

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD J. BARRY, JR.

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Edward J. Barry, Jr., on October 23, 1998, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and ...

Shaun Illingworth: Shaun Illingworth

KP: I'd like to begin by asking you about your parents and growing up in Trenton. I'll just start out with that general question.

Edward Barry: Well, my mother was the daughter of an Irish immigrant mother and an Irish, USA born, father, in the Ewing Township-Hopewell Township area, just north of Trenton. My father was born in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, of Irish descent. They moved to a farm outside of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and from there, to Trenton, where my father worked in the car shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Then, he became a policeman on the Trenton Police Force. He took examinations and progressed in rank until he became a captain. I am the oldest of three children. I was educated in Trenton- Blessed Sacrament Grammar School, St. Mary's Cathedral High, and yet, I spent a good bit of time at my grandmother's farm out in Hopewell Township, and developed a liking for agriculture. Therefore, as I grew up, I wanted to go to Rutgers College of Agriculture, which I finally did. For the first two years, I commuted, which can be a rough deal. The last two years, I stayed in a dorm. My childhood was happy. We didn't have television, we didn't have all these plastic playthings. We made things for ourselves. As a youth, I spent a good bit of time hunting, fishing, and trapping. A friend of mine and I ran a trap line at my grandmother's farm on the weekends. During the week, we would set traps in the old Delaware-Raritan Canal feeder, which ran close to our homes. We managed to get a few bucks with muskrat pelts, and so forth. But, being outdoors, and being next to nature, made it all worthwhile.

I went to Rutgers College of Agriculture. Professor Helyar was the dean. I don't remember too many of my teachers. Some of them put you to sleep, [laughter] Botany lectures, and so forth. But, I enjoyed it, especially the lab periods, either out on the farm or, often times, we would take judging trips out to different cow, horse, or swine farms, to learn how to judge the qualities of different animals. In there, I built up friendships with a lot of fellows who later on became instructors and professors at the College of Agriculture, like Dick West, Ernie Christ, Howard Woodward, and Dave Tudor. The first summer vacation I had from Rutgers, I spent as a farm hand on a state hospital farm, Trenton Psychiatric, it's now called. The second summer I spent working as a plumber's helper in that same institution. My third and fourth summers I spent as a student aide with the Soil Conservation Service, working at CCC camps at Clinton, where Routes 22 and 31 meet, and Freehold.

The first year was at Clinton. No trace of the camp remains. The second year was at Freehold. There, I gained more experience being out with gangs of CCC enrollees. I think that CCC movement was very good for the country, as a whole, because the camps were staffed by reserve officers. It gave them experience in handling men, providing for their needs, and so forth. Enrollees themselves benefited the most, because it got them out of the slums, into the air, gave them some income, which many of them had to send home to their people who needed it more than they did. At the same time, they did a lot of good things for the country. The ones I was

with did soil conservation work, laying out and building terraces, planting trees, planting seed patches for water run-offs, to prevent it from getting too fast. Also, they really took down a lot of the old rock walls up in Hunterdon County, because, at that time, a lot of *nouveau riche* people were moving out, buying farms up cheap for summer homes. Here was an opportunity for them to get them fixed up, looking nice, at little or no cost to them. All they had to furnish was seed, fertilizer, and other materials. So much for the CCC. I'm sorry to see it not present on today's scene.

But, after my job for the summer in 1940 ended, I obtained employment at the Farmer's Co-Op at Trenton, and worked there until February of '41, when I was drafted. I was in the third draft. I think it was the 17th of February we had to go in. In those days, you went in, took your physical, you were sworn in, and shipped right down to Fort Dix. No opportunity to go back and get your affairs in order. Anyway, I spent a week at Dix, during which time, I pulled KP three times, I think, in a thousand man mess, [laughter] which is no easy task.

Anyway, a bunch of us were sent to Raritan Arsenal, outside of New Brunswick. No trace of that post remains. In fact, there were three ammunition companies formed up there. I was in the 53rd. We got our basic training there. We also did guard duty in the ammunition area, where they had storehouses of ammunition awaiting transfer to ships going overseas. In those days, people don't realize how bad off the Army was. When I went to Dix, I was issued a uniform. I was given a set of 1918 breeches, with roll leggings, and they are a bollix to put on and off. Many fellows were given the old roll-collar overcoats, hob-nail shoes, things that were passé years ago. But, that's all the Army had. And so, up at Raritan Arsenal, we had our basic training and getting used to Army life.

Our indoctrination into the use of firearms was three shots per man out of a .45 caliber revolver. The Army couldn't spare more ammunition for us. After that, we were put on guard along the waterfront there, where the ammunition warehouses were. I'll never forget, one fellow from New York who came upon two hunters who, for some reason or other, landed on the waterfront. He had to hold them at pistol point, not knowing whether they were going to go for him or not, until the next guard came around, because we didn't have any phone. That's one humorous thing. At that time, I met a girl at NJC, Kay Hendershot, Class of '41. We got very friendly and, around Memorial Day, we went on a beach party, down at Asbury Park. It was a Friday night, and we came back Saturday morning. It was supposed to be payday. We were to stand inspection, get paid, and be on our way. As we got down to the Post, I noticed soldiers walking back and forth, back and forth. Nobody said anything 'til we got inside the gate. Then, they said, "Report to your company area, the post has been alerted." There was rumors about sabotage going to occur. At that time, I was a buck sergeant. And so, I was given a detail of men to go down and go up on one of these towers that had a searchlight on it. We spent the night chasing rabbits all around the ammunition storage buildings. In fact, [laughter] complaints came from Newark Airport that we were blinding the pilots. [laughter] We had to cut that out.

But, anyway, from there, shortly after Memorial Day, the whole company was shipped to Fort Knox, Kentucky. As usually happens in a peace-time army, things really got bollixed up. They didn't know we were coming. There was no barracks set up for us, no bedding, nothing. It was a

weekend. In an old army post, on a weekend, nothing gets done unless the general needs something. We had to sleep on the floor, and a couple of the guys went out to a nearby gin mill and really got soused. They came back, spewed all over the floor of the second floor, and it dripped through on to the fellows on the lower floor. But, anyway, at Ft. Knox, we were soon indoctrinated into their way. I never will forget the first time we were served hominy grits and all our boys were from up New York-New Jersey area. I swear, there was just as much in the garbage pail as there had been on the serving tray.

But, anyway, we endured down there for a couple of months, and then, we went on maneuvers down in Louisiana and Arkansas, which was the first grand scale maneuvers for the Army in quite some time. We participated in that. We had to set up ammunition depots in places, that weren't fit to keep a hog in, I swear. But, that's what somebody had sold the Army on using. Down in Louisiana, the doggone mosquitoes, whew! They were terrible. Arkansas, I guess, wasn't much better. In fact, I think Arkansas had more snakes in it than Louisiana. But, anyway, we came back from that to Ft. Knox. We had all gone in with the idea that we'd serve a year and get out. Then, in October, they passed a law that we would serve for duration plus, which instigated the OHIO movement-Over-the-Hill-In-October. But, I figured, if I'm going to be in for a long time, I might as well go first class. I applied for OCS. [laughter]

I went up before the OCS board with my foot bandaged up, having been operated on for a plantar wart, and I was on crutches. But, somehow or other, I got by. While I was in the hospital with that plantar wart, Pearl Harbor came along. I told the boys, "We're in it now." Anyway, I was sent to Aberdeen Proving Grounds by train. This was not long after Pearl Harbor. Boy, that was the nicest ride I ever had on a train. It was on the C&O from Louisville to Washington. Man, the people were going all over me, because I was in uniform, and war had just been declared. I got to Washington, then took the Pennsylvania Railroad north to Aberdeen, where I joined the third OCS class in the Ordnance School.

Lo and behold, I find that seven or eight of my classmates from Rutgers were there, who had taken four years of ROTC. They had gotten their bars as infantry officers. But, Bob Braid had married the daughter of Colonel Outland, who was commandant of the Ordnance School when it was at Raritan Arsenal. When Colonel Outland was called down to Aberdeen to establish the big Ordnance School, he brought along a bunch of Bob Braid's classmates, got them changed to Ordnance branch, and there they were. One or more of them had cars, and they'd give me a ride home almost every weekend, and pick me up on the way back. That was in good stead. Our OCS class was given the honor of being given our commissions by Vice-President Henry Wallace, because his son, Bob, was in our class. In fact, we had two Bob Wallaces in our class.

One was a lot bigger than the other, but, they were both tall. That was a good, great time. My mother, my father, my aunt, my uncle, my girlfriend, all came down to see me get my gold bars. Then, I had a week's leave before I had to report back, and, when I reported back, I was assigned to the Ammunition section of the Ordnance School as an instructor. Lo and behold, Ralph Russo was in my section, and then, shortly thereafter, he became head of it. There was Warren Ermeling, Charley Pease, Bill Johnson, Bob Braid of course, and some more. Well, anyways,

there was seven or eight of them down there. Mike Hill, yes. They helped me along wherever they could. I taught there for about a year-and-a-half, mostly to officer candidates.

