

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH HERBERT M. TANZMAN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and  
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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Herbert M. Tanzman on June 2, 2004, in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Mr. Tanzman, thank you for taking the time today to talk with us. To begin, could you tell us where and when you were born?

HT: Okay, I was born in New York City, East Village, actually, Avenue A, ... on July 29, 1922, but I lived in New York two weeks, [laughter] because we moved to New Brunswick then. They waited until I was born, my mother was expecting, and we moved to New Brunswick when I was about two weeks old. My brother was born in the same [house]. In those days, you weren't born in a hospital there. We were both born in the same house on Avenue A and a cousin of ours was born in that house also, because it was a new building, the nicest building there, and so, when my mother was moving out, she made sure ... that her sister got that apartment, [laughter] and so, the three of us were born in that house.

SH: Is your brother older or younger?

HT: My brother is older. He's eighty-five. So, he was four years old when we moved.

SH: Where and when was your father was born? Can you tell us about his family?

HT: Okay, sure. My father was born on November 17, 1888, ... [laughter] the year of the blizzard, and he was born in Austria and the name of the town was Jaroslav, ... which is today, Poland; it was Austria. After World War I, it became Poland ... and he left home when he was ten years old, by himself, [laughter] and he came to America in 1902, though he went to Vienna first. Then, he came to America in 1902.

SH: Did he have family here already?

HT: He had, I believe, an aunt or some relatives here, yes, and that's where his origins are from.

SH: Did he come from a large family?

HT: No. My father had, let's see, ... I think there were six brothers and sisters that lived. In those days, in Europe, I think a lot of youngsters died. ... He came here ... [and], in 1921, which is nineteen years later, he ... brought over his mother and father and his brothers and sisters to America. [laughter] ...

SI: Did he ever tell you any stories about what it was like to travel to Vienna and the United States as a child?

HT: Yes, well, ... my father, where they came from, there were a lot of people, particularly Jewish people, [who] didn't care to go back there. You know, there was a lot of discrimination and stuff, but he was only a young man, but he did say that he really was enamored with Vienna. He loved Vienna. When we were kids, ... we had a big encyclopedia and we'd lay on the floor and look at the book about Vienna. My father would talk about Vienna. Vienna, then, was the

center of the world, the capital of the world, really, a beautiful city. But he never had a desire to go back to Europe or anything like that. ...

SH: How long did he live in Vienna before he came to the States?

HT: Well, let's see, figure it out, if he was ten and he came here, that made him ... probably fourteen, I guess, four years, probably, roughly three, four years.

SH: He came to the United States as a fourteen-year-old.

HT: Approximately, yes, right, I guess.

SH: Did he work while he lived in Vienna?

HT: Yes, he did, he worked. He did hard work. ... My father was a very physically powerful man, very strong man, exceedingly strong, and he worked; he said [it was] hard work he did there, loading wagons or stuff and that's what he did. ...

SH: Was he learning a trade at that age?

HT: No, I don't think so. He came to America, and then, ... he was a man that everybody liked. He was a nice man, not because he's my father, but he was. He was a nice man, a good man, and he did good. He was successful in America when he came over, and then, ... ladies dresses is what he was in and he had a very big store on the Eastside, I think it was Avenue A or Avenue B, one of those two, and then, ... in 1922, we moved to New Brunswick. ... Then, we had a large dress store, Tanzman's, on Church Street. My mother ran the store ... in New Brunswick at that time.

SH: How did he get involved in selling dresses?

HT: I'm not sure exactly, to be honest, unless [it was through] my grandfather's brother. ... He had eight stores, Wilk Company. He was a successful man, his younger brother, ... I'm talking about my mother's father, yes, on my mother's side, and so, my father was close with him and he helped him along and I guess that was the reason that he went into the dress business. Also, my mother, who was a very exceptional woman, very brilliant woman, too, ... that brother had a store in New Brunswick and my mother was managing that store, and then, they came to New Brunswick.

SH: Can you tell us about your mother?

HT: My mother was born in New York City, Eastside New York City, Lower Eastside, on July 1, 1895, and she came from a family of seven children. She was third, the third oldest, ... and her parents came from Austria also, her mother and father. They came from a town called (Zehzuv?) in Austria. ... My grandparents came over here very early, I'm not sure exactly when, ... 1885 or something like that. They came here comparatively early and they lived on the Eastside, too. They lived on Avenue B. [laughter] ... They had a store, ... I don't know exactly

what kind of store, all kinds of merchandise, on Avenue B. My grandfather and other immigrants would go across the Williamsburg Bridge with packs on their backs and sell to the other inhabitants there. ... We didn't live far from each other, although, I don't remember that but my brother does. ...

SH: Did you ever hear the story of how they met?

HT: No, I don't know. ... I really don't know that story, no. ... We were very close. We lived in the same house. ... When we moved to New Brunswick, then, my grandparents moved there from New York and they lived around the corner from us in New Brunswick, and then, we bought a house in Highland Park, when I was four years old, and moved to Highland Park. It was a two-family house and we lived downstairs, my grandparents lived upstairs, ... which was nice, because, a good part of my life, I lived with my grandparents. ...

SH: Was this your father's parents or your mother's parents?

HT: That's my mother's parents. ...

SH: You said that your father was able to bring his family over here. Where did they live?

HT: ... When they came here, they lived in New York and, ... as a matter-of-fact, my kids just dug it up ... on the Internet and they ... got the story, [which] was that my father brought them over in 1921 and they lived on Avenue A, also, his father and mother and, at that time, there were two brothers and a sister. He had a sister who was already living in New York at that period and he had an older sister, which I never saw. She married a man in Cincinnati and they lived in Cincinnati and I never ... saw her, actually. She was an older sister. The two younger brothers were bachelors who had walked across Europe and took a small boat to Palestine with another man. One was a doctor and a military commander in the Austrian Army. The other was an engineer. In Palestine, they worked on building roads to Jerusalem from Beersheva. The doctor had seen so much blood that even when my father brought them to this country, he chose to go to law school, along with the other brother, rather than practice medicine. They qualified to work in the courts as interpreters, as they both spoke many languages. By scoring the highest on the Civil Service exams, not through politics, they served as New York City's chief clerks of the court system. One succeeded the other following his retirement. ... That was the story on that. My mother was a very smart woman, ... everybody loved her, too, and she ran the store, really, in New Brunswick and my father went to New York all the time and got dresses and everything and he dealt with the manufacturers or contractors. ...

SH: How did your father deal with not speaking English when he first got here? Did he go to school?

HT: I don't know if he went to school. He left home in Austria when he was ten and went to Vienna. He spoke very good English, he really did. He had no accent or anything. So, I never did ask him, or he might have said it, but I don't recall that, really. ... They had a big store there, I know, in New York, because, I don't know if this is part of the story, but I can just tell you, there was a man in New Brunswick who was a very wealthy man, a big man, who was a dress

manufacturer and they were friends and all. He said, "Herbie, ... I knew your father in New York." He says, "He was very big, ... very big business." He said, "I was just a poor man and your father had a very big business in New York." So, that's all I know about that.

SH: Do you know the name of the business?

HT: No, no, I don't know. In New Brunswick, it was called "Tanzman's," of course, but I don't know what it was there. ...

SH: Do you know where they entered the United States? Did they come through Ellis Island?

HT: I don't think ... they went to Ellis Island because that was before Ellis Island. My other grandparents, my father's parents, came a little bit later when people were no longer going to Ellis Island. ... We contribute to Ellis Island ... and my father's name is there, but I'm not sure ... if he did come to Ellis Island. ...

SH: Did he ever talk about his childhood in Austria? What did his father do there?

HT: No, I'm not sure what his father did there. ... I think he might have been ... a horse trader or something to do with animals, but I'm not positive of what he did there. ... He spoke a lot about some things and about the old country and, ... of course, a lot about New York, downtown New York and everything and how he grew up. ... He was in a boy's club. ... As a young kid, he won the wrestling championship. [laughter] He was very strong and ... I know my grandfather's brother looked to him for protection, because he was, in a sense, his bodyguard, too.

SH: As a young man in the United States, did he get involved with sports? He was a wrestler, but did he follow, say, baseball?

HT: Well, he did. He followed it all, but he wasn't active in it. He was a great boxing fan and used to take me to the boxing bouts in the Masonic temple in Highland Park. Although, we did have in our family, my mother's brothers were baseball players. As a matter-of-fact, one of my uncles played with Lou Gehrig. [laughter] ... He also came from New York and, as a young man, ... he was a catcher, Lou Gehrig was first base, and he did play with Lou Gehrig. ...

SH: What was your mother's name?

HT: Oh, her name was Rose, my father was Max, and my mother, they say she graduated from school when she was fifteen years old. She was an exceedingly brilliant person, really, and very talented and creative. She died very young. She died at forty-six. ... She had high blood pressure.

SH: What was her maiden name?

HT: Wilk. ...

SH: When did your parents marry? Do you know?

HT: Yes, let's see, February 22nd. ... My brother was born in 1918, so, I guess they might have been married, say, 1916, I'm not sure of the exact year, probably 1916, because Norman was born in 1918. He's a "Yankee Doodle Dandy;" he was born on July 4th. [laughter]

SH: He had a good birthday party every year, right?

HT: Right, yes. We used to have big parties and that was interesting, too, because my mother's younger sister lived in Long Branch, where I live now. [laughter] I used to go, as a kid, there, of course, but ... her two brothers were in the wholesale paper supplies [business], bags and all that, for stores, and, in those days, they sold fireworks on 4th of July, and so, ... we'd go down the Shore and they would bring all kinds of fireworks and [it was] my brother's birthday and ... the whole area would come around and somebody threw a cigarette or something, I don't know who, ... in a pile of fireworks and they were shooting all over the street, Roman candles and God knows what, spinning wheels. [laughter] That was some riot there that one year. That was interesting, [laughter] but they would bring down fireworks and stuff.

SI: What was the Shore like when you visited there as a child?

HT: Oh, the Shore, it was nice and I worked there as a kid. As a matter-of-fact, my brother did, too. ... They had, in those days, the dog races and the miniature auto races in Long Branch and my brother and another cousin from Connecticut, those two boys, they parked cars, *et cetera*, [laughter] ... right on the boards there and, myself, I worked. I would go in the summer, when I was a little older, maybe fourteen years old. ... One year, I worked on a milk truck, milk and ice, in those days. Sheffield Farms was a big company and the milk truck also delivered ice to the people. So, I'd work every night, all night, delivering milk and all, and then, I worked at Max's Hot Dog Stand. ... I don't know if you ever heard of it? ... The one now is not the original Max's. But, anyhow, I worked in the original Max's as a kid. I was a curb boy [laughter] ... and I worked all summer there and that was, more or less, the story on that.

SH: Can you tell us what a curb boy is?

HT: Yes. A curb boy, today, is like a car hop, right, but there was no parking lot or anything. We were right on the boards and the cars would pull up, park along the boards and you'd run out and ask them what they wanted and bring out ... hotdogs or hamburgers, whatever they wanted, and that's what we did. I used to go to work at, roughly, six o'clock. I'd work until, maybe, one, two in the morning or something like that. On the milk truck, I'd go to work [at] midnight and work until ... eight or nine o'clock in the morning. ... Both seven day a week jobs, [laughter] without much pay, but, in those days, it was okay. ... Max paid fifty cents a week, plus tip.

SH: Did you promote child labor laws later on?

HT: No, [laughter] I just took it as the way it was. I loved the ocean; ... still, to this day, the ocean has magic powers to me. I think, ... no matter what's wrong with you, if you go in the ocean, it cures it. [laughter] Really, I do. ... I know there's a lot of people who feel that way.

Even if I just look at it, I like to sit and look at it. I always liked the ocean, yes, but when I was in the Navy, as an aside, a lot of guys, they never saw the ocean. They came from all over, and then, I had to show them how to ride the waves, [laughter] to go in the ocean and all, because they didn't know what to do. ... My experience helped me. [laughter]

SH: Can you tell us about what your family told you about World War I? Your father did not bring the family to this country until after World War I.

HT: Right, after, yes, right.

SH: Did you ever discuss the wartime conditions?

HT: No, not like that. Of course, they spoke about it and all and we had relatives in there. I mean, not my direct family, my cousins and stuff like that, my mother's family. ... As a matter-of-fact, my father said [that] one cousin, he was very close to my mother's family, too, ... in the war, his hair turned gray overnight, white overnight, ... in the trenches there and stuff like that. ... My father was a very patriotic guy, though, and he was very strong. He had no use for guys that weren't patriotic and, in World War II, he ... sold the liquor store and went to work in the Raritan Arsenal, for the war effort, and he was in Edison, ... which was, back then, ... Raritan Township. ...

SI: How did his business fare during the Great Depression?

HT: Well, in the Depression, my father lost everything. He was a well-to-do man and they lost everything. He bought a liquor business in 1938 or so in New Brunswick, after he closed the dress store. Then, when World War II started and I went in the service, my brother and I, ... he sold the business and he went to work in Raritan Arsenal. ... After the war, when I returned and opened my real estate and insurance office in New Brunswick, my father agreed to join me.

SH: Did your mother's family also lose their businesses during the Depression?

HT: No, because, ... really, my grandfather had no business. He ... helped out and worked in my mother's store. My grandmother didn't work and that was how that was. ...

SH: As a young man, do you remember any scenes from the Depression that we commonly see depicted in books and magazines? Do you remember any?

