

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH VICTOR J. CAMPI

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Victor Campi on March 27, 1995 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

Brett Marin: ... Brett Marin.

KP: I'd like to begin by asking you about your father. He seemed to have an interesting life, in terms of his experiences and different careers. You mentioned that he came to the United States when he was very young.

Victor Campi: Yes, he arrived in the United States when he was fourteen years old. His father died when he was five and they were basically farmers in the Apennine Mountains of Italy. ... At that time, of course, to avoid disaster in losing a crop, they would own parcels of land in little different areas. We had about thirteen parcels of land when he died. Apparently, financially, there were problems, and Grandmother didn't know how to take care of it, and so, as a result, they lost those lands, and so he felt his future would be improved by coming here. ... He arrived alone, by himself. And, of course, in those days, what happened very often, people from your hometown would keep in touch with the old folks back home, and they would help you get settled in the new area. ... I don't know how he obtained his first employment. But after arriving, obviously in New York City, he went up to Pocantico Hills. Pocantico Hills is a town that is, in its entirety, owned by the Rockefeller family. ... The old man was building a mansion there, but, I believe, thereafter, they built mansions for each one of the children. ... He [my father] was, I think, probably, and I'm speculating, obtained a job working for a contractor and later on, the old man hired him. And he worked for him for, he was the oldest employee at one point in time before he died. ... He started from scratch and became capable of doing all kinds of things. ... He became a superintendent of roads and he was hiring and firing people. As a matter-of-fact, he would have remained in Pocantico Hills. ... My mother's family moved in and that's where they met, and that's where they married, and that's where they had their first children. However, in, perhaps in 1915, '13, '14, or something like that, my father fired a man who wasn't competent, as far as he was concerned. He was very serious about doing his job. So in the community, he was told to, there was an organization called *La Mano Nera*, the Black Hand, and it wasn't organized crime per se, but it was where people of ethnic groups got together and tried to protect themselves and help each other, and they told my father that they should rehire this man. ... He said that, "No," he wouldn't. So they gave one of their members *La Bacio Morte*, the Kiss of Death, and they said, "Teach him a lesson." And so, he came over one night and set fire to the house. ... The dog raised hell, and he killed the dog, and it wakened the family, and, thereafter, my father thought, it was time for him to go and try other things. And so he went back to Italy, at that time, with three children, and he tried to start a bus service. Actually, buses, in those days, also handled the mail. And, apparently, it didn't work out. His finances were in order, I mean, he couldn't handle it. So he came back to the United States and went to Schenectady, New York and worked for General Electric for a little while, and then he got in touch with the old man, and he had an estate in Lakewood, which was some 550 acres or something like that. So he came down there and that's where I was born. ... The estate was quite, a little unusual by today's terms. It had, for example, a flock of sheep. It had cattle, so it was quite a community. ... He took care of the shops there. He would build farm equipment if it had to be built. He had a hearth there, where he could put a piece of metal on the hearth and then bang it out, and then putting it on the lathe and build whatever had to be built. This was his expertise. ... The old

man knew my father, and, of course, never did business with him on a day-to-day basis, or anything like that, but, occasionally, he use to run into him, at a time when old man Rockefeller use to give out dimes. And if he ran across my father and my brothers, he would say, "How's the family doing?" and he would hand a dime out to each one.

KP: Did you ever get a dime out of him?

VC: Well, I have a few left.

KP: Did he ever personally give you a dime when you were in the shop?

VC: No, no. The only time I ever saw him was when I was helping when the air conditioning was out, and so I brought in some dry ice to put in front of the fan and he was in bed. At that time, he was well into his nineties and he looked like "Old Man Scrooge." He had a nightcap on. A feller by the name of (Yardie?) was his Swedish butler. So my contact was very limited. Of course, my mother's family worked for him. My grandfather worked there. Grandfather was a man, in Europe, [who] never worked. He was the town scribe and a musician. When he came here, he had to go to work, which he managed reasonably well. One of my uncles was the old man's cabinetmaker and fixed his antiques and things. ... Another uncle was his chauffeur for years.

KP: So your family had quite a connection with Rockefeller.

VC: Well, we worked for him for a number of years. As I say, my uncles did, too, and my grandfather. So, as a result, I know my father, for example, knew all the kids. He knew all of Rockefeller's sons. He saw them around the estate, apparently, like that, and there was no socializing, or anything like that, but they were on the scene together.

