the end of the war, if you will, but I didn't get to my personal life with my family, okay. I do want to yet record something about my first wife, Pauline. I adored her and she adored me, I know she did, okay. What we did, what our family encountered while we were, and I want to write about that a little bit because I want my children and my grandchildren--unfortunately one of my children is gone--but I want them to know how much I was blessed by having a wife that I had, that the good Lord gave us five beautiful children, and then I lost my wife to cancer, breast cancer. ... After she died, that I remarried to my, I call her my childhood sweetheart, we were in

high school together, and I married her after a short period of time because her husband died and my wife died, and it was another beautiful relationship. So, I would like to put that down, and I should put it down because, you know, there's so much pain in this world that I would like to tell people how blessed I am and was. I've had problems health wise, but by golly, I overcame or I got through it. So, yes, that's what I want to do yet and I haven't. ...

NM: What were some of the challenges after World War II that you and your family faced? Did any of the economic trends or the inflation of the 1970's affect the family unit at all?

HH: You know, Nick, I don't know how to dwell on that because there's so many good things that happened to me that some of the things that I probably would think of as being difficult just don't, they don't stay with me, you know, that's strange. Even now, I've lost my second wife, but even now, I don't see anything difficult, you know, or haven't encountered. I think I was somewhat always ... frugal, but I wasn't a "cheapie" by any means. As a matter of fact, my brother called me a "big shot," trying to be a "big shot," and there was nothing. ... . Honest to goodness, I wish I could have done more. I would like to have done a little bit more for mankind, which I didn't do. I guess I did. I'm a little bit still active in my church, Our Lady of Fatima. All the Pastors there I was friendly with or still am. Again, it was just, you know, you say is there anything I want to talk about, economic times. You know what, for some reason or other, I weathered all of it.

NM: Could you talk about some of your trips to France after the war? Did you go back to visit?

HH: Oh, yes, yes. I went back in 1973, strangely enough, I belonged to the Dunellen Rotary Club then and they had a trip that you could win. So I won the trip, and, as a result, I took my, with my own help if you will, took my wife and my young son, Matt, to Europe in 1973. ... I went back to see my French helpers, but it was a fleeting sort of thing. Actually, it was a Rotary convention in Lausanne, Switzerland, and fabulous from my standpoint. It was the first time I ever had a vacation like that. It was in France and Germany and Italy. ... That was in '73, and Matt still remembers that. Now, in 1982, I went back with my son, Andrew, and we went back till, we went to see my good friend, Eddie Gardner, who was a crewman on a Lancaster, and he was shot down with his group. He lived on Granton-on-Spey in Northern Scotland. Andrew, and with Andrew, it was a beautiful trip. We went to Scotland, England, France. We played golf in, one game of golf, we wanted to see, when we got there it was in May of ... 1982, and the weather was supposed to be beautiful. It wasn't. It snowed in Scotland, couldn't play golf, and Andrew is a great guy for golf. We wanted to play on so many courses. We stopped at about four different courses and all of them were cold or snow on the ground. Anyway, so we got to England, then we went to France across the Channel ... and we played golf finally in, outside of Paris, Versailles. What is the name of the famous, where Hitler accepted the French surrender in 1940 in a railroad car, close to the palace of French Kings, ... the famous castle in France? That's where we played golf. '94 also, which was the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, I went back again with a group from our group from the Air Force, and it was a nice trip also. That was in '94, and I saw most of my helpers then. ... I would love to go back again, but now there's only a few left, and I was so impressed with the places that I stayed, where I hid out, and so forth. It's, in my mind, yet clearly, clearly the places that I stayed at, you know, where the Germans were, oh my God, it was unbelievable, and I still wish I could go back tomorrow.

NM: How had these places that you had been to in 1944 changed when you went back in 1994?

HH: Okay, in '44 in Neufchâtel-en-Bray, it was bombed by the Axis, it was almost obliterated by the Germans. It was hit by the Americans coming back again, but in Mesneires-en-Bray, that's okay. A couple of other places that I hid out, this is out in the country. ... The only place that was really gutted by the Germans was Neufchâtel-en-Bray. Now, it has been rebuilt. The church is magnificent. So, to my knowledge, it's restored as it was in the beginning, and to me, it was the greatest thing. ...

NM: Did the towns get bigger or had the population grown from the last time you had been there?

HH: No, honestly, for some reason or other, no. It was just, and the small villages are so picturesque, and so, in my opinion, welcoming, you know. It was just, where this one guy lives now, he's the only survivor of my helpers, he lives in Chambois below Caen, but it's just such a small village, Nick. It's such a beautiful place in my opinion, okay. ... They're still okay.

NM: You maintained some contact with these people after the war?

HH: Oh, yes. You know, see that thing there, those are all Christmas cards that I got from people all over in England, and France and so forth and so on, that I haven't responded to, and I still have to write to them. For example, the Englishman, the Scotsman, the French people. ... The only ones that I know now is the guy who just died, Maurice, and his brother, Michel, that's it.

NM: From what I understand, occasionally, they would visit you as well?

HH: ... The Englishman and his wife came over, the Scotsman and his, no I'm sorry, he never did, ... the Frenchman, Maurice, who just died, he came over with his wife and his daughter. Michel, the guy who lives in Chambois, he came over with his mother and father and his wife and when? '78, '79, and I think it was '80. They stayed with us in Dunellen, and they visited with all my children and their families. ... I took them down the shore, took them into New York, and I think I told you that the man, when they saw some of the skyscrapers, the Frenchman would say, he'd look up and he'd say, "Ooo la la." He was so amazed at the buildings and the bridges, anyway, so much.

NM: Is there anything else that you want to say for the record before we conclude the interview?

HH: Not really, Nick. One thing, the question you, I don't know if I contributed anything here, I don't know. Incidentally, I should say this, when I went back in '82 with my son, we went to Bastogne, and that was a neat visit, my son Andrew and myself, that was one of the side trips that we took in 1982. You know, I just talked. ... There wasn't anything phenomenal about my experience except that it was an experience. It was a facet of my life I survived, but I don't know if I made any contribution to anything here, okay, I don't know. Is it worthwhile to even talk

about it for my standpoint or anybody's standpoint? Is somebody going to say, "What a bunch of BS," you know? I don't know.

NM: Well, let us conclude the interview for the day. Thank you, Henry for having me here.

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Reviewed by Katie Ruffer 2/22/2013

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 6/18/2013

Reviewed by Henry Hodulik 9/1/2013