In those days, promotion was pretty rapid. If you were a second lieutenant for about six months, and you kept your nose clean, you'd automatically go to First Lieutenant. Then, after about a year, you'd be due for a captaincy. The colonel in charge of personnel called us all in and told us, "You fellows are due for captaincy, but, it's not in the table of organization here." He said, "But, I tell you, they're organizing a bunch of ammunition companies, and they're organizing about fifty bomb disposal squads, which call for captain." Well, I'd been in an ammunition company as an enlisted man, so, I didn't think too much of it. I volunteered for Bomb Disposal and went up to Bomb Disposal School, which was right there on Aberdeen Proving Grounds, went through the course, and I was then assigned a squad.

I was about the third or fourth commander of that squad. I don't know what happened to the others, but, anyway, I got the final group of the 31st Ordnance Bomb Disposal Squad (Separate), which was their complete title. We trained for a while at Aberdeen-bombs, fuses, excavation, and one thing or another. In November, 1943, we were sent up to Camp Shanks, where we had to get all of our equipment. Man, that was the easiest place to get stuff. I mean, you just say, "I'm short this, I'm short that," and they throw it at you. But, the thing was, we had twenty-four bomb disposal squads there and the orders would come down, "Your G-2 goes to this meeting, your G-3 goes to that meeting," and so forth. "Your VD officer goes here, your morale officer goes there," all at the same time. What we did, one of the officers would go to each meeting and come back and report his findings as they affected us.

But, anyway, we got on the *S.S. Mexico*, which was a Caribbean cruise liner, at Hoboken. It was in the middle of the night, so, I never saw what the outside of the ship looked like. We went on a convoy, supposed to be the biggest convoy up to that time. I think the *Nevada* was supposed to be our principle guard ship, along with a bunch of corvettes, and destroyers. We never had any U-ship trouble. Took us thirteen days to get over to Swansea, Wales. Going down the Irish Sea, we did have a submarine alert. I'll never forget, [laughter] one sailor was rushing to his alert post and he brushed against a soldier who took umbrage at it. "Hey bub, what's the matter?" The sailor turned around, just cold-cocked him, and went on his way, because he had to get to that gun, or whatever was his duty station.

Anyway, at Swansea, as I recall, that was one of those ports with a tremendous tidal drop, and they had some kind of gates at the port to hold back the water after you entered. But, anyway, we unloaded it, six o'clock in the morning I think it was, maybe five o'clock. But, in England, that time of day, in the winter, is like midnight around here. Again, I never saw the outside of the ship.

Then, we got on a train. We had orders to report to a Quartermaster Depot G-20 at Boughton, Notts. "Notts, what's that mean?" Anyway, we got on the train, and reached the town of Chesterfield after many delays, due to air-raids, and fog, and so forth. Then, we were supposed to go across town to another railway station and take another train from there to Boughton, Notts. When we got there, the other train had left. There I was. I had six enlisted men and myself. I

had no English money, I didn't know from nothing. [laughter] But, the Salvation Army found out about my predicament and they offered to put the men up, and there were some American officers in the same predicament as I was, who had been in England for sometime. They were going from a replacement pool to new assignments. But, they had English money, and they knew their way around, so, they took me along with them into this hotel, put me up there. That was a funny experience. We went out in the evening to see the town. You didn't see the town, it was absolute pitch black, except for somebody passing by wearing hob-nail boots. You could see the sparks strike from the cobblestones. Here and there, if somebody was fortunate enough to have a flashlight, they'd shine it. Then, in the morning, [laughter] it was a strange experience to have a maid come in with a cup of hot tea about five-thirty, six o'clock, as a wake up. But, anyway, we finally reached our destination, Quartermaster Depot G-20, the next day.

We were assigned a Nissen hut for my six men and all our equipment. I stayed in another Nissen hut for officers. That was a weird experience too, because it was three days before you could see what the camp looked like, because the fog was so thick. You had to grope your way from one building to another and read the number on it to find out whether you were at the mess hall, the latrine, or whatever. But, England, in winter, is beautiful. I mean, it's nice and green, it's not brown like it is here. But, I was never so cold in my life. I had flannel pajamas, a bathrobe, two blankets under me, two blankets and a quilt on top on me, and I'd lay in bed and shiver. Each Nissen hut had a little stove, like a pot stove, which had a real thick lining on it. I don't think much of the heat got through that lining to be of any benefit to the people on the outside. [laughter] But, anyway, we stayed at this Quartermaster depot. They had a bakery and, once a week, they would roast coffee. You could smell those smells all through the area, because we were in the middle of Nottingham Forest. Oh, man, these oak trees, tremendous, great, big things, but, they were dying, I think, because they're all gnarled and I couldn't see any leaves. Well, of course, it was wintertime, but, I didn't think there were many leaves on them. But, it was a big estate that some earl owned, I guess, and let the Army have the use of it.

We did various jobs in the area, like giving talks on bomb reconnaissance. What to do, and how it would be handled, and so forth. Myself, I was sent to school one week in London to study British fuses, and then, for another week, up in Doncaster, Yorkshire, at a big British RAF base, to study German fuses. Then, in April, we were sent all the way from Nottinghamshire down to Dorchester, beautiful part of England, to join a platoon from a Royal Engineer Bomb Disposal Company. They were stationed at a golf course. [laughter] They used the clubhouse as their mess hall, barracks, and stuff. My men moved in with them. The officers lived off-base, at different houses. I was able to get a room at a house just bordering the golf course and also bordering a U.S. Army staging camp. Well, things went along pretty good. We worked with the British very well, but, my men came down with something. I took them to the doctors and they said, "These men are not getting enough protein in their diet." They were eating the British mess. The doctor said, "Make arrangements for them to get more protein." I worked a deal with the staging area camp where by my men would go up for supper, American food, you know. That cured the problem. [laughter]

It was there that we took care of our first bomb, which was a fifty-kilogram phosphorous, petroleum jelly, incendiary bomb that had broken on impact. That was a little touchy. I took my

men and myself, afterwards, up in a bunker on the golf course. I passed around this bottle of whisky my father had sent me and we polished off that bottle in celebration. [laughter] There were lot of funny incidents which occurred. Like, before the war, the family had a farewell party for me, when I was being drafted, and one of them was Tom Barlow, the former building inspector of Trenton, who'd been in World War I. He told me, "Just bear in mind, a guy can die from laughing in the Army, and it'll get you through an awful lot of tough spots." It proved true. I mean, you can see something humorous in almost everything that happened. Course, if it happened to you, you took a different attitude.

We were supposed to go into Normandy on D-plus-seven, my orders stated, but, they had this storm, and enemy resistance was greater than they expected. We actually wound up going in at D-plus-forty-six, just at the time of the St. Lo breakthrough. My orders called for me to set up my initial CP way over in German territory. [laughter] Anyway, they kept us busy cleaning up an ammunition depot at Ste. Mere-Eglise which had caught on fire. Some of the men were trapped in there, in foxholes, for two or three days. Some of them came out who weren't right afterwards. I mean, with all that explosion going on, they never knew when something was going to get them. There was ammunition of all kinds blown all over the place. Some of it had armed itself, like anti-tank rockets. Shoulder rockets would have the safety pin blown out, and, you had to pick those up gingerly and re-install another safety pin to make it safe. We'd load all that stuff on DUKWs, that's amphibious trucks, and take them out and throw them in the ocean. There's one squad that was working with us that, when they did that, there was a Teller mine that hadn't been properly safetied. When it got down to a certain depth, the pressure set it off. The drivers took off. They had life belts, just took off and left, our squad there had no life belts. But, they managed to turn the DUKW around and make it back to shore. [laughter] As I say, there was always something humorous.

From Normandy, we went to Catz, and then, we went to St. Lo, then to Le Mans. We stayed there about a month. While in Normandy was the only time we spent under canvas, because, as we moved on, we were able to find a house. It was no big problem, just myself and six men, so, we could fit in an ordinary family house. From then on, we always had houses. We even got a little picky if the plumbing wasn't right. We'd say we want another house. [laughter] Depends on what side you're on! At Le Mans, we did the usual work. We found that our main job was cleaning up ammunition, both friendly and enemy, and disposing of it. All the time, we were working on ammunition. Once in a while, there'd be a bomb coming along. After Le Mans, we moved up near Chartres. Beautiful cathedral there, you can see it for miles, because it's on a plain. We were in a little town called Belleau L'Eveque, I think that means "The Bishop's Woods." We did our usual work around there. We were assigned to the Advance Section Communications Zone (ASCZ), which stretched all the way from the ports to the front lines. We had to keep moving up behind First and Ninth Army.