KP: Your family had a connection with Rockefeller for a long time.

VC: I think from probably 1900 to, say, in the '40s. It may have been a little before 1900.

BM: The man that your father had to fire and then came back with the Black Hand ...

VC: Well, no, that was just a local organization that was trying to look after its own and had no, I think, no connection with any organization. And they, I don't know, in those days, apparently, something like that was done periodically.

KP: It sounds like your father ...

VC: My father was, he was a kind of the guy, for example, when World War II came about, and he was roughly forty years old and had three or four children, he went down to sign up. They wouldn't accept him because he had too many dependents and because of his age, I guess, too.

KP: Did your father like working for the Rockefellers?

VC: Yes. Oh, my father, of course, had his own shop and he loved to do the things that he did. ... He was a very quiet person, who was an introverted individual and intensely loyal to the people that he worked for.

KP: So he very much respected the Rockefellers.

VC: Oh, yes.

KP: And they seemed to have respected him.

VC: Yes, yes. I think there came a time, once, when, I think, my mother had an operation, or something like that, and I think Mr. Rockefeller sent a check over, although, as I say, he was very frugal. He changed his dimes to a nickel, I think, the Depression, you know.

BM: When your family moved back to Italy, did your father know he was going to come back to the United States?

VC: No, I think that, of course, I never discussed this, but I've gotten this from the family. I got the impression that, of course, he could, cars were a new convenience, and he could fix cars, and so the maintenance of the system wasn't anything of a problem, but he was not a businessman. ... I think he went there with the intent of establishing a life there, but, apparently, I say he wasn't a businessman, I don't believe, and so, financially, the thing didn't work out. And so, as a result, he thought, I assume, that his opportunities in the United States were much better.

KP: So, in other words, this position he had at the Rockefeller estate really fitted his personality. He didn't want to become a small businessman, or create his own shop.

VC: No, no. It was like a big family. He was very comfortable in that kind of a setting. As I say, he was not outgoing and he was an introvert, so, as a result, he was very shy. He didn't like business transactions and he didn't feel comfortable doing it.

KP: Where did you live when you were in Lakewood?

VC: Well, we lived in a house close to the estate, initially. Then, after I was born, a few years after I was born, my father bought some land and built a house. ... He did practically all the construction himself. As a child, I used to hold the lantern sometime as he was working in the attic at night. I'll tell you, he could do anything. And so, we lived in a, I think it was a blue-collar neighborhood, actually. In those days, it was very safe and very comfortable. The neighbors were people that mind their own business and we got along fine.

KP: How many people in the Lakewood community had dealings with the Rockefellers?

VC: Well, he had a staff working for him. At the time, it wasn't Lakewood's chief industry, or it didn't impact heavily, I don't think on the ...

KP: So your work on the estate was the exception?

VC: Well, the estate was a little unusual. It's now called the, it's the Ocean County Park, it's part of the park system. They gave it to the park. It was very unusual, as I say. Here was a flock of sheep, and the shepherd we knew, and he was an Irishman, a very colorful character. And they had some cattle. ... In the summertime, I used to help bring in corn from the fields, and my father did a lot of the landscaping. A lot of the trees that were planted on the estate were under his supervision. It was, as I say, a very intimate, close relationship, which you don't find with normal industry.

KP: Someone in the class had a father, who was a groundskeeper on the Long Island estate, and he told very similar stories to what you're telling. It sounds like education was very important to your father.

VC: Well, my father felt, of course, inasmuch as his father died at an early age, and he didn't have an opportunity to get an education, and from my earliest memories, I've always known, and he let everyone know that they had to go to school. They were to get an education. ... It was an assumption when I was growing up that I would have my turn and [also] my brothers. ... My oldest brother didn't go that way and it was big disappointment to my father, although, he, later on, became very successful and did attend some university classes. But my next oldest brother became a dentist, and one is an engineer, and one is an accountant. And I'm, I don't know what you'd call my occupation, but I was a, actually, I've been in public service all my life. My younger brother is a dentist, also.

KP: What struck me also was that education was very important to the Rockefellers throughout their career. Do you think that your father got any of that sense from the Rockefellers, or was it just the fact that he hadn't gotten an education ...