HT: Yes, times were hard then, they were very hard and the thing about the Depression was that most people took it; that's all. I don't think that could happen today. If that ever happened today, there'd be a revolution. I don't think the people would take it. Times were so very bad, but everybody, almost everybody, not everybody, had the same situation, and so, you lived that life. Everything was hard, but you enjoyed [it]. When I say "enjoyed it," your parents ... [did] the best they could with you and you didn't know any better, so-to-speak. ... I don't think anybody would take that today. They really wouldn't. You see about these riots and all? ... I guarantee you, ... they wouldn't take that, because things were very bad, yes. I remember, one time, I don't know if I should say this, but my mother gave me a dime to go to the movies and I

was playing on a lot, an empty lot there, with a couple friends and I lost the dime, and so, I went in to ask my mother for another dime and she kept talking around, and then, finally, she started to cry and she said, "I don't have another dime." So, that's the way it was. She didn't even have another dime to give me, ... but we lived nicely. When I say "nicely," we lived in a nice area of Highland Park ... and it was a good town, ... but almost everybody was in that kind of position, I think. ...

SH: Had your father gone to work for the Raritan Arsenal by that time?

HT: No, no, no.

SH: What did he do after he lost his business?

HT: Well, he ... bought the liquor store after they closed the George Street store. Because, what happened was, they were on Church Street in New Brunswick. I don't know if that means anything to you. Yes? Church Street, in those days, was the main street of New Brunswick, not George Street. ... We were on Church Street and we had a big store there. It was two stories and the Depression came and ... Church Street was no longer the business center of the town. The business in New Brunswick was moved to George Street and we were no longer in the heart of town, I mean, in the main part of town. ... So, that's when they closed the store, finally, because the business was slow on Church Street, which had been the center of town, now, they no longer had the shoppers' traffic and that's what happened there.

SI: Where was the liquor store?

HT: The liquor store was on Albany Street, right where Johnson & Johnson World Headquarters are now on Albany, close to George Street, between George and Nelson, yes. ...

SI: Can you tell us about what it was like to grow up in Highland Park and New Brunswick?

HT: Yes, sure. Well, in New Brunswick, ... I left there when I was four and, ... I mean, I do remember it, but my brother was my protector, so-to-speak, and we went to [the] Bayard School, which was on Bayard Street. We lived on the corner of Bayard and Nelson and Bayard School was right up the block there. It's gone now; they've built some other stuff there, but that was where we went to school and we had friends there and all. [When] we moved to Highland Park, we had a lot of friends and it was nice. As a matter-of-fact, we were the only Jewish people there. There weren't hardly any Jews in Highland Park. ... Today, there's a big orthodox [community]. In Highland Park, [when] we grew up, there were a few Jews. Most of our friends were Gentile friends and we had no anti-Semitism or anything like that. We ... grew up and we were both good, athletically, and nice guys. [laughter] I mean, people liked us, and all, and the neighbors liked my grandfather, well, because he was a very learned man, religious-wise. He was a very orthodox man and they'd come to ask him questions about religion. Our next-door neighbor, the name was Erickson, they were real fine people, two were schoolteachers and the other one was ... a secretary in a business, and they had a brother who was a minister. He came from Kentucky. He'd come every summer and he liked to talk to my grandfather and all. Everybody liked them, too, my grandparents. So, my grandmother died young, too. My

grandfather lived to eighty-two. My grandmother died at about fifty-six. They all had high blood pressure ... and, today, none of them would have died. ...

SH: Where did you live in Highland Park?

HT: ... I grew up on South First Avenue and it was a block-and-a-half in from Raritan, between Park Place and Magnolia Street. ... Highland Park was a nice town, always a nice town.

SI: Were there many Rutgers faculty members living there, like today?

HT: Yes, ... a good portion of them were. As a matter-of-fact, Mason Gross lived in Highland Park. All the heads of Rutgers, ... all those people lived in Highland Park, and then, you had people that went to New York, [the] stock market, like Rice, where the YMHA is now, that was the J. K. Rice estate, his home, but he was on the stock market in New York. It was a high-class town, still is a good town. ...

SI: Was your family very observant when you were growing up?

HT: Yes, we were an observant family. I mean, not extreme, but we were, and, of course, my grandparents lived in the same house and they were very observant, too. So, I grew up that way and ... one of my experiences was that one of my friends had his birthday [and it] came on Yom Kippur, which is the holiest day for Jews, and his mother, who was a very devout Baptist woman, held his birthday party after sundown so that I could come to the party. That was a nice thing and I belonged, ... as a kid in an orthodox home, ... to the Christian World Crusaders in the Baptist Church, the Boy Scouts in the Reformed Church, [laughter] and I belonged to the Christian Temperance Union, because one of my friends' mothers was the president of that, and so, I belonged to all those. ... I belonged to all those things. [That is] where all my friends were, which was probably an experience that not many people have. ... I went to Lafayette School, grammar school, and I was chief of the safety patrol in sixth grade. What happened was, ... they elected [them] then. They had an election and I was elected. [laughter] ... The teacher was even surprised. She was raving ... that I was elected chief of the safety patrol and that was a good job. You stood in front of the school and ... I went all over, inspecting to make sure everybody's on duty, and then, on Fridays, I'd collect everybody's badge, and then, I'd have to go to meet with the principal, give her the badges and tell her if anything was wrong. That was pretty good. [laughter]

SH: You had a younger sister.

HT: My younger sister, who was very smart; both of my siblings were smarter than I. [laughter] My brother skipped a full year of school, in grammar school. ... My brother skipped twice, I'm sorry, because, in those days, we went a half a year, you see. He skipped two half years. ... My sister skipped the full year and they wanted to skip her again, but my mother, wisely, wouldn't do that, because she said, "She was too young." It wasn't a good thing to do, so, she didn't accept the second skip. So, they were ... both very bright. ...

SH: You spoke about working at the Shore as a young man.

HT: Yes.

SH: When would your family go to the Shore?

HT: Oh, well, just, you'd go maybe on a Sunday or something like that, yes.

SH: I thought perhaps you spent the summers down there.

HT: I did after I was a teenager. My brother and I went and lived with my aunt, in the summer, not all the time, ... not all our life. I'm just saying we lived ... [there] when we were in our young teens. ...

SH: Before that, did you have an after school job?

HT: I did, after school, I sold *Liberty* magazine; ... I had this problem. ... My mother had a stroke when she was forty-four and I was in school then. I was a good athlete. I played basketball, football and [the] coach wanted me to go out for baseball, but I didn't want to, because I felt it was dull to play. [laughter] I like to see a game, but I didn't like to play. It was too dull. At any rate, my mother had a stroke and things were bad then, and so, I had to go to work after school, in twelfth grade, and I did. I worked after school in a tailor's shop. ... As a matter-of-fact, I was very good. ... Still, today, anything, like when my kids were in Scouts and all, they'd come home and say, "The Scout leader said, 'Geez, your mother must be some sewer, because of your badges, I've never seen anything sewn so good.'" [laughter] They said, "No, my father did it." [laughter] That's true. Anyhow, ... to this day, I can sew anything, but ... I worked after school in a tailor's shop. The man was a crackerjack tailor. ... He made suits, men's suits, ... like a real craftsman, and I learned good from him. Then, he got ill. He got a stroke or something, and so, I ran the business. [laughter] I ran it for some months. I mean, I couldn't make suits and all, but I could alter. ... He did all the alterations for Bond Clothes. Bond Clothes comes out of New Brunswick, and he did all their alterations. People bought suits here from the factory, and then, they would send them down to him if they needed alterations, so, I did that, yes, right.

SH: You were involved with the Boy Scouts.

HT: I was in the Boy Scouts, yes, and I was in Troop 2, which was in the Reformed Church. [laughter] My brother and I both were, but, in those days, they didn't have Cub Scouts. ... When I was eight years old to twelve, I went to Boy Scouts every week with my brother. [laughter] I did that, that's true, and I went there every week to the Boy Scout meetings, and ... it was a good troop, and then, when I was twelve years old, after it, I belonged to another troop, Troop 10.

SI: How far along did you advance?

HT: No, ... I didn't go [to Eagle]. I was Second Class.

SH: Did you ever go to camp?

HT: Not for any kind of season, a day, or whenever they had things. ... But, when I was a kid, Norman and I went to Cedar Lake Camp, which was a YMHA camp that was in the Bear Mountains in those days. One year, we went for a whole summer. My sister had scarlet fever, and so, my mother sent us to camp. Otherwise, you're quarantined. I was the youngest boy in the camp, because my mother told them, if they wouldn't take me, she wouldn't let my brother go.

SI: Did your family know about the Zionist movement? Did they support it?

HT: Yes, sure, yes, they did. We always ... did that, yes. We were very active that way, all of us, right to this day. Oh, I can tell you about that later, but, yes, we are very active, all of us, yes.

SI: I was thinking about your father and his involvement with Vienna, which was a hotbed of Zionist activity then.

HT: Yes, yes, right, yes.

SI: Did he ever tell you any stories about that?

HT: No, ... just that they were supportive and felt strongly about it, but, no, basically he was just a kid then. But I know we always, even as kids, even among my friends, I was more religious. When I say more religious, I wasn't like wearing a black hat and all that, but I was a religious guy and my friends would look up to me, because I knew the religion, so-to-speak, and I did that and I always did that. ... I didn't go to school on Jewish holidays and things like that.

SH: Did you have a *bar mitzvah*?

HT: Oh, yes, sure. We were both *bar mitzvah*-ed in the old Highland Park Temple, yes. ...

SH: Did you see that temple being built there?

HT: ... Yes, the second one. The first one was an older one on North Third Avenue. I mean, that's where we went to Hebrew school in those days, [before] we built the new one, but, even then, I was a very unusually good Hebrew student, and so, one of my closest friends, his birthday was one day before mine, his was July 28th and I'm July 29th, and the rabbi left. He moved to California, and so, the rabbi taught me both, do you know what the *haftarah* is? That's what you chant [at] whoever's *bar mitzvah*. He taught me his and mine, [laughter] back in those days, and I taught him his, because the rabbi had gone, ... until we got a new rabbi and all. He said I knew my stuff.

SH: Did your grandfather also help you?

HT: Yes, my grandfather, sure. ... We always, on Passover, everybody came, the whole family, all the kids, all his seven children and their children, and we slept in the attic or slept on the floor, in those days, and everybody came and stayed for that, sure. ...

SH: You kept a kosher home, I assume.

HT: Yes.

SH: Were there any traditions or holidays or observances that were indicative of your family's Austrian-Jewish background?

HT: Yes, well, when we were young, ... I can remember that on the High Holidays, ... you can't turn on the lights, you can't create anything. When you push a button, you're creating electricity. ... I mean, you're not working, really, but that's against the rules. So, when we were really young, we had no lights, had candles and you'd come home from the synagogue and you had no lights or anything like that. ... Yes, all those kinds of things like that, and, every Friday night, we'd go upstairs to what they call a *kiddish*. I don't know if you know what that is, where you say a prayer over wine. We'd go upstairs to my grandfather [laughter] and we would do that. ... For [the] Feast of Tabernacles [*Sukkot*], we had a booth built there and we would eat our meals there. We'd go up there. ... The roof has to be open; you've got to see the sky. We had cornstalks on it and all. If it rained, tough luck. [laughter] But we did all those things, yes, and my friends, they liked it, too. They would come [over] on Passover, they'd [eat] *matzahs* and all, all my friends eating *matzahs*. [laughter] My friends' mothers always begged me to sleep over at their house, but I wouldn't do it, because I wouldn't eat out, non-kosher, and so, they would say, "We'll give you cream cheese or jelly or something," ... but I never did that. I mean, I wasn't a zealot, or anything, but I didn't. I would never do that. ... Even when I went in the Navy, I couldn't eat the food at first, ... and so, I had the cans; they had *gefilte* fish that the chaplain had and I was eating that, and then, finally, he got livid. He said, "You're allowed to," for that [during the war], but, at first, ... I couldn't eat the food. [laughter] ...

SH: Did you play on any sports teams in Highland Park?

HT: Yes, I played football and basketball and I was a guard in basketball. In football, I was a halfback and an end and I was a good athlete. ...

SH: Did you letter in these sports? Were you on the varsity?

HT: Yes, well, I was JV and varsity, varsity football, yes, sure, but, then, in my senior year, when I would have been [varsity], but I couldn't play because I was working. But, then, I went in the Navy and I was a very good athlete, exceptionally good athlete, in the Navy and I played all sports. I was undefeated boxing champ, undefeated wrestling champ. I ... played football, basketball, track. [laughter] ...

SH: In high school, you said you were in the college preparatory course.

HT: Yes, I was.

SH: Did you have hopes or plans to go to college?

HT: Yes, I did, really, I did. As a matter-of-fact, in those days, [at] Highland Park, if you were a commercial student, you were like a second class citizen, to the degree that the school wasn't oriented to that and ... if you're a commercial student, you shouldn't have been going to Highland Park High, because ... they didn't have the right training for that, and so, ... I was college prep. I took four years of Latin. I was academic and, yes, I did intend to go to college. As a matter-of-fact, ... it was bad times then, so, when we come out of school, ... Perth Amboy High School had the Middlesex Junior College in the Perth Amboy High, after school, at four o'clock, and we went there, to Middlesex Junior College, and, when I come out of the Navy, I enrolled in Rutgers and I was accepted, but, then, I knew what I was going to do. I knew I was going to go into real estate and I said, "Gee, why am I going to go there for four years?" So, I didn't go and I just opened up my own business. ...

SH: When you were in high school, was there one teacher that stands out who encouraged you?

HT: Well, in a sense, I was ... a quiet guy. ... I don't want to mislead you. [laughter] I was a quiet guy. ... My Latin teacher, Miss Filean, who was very strict, but she was the best teacher. She was a good teacher ... and you learned that and I was good in Latin. I took four years of Latin, as a matter-of-fact, and it helped me all my life, I'll tell you the truth. They say it's a dead language, but it isn't. Most of your English comes from here, spelling, grammar and what they mean, because of Latin. ... It was very helpful to me in my life, and then, we had other good teachers, some other teachers that were very good, but I'm just pointing her [out] as an example of a strict teacher who was good. ...

