

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH EDWIN A. KOLODZIEJ

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Edwin A. Kolodziej, March 29, 1995, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and ...

Chris Eberle: Chris Eberle.

KP: I would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your parents. Your father was born in Poland.

Edwin Kolodziej: My father came here from Poland, yes.

KP: Why did he emigrate to the United States? Did he come over with his family?

EK: No. ... My father was raised on a small farm ... east of Krakow ... in Poland. The farm that my grandfather owned was from ... when they split up all the domains and the peasants each got their own farm. It was very long and very narrow, and it ran down a hill and up a hill. There were, ... I believe, seven children in the family. My father was the oldest son, and it became obvious to him very early on that that piece of land wasn't going to support all of them. So, he decided that he would like to go to the United States. He had no relatives in the United States, but he had a friend who was somewhere in Pennsylvania. ... So, he decided to go, and my grandmother and grandfather sold a calf, got enough money, and my father left for the United States. ... He took a train down to Vienna, from Vienna over to Le Havre, and then, over to England, and then, took a boat to the United States, landed at Ellis Island, and we have his name inscribed at Ellis Island, ... on the wall there.

KP: When did he leave Poland?

EK: He came here somewhere around 1917.

KP: 1917?

EK: Yes, 1917. He was eighteen years old when he got here. He didn't speak the language. He didn't know anyone. He came to Sayreville, New Jersey, where there was a building called the "Twenty Family House." Sayreville, at the time, was dominated by ... the Sayre and Fisher Brick Company. They had their own company store. They had their own company buildings, and there were other people there from his village in Poland. He went to them, and he got a job ... throwing brick. ... After they brought the brick out of the kiln, it had to be thrown to the next place in each kiln. So, it's manual labor. He lived in the dormitory. ... He bought his food, which was cooked for him by the woman in the dormitory, at the company store. He only got paid once a year. ...

KP: Did they keep an account for him?

EK: You had an account, and you bought all your food, all your clothes, all at the company store, and you lived in the company building. So, they charged all of those against what you made. I guess you were getting some little stipend off of it, but that's how that worked. He

lasted there for a while and decided that that wasn't for him. ... He left there, and, I believe, from there, he went out to Pennsylvania, to Scranton, ... to the coal mines. He worked in the coal mines and he had, from cuts on his hand, the black scars from where the flesh had grown over the black coal. ... He lasted there for a period of time, then, ... he went up to Connecticut and tried ... working in a factory where they made nuts and bolts. He didn't like that. He then went down to Baltimore and worked in a shipyard. ... There, he took some basic classes in English, while he was working in the shipyard. In those days, they threw the rivets. They would heat them here and throw them, and a guy up on the ship with a metal cup would catch the rivet and would bolt it into place. Well, one of the rivets came down and hit him on the head and he decided that that wasn't for him, either. [laughter] So, he came back ... to Sayreville and apprenticed himself to ... a man who had a butcher and grocery store and he learned the butcher trade. In the beginning, he went house-to-house with a horse and wagon, selling. In those days, you went house-to-house selling. ... The store came to you then, you didn't go to the store. He established his own little business on Main Street in Sayreville, and then, eventually, built a store in Parlin, New Jersey, where his more exceptional clientele were. That's where I grew up.

KP: Did you live in Parlin or Sayreville at the time?

EK: I grew up in the Parlin section of Sayreville. Parlin is where DuPont had built a munitions factory in World War I and Hercules had built a munitions factory. ... They didn't have those names then, but, there were two munitions factories there, and DuPont and Hercules, at that time, built them. In those days, if you worked for a company, they built a company village. ... If you were an executive, they provided a house for you to live in. That was part of your pay. Well, Hercules and DuPont had built two large sections of that. I live in one of those homes now. ... They had built those homes and executives lived there. My dad, he'd go around selling meat. It dawned on him that these ... were engineers, [and] that this was a very fine clientele for him to have. So, he built his new store where those people were, which was in the Parlin section, so [that] he could trade on that.

KP: Eventually, he learned a great deal from his apprenticeship.

EK: Yes. He went into the business for himself and became an extremely successful businessman, with the help of my mother and ... the horse and wagon. The horse and wagon left and the truck came in. When the truck came in, he had a ... much wider area to cover, and my mother ran the store during the day while he was out selling from the truck.

KP: When did they make the transition from the horse and buggy to the truck?

EK: In the very early '30s.

KP: Throughout the 1920s, they were driving a horse and buggy.

EK: Yes, but I don't remember my father's horse and wagon. I remember the first truck he had, because, as soon as I got to be five or six years old, ... in the summertime and on Saturdays, I would always go with him. ... The women would come to the truck and order and I would carry

the bundles into the house for her. I went to work when I was five, or six, or seven years old and the whole family worked in the business.

KP: Some of your earliest memories are of going with your father as he made his rounds.

EK: Yes. As a matter-of-fact, because my father went all over town and because I went with him, I got to know everybody all around the town. Many years later, when I went into politics, I was extremely well-known, because my father was very well-liked, and so was my mother, and because the parents of so many people knew me. So, I had a big edge in local politics. My father make the rounds selling meat until he suffered an accident where he cut his finger, got an infection, and almost lost his arm. After that, any little cut he got, he'd get re-infected. So, the doctors recommended that he not cut meat anymore. ...

KP: When did this happen?

EK: ... That was shortly before World War II, which would make it in the mid-'30s. He then became the manager in the Hercules Village, [which] is what the thirty houses Hercules had were called. They had a club house with bowling alleys, billiard tables, a dance hall, etc., because all the community activities in that little community took place in there. He became the manager of that for a number of years.

CE: How did he get that job?

EK: Because all of these Hercules executives were customers of his. ... When the young engineer would come in with his young wife, my mother would teach her how to cook, and what to buy, and how, so we ended up being friendly with all of these people. In fact, ... these people formed a part of my education. My mother was very conscious of the fact that she had a sixth grade education [and] my father had a third grade education in Poland, so that, as I grew up and as it became obvious to them that I was going to move ahead in the world, those college graduates across the street in [the] Hercules Village became my tutors, my mentors, who, when I needed a tuxedo, they provided a tuxedo. When it was a question of what manners to use at the dance, ... they taught me, so that ... I had a lot of ... teachers. ...

KP: Your parents wanted you to go to college.

EK: Well, my mother wanted me to be a doctor, [laughter] and, "Doctor," to me, meant, "Surgeon," and I grew up with the skill as a butcher. ...

KP: Did you have a job at this time?

EK: During the Depression days, ... you go through the '30s, nobody had a job and nobody had food, so that, ... for example, ... when the programs came out, the NRA came out, ... where people were given food, my father[']s shop] became a depot. We would receive it, and then, we would deliver it. I remember going to a house with two old people and bringing them a five-pound bag of potatoes ... and they kissed me in joy, because they had something to eat, so that ...

my views as to [the] government, and what it should do, and how it should do it are a little bit colored by what I saw there. ...

KP: You have rather vivid memories of the New Deal programs and their impact on your family.

EK: Oh, absolutely. Franklin Roosevelt was a hero of mine. ... I tried to copy his speaking style. ...

KP: Really?

EK: Yes. I have done a great deal of public speaking, and I tried, sort of, to talk like he talked. ... He was one of my boyhood heroes, ... Franklin Roosevelt.

KP: How did your parents feel about Roosevelt?

EK: You know, ... my father came here from Poland, my mother was born here, but, her mother and father came here from Poland, and they admired him. They felt that he was doing what was right. They felt it was the government's duty to help the people.

KP: Even though he was a small business owner, your father thought highly of Franklin Roosevelt.

EK: Absolutely. You know, it would be hard not to. During the Depression, there were very few jobs and there was practically no money. People would come into my father's store and say, "I'll do anything for food, any job you want done here." People were picking berries in the woods to eat. That was the Depression. This country hasn't known a depression like that since then. I was around eleven, twelve years old and I was very conscious of it all, because of my father's business. ... He injected me into the middle of it.

KP: He knew who was doing well and who was struggling in the community.

EK: Well, there weren't very many people who were doing well. The ones who had jobs across the street were all right, so, his move over to there was right, too. In those days, my father's big problem was that he had to extend credit to everybody.

KP: Does that include the executives as well?

EK: Well, we tried to get money from them, because, in order to buy what we were selling, ... we had to have money. He was always owed large amounts of money by people, but what else could you do? Remember that many of the people he was selling to were people like him, who came from Poland, because Sayreville, at that time, had a large Polish section, and we were supplying a lot them with food, also.

KP: Where did your family go to church?

EK: ... The church where my mother and father were married was ... Saint Stanislaus Church, which had just been formed, but my mother had a falling out with the priest very early on. When I went to first grade, she was told that the school wouldn't supply the paper and the pens, so she got unhappy. She transferred me to Our Lady of Victory School, which was the Irish-Catholic ... school, because they supplied the pencils and paper. So, I went to OLV. I grew up a member of Our Lady of Victory and [laughter] sort of an informal member of Saint Stan's.

KP: Your classmates were Irish-Catholics.

EK: Yes.

KP: You were the only Polish child.

EK: Just about. Then, when we moved to Parlin, I went to first grade at the Roosevelt School, and, forty-odd years later, I took my grandson to first grade at the Roosevelt School, which was a bit of a thrill. ... Anyway, I went to kindergarten at Our Lady of Victories, I went to first grade at the Roosevelt School, and I'm ... one of those people that belongs in the same, I like to think of it, ... classification as Winston Churchill. Winston Churchill stayed back in first grade, and so did I. [laughter] When I got to the Roosevelt School, my mother, in her haste to advance me, I was in kindergarten at OLV, ... put me in second grade at the Roosevelt School, so it might have been that she didn't know the difference, I don't know. ... When I got into second grade, they called in my mother and my father, ... and I was there when they told them, ... I was in the second grade, that I did well in everything, except I couldn't read, and they recommend that I ... be put back in the first grade. I didn't want to go back into the first grade and I refused to go to school for a couple of days. [laughter] I cried. I just didn't want to be put back, but, they insisted, and, of course, I have always read voraciously, and I don't know whether it's because they said I couldn't that I always did it, to prove that I could. So, we like to joke and say, "I stayed back in first grade."

KP: What was your experience at the Roosevelt School like?

EK: I went to school with the sons and daughters of the people who were the executives in the plants and they were all ... college people, etc. ... So, we lived on this side of the street, they lived on that side of the street. I used to get teased by saying, "Hey, what school do you walk on?" because the kids that were raised with Polish parents, their grammar and their structure wasn't always right, ... so that some of the so-called "Polish kids," if they [non-Poles] asked you, "Where do you go to school?" they [the Polish kids] would say, "What school do you walk on?" and that became a big joke. ... It sort of wasn't so funny, because that meant you were a Pollock, okay, in the derogatory sense of the word, not in the foreign sense of the word.

KP: Did these children often let you know that they looked down on you?

EK: Yes. As time went along, ... on the north side of Washington Road, there were a lot of Polish people. On the south side of Washington Road were, basically, all these people who were, and I don't mean to mislead you, executives, and supervisory personnel, and ... foremen, and stuff

like that. So, those people on the south side sort of looked down on us on the north side, but, eventually, we formed our little football team, we played them in football, and beat the hell out of them. [laughter] ... Then, as you got into school, you formed friendships and that ... all dissipated itself, eventually, and it became a non-factor, you know. I was the president of my grammar school graduating class, I was the president of my high school graduating class, etc. ...

KP: Did any Poles ever become a foreman?

EK: Sure. ... Well, they made it to the foreman positions, because that'd be as far as that goes. Later on, their children, who would go on to college and become engineers, would go into Hercules and some of them went higher up in Hercules. ... The village is composed of about thirty-five or forty houses which form one little group of streets. My father's building was here. Over to the left, alongside the road, outside of school was always the plant manager's home, which was a much bigger house, okay. In 1938, they built ... five new homes in the back of it. Then, the plant manager moved from Washington Road back there. I bought one of those homes, which is where I live now. One of my childhood ideals was to someday ... live in one of them. ... I mean, that was the top of the mountain. ...

KP: You must have been delighted when it was put up for sale.

EK: ... One of the buildings in particular intrigued me. A friend of mine, who worked in Hercules, one of my mentors, called me, and, by now, I'm a lawyer and practicing law ... where my father's butcher shop was. I took over and converted it into a law office, and I'm practicing law, and I got a call from Tommy Tompkinson saying, "There's a house for sale back here in back of me. It's Chrisfield's." I said, "That's the house I always wanted." Within an hour, I was in that house talking to the man. He said that he wanted \$21,000 for it. I said, "It's sold." ... I didn't have any money in those days. I went to my mother and I said, "Give me 500 dollars." She gave me 500 dollars. I went downstairs, drew a contract, went over, and gave the guy the 500 dollars. He said, "You haven't even looked at this place." I said, "I knew this place before you came here," and I bought it.