VC: I think there was a feeling among a lot of immigrants that they wanted their children to do better, and education was a way to approach it. And so, my father was very, I mean, this was instilled to us. It was never drummed into us, exactly, but it was a fact that was there, that we were expected to go to school. ... He sacrificed to put me through school. ... The only thing I missed is the fact that my next oldest brother, who is five years older than I, so, as a result, in high school, for example, all my older brothers were at school. So, as a result, I didn't have the benefit of some counseling that they would have given me, and I know, even when I came here to Rutgers, I really didn't know what I wanted to do. [I] really didn't know what I wanted to do. ... I started off in engineering and thought, "Well, gee, my father has a sense of engineering, one of my brothers is an engineer, another one is a dentist, they were mechanically inclined," then, I found that I wasn't motivated. ... I was the, in high school, I think I was the fourth member of the Honor Society, and things like that, and here I felt like a dud, until one of the psychologists told me, he said, "You're in the wrong field. You've got to deal with people." So I finally took his advice.

KP: Your father sounds like he was very proud to be in the United States.

VC: Well, there was a feeling there that I don't see nowadays among new immigrants. We were always turned towards becoming an American and becoming integrated into the American

community. Now, of course, one hears a great deal of our civil rights and minorities and things like that. Basically, at that point in time, when I was growing up, I was a minority. I was a Catholic-Italian in a community which was basically, initially, WASPs. I mean, they were Protestant-Americans. ... My father worked with a lot of them and had no problem with this, although, I think, knowing that his command of the language wasn't as fluent in English as it was, so people such as he, very often socialized with people of the same ethnic background. But, as a matter-of-fact, some of our neighbors, their children went on to school, too, and did very well. But they felt comfortable in their own ethnic group. They knew the cultural inheritance and they just felt happier there. But we wanted to be Americanized to the point that, if my parents spoke in Italian, I would respond in English. I missed the opportunity to become fluent in another language.

KP: So you understand Italian but don't speak it.

VC: At that time, I could understand my parents, my grandparents, without any problem. But the thing is that I never responded, and we never thought in terms of being of a different nationality. Your loyalty was here. But, of course, after a while, even though you're feeling that you're somewhat different, ethnically, once a person of my generation became involved with the war and served, we felt that, I no longer had a feeling that I was a minority. I didn't care what they called me, I was just as much an American as anyone else and part of the system.

BM: So instead of being an Italian in America, you were just an American.

VC: Well, you're an Italian-American. I would certainly never deny it. I am very proud of my Italian heritage. But the point is this, I'm an American, with the benefit of that heritage.

BM: Instead of the trend that you see today, where people kept hyphenating who they are, you just happen to be an American.

VC: Yes, right, and speak to me in my language. That wasn't thought of at all. We were intent upon being integrated into the community and felt very comfortable there. As a matter-of-fact, in Lakewood, there's a very large Jewish population, and, I think, they, at one time, may have considered themselves a minority, too. They are ethnically a little different, but we got along very nicely.

KP: My stepfather grew up in Clifton in the 1920s and '30s. My stepfather is Catholic and he has very distinct memories of the Ku Klux Klan burning crosses to drive him out because they were one of the first Catholic families. Do you have any memory of Klan activity in the Lakewood area?

VC: I understand that there was some Klan activity but it never, well, as a matter-of-fact, at one time, I think, they draped the door of the Catholic Church with crepe. Of course, my older brother was, as a matter-of-fact, he became involved in politics later in life, and he was a county chairman for eight to ten years, and he felt a little, I think, subjected to a little more. ... I think there is someone that they knew who found nails in his tires.

KP: You don't have any childhood memories of possible discrimination?

VC: No, no. A friend of mine once told me that he noticed that the KKK used to hang their sheets on the clothesline next door, but it never got ugly. As a matter-of-fact, one of the people that I consider to be very WASPy married, his son married a Catholic girl and he told me, with a great deal of pride later on, that she was going to a parochial school and they were doing such a terrific job. ... You know, I think, there is a time, of course, when anyone that's different sometimes poses a danger, that you just don't understand and you're apprehensive, and the more that you have social contact and business contact, that you realize they're not really different. They have the same aspirations and the same problems adjusting that you do.