Some of our squads were attached to some of the forward elements. Some of them landed on D-Day. I know one of them got about six-feet up in France, he said, "I've seen enough of France." [laughter] Well, finally, we got up to Rheims, right in the middle of the Champagne area. We stayed there about a month, and we became connoisseurs of champagne, because, at that time, there were four officers, (three squad leaders, and a platoon leader). We had an apartment and

the men had other quarters. We used to buy champagne by the case. You could get it for two bucks a bottle. But, the French, they're shrewd. They keep raising the price every week, five francs a bottle. In our diligent efforts on bomb disposal, we located some small champagneries out in the country, where you could get it for seventy-five francs a bottle. The Air Force would send trucks with trailers into Rheims and load them up with champagne, because those boys were getting flight pay and had plenty to spend. They would take it back and have a gay old time.

From Rheims, we went up into Belgium, right on the banks of the Meuse river. We couldn't find anyplace in Namur, but, a little town called Profondeville, about five miles up river. We found an ideal set-up where we had a little *pension*, or hotel, and alongside it was a very nice cottage owned by some Brussels banker, I think. We took over both of those, and the men lived in the little hotel, and the officers stayed in the banker's cottage. We were very comfortable through that winter. In fact, we were having a Christmas party for all the men and their friends among the civilians on Christmas Eve, when you could hear the guns firing in the Battle of the Bulge. We had been working in that area, gathering ammunition, and then, the First Army started coming back. They crossed the bridge at Namur. We didn't know that all this artillery fire was coming from our side of the river. [laughter] We were right on the river front, with a beautiful lawn down to the river. Fortunately, the Germans never reached the Meuse and we went about our business. One of our sergeants had a brother in one of the divisions that had been up on the front-line in the Bulge. Before the Bulge, he went up to see him. He came back, he said, "Boy, that line is awful thin. They've got guys really spread out." That's where the Germans hit. I often wonder whether that thin line was deliberate or just an oversight. But, anyway, history will be the judge of that, I guess.

Let's see, from Namur, we went up to Bonn, Germany, and worked a while in that area. There were thousands of Germans captured in an encirclement on the other side of the Rhine, and they started bringing back prisoners. They would put about fifty Germans on a two-and-a-half, six-by-six truck, and about twenty-five in a one-ton trailer behind. They would [laughter] be standing there so straight, and they'd have a ride to acres and acres of land surrounded by barbed wire as an impoundment for them. Jeez, that was really something. I'll say this for the German Army, they had discipline.

We had an occasion, near Château Thierry, where all of these freight cars were being unloaded of all German material, to accommodate American necessities. Somehow or other, the whole mess caught on fire. There was a big pile of drums that caught on fire. Those drums would take off into the air. When they'd get heated up, the end would blow out, and it would be just like a rocket. I was never so impressed in all my life. But, anyway, at the railway, there were a couple of car-loads of fragmentation bombs, with heavy iron wrapping around an explosive center. They're deadly against personnel, and so, they wanted us to take care of them. A couple of B.D. squads went up there, and looked over the situation. They said, "This is a hell of a job for the few men we have." We went to the compound officer in charge of the prisoner compound, and said, "We'd like some help. Can we get some of your men?" He said, "Sure. [laughter] Glad to get rid of them." They gave us about twenty German prisoners, with two or three German non-coms. Boy, those German non-coms made those guys snap. We loaded those bombs on the trucks and took them out in the woods, to a sand pit, and made a long pile to blow them up. One

of the German sergeants looked around at the woods. He said “Don’t think it’s going to work.” We set the thing off and, true enough, it didn’t work. We had fires started all over this woods, because it was an incomplete explosion, or low-order detonation. Some of the bombs were on fire, and you never know when one of them was going to go off. We were running around those woods stamping them out with our feet and everything, because we didn’t want the whole forest to catch fire. German woods are beautiful. I mean, the trees are pruned up as far as the civilians can reach for firewood. You can see quite a distance through them. I had to run around with my jeep, which I had fitted with a siren off a tank. But, my jeep, had a six-volt battery, and I think it was a twelve-volt siren, so, it just went, “Ooooooooooh.” [laughter] I drove all around that woods before we were going to blow it, hollering for the civilians to get out. They came out of the woods with baby carriages, and express wagons, full of twigs. They’d been in there, gathering. I used to holler, “Bomb non eclate,” and, “Bomben, Bomben,” to alert them.

That takes us up to around Châteaux Thierry. Then, we crossed the Rhine on a pontoon bridge. While we were at Bonn, we had a ticklish one. Across the Rhine, there was an airfield. When the Germans pulled out of the airfield, they had all of their bombs stacked around the perimeter, and they set them off. Only, some of them were not bombs in themselves, but cases of butterfly bombs. You know what a butterfly bomb is?

KP: Maybe you could just describe what they are.

EB: Yes. These cases went up in the air, and opened up, and these little bombs would drop out. They weigh about two-kilograms, shaped like a tin can on its side, made of iron, with an explosive charge in them, and a little mechanical fuse. Then, as the bomb came out of the case, these wings would spread out and, as the bomb fell, the wings would make a shaft turn and arm the fuse. Some of them would go off when they contacted the ground, some would remain about five minutes and go off, some would stay there until somebody tried to move them. We didn’t know what we were up against. Some German had come in with a herd of sheep and started to graze his sheep on this deserted aerodrome. One these bombs went off and killed about seven of his sheep, so, Military Government got us to go out and take care of them. Well, what are you going to do with these damn little things all over the place, with grass growing up around them? I had my men make little flags from coat hangers and newspaper cut in triangles. Each one would take a handful of flags, and go out very slowly, locate, and mark each bomb. Then, I went to an Engineer depot, and I got half-a-mile of Prima cord, which is explosive fuse, plus, about three or four-hundred pounds of TNT blocks. Fortunately, on this airfield, they had a structure like a grandstand, made of concrete, that you could go hide under. We stretched a line of Prima cord down amongst these bombs, ran a branch line off to each one, and put a TNT block along each bomb. We didn’t do it all at once. I think there was six-hundred and some of them. But, we’d maybe make a hundred go off at a time. Fortunately, we could run under this slanted grandstand in the back of it, because there was a hell of a lot of shrapnel coming. I know sometimes we took risks when we were blowing up bombs, not getting far enough away for the shrapnel not to hit us. You could hear these pieces, makes the noise of shrapnel ripping through the air “Bang,” hit! Fortunately, they didn’t hit anybody that I know of.

Then, after Bonn, we went up as far as Fulda, Germany, when V-E Day came along. It was out of Fulda, I think, that the most hairy thing happened. I don't remember the name of the town, but, it was somewhere nears Kassel. There was a railroad tunnel whose one end had been bombed shut, but the Germans had used it for various things, as a factory or one thing or another. When they left, there were four American five-hundred-pound bombs, slipped into openings in the wall. Well, you don't know, were the damn things booby trapped, or what? So, [laughter] what we did was, we had a plug which we screwed into the fuse pocket of the bombs, so we could pull them out easy enough. But, who's going to stand in there and pull a bomb? We put a snatch block (pulley) and ran a rope out the front end of the tunnel, and then, me, I had to be the big hero. I got in the jeep and hooked on to that rope. Well, it was a rope we hadn't used in all the time we were on the Continent, and it stretched. I put the jeep in four-wheel drive and nothing happened. The elasticity of the rope pulled the jeep back. [laughter] I did that two or three times. I said, "The hell with this!" I took the two-and-a-half-ton truck and hooked it to it. The rope, of course, that just walked away with the load, and you could feel the rope give when the bomb came out of the niche it was in, and you could hear it hit the floor of the tunnel. You'd be waiting, because it was like you were in the muzzle of a shotgun. If I had good sense, I guess, I should have put some sort of an offset, so that the truck wouldn't be in direct-line with the mouth of the tunnel. But, anyway, we succeeded in getting those out without any of them going off. But, the suspense was something to behold.

I've just about run out of words, because when we were at Fulda, I think, when I got my orders to return to the U.S., and I went by train in a Forty-and-Eight car to Antwerp. It's not what it's cracked up to be, I'm telling you. They had a bunch of camps around Antwerp, named for different cigarettes, Philip Morris, Chesterfield, Lucky Strike, and so forth. I don't know which camp I was in, but, we were there for two or three weeks, I guess, doing nothing but eating, sleeping, and waiting for a ship. Finally, we got on a Victory ship. Going over, in November 1943, our convoy had taken thirteen days. Coming back, we hit Boston in seven days. That was some welcome! They sent the fire ships out and they were spraying up red, white, and blue sprays. Really made you feel good! But, the funniest thing, we pulled up to dock, and this particular dock was a double decker that had roll-up doors, steel doors, you know. For ventilation, they brought them up about hip-high. We were all standing up out on deck and, all of a sudden, somebody says, "Look." Here's some girl with, I guess, nylons on, had come up. All you could see was her legs from the knees down. She came up in front of the door, and was talking to somebody, turning this way and that way. These guys that had been cooped up on the ship for a week, or more, so, they all came running down to the side of the ship, so that, that Liberty ship actually tilted. [laughter] The captain had to come on the P.A. with, "All crew, all personnel, back to their quarters." [laughter] From there, they took us to Camp Miles Standish. We had a haircut, and a steak dinner, ice cream, and, in a day or so, they sent us down to Ft. Dix.