KP: When was that?

EK: Thirty-odd years ago.

KP: 1957?

EK: Yes.

KP: Do you still live there?

EK: I still live there, yes. ...

KP: Your mother worked as a hairdresser.

EK: After my father cut his finger, and it became obvious that he wasn't going to be able to run the store anymore, the decision was made, and I must have been fifteen or sixteen years old at the time, but, ... the way my family worked, ... we all sat down at the table and talked about what we were going to do, and everybody had a voice. ... By that time, my uncle, Tom, who was seven years older than me, was living with us. His father, my grandfather, had died, and the decision was made to close down the store and to rent it out, because Dad was working over there, and Mother decided that she should have a career. So, she enrolled in a beauty culture school in Perth Amboy and she and I went through beauty culture school. She learned all of the physical things. Because of her limited education, I worked with her on the studying. ... You have to learn all the muscles in the face in order to do massages and you have to learn the structure of the hair, and the skin, and all of that, so that ...

KP: ... You both went to beauty school?

EK: Well, she went to school, she brought the homework home, and then, we did it together. [laughter] ... Eventually, well, I guess, one of her proudest moments was, ... you had to take a test at the end, a state test, to be a licensed cosmetologist, and she was in a class of ... people who all had high school educations, and she had the highest grade on the test, a ninety-something. She was the top of the class when she took the test. My mother then, became self-taught and self-read. She read practically every book I brought home, ... from high school and from when I was in college. Selectively, she would read all the textbooks I brought home. So, she became self-educated.

KP: If she had been born a generation later, your mother probably would have gone to college.

EK: My mother was a very bright person. My father, because of his business acumen and working experience, the two of them together, it was a team. Eventually, he became a director on the local building and loan association. ... The building and loans were designed, historically, to provide a place for the working man to save his money, and his savings were to be used to help him to build a house. ... It's not what they are today, but, what they were then was, all the working people deposited their money there, and that money was then loaned back to them; that way, they got houses. He became a director and was in that until he died.

KP: When did that begin?

EK: It's in the late '20s that it started. He went into it in the early '30s.

KP: He was a director from the early 1930s on.

EK: Yes, he had a long career in that. ... My father played a role in the community and my mother did, too. ... She opened up her own beauty parlor and conducted that for awhile. Then, when the war came, my father gave up the club and went to work at Hercules as a guard, on the guard force. Irene's father, at that time, was a guard on the guard force, so that the Kolodziej-Halmi relationship now starts to build into this. ... He worked there. My mother, during World War II, left the beauty culture field and went to Hercules, because they were very short on

manpower. ... This is the beginning of the women's movement, really. Women became a part of the work force. My mother went and worked in a laboratory, washing laboratory bottles and things, okay, since, in those days, whatever job that would help the war effort is what you would do. So, they both worked at Hercules during the war. Mother, in addition to working in the plant, also worked as the manager of a beauty parlor. ...

CE: How did your parents react to the invasion of Poland in 1939?

EK: Specifically, on the day ... that the Germans bombed Warsaw, Father was delivering an order to Simon Dominick's house. Simon Dominick had come to the United States on the same boat that my father had come on. ... At that time, when they came over from Europe, whoever was on the boat with you, since nobody knew anybody in the United States, you became "cousins." I have all kinds of cousins who really aren't blood cousins, but, because our parents came over on the same boat, whether they knew each other or not, they then related to each other. We were delivering a meat order to the Dominick home. I went with my father, because, when we went to them, it was always a little bit of a social visit, and, ... I remember, we delivered the meat order into the kitchen in their house on what is now MacArthur Avenue. Mrs. Dominick ... was crying when we walked into the room, and she said, "Tony, listen." She turned the up radio and they announced that the Germans were bombing Warsaw. My father and Mrs. Dominick got on their knees and prayed, and me, too, because they were. I didn't quite ... grasp it, but, they were extremely upset over that, and that's my first recollection of the impact the war would have on my life and everybody else's life, eventually. When I saw ... my father and Mrs. Dominick in tears, and I mean real tears, because this is where all their parents, and all their relatives, and everything were. ... It's difficult talking today because you could be very easily misunderstood, but, at that time, there was strong anti-German feeling in Poland already, and that came out like you almost don't want to believe. I mean, as a child, I hadn't heard that before, but, now, they're really talking about what the Germans were doing to them, this, that, and the other thing, okay, and that, "This is the way the Germans always had been," remembering that Poland, traditionally, has been the battleground for Europe. I mean, everybody goes back and forth across Poland. ... We joke, once in a while, that you never know what the next grandchild is going to look like, because you don't know, when ... the Tartan hoards or what the hell they were, ... Ghengis Khan, came across, God knows what happened. [laughter] Today, we have a lot of publicity to the fact that, during these things, ... there's raping, and killing, but, you know, this is nothing new. You're a historian. You know it as well as I do. All this is a repeat of everything that happened before, which will get you into one of my favorite topics. ... If you look at America from 1776 until now and make a list of every war that we've been involved in, I mean, we're always in a war, from a historical standpoint. We're always in some war. It's just a continuation of the wars, so that, when somebody talks to me about freedom, freedom is continually won. It doesn't exist. It has to be re-won, generation by generation. If you look at the wars and the number of people that fought in them, ... I brought a paper along with me where I broke down all of the wars, and all the people killed in all of the wars, and how many people were involved in all of the wars, [it is a] ... very interesting, statistical thing to see all of that, and it teaches you a different perspective. I got off the topic.

KP: That is fine. Did your parents stay in touch with their relatives in Poland?

EK: My father wrote to them and sent them money all the time. ... I have no recollection of my mother having any real relationship with her relatives and, to this day, I don't even know them. ... My mother ... died when she was fifty-eight years old of a heart attack. My father, eventually, went back to Poland, about fifty years after he left, and visited ... the place where he was born and raised, and, about five years ago, Irene and I went back and went there, also. When you ask, "What was the effect of the war?" I think of this: my father, in his relationship with me, because he worked such long hours, every night, he had to park the truck in the garage, which was about four blocks away from where we lived. So, when ... I was a little kid, when he went to ... put the truck in the garage for the night, I would go with him, and we would walk back together, and that's when I got to communicate with my father. We talked about the stars and all the things you talk to kids about, and he always told me how the stars looked where he was born and how, when I got out of eighth grade, or maybe high school, he was going to take me back and show me the stars where he was raised. World War II completely ended the whole idea ... of my father and I going back to Poland to see the stars.

KP: Was that his plan?

EK: That was his plan. He wanted to take me back. He eventually got back there. Because of other circumstances, I was not able to go with him when he went back. He went back ... with five ladies who were going back who were either the children of people that had come over with him or the actual people who came over with him. So, he went back with them and he eventually visited there. One little sideline on that one, ... he left the tour. They were on to go to his little village, whose name escapes me at this moment. When he got off the train there, he was told that, ... now, this is Russian-occupied Poland now. So, another one of the enemies of the Poles were the Russians. The Germans are their enemies, the Russians are their enemies ... because the Russians also dominated them. These are a dominated people, in a sense, so that he was told, ... "When you get off the train, you go to the police station and you tell them that you're there. You check in." Not my father. When he got there, he was so excited that he headed for his sister's house. He eventually got to his sister's house. According to him, ... it was a sad thing for him. He said, "Living in the United States and going back fifty years later, it was one string coming down with one bulb." ... They were very poor. To have a feast, because he was there, they killed a rabbit. He was very sad at how poor they were and that increased the amount we sent over after that, because he went there. Meanwhile, a car pulled up and he was arrested, because he had come and not registered at the police station. [laughter] They took him into the police station ... It took him about six hours before he got out of there and they had to intervene as to who this guy was and what did he come here to do? ... So, he got back there. We eventually got back there, with one of my cousins, who took us to, ... the house is no longer there, but, the exact spot where it was, and we met a lady in the next house, a very old lady, who ... had known of the family and lived there, so that I got to see the uphill.

KP: Where the stars were.

EK: ... I got to see the stars, eventually. ... Because I'm an emotional type of person, I sort of felt that he knew I was there, you know. It was a sentimental moment, right, Irene? I have no idea why we had no relationship with ... my mother's relatives. ...

KP: They lost touch with their Polish relatives.

EK: ... She had.

KP: Yes.

EK: My grandfather on my mother's side was a cavalryman in the Polish Army, handle-bar mustache and all, played the violin, died an alcoholic. After his wife died, ... my mother was the oldest child, so, she raised the others. He ... still worked at Sayre and Fisher. Sayre and Fisher, in those days, back before I was born ... in the '20s, ... when you went to work, a day's work was doing this much. So, you could go to work very early in the morning and do one day's work, go to work after breakfast and do another day's work, go after lunch and do another day's work, if you wanted to work that hard. After my grandmother died and the children sort of moved along, my grandfather built himself a little place and he only worked one [day's work.] ... He had built it on ... a lake, around it, and he threw his fishing line out at night, caught fish, and ate them in the morning, and he had some friends who would come over. He played the violin and he had two other guys that came over, one with an accordion and one with some other instrument, and they'd make their own booze from potato peelings and he had one hell of a high old time.

KP: How did the Depression affect the Sayre and Fisher plant?

EK: ... The Sayre and Fisher plant, eventually, ... went into bankruptcy.

KP: During the Depression?

EK: The Depression hurt it, but, then, after that, the development of lightweight aggregates, ... which, I believe, the Ceramics Department here at Rutgers may have played some role in if it existed then, [killed it]. ... The development of a lightweight aggregate meant that you could build taller, bigger buildings which weighed less, so that the use of cinder block limited the need for brick, and that's why Sayre and Fisher eventually went out of business. It doesn't exist anymore. If you get to my office, I have an 1847 watercolor, it's as big as half of that wall, that shows the Sayre and Fisher plant as drawn in 1847, and I have an aerial photo that was taken now, and ... another rendering in 1918, and another rendering at another time, so that I have different phases of that. The plant itself, eventually, was bought out by a speculator who sold it. He bought it to sell off all the land and make a profit, so that the last part of it, the major clay pit, is now there, and I eventually ended up, with two partners, owning the clay pit. It's now in the process of, probably, going to be developed to hold five to six hundred homes, but Sayre and Fisher was the basis of that community for, oh, maybe, thirty years or so. Everything was built around it, Hercules, Du Pont. ...

KP: They were smaller firms.

EK: Hercules, Du Pont, and Sayre and Fisher were smaller. They were munitions companies, but, after ... World War II, they went into plastics. Anyway, those two got bigger, and Sayre and Fisher went down. ... Meanwhile, in another part of town, National Lead built itself up. National Lead made the lead that goes into paint, so that Sayreville, as I grew up in it, consisted of Hercules, DuPont, National Lead, Sayre and Fisher. On the South River border was an outfit called Quigely, which made a different type of brick, the hollow tile brick, okay, used inside of fireplaces, ... Quigely, Hercules, DuPont, National Lead, then, Illinois Glass came in. This is in my time, now, when ... Illinois Glass built the building where they made glass block. I never thought of it this way, but, do you see how the town ties around the ... construction industry? It went to glass block. That business ... didn't take off either. Glass block never got to be whatever, so that ... now it's used for decorative purposes in houses, etc. So, they basically went out [of business] and Sunshine Biscuit took them over. Sunshine Biscuit is in that plant now. We still have Hercules and DuPont. National Lead is gone. ... When I grew up, Sayreville was known as "The Home of Nationally Known Industries," because we did. When I grew up, Sayre and Fisher was on a descending scale. The others were ascending. Now, Hercules is downsizing, DuPont's downsizing, and ... the nature of the community has changed completely. ... We basically had ... the Baptist church, the Presbyterian church, [and] two Catholic churches. Now, we have a temple, we have a Lutheran church, we have a Hindu temple. If you get directions to come to my office, my office is alongside of the ... Dwarkadish Temple, which is, apparently, a very large Indian temple, one of the sects out of India. I'm not familiar with them. Plus, ... the make-up of our town has become multicultural, whereas before it was German, ... Polish, and Irish. Incidentally, my father tells the story, when he came over, when he worked ... in Sayre and Fisher, that ... the Germans who got there before the Poles were then in the earlier supervisory positions, okay. They were the foremen, and, on Sunday, on Main Street in Sayreville, ... it was dirt road, so, when they would walk up to what's called Allgairs Hall, where there was a bar and a place where they had weddings and things, when they would walk up there, ... the German guys would throw mud balls at them. ... Everything happens all the time. ... My father had his turn at being discriminated against, and biased, and all this, that, and the other. I had my turn with it. But, it eventually evolved. ... If you leave it alone, it will work itself out.

KP: There was a large German community in Sayreville.

EK: Yeah. ... The Presbyterian church was called "the German church." There was a Polish church, the Irish church, and the German church.