BM: Why do you feel that feeling of assimilation has changed from then?

VC: Well, I'm not a historian and I'm no authority, except that I see that, I know how intently my father, my parents and I, at this time, were trying to become part of the American scene and taking advantage of the opportunity. I went to school here and I missed on a scholarship opportunity. The program was just initiated and when I applied for it, it was too late. But anyway, I spent a year away and worked. I think my expenses for a year was something like 800 dollars, of which I may have earned half of it, and when my, and the thing is, I wouldn't expect anyone would give me anything. It was my business and so I went to the, what was it, the National Youth Association, NYA. I worked for that, and Vince Kramer, pushing a broom around, and I had a little job here and there, and I worked summers and things like that. ... Then, as far as differences are concerned, I read about people, they insist that the schools should teach a new language, which is something we never thought about, as a matter-of-fact, we didn't even use our own language on a day-to-day basis.

KP: You said that your parents would speak Italian at home.

VC: They would converse in English, but very often, they would lapse into the Italian because they were very comfortable with it.

KP: Did your mother ever work outside the house after she was married?

VC: No, I think, at one time, around the early 1900s, I think, she operated a general store. Now, she had good business sense, but she was basically a housewife.

KP: It sounds like your mother ran the household and paid the bills.

VC: Well, yes. Except my father supplied the, well, my mother watched the purse strings.

KP: They met at the Rockefeller estate up in New England?

VC: That's my understanding. I know my uncles and my grandfather worked for the estate and that's where my father was working, and that's where, I'm pretty sure, they married and that's where they lived for a number of years.

KP: How active were your parents in the church?

VC: Well, to compare it with church today, there's more in the Catholic church, there's more parishioner participation. There, particularly, as much as the pastor, it wasn't an Italian church, it was a church where English was spoken, and they were very comfortable with it. And they didn't actually participate in ...

KP: Except for going to mass?

VC: Yes, and fraternity classes and stuff like that.

KP: So was your priest Irish?

VC: I don't know. No, we've run across a few Irish priests [with whom] we were very comfortable with, but, no, he was a Monsignor. I don't think he was Irish.

KP: To confess, I've only been to Ocean County once, but it sounds like it was a rural and rustic place when you were growing up.

VC: Well, it was a small town atmosphere. What made it distinctive is the fact that it was in the upper fringes of the Pine Barrens. And, for some reason, it was thought that the air was fresher there and it was healthier. At the turn of the century, going down to Florida, if you were a New Yorker, it was quite a big deal. You had to go by train and it was long. So it was the Rockefellers and the Goulds, who were the railroad magnates and a number of other people. Lakewood became a resort, a winter resort. There was the Lakewood Hotel and various other places that were very fashionable, and a great deal of social activity was conducted in Lakewood, until about the end of World War I. A friend of my father was, I think, the manager of one of the hotels, and, at that time, there was a Jewish element coming in, and, I think, at one time, I think, a cabinet member went to the hotel and they wouldn't accept him. But, at any rate, I think some of the Jewish people bought the hotels, and from there on, it became a Jewish community. ... I think, when they bought the original hotel, there was a lot of World War I gas victims, soldiers who were victims of gassing, and they were sent to Lakewood because the air was so much better, and so, that became very successful. But, after that, there was a time when there was only one so-called "Christian hotel." I think anyone could go in and register, but, basically there became the "Borsch Belt" of down the Shore. ... They had marriage counseling and things like that. But it was a delightful town to live in, and there was this mixture of people. Everyone got along fine. My best friend was a Jewish boy that lived next door. His father was the local judge, and so we got along fine. ... There were some, in those days, you called them black, actually, Negro or colored, that was the expression that was used, and I find it difficult saying African-American now. When I was down in the Pacific and there were Melanesians or Micronesians, they certainly are black, but they are not African-Americans. I know every era has its own political correctness, and, of course, you have to talk in today's terms, because you have to converse and understand each other, and things do change.

BM: Did your parents stress religion to you? Did you receive communion and confirmation?

VC: Well, I think my mother by example, you know. It was just part of your upbringing and you just did it and it became part of your life.

BM: So you received communion and confirmation. You became an ardent Catholic.

VC: Yes, you know, it was just part of your life. I don't think there was [more] conformity in those days than there is now, in many ways, in all kinds of things.