SH: You graduated from high school in 1938.

HT: 1940.

SH: 1940.

HT: Yes.

SH: Did your brother go on to college?

HT: No. ... My brother graduated high school, New Brunswick High. In those days, Highland Park didn't have a high school, when he went, and, when I was in Franklin Junior High School, ... while I was there, ... Franklin was converted to a high school, and so, I graduated Highland Park High School. ... Well, my sister got her college degree many years later, after she was married and all. She was the head of the, I don't know what they called it at Rutgers, I guess the *Targum* newspaper, ... I mean, not as a student. ... She was very good at that and all and she was a good artist, too. ... She had children, and then, she went to college. ...

SH: Was your brother drafted during the peacetime draft?

HT: Yes, he was, but not me. My brother was in the Coast Guard, but I enlisted ... and that's also an interesting story. I wanted to join the Marines and my father didn't want me to join the Marines. He says, ... "If you want to join, okay, but," he says, "why would you want to join the

Marines,” he says, “if you’re not going to learn anything except how to fight?” [laughter] He said, “Join the Air Corps, because, then, you’ll learn something and, when you come out, you could have an occupation,” which was good advice. I said, “Okay, Dad.” I wouldn’t do it unless I had his permission, because of my respect for my father. So, on my birthday, I get up early in the morning and I walked down to New Brunswick, to the post office, that’s where [the recruiting station was], and then, I went to the Army Air Corps and there’s a sign on the door, “Back in ten minutes.” So, I went next door and joined the Navy Air Corps. [laughter] That’s true; he didn’t tell me which air corps to join. That’s a true story. That’s the truth. ...

SH: This was your eighteenth birthday.

HT: I was nineteen. ... Then, my boss wouldn’t ... release me. I never expected that. I worked for Harris Steel and they were building these landing crafts. ...

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

HT: Okay, ... as I said, I was working for Harris Steel. I joined the Navy and I was very happy about it, Navy Air Corps, and my boss said he wouldn’t let me go and I said, “What do you mean? I [want to] go fight for my country.” [laughter] “No, no,” he says, “we can’t let you go here.” ... Even if it was snow-covered, I could point out exactly what gauge, what size they needed, to build the ships. So, I had big arguments with him and it took about three months and he finally relented and released me. So, I guess I was really a super patriot, [laughter] because I could have stayed out, if I wanted to. ... I wouldn’t do that.

SH: Where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

HT: Okay, Pearl Harbor, all I remember is that ... we had gone out on dates or something and I came home ... the next morning, I heard [it] on the radio. I was home and ... it was all very shocking, so-to-speak, and one of my wife’s friends, her brother was a pilot. He was an older person and, I remember, she was crying and all that, but that’s what I remember about it. ... Later, he was lost over the Channel.

SH: As a kid finishing up high school, knowing that Hitler had come to power in Germany and invaded Poland in 1939, were there any discussion about this in your family?

HT: Yes, there was a lot of discussion about that. ... My father had no relatives over there, that we knew of, I mean, ... he brought them all over here. My Grandfather Wilk, he had one brother there, but ... they had lost track of him. So, my family, personal family, had nobody over there in the Holocaust, that we knew of; other families did. My father-in-law, ... my father-in-law’s story, I’ll just digress for a moment, my father-in-law and mother-in-law came from Russia, Belarus. Belarus, now, today; White Russia, they called it, because the trees were all white. I don’t know if you know that. I always thought that it was because they weren’t Communists, [laughter] not red, but, no, the trees were all white bark birch trees, and so, all the forest areas were white, that’s why they call it White Russia. So, my wife and I went there about ten, twelve years ago to see her roots. At any rate, my father-in-law was here and he tried to get his family over here, but it was too late. They couldn’t get out and they were all shot. ... His brother got a

letter; [they were] the only two that got over here. They came earlier. ... My father-in-law came when my father came, roughly, and there was a boy who hid in the woods and they lined them all up in the town and shot them. They didn't take them to camps; they shot them and threw them in a ditch. He saw that happen. So, that's what I know about her family. We went there and she ... asked permission; I went on a mission. I don't know if you want to hear about that or not. We ... went on a mission; we were very active in all kinds of things and we were selected to go to Russia and we wanted to go. ... Our job was to bring to the Jewish *refuseniks*; they were very badly harassed in Russia and, if they were assigned to go to Israel or something, they were fired from their jobs and everything else. They were strong people. We went there and we had prescriptions, if you had high blood pressure, ... whatever you had. We had prescriptions that we had to deliver and we had clothing and religious articles and other goods, and so, my wife, very shrewdly, she took a checkbook and wrote, we had phone numbers, and she would write the phone numbers [as] if that was the amount of the check, in case they inspected us, and so, we went there. ... Every night, we were delivering and we had to carry our bags all the time, because, otherwise, the Russians would wonder ... if we went out at night. So, we had those bags all the time and, at night, we were delivering and nobody knew. It wasn't a Jewish trip and nobody knew what we were doing here, and then, they told us that you couldn't call from the hotel, because the wires were tapped, and so, you had to go to a phone booth. The closest phone booth was two miles away, but I was a jogger. I ran for forty years, so, every day, I'm jogging to the phone booth, back and forth. You go there, you call a number, either they don't answer or you call another number, they don't talk English. You're running back and forth. So, people on the trip said to my wife, "What's your husband do? He's jogging all day long, all the time," but I did do that and we made deliveries and all. We had some interesting experiences and we almost got picked up by the Reds. ... I went to the town, we had found the town where her father came from. She had to write an essay to the Russian government, because it was still Communist, as to why she wanted to go there. So, she said she wanted to see ... her grandfather's grave and all that. Well, we couldn't find it. There was no cemetery. It was all overgrown. The town was like *Fiddler on the Roof*, a little town with a well in the middle of the town, dirt streets, nice and neat and all, a small, little town, and we got there and there was a woman there, an old woman, and she remembered them. There were no Jews left there and she says, "I remember them," because my father-in-law, his mother didn't want him to go into the Russian Army, and so, that's why they sent him to America, my wife's father, but they had to smuggle him across the border in a wagon, a horse and wagon, and they had some Polish men that worked for them in the flour mill and this woman said she remembered the Polish guys. ... That's how he came over. My father-in-law came by ship and my father-in-law's father set him up here. Then, my father-in-law's father came over, several times, by ship, which was very expensive in those days, to see how his son was and all. But my wife's grandmother didn't want to come over. They ... did very well in Russia, comparatively, and they had no idea that Hitler was going to come and all. So, they never came over. That was my experience with that. ... Afterward, on the plane, the people were saying, "We were wondering, [there was] something funny, the way you people would dress and all, we could tell that you're classy people and, yet, you wear the same clothes every day," [laughter] because we left all our clothes here, too. ... We left all our clothes, left everything here, but, when we hit Ireland, we kissed the ground, [laughter] at the airport. ... An interesting thing, too, when we were going back, and lined up for customs, I got in a conversation with a fellow next to me. He had a tracheotomy, cancer of the throat, and I talked to him. It turned out that he was the commandant of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade that fought

for [against] Franco, ... an American, from Philadelphia, and I was friendly with him, talking to him and all. When we got on the plane, his wife came over and said, "Gee, that was very nice of you ... to talk to my husband and all. Maybe you'd like to come up front with us?" and we went up there. In first class was Raul Castro, Fidel Castro's brother, who had the whole first class, because it was the anniversary of the ... Spanish [Civil] War and ... they're all from all over and that's how come this guy was there and Castro was there, and so, he introduced us, took pictures with us and all, ... quite interesting. He looked exactly like his brother, same thing, spitting image of Fidel Castro. So, that was the story on that.

SH: What did your family think of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal?

HT: They worshipped him. Most Jewish people ... thought Franklin Roosevelt was God. After the war, they all were disappointed, when he sent the *St. Louis* back and all, they couldn't believe that he would do that, and he lost a lot of Jewish [admirers]. He had a tremendous Jewish following. They thought he was God. That's true. I had his picture in my bedroom. Really, they all liked him, but they still realized that he did good for America. I mean, he was a good president for America, ... but that was not good, what he did there with the *St. Louis*.

SH: Did any of your family participate in any of the programs that he set up?

HT: Yes.

SH: CCC and WPA?

HT: Yes, they did. I believe they did, yes. ...

SI: Before we move on, how did you get involved with bringing the medicine to Russian Jews?

HT: Okay, okay. I don't recall who approached us, but we were approached by somebody in a Jewish [organization]. Well, we were active in what they call *Chamah*, Russian *refuseniks*. They are an organization out of New York and the Russians, rabbis, which we were supporting, ... they asked if we would go and do that, and that's how come. We supported that organization and the rabbis, those guys, and they were strong guys. I mean, we admired them, because they put their life in their hands and that's why we did it. So, they hooked us into a trip, which was not a Jewish trip, and the people there had no idea what we were doing, except they figured something wasn't kosher with us, [laughter] because they said to my wife, because my wife's a very good dresser, ... "Something didn't seem right." ...

SH: Did your family or your children know what you were doing?

HT: Yes, they did, but nobody realized the exact consequences of it or the danger of it. ... We were told that, ... "First of all, if they search your luggage and they see religious articles, just say you're a very religious person. Don't get into any arguments and, probably, the worst they would do [was], they might detain you a little bit." Then, after that, ... they briefed us on all that stuff and we're the only ones on that trip that were doing that. As a part of the trip, ... we wanted to go to this big synagogue in Moscow, and the guide said, "You can't go there." So,

then, I said, "Okay, then, we're not going to Lenin's tomb." So, he said, "What do you mean?" He, it was a he, I think, says, "You've got to go to Lenin's tomb." I said, "We don't have to go to Lenin's tomb." Well, the people on the bus, who were not Jewish, supported us and we insisted and we went to that synagogue to see a service. It was on a Saturday morning ... when we went, so, that was one interesting experience. But, then, they told us that if you go to a station, because we were going to different places, if you're on a subway, a subway in Russia is way down, beautiful, though, very clean and everything, but way underground, and so, you go down. They said, "If you come to the stop that you have to make and you see a lot of policemen around, don't get out, go to the next stop." So, as our luck [would have it], we were going to the place there and it was surrounded by police. It turned out they were going off duty at that time, all them. So, we went to the next stop. Then, we came back. We went around. Finally, we spot, we had signals, we spotted the guy we were supposed to meet, and then, we're carrying all the stuff, and he took us; we went to a house. ... There's no elevators there or anything. It was like the tenth or eleventh floor and we went through back streets and all that and we went up to the apartment. It turned out the man was on *Pravda* and, when he was a *refusenik*, they fired him. His wife was a schoolteacher; they fired her. His father-in-law, his wife's father, was the head of the railway system in Russia, so, he wasn't fired, but they wouldn't let him go. In other words, he could not leave Russia, because they said he could, ... which was a lot of baloney, probably, ... tell where the railroads were and all that. When we went there and his son, ... he was thirteen, going to be thirteen, we brought him stuff for a *bar mitzvah*, prayer shawl and ... tapes, and we noticed he's hanging onto his grandfather all night, very close, and the parents, they spoke English, and they said, "Yes, he loves his grandfather and he knows that he'll never see him again." In other words, if they get permission to go, he will never see his grandfather again. Then, ... I asked him how to go down, how to go back, and he says, "Just go downstairs. The trolley runs right in front of you." [laughter] Well, coming to the apartment, it was daylight; we couldn't take the chance, so, we came through all the back streets. So, we went out and we went right onto the trolley. ... It was interesting. ...

SH: Shall we go back to where you went to Highland Park High School?

HT: Yes, sure. I'm sorry, I digressed a little.

SI: It was a great story.

SH: Please, no apologies necessary.

HT: No, I could, later on, tell you a lot of things in Israel, too. ... I was very high up. I was national vice-chairman of Israel Bonds; we did a lot of interesting things there, too. I went across the Suez with Ariel Sharon. I walked across the Suez with Sharon, who is now the prime minister, and it was an exciting time. ...

SH: Next interview, yes? With your father's permission, you went to join up at nineteen. How did events proceed from there?

HT: Yes, okay. I went in and, ... first, we went to Colgate University, pre-flight training, and then, I went to Jacksonville, Florida, and the wind up was, I was an aviation radioman, in the

Navy. In the Navy, you're everything in the Air Corps. The Army has crews; you fly the plane, you come down, there's a crew who does maintenance and all. In the Navy, you're it, [laughter] the plane is yours. So, ... your mechanics have to service it and your guys fly it. We're all flying, and so, I went to Jacksonville, and then, I went to Yellow Water Creek, Florida, Naval Air Gunnery School. Robert Stack was in my class there. ...

SH: Was he already a movie star at that point?

HT: Yes, he was, and then, ... as a matter-of-fact, he was at the opening of the Garden State Arts Center [Holmdel, New Jersey], and he was the MC or something. Now, they had their anniversary a few years ago and he was there. I went over and he took a picture with me. ... After Florida, I went to Whidbey Island, Washington, after that [gunnery school]. ...

SH: What was basic training like?