KP: Was the German church a Presbyterian church?

EK: Presbyterian. There was a Methodist church down there, too. That is still there, but, that didn't pick up an ethnic name. ... That was ... just a church. Eventually, as a lawyer, I was ... always pleased with the fact, and I joke about it by saying, "Whichever one guards the entrance to Heaven is going to say, 'Hello,' to me," because I've done legal work ... for both of the Catholic churches, for the Protestant church, for the Methodist church, ... for the Lutheran church, and for the Jewish temple. I worked with all of those on a sort of *pro bono* basis, because ... you're working with the churches. So, I've always felt kind of thrilled that who the hell ever is in charge

up there, I got the right one, no matter what. Now, I'm next door to the Dwarkadish temple, so, if they're in charge up there, I might be all right.

CE: How did the German community react to the war?

EK: ... You're testing my memory a little bit now. ... There was a barber, whose name I can't remember, on Main Street who, we were told, belonged to the *Bund*. The *Bund* was up in Northern New Jersey, or New York, or somewhere where they had ... a headquarters. They belonged to the *Bund* and he had a son who was my friend, remember now, this was like sixty-eight years ago, or sixty-five years ago, or something, ... because my mother and father's first store was on Main Street in Sayreville. So, when I was a little kid, I played with him. ...

KP: Was your father upset by the invasion of Poland?

EK: Yes, yes.

KP: How did he feel about the issue of American intervention?

EK: In the war?

KP: What did he want the United States to do before Pearl Harbor?

EK: He wanted the United States to help Poland. ... You have to understand that this war, between Germany, and Italy, and, eventually, Japan, was a war in which there were extremely strong feelings, the Four Freedoms, Franklin Roosevelt, okay? We had been attacked, we were threatened, but, it wasn't that we were threatened, the world was threatened with totalitarian domination. That was wrong, we were right. You forgot all about that he was German and you were something else. We all went because we wanted to, that there was a reason for fighting, and people were crawling all over each other to get into the service. ...

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

EK: The contrast started to show in the Korean War, where, all of a sudden, there wasn't quite the same feeling. ... There was no thought, in World War II, that we would not win and win decisively, because, if we did not, we were going to become slaves to another empire. In the Korean War, particularly when, we couldn't cross the Yalu, all of a sudden, you started to get a different feeling. This wasn't a war to prevent something from happening, this was a war in which you said, "You can't go by here," which makes it more like a game than a war. Then, comes along Vietnam. Now, you've got an entirely different [situation]. ... These Vietnam guys I see are beating their breasts because nobody recognizes them as fighters and heroes. Well, they were fighters and heroes, but, historically, it's going to show up a little bit different. I mean, these things are passing themselves down, and, now, it's a hell of a contrast with what it was like in World War II. I mean, we were there, and we were united, and we fought for one purpose, and those who fought, they died, and all kinds of people died, ... so that it just wasn't that way. You didn't recognize differences between people, you fought ... side by side. We had ... the process

with the blacks where they were integrated, ... but, see, then, until Kennedy activated all our blacks, ... we knew there were blacks, we knew there were black divisions or something, a black fighter squadron, ... but that wasn't the cause of the moment. The cause of the moment was to defeat those [enemies]. ... Of course, the sad part of the racial issue is what we did with the Japanese people that were here. We separated them away from that population, which we should never have done. I mean, just like we took ... the German people who lived in Sayreville and they went and fought side by side with us, well, the Japanese, on our side, should have done that, too, but somebody got excited out there on the West Coast and ... that's not a good part of our history. Incidentally, you'll notice that, a little at a time, fifty years later, ... it came to my mind again, because we just developed, in the last couple of weeks' papers, [knowledge of] the Japanese and their medical experiments, operating on live people. ... Then, you get back, all of a sudden, there's stories in our newspapers, ... a little while back, about experiments we were conducting, where people were being given these things to test them out, so that when you say, "Well, what the hell was Hitler doing ... making lamp shades out of people?" Well, what the hell were we doing and what were the Japanese doing? Or, is this a pervasive thing? Is it that, ... if you win, you did no wrong, and, if you lose, you did all wrong? ... At least from where I sit looking at it, it is an interesting sideline.

KP: Did your parents join any Polish relief organizations during World War II? Were there any such organizations in the area?

EK: ... Undoubtedly, there were some, but ... I don't have any recollection of it at all. You have to remember, I come out of high school, and I walk out of high school, and I walk into the Army, and that takes care of the next three years, you know.

KP: Where were you when you heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

EK: December the 7th, I was in ... the living room of our home and it came over on the radio. I was with another person, which would be one of my boyhood friends, but I don't remember which one. ... When my mother and father came home from wherever they were, I told them. ... You know, when you talk to me [about] the shock of the Warsaw thing, the Pearl Harbor thing, the Kennedy shooting, the other Kennedy shooting, the black civil rights leader, ... [the] Martin Luther King shooting, I mean, my lifetime has seen so many dramatic things, I don't know how many times we're going to be shocked. It just seems to be one shock after the other, and then, the guy that shot Kennedy, he gets shot. We were coming out of Our Lady of Victory's Church when somebody said something about that. We drove home, fast as hell, put on the television, and, here, they're showing us pictures of this guy, ... Ruby, shooting Oswald, okay.

KP: You did not graduate from high school until 1943.

EK: Right.

KP: How did the war affect your high school?

EK: High school. ... I was president of the class, a member of the student council, editor of the yearbook, and chairman of the war bond drive. I put that one last on purpose, for you. Do you want to know how the war affected it? When I was chairman of the war bond drive, Sayreville High School sold more war bonds than any other town around, I think, and I was privileged to lead that. Now, how did it affect it? It became the governing topic of everything. All of a sudden, everybody was trying to get the hell out of high school and ... get into the service. ... If you look at my high school yearbook, our graduating class, you'll find half a dozen pictures in there of guys who had left the class and gone into the service, so that, ... technically, they didn't graduate with us, but, we treated them as ours. Everybody wanted to go into the military service and, in Sayreville, everybody wanted to go into the Navy, for some reason.

KP: The Navy was the big attraction.

EK: [laughter] I know, out of my high school class, everybody wanted to be in the Navy. I didn't know why.

KP: Did you ever consider the Air Force?

EK: I wanted to go into the Air Force. ... I don't know how many stories you want to hear. ... When I was in grammar school, it came around to having the first eye test, where the nurse tests your eyes. I was in eighth grade and the nurse said to me, "You have one good eye and one weak eye, but, not bad enough that you need glasses." That was the end of that. So, it comes time for me to make a decision about what I'm going to do, and I'm toying with ASTP, and I'm toying with, maybe, going into the Air Force and being a fighter pilot, which ... was everything. ... Be in the Navy, be a fighter pilot, and [to be] a Navy fighter pilot was even better, okay, [laughter] and I said to my mother, "Well, from everything I've read, there's no sense in me going into the Air Force, 'cause I have one good eye and one bad eye." So, I went the ASTP route, and I ended up in the infantry. Somewhere along the line, when I get to college or somewhere, I get an eye test again and, lo and behold, the tester says to me, "Well, that's very interesting. One of your eyes is 20/20 and the other's much better than that," [laughter] so that when the nurse said, "One is good and one is bad," relatively speaking, they were both terrific. That's how I didn't get to go into the Air Force. Maybe [it is] just as well, since I'm not too mechanically inclined. I don't know if I could have handled all that. Incidentally, one of the surprises, to me, was when I saw my first P-48, ... that little fighter plane in World War II. That fighter plane's no longer than from me to that wall over there. It's a little thing. The first time I saw one, I thought, "Well, I am sure as hell glad I didn't end up doing that. Who's going to fly up in the air in one of those?" So, anyway, what else do you want to know?

KP: Did you organize any scrap drives?

EK: Oh, you're talking about high school, World War II, [when] I led the bond drive.

KP: Yes.

EK: The students were involved in gathering scrap. On top of that, there was a tremendous labor shortage. ... You've got to remember, you're taking eleven million men ... right out of the work force. When the primary people, eleven million men, go out of the work force, ... somebody's got to replace them. So, you replace them with women, and children, and old people. Well, this sent everybody to work again. I played football in my senior year in high school and I was going to be the starting second baseman on our baseball team. In my first three years of high school, I had pneumonia and I was an asthmatic. I had difficulty. I got healthy in my senior year, and I could get into the sporting endeavors again. It was announced, ... at Raritan Arsenal, you're familiar with where that is, that they were tremendously short of people to load the boxcars with munitions. So, a group of us decided, after school, to go work ... at Raritan Arsenal, so that I quit the baseball team. ... Because the coaches all went into the service, [laughter] ... we had a baseball coach, whose name I can't remember, who was a senior at Rutgers here, who was an athlete of some note, apparently, and was out there coaching us, and I remember him calling me into his office and saying, "Eddie, it's difficult enough these days, but why do you have to go work over there? Can't you play ball and do that, too?" and I said, "Nope. I'm going to put all my hours in over there for the war effort." I mean, that was more important than my personal feelings for baseball or anything like that. So, looking back at it, I wish I'd played ball. ... So, I worked at Raritan Arsenal and I found out that they weren't exactly munitions. ... Some of it was, would you believe, back to the stuff involving my father when he was working at Sayre and Fisher. You would work over there, and here's a boxcar, and in it is a bag which contained chains that they used on tanks, and they're heavy, and the guy says, "Tell you what, you unload this whole boxcar, you can go home and I'll punch you in for the whole day." ... I was a sucker, ... because we were new there. We'd barely got done before our shift ended. We got, maybe, fifteen minutes off, but, here I was, doing the same piecework that my father was doing. I was trying to get the boxcar unloaded, so [that] I could go home and get punched out early, but, what we did was, basically, load and unload boxcars, mostly with hand trucks. ...

KP: It sounds like that was a lot of hard work.

EK: It was a lot of hard work, that used up a lot of your spare time, and the selling of the bonds, and that ... sort of was what that was about.

KP: You were drafted in July of 1943. You graduated in June and you reported for duty in July.

EK: Right. I think I went in in August.

KP: Did you report in with a group of people from Sayreville?

EK: Yes, yes. The way ... that worked, in those times, the draft board was ... located in South Amboy. South Amboy ... has a passenger railroad station, and on John Street is the city hall, and you walk down John Street to Little Broadway, you turn left off [of] Little Broadway, and ... there's the draft board. You recall [that] I said earlier [that] I was an asthmatic. There was some question as to whether, physically, I could go into the military service, because ... of my lungs, and I had had an attack of asthma three days before I went up to Newark to be examined, and I

was completely amazed that I passed. When I came back, my mother said, "You're 4-F, right?" I said, "No, I'm not." 4-F was the term for [someone who was ineligible for the draft]. ... I said, "No." "Why not?" "I'm drafted." [She] said, "I can't believe it. You're an asthmatic." She didn't want me to go to the war.

KP: What would she have preferred?

EK: Oh, she'd have preferred that her son stay home, [that the] apple of her eye stay home, but, look at it from my standpoint. All my friends are volunteered into the service. Here I am, sitting with these attacks of asthma, and, all of a sudden, this guy says I can go into the Army? I said, "You're on. I'm out of here," all right. ... I had already taken the ASTP test. ...

KP: When did you take the ASTP test?

EK: Prior to that. It was probably in the spring.

KP: Did you take it at your high school?

EK: No, I think I went down to Princeton to take it. I have trouble recalling, but, I think I went to Princeton to take it.

KP: This was before you were drafted.

EK: ... Then, I had a choice. ... After taking the ASTP ... test, I got a notice [asking me], "Did I want to go into the Army or into the Navy?" ... That gave me cause for great concern. I had an uncle who was a career Army man and I eventually decided, for that reason, to do that. ... It wasn't a very good reason. Actually, if I had gone into the Naval end of it, I probably would have ended up at Princeton. Then, I would have never gone to Rutgers at all, you know.

KP: Then, you would not be here for this interview.

EK: I wouldn't be here for the interview. ... That decision was made, that I would go into the Army, and I submitted that. Then, I got a notice ... to report for duty to the city hall in South Amboy. So, my parents drove me down there, and there must have been about thirty guys there from the area, and we got it together there, and then, ... the streets in South Amboy are very wide, they took us out in front of city hall, and they formed us into so many rows, this and that, and then, of course, everybody came with their parents and relatives, and we marched down John Street ... to Broadway, turned left on Broadway, walked up to where Madura's Pharmacy is, turned right, and marched over to the railroad station, with all of our relatives and friends. [laughter] We all marched. I mean, we marched and they walked along with us, okay, no band or anything like that, but, we all marched together, and then, we all got ... into the railroad car, where there were other people who had been picked up, apparently, from other draft boards down the shoreline somewhere because that line runs that way. ... Then, all the mothers are crying and all the sweethearts are kissing. I didn't have a sweetheart, but, all of a sudden, I got one, a girl that I had known from South Amboy High School named Mary. ... This is the classic picture,

where ... the guy's leaning out the railroad car window, okay, and the girl runs up and gives him it. Well, Mary runs up and says, "Good luck, Eddie," and gave me a big kiss. So, I thought, "What the hell? I had a girlfriend, too, to say good-bye to when I left." ... It really wasn't, but, it was just the way you see it in a movie or something like that, and we were off to Fort Dix, and then, it all started.