KP: It was interesting. I read in the WPA book that Lakewood had hard times during the Great Depression, that some of the hotels were boarded up and not doing well. How did the Great Depression affect your neighbors? It sounds like your father was very fortunate to have work.

VC: Well, he had a steady job. The thing is, I never had to worry about food on the table, or anything like that. We had, and, of course, our family life was one that gave you a lot of security. And then, for example, I think that the fourth or the fifth member of my family went to the same school, same grade school, same high school, and a great deal of security. And we didn't have a transient society. Everyone was in place.

KP: So even though Lakewood had a lot of resort people the year round ...

VC: Well, the resort people, I think they still had, inasmuch as it was accessible to New York and inasmuch as they had, a lot of these hotels that accommodated a lot of the Jewish people that went down there, they had, I think, a thriving business. ... Everyone was uptight because of money, and, of course, if you grow up in the era of the Depression, one acquires, at least some of us do, I do, a Depression mentality, you know, "The wolf is always at the door." Even though things may be, who knows, now, people think, sometimes, young people, particularly, I think they think more positive, and, sometimes we think that they are not realistically in the one direction, we were under-realistic in the other direction.

KP: Yes, because it sounds like your father was very fortunate to work, but you still knew it was the Depression.

VC: Oh, his time was limited. We were very frugal. My mother had a couple of grocery stores close-by and she would send me to one store for one thing and another for another thing, because something was a penny cheaper per pound. But we never did without. So my father sent five of us to college on his own. And the children were dental students, as a matter-of-fact, for some reason, there are a run of dentists in my family, a half a dozen or more of my nephews are in the business.

KP: It sounds like the Campis were well-known at the schools you went to. What kind of expectations did you have and how good was your schooling?

VC: I think that, I say, I certainly didn't have, sometimes, perhaps the emotional stress that some people who grow up adjusting to the economics and the family security and things like that. In my day, you didn't have people with separated or divorced parents. They were at a minimum. And you didn't have people with, you know, a youngster who had step-brothers and various

things of that kind. You didn't have that. You had a stability and you had some, great deal of security. The atmosphere was better, I think. As far as how progressive the school was, I don't know, except that I can't blame, for my shortcomings, I can't blame the school. I have to blame myself, I think.

KP: So even though you weren't in the right major, it sounds like your school gave you the basics to do well.

VC: I think so. That was a personal problem. I just didn't know what I wanted to do. And the thing, I didn't have any counseling of that kind, which I, you know, someone looking over my shoulder. My father, not having a great deal of education himself, didn't attempt to, except [saying] that "you must go and do it." And if I stumbled, he was right behind me and never made it an issue. And so, I know, it was very embarrassing to me that, when I was told that I was in the wrong field, so I dropped my courses. I thought that they would be an incomplete. They were failure, a few of them, and that was embarrassing to me. Here, I had been an honor student, but my father didn't, never censored, or anything like that. He knew I was trying, and I always had that feeling that he backed me up anytime I was really doing [anything.] Of course, if I neglected or went off and partied and carried on, why, then, I think, he would have a few words for me.

KP: It sounds like it was important to your father that you go to college, but what you studied was really up to you.

VC: Well, that's right. He didn't attempt to do, actually, in those respects, I thought my talent would be in, and I still, of course, have a major in science and a minor in mathematics, except that this psychologist told me that I should deal with people and not with numbers and paperwork.

BM: So you were different from you brothers in that your brothers knew straight off what they wanted to do.

VC: Well, what I found, it was embarrassing, but it made me feel that I was inadequate in some ways. My kid brother, of course, my older brother was a dentist. He knew he wanted to be a dentist from the teens. As a result, he never took a step in the wrong direction. It was all productive. He wasted no time and was very successful. He's an orthodontist and he knew what to do, and, of course, he has a son who was an orthodontist.

KP: You had one older brother who didn't go to school?

VC: No, he was a "Beau Brummell" of his class. He was very articulate. He became, he worked for the telephone company and did very well there. And during the Depression, there again, he never lost a week's pay, sometimes, I think, they cut him down, but he always was productive. ... After he left that, he became an under-sheriff and he was a political chairman of his party for eight years and mayor of his town for a couple of sessions.

KP: Was this in Ocean County?