HT: ... It was hard. Yes, it was tough, because what they wanted to do was make you real tough, so that we had, in Colgate, the guy who played center for Catholic U and played for the Brooklyn Dodgers, pro, I'll use one curse word, if you don't mind, because he was a tough guy and he especially, on Mondays, after the weekend, guys went out drinking, and whatever they did, and he'd work you to death. ... If a guy doing pushups [was] laying on the ground, he can't do any more, he'd go to the guy and say, "Die, you bastard, die." [laughter] I swear to God, rough, and then, they had the hill they called "Agony Hill." There was a telegraph pole up top and you had to run that hill, up and down, and then, you had to do it with a guy on your back, and then, ... if you couldn't make it, you just stood. There were some guys, if you were looking out the window, you'd see them all day, trying to go up that hill. ... That was there. ... Wherever you went, the training was tough, I mean, but, you took that; at least I did. I was physically in good shape and all and we did it. ... Then, finally, I decided, ... I was a good athlete and all, and I had a chance to ... be a chief athletic specialist, so, I volunteered. I had six weeks to go to be chief, but, then, I saw the planes fly. I said, "I joined to fly." So, I went up to Joe Maniaci, who played for the Chicago Bears, he was my commanding officer, he said, "What? Are you crazy?" I said, "No," and I did; I quit that and went back to a lower rate to go to flight training school. ...

SH: Where did you do that?

HT: Okay, ... we had Jacksonville NATTC, Jacksonville, technical training, NAS Jacksonville, Yellow Water Creek, Florida, and then, we were sent to San Diego, and then, to Whidbey Island, Washington, which is off the coast of the State of Washington, and then, we flew out of there and they sent us there, allegedly, ... to fly in the Aleutians. It rains all the time. It's beautiful country, the most beautiful state in the Union, wonderful, but it rains all the time, and so foggy and all. So, we were ... training there and, as a matter-of-fact, I could take ... that plane and take you in, with no visibility, right in by radar. ... That's what we had to do, and then, ... one Sunday, they told us to get ready to go and they sent us out to the other part, out in the Pacific. They needed a crew, it turned out, who was experienced in PBYS, PBY-5A, and they needed that kind of crew, and so, we were sent out there; just our crew went out there

SH: When you were in San Diego, what were you training for?

HT: In San Diego was not training. We were just ... sent there, and then, they assigned you from there to where you were going. Now, in the Navy, ... I wanted to be on a torpedo-bomber. I am over five-ten, you had to be under five-foot-ten to fly in any of those planes, so, I had to fly in a big plane, PBY, ... because I was taller, but I'm not today. [laughter]

SH: You were at Whidbey Island, and then, you were sent to the Aleutians.

HT: No, we never went there. We went to Whidbey Island and we were flying, anti-sub [missions]. [At] Whidbey Island, as a matter-of-fact, we got overseas pay, because it's more than three miles or five miles off the coast, yes, and so, we were flying anti-sub, plus, training for that kind of weather. ...

SH: You were mostly anti-sub at that point.

HT: Yes, anti-sub, mostly training, too. We were flying every day.

SH: Was your crew a set unit?

HT: Yes.

SH: You flew together all the time.

HT: No, ... our crew was our crew. We had the same guys. ... We flew the same crew all the time and we were close, like a family.

SH: Can you tell us about the crew and where they were from?

HT: Okay. You had three pilots, a plane commander and two ensigns. One was a navigator pilot, and then, you had two radiomen, two mechanics, machinist mates, ordnance, and then, we had other guys flying with us. When we went down, we had ten, of which seven were killed. When we went down, three of us survived, but that's what you had and we lived together. ... In the whole time I was in the Navy, I was maybe a month, just going to Iwo Jima, on shipboard. We lived in the plane, really, that's all. We didn't know where we were going, ... not any [of] our squadron went, just us, and that's when I was in the VP-23, that's the one, the Black Cats. We went to Iwo Jima, because they needed guys who knew how to fly a 5A.

SH: Where did your crew go after leaving Whidbey Island?

HT: After Whidbey Island, we got orders, and we went to San Diego and, from San Diego, we went to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, and then, we were there for a while. We went to Johnson Island. Every plane in the Pacific had to stop at Johnson Island to refuel, to go out further, and we were doing anti-sub there. In a sense, it was like a vacation. [laughter] You could fish or do anything you want, and then, played basketball all day, and then, after that, we were sent to Saipan, went to Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, and then, from Saipan, they pulled us out and sent us to Iwo

Jima. They didn't say where we were going. We went onboard ship. That's the only time I was onboard ship. The USS *Chincoteague*, was a seaplane tender, and we went to Iwo Jima. We were there before D-Day, like two days before, and then, ... it was like the 4th of July. Navy ships, those Navy guns, those sixteen-inch guns, they leveled everything. All the islands, like Kwajalein, Eniwetok, no trees left on them, the Navy just leveled them. Iwo Jima didn't have any trees to start with; [laughter] it was just like a big rock in the ocean. ...

SH: Where were the members of your crew from?

HT: Okay, they were from all over. ... David Cox was a Mormon from Utah, Provo, Utah. John McDonald, ... he was an Indian, actually, part Indian. He was from, I guess, Wisconsin. Kummer was from Wisconsin. Howard Pitts was from the State of Washington. Clyde Reedy is from Minnesota. Nobody else from the East except me; ... I don't even know if there was anybody from the East in our squadron, ... I mean, in our crew. There were probably some in the squadron.

SH: How did you travel to San Diego? Did you fly?

HT: To San Diego, I went by train. Then, we went by a freight train, up to Whidbey Island. ... It took us a couple of days, I don't know, and then, after that, we flew down to San Diego, flew overseas and flew all the time. ...

SI: When you were conducting the anti-sub patrols, did you ever actually make contact?

HT: No. You'd see things. It's difficult, too. In the Pacific, when you're flying, whales on the radar look like subs, in a sense. You had to really know what you're doing, so, yes. I was rescued by a submarine, of course, but that's different. ... No, we saw things, but ... we didn't encounter any armed combat with them, or anything like that. We did fly into Truk Island, all the way in and out, which was the strongest Japanese submarine base in the Pacific ... and our pilot was like a wild guy. We flew in, right in, to Truk. "Pull out, pull out;" they were firing at us. We had very light armament.

SI: When was the first time that you really realized that you were in the war and it was dangerous?

HT: Well, I guess Saipan, because Saipan was tough battle there, too. They lost a lot of men in Saipan. We were stationed near Tanapag Harbor and we flew from there every day. ... We were doing different things. ... We were flying cover for the Army Air Corps, P-51s, P-61s, and we'd go out, well, on Saipan, we're going on just routine flights, or to rescue somebody, maybe, and they'd send us out to, also, cover the B-29s. They'd take-off from Guam and Tinian, and we would have to fly over. They needed seven thousand feet take-off for the B-29s and a lot of them couldn't get off. ... Their planes crashed. They went over the end of the cliff and never got up. We had to go down and get them, if we could. So, we did that, and then, when we went to Iwo Jima, we covered P-51s, P-61s. We would go out first. [laughter] It was like a dumb system. They didn't have the navigation equipment that we had; ... they were fighter planes. We would take-off first and go circle the target. They would home-in on us, go down, strafe and

drop their bombs, and all, and escort us back. That's what we did on Iwo Jima. Iwo Jima, they took because they needed it for the B-29s. It was in-between Japan [and the Marianas]; [if] planes were damaged or whatever it was, they'd go there. So, we did that and we were bombing Kita [Jima], Iwo and all different islands like that. We did that, yes. At first, Iwo Jima, when we got there, ... the battle hadn't started, but we were there. We were moored right off of Mount Suribachi. As a matter-of-fact, I saw the flag go up. That's where we were, but we were moored there and they were firing; the Navy ships were firing those guns and they were firing back. The first night we were out there, ... there was no reefs or anything there. It's just a rock in the middle of the ocean. So, the waves are thirty-five, forty feet at the shore, and so, ... our plane was moored there. We had an anchor and, if you weren't flying, you couldn't stay in the plane, the weather was so rough that you'd throw up and all. ... So, we had to go up and we'd strap ourselves on the wing, to get fresh air. We took our sleeping bags, tied them on the wing and zip yourself in. [laughter] So, the first night we were there, the shells were flying over us. We're laying there. You can't do nothing. You can't move even. The shells were flying. It turned out that the Navy brought the battleship *Indiana* in and anchored it right behind our plane, and so, the *Indiana's* firing at Mount Suribachi, Suribachi is firing at them [laughter] and we're in-between, laying in here, but the shells were flying. Lucky, we weren't hit or anything like that. ... So, that's how it was. Then, another interesting thing was, ... our planes were wrecked, because the water was so rough. We had to go back and bring back 5As that could land on the landing strips and you're just sitting there. When you're off, you listen to the radio, you hear Tokyo Rose telling you to give up and do this and do that. [laughter]

SH: You said that your planes were wrecked. How were you able to go back?

HT: Well, they were being wrecked, so, ... they said, "You've got to get out of here," and we went back to Saipan and came back. The planes we went over [with] originally [were] on this seaplane tender, and so, ... they weren't 5As. A 5A can land on a strip. It had the wheels that come down, so, we had to go back and get new planes.

SH: Where did you go back to?

HT: Saipan.

SH: Did you ever land on the tender?

HT: No, ... they can't land on a tender.

SH: I didn't think so.

HT: No, they'd bring you upward, yes.

SH: With a crane?

HT: Yes, right. No, we didn't land on a [tender]. The only time I was on [a carrier] in the Navy; I was on one a lot of times after, with Navy League, because I was an officer of the Navy League, training officer at Lakehurst, later in life. But only on coming home, I came home on

the *Saratoga*, which was sunk at Bikini, later, on purpose. They sunk it at Bikini. Otherwise, we weren't on carriers or anything like that.

SH: How does a plane take-off in thirty-foot waves?

HT: Well, it was very difficult. We did it, but, then, our squadron was the first jet squadron in the world. We had what they called JATO, Jet Assisted Take-Offs. There was like two capsules, one on each side of the plane, and push a button and the plane, seven-second take-off, would shoot us out of the water, otherwise, you couldn't take-off. That would shoot us out of the water. The only problem with that was, if they didn't go off at the same time, you're dead, because the plane [would rip itself apart], but, luckily, we didn't have that problem because we had that JATO on our planes.

SH: As a crew, you basically lived on your plane and worked closely together. Historically, the Navy is very hierarchical; officers never interact with the enlisted men. Did you ever have any problems in interacting with your officers?

HT: No, we didn't, because, well, it all depends. If you're, on Iwo Jima, we were all together, but we did have this problem. They had what they called C rations. Now, C rations was like a big can and it might have meat, chicken, whatever it was, and it'd feed ten guys. So, our pilot, he always picked what he wanted to eat and the guys were upset with that. But I was a strong guy, so, they came to me and said, "You tell Nicholas," you tell the pilot, "that we want a choice. We want to have a say," and it just so happened that the night before, ... a man in the tent next to us went berserk and shot his pilot. ... So, I went to the pilot and I was strong, I didn't care, and I said, "We want to have a voice in this and that," and he started up and I said, "Look, let me tell you something. You see what happened last night?" I said, "If we don't get a choice, you're next." [laughter]

SH: He did not come after you?

HT: No, we had a choice after that. [laughter]

SH: Was that an isolated incident?

HT: Yes, yes, we were good friends, really. Oh, one other time, in the Navy, too, when you come in on the water, like in Saipan, you land on the water, and then, ... you taxi in. There was no landing strips like that for us, ... but you had to catch the buoy, and you had a pole, like a pool cue, not even that big, with a hook on it and they'd use me. I was the strongest guy. I was a strong guy, so, I was the guy that would do that. You get out on the bow and it's rough. The water is rough, and all, and he taxis and you've got to grab that hook. If you missed it, they would throw you in the water. ... I never missed. One time, he says, "Okay, you missed." ... I said, "No, I didn't miss it." I said, "If I had a telephone pole, I couldn't have got that. You never came near it." So, he says, "You're going in." I say, "Oh, yeah?" So, I pulled him out of the cockpit; I'm standing on the step. I said, "If I go, you go with me." All that was left in the plane was his feet; ... that's true, I did that. [laughter] I wasn't a good guy. At any rate, I did that and the guys were inside cheering me. [laughter]

SH: When you were on these island bases, were there any officers' or enlisted men's clubs that you could go to?

HT: No, there was not, really. There was no enlisted men's club. On Saipan, you're allowed two cans of beer a week, okay, green beer, they called it ... and that's all. ... There was no officers' club or anything like that, but they did have a college, which I went to. They had courses were you could go and take college courses. So, we did that, too, if you had free time and all. ... They tried to give you things to do. Other than that, ... a few of us, we were athletic, we lifted railroad wheels, and stuff like that, to stay in shape. As a matter-of-fact, it was coincidental that the three of us that survived were the three guys that ... were doing the weights. So, I don't know if that had anything to do with it or not, but that's true. ...

SH: As you made your way across the Pacific from Hawaii, when you descended to refuel, what did you see? What else do you remember?

HT: Okay, yes, all right, no, you didn't see [anything], just ocean. ... It took us, I think, thirteen hours, I'm just guessing, to fly to Hawaii. Today, you do it in, what? three hours or so, but we had, I'll tell you, too, I don't know if this is for publication, but our pilot had been at Guadalcanal. ... This was his second trip and he said, "What we've got to do is, ... we've got to fill the plane with liquor, because you can't get any out there." ... He said, "Everybody send all your clothes home." [laughter] So, we sent all our clothes home and we had a planeload of liquor there, and, plus, we had a gas tank inside the plane, ... a big tank, because you need it. So, when we got to Kaneohe Bay, we checked in and said, "We had a terrible experience here. The plane ... was going down and we couldn't get the leverage. So, he told us all to throw all our clothes overboard." ... [laughter] That's a true story. So, they took that for gospel truth, I guess, and that was it. They issued us new clothing and everything. Then, when we went out into the islands, we buried that liquor in different places. See, it was in crates, you can't have boxes, and so, we always had liquor. Everybody was wondering why we were always happy all the time. [laughter] We had liquor all the time. You could get a hundred dollars a bottle, ... but we wouldn't sell it. ... That's what guys would pay for a bottle of liquor out there. ...