KP: How long were you at Fort Dix?

EK: Fort Dix, a relatively short period of time, and then, ... we started a little bit of training there, you know. ... Well, you've seen it in movies, where you go in and you go through this line and you walk out with this bag full of clothes and stuff. ... Half of it fits and half of it doesn't, but, we went through that. ... For the first time, a little Polish boy out of Sayreville, New Jersey, [who had only] lived with his mother, father, and his sister, all of a sudden is up in this big building with, ... I don't know, a couple of hundred guys in the building. ... The first time you walked into that bathroom, it was a sight to see, because there's not one toilet, there's like thirty of them in a row, okay, and there's thirty lavatories in a row, etc., and everybody takes a shower in this big place. ...

KP: Before entering the service, how far had you traveled outside of Sayreville?

EK: Prior to that?

KP: Yes.

EK: ... The only expedition I made prior to leaving Sayreville for World War II was the World's Fair in New York when I was twelve years old. So, if I was born in '20, ... [it would be] 1936, I guess. I was a member of the Boy Scouts at the time and I went to the World's Fair, for one week, as a guide. ... They had a village made up of Indian tee-pees and [there were] different scouts. ... If you were honored, you were allowed to go there and serve as a guide. So, you went there, and you lived in those tee-pees, and then, you were given a map of the World's Fair, and, when different groups came in that wanted tours, you took them around. I'll never forget that first day. I had never been through the place myself and this nun says to me, "Well, we want to go to the Czech exhibit." So, I said, "Well, why don't we look on here and find out where it is, so [that] we know where we're going?" [laughter] But, eventually, I learned it. ...

KP: You have very distinct memories of the New York World's Fair.

EK: Oh, absolutely. ... A particular memory, ... at the time I was there, the Czechoslovakian thing was significant, and I guided a group of Czech people to the place where a very prominent Czech leader, I can't remember the name, ... was speaking, and, again, all these people were crying, and on their knees because of what had happened to Czechoslovakia. That was the time when, what the hell was his name, went out there, the prime minister of England, ... Chamberlain, with the umbrella, ... [and] gave the game away. ... So, I remember that in particular. Yeah, I have great memories of that. In fact, I have a cane that I got from there, I have pictures from there ...

KP: Do you remember the "Cities of the Future" exhibit?

EK: ... Yeah. Well, I remember seeing television for the first time. You know, everybody ran to see this little thing moving, or whatever it was. That's something that's hard to comprehend, when you think of today and you think of then. ... My [high school] class had its fiftieth reunion and I wasn't able to be there because I was scheduled to be involved in the opening of the 95th Infantry Division Museum in Oklahoma City. Life is full of choices. I really wanted to be at the fiftieth, I really wanted to be out there. So, I went out there, but ... because I couldn't be at the reunion, I did a tape which was played at the reunion where ... the sum total of the commentary is, "Everything that exists today that didn't exist then," and it takes about four-and-a-half minutes, and I think it's very interesting and very clever. ... It isn't original with me. It's from material that I got somewhere else, you know. ... We didn't have electric typewriters, we didn't have frozen food. ... I'll let you listen to that if you get out there. So, where were we? You got me out of the World's Fair.

KP: Yes.

EK: Where did I go? The World's Fair. That was the only time I'd been away from home, and then, Fort Dix is the next place ... where I'm away from home. [laughter] My mother and father, ... my ethnic parents, did not do vacations from the standpoint that, here, everybody takes people on vacation. My mother and father didn't have vacations. [If] we went to Asbury Park, we went a big distance. So, then, at Fort Dix, ... after a few days, ... I was then assigned to the infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia.

KP: Did you know that you were in the ASTP at this point?

EK: Yes, sure. ...

KP: However, you were first placed into the infantry.

EK: Well, first, ... you have to get into the Army. ... Fort Dix gets you into the Army and gets you issued [your clothes and equipment]. Now, you're dressed like one of these people, okay. Then, you're sent for basic training. The question, from Fort Dix, is, "Where are you going for basic training?" If you're going to be an artilleryman, you go out to Fort Ord; if you were a Navy guy, you went to Great Lakes. So, I was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, and there were, I guess, three, or four, or five, or ten [of us], ... I don't remember, and we were put ... on a regular train. ...

KP: Was it a regular passenger train?

EK: A regular passenger train. ... We had our duffel bag all packed, it's that thing ... about this big around, threw it over your shoulder, and we were taken into town, and we got on a train, and we were given train tickets. I remember, the train was one of the better ones, because it was one of the ones with swivel seats, we could swivel it around, and it had a Polaroid window, where you could turn the thing and it would control the light coming in. You know, [for] a Polish boy

out of Sayreville, this is a big trip. So, we get down ... to, I believe, Columbus, Georgia, and we get off there. ... You saw that building I showed you, where we stayed at Fort Benning, that shack we lived in, well, we get into the train version of that shack, a rinky-dink thing, okay. That must have been a World War I train we got into, and we got on that train, and that train took us from Columbus into Fort Benning. Fort Benning's the infantry school, and it still is the infantry school, and this is the place where all the research [is done], ... and all the officers are trained. ... I didn't realize it, but, I was in the top infantry place, and we took a very, very difficult infantry basic [course]. We got there, and we moved into these shacks, and we formed into units, and the training started to be a [reality].

KP: What did you think of the South?

EK: Well, I remember, the first thing about the South that annoyed me, when we were on that rinky-dink train, going from Columbus into Fort Benning, a bunch of people had accumulated from everywhere. So, now, we have ... a lot of guys, and we stopped at one place, and a guy was out there with a big cardboard box full of sandwiches, and we were each given a sandwich. My sandwich was lamb, and it had butter on the bread, and it had been sitting out there in the sun, and I ate it, and I got sick from it, and, at that moment, I hated the South, the heat, the sick[ness], the whole thing. I got to hate it even more when, the first time I went in to eat, ... I was served what I thought was spinach, only it was turnip greens. I took a lot of it, [but], [laughter] one mouthful was enough. ... During basic training, [whenever they served] whatever I didn't like, ... I went over to the PX and I bought Power Bars and Dr. Pepper. That was the real Dr. Pepper, from the beginning, okay. ... Actually, we were so busy with basic training [that I did not think about these things]. ... You got to remember now, this war is going full tilt and ... they want these people trained. So, [during] our basic training, I didn't ... [get a pass] to go into Columbus, Georgia, until after it was over. So, it was like sixteen weeks of, "Go, go, go." You were just there, that's all. I do know that, ... after we got there, ... the second night, ... for the first time, I got extremely homesick. I really missed my parents, and my sister, and my home, and all that. So, [at] about two o'clock in the morning, ... I found a telephone, I called home, and [I] talked to my mother and father for a while, made them believe I was happy, you know. ...

KP: Did you miss them?

EK: I missed them very, very much at that point. That was ... one of the few times I've been really homesick in my life, but, then, you know, you start ... very early in the morning, you work until very late at night, and you're tired, so that I got into the swing of it and that was it.

KP: What was your drill instructor like?

[Tape Paused]

EK: [My] drill instructor was a southern guy, ... [which] led to something that happened many, many times in the service to me, still happens once in a while. Reading off a list of names, they're alphabetical, [he] gets to the "K"s, he goes along, and then, he stops, [there is] just silence, and I say, "Here," and everybody laughs. At that point in time, everybody knows me,

because, ... wherever I went with a new group, they go through the names, the guy would scratch his head, look at what would be my name, I'd say, "Here," everybody would laugh, and, all of a sudden, ... you get to be known, okay. ... Because I always laughed about it, then, they knew you had a sense of humor, so that my name led me to being one of the first known all the time. We had a southern first sergeant who was the typical DI type of first sergeant, not as severe as it's characterized in the movies, but, typical. The guy had a real southern drawl, a real southern drawl. [He was] a real big, hook-nosed guy with a mean streak to him. ... They formed us into a rifle company for training, and we had a captain, which every company has, and ... each platoon had a lieutenant, and we had a weapons platoon, a rifle platoon, etc., just like the others do, ... so that, when we trained, we trained as if we were formed into an infantry company. ... The captain was a fellow named Petrolunas, Captain Petrolunas, a tall, Greek guy, about as handsome as a guy can be, okay, broad shoulders, narrow hips, about six foot-two, tremendously good looking. I thought, "Holy, when God made that guy, he ... really did something." I liked him. He was a very quiet type of guy. For some reason, I established some sort of rapport with him. That sergeant was, like, impossible to me, but, eventually, I mean, everybody had to take their turn in the kitchen, and the kitchen was from three o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock at night, and you were exhausted ... when you did that, because that was real work, and, you know, some of the kitchens, they smell. I don't give a damn how you cut it, no matter how clean you make it, it smells, okay, because of the heat, and all the food you're handling, and all of that. The food was very crude [there], by reference to other places I stayed. ... When I left there, I went to the University of Pittsburgh, which was different. [At] Pittsburgh, [there] was better food than I had at home. When I was down at Fort Benning, it was food I don't even want to describe, all right, but, you ate it, and you did your kitchen duty, and you did your training duty.

KP: What was your company like? What were the men of your company like?

EK: I don't know, how many stories [do] you want to hear? ... You need to understand that this would be a little bit different type of a company, because I would say that ... the lowest IQ in that company must have been around 116, 120, or something like that. It was there and up. We had guys with, like, ... 180 IQs. ... We had guys that were so smart, I couldn't believe it. I mean, that's where I learned that, ... man, as bright as I might think I was, there were guys that were a hell of a lot brighter than me, you know. You eventually learned that you have your place in this structure of life, [but], there's always going to be somebody that knows more than you do. This was a very bright group of people and it made the training kind of difficult, because a lot of them rebelled against the training, and, of course, they were a hell of a lot brighter than the people that were training them. I didn't have that problem. I just [thought], ... "You had to ride with this," so, I rode with it. ...

KP: What kinds of problems were there?

EK: They rebelled against authority. Remember, they're so super intelligent that, "Who the hell's going to tell them what to do?" They rebelled against authority. They spent a lot of time in the kitchen, ... until they learned [that], eventually, the Army subordinates your personality to it. There just isn't any other way, you know. You start out doing this, which is nothing but a disciplinary tactic. It really means nothing, except that they teach you that somebody's better

than you, and, [when] you see them, you're going to do this to them, and you're going to wear a necktie when it's hot as hell, whether you want to or not. You're going to tuck it in here, like this, it's going to be the second button, it's going to be that way, and, when you stand, you're going to have your hands like that, and your thumb's going to be along the seam of your trousers. Discipline, it's all discipline. The idea is that you have to learn, that, in order for you to live, you have to do what you're told to do, when you're told to do it. ... Later on, I'll give you an example of that. ... You have to learn to do what you're told to do, when you're told to do it, if you want to live, and that is ... such a rule that I subscribed to it completely in combat. You just must do that. ... These bright guys rebelled against that completely. Plus, ... for some reason, some of the brighter guys we had did not have personal habits that were like everybody else's. I don't know why I ascribe it to them, but I did. I remember, there are two instances in basic training that stand out in my mind. ... The first one, I've told many times. In the barracks, in the evening, after the day was done, there would be discussions at a high intellectual level, I guess. [laughter] ... So, they got into a discussion one night about, "Is there a God or not?" okay. "Is there a God or not?" [They had] a big discussion [on] whether there's a God or not, and we have these eighteen-year-old intellectuals who are discussing whether there's a God or not, and one was a pure atheist and took the attitude [that] there absolutely is not, and this argument went on until two o'clock in the morning, until everybody was hollering, "For Christ's sake, shut up," [laughter] because we wanted to sleep. ... This one guy was very vehement that ... there just was no God. He was an atheist, that's that. [At] four o'clock in the morning, we're all awakened by this moaning. So, we all jump up to see what it is, and we go over, and it's this guy who's an atheist, and he's laying there, and he's moaning and he's groaning. Something's in his ear. A bug had crawled into his ear and was crawling around on his eardrum. ... Guess what he was saying, "God, help me. God, help me." So, we went and got some warm water, put it in his ear, and we flooded it out. That was it. He never said anything about being atheist again, okay. [laughter] ... You'd walk by him and you'd say, "God, help me. [laughter] God, help me." That was the end of all the atheist talk. [laughter] There are no atheists in foxholes. I don't know what you subscribe to, but when your life is threatened every minute, you're going to believe in something. I don't know what the hell it is, but you're going to believe in it, because you got to believe that something's going to save you or else you go blind. That's one of the stories. The second story's a very, very odd story, a delicate sort of a story. We had gone out to our first bivouac, where you stay [out] over night and you set up pup-tents. ... For your personal use, there are slit trenches. So, if you wanted to go have a bowel movement, you go to the slit trench and you straddle this thing. That's what life's all about. Well, apparently, some of these people ... didn't want to get out of there, get off the ground and walk over to there to do that, because, ... for health reasons, that was set away from where you were sleeping and all of that. Well, in the morning, when they did the morning inspection, [as] we're all standing in front of our pup tents, they found that somebody had had a bowel movement and it was laying there. They formed us into a company and the first sergeant says, and I'll never forget this, "Someone has defecated in the area." [laughter] You know, that was the first time I [had] heard that word. When he said that, I thought, "Someone has defecated? [laughter] What the hell? What the hell? Defecated?" And a friend of mine says, "He means, 'shit,'" and I said, "Oh, I got it. I got it. I got it." [laughter] "So, we are not going to do anything until that man stands up and says who he is." That man never said who he was and we went through about a week of hell, until they finally gave up. ... They were punishing us to make him reveal himself. [He] never revealed himself. I'm convinced