Here I was, going through the Connecticut-New York-New Jersey landscape. All the smokestacks were standing. The factories had no broken windows. What a contrast from what we had come back from! People in this country don't know what they missed. After the war, I moved into Lawrence Township, fifty-one years ago this November. I was still gung-ho, and wanted to participate in the civil defense, because England had a wonderful civil defense. So, I was appointed Sector Warden. I tried to get people to act as Block Wardens, because the Cold

War was coming, you know. People just wouldn't do it. All you'd want them to do is, in time of blackout, patrol the street and make sure there were no lights visible. You couldn't get them to do it. They had quite an elaborate scheme down there in Lawrenceville. They were going to use Lawrenceville School as a hospital, and they were going to run a locomotive, up to the hospital, since there was still a railway line in there, where by they got their coal each year, and use the steam from the locomotive to heat the hospital. Many things like that were planned. Thank God we never had to use them.

Anyway, in here, [a booklet on Mr. Barry's Bomb Disposal squad] it tells you how many tons of explosives we disarmed. Oh, yes, there are two incidents I want to tell you. One, when D-Day was on, we were busy digging out a thousand-kilogram bomb, (that's 2,200 pounds), that had fallen in a U.S. Army Replacement Depot in England and failed to explode. It had fallen in chalk soil, which, naturally, is white and wet. The bomb went down quite a ways. We had to dig down twenty-five feet for that bomb, which meant we had to use planking. We had a regular set of timbers with us to sink a shaft and shore up the walls. But, the men had to shovel dirt from one level to another and go down twenty-five feet. When they came out of that hole, they looked like wet goblins, I guess you'd call it. We went down twenty-five feet for that one, and we got quite a cheer when we brought our truck up. We had a hoist on it that came from the wench. We had spars coming out to a pulley and the winch cable went down the hole. It was beautiful for pulling up a bomb out of a hole and loading it on another truck.

Another incident was the biggest put down of the war, in my opinion. In France, we got a call about a bomb that had fallen in another American Replacement Depot, the full colonel in charge was demanding, "Get that bomb out of here. Get that bomb out of here," gruff, excited voice you know. I said, "I have six men and myself and that bomb's down at least fifteen, twenty feet." He said, "I have plenty of men here, use some!" OK, good. I went to an Engineering outfit nearby, and borrowed a compressor truck, with spading shovels, and I brought them back. There were some Engineers among the guys in the camp that knew how to use air equipment. Man, that hole went down really in a hurry. They uncovered the bomb. My men cleaned it up, and I got down there. I was looking at the fuse, trying to identify it and how to handle it. I tell you, it used to take about an hour to disarm a fuse. This colonel was up there hollering, "All right, get that bomb out of there. Get that bomb out of there." All of a sudden, there was silence. After I took care of the fuse, I came back up. I asked my sergeant, Romer, who was a big guy from Ohio, soft-spoken, but a big guy. I said, "What happened to the Colonel? All of a sudden, he stopped talking." He said, "Well I went up the Colonel, and said, 'Well, Colonel, if you want to speed this up, you could go down and help the Captain.'" [laughter] He shut up.

But, I'll tell you, without the training, and relying on the experience of the British, who pioneered in this, we would have been lost. We had an organization down at Aberdeen, in the Bomb Disposal School, called Research and Development. The officers from that were sent over to England right after the Blitz began, I think, before we were in the war. They were studying the British methods, and so forth. They came back and they improved a heck of a lot on our operation. It was all secret information at that time, but, I guess it's public information, now. They developed what they call an impact wrench, worked by hand, from a distance, by which, you could unscrew the retaining ring from a German fuse and pull the fuse out. If the fuse

happened to go off, all you lost was the impact wrench. They developed one that took care of ordinary impact fuses, with a little Coleman camp stove, with a little boiler above it, made out of an artillery cartridge case that had flues up through it, and this generated steam. From there, it led off to a hose that had a magnetic cap that would fit over a fuse. So, you'd fill that full of water, touch off your Coleman stove, and get the hell out of there. After three-quarters of an hour of steaming, that particular fuse was neutralized, because German fuses were electrical. In other words, as they dropped from the plane, they were given a shot of electricity. That electricity was stored in a big condenser that took up most of the body of the fuse. By applying heat, you would break down the insulating layer between the rolls of that condenser and short it out. Perfectly safe.

But, the Germans had some real doozies. They had this Zus 40, which was a secondary fuse, underneath a regular fuse that worked so that when you pulled the regular fuse out, the Zus 40 would go off. They lost several British officers, until one of those fuses malfunctioned and hung up. The B.D. officer looked down, and he crapped his pants after he saw how close he was to death. From then on, they took different measures, for the Zus 40. Then, the Germans had, course, long delay time fuses operated by clockwork, which you could hear. We had a microphone, with a magnetic attachment, you could put on first, to see if it was a time clock, and, either move the bomb, or blow it up, or take a chance on taking the fuse out, which we could do. We could do it remotely. Then, they had a long delay, anti-removal, anti-disturbance fuse. That was a chemical long delay where acid ate away this plastic disk over a period of time. That was a really doozy. But, our guy back here developed a method of taking out a screw, drilling a little hole, and then, sucking all the air out with a vacuum, like a bicycle pump, and turning a valve, allowing it to suck in liquid plastic that would surround all the parts of the fuse and hold them tight. Then, you could just pull it out. That was thought of by John Feldman. He became a Colonel. He's in the Ordnance Hall of Fame because of the work he did in research and development.

I don't know whether this record means anything, but, from D-Day until V-E Day, the squad had disposed of 103 bombs of all nationalities, 643 German butterfly bombs, and 486 tons of German and Allied munitions. That's just our squad. The main thing is, due to good luck, more than good management, we never had an accident. My men or I never had a scratch. I never fired a shot in anger. Well, yes, I did. Once, during the Battle of the Bulge, a German plane flew down the Meuse river, and I shot at it, one night, but, that was it. I never saw a dead man, believe it or not, because we were operating far enough behind the lines that things were pretty well cleaned up by the time we got there.

The main thing is we're all lucky and glad that we got out with a whole skin. That was one of the reasons I went into Bomb Disposal. Either I'd come back in one piece, or, I wouldn't come back at all, since I had seen too many amputees, and so forth, from World War I, when I was young. I was born in 1919 and World War I was still a recent memory. Many of the people I was associated with, in my growing up, had been veterans of World War I. I want to apologize for my [pointing to a cut below his eye], this was not that my wife hit me. I had a little melanoma removed back on the 12th. The stitches were all supposed to come out yesterday, but, there's still some left in there. I hope to hell they got it all.

KP: We have a few follow-up questions we'd like to ask, if you don't mind. Going all the way back to your youth, it seems like the Church was very important to you when you were growing up. You showed us a picture of your family and we see that your sister became a nun.

EB: Right

KP: Which I take as an indication that you attended Mass, regularly.

EB: Right. I'll tell you, there's no atheists in foxholes and, when you're down there with a damn bomb, looking at the thing, whether it going to go off when you handle it or before that, you hope somebody's looking over your shoulder. That's all I can say.

KP: You also mentioned you knew a lot of World War I veterans growing up.

EB: Yes

KP: Your father was not a veteran?

EB: No, he was a policeman.

KP: During the war?

EB: Yes, during the war, they were exempt from the draft.

KP: Where did you meet the World War I veterans you knew as a boy?

EB: Well, family friends. Tom Barlow was one. He became the building inspector for the city of Trenton. Before that, he was a building contractor, and so forth. He was a hunting buddy of my father's. Another was John O'Hara. He was a veteran of World War I. There's an amusing incident. During World War I, he mailed himself home a .45 caliber pistol, fully loaded. [laughter] I knew he had it. When I was going to go overseas, I said to him, "How about loaning me that .45, because I'm supposed to be armed with a carbine and getting in and out of a jeep with a carbine on your back is no good." "Okay, Ted." My nickname was Ted. That distinguished me from my father. He gave me the gun, and I took it down to Aberdeen, where a friend of mine in the Small Arms Section took it, went over it, and put new stocks on and they put a new barrel in it. They fixed it all fine for me. So, I took that overseas with me, and, in London, I bought a shoulder holster, so, I could wear it underneath my jacket. Later on, in Germany, I bought a Luger from a combat soldier. I used that holster also the Luger. In fact, I traded the Luger for a shotgun, about five or six years ago.

Oh, I sent all kinds of rifles and shotguns home, because, as an ordnance officer, I could sign a clearance that they were safe, and all that stuff. [laughter] Also, I went up to Fabrique Nationale Des Armes De Guerre, outside of Liege, and had a shotgun made for myself. I'm sorry I didn't get it in twelve-gauge. I got it in sixteen-gauge, automatic, and I shipped that home. A lot of the

big shots were having over-and-under shot-guns made for them there. At the same time, the company was putting out the grousers for Army tanks to extend the width of the treads, so they could operate on mushy ground. They never stopped producing over there. Everywhere I went in England, I'd send something home, pottery, Sheffield steel, or Nottingham lace, and a lot of that stuff I have today, yet.