SH: Was there any that you did not get a chance to go back for?

HT: Maybe so. [laughter] I don't know if we did, but that's the truth. ... It's not a good story to tell back home. [laughter] I'm just saying, it was an experience that we had. ... He was a wild pilot, too, very wild pilot. When we'd come in, all the time, he'd buzz the headquarters Quonset hut and had everybody yelling. So, everybody's afraid to fly with him ... and, the day we went down, the flight surgeon, ... they had to get four hours of flight a month to get flight pay, whoever it was on the crew. So, the flight surgeon flew with us that day. He was killed, because he was getting his flight time. ...

SH: To back up, before we talk about that ...

HT: Yes, you want to talk about civilian life. ...

SH: No, I want to ask about the islands you anchored off of, where you got your two cans of beer like Saipan, what were the other services doing there? How was it laid out?

HT: ... We went there and we sat around, laid in the bunk and drank the beer. [laughter] I mean, there was nothing. ...

SH: They had tents for you there.

HT: Yes. Well, no, we lived in Quonset huts, yes, on Saipan. When we went to Iwo Jima, when we went on land, after [the battle], we had tents, yes. Then, after that, I don't know what happened there. ...

SH: How long was it before you actually landed at Iwo Jima?

HT: ... We came back and landed on the landing strip and then, we were always on the land. See, at first, we were on shipboard, but the only problem was that ... if you were on shipboard, ... when you came in, there had to be three guys on the plane ready for standby. So, you needed a radioman, needed a mechanic, needed a pilot and whoever else is on the plane couldn't live in the plane. It was just too rough, you would throw up. So, there's always three of us, whoever was there would have to go up on the wing, tie yourself on. ...

SH: How many days did you have to do that for?

HT: I'm trying to remember. I can't tell you exactly, but it probably was a week, I guess, yes. ...

SH: How often did you have to fly?

HT: Okay, it could be every day, could be every night, depended. ... They'd post it, or they wouldn't. The last night, though, when we went down, I had just come in from a flight, and I was in my bunk, asleep. It was late. We came in and ... we flew long hours, because we patrolled, for eight to ten hours. We didn't just fly a couple of hours. We flew eight, ten hours, depends. ... A guy woke me up and he says, "We need you. Can you go? [You have] got to go out." I said, "Okay," and we went out. One pilot was my close friend, Clyde Reedy, he's from Minnesota, he refused to go. I didn't know that until after. I don't know how [he did it]. [laughter] You can't do that in the Navy. They don't say, "Do you want to go?" They say, "You're going." Who's going to say no? You can't say no. So, he said they told him that they're going to court-martial him. He didn't fly and, luckily. He wouldn't have been alive if he did. ... So, I went out. I was tired. You know, I'd just flew in, so, the other radioman said, "Look, Herb, go ahead, take it easy. ... I know you just came in," and that, ... in a sense, saved my life, because he was killed. He was on duty and I was asleep. I was laying on the bunk and that's what happened. But we just went out, because they said, "Go out," and we went out. But we were booked, when you had to go, ... they would send you to a spot, not next door, but somewhere out there and ... you've got to circle that spot and see, when the guys in the B-29s are going over, and when they're coming back, who makes it, ... who's going down, or what. If they went down, you had to go down to get them, or try to get them.

SH: As a radioman, what were some of your duties?

HT: ... In the Navy, you did everything.

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

SI: This continues an interview with Mr. Herbert M. Tanzman on June 2, 2004, in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

SH: Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Please, Mr. Tanzman, continue describing your duty station as a tail gunner.

HT: Yes, okay, yes. Well, in the Navy, as I said, every man was a gunner. So, it wasn't ... like the Army Air Corps, I believe they have gunners, they had specialized guys. Now, the PBY was not a plane that was a fighter plane or anything. You had very light armament. We had, maybe, twin .30s in the bow, a .50 in each of the waists and a .30 in the tail. I was a tail gunner and what we did, ... if you had to man the gun, you go ... in the tail and there's a wire that's strung there and on that wire is another piece of wire. ... Now, when I say piece, it's a thick piece of wire. It holds your weight and all, with a ring on it, and then, it came down. It had a belt at the other end. The gunner would put the belt on, open the hatch, there's a hatch, and then, ... you lowered the gun. I mean, it was on hinges. You lowered the gun down, and then, ... you'd go down. You're hanging below the plane, in order to see where you're going to shoot. ... You can't do it while you're inside, and so, you would be beneath the plane, except you'd have your knees in there. You might be either kneeling or laying, but the rest of your body is beneath the level of the plane. ...

SH: Does this gun rotate 360 degrees?

HT: Well, the gun, yes, somewhat, yes, right, but, no, you couldn't be 360. All you could go is, maybe, 180, because you're laying [there].

SH: Did you have to do this every time you flew or was it only when you were under fire?

HT: No, no, ... only if you're in an emergency. ... You had to know how to do it, and do it, but not all the time, no, no, or unless you're showing something [off]. Sometimes, people would come to fly with you. We had like admirals or different people, even higher ranking WAVES and all. They'd come on the plane, and then, you'd show them what you do. ... They weren't checking you out. They were interested to see what you were doing.

SH: You said WAVES.

HT: Yes, there were WAVES, too, ... not in our squadron or anything, but there were WAVES on the island, yes, WAVES on Saipan, yes, yes.

SI: How often were you in combat situations?

HT: At Iwo Jima, we were in combat situations virtually every day, continuously. We covered the P-51 and P-61 air raids on nearby Japanese islands, such as Chichi Jima. We circled the target, because they lacked the navigation equipment that we had. They would home-in on us and they would go down to drop their bombs and strafe, and then, they would escort us back to Iwo Jima. At Saipan, we were usually on duty covering and watching for B-29s. [laughter] ... and, ... what they're doing. You're not going to do much good, unless a plane's coming at you, which they weren't, normally. They're firing from below, either from a ship or shore, ... and so, your main job was to avoid them, [laughter] if you could. ...

SH: As a radioman, what was your job?

HT: Okay. ... In the plane, you had two seats up front, the cockpit; that was the pilot and a co-pilot. Right behind them was a radioman. On the other side was the third pilot, or a navigator. The radioman was also a navigator, too, he did both. We had to operate the radar and do plotting, and then, the PBY had a tower, they called it. If you notice, it goes up in the middle and the wings [are] across here. The mechanic, machinist's mate, is up in that tower, he had to sit up there, and operate all the instruments, and then, you had an ordnance man and another machinist's mate and they would sit in the back, by the waist, for the guns, man the guns, or just observation. That's basically what it was. If you had other guys, they just helped out, whatever it was, ... but our crew, really, ... our main crew, was ... seven or, sometimes, even five guys was our basic crew.

SH: You usually were alone. You were not flying with any other aircraft.

HT: Yes, we were alone or escorted or surrounded by fighter planes, normally, ... or B-29s. We weren't alone. Well, yes, we were, when we first went out. From Iwo Jima, we were alone, we were to fly out, and then, after that, we're surrounded by fighter planes.

SH: You were looking for both submarines and downed pilots.

HT: Yes, right.

SH: Do you remember ever saving other pilots?

HT: Yes, we went down, sure. We did that, sure, yes.

SH: Did you take them onboard your aircraft?

HT: That's what you had to do, if you could get to them.

SH: You were not directing other ships to rescue them.

HT: Well, it all depends. You might have to. See, in the case of our own crew, we were down, and we were in life rafts, the three of us. The B-29 spotted us, they wired back and a submarine came and got us, the SS *Threadfin*.

SH: Let us talk about the twenty-four hours before your plane goes down. How did this come to be?

HT: Well, as I say, we ...

SH: You were on Iwo at that time?

HT: ... No, we were on Saipan. It was after ... Iwo Jima. The battle at Iwo Jima was over. We were sent back to Saipan to cover the B-29 raids, that's what we were covering. So, we had to go out to cover the B-29 raids and they would assign [us] where to go.

SH: When is this? Do you know the date?

HT: Yes, the date we went down, July 27, 1945, just a couple of weeks before the war ended. I think the war ended the 16th, is that right? August 16th, just before the war ended, yes.

SH: You were on Saipan.

HT: We were on Saipan and I went to sleep. ...

SH: Your regular crew had gone out.

HT: Well, some of us, not all. See, sometimes, the whole crew didn't have to go, either, depending on what you had to do. So, for some reason, I went; not all of the crew did. I don't know why, either. But, when I came in and I went to bed, they woke me up and said, "Hey, you've got to go out." That was it. As a matter-of-fact, they had, ... playing there, Claude Thornhill. [laughter] We had every big star [who] would come out there. He was playing the piano, entertaining us and I watched him for a little while and I went to bed, went to sleep then. ... They had every kind of big star, Bob Hope, Jerry Cologna.

SH: You got to see them.

HT: Yes, we saw every one of them, yes, a lot of big stars out there.

SH: On Saipan, life was almost normal, for a Navy base.

HT: Yes, other than that, it was normal. It was, routine, more or less. We just took it all for granted. I mean, there was ... one fellow in our crew, David Cox, that was afraid to fly, and, when we took off, he was nervous, he's hanging on and all. I said, "Gee, why are you doing that?" I said, "I would never do that." He says, "Well, you get ... extra half pay for flying." I said, "I'll tell you the truth, if I was afraid of flying, if they gave me a million dollars, [laughter] I wouldn't fly." He was killed, one very fine guy. ... He was afraid to fly and he had a little baby, too. But I wouldn't have done that. I mean, I wasn't afraid to fly.

SH: They shook you out of bed and sent you out with another crew. Your pilot refuses to go. Who else from your crew refused?

HT: No, my whole crew went, except for him.

SH: Everybody but him.

HT: Yes, yes. He refused to go. He said he was tired or something. I don't know what it was. He's a wonderful guy. He's my good friend. He's a dear friend, but he had the guts or ... stupidity, [laughter] whatever it was, to do that. You know, he shouldn't have done it, but he did.

SH: Was he court-martialed?

HT: No, they didn't. He was a magnificent guy, really. ... They said, "We're going to court-martial you." He said, "Go ahead, do what you want. I'm not going to fly. I'm not going out." He had been on some kind of duty before on the ground. He hadn't been out flying with me right before, either. They had to cover something, I don't know what he was doing, so, he said, "I'm too tired. I'm not going," but, after we went down and all, they didn't bother to press charges. They just let it go.

SH: Please, tell us how the plane wound up going down.

HT: Well, I don't know, really. Nobody knows. We went out. It seemed nice. ... You take off in the dark, but, then, the sun was shining. We're out there, going to whatever our destination would be, and then, this other fellow, ... he said, "Go ahead, ... take a rest," and so, I did. I was laying down and, the next thing I know, I was underwater. I was trapped in the plane. How we [went down], I don't know. The two fellows, who were sitting in the blister, when I saw them, I saw Howard Pitts at the reunion, fifty years later, he said he was sitting right there with the blister open. He says, "I don't know. Nothing came over the radio and, all of a sudden, boom, the water comes rushing in," and he doesn't know what happened, either. We could have been shot down. I don't know what it was. Whatever it was, they didn't know, I didn't know, and everybody else was dead, so, we don't know why it happened. The next thing I know, I was trapped in the plane ... between two bunks, because I had been laying down. I couldn't get out, because the impact was such; that's probably how come my back and everything ... got hurt so bad. I finally tore myself loose and, by that time, the plane, that part, was underwater; it was going down. It took four minutes to sink, they said. So, I climbed onto the catwalk. I knew the plane. I lived in it, if I didn't, I would never be here. I crawled along the catwalk. I know ... I blacked out a couple of times, but I knew I had to get to the blister, because I had to get out. I got to the blister. By that time, that was underwater, too, ... but it was lucky it was open, because those guys had gone out. If they hadn't done that, [I would not have made it] and I surfaced right alongside the raft, my luck, and they pulled me in. ... If I'd surfaced on the other side, I wouldn't have been here, either. There were sharks all over the place, and he, Pitts, pulled me in and I was very bad. He knew that, too. ...

SH: What were your injuries?

HT: Okay, I had a spinal fusion, ... I mean, I had my back broken, I had my anal margin ripped out, my teeth broken. Howard Pitts said, when I saw him in Washington at the reunion, he said, "There was no skin on your entire back. All the skin was ripped off your back," ... and then, basically, whatever else I had, that was enough. [laughter] I had those injuries, and so, he pulled me in. ...

SH: The two of them were already in the raft.

HT: Two were in the raft, right. He pulled me in and I was laying on the bottom of the raft and ... you could feel the sharks ... banging the raft all over. When they smell the blood, they come. ... He had a very tough job, because he was paddling, trying to save my life, and hitting the sharks with a paddle and the other guy, Keith Kummer, he wasn't hurt, but he went berserk. He started yelling, "We're going to die. We're going to die," and I could always remember that. Howard says, "If you don't shut up, I'm going to shoot you," [laughter] because we had guns, pistols, in case. ... We had pistols, we had money, Japanese money, Chinese money, that they ... gave you, in case you went down someplace on land, so you could buy your way out, whatever it is. So, he said, "You shut up or I'm going to shoot you." Then, he wouldn't let me close my eyes, every time my eyes closed, he made me open my eyes, because he said he was afraid I would die, ... that I would never open them again. ... Then, a B-29 finally spotted us, and then, the submarine came.

SH: Which submarine came?

HT: ... The USS *Threadfin* and it took us to Saipan.

SH: How much time elapsed between the time the plane went down and the time that you were spotted?