VC: Lakewood, yes. No, Monmouth County. He had moved out to Monmouth. Well, we're not getting too ...

KP: No, no, we actually ...

VC: I'm willing to discuss anything you like, because there is a difference in my era and yours, a distinct difference, and I think our view of life and our lifestyle is completely different as a result.

BM: One of the differences in our views about college is that, nowadays, it's taken for granted that you're going to go to college. For your generation, it sounds like it was more of a privilege.

VC: See, in your generation, I think, going to college is like my going to high school. The thing is this, you'd have to think in terms of maybe a Master's or a Doctorate, whereas in my day, it wasn't felt as necessary.

KP: It sounds like you didn't have a lot of guides. Why did you come to Rutgers? Had any of your brothers gone to Rutgers?

VC: The reason I came to Rutgers was because I had a very good friend, he's like a brother, who went to Rutgers, and he's in the Class of 1940. And you see, I had stayed out one year and then he told me about Rutgers. But, as a matter-of-fact, another feller from high school also went to Rutgers, and so, when I went to Rutgers, initially, he was my roommate for a while, and he wanted me to join the Betas, and I think I was a pledge for a while. But I felt that it's unfair for me, my father had paid so much, had sacrificed so much to get everyone to school. I thought it would cost more and I didn't think it was justified.

KP: But you toyed with the idea of joining a fraternity?

VC: Oh, yes. It was, well, I knew him, I knew his friends, knew the fraternity and felt very comfortable with it, but I thought that was just a frill and it just wasn't fair.

KP: Where did you live?

VC: In Lakewood.

KP: Did you commuted?

VC: No, I lived on Morrell Street. Is it Morrell Street, right behind the gym?

BM: I'm not sure.

KP: Did you live in a private room?

VC: Yes, in a rooming house. Initially, I also lived with my brother, in (Durham?), close-by. He was working for American Cyanamid at the time, because all they, they try to help in some way and this is his way of helping. I stayed with him for a while. Then I moved to this rooming house.

KP: So you never lived in Winants Hall or Ford Hall.

VC: There, again, that was more expensive.

BM: Was this behind the gym?

VC: Yes, behind the gym. There's a road that comes right, parallel. I think it parallels the south part of the gym.

KP: Was that where the fire department was?

VC: No, I don't remember a fire department. And then, you know, for example, I didn't even feel deprived. Believe me, everyone was scrimping and saving. They had this Depression mentality. ... I went to, there was a drug store, I think, up the street, where I could get a dinner for thirty-five cents, you know, so there, it was enough for me. I didn't feel deprived at all. I was never hungry. If I needed money, my father was always, if I asked him for ten dollars, he gave me twenty, if he had it. He'd give me fifteen dollars. He always gave me more than I asked for because he knew I would use it carefully.

KP: So your father had a lot trust in you and in your decisions.

VC: Well, it was the family situation. We all had trust in each other. When we were growing up, we did little chores. As a matter-of-fact, I started working when I was ten years old, after school, that was the way everyone in the family did it. Everybody worked. My brother, who was going to Georgetown Dental School, sent his shirts home and my mother would do it, and I used to iron them and we'd put them in a bag and mail them back. That's the way, I don't know, that effort ... sometimes, I wonder about some people who are not doing too well in this day and age, work as hard at not thinking that they are being set upon.

KP: Had you thought of going anywhere else besides Rutgers?

VC: No. Basically, no. My friend had convinced me and that was, it was close and I thought that was, I didn't really debate that too much, although my older brothers went to other schools, except one of my brothers, I think, finished his accounting and his Master's degree in accounting at Rutgers.

BM: How was the school's reputation back then?

VC: Oh, I think that its reputation was as certainly as good as it is now. I think that, of course, we didn't think [it was] Princeton. A lot of the people from our area went to Princeton. That was where the elitists and those that had the money to go went. ... I wouldn't even consider it,

because, financially, I didn't think, I thought Rutgers was a good school and I could manage it and I was very comfortable there, never uncomfortable. But, of course, this friend of mine then went into the Marine Corps. Both these friends that were roommates at one time, went into the Marine Corps and then influenced me to go into the Marine Corps. I think it was in the summer of 1941 when my draft number came up. Inasmuch as I had a lot of science courses, they gave me a deferment for six months. After struggling for so long to get through college, I didn't want to give up, and some people had to give up, and I only had six months to do and I wanted to get it over with. But after December 7th, of course, I had no question. As a matter-of-fact, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. For me, it wasn't, I was doing what I had to do. There was no choice. I mean, I didn't think of it as something imposed upon me. It was my privilege to serve, because my father was going to serve at his age. People like myself, my age, we were the ones that had to do this. And all armies are staffed, basically, the rank and file are always young people, and that's where, you sort of, in a sense, pay back all that's been contributed to you. So I had no problem with it.