I'm sorry I never dug into my store of pictures, because I was very fortunate. For intelligence purposes, we had a 35-mm camera and a complete developing and enlarging kit. One of my men had a 35-mm camera, and he was a photography nut. I said, "You're in charge of the photograph kit" Also, I had a 35-mm camera. In cleaning up the trenches in Normandy, one of my men found a whole box of 35-mm Kodak film, tropical wrapped, that we used for quite a while. Then, too, we were entitled to a certain amount of chemicals, and printing paper, every month. Of course, towards the end, well, long before the end, they got short of the regular paper, and we had to use V-mail paper. Many of the pictures I have have curled up, but, we took pictures everywhere we went, battlefield sites from World War I, Château Thierry, etc. Incidentally, one of the times we were blowing up bombs, you see, we'd start off with just one bomb, to make a little crater. Then, we put two in, to make it deeper. Finally you'd get way down, in order to cut down on the possibility of casualties from shrapnel. Near Château Thierry, we were doing that, and, down at the bottom, we found a World War I, 75-mm French projectile. It had a long cylindrical fuse sticking out of the front. There was a jawbone, from a mule, I guess, and a piece of chicken wire that may have been for camouflage. They had been there since World War I.

It's an experience that I've lived with, and I wouldn't want to go through it again, at my age, but, I enjoyed it. We, for the most part, ate well. We were well treated, for the most part, and I have no gripes. I consider the time I spent in the Army as well worth it, even though it was supposed to be for one year, and turned out to be four years, ten months, and sixteen days. [laughter] Then, I served in the New Jersey National Guard. I joined them when I was working at Leesburg Prison Farm. I joined a Tank Battalion at Vineland. Then, when my father died, in '47, I came back to Trenton, and went back to work for the Farmers' Co-Op, and, by then, of course, I was married and had one child.

I joined the 30th Ordnance Battalion of New Jersey National Guard at Trenton, and stayed with them until my first wife died with polio, in 1950, in the big epidemic. We had already been sent down to Fort Bliss, Texas, as part of the Korean problem. The Red Cross got me out, because I had three little children to take care of. They put me in the Reserve National Guard. I stayed in there until, I think it was, January the 5th, 1950. It was exactly five years after my terminal leave from the Army in World War II. Then, last Armistice Day, they had a ceremony at our township hall, and I was presented with this New Jersey Defense Medal. That's limited to anybody who served in the armed forces and received a decoration.

KP: Let me give Shaun a chance to ask some questions.

SI: Well, in your post-war career, what made you choose the Farmer's Co-Op, rather than, say, starting your own farm?

EB: Well, it costs money to go into farming today, big bucks, big bucks. One of those combines would be thirty, forty thousand dollars, tractor, twenty-five thousand, right on up. I worked for the Farmer's Co-Op. They gave me credit for my service time, so, I had credit for thirty-five years worth then. I was nineteen years on the road, going from farm to farm, selling feed, seed, fertilizer, farm equipment, like silos, and even barns. You met a lot of nice people. You also met a lot of crusty people, but, after a while, you got to know them, and how to handle them, and the work was outdoors. All my life, I liked to be hunting, and fishing, trapping, too. I realized that people were, maybe, making more money other places, but, I was doing something I liked. But, then, got to a point where I could see the handwriting on the wall, with the number of farms going out of business. How long were we going to be in business? I took a test for the State and got an appointment as a Buyer in the Purchase Bureau. So, at age fifty-five, I changed careers. I have credit for twenty years with the state, since I bought two of my service years back. It was the best seventeen thousand dollars I ever spent. [laughter] Because, it made me up to twenty years credit in service with the State, and entitled me to free medical service.

KP: Oh, that was a very good purchase.

EB: Yes, because I've had, at least, six or seven operations on my feet. I've had a knee replacement, have a pacemaker, I have inter-ocular lenses, also. [laughter]

KP: I can see why you would say that.

EB: Yes, and, my wife is covered, too. My wife has had cancer and all the treatments that go with it are covered. I've lost three wives. One from polio and two with cancer. With my first wife, I had three boys. My oldest is Edward Barry. He took four years of ROTC here. In fact, he was named best military student of the year, along with another young fellow in the Class of '69. He took helicopter training, and went across to Vietnam, and did all kinds of stuff there. I got a call one morning, saying, "Lieutenant Barry's been in a wreck and he's still alive." They had him back in this country in forty-eight hours. He had a full recovery and lives near the Rutgers Stadium.

KP: Have you been back to Europe since the war ended?

EB: Yes. My wife and I went to Ireland, let's see, in '83, I think it was. Of course, Ireland wasn't in the war, but, that's a country from which my ancestors all came. It makes me glad that they did, because that's a poor country. Around Shannon Airport, there is twenty-three, twenty-four percent unemployment. I loved the scenery over there, and I liked the people, too. The food's not bad, compared to England. [laughter] When we were in England, it seems that our main diet was powdered eggs, Brussel sprouts, and potatoes. [laughter] When I was in England, about seven months, I think I had three fresh eggs. They came from the black market, because these British officers with whom I was stationed at Dorchester had connections in the black market farmers and others. But, once we got on the Continent, and we captured Antwerp, that's when the supplies really started to roll in. You came down in the morning and they say, "How do you want your eggs?" Boy, I never heard a more welcome sound. [laughter] Nothing makes you

appreciate your own situation until you see what another fellow has to put up with. I don't know what else I can contribute.

KP: I have a question about your growing up Irish Catholic in the 1920s and 30s, and the impact of Al Smith on your community.

EB: Yes. [laughter]

KP: You were just a boy, but, nonetheless, you have some recollection of that.

EB: Al Smith, Father Laughlin.

KP: Coughlin?

EB: Coughlin, yes. He used to be on the radio every Sunday, pounding just about everyone and everything. When I went to Rutgers, here, studying plant pathology, we came to the subject of the potato blight, and the instructor, I don't know who it was, said, "Well, this is the reason we have so many Irish cops in this country."

KP: It sounds like you could really identify with that comment ...

EB: Yes.

KP: Because, your father was an Irish police officer.

EB: My grandfather, I think, down in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, was a cop.

KP: Did you think you might become a cop?

EB: No.

KP: You did not want to become a cop?

EB: No. My father, until he became Captain, was always on a swing shift. I mean, three to eleven, eleven at night to seven in the morning, seven in the morning to three. Every Sunday, we'd eat our main meal at a different time. I thought my eyes would not permit me to do so. I was near sighted, at that time, not enough that I couldn't get by my driver's license without glasses. No, it never appealed to me to become a policeman.

KP: Did your parents expect that you would go to college?

EB: I was the first of my generation to go to college. Let's see, I think I had an uncle who went to Rider. My father took a course or two at Rider. He had beautiful handwriting. My mother took a stenographer's course at Rider, because they were down in the middle of Trenton. Now,

Rider's out, well, just less than a mile from me. I have a grandson, Kevin, who goes to Rider as a freshman. He's pretty good pitcher.

KP: How were you able to afford college?

EB: Well, in those days, I kept track of my expenses, and, I think, you wouldn't believe the figure I came up with. I mean, including the meals I ate here, my commuting costs, my book costs, tuition, and general fee, I think, were less than four hundred dollars a year. That was in 1936-37. Course, the College of Agriculture had a lower tuition rate and I don't know whether they still do or not.

KP: No, I think it is actually a little higher now. I thought they had government support.

KP: All of Rutgers has government support.

EB: Well, I mean federal, the Land-Grant Act, and so forth.

KP: I do not know all the details, but, I do know it is actually a little bit higher now. [laughter] Things have changed.

EB: Yes. I can see by the traffic around here how things have changed. There never used to be any parking up on Queens Campus. God, it seems like a sacrilege, terrible.

KP: You're not the first to comment that there used to be a lawn there where the chapel is.

EB: Right.

KP: You said you commuted the first two years.

EB: Right.

KP: It sounds like you really wanted to live on campus though.

EB: Well. Yes and No. I had a job every Sunday, delivering newspapers, got three bucks for it. I went seventeen miles. I always borrowed my father's car. I went from the center of Trenton out to the city limits, along the river. That was my spending money. I didn't want to give that up. Commuting was less than thirty dollars a month. I wasn't fraternity, or anything like that.

KP: You did not want to join a fraternity?

EB: Not particularly, no.

KP: Could you have afforded a fraternity?

EB: I don't think so.

KP: It does not sound like something you missed.

EB: Because my father was a Police Captain, he was making only \$3600 a year, and he had my brother and my sister coming along. My brother went through law school. Jack was three years behind me at Rutgers. He belonged to Kappa Sigma, when they were on the corner down here. It was a wooden building with a lot a gingerbread on the front. But, speaking of Rutgers, I was on the committee for the first Ag Field Day they held out at the Farm.