HT: I think about eleven hours, something like that, yes.

SH: Obviously, you must not have had any clothing on, at least from the waist up, since your back was ripped open. Did you have a life vest on?

HT: Oh, we had life vests all the time, but I didn't have it then. It ripped off, whatever it was, because, to get out, I don't know how I got out, that's what happened. ... Then, we went to Saipan, and then, ... they operated on my anal margin about eight times. They did a wonderful job, plastic surgery and all. The back, they didn't do it until later on. ... I was nine months in hospitals, altogether, and they did the back at Brooklyn Naval Hospital.

SH: Did you stay conscious? Were you able to maintain consciousness?

HT: I was conscious. ... I was, but I wasn't. ...

SH: Neither one of the other two men were injured.

HT: No.

SH: Was there any attempt to try to get any of the other people out of the plane?

HT: We couldn't. It was gone under. In other words, they didn't even expect me to [come up]. I mean, I came up when it was already down. ... Nobody knew ... who was there or what.

SH: When you went onboard the submarine, do you remember that at all?

HT: I remember them lifting me on and all that. That's all, them saying that, ... because of me, they couldn't go down, submerge underwater. They didn't want to do it and they were getting directions. The submarine didn't have a doctor. They had a pharmacist's mate, and he was getting directions from shore, by radio, what to do, *et cetera*, so, that was it. When I got to Saipan, I was intravenous for a month or more; because of my anal margin, I couldn't move my bowels or anything. ... I lost fifty pounds, something like that, because I couldn't eat or anything, and then, they operated on me there. That was okay. They did good on that, and then, my crew had gone home by then. Nobody was there; that was another hard thing for me. My crew had gone home. So, then, ... I went to Pearl Harbor, and then, to Alameda, ... San Francisco.

SH: Did they fly you from Saipan, too? Or did they put you on a ship?

HT: They flew me from Saipan to Pearl Harbor. ... it's Hawaii.

SH: What kind of plane did you fly on?

HT: That was a big plane, a PB. ... It's a big plane, a big seaplane. ... I knew there, too, ... I felt something was wrong when we're taking off, and the guy told me, after, that they almost crashed. I knew it, because I could feel it. I know flying, but we got off and we ... got there all right. After that, we went to Alameda, and then, to Brooklyn.

SH: Did they fly you from Alameda to Brooklyn?

HT: No, I took a train, ... and then, when I got there, they eventually fixed my teeth. ... The doctor was a noted surgeon, a captain, in Navy, very high ranking man, a Dr. Scott from Virginia or West Virginia, a very, well-known surgeon and he says, "Well, I'm going to tell you, I'll give you a choice, either you can wear a brace all your life or I could operate on you, but I want to tell you, it might or might not be successful," so, I said, "Okay, I'll take the chance," [laughter] which I did. I didn't want to wear a brace all my life, so he operated on me and that was successful, and then, I got out in May.

SH: Of 1946?

HT: Yes. The Navy said they had no further use for me. [laughter] That's what the guy said. I said, "Gee, thanks a lot." [laughter]

SH: When you were on Saipan, what kind of facilities were there? Obviously, they must have been fairly good.

HT: No, it was Quonset huts, a couple of Quonset huts put together, ... not a real hospital, but they were good, though, I guess, the doctors. I'll tell you something else that's interesting. ... When I hit Alameda, I get off the ship and who's there? I see that doctor, Dr. Nova, who just happened to be there. He's the guy that operated on me on Saipan. He says, "Can I ask you a favor?" I said, "Sure, Doctor." He says, "Could you come in the head a minute?" [laughter] He wanted to see his operation. He says, "Boy, good job I did." But, in the hospital on Saipan, every day, he's bringing guys in to look at me, to see the job he did. He was a young guy, a nice guy, though. [laughter] That was a funny story. So, then, here's the next thing [that] happened to me on Saipan. By that time, it was High Holidays coming around, because this was in the end of July and, now, the fall, maybe October, whenever it was, and I'm a religious guy. I wanted to go to services. They had services on the other side of the island. The Army had services over there and there's mountains in-between and they had a lot of snipers, even to this day. Once in a while, you pick up the paper, and you see they arrested some Japanese guy who doesn't know the war's over, really. [laughter] They were hiding in the bushes there. So, the doctor said, "Yes," he could do that. He took pillows and ... strapped them all around me and put me in the rear of a truck, with a canvas cover on it, had a corpsman with me and a driver and another guy sitting with the driver in the front. Next thing you know, a sniper shot the driver, and we went over a forty-foot cliff and rolled over three times and I was at the bottom of the cliff. The corpsman was killed, the driver was killed, and the other guy, he wasn't killed, he radioed in and they came ... [to the scene]. So, that was the next experience that I had. [laughter]

SH: How did they get you out of there without hurting you further?

HT: Well, I don't know, they did it. It was like a plateau down below. It was forty feet below where we went over. We went over a cliff, because he's, the driver's, shot and the roads there are going like [this]. The driver was killed, unfortunately, and the corpsman was killed, too, yes.

SH: This sounds facetious, but did you make it to the services?

HT: No.

SH: Did they take you back to the hospital?

HT: No, they took me back, to the Quonset huts, I never did make the service. ... So, that was the next story I had. [laughter] ...

SH: Did you sustain any other injuries from this accident?

HT: Well, I couldn't tell. I imagine I might have aggravated my back a little bit. ... I assume it did. I don't know.

SH: You think being wrapped in these pillows and the boards ...

HT: It saved my life anyhow. Whatever it did, it saved my life. ... [However], I could feel it, every time I rolled over, like I hit something soft and it must have been one of the other bodies, of the corpsman or something. ... The corpsman was from Atlanta, Georgia. ... He was a hospital corpsman. ... I don't know where the others were [from].

SH: Was this a Navy facility that you were at?

HT: Yes. ...

SH: I did not know whether the Army and Navy combined their facilities.

HT: No, no, they were separate. As a matter-of-fact, I think the animosity between everybody, I mean, on Saipan, especially, I think, the Army and the Marines were killing each other. They came from different sides and a lot of guys were killed by ... so-called 'friendly fire.' Just like this fellow [Pat] Tillman, now. He was killed [in Iraq] by ... what they call friendly fire. ... There was two generals, or whatever they did, they had something screwed up there and they were going at each other. But Saipan is a beautiful island, physically, I mean. ... Now, they say they have some hotels and everything there. ... The climate and everything, it's hot, but it's a beautiful island.

SH: On these different islands, did you ever see any of the natives or interact with them?

HT: No. ... The Navy, you see that was the difference between the Army and the Navy. The Army mixed in, like in Europe, all over. ... They had what they called, Chamorros was the name of the natives and, no, we were not allowed near them even. As a matter-of-fact, some guys did that, and they got stabbed to death. They got a woman, thought they're going to have fun with her, or something. ... I don't mean illicitly, ... and [they] stabbed them to death. So, we weren't even allowed to go ... near them. There weren't many; I didn't see [many]. ... There are very few prisoners. Iwo Jima had fifty-five-gallon oil drums over the whole island; in each drum was a Jap, with machine guns, and grenades. It was the worst ... battle in the history of the Marines. ... We had twenty-eight thousand casualties, not killed, twenty-eight thousand all together, and the Japs never gave up. They're the toughest fighters of anybody. You had to kill them, that's the only way, or burn them out of the caves. ... We had one prisoner. We called him, "Joe," and he was sweeping up. [He looked] like a harmless guy, but he took all our phone numbers and said, because they're going to win the war and he's going to get us, afterwards. [laughter] That's true. He said he's going to come and get us afterwards, but we won the war, [laughter] but that was true. ... We had no contact with natives, whatsoever.

SH: That was the only Japanese prisoner of war that you saw.

HT: Only one I saw, yes. ... I know they couldn't even capture them. They had to kill them to get [rid of them]. ... They would go into caves, the flamethrowers and all. ... They wouldn't surrender.

SH: You talked about being able to see Mount Suribachi. How long were you there?

HT: Well, the entire battle. ... When we first came there, we were moored or anchored, really, right at Suribachi, right below it there. Then, when we were on land, we were right there. Our landing strip they had made there was right near there, so, I was always near Mount Suribachi, yes.

SH: Do you remember hearing the news that Roosevelt had died?

HT: Yes.

SH: How did people react?

HT: When Roosevelt died? Yes, ... I was in Whidbey Island. Yes, I was crying. I mean, I was sad about it, yes. ... Some guys were cheering, ... opposite party and all, I guess.

SH: What kind of faith did you have in Harry Truman?

HT: Yes, I liked Harry Truman. I think he's a great guy.

SH: You felt that at the time?

HT: Yes, I felt [that] he came across like an honest, straight guy, I mean, honorable. When I say honest, he was a politician, but he was an honest guy. That was my feeling for him. I had great respect for him.

SH: You did not have any fears that we would not stay the course.

HT: No, no. He looked to me like a guy that, he's going to do what he has to do, and that's what he did do. ...

SH: What do you remember about the end of the war? What was the reaction like?

HT: Well, yes. ... When the war ended, there were guys shooting guns and everything there. As a matter-of-fact, a lot of guys were killed then, believe it or not, these shootings killed our own men. I mean, not intentionally, plus, guys died, they were drinking. There wasn't liquor, but they were drinking alcohol, wood alcohol, that they used in the bombsights, and they died, poisoned from it. ... A number of guys were killed as a result of celebrating the end of the war. I can remember that vividly, yes.

SH: You were in the hospital.

HT: I was in the hospital, yes, but I can remember that, sure.

SH: Did you understand what an atomic bomb was?

HT: No, not really, I don't think so, but, we flew those missions. Well, not that last mission, no; I was in the hospital at that time, but we flew all the B-29 raids, and we were always concerned,

because it was our job, to hope they don't go down, but, if they do, we have to get them, try to get them, ...

SH: Before you were in the hospital, was there any talk of how your crew would prepare for the invasion of Japan?

HT: Not specifically, but we did know this, that if ... Truman hadn't done what he did, there would have been, what do they say, how many killed, five million or something like that? As a matter-of-fact, every Purple Heart today that they give out was made in World War II, because they feared, if they invade Japan, we're going to lose a tremendous amount of men. A lot of people don't realize that Truman saved a lot of American lives. He didn't do good for Japan that way, but he saved a lot of American lives, because they said that there would have been a tremendous amount of loss to us, if we had to invade Japan.

SH: When you were in the hospital, did you feel that the people taking care of you were well trained?

HT: Oh, yes, they were extremely nice. I have no fault to find with them, whatsoever. ... They were good, all the personnel, in Brooklyn, too. ... Everybody was nice. I had no trouble that way. ...

SH: Did your family ever tell you how they found out about the crash?

HT: Yes, my father got a telegram from the Navy, saying that I had been badly injured, and then, ... he couldn't find any information, but ... his friend from the New Brunswick *Home News* had some kind of influence and, finally, they found out that I was alive, that I was okay, but they didn't know how bad I was hurt. They figured that I, maybe, lost my legs, they didn't know what, and they, of course, were ... worried, but they knew I was alive, yes, but I have that telegram. ...

SH: How long was it before they knew the extent of your injuries?

HT: Oh, maybe not even until I'd come home, when they met me at ... the train station. [laughter] I walked in; I wasn't on crutches or anything else. Yes, I was thin.

SH: You were able to walk before your surgery in Brooklyn?

HT: ... Yes, before the back surgery.

SH: Really? Okay, I was thinking that you were doing all this traveling on stretchers.

HT: No, no. ... I had pain and everything else, but, before the back was operated on, I could walk and all. ...

SH: How soon after you were injured on Saipan were you able to walk?

HT: Well, I'm just guessing, it must have been a few months. I don't remember exactly. I know this, that I was on intravenous for over a month, and then, ... I know the first time I got up, I guess I wanted to take a shower and I fainted. I was weak and everything and I fainted, ... going into the shower, but it was a few months, sure. I was lonely. When I say lonely, in Saipan, at night, the dark and the Quonset hut and laying there, [laughter] that was a lonely period in my life there. ...

SH: Did you get regular mail from home, even before the end of the war?

HT: Yes. I did get mail, I guess. ... I don't know, because our squadron went out, so, I don't know. Then, it turned out that they left my parachute bag with all my stuff there and, finally, an officer took me around ... and guys, they said that they didn't know they had my stuff, different things I had, but I was saying, "That's mine. That's mine."

SH: Really?

HT: Yes, yes, because the squadron did a dumb thing, they left me there. I mean, our commander was, pardon my expression, a jerk of a guy. ... Clyde Reedy says the same. All he did was take care of himself. ... He should have been looking after me, *et cetera*, and everybody, no, but he wasn't, no.

SH: Did you stay in the Reserves?

HT: No, no. The Navy said to me, "The Navy has no further use for you." [laughter] That's what they did, exactly, ... not nasty or anything, and that's it. He says, "You're discharged," and that's it. That was in Brooklyn Hospital, but, then, after some years, the Navy asked me if I would train a squadron in Lakehurst, which I did, as a patriotic thing. I didn't get paid for it. I had to pay for my own uniforms, [laughter] and I went down every week, one day a week, to train the squadron down there in Lakehurst, New Jersey. I was a lieutenant. They gave me the rank of lieutenant, senior grade. ... I didn't get paid or anything. ... Then, we would go, every once in a while, ... I took fifty some boys, ... flew to Florida, to, what's the base out there?

SI: Jacksonville?

HT: No, Jacksonville is where I was trained. ...

SI: Pensacola?

HT: Pensacola, yes.

SH: That would be a Navy base.

HT: ... I took fifty boys there and I took a group of boys on a ship one time, maneuvers off the coast of the Carolinas, ... for the Navy, and I did things like that. ...