it was one of the super-intellec[t]s we had there, one of these 180 [IQ] guys that, you know, violated the rules, but that was one of the funniest moments in my life. "Someone has defecated in the area," wow. ... I don't know, basic training, ... you never know what your skills are, or aren't, or ... whatever, I don't know. Hand grenades, ... the ones with the cross marks, the way you throw a hand grenade, or the way you were taught to throw a hand grenade, a catcher throws a ball like that to second base [and] a football quarterback throws a ball this way. You got to combine those two movements into throwing the hand grenades. You throw from here, and, just like you spin the football, you have to spin the hand grenade, but, you have to use that motion. ... [The grenade is] going like that forward motion of a football, but, you take it from this position. For some reason known only to God, that came natural to me. ... It came naturally to me. So, we're taking our first day ... in the hand grenade stuff. So, he says, "Okay," we're using duds, "here's a building with a big window in it and you're supposed to throw ... one in the window of the first floor, and one in the window of the second floor, and one in the door." So, they put him there and I go, [Mr. Kolodziej makes a throwing noise], one, two, three. I was surprised myself. [laughter] ... I'm not real athletic, you know. I thought, "How the hell did I do that?" So, then, Petrolunas comes over and says, "You want to try that again?" Well, you don't say, "No." [laughter] ... He brought me some more. I think I did like twenty of them. He says, "Stand up and do it." I was doing it laying down. "Stand up and do it." So, he looks at me and he says, "You can do that."

CE: Were you using live grenades?

EK: No. This was just to learn, okay. Later on came the live grenades. You trained with live stuff, there's no question about that. You [will] notice, in that picture of me there, I always carried grenades everywhere. I carried a .45 and grenades, because I was convinced that, if he was that far away that I couldn't hit him with the grenades or the .45, then, I'd run like hell the other way, but if he was that close to me, I wanted the most effective thing. A hand grenade has a cone of dispersal like this, which would sort of take care of a lot of things, but, that was my theory. So, this led to Captain Petrolunas making me his runner. I became his runner. Every captain has somebody that's assigned to him. ... You take messages from here to there. I became his runner and I think that's really why, when I got to University of Pittsburgh, I became [the] cadet first sergeant, because, for some reason, Petrolunas had marked me up, and this all came about because ... God made it natural for me to throw that thing. ...

KP: Later, you became an infantryman.

EK: I went to the University of Pittsburgh. ...

KP: Yes, but, how effective was your infantry training in relation to your actual combat experience?

EK: My infantry training was excellent.

KP: While in combat, did you ever say to yourself, "They should have taught us this in training?"

EK: No, no. The infantry basic training we had at Fort Benning was excellent training for what we did, knowing that, after I go to Pittsburgh, and after I leave Pittsburgh and go to the infantry division, that we then did training with them, and we did the maneuver down ... in West Virginia, and we did extensive training with them. ... The infantry soldier ... is the average guy. The way they teach the average guy is, they use the same theory they use on television. They assume everybody's twelve years old. So, they teach it to them over, and over, and over, and over again, so that when we got to the infantry division, the stuff that we had learned at Fort Benning, we learned ... to be teachers of that. When we got there, ... they just kept repeating it. I mean, ... you have to be able to take the rifle apart and put it back together blindfolded, and that's for real ... because it takes ... some people more time to learn than others. There's always a class in taking a rifle apart, and the first aid courses, and the ... courses in compass, and all of that ... stuff You just do it over, and over, and over again, so that I thought we were extremely well trained. I had no problems with training for infantry, though.

KP: Was there any part of your training that was particularly useful in combat?

EK: Well, ... you're ahead of yourself now, but understand ... that I was trained as an infantryman ... in the weapons platoon of a rifle company. I was a .30 caliber machine gun [man]. ... We were in a position, back from the Moselle River, where you could actually hear the artillery fire and all that, and we were getting ready to go on line. That day, a gentleman came around, because ... our regiment had formed an outfit called the Regimental Combat Scouts, and this takes a little bit of telling, but, in an infantry regiment, you have an intelligence center, a reconnaissance unit whose sole function is to go out and get information. They never fight. They go as far as they can to find out what they can without fighting, and then, they come back. Our regimental commander, our colonel, felt that ... when those people found something, we needed an outfit that, then, could go get more, i.e., very often, in combat, you lose contact with the enemy. They're here, you're here, but ... this isn't trench warfare in World War II, where you're looking each other in the eye, so that our job, for example, would be, you go out and go until you find the enemy, engage the enemy in a firefight, and then, come back, because they would triangulate on where that firefight took place. Then, they'd know where they were situated, or [we would] go through our lines ... until you captured one of the enemy and bring him back, because we wanted to interrogate him. So, it was that type of work, so that I went from an infantry line soldier into this combat outfit, because the guy who was put in charge of our Regimental Combat Scouts ... gave them special training, Ranger training, for almost eight weeks, and it dawned on him that he did not have a .30 caliber machine gunner. So, he was going around to all the rifle companies, looking for a volunteer to leave the infantry company and go with this Regimental Combat Scout outfit to be in charge of the .30 caliber machine guns. That particular day, I had an argument with my tentmate, a fellow named Tom Gorman. He was commenting about the fact that ... when we went to machine gun school, he shot practically perfect. He could do with the machine gun what I did with the hand grenades, all right. With the machine gun, they had [an] elevate and traverse mechanism, one knob over and one knob over, and you had to be able to do all of this and squeeze the trigger, and do all this, squeeze the trigger, and not me. I got through that because the sergeant liked me. [He] went out and put a pencil through all the places and said, "Okay, you're a gunner," okay, [laughter] so that that's how

I got into that. So, Gorman was saying, "We're going to be in combat tomorrow. How the hell can I trust you? You can't hit anything." I said, "Well, you do all the shooting," because he and I were both, at that point, ... ammunitions carriers. The machine gun squad has a sergeant, a gunner, an assistant gunner, and two guys that carry the ammunition. I was one of those. So, this guy comes walking around and he's looking for somebody to handle a .30 caliber machine gun. So, I go up to him and I say, "What about me?" He says, "Why do you want to do this?" I says, "'Cause I'm pissed off at him." [laughter] So, he goes back and talks to Paciotti, who's the company commander, and Paciotti, apparently, ... tells him I'm a good guy. So, he takes me. So, I go to there and, all of a sudden, I have five guys underneath me. I'm in charge of them. I have two .30 caliber machine guns that are still in cosmoline. [We] have to take them apart and I'm in charge of the whole thing. I, now, become in charge of the whole thing, so that I made a tremendous jump, just like that, only because I was annoyed with the other guy.

CE: Were you still a private?

EK: [I was] still a private and the Regimental Scouts had no table of organization. We had no TO. I fought the entire war as a PFC, despite the fact that I was handling a section of machine guns. I had two men underneath me who were staff sergeants, who were water-cooled machine gunners. That's the one with the ... water in it, but, they had no skill in the light .30. So, they were underneath me. I had staff sergeants underneath me. Eventually, ... when we got cut down to about thirty guys, I ended up running the outfit, but, [with] no rank. When the war ended, I was immediately made a staff sergeant, just like that, because I was assigned back to company, being [that] I became staff sergeant immediately, but I had no rank throughout the war.

KP: Did you ever go back to your old company?

EK: When the war ended and they disbanded the Regimental Scouts, I went back to Company B. I stayed in touch with Company B throughout this, because most of the work I did was nightwork. We fought at night. During the day, I was back at regiment and I had time, so that I was free to do what I wanted to do, and then, in battle conditions, you're a lot freer to do whatever you wanted to do. So, if B Company was anywhere near me, I'd go visit them, which I guess should lead you into this story. ... My first night in combat, the I&R had said that the Germans [were across the Moselle]. We were ... overlooking the river, on this bluff. On the other bluff, across the river, was where the Germans were. The distance is, maybe, like, a half mile. [It was] similar [to], if you're driving along Old Bridge Turnpike in South River, you're looking down and you see Sayreville. It's sort of similar to that. ... There was a little settlement of houses in a place called Vezon. ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. Edwin A. Kolodziej on March 29, 1995, at Rutgers University with Kurt Piehler and ...

CE: Chris Eberle.

KP: Please, continue.

EK: ... Because Vezon was down there, the Germans had an outpost there, and we were given the assignment ... to go through our lines, down to that outpost, capture a German, and bring him back, because the I&R had said that the Germans put that outpost in there every night. ... We black-faced and went through our lines. ... We went down and into Vezon. Vezon is a little, typical, ... tiny-weenie French village. ... It's supposed to be a square, but it's triangular shaped, houses here, houses here, houses here, okay? ... It is easier if I read this. We're here. I'm here. Every patrol has a point, with three guys in a point, then the main body of the patrol, and then me, with the machine gun. I set up here, okay. The point went down here, too, and this is done very silently. They're looking to find wherever the Germans are, which is supposedly down here somewhere. At this point in time, a flare goes off. The Germans used green flares. We used red flares; they used green flares. What you do when a flare goes off is, you freeze. Whatever position you're in, you hold it and you just don't move, because they're looking through that light from the dark, and it takes them a while to adjust their eyes, and it doesn't last that long, and, if you're lucky, they don't see you. We froze and that was the first hint that something was wrong. Somebody knew we were there. ... They must have heard us. That's why they were flaring. Incidentally, we always had ... a get-away group, right here. There are two guys that are assigned [to that]. In our patrol, somebody always had to get back, because they were get-away men who, the moment contact started, ... started back, because somebody has to report back. So, that flare goes off, and Grondahl and I have our machine gun here, on a tripod, and then, music starts, American music. An American woman's voice says, "Men of the 95th, we know you are here. Why don't you come join us? We have a very warm, comfortable place where you can be," etc., etc., that whole spiel. ... You know, everything was a secret in the United States. Everything was a secret in the Army. I didn't know who the hell knew where we were. ... We go through our lines, we're ... in no man's land, in the German position, and, all of a sudden, this voice is going off, telling me that they know we're here. You [think we] ought to be scared? Try it. At this point in time, the music stops, and the voice stops, and I'm laying here, and Grondahl's laying here, and I see a flashlight go on and off, right there. When I looked, I saw that there were a squad of Germans and the guy in the front, with the flashlight, was looking at his watch. He didn't know we were here. So, I swung the machine gun around, so that it aimed that way. I just swung it right around, pulled the trigger, [Mr. Kolodziej imitates a machine gun firing], and that was that. One of these guys got as far as here and was laying there, crying for his mother. ...

KP: Was that your first combat experience?

EK: That's my first actual combat, right there.

KP: When did that incident occur?

EK: That was on, if you want the exact date ...

KP: Was it in 1944?

EK: Yeah, it's on the citation. October 21, 1944. That's my first day of combat. I never saw any before.

KP: You received a decoration for your actions.