KP: That is a Rutgers tradition that has continued.

EB: Yes.

KP: Where did the idea of the Ag Field Day come from?

EB: I don't know. Somebody thought it up.

KP: You just decided this was a good committee to join.

EB: Yes. It was Paul Dobin, and myself, and several others. After all, that's sixty years ago.

KP: We are impressed with what you can remember. [laughter] We fully understand that you might forget certain things.

EB: Yes.

KP: Sixty years is a long time.

EB: Yes.

KP: What is your recollection of Dean Metzger?

EB: He was crusty, but, he was fair. ...

KP: You had no run-ins with him for any reason?

EB: No.

KP: It seems that people who had run-ins with him have more distinct memories of him.

EB: That is true.

KP: How did you feel about having to go to Chapel?

EB: Just spent time there. [laughter] Doesn't hurt you to go.

KP: The Class of 1940 was a very close class.

EB: In what way?

KP: You really stuck together after graduation.

EB: Oh, you mean the Class of '40.

KP: The Class of 1940 Fund, and so forth.

EB: Yes.

KP: I get the impression that it was a tight knit group. For example, Carleton Dilatush led your class when you graduated.

EB: Right.

KP: He's still leading the class.

EB: Yes. He lost his wife, couple years ago.

KP: I am curious about your observation about your class.

EB: Yes, well, we were brought up in pretty hard times. Personally, I never was hungry. My father always had a job. But, some of the guys, their families had it tough, I'm telling you. I guess, it follows you through your life. Far as sticking together, I don't know. When we got out, most of us had this common problem ...of service. I remember, it was at our baccalaureate service. Jan Masaryk, from Czechoslovakia, gave a talk. We didn't know what the hell was going on over there, and still don't know. I still can't remember what he said, but, I do remember that, later on, he went back to Czechoslovakia, and he was killed for his beliefs. You remember those things. ...

KP: Before the war broke out, did you have a good sense of what was going on in Europe?

EB: No. Even when you were in service. There was that time, from February of '41 till December, that was more or less like the German Sitzkrieg.

KP: You had mentioned Over-the-Hill-In-October.

EB: Yes.

KP: There were a lot of people who did not want to be in the Army.

EB: Oh, yes.

KP: We were not at war, and a peacetime draft was unprecedented, so, many did not see its purpose.

EB: Right. Well, we did in World War I.

KP: Yes, but war had actually broken out.

EB: Yes. But, I would say the Army did all right by me. I mean, I have no complaints.

KP: I know Mike Hill had stayed in Advanced ROTC. Had you thought about staying in Advanced ROTC?

EB: I could, but, I couldn't, on account of my Ag program, which called for a lot of labs field trips, and so forth, and you may not get back in time for drill.

KP: The lab courses kept you out of advanced ROTC?

EB: Well yes. I guess I would have gone, because I was interested in the Rifle Team. I tried out for the Rifle Team. There's another incident where luck stood in my way. When I got over to Raritan Arsenal, who should be there but Frenchy, I don't know his last name, a sergeant who had been a ROTC sergeant here at Rutgers. He saw me, he said, "What the hell happened to you? You bust out of school?" I said, "Nah, I was drafted." It was largely due to him, I think, that in a couple weeks, I was wearing a corporal's stripes, and, in a couple of months, I was wearing sergeant's stripes. Still getting twenty-one bucks a month, recruit's pay, but, still, I had the stripes, because there was nobody else who knew anything about drill.

KP: But, you knew about drill.

EB: Yes, because I had two years of ROTC here at Rutgers. It was funny, we would get out on the parade ground at Raritan Arsenal, and the officers would gather around the IDR (Infantry Drill Manual), because they had been raised on the old squads right method, just like we had here at Rutgers. But, in the meantime, they went on to the new system. [laughter] I was one of the few who could give commands. [laughter] That stood me in good stead.

KP: Did the Army, before Pearl Harbor, have a much more relaxed pace?

EB: Oh, yes. When we were up at Raritan Arsenal, we used to get every Wednesday afternoon off for sports. Generally, we would go to a pizza parlor and a bowling alley in Nixon, and things like that, you know. Oh, yes, the Army was much more relaxed, but, promotion wasn't as fast.

KP: I have also been told that.

EB: Right. Most of the fellows that were at my class at Rutgers and went to Aberdeen came back as, well, most of them, at least, made major or lieutenant colonel. Bob Braid even became a general. He died on the golf course not long ago.

SI: Your experience with the Drill Team at Rutgers helped you in the Army?

EB: Not on the Drill Team.

SI: Sorry, drilling with the ROTC.

EB: Yes, it stood me in good stead, because you learned about latrines, etc., the basics of Army life, in the classroom. I think it's a good thing. I'm sorry that it's all voluntary now, but, in those days, we all had to take it, unless you had a iron clad alibi, or something. I don't know, but, it never hurt me.

SI: Did your experience in the classroom at Rutgers help you later on when you were an instructor at Aberdeen?

EB: No, because it was all technical. I mean, this fuse, when it hit this, that would happen, and you'd get an explosion, or, you have to store ammunition so far apart or you'll get sympathetic detonation, you know. If one pile goes off, they all go off. They had such a thing as Quantity Distance Tables that they used to follow in the peacetime Army, where storage of ammunition had to be so many feet between this kind, and that kind, and so forth. They put small arms ammunition in between, because that won't explode. It'll burn and when it explodes, it is not a high order detonation. ...

KP: I was wondering if you could reflect a little bit on your favorite professor at Rutgers, Harold Beezly.

EB: He was a man's man. But, I liked them all, Bailey Pepper, Entomology, Professor Helyar, head of short course. [laughter]

KP: Helyar?

EB: Yes, Prof. Helyar. He helped a lot of farm kids that didn't have a pot to pee in or a window to throw it out. He'd arrange for jobs for them, and a place to live. If they're interested in going to school, he saw to it that they got to school. Dean Lippincott, he was the same way. There were several German refugee kids that he helped out. ...

KP: Do you remember the German refugees?

EB: Yes, one of them was in my class. I remember his name. Carl Livingstone. He was a rugged guy. He'd been a football tackle, you know. Also, I remember George Vandernoot in animal husbandry. Incidentally, our class was very well represented on the team that beat Princeton for the first time in sixty-nine years.

KP: You were at that game.

EB: I was at that game. First game that was played in the new stadium. Somebody burned a hole in a brand new flannel shirt that I had on. [laughter] I took my brother there and I had to get the seats. I turned in my student ticket and get seats over on the Princeton side. [laughter] There was Art Gottlieb, Paul Harvey, I don't know who all else in my class, who were on that team. In those days, a lot of players went both ways, I mean, both offense and defense.

KP: Yes. I have heard about that. It was much tougher than today.

EB: Yes, right. Yep. John, oh, what his name? Coach, short, stout guy. Oh, boy, that the worst thing about getting old. There's so much to remember and you can't do it, you know.

KP: You are doing a pretty good job. [laughter] We do not remember that well either.

EB: Well, I remember that day. This town went nuts.

KP: That is what I have been told.

EB: Yes.

KP: Do you recall the controversy that surrounded one of the honorary fraternity at the College of Agriculture?

EB: Alpha Zeta?

KP: Yes.

EB: I never knew it had a scandal. I'm a member of that.

KP: There were some protests, and this one had been after you left, concerning a clause in the fraternity's charter which would not allow black members into Alpha Zeta. Do you remember that at all?

EB: No, I don't. It was kept a secret from me. Oh, when you start talking about that sort of stuff, in most classes, they seat you alphabetically, and I sat, for four years, next to Ernie Baxter.

KP: I have heard about Ernie.

EB: Yes, he was a four-letter man, I think. He wasn't big, but, he was in 150-pound football, and boxing, fencing. He was colored, but, there wasn't a whiter guy anywheres around. I mean, he was damn nice. Whenever anybody starts that business about discrimination, I point that out. No, I never heard anything about that.

KP: I know it was around 1942.

EB: Something like that would probably have been kept sub rosa.

KP: We actually got this information from the *Targum*.

EB: Yes.

KP: It actually made the *Targum*, I know, by 1941-42.

EB: Well, I was busy with other things during that time.

KP: I am not sure how far back that went.

EB: Yes. I don't care whether a guy is sky blue, pink, or purple. If he has the qualifications, give him a shot.

KP: Did you encounter any black troops, either at Raritan or Aberdeen?