KP: It sounds like your father was very proud that he had three sons in the military.

VC: Well, I think he was pleased, I think.

KP: He was probably also worried.

VC: Yes, yes. But there was no question. As a matter-of-fact, after I got out, the first thing I did, I tried to get in touch with the Marine Corps to join the candidates class, as my friend had done before me, and the next classes available were October 6th. And between leaving school and the end of December, I had to get a number of recommendations and make applications and all that type of thing.

BM: Did you take any ROTC classes here?

VC: Not here. I only went two years here.

KP: You didn't expect that when you first entered ...

VC: No, at that time, I had no objections to it. I enjoyed it, and, as a matter-of-fact, and that wasn't my basic interest, and, as I say, after I got through school, you didn't want to walk down the street without a uniform. I felt as if it were, and so, as a result, I donned the uniform very proudly and did what they told me. As a matter-of-fact, I didn't have, I thought maybe I wanted to go into the Air Force, but I think my eyes were, I think there was some question of whether or not I had the sight. But, anyway, I went in the Marine Corps and I took the assignments that they gave me. After I came back, on my first tour of duty, I thought, maybe, I would like to get into the infantry. I understand that they are a little more exciting at times. But not that my trip out, we had a little more excitement, too. And one day, I was having lunch at Camp Lejeune and I ran into a colonel, Colonel Fitzgerald, that had been in our defense battalion, and he said, "What are you doing?" At that time, I was operating an anti-aircraft school. I was running it, the thing is that the NCOs were running it. I was a figurehead. They did all the work and all I had to do was check the paper. They knew what they were doing. Everything was fine. They were shooting at

little crafts that they sent up. Well, it was enjoyable. And I said, "Well, I'd like to have a change." He said, "An artillery school is starting in Quantico. If you want it, I can arrange it." I said, "Okay." He said, "It started yesterday, but I can get you aboard." I said, "Fine." So I went back to Quantico and went to artillery school. And the second time out, I went out as an artillery officer. Of course, when I got to Saipan, I joined the First Battalion, Tenth Marines, and, unfortunately, at that time, I thought unfortunately, that all of the battery slots were taken, and I was a captain at that time, so I was assigned the S-2, the intelligence office. And I thought, let's see, I'm not going to get the nitty-gritty. Before I had been a battery commander and detachment commander, and I've enjoyed that kind of responsibility. But it turned out to be the best job I ever had, because right after that, we went to Japan. As a matter-of-fact, I've got the maps, and the landing there was scheduled for November 1st, in the so-called "Operation Olympic." Then Operation Coronet would be up in the Tokyo area. And my recollections was that I got these maps before V-J Day.

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

VC: Well, yes, it's a funny thing. It wasn't certainly my major and there was a Professor McKinney and I enjoyed him. We use to sit at the music club and play music, and most of my family were not musically inclined, at least music was not a big part of my upbringing, and I found that I enjoyed it a great deal.

KP: Did you play an instrument?

VC: No. As I said, we weren't taught any instruments at all.

KP: What music did you like to listen to?

VC: Well, classical music I found, once I was exposed to it.

KP: What about opera?

VC: Opera, yes.

KP: So that explains why Howard McKinney was one of your favorites ...

VC: Oh, yes. He had written a book, I think, *The Developing Arts Through the Years*, and I found it very fascinating. There again, I don't know that picking engineering was my choice.

KP: You also had Arthur Burns.

VC: Oh, he was a history teacher, very, I thought he, I just remember a person who impressed me a great deal, very knowledgeable. Of course, maybe he was exposing me to some areas of academia which I hadn't touched upon before, at least not in the depth, and profoundly.

KP: Having been in government service, did you notice him much in your career?

VC: No. Frankly, I don't know what became of him.