SH: What was it like to be an officer now?

HT: [laughter] Yes, no, it didn't matter. ...

SH: You talked about the *Saratoga*. Please tell us that story again.

HT: The *Saratoga* was there and I had to carry my own stuff on there. They had nobody to help you, I mean, so, I said to the officer there, I said, "Geez, I'm just coming out of the hospital." He says, "We'll ask somebody to help you," ... but there was four thousand guys on the ship and all you did was stand in line, after every meal, for the next meal, because there were so many guys on there, [laughter] and that was it. As soon as you ate, you got in line. [laughter] That's a lot of guys, four thousand. The bunks were, I don't know, five, six deep ... and the whole ship was filled with bunks. That's what it was, yes.

SH: How long was it before you met up with the other two crewmen who were rescued at the same time?

HT: Oh, okay, the one man, Keith Kummer, he came to my house. Now, I never saw him again after that. I don't know what happened to him. He was a nice guy. Clyde Reedy and I, we were in touch all the time and ... we would see each other. As a matter-of-fact, one day, his wife called me, Mary called me, she says, "Clyde has to go to New York and we have a son-in-law who's a minister in Maryland, so, what he's going to do [is], he's going to take the train and, when he hits Woodbridge, you be there," whatever time, eleven-thirty, whatever it was, "Clyde will get off the train. You'll have lunch together and he'll take the next train to [Maryland]," and I saw him at other times ... and, now, we talk to each other all the time. He's a wonderful guy. The other guy, Keith, I don't know, I never saw him again, never heard from him again and Howard Pitts, I never saw him again, until we went to, Corpus Christi for a reunion. ... He's a nice person. ... He's a dentist, retired dentist, but he lives in Marysville, Washington.

SH: When you were at the hospital in Brooklyn, were you in the hospital twenty-four hours a day?

HT: No, I was there all the time, except, afterward, I would have time off. I came home, by train, subway and train. I would come home for a day or a weekend or something like that, ... after quite awhile. I was in a cast for ninety-three months.

SH: Ninety-three months?

HT: Three months.

SI: Ninety days.

HT: Ninety days, no, I started to say ninety days, three months. In those days, when you had, a spinal fusion, I was in plaster casts from here to here, full-body cast, for three months.

SH: Did you ever consider using the GI Bill?

HT: No, yes, I did. As a matter-of-fact, I applied to Rutgers and I was accepted, and then, I said, "Gee, ... I don't want to do that. Why am I going to spend four years in college?" I knew what I wanted to do. I was going into real estate. My brother was there and ... I knew that's what I wanted to do. ... Then, I did go to some night classes, different classes and all, at Rutgers, *et cetera*. ... I figured, "Why should I spend four years when I know already what I want to do?"

SI: With all of the traumatic events that you endured, did you have trouble readjusting to civilian life? Did you have any lingering problems?

HT: No, ... not really. My personality is such that; [laughter] I'm just saying, in due modesty, so-to-speak, no, I didn't. ... I always knew I did what I had to do, in other words. ... I always say, even politically, "I did the best I can." [laughter] ... I said, "Well, I don't know if I'm right or wrong, but I did what I thought was right and I did the best I can." ... I always did that kind of [reasoning]. Sure, it was not an easy adjustment, maybe, and all, but, I never let the so-called disability or anything hinder me in any way. ... Even running, see, I'm not supposed to run. I was running for thirty-five, forty years [laughter] with a spinal fusion, so, I was a strong guy, and ... I did what I had to do. ...

SH: Had your brother been in the military as well?

HT: My brother's in the Coast Guard, but he was stationed in Brooklyn. [laughter]

SH: He had already gotten out and established his business.

HT: ... Before he went in, he was working for Jacobson and Goldfarb and they were good to him, ... when he went out. He went back to them. Eventually, he ended up owning the business. They had no children, neither one. They were brothers-in-law. They had no children, and then, it was Jacobson, Goldfarb and Tanzman, and he was part of that business, yes.

SH: When did you meet Mrs. Tanzman?

HT: Oh, I knew her ... even before the war, years ago. She's a New Brunswick girl and I was Highland Park and ... I knew her family. As a matter-of-fact, two of her sisters were in my brother's class in high school, ... because he went to New Brunswick High. She was a New Brunswick girl and I knew her brother. I knew them, yes, but I met her, really, ... before the war even. ...

SH: When did you start dating?

HT: Well, we dated. We went together, eight years, not really steady, but we went together for a long time. We were friends for a long time.

SH: Was she writing to you when you were injured?

HT: Yes, sure, we wrote to each other, but we weren't going steady and, obviously, we were good friends. ...

SH: What other memories of your Navy career did we not ask about?

HT: Well, let me see, Jacksonville was a big base, naval air station. ... Oh, one thing that did happen [that] was interesting, I went into town on liberty, and, coming back, I'm in a cab and another guy gets in the cab. We got into a conversation, "Where are you from?" and this and that. "Oh, gee," he says, "I've got a cousin in New Brunswick." "What's her name?" I said, "Oh, gee, is this her?" I took out my wallet. [laughter] ... He was my wife's cousin. ... That's a true story, too. I still see him. We're still friends, of course. I said, "Is this her?" "Oh, my God, that's my cousin," [laughter] because he gave me the name.

SH: That is a great story.

HT: Yes. Another thing was, where we come from, ... New Brunswick and all, the people, everybody you know [knows] everybody, and Mildred, on the block that she lived on, ... one girl is still her good friend and her brother, her younger brother, he was active in New Brunswick and all. He says to me, "You know, you were my hero. You were our hero." I used to come down in my uniform and call on Mildred. [laughter] He says, "Boy, we all came out, ... oh, boy." I said, "Gee, that sounds good." ...

SH: How long did it take you to pop the question after the war?

HT: Oh, I don't know. ... Well, after the war, let's see, that's '46, and we got married in '49, yes. Mildred was and still is a very beautiful woman. When we brought Roy to Rutgers, one of the guys said, "You have a beautiful girlfriend." Roy told him proudly, "She is my mother." Mildred is not only a beautiful, loving and caring person, she has done many good deeds for others. She was active in organizations and civic activities. It was a lucky break for me when she married me.

SH: You took it slow.

HT: ... Well, we didn't go steady. No, we'd ... just go out, both of us going out, and I was getting established. ...

SH: Did you have any trouble in the military with anti-Semitism?

HT: I didn't have [any]. ... Really, people were good. There was some anti-Semitism, but, normally, the men; the higher-ups were anti-Semitic, I believe, the top brass, I think, but the men were good guys, very few. I had one experience, though, which was good. ... I went to Yellow Water Creek, Florida, to gunnery school, and the first night in the barracks, there was two hundred guys in there sleeping. ... In the night, some guy from the South, he didn't say anything anti-Semitic, but he's talking with a, "Jewish accent," so-to-speak, blah, blah, and I was burning up. I got mad. So, finally, I was a tough guy, I'm a strong guy. I'm not a nasty guy, never, but everybody liked me, but I stood up and I said, "My name is Tanzman, Bunk so-and-so. Next guy that says anything, I'm going to knock the crap out of him." So, quiet, all quiet; the next morning, a guy in another bunk comes over, Tommy Walsh, Irish guy, a good friend from

Taunton, Mass. He says, "Boy, I was proud of you last night." He says, "I had to go to the head, but I was afraid to walk by your bed." So, now, the next thing you know, the MA comes in, master-at-arms, who's in charge of the barracks. He said, "Okay, everybody line up." He says, "Where's this guy, Tanzman?" So, I said, "Oh, boy, I'm going to be in big trouble here, now." So, I raised my hand and he says, "Come here." He took off his badge. [laughter] He says, "I want to tell you something. I could never do what you did last night. "Boy," he says, "you quieted those guys down." He says, "Here, take my badge." [laughter] Honest to God, ... "Here you are." ... Well, it's true, they respected me for what I did. ...

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

SH: The services were segregated during this time period, but the Navy had African-American and Filipino stewards. Did you ever see any?

HT: ... Yes, we did. That was bad discrimination, by the men, I mean, even the guys. Most of the guys that I trained with were from North Carolina and they were very high class, really, boy, they were probably the highest-class Southerners that there are, ... without being discriminatory, ... but they were very bigoted. ... There was very bad discrimination in the Navy. As a matter-of-fact, up at Whidbey Island, one night, we had *Amos and Andy*, they were white, [in blackface]. ... The blacks were always segregated, no blacks were with you, no matter what, and, if they were, the white guys would make them, not the guys with you, but even in front of you or something, they'd make those bad cracks, ... even nice guys; ... guys you would say were nice guys otherwise. They were very bigoted. I gave them credit, they stood up and walked out. All the black guys stood up and walked out. I said to myself, "Boy, that's brave, guys," that they did that. But, then, I had one guy, now, for the first time in fifty years again. We went to school together, in the Navy, and he was from Picayune, Mississippi. He's a very fine guy, but they were bigoted, too. So, one night, at Jacksonville, ... Louis Armstrong was there. This guy was a music fan, so, we went three nights in a row, this guy, Sparky Fenton. We went three nights in a row to see Louis Armstrong, even though he was black and all. ... He was a very decent guy otherwise, but that's how they were. ...

SI: Did you see signs of segregation when you went on leave in the South?

HT: Yes, ... well, the South was a bad place. Blacks, in the South, if they were walking down the street and a white man came, the black had to go ... in the street, I mean, off the sidewalk. ... We couldn't believe that, really. We didn't have any of that, but they were ... bigoted people and, now, they're probably better. They say, the statistics show that they're better interracially than the North is, at this point. But they were. ... So, that's how they were brought up, I guess, but we didn't have direct confrontation or anything like that.

SH: You talked about the USO shows on Saipan. Were they allowed to come to the shows?

HT: ... They would, but they'd be [segregated]; I don't remember if there were any on Saipan, honest, there might have been, I don't know. I assume there were, but, if they were, they were segregated. But I do remember them, at Whidbey Island and Jacksonville, places like that, and they were separated from us. ... The worst problems we had were with the Marines. Navy and

Marines were bitter enemies and even if, when you're training, you're marching, you go ... try to march through, knock them down. In town, you have fights all the time. Yes, really, we had fights with Marines, Marines and the Navy. ... Marines are part of the Navy, but there was a lot of animosity between the two.

SH: Did you ever get stuck on Shore Patrol?

HT: ... No, no, they were separate. ... We didn't do that at all, no. The only thing we would have would be guard duty, maybe, at night, or something like that.

SH: You mentioned some of the people that you saw in the USO shows. Did you see Bob Hope?

HT: Yes. We saw Louis Armstrong, Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Claude Thornhill, movie starlets, females, ... a number of them. I mean, we saw a good many of them. They're good. Of course, Hope, ... we saw him a few times. He was a funny guy. He would say, to an admiral who'd come ... on the stage and he'd say, "Hey, mate, what's your rate?" [laughter] something like that. ... He was demeaning to them, but [they knew] it was a joke. He was a good person. I saw a lot of stars, I did.

SH: You talked about being involved in athletics when you were in the Navy. Where were you on these different teams? Where did you compete?

HT: Okay, well, at Jacksonville, Colgate; on the islands, no. As I say, we were working out, a few of us, on Saipan. ... At Jacksonville, we played football, basketball, *et cetera*, boxing, wrestling. Overseas, in Johnson Island, ... we had a basketball team called the Black Cats. Oh, Whidbey Island, too, we played basketball and all. The only place you played football was, really, in Jacksonville, and then, you played and you practiced there. You had no equipment, just a little bathing suit, [laughter] and it's rough. ... You were strong; you took it. ... So, I would say, "Gee, those guys, I run through, they bounce off me." He says, "Yes, what do you want?" [laughter] ... You had to be tough, ... not nasty, but tough. ... There was one Jewish guy ... at Jacksonville, in training, and he said to me, "I envy you." He says, "They love you." [laughter] They did. ... I would wrestle four guys at a time. ... Really, I was a strong guy. Kidding around, I'm just saying, they'd pile on me, fooling around, and I would do that, yes. He says, "I envy you."

SH: How were GIs treated when you went off the base on liberty?

HT: Basically, it depends where you were. The North, you weren't treated so good; the South, you were treated better, not as good [as] Washington. The State of Washington, you were treated very good. They were terrific. They were primarily Scandinavian up there, nice people, I mean it, boy, they treated you [great]. They were really very nice up there.

SH: When you were on Whidbey Island, since you were so many miles off the coast, how often did you get back?

HT: Yes, every weekend, you'd go across the bridge. ... What we would do is hitchhike, when you hit the main road, on the other side; we went into a little town called Oak Harbor. As a matter-of-fact, I'll just tell you a story about that. My wife and I, when I was [real-estate] commissioner, they had ... a conference up in Vancouver, and that's near where I used to be stationed. When we were on Whidbey Island, we would hitch out to the highway, and then, whichever way a car was coming, it wasn't a lot of traffic, if they're going this way, you're going to Seattle. If they're going this way, you're going to Vancouver. Seattle was ninety miles away and Vancouver's a hundred miles away, and that's what we would do. So, they were really nice people up there. We used to go to dances, Saturday nights, and it was nice. They had orchestras and all. So, ... I went to Vancouver, to this conference and I said to my wife, "Let's rent a car." She has two nephews living in Seattle. I said, "We'll rent a car and we'll drive down, and I'd like to see Whidbey Island." So, she said, "Okay." So, we rent a car and we go down, and then, you've got to take the ferry. You go over there and I got to Oak Harbor, but the base isn't there. They moved the base to another part of the island. So, anyhow, ... I went into town, I asked the guy. He says, "Geez, you were at that place?" ... I went to the Navy base, and I told my wife, "Take a picture of me there, in front of the base." So, she took a few pictures. Now, we're riding, we might have gone forty, fifty miles and I say, "You know, suppose the picture didn't come out?" She said, "What are you, crazy?" [laughter] I said, "No." We turned around and went back and took more pictures out there. I said, "I want to make sure I got that picture," and then, when I came back home, I sent it to the guys in my outfit, like Clyde Reedy and ... other guys that I knew who were not in my squadron, but I'm friendly with them, so, I sent them all a picture. I said, "The Navy's looking for you." [laughter] ... She thought I was crazy.