EB: No. but, in England, at G-20, the Quartermaster depot, they were all colored troops, because they were labor. That was really something. You got a kick out of them out there drilling. "Simulate to the rear march," etc. They'd go through this jive business. It was funny, listening to them. I don't know if I ought to tell you this or not, but, in the officers' barracks, we had guys from everywhere. One night, this one officer came in, and another one said to him, "Wait a minute, what the hell was the trouble down at your company today?" He said, "That black son-of-a-bitch," he said, "at the morning assembly of officers, the lieutenant asked if anyone had anything more to say, and this colored warrant officer said, "Incidentally, lieutenant, Mary sends her love." [laughter] He'd been dating this lieutenant's girlfriend down in the village, you know. Oh, Anytime we wanted to get a rise out of him, we'd holler out, "Incidentally lieutenant!" That's the funny thing, because, when we were outside of the port of Antwerp waiting for a ship. I had gone to a movie, and, when the movie was over, and we're walking back to our tents, I could hear this scrunching ahead of me on the gravel, and a familiar voice. I hollered out, "Incidentally lieutenant!" He turns around, and he says, "Captain, UXB." [laughter] So, it was him after the war was over.

There's another incident, too, that did relate. In Normandy, we were stationed with this Medium Maintenance Company for quarters and rations, because we didn't have enough people to have a mess hall, and so forth. Then, they got orders to move out, and they left us. We had to exist on 10-in-1 rations for couple of weeks, because we still had this ammunition depot to clean up. We started running low on certain things, shaving cream, razor blades, stuff like that. I went down to this Quartermaster depot down the road. I was in the front tent there, explaining my troubles to some disinterested sergeant, and, in walked the commandant of the depot, who was Ed Hoffman. He and I had been drafted the same day. We had both gone to Raritan Arsenal. He was in a different company, but, we still rode back and forth to Trenton, because he had a car, or his girlfriend had a car, I don't know which. I went to Fort Knox, put in for Ordnance OCS. I don't

know where he was, but, he put in for Quartermaster OCS. Here he was, the commandant of this depot. I told him my problem, and he said, "Come on down to the break down tent," where they had odds and ends stored. He told me, "Help yourself to whatever you want," and we did. [laughter]

I tell you, another story. In England, we were called in on an air raid down at Swanage. Swanage is a resort town on the southern coast of England where some US troops were billeted. There'd been an air raid against the garrison down there, and there were little anti-personnel bombs all over. These were like a mortar shell, 60-mm mortar shell, 'bout that thick and 'bout that long. They were all over the streets, on roofs, in gardens, etc. These British officers with us got a couple of hand baskets from some woman, and they went around, just like gathering eggs because these bombs had a percussion fuse that, if it didn't go off when it hits, it wasn't going to go off. Civil Defense had put sandbag enclosures around some of them that had fallen in the open. There was an American soldier standing guard over a couple of these enclosures. When the British officers went up and reached inside for the bomb, no bomb. Being the only American officer present, I asked the soldier, "What happened to the bomb in there?" He said, "Well, three guys in a truck came, and they stopped, and got out, and they took the bomb." I says, "You were on guard here?" He says, "But, there were three of them and only one of me." But, he did remember the unit number that was on their truck's bumper. I got on the phone, and I called this unit, and got the Charge of Quarters. I explained that I wanted that bomb back, PDQ. "Ah, just a minute sir, be right back." After a while, he came back and said, "Well, sir, that bomb's been already taken care of." [laughter] I blew my stack but, what could I do? After the war, my wife and I went to a wedding of one of her classmates at NJC at Somerville. The groom was a master sergeant. He had medals, he had stripes, he had been in the First Division. They'd been all over Africa, Italy, Sicily, France. After the wedding, at the reception, we got to fighting the war again, and I said, "Gee, you were in the First Division? You were all over. You were in England, weren't you?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Where were you in England?" He said, "Swanage." I said, "A funny thing happened to me in Swanage." I told him the story about the bomb. He listened to me, and he said, "Yes, and you got me a hell of a chewing out." He was the one.

KP: Who picked up the bomb?

EB: He picked up the bomb. He'd wanted it for a teaching aid in a class he was giving on bombs and anti-personnel devices. [laughter] I'm telling you, it's fun to unload all of this.

KP: Whom else have you told about the war?

EB: In bits and pieces. My kids, they wouldn't understand it, you know. You're afraid to talk. I'm in the American Legion. I don't attend meetings much anymore, because I bowl on meeting nights, but, I'm a Past Commander of Lawrence Township, Post 414. You don't always want to brag at a bar because somebody can come up with something else that can beat you. [laughter] When I went to OCS, there were guys with tech sergeant, master sergeant's stripes, you know. Some had just come back from Pearl Harbor, and there I was, with only buck sergeant stripes. You feel about that big. You know, when you get to be a commissioned officer, there's always a

bunch of big shots shooting off their mouths. But, I think that one about the Colonel coming down to help me was the one that takes the cake. What other questions do you have now?

KP: Do you need to be somewhere?

EB: Well, I'm going to one of my son's for supper tonight. I'm supposed to be home around six o'clock.

KP: Maybe we should ask you a few more. Let me see if Shaun has any.

EB: Yes.

SI: Well, since we were just talking about how, in OCS, somebody always had a bigger story to tell ...

EB: Not in OCS.

SI: Well, people with more stripes, and so forth.

EB: Well, you leave all of those behind when you go to OCS. All those stripes come off. You're all the same.

SI: I was wondering if your class was any different because of the Vice President's son being in it?

EB: I don't think the instructors gave a damn one way or the other. I mean, we had guys wash out and I had the unpleasant duty, a lot of times, to interview guys after I was commissioned. That was part of my duties at night, after instructing all day, then, you had to interview the officer candidates. Ask them questions, what would you do if this, or that, and so forth. You tried to get an angle on the guy's character and potential as an officer.

SI: I was also wondering, as an officer, did you feel there was a special bond between you and your men?

EB: Oh, yes, because their life and my life were intertwined. [laughter] If they wanted to do me in, they could do me in. [laughter] We got along pretty well.

SI: Would you go on leave together?

EB: No. Enlisted men and officers couldn't do that. Although, after the shooting was over and V-E day came along, I put in for leave for rest and recuperation, at the Riviera. As they're going to cut my orders, I said, "Oh, being an officer, I'm not supposed to drive. I'll have to take one of my men as a driver." [laughter] There was a regulation in the Army that officers are not supposed to drive, but, Bomb Disposal officers were permitted to drive, because of the shortage of personnel in their units. Anyway, we took off. We went down the Loire Valley to the Riviera,

past a lot of German wreckage on the way. We broke two springs on the jeep getting down there. But, my driver had to stay in Nice and I went to Cannes. They put me up at the Hotel California, in Cannes. I had a beautiful view of the Mediterranean, and the harbor.

They put up a sign about a deep-sea fishing trip. Oh, boy, I want to go deep-sea fishing. I signed up for it. Well, "Be down at the dock at six o'clock in the morning." Got down there, here were a couple of boats, well, bigger than this table, but, not much bigger, with a one lugger engine. [laughter] We got out there a ways and they passed out these hand lines, using the snails for bait. [laughter] You'd let it over and pull up. If you got a fish this big, the captain went into ecstasy. That was grand. [laughter] Oh, boy! Yes, that was a nice trip. That was the only time I encountered trouble with Patton. Coming back, we went up and stopped at the Swiss border, went over into Switzerland, had a drink of wine at the bar there, and came back, and went on. As we came into Third Army territory, there was a roadblock. They stopped me. "What's the matter sergeant?" He said, "Sir, you have no necktie on." [laughter] They made us dig out our neckties and put them on. That's the first time we had put them on since we left England.

KP: The stories about Patton making his men wear neckties is more than a myth.

EB: Well, so far as I'm concerned, it's true.

KP: You were stopped and had to put one on?

EB: Yes.

KP: I get the impression that this was the ultimate in chickenshit.

EB: Yes. But, being an officer, I've got to admire him for his control over his men. I mean, they'd die for him, you know. That's saying something, and because of that, he would treat them right. I think he turned his back on a lot of their peccadilloes, but, I have no proof of that, because he had a lot of his own. [laughter] Yes, oh, I'll tell you about Bomb Disposal. After I was married the first time, we went on our honeymoon, and I stopped at a fellow officer who was in Covington, Kentucky, and my sergeant in St. Mary's, Ohio. Every place you went, they'd ply us with food and drink. We came back from that, and Kay, my wife, said, "I don't know how you ever came back sane and sober." 'Cause, really, they could booze it up.

KP: You drank a lot?

EB: Well.

KP: At least, maybe, you drank more then than after you came back.

EB: Yes, because it was there. It was good. [laughter]

KP: Well, being in Champagne country does sound nice.

EB: Yes, there used to be, as I said, four officers in this apartment. Each noontime, we'd split a bottle between the four of us, after lunch. Then, at the end of the workday, before supper, we'd split another bottle. Then, after supper, we'd have yet another bottle. You keep that up for a week or ten days, everything is rosy, you know. You're going just like on a high, I guess they would call it today, with dope. When you'd burp and it would taste like fermented apples. You only live once.

SI: I guess you were not disposing of any bombs during this period of inebriation.

EB: Yes, sure. Some guys had to have it, to get their nerve up.