EK: ... First, actual combat, fired my first shot, killed my first people, how ever you want it. So, then, when I saw that, I found out there were two machine guns, here and here. When they saw me fire here, that started a firefight, the two of them against me. The Germans used green tracers; we used red tracers. When I took over this outfit, one of the things I did, the standard belt of ammunition comes with a tracer every five, I made mine every twenty, because I felt that, when you fired the weapon at night, with the tracers, if you had them every five, it makes a straight line to your gun, where the bullet's going, because it contained light powder. Our guns had a lower cyclic rate of fire than the German guns did. They fired much faster, "Burp, burp, burp." ... These guys were shooting at me, but ... because of the higher speed, there was a straight green line over to where they were. ... When I fired back at them, there was no straight red line, just red dots that showed up once in a while. I engaged in a firefight with these two. ... In the meanwhile, the three point men were trapped here, underneath them. One of them was killed, and the other two laid there, making believe they were dead. I got in a firefight. I knocked out these two machine guns. In the meanwhile, since I didn't know what was in these buildings here, I then started shooting up every door and window. You don't need ... a sharpshooter's medal to do this, because, if you've got this thing where you just could do this with it, you [could] just blast them all. So, I shot these all up. At this point in time, while this was going on, the get-away men were going back. On their way back, ... this happens contemporaneous with some of this, they find a squad of Germans under a tree. So, they throw hand grenades into them. So, I took care of that squad, they took care of that squad. I took care of these guys and these two machine guns. Then, we were given the orders to disengage. So, we went back. When we got back, we were living in a barn, ... I went up to this loft and went to sleep. I was awakened suddenly by two MPs that looked like they were about fifteen feet tall. ... They were very big guys. One of them lifted me up and they said, "They want you downstairs." So, I go downstairs and there is General Twaddle and other officers. Since this was one of the first combats of our division, they had come there and they wanted to question me about what had happened and how it had happened. At that point in time, a guy walks into the room, I showed you his picture, I said [that] he played football for Cornell, a very big guy called Jumbo Curran. He was one of the two that was laying there, making believe he was dead. He then comes in, and he's a big guy, picks me up, and hugs me, and kisses me, and says I saved his life, and then, he describes how both of these got knocked out. This guy was dead, and then, after we left, much later, when they felt it was safe, they crawled out of there. That was a press conference, my first press conference, or whatever the hell it was, okay? Now, the next morning, the Germans put up a white flag, and they came in here, and the artillery people counted [that] they took out thirty bodies from here. That's the Bronze Star, all right.

KP: You were awarded the Bronze Star on your first day in combat.

EK: First combat, they gave me the Bronze Star. I was on my way to being Audie Murphy. ...

KP: Did you expect this at all?

EK: I didn't even know we had medals. [laughter] To be honest with you, I didn't know we had medals. This is intrinsic to what it was. ... You don't do this for medals. I did this because what the hell else could you do if you're there? ... You're starting to get a taste of what the world is all about now. So, we do that. We're back. The next day, I decide to go over to B Company. This is how we got into this. I go over to B Company, because I want to visit with the guys, because I had combat, because they're on this ridge, looking down. So, by now, I wear a white rabbit skin jacket and ... a polka dot scarf around my neck, and I'm letting my hair grow long, okay, and I don't wear a helmet, and I wear my .45, and I have my hand grenades, okay, because, now, we're in combat, and you sort of do what you want to do. ...

KP: You did not wear a helmet in combat.

EK: Oh, yeah, ... when we were out here, I had a helmet on, but during the day, when I'm walking around, I didn't wear one. You're supposed to, but I didn't. So, anyway, ... I decided to go see B Company. So, I found out where they are, and I walked there, and they're in foxholes, in the ground. So, they tell me where Captain Paciotti is. I go see Captain Paciotti. Paciotti tells me [that] they saw all this happen. They saw the firefight. They saw all this stuff going on, and, of course, I have to tell him all about it, because they haven't had their first taste of battle yet. So, I tell him all about it. So, then, I go over to a couple of foxholes to find Tom Gorman, the guy who [I was angry at]. [laughter] I say, "Hey, Tom," you know, "Well, well, Tom." So, then, I turn around, I'm walking back to go back, and I'm walking along this ridge, okay, standing straight up with my white rabbit skin vest and my polka dot scarf, when, all of a sudden, I see a guy walking towards me. He gets closer. I think, "Jesus, he's got a silver-handled pistol," one of them. I get a little bit closer and the voice says, "Don't salute, soldier." General George Patton, [laughter] ... on the battlefield. So, I said, "Excuse me, sir, but, you shouldn't be here." He says, "Where's your helmet?" I said, "Well, you know." He said, "Where'd you get that outfit?" I said, "Well, you know." He said, "What's your name, soldier?" I said, "Kolodziej." He says, "Oh, you're one of the guys that I'm here to decorate today." He says, "Why are you dressed like that?" I answer, "Because of the job I do, I got a right." He says, "You're right." So, he said, "We both should get out of here, shouldn't we?" I said, "Yeah, you don't belong here more than me." [laughter] I said, "You're the general of all the armies." So, we had a little "sort of" press conference, and, now, I meet General George Patton. This is a Polish guy from Sayreville. ... Anyway, the head of the Scout group, ... he says to me, "Well, where the hell have you been? Because General Patton's coming here. He's going to give you and all of the members of that thing your [Combat] Infantry[man's] Badge." So, we get in line, we line up, and he drives the jeep, he gets the hell out. So, he's going down the line. ... He goes down. He's giving one to everybody, shaking hands with you, and he comes up to me, and he says, "Oh, here you are." He said, "Where's your vest?" I said, "Oh, over here." He says, "Tell me, how many of them did you kill?" I said, "They tell me maybe thirty." He says, "That's that many of the bastards that'll never reproduce," shakes hands with me and off he goes, and that's my general. ... That's my meeting with General Patton.

KP: He was actually walking around on the battlefield.

EK: He actually did it. He was standing there. I mean this. ... Down at the bottom of the hill is where his jeep was and his jeep driver was down there. He was up there, looking things over.

KP: Was he alone?

EK: He was all by himself. There was a jeep driver and him. That was my meeting with him. Now, we got into that because I wanted to tell you the story of meeting him. So, while I was doing that, I told you the story of Vezon and the Bronze Star, so we got you that far. ...

[Tape Paused]

KP: After graduating from Fort Benning, you were sent to the University of Pittsburgh, which must have been very thrilling for you.

EK: Yeah, it led to good food, because they had ... an Air Force training unit scheduled there, and so, ... you lived in ... these towers, great, big buildings, seventeen story buildings. We lived up there. ... The schedule there was, you study, you go to class every morning and every afternoon and have compulsory study hall at night. The only time you had off was between five and seven and one hour of that was eating. You had to go to eat. So, you had, basically, one hour off. It was compulsory, monitored study hall at night. So, you did that five days a week and you also did Saturday morning classes. Quizzes were usually [on] Saturday morning. If you failed the quizzes, you didn't go anywhere, so that you sort of wanted to pass them. [They were] very intensive courses. I found that the weakness of the structure of the ASTP program was that, in the first place, you're really at the college level for competition here. Plus, I found that, in our society, we have some people who felt that, even though they had been to college and had done a little bit of college work, that if they didn't reveal that when they got into this, that they would just make it a little bit easier for them, so that your competition, sometimes, was against people who had already taken those courses.

KP: It was their second time around.

EK: Second time around. So, the competition was severe and ... the grading here was difficult. It was difficult as hell. ... I was not equipped for this at all. You know, in my last two years of high school, with all the extracurricular activities I was involved in, ... and then, the war activities, this and that, the sciences and the math, ... [laughter] I got through them. ... Since I was the class president, and editor of the [year]book, and all [of] this and that, I sort of could come and go to class as I wanted to. So, I got through a lot of stuff. I paid the price when I got here.

KP: You realized that you were in a little over your head.

EK: I was [in] over my head. I absolutely was [in] over my head and it was extremely competitive. Plus, the teaching was very fast. I mean, this was cram it down your throat. You're going to do a whole term in, like, six weeks, and you're going to get it all, and you're going to do

it, and they're going to force it on you, tough. ... I then applied for a transfer to the Air Force. In the meanwhile, it took me a while to figure this the hell out, but ... I said, "I better get the hell out of here, because they're going to throw me out of here, eventually." So, in the meanwhile, I'm the cadet first sergeant, so that I have a lot of leeway. ...

KP: You were the cadet first sergeant. Is there a story there?

EK: Well, you know, when I went into the service, to basic training, I decided to be one of the guys that went along and [did] not make waves anywhere. I got to be cadet first sergeant. The first day, when we lined everybody up, ... you've got a company of soldiers, two hundred soldiers, and the first sergeant stands here, and each lieutenant stands in front of his platoon, and the captain's in back of the first sergeant, and it's the first sergeant, and I never noticed what the hell these guys did. The first sergeant lines them up, brings them to attention, asks everybody for their reports, all along the line, turns the reports in to the captain. ... At first, I got through that all right. Then, it dawned on me, "I'm the first sergeant. I have to march them from here to where they go next," and where we went first was over to Forbes Field and to the gymnasium, where we would do the physical part of our program, and I had never marched two guys, much less ... marching 200 guys up city streets, around corners, this, that, and the other way, where it takes ... all the skill of close-ordered drill that you need. ... Of course, ... if somebody's drilling you, it's one thing. To drill somebody else, you have to remember to give all commands on the left foot, and this, that, and the other thing, which I really didn't know. So, I stumbled through that some way, but, eventually, ... by trial and error, I got to be able to do that all right, but, that was one of the difficult parts. The rest of the time, your life was a little bit easier. We were on the sixteenth or seventeenth floor. You went up and down by elevator, so that if you wanted to sneak out, it's not so easy, except, if you were the cadet first sergeant, you could get out pretty easy. I could take the elevator down. So, one night, I decided to have a date. I had met a girl at the [USO]. This is another incident [at] U of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh was not an Army town. It had a USO in which they had all kinds of girls and very few soldiers, so that it was sort of a nice place to go to, okay. I had met a girl there and I had also met a girl .. in Pittsburgh. The way that worked is, the girls would be up on the balconies, in that atrium, looking down. The soldiers would be formed down there, and the girls would write little notes and throw them down, [laughter] and there would be their name and their phone number. So, there's a girl named Marge Hamilton. I got hers. So, I called her house, and, eventually, I arranged to meet her somewhere, and then, we decided to go to a movie. So, for me to go to a movie, I had to be able to get the hell out of there. So, I took the elevator down, which was all right. We went to the movie, but when I came back, there was a different company that took over for that shift, and there's no way I could take the elevator back up without getting caught. So, I walked up the seventeen flights of stairs. That was the only time I did that. Try walking up seventeen flights of stairs some time. By the time you get to the top, and I was in great shape, then, at 140 pounds, I was never going to do that ... again, so no longer did I cut out for dates. At the university, the only other thing that happened that was of any moment, if I got this straight, when you went to class, you marched to class, and, when you got in class, when the professor walked in, you stood up, and then, when he told you to sit down, you sat down, and you did what he said. We had a math test one day. I didn't have the slightest idea how to do any one of the things, none of the five. ... I had no idea. So, in the Army, there was a certain amount of cooperation among the soldiers, since we all had to get to

some point together. So, I looked over at John Krupa's and he looks at me and nods to the other guy. The third guy over was one of these guys that had all this stuff before. John had copied [off of him]. ... All he copied was the answers, the right answers to each one of the problems. So, I glanced at John's. So, I wrote them on mine. So, where you put the answers, I put all the right answers, but, ... then, I sort of figured, "How would you do it?" So, I made all kinds of numbers, this, that, this, that, this, that, you know, with all these equations. You put all this stuff down, you end up with this. So, that's what I did, gambling on the fact that they would grade this by putting a thing over it and saying which is wrong and so on. Next day, we go to class, and the professor comes in, and he says, "Very interesting." He goes up to the board and he writes a big number on the board, one million, nine hundred and something thousand ... to one. "See that number?" he said, "That's the odds on something happening." He said, "There's one person in this room that got every answer right, but figured it out in his head, because what he's got written down for what he's doing has nothing to do with the answer." Already, I know he's talking about me, all right. He says, "I want you to know that the odds on him guessing all of those right ... [is] that. Now, you're all very nice guys. Somehow, he got the answers and I know who he is. He got the answers and somebody gave them to him." He says, "I'll tell you what, there's a war on." He ripped all the tests up, threw them in the garbage. ... Now, we forgot that, except that he knows what the odds were. So, now, here's another set of tests. ... He had us sitting forwards and backwards, this way, ... so [that] nobody could see anybody else. He said, "Now, we'll find out how much everybody knows." [laughter] I thought that's a very interesting little story, ... but, we fixed him, because we got to like him after a while. We fixed him. He was the typical absent-minded professor. He got to class, but ... he would be a little late. ... There were a series of bells that rang for the end of class. Well, there was another bell that rang that wasn't ours. We left on the second bell. So, one day, we decided, before he got there, that, when the first bell rang, we were all going to stand up, salute, and walk out, just like we would if it was the second bell. So, we did and we walked out. He didn't know it. So, the next day, we came in, we wrote on the board the odds of him knowing ... which bell was ringing. [laughter] So, we ended up friends with him, but, somewhere along the line, I decided to get the hell out of there. ... Then, Walter Winchell did his famous thing, and then, the President made the announcement that they were going to pull people out of the program, and I was advised that I had been transferred to Indiantown Gap, to the 95th Infantry Division, and my application for Air Corps was still laying on the colonel's desk, but it couldn't be acted on, because everything was frozen, and I had to go to the infantry.