SH: Before we end the interview, can you tell us a little bit about your family and how you got involved in politics in Highland Park?

HT: ... Okay. Well, they were after me to run for council. and ... it has to do with this, I was commander of the Jewish War Veterans and I was commander of the Veterans' Alliance, that's made up of all the veteran's organizations. This is when I came out of the Navy, as a young kid, and I was commander of all the veteran's organizations through the Veterans' Alliance and I was a leader, so-to-speak, but I wasn't involved in politics. I was always a Democrat. ... They came after me to run for council and I really wasn't anxious to do it, but I said, "Okay." I won easily, but then that's how I ran always. I was very popular. I was, for some [reason]. They didn't know me well enough, maybe, [laughter] but the point was that I always ran way ahead of my own party, like two to one over my own party. The newspapers always showed that I was a popular guy. ... Then, they wanted me to be mayor, but I didn't want to be mayor, but they insisted that I run and ... I ran unopposed, the only Democrat in the history of Highland Park that ran unopposed as mayor. I ran as mayor, which was a nice honor, and I made a lot of friends. ... The Republicans all backed me, because, in due modesty, I was a good mayor. [laughter] I did what I had to do. I had experiences where, for example, when my kids were little, we went to a submarine base and about two, or three in the morning, the phone ... rings. A lady says, "All the noise here on River Road, what's all this noise?" and this and that. I said, "Okay." In the morning, I checked. I found out what it was and it was Rutgers University putting in phone lines or something. So, I went over [to] her house. This was my method. I would go call on them. Now, they never before saw a mayor in their lives. They come from New York or someplace, I

don't know wherever they come from, but they never saw a mayor. ... I knock at the door. This lady, she's a prominent Republican. I said, "You know, that wasn't nice, what you did last night." She says, "Why?" and I say, "Well, that wasn't a nice thing to do. Why did you call me [at] three o'clock in the morning? You could have called me at eight o'clock the next morning, because, what am I going to do at three o'clock in the morning?" I said, "That wasn't a nice thing to do," ... and I told her that it was Rutgers. ... From then on, they were my supporters. I did that all the time. Another lady wrote in about potholes in the street. I called on her. I said, "Why did you write a letter? All you had to do was call up." She was from New York, she says, "Oh, my God, the mayor." She never saw a mayor, it's true. So, that was my method. I was a man of the people. When it snowed, my guys, ... when we would go out, we would even move the cars, so that they can plow and everything. We did all that, and, we had a good administration and so, I was popular. Then, my brother, he ran for Assembly. He was from Woodbridge, which was solid Democrat. You couldn't lose there, you know what I'm saying? [laughter] Well, he's a popular guy. ... and so, he won. He was Assemblyman and later Senator, and so, ... we were always [involved]. ... Now, my son and my grandson; my grandson, ... first, he was on [Joseph] Biden's staff and, now, this summer, he was on [Jon] Corzine's staff. He was the assistant to Corzine for the Democratic National Senatorial Campaign, and so, it's in us. [laughter] We've got that kind of personality where we do it. ... Then, the next thing was, after I retired as mayor, and I figured I'd done all I could and I didn't think it was a good idea to continue to do it. I spent ... fourteen years, I guess, in public office, in there. I spent thirty-five years in public office, all together. So, I got a call from the president of the New Jersey Senate, Barney Dwyer, one of my good friends. He was mayor of Edison when I was mayor of Highland Park. He asked if he could see me and I went to Trenton to see him and he says, "You want to be on the Real Estate Commission?" and I didn't want to do it. I really didn't. I said, "Oh, Barney, I don't want to do it." So, he says, ... "Listen to what I'm going to tell you." He said, "The Governor ... wants to appoint somebody that nobody wants. If he appoints you, there's nobody in this state that's going to object to that," and he says, "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you, you've got to do it," and that's how come I'm on the Real Estate Commission and I was president of the Commission. I was on thirteen years and we had a good commission and I did a good job. I did everything good and I served under five governors, and even Governor ... Tom Kean, a Republican, and a nice man, he reappointed me three times and, usually, they don't do that, because of the spoils system. Whatever party's in, they throw you out [for] another guy. So, each time, I'm reappointed. I said to him, "Governor, thanks for the appointment." He says, "Don't thank me, it's strictly on merit," which was a nice compliment. [laughter] ... So, I had an open door to the governors, too. They all liked me. ... If you want to see the Governor, you have to make an appointment; I'd go across the street and ... I'd go in. As a matter-of-fact, I revised all the real estate laws in the State, under my administration, and ... it works like the Supreme Court. It's not what the law says, it's what the court says, their interpretation. The law says this, but they interpret [it] this [way]. So, the real estate laws are the same, it's how we interpret them. So, I drew all new laws and I had to have somebody to formulate what our interpretations were and so, there was a young guy, his name was Franconero. ... Connie Francis, that's her maiden name, and it's her nephew, it turned out. [laughter] I just assumed that it was. At any rate, I had to get somebody, hire a lawyer, to do that. There was two things; one was to hire a lawyer, the other was another part of the story. So, I ... didn't have the money in the budget, you've got to have money to pay for him, ... but you can transfer funds in this state and Sam Fortunato, who was the Insurance Commissioner, and

my good friend, he says, "Herb, I've got money. I'll give you the money." Okay, now, I go to do it and I find out that the Governor had a moratorium on hiring then. You couldn't hire anybody. So, I said to Fortunato, "Gee, what do I do?" He said, "See the Governor," and I'm a dumb guy; I went to see the Governor. [laughter] I went across the street and I just went right in and he says, "What do you want?" and I told him. He says, "Oh, okay." He says, "Just go down the hall, see Jamie," the guy's name. He says, "Tell Jamie I told you [to] give you whatever you want." So, I did. [The] next thing you know, every commissioner in the State's calling me up, all different commissioners, "How did you do it? How'd you do it?" [laughter] I said, "How did I do it? They said, 'See the Governor,' I saw the Governor, that's what I did." So, I was a big hero with them, and then, the wind up was, I couldn't hire the guy, because there was a deputy insurance commissioner, a woman, who refused to do it. So, I ... went to see her and I said, "Look, I'm not going to tell you what to do, ... but let me just tell you something. This young man I'm hiring," I said, "this is a lousy job." It is, it's a real lousy job, tedious, lousy, but it's good as a requisite, on your bio, when you use it on your resume, it's a good thing to have in it, ... that's why they will take you. So, I says, "I have to hire this guy." I says, "Now, I want to ask you something." There was a campaign on then, it was Florio. I says, "Do you know who this guy is?" I says, "You know who Connie Francis is?" ... She said, "Yes." I said, "Well, this is her nephew. Now, if you go to all the rallies, you will see Connie Francis is singing for Governor Florio," which she was. I says, "Do you want me to tell the Governor that you're not going to hire Connie Francis' nephew?" [laughter] I says, "I don't want to be that guy. ... You go tell him that," and so, she said "Okay," and we hired him. That's what I did, I used that kind of strategy all the time, and it worked. Honestly, I mean, that was true. ... "I'm not going to go tell the Governor I'm not hiring her nephew," right, and he was a nice guy, anyhow. ... That's the story with that, yes, but most of the time, whatever I did, I was forced to do it. Honest, I didn't want to be councilman, I didn't want to be mayor, I didn't want to be commander, I didn't want to be commissioner. ... I wasn't looking to do that, but, when I did it, I was liked. ...

SH: These veterans' organizations that you headed up, such as the Veterans' Alliance, what were you able to do with that?

HT: Well, then, again, it's a PR thing, to this degree, to get along with all the different veterans' organizations and that's what I did. Of course, we ran the parades and everything else. I led the parades, ... but we got along real good and we had ... black veterans, white veterans, it didn't matter, and we got along very good and we had a good alliance. We did. I met with the commanders of Camp Kilmer, different ones, and it was a good thing. ... Also, I was national vice-chairman of Israel Bonds. I was also local chairman. I did the same here. I had a very good rapport. I knew ... all the prime ministers [of Israel], and I would speak all over the country. They would send me all over. I would say "like an itinerant preacher," wherever ... they'd send me, "Go to California." "Go to Chicago," ... and I would go there and I would speak. I wouldn't just speak. I'd go early in the morning, start at seven in the morning. Every hour, I would have an appointment with some influential person, both financially and otherwise, in the community there and I would talk to them and ... I'd usually have an Israeli general with me and I'd get to them and interest them in buying Israel Bonds, and then, at noontime, I'd speak at a function. In the evening, I'd speak at a function. [laughter] ... I did get out all over. I did that, too, for quite a while and as I, say, ... I knew all of them and I walked across the Suez with Ariel Sharon, and I could see Cairo. We saw Cairo right there. He could have taken Cairo if he

wanted to. ... Then, Rabin, who was a great man, too, Yitzhak Rabin, and he was speaking in Highland Park. ... They asked me if I could get him so I went to the Newark Airport to get him and I brought him back, and then, he had an appointment to meet with the President, our president, after that, in the evening, and so, I called up the State Police and I found out that there was some kind of accident on the New Jersey Turnpike and it was jammed up. So, I said, "What [could] they do?" They said, "We'll call up every town. We'll have a police escort meet you in every town." [laughter] ... So, I went Route 1 to the airport. I'm driving, going eighty miles an hour, because I had to make the plane for him, and, in every town, there'd be police cars waiting, but, even so, you're taking your life in your hands and I said, "Boy, I'm never going to make it alive," but we did make it. ... I got him there in time. [laughter] ... I had good experiences. I went to Beirut and I met with the Christian Phalange, I did, and I met with Gemayel, Bashir Gemayel, and, a week after that, the PLO, they blew up his headquarters, the same place where I had met him one week ... [earlier] and he was killed, because he was a good man. He really was. I'm the National Foreign Affairs Chairman, and I'm the personal representative of the National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans. I meet the conference presidents of major Jewish organizations and they meet in New York. They call me from Washington all the time and I go to meetings there in New York. ... Every dignitary in the world comes there. They want to meet with the Jewish leaders and somehow make friends with them, so, we have had Kazakhstan and every country you can name. ... The president of Lebanon was Amin Gemayel, who was Bashir's [older] brother [term ended 1988], Amin Gemayel, and I met with him. I get to meet all different people and it is interesting, so, I do that, too. I was in New York last week. ... They call me and I go in to meetings.

SH: Are you involved with the Purple Heart Association?

HT: No, no. ... I have the Navy Air Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal from New Jersey and others.

SH: Thank you so much.

HT: I don't know, I rambled on and off here. ...

SH: Would you like to say more about your family?

HT: ... Okay. Number one, as I say, my father and mother were really very well respected. My father opened every door for me. [laughter] All I had to do was say, "I'm Max Tanzman's son," and I don't care where it was ... every person, or office, whatever it was, I had an open door. My mother was a very, very, very popular woman. Everybody looked up to her. She was very bright and a very good lady. ... I had great love for my grandparents, my mother's parents, because I grew up with them. ... That's a fortunate thing for anybody, if they could have their grandparents ... in their life. It really is something that a lot of people don't have the good luck to do that. As far as other than that, my brother, I told you about, he was a successful person, ... politically and business-wise. My sister, [Ruth Tanzman Naar], a very bright girl, ... she worked for Rutgers and she was editor of their ... publication, she wrote that. She also was very smart. She died comparatively young, at sixty-one. She had sugar [diabetes]. ... My children are all [successful]. My son, Roy, is a partner in Wilentz, Goldman and Spitzer and he is the head of

numerous organizations. He's active in many things. Roy's wife, Brenda, is a medical assistant in the office of Dr. Henry Scharf. They live in South Brunswick. My second son, Jeff, is a chiropractor with offices in Edison. He is also active in many things, both civic and religious. Jeffrey's wife, Micky, is an Israeli *sabra* [a native-born Israeli] and is a teacher in the Hillel Academy in Oakhurst. They live in the same building we do in Long Branch. My daughter, Maxine Bock, is a psychotherapist. She is married to Jack Bock. He is a CPA. They live in Wayne. Roy and Brenda's children are Jill and Brett. Jill is married to Jordan Matthews and is a second grade teacher in Woodbridge Grammar School. Jordan is an attorney. Brenda, Micky, Jill and Maxine are all involved and active in many civic and religious activities.

SH: Does Brett go to Camden?

HT: Yes. He was on both Senator Biden's staff and Senator Corzine's staff in Washington. When the Pakistani man was murdered in East Brunswick, Congressman Rush Holt called Brett and asked him to speak at the memorial service. He is now going to Rutgers Law School in Camden and is President of the Student Council. Jeff and Micky have four beautiful and talented daughters. Their ages range from nine to seven—the youngest two are twins. Their names are Danielle, Arielle, Shira and Aviv. Maxine and Jack have a son, seven, named Noah. Not to brag, but all of my grandchildren are exceedingly bright and good-looking.

SH: Thank you so much for taking time today to talk with us. This has been delightful.

HT: All right, then. Thank you for the courtesies you have extended to me. I can go over any particulars at another date, if you want.

SH: Great, we will hold you to that.

HT: ... Yes, I would, politically or other things that I did. I didn't get into all that today.

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 2/21/05  
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/25/05  
Reviewed by Herbert Tanzman 11/05