KP: This sounds like something you had to have nerve to do.

EB: Yes. We only had, I think, one US Bomb Disposal officer ask for reassignment, and that was because he was working with a British officer who was working on a butterfly bomb and got his head blown off, right in front of him. Shook him up.

KP: Your squad was unscathed ...

EB: Right.

KP: Other squads were not so lucky?

EB: Yes. Joe Bossaloto's squad had a calamity happen to them. After the Ardennes, the Engineers lifted up the anti-tank mines that the Germans had put out. They were long things, like this. The Engineers put them up like stacks of wood and left them for us to dispose of. This squad, working out of Liege, went up to one of the piles and backed up their truck. I think there was four men there, or five, five I guess, and one went back to the pile of mines, and the damn thing went off and killed four of them. That's the worst, that I know of. It wasn't a bomb, it was mines. We don't know whether it was booby-trapped, or one of the men did something wrong, we'll never know. That's why we got the big money. Well, as a Captain, I was making a \$150.00 a month. No, enlisted men weren't supposed to work with fuses.

KP: That was your job.

EB: Yes. Their job was to dig down to the bomb, and dig around it to lay bare the fuse, so I could identify it. You see, the German fuses all had a model number on them and, by that, you could tell whether it was an impact fuse, a time fuse, anti-disturbance, or so forth. It's funny, they never got wise to the fact that we knew that. If it was a #55 fuse, that was an impact fuse, you just went in with your heat steamer, and steamed the fuse for about half hour, and pull the fuse out, away you go.

KP: Even though they changed the bomb designs, they kept numbering the fuses.

EB: Right.

KP: You knew, if a new number appeared, there might be a problem.

EB: That's why we had the Ordnance Technical Intelligence Teams. They would be right up along the front to get at captured armament, and see what new developments there were. They were the ones who went up and snuck out a lot of the V-2 rockets before the Russians could get to them.

KP: After the war?

EB: After the war. Also, Wernher von Braun worked on rockets for the Germans during the war and for us after the war. Incidentally, when my New Jersey National Guard unit was sent to Fort Bliss, in the Korean conflict, we were moved into the quarters that had just been vacated by the German scientists down there, an old hospital, the station hospital, with all the covered walkways, so that they could move patients around without being rained on, and so forth. Boy, the wind down there, that was really something. All the windows were taped on the inside. Otherwise, the dust would blow in through the window cracks.

KP: Did you ever go to Mass when you were in the service?

EB: Oh, yes, as much as I could. I mean, there'd be chaplains coming around, or else, in France and Germany, you could always find a Catholic Church. In England, it was a little more difficult, but, we found them. Oh, yes, never gave that up. I mean, not that I'm a holy Joe or anything. ...

KP: I take it you had enough points to come home rather quickly.

EB: Yes, because I had a lot of points from different battles. The Battle of England, Battle of Normandy, Battle of France, Ardennes, Rhineland, Battle of Germany. I was entitled to all those battle stars. See, here's my old 201 form. Originally, I was with the 47th Bomb Disposal Squad. That was the same squad with a different number, August 3rd till 15th of October, then, we were re-designated in November, 1943, as the 31st Bomb Disposal Squad (Separate). Yes, I got back to the US on the 26th of September of '45. I had twenty-two months overseas. Yes, I got the Battles of England, Northern France, Normandy, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe campaign stars and a Bronze Star. Is anybody else as windy as I am?

KP: You are not even close to being windy. The longest interview we have had is about seven hours.

EB: Oh.

KP: You have not even approached that record.

SI: Do you believe that your Bomb Disposal training at Aberdeen, and in England, adequately prepared you for the real thing?

EB: Oh, yes. The pioneer work done by the English was ahead of our work. Without that training, I'd never think of going down there. That's the loneliest feeling in the world, to be down there with a big thousand-pounder. You don't know what it's going to do next.

KP: It sounds like you really appreciate what the British taught you.

EB: Oh, yes.

KP: Both indirectly and directly.

EB: Right, right. I mean, being Irish, I don't care about the English.

KP: I was curious about that, too, being an Irish Catholic in England.

EB: Yes, I kept my mouth shut. [laughter] Although, when I was with the British, I told you, I lived in this house, and two pretty well-to-do women lived there, both wives of British officers overseas. One of the husbands was a major in the Army, and the other was a commander in the Navy. I used to get ragging them on the royalty. You know, why have royalty, and all that stuff. What do they do for the country? I didn't get thrown out, but, I guess it's hard to understand. Here's a picture, four of my boys, when they were young. The one that's a doctor wasn't born yet. We used to go down to the shore, Brant Beach, for two or three years. Had a good time.

KP: You lost your first wife very soon after you were married.

EB: Yes. We were married for five years and had three sons. She was stricken with polio in 1950, while I was at Fort Bliss, Texas, with my New Jersey National Guard outfit.

KP: You had three sons.

EB: Right. After I remarried, I had two more sons, no girls.

KP: What was it like to raise three sons by yourself, in a time when it was not very common.

EB: Well, if it wasn't for my family, I don't know what I'd do. I tried. First, a cousin came and lived with me. She had no children, but, after about a month or so, it got to her, and she told me she couldn't take it any longer. Finally, my mother, who was, by then, a widow, sold her home and moved in with me. She lived with me for about six years, until I remarried. She raised my boys. I picture family like a herd of buffalo. When one of them's hurt ...

KP: The herd gathers around ...

EB: They circle around. Some of them offered to take one or two of them, but, I didn't want them separated. They did all right. All but one had a college education, and he didn't want it. I made him sign that. [laughter]

KP: You actually made him sign that he did not want to go to college?

EB: Not exactly. He didn't want to go to Notre Dame High School, just down the road from me, so, I made him sign he didn't want to. The other two older sons went to Notre Dame, did all right. He didn't go to college, but, he made out all right. He works for Amtrak in a pretty good paying position, out on the road. I have another boy with AT&T. I guess he's still employed. He came to Rutgers, went in for Electrical Engineering, didn't like it, and went to Agriculture. He studied under Dick West, a classmate of mine, in Forestry. And He's working for AT&T now, as a computer specialist. I mean, he troubleshoots problems they have with different installations. The second boy, he went to Rider, and he works as a salesman of medical supplies, like staples, sutures, and things like that, 'round the New York area. He also instructs up at their Connecticut place, where they develop new operations. I think that's US Surgical, the one that developed the new system for taking out a gall bladder. Tom, well, he's working at Amtrak. Michael, he's a lawyer working for the State as a law officer in child support cases. [laughter] Sometimes he keeps us amused all night with the stories these guys give, you know.

KP: Of why they cannot pay support?

EB: Yes. He says the thing to do is to look at their shoes. If they have good looking shoes, you know they're lying. [laughter] The other boy, the youngest one, he's a medical doctor. He got out of Stockton State College, got married, had a couple of kids, and then, decided he wanted to be a doctor. His wife worked a couple of jobs, and then, they had another child. But, he made it through med. school with a good record, and he's now down in Florida, as a partner in a good practice at Stuart, near the Palm Beach crowd. [laughter]

KP: I take it you are very proud of your family.

EB: Oh, yes.

KP: You should be.

EB: None of them has ever been in jail and they all have good jobs and nice families.

KP: You have had some that have carried on the Rutgers tradition.

EB: Well, my brother and I, and my oldest son, but, I wish to hell they'd get a better football team. [laughter]

KP: Are you disappointed in their recent performances?

EB: Well, I had hopes for them while watching the game Saturday on TV. They really showed some life in the second half. It was like the old days. [laughter]

KP: You have been attending games regularly since you graduated from Rutgers.

EB: I used to come, at least to Homecoming, but, then, they jacked the price up. I won't pay twenty-two dollars for a college team. I can't. My wife and I are doing all right, money-wise. Having that medical coverage is a Godsend and we're getting income from five different places. I still get a pension from the Farmers' Co-Op, although I took a heck of a slice by quitting so young. I get a pension from the State. Marge gets a pension from the State, and we both get Social Security. We're doing all right. We have more money than we did when we were both working. [laughter]

KP: Also, your house is paid for.

EB: Oh, yes. That was paid for twenty years ago.

KP: Well, unless there is something we forgot to ask, thank you very much. We really appreciate this.

EB: Well, I hope some of my stories didn't bore you.

KP: No, no, you were great.

EB: I've been waiting a long time to get a lot of this off my mind.

KP: We are glad you are feeling better, though we are sorry.

EB: Yes?

KP: Because, last year, we called and you had some problems with your feet.

EB: Yes, I did. They're in pretty good shape now. I need to learn to walk again. Boy, I'm telling you, I had an operation in October on one of my toes, where they cut the metatarsal bone and let it come up, so, that you're not walking on a knuckle. During part of that, I got an ulcer started. With the high sugar I have, it's hard to control. It took from last October till this May for that to clear up. You have to watch yourself.

KP: In closing, we wish you good health and speedy recoveries.

EB: Well, sorry I kept you here so late.

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

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