KP: You were not distraught that the ASTP was closing down.

EK: Well, I wasn't unhappy. I wanted to get out of ASTP, because, obviously, this was going to get nothing but worse, later on, for me. ... I think I was in a little over my head. I don't think I had the high school background to handle the work.

KP: What did you think of Pittsburgh?

EK: ... In the first place, that was the Pittsburgh where, if you put on a white shirt and walked outside, you couldn't be outside five minutes, the collar was black. All the steel mills were still in operation and it had tremendous ... soot and ... pollution. [They had] a tremendous pollution

problem there. The air tasted like ink. It was really a polluted place, but it was a very nice town, and the people in the town, every weekend, on Sunday, there was a list on the board of people that would invite a soldier to their house for dinner, and you could go out and have dinner with them, and this, that, and the other thing.

KP: Did you take advantage of any of those offers?

EK: Sure, and there were fraternity houses there and sorority houses there, and the sororities, of course, would invite you. ... I went on a hayride one night. Should I tell the hayride story, Irene? I went on a hayride one night, which consisted of some sort of vehicle with hay on it. ... When we got to the sorority house, I got there late, so, I got the last one. I got the one that nobody else wanted, [laughter] a very, very heavy girl who was very amorous, which led to real problems for me in the hay. [laughter] I'll tell you this, I didn't want to be rude or impolite, because these were all very nice people, but, that really was ... a crazy evening, but, everybody was very nice. Pittsburgh treated you wonderfully. You know, conversely, in South River, in Sayreville and New Brunswick, with Camp Kilmer being a staging area, ... we had soldiers in and out of here all the time, and, most of the time, they weren't welcome, because they'd come in, and get drunk, ... and grab the women, and get in fights, ... so that there were a lot of problems ... in this area, but, it didn't exist in Pittsburgh, because, in the first place, you had some Air Corps guys and you had these ASTP guys, and they're all, basically, gentle guys, ... and it wasn't quite that way [here].

KP: However, closer to home, Camp Kilmer's presence caused some problems.

EK: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. ...

KP: Were there fights in the bars?

EK: Oh, ... I remember, before I went into the service, one night, being over at Milltown, at a church bazaar, and there was this paratrooper there, a real huge guy with red hair, and he ... had a half-a-load on, and he was running around, kissing girls, and this, that, and the other thing. ... They had a constable there that was about five foot-five and about sixty-five years old. So, there was a group of us and we went to him and said, "Are you going to need some help ... [from] us to get him out of here?" "No, I don't need you guys," and he took out of his pocket that type of billy they have, where you have an iron ball that's wrapped in leather. ...

CE: A blackjack?

EK: A blackjack, like, with an iron ball in it. ... He walked over to this paratrooper and he said to him, "Soldier, I would like you to leave," and the soldier made some obscene remark. Well, he reached over and he hit ... him with that blackjack, right here, ... about three times, right in this leg here, and ... that guy collapsed right to the ground, because that was a very muscular guy. He hit him with that there. He got the charley horse of the world. So, then, we went over, and grabbed him by the shoulders, and dragged him to the outside, and he went home, eventually, I guess, ... not that every ... soldier was that way around here, but, they had problems here. They had real problems here. I think newspaper stories would back that up for you.

KP: Was your mother concerned about your sister with all these soldiers passing through?

EK: My sister was four years younger than me, so that when ... I was eighteen, she was fourteen. She was just starting high school. ... She stayed in Sayreville, basically. I don't know that there was any problem with that at all with her. I have no history on that. I wasn't present for my sister's growing up from fourteen to eighteen at all.

KP: The war took you away.

EK: Right.

KP: Your mother visited you at Pittsburgh.

EK: My mother visited me in Pittsburgh, right.

KP: That was her big trip.

EK: ... Up to that point in her life, it was the biggest trip she'd ever made, and she was kind of concerned about it. My Uncle Tom, who was in the Air Force as a mechanic, happened to be home, so he offered to go with her. They took a train out to Pittsburgh and stayed overnight. I got them rooms in some hotel somewhere. They stayed overnight and I visited with them. It was the first time I'd seen him [since I went in]. We were sort of raised like brothers instead of ... uncle and nephew. We were sort of brothers. So, I got to visit with him and visit with my mother, and part of the reason she came out was that I had called and said that I was going to apply for transfer to the Air Corps, and she was concerned about why I was doing that. So, we discussed all of that, and they agreed to what we were doing, and we had a very nice visit. I don't really recall anything in particular that we did.

KP: You must have enjoyed yourself.

EK: Oh, it was great for me.

KP: That was your first college experience, despite the complications.

EK: This was my first college experience, right. I was at the University of Pittsburgh. ... [I] walked up seventeen floors to go on a date with a college girl. [laughter]

KP: Did your time at Pittsburgh leave you better prepared for your education at Rutgers?

EK: Well, I think ... that had a role to play, ... since we were home early. Because we were supposed to be trained to do Japan, we were discharged early. Other guys were still in Europe, waiting to come home. We were pulled out of Europe and shipped home very early.

KP: You were one of the people that got shipped home early.

EK: Right, to go to Japan, right. ... Then, when the war ended suddenly, we were one of the first ones discharged, too. ... I decided, because my parents were not wealthy, I was going to use the GI Bill of Rights to go to college. ... I came up here and took the test up here, because, in those days, you had to take a test to see whether you're suited for it or not. ... Before you took the test, you had an interview with this psychologist guy, a psychologist, I guess, and, when I walked in, he stumbled over my name, and I said, "It's Kolodziej, K-O-L-O-D-Z-I-E-J." When you get all done with the whole test, you go back to this guy, ... [so that he can] give you the results. I walked in, he says, "You're fine. You're probably going to go to college, no problem with that," he says, "but, ... you're very touchy about your name," and he said, "I would ... suggest you change it. ... I looked in the phone book," he says, "Why don't you change your name to Kellogg?" and I said, "Well, excuse me, is that the price of going to college?" He says, "No." I said, "Well, where I live, Kolodziej is a very common name. The first king of Poland's name was Kolodziej." "Kolodziej, in Poland, is as common as Smith is here, okay." So, I said, "In the area where I live and in the area where I'm going to live, it's basically a Polish community, so, I would rather keep my father's name." So, he was a little bit unhappy with me, but, that's the other part of my name story, all right, and then, I had to decide where to go to college, and I wanted to go to either Princeton or Rutgers. ... I think the decision to go to Rutgers was that I felt I would be more comfortable in a school where there were people that were closer to my tastes, because Princeton, I felt, was an upper scale school, where, ... at that time, they'd say [that only] rich people's kids would go to Princeton. ... Rutgers was more where everybody would go. Whether that was true or not, [I don't know], but, that was the basis of the reasoning.

KP: That was your impression and it influenced your decision.

EK: Yes. I had to decide and I guess that whole thing out of Pittsburgh sort of led me feel to that I would rather come here. Plus, we were low on money. If I came here, I could live home and commute. I commuted. I came up on a #2 bus every day. So, I commuted to school here, and then, I decided to do the four years. I did the four years here in two-and-a-half. I overloaded and went summers, took all my majors in the last year, in one year, because, in the meanwhile, I had met a young lady up at NJC. ... We decided [that] we wanted to get married, and, therefore, I decided, instead of playing football for Rutgers, which ... was what I was getting ready to do, that I was going to overload, so [that] I could get married, and so, Rutgers became the choice. ... I would say what happened at the University of Pittsburgh meant [that] I was in a hell of a lot better shape to face Rutgers, because I knew it was going to be competitive. I knew college was going to be competitive and I knew I was going to have to work.

KP: You also learned not to major in engineering.

EK: No. I knew I was not going to be an engineer and I enrolled in what was the equivalent of pre-law, because ... one of the things I wanted to do was be a lawyer. I had the opportunity, when I was in the military service, to go to the military academy. When I got decorated in Europe, my name was put on a list of people. ... During the war, every year, so many people are taken out of combat and sent to the military academy, and my name was on the list to go to the military academy, and I signed a [form of] consent to go there, and, if the war had gone on a little further,

I would have been yanked out of there and sent to West Point. I also knew that West Point was a lot of engineering.

KP: [laughter] You had mixed feelings.

EK: Right. When I got down to Camp Shelby, where we were when the war ended, ... the CO came to me, ... and when we left Europe, I checked my name off that list. He said, "We can put you on a list here for West Point, and we can damn near guarantee admission for you, because we have so many [appointments], and you're going to be ours to go there from the division," he said, "but, what you're going to have to do is not take the discharge. You're going to have to stay here, you're going to enlist, and you'll become the company first sergeant, because we're going to disband, and you'll be here for the disbanding, and, eventually, you'll go off to West Point," and I said something to the effect of, "Whistle Dixie," and went home. [laughter] I decided, "No, I wanted to be home." I'd been away for a long time. I wanted to be home. So, West Point was out, Princeton was out, being a lawyer, maybe, was in.

KP: The 95th Infantry Division had one commander all the way through.

EK: Henry Twaddle.

KP: Did you ever meet him?

EK: Sure, sure, sure. ... Privates don't get to know generals on a first-name basis, but remember that, through the entire combat sequence, ... I was stationed at regiment, because the Scouts stayed at regiment, because, basically, our work was night work. At regiment, every so often, the general would be there. ... You don't go up and talk to generals, but, generals do talk to you sometimes, and on several occasions, the general came over to talk to a group of soldiers. I talked to him. He was a very nice guy.

KP: Was he well-respected within the division?

EK: Absolutely. He was an excellent soldier and a very good general. He's just stuck with a name like Twaddle. [laughter] That's a ... different line of story, but do you really think that Franklin Delano Roosevelt would have been the President of the United States if his name was Franklin Delano Schmirtz? I mean, you can take that on as a comic routine that you can take all the way out, if you want to, but, I don't know if there's some merit to it or not. [laughter] Twaddle might have gone up higher if he had a different name, I don't know. He was a very good general.

KP: You mentioned that your division was well-trained and that you also did some alpine training.

EK: I went to mountain climbing school, right, and they had also done desert training in California. I felt that [in] the ... infantry division that I served in, considering the speed with which they were trained, everybody was very well-trained. ... Of course, you know, an infantry

soldier, if he's a farm boy, ... is a hell of a lot better off than if he's a city boy. Believe it or not, being in the Boy Scouts was a big help, because Boy Scouts, in those days, we were camping out all the time. We were making fires, we were cooking our food, we were sewing our own things. I was very active in the Boy Scouts. That was a big help, because, when you get into combat, you have got to do all of that. I saw a ... combat situation where I told a guy to make a fire in the stove, and he has all these logs about this big around, and he's trying to light them with a match. I said, "Locker, where the hell were you raised?" Well, he was in the city [and had] never made a fire before in his life. I mean, you put a guy like that here [and he is lost]. Again, ... they took these guys out of all these colleges. Locker, who's another one of these guys with an IQ up to the sky, didn't know how to make a fire, though. ... The Army also had some misplaced people. There was a guy named Leux, L-E-U-X, who was in another regiment where a friend of mine, my buddy, was. I got to know him pretty well. ... He was at ASTP at Pittsburgh with me. Here's a guy that, while we were doing all this stuff at ASTP, he, to keep himself busy, was teaching himself Russian. While I was struggling to get my homework done, he was teaching himself Russian, because his was already done, and he was the guy that we'd all go to if we needed tutoring, without talking to the other guys, to help us. [He was] a very nice guy, but he didn't belong in the military. He was completely uncoordinated and he was one of these mishaps that happened. [He was] completely uncoordinated. [When we] went to the obstacle course, oh, God, it was hard not to laugh. You know, you get [to] the first thing that's about this high that you have to step over, he would come running like hell, and get to it, and stop. He couldn't jump over it, and, after a while, we didn't laugh anymore. Everybody tried to help him, because he was a hell of a nice guy. He just was completely [uncoordinated]. ... All I know is, he was killed the first day he was in combat, "Bang."

KP: Really?

EK: ... You [have] got to know [that] a guy like that's going to die in combat. ... You can't live if you can't react, okay. That was sad. ... That's one of the sad[dest] things in the world, that I know. That talent was completely wasted because the Army system didn't work well. He should never have been there. He should have been some other place. He could have contributed mightily in some other area, but the system doesn't always [work], you know. [With] eleven million men, they're going to make some mistakes.

KP: When did you first meet the men of Company B?

EK: First time?

KP: Yes.

EK: We were on a train from ... Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Indiantown Gap. We got off the train, a truck picked us up, took us into B Company, because, apparently, we already knew we were going to be in B Company. Every company has its little headquarters building, and we were taken there and were introduced to the first sergeant, K. D. Johnson. K. D. Johnson introduced himself to us and told us, "You're in the goddamn Army now, and you're going to know you're in the goddamn Army now, and just 'cause you went to school, that don't mean

nothing to me.” That was the first page of all these hardened guys who’d been through all these maneuvers and everything else, ... this extensive training. All of a sudden, these very bright guys get thrown into them. That led to some clashes. K.D. was the first introduction to it, who happens to be an excellent guy, might I add. ...

KP: Was K. D. a career sergeant?

EK: A career officer, a career first sergeant. He eventually earned a field commission. Yes, ... he was regular Army. ...

KP: Yes.

EK: He was a regular Army guy. ... So, then, he said, "Sit down," so that, eventually, he said, "and when you go into the captain, salute, you idiot." So, eventually, one at a time, we go in to Captain Paciotti. So, we salute. ... Paciotti says to me, this is vivid in my memory, ... "Well, you're in for the infantry now, soldier." I said, "Yes, sir." He says, "You're going to be in a weapons company. Do you know what a weapons company is?" I said, "Yes, sir. I do, sir." He says, "What is a weapons company?" I said, "A weapons company is mortars and machine guns, sir." "Fine, so which do you want?" I said, "I don't know what you mean, 'Which do you want?'" He says, "Well, a machine gun goes, 'Da-da-da-da-da,' and a mortar goes, 'Psooh, psooh.'" [laughter] And I took the insult, okay. I knew how to operate a mortar. ... I knew all of that. I said, "Well, I guess if I had to choose, I'd rather have the machine guns." He said, "You got it. You're now going to be in ... Sergeant Kaleialohp's machine gun squad," and he says, "You report back to the first sergeant. You take yourself, salute, go out to the first sergeant." In walks Kaleialohp. Kaleialohp is a Hawaiian born prince, a real prince from Hawaii. He was a prince over there. He comes in, takes us back to the building, shows us where our bunks are. He says, "Come here," and we go outside. ... He says, "If you work with me, I'll work with you." He said, "The first thing I'm going to do, you're both privates, I'm putting you in for PFC today. That'll get you some more money." He says, "Now, don't give me no shit, [laughter] just do what you're told, and everything will be all right, and I will be like a father to you," and, guess what, he was. ... It was Tom Gorman and I. He took us in, and ... we started training with him, and the ... platoon sergeant was Paul Kappel, who I still correspond with today. Kaleialohp stayed a career soldier. He died, I believe, in Korea.

KP: Was he a career soldier?

EK: Regular Army. ... He was regular Army, and he had a section of machine guns. All the women were in love with him. He was a great lover. He was a great soldier. He made sergeant so many times. He kept getting sergeant and getting broken [down] all the time, because he didn't buy the rules either. [laughter] If he wanted to go to town, he went to town. If they busted him, so, what the hell? He didn't care, a hell of ... a good guy. So, that's how I got to be in a machine gun section and that's my meeting with the infantry. I did find, in the beginning, ... there was a lot of poking fun at you, especially by the Southern guys, with reference to the fact that you were a college guy and you went to college. ...

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

KP: How long were you in college at Pittsburgh?

EK: I was in college for about three months at Pittsburgh. That's it. How much college did I have?

KP: Yes.

[Tape Paused]

EK: ... Okay, if I took you to ... our next reunion and you talked to one of the guys, he'd say, "Oh, yeah, Kolodziej, he's one those ASTP guys." ... You never lose that. I mean, if you're black, you're black, if you're a Jew, you're a Jew, if you're ASTP, you're ASTP. [laughter] You got it? I mean, that's just the way it goes. You just never lose that. ... I wear it as a badge of honor. "You're damn right," but, ... now, it's not said in a bad way. I mean, I'm seventy years old and most of my guys that I meet with are over seventy or closer to eighty.

KP: When did your division ship out? Do you have any memories of that experience?

EK: ... We were at Indiantown Gap, and, from Indiantown Gap, ... I'm in West Virginia for the mountain climbing school, then, the division comes down there for a maneuver. We do the maneuver. [From West] Virginia, we come back to Indiantown Gap, and, you know, the word is that we're shipping out, and ... nobody has to tell you, because the things you do tell you that you're shipping out. ... By some miracle, all of a sudden, everybody had a pass long enough to get to home or something, and then, from there, they shipped us up to Camp Miles Standish, in Massachusetts, and, from there, we finished our training. The last night before I boarded ship, I had a pass and I went to, God, what's the capital of Rhode Island?

KP: Providence.

EK: I went to Providence. ... [When] we got there, we went to the amusement park. We met these two girls, who were engaged to guys who were overseas, who were going there. So, we suggested to them that ... we team up, just to be with somebody, to be social, they understood that most of the guys that were coming there tomorrow were shipping out. We went through that whole park with them, and we had, you know, French fries, and hamburgers, and all this and that, and I had one of those nights that, whatever wheel we went to or whatever, if I threw the baseball at those feathered things, I won everywhere. ... I don't even remember her name, [but], she ended up with so much stuff [that] she couldn't carry it. It took two of us to carry it. So, I went all the way to her house with her to help her deposit [the] stuff, because what the hell was I going to do with it? ... So, that was my big night before we went overseas, with a girl whose name I don't remember, who was engaged to some guy who was overseas. Go ahead, believe me. So, we went back, and, the next day, we got on a ship, and [it was] that ship I showed you the picture of, and ... I forget how many thousands of people, or soldiers, were on there. ... The first night out, I was assigned guard duty on deck. I don't know what the hell we were guarding, I don't know. I

mean, this is a ship going across the ocean, but, you had to keep everybody busy, and my guard post was at the very front of the ship, right where the point is, on the prow. I was there, so that I stood there for two hours, and it was a bright, moonlit night, and we were sailing into the moonlight. Of course, there was the whole question of submarines and this, that, and the other thing, you know, but, I stood out there, and I never ... forgot that night, because all the stars were there, and I was going to Europe. I was going to get there before my father. I remember thinking, "Dad, here's the stars. Here's the stars over the ocean. We'll eventually get there."

KP: You were excited about going.

EK: Oh, yes, ... other than the fact that it took a long time. The boat used to go this way, and we were ... part of a large convoy, and there were all ... those amphibious planes flying over ... because there were a lot of sinkings going on. ... You're starting to get the feeling of fear now. ... If a submarine hits this thing with ten thousand guys on it, ... there's going to be a lot of swimming to do. Then, we get to Liverpool, we disembark, and I'm driving back and forth between Liverpool and the staging area. ... I did get a pass to go to London, which is where I met Teddy Pence. We go to London. I go to the Stage Door Canteen. At the Stage Door Canteen, two things happen that are characteristic of the time. Beatrice Lily is there and we all sit on the floor. ... Do you remember Beatrice Lily, the chanteuse of World War II? ... Her most famous song was ... *There Are Fairies in My Garden*. She stands up in a gown which has a long trail, so [that] when she puts her arms like this, it hangs all the way to the floor, and she very slowly moves while she's singing *There Are Fairies in My Garden*. ... Her gown was made out of this material that just shimmers while she's singing. So that that was my USO experience in London, where some famous person was. Meanwhile, I met a girl there who wanted to marry me, and she offered me a deal. [laughter] ...

KP: Did she simply say, "Here is the deal?"

EK: ... We had danced. In the USO, everybody just relates to everybody else, because you're going to be gone and not see each other again, and she said to me, "I like you, and I want to get to the United States, and I'd like to marry you, ... if we could arrange it. I don't want to be on your insurance. Your mother can have your insurance. ... After I get to the United States, we can get a divorce. I just want to get out of here." I said, "I don't want to go up that particular road," [laughter] some type of thing. At night, in London, it was a complete blackout and, of course, when you walked the streets at night, you were continually accosted by prostitutes that wanted to know, did you want to use their facilities, which for, again, a little Polish guy from Sayreville, I mean, the first time in my life some prostitute stopped me on the street and said to me, "I got a nice French girl from over the Channel," you know, that stuff. So, ... all your life ... experiences start. The next day, ... for some reason, I ended up alone and not with the other guys. So, I took a walk over to Trafalgar Square, ... where the lions are at Trafalgar Square, where that statue is. So, [I] took a walk out there to look around, and, while I was walking around there, I sat down to have a cigarette, and there was a girl sitting there, reading Shakespeare, and I thought to myself, "How do you like that? I come to England, and here's a girl reading Shakespeare." So, I say, excuse me, but, this is my name, and I'm by myself, would you like to talk for a minute? So, we started to talk, and we talked, and we went to lunch, and we talked, and we walked, and we went

to dinner, and we talked, and we walked, and we traded addresses, and then, I walked her to the, they don't call it the subway there, they call it something else.

KP: The Underground.

EK: The Underground, and she went home, and I went back to my division, and we corresponded for a long time. [She was] a very fine woman, and then, she eventually sent me that "Dear John Letter." I don't have any of her letters. Incidentally, ... my mother saved every letter I wrote home. ... I have all of those in chronological order.

KP: We would definitely love to see them.

EK: ... There's a lot of them. Every letter I wrote home, I have it. ... When I had these four ... coronary artery operations, there were recuperative periods ... when I started to gather this stuff together a little bit, because I had time on my hands. Some are V-mail, some are that tissue paper mail, and some are regular letters. I'll show them to you.

KP: Many of the men I have interviewed have told me that their voyages to England were characterized by cramped quarters and bad food.

EK: Yes, sure. You are closely compacted. They ... put [a bunk] on the wall, this way, and there's a chain that holds it, and then, there's a thin thing there, so that, ... well, if I'm laying here, I would say it's not far off that he's laying there. I mean, it might be a little bit more than that, but, that's sort of the theory, and it goes from the floor, or the deck, up to the top, depending on the height of the thing, how many there were, and it was just full of them. ... Everybody spent a lot of time up top, if you could. You really tried to just sleep down there, and, of course, you'd have to wait to use the facilities sometimes, but, ... I mean, there was always a crap game ... or a card game, and there was hanging around the deck. Plus, they made all sorts of work-like details, where you polished this, you swept this, and the Navy guys would come in and want to shoot craps with you, with their fixed dice, and stuff like that, [laughter] and the food, for a large group like that was, ... I don't have any recollection of it, one way or the other. ...

KP: Did you get seasick at all?

EK: No, no, I didn't. Other guys did, and the stench is tough, ... sometimes, if the guy vomits onto the floor. ... It's the Army. ...

KP: How long was your unit in England for?

EK: Not very long. We hit the beach at Omaha. We hit Omaha Beach on D plus 100. A hundred days after D-Day, I was walking up that cliff, and I would have to go back to see when we [arrived]. ... I don't have those things memorized.

KP: Were you only there for several weeks?

EK: Oh, not long at all, because we were fully trained. All our stuff had to get [put] together and get there, and then, they had to ship us down to the boat, which would take you up to there. When we got to France, we went into the hedgerows in Normandy, and we were stationed there for a period of time. ... It was during that period of time that the Combat Scouts were in training. I had motor pool duty at that time. At that time, the Red Ball Express was going on and a lot of our guys were put into the Red [Ball Express], because we had truck driving experience. They needed all kinds of truck drivers who were doing the Red Ball Express, and so, we were sort of holed up there while they were doing that, but, then, when that ended at St. Lo or wherever Patton got stopped, because he didn't have any more gas, then, they all came back, and we headed for the Moselle River, where we went into combat. ... While we were waiting for that to happen, ... Tommy Gorman and I were guarding our motor pool. We had our pup tent. ... The only thing I remember about the motor pool is, they had a hell of a cook. He made the best cherry cobbler I have ever had in my life and he used to make big trays of it, this big. We did him a little favor, so, every once in a while, he'd give us the whole big one, and we'd take it back to our pup tent and have it for a couple of days.

KP: Was this in England?

EK: No. This is in France, now. In France, we're guarding the motor pool, while this Red Ball Express is going on. I don't relate to how ... long we were at [the motor pool], but ... I could figure it out.

KP: Did you enjoy England?

EK: Did I enjoy England? I enjoyed England, because, in driving from Liverpool to London, I got a grand tour ... of that part of England, ... all the thatched roofs and the people ... treated you very [well]. London was a shambles. London was ... impossible. ... When we were done with going back and forth on the trucks, I went from Liverpool to London on a train. I got to London in the middle of an air raid and it was unbelievable, the devastation there was in London, that the Germans had wreaked on that place. ... I don't know how those people lived through that, battering, but they did, and, driving around, I got to see all of that, and the people were very nice. When we were driving, they'd wave us down, and they'd have tea, and crumpets, or whatever for us, or something like that. Everybody treated you very nice.

KP: Did you go into any of the English pubs?

EK: ... I didn't like the warm beer, but that's ... a different societal element there, the way they use the pub there. That was a family place and it was also true in Belgium and places like that, ... where the family would go there. Mother, father, children, all [would] go there and play whatever games, and do this, that, and the other thing, very interesting. ...

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

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