KP: Well, he eventually became chairman of the Federal Reserve Board.

VC: Is that right?

KP: Yes.

VC: I was just impressed with him.

KP: Yes, you're not the only class member to mention him. He has turned up a number of times. I get the impression that he was a very good professor.

VC: Is that right?

KP: What did you think of Dean Metzger? Did you ever have any dealings with him?

VC: I had very little dealing with him and I don't have any recollections that would create an opinion. I draw more or less a blank there.

KP: What about chapel? Did you attend chapel regularly?

VC: Yes, I think so. I had no problem with that. In high school, we used to have chapel on regular basis and they use to say a prayer. As a matter-of-fact, very often, they'd repeat the Twenty-Third Psalm, which, in its Protestant version, I liked better than the Catholic version. I feel very, as a matter-of-fact, I've got a plot, now, behind a Presbyterian church. It's right near Christ Church in Shrewsbury. It's a historical area. There's four corners that are all churches and municipal buildings and it's declared an historical site.

BM: Did you find a problem with prayer in school?

VC: No, no. I never heard any discussions, whether they'd be Jewish or atheists or [anything] other than Protestant. It was usually, it didn't touch upon a presentation that created problems. It was a generally accepted version of believing in one God. I have to be careful I refer to it as Christian, but Judeo-Christian. I'm saying the same thing when I say Christian, I mean Judeo-Christian, because we talk about the same principles.

KP: So even as a Catholic, you didn't mind the Protestant version of the Psalms?

VC: No, I liked that Psalm better, even to this day. ... It's the same thing, but the wordage is a little different.

KP: Nowadays, Mussolini has gotten bad press by historians, but Mussolini, in the 1920s and '30s, had a lot of good press, including from Winston Churchill at one time. What did your father think of Mussolini?

VC: Well, you know, it brings up an interesting point. You know, nowadays, I don't think we raise our children the way we used to, because lots of, every night, we always had supper together. Families always ate together. And the radio was turned on when Mother was preparing dinner and we would listen to the news. My father was there and he editorialized, you know, he'd take issue with it and would say, "Oh, but they're not telling you everything." During the '60s, when there was all kinds of nonsense going on, I'd come home at night and my children had watched the television and saw these terrible rioting and things like that. And in some cases, I know, if they picked up the camera, there wouldn't be anybody there. But I'd lost them already. They had seen these horrible things. My father took me by the hand and brought me to the circus and showed me an elephant. My kids saw an elephant on television long before I got around to showing it to them. So, in a sense, the media is controlling our life. And this, of course, is a big change, as is the Pill. For example, women now can control their reproduction, never did that before, I mean, since the beginning of time, you're talking about future shock here. And so, the thing is, my father, I don't remember, he was disappointed in things. [Mussolini] made the trains run on time. But other than that, my father had no allegiance to him whatsoever. But as I say, he was disappointed.

KP: Was your father active in any kind of organization?

VC: He was a rather shy man, as I say, introverted. He was not a joiner.

KP: So he was happiest in the workshop.

VC: Oh, absolutely. As a matter-of-fact, whenever Mother would come down a little too heavy on him, he would go downstairs where he had a workshop. He'd escape.

KP: You mentioned he editorialized the news. What did he think of Roosevelt and the New Deal?

VC: I don't have any specific recollections as to issues. He, generally, for compassion, he wasn't confrontational on any issues. Most of the things, I think, he accepted were very conservative in some ways. But, I think, in the Northeast, we were all influenced in a much more liberal way, then, say, in the mid-West. I think his views were pretty much in the mainstream.

KP: Where were you when the attacks on Pearl Harbor came?

VC: Well, I do remember. I went home for the weekend, and in those days, I hitchhiked and we had no problems. In those days, they picked up hitchhikers. I was hitching home and when I got to, when I came back on Sunday, of course, I went to my room, and, of course, the landlord and landlady and the other students that were there were all a little bit in shock. But I don't think that, sometimes, when you hear that news, the impact is not [right away], you know. It takes time for it to sink in, particularly, if you were to think in terms of, "How does this influence me and what does this do to my life?" It certainly changed my life for four years.

BM: When you were at Rutgers, how would you characterize the students' reaction to the United States intervention in the war?

VC: I think, of course, there again, I wasn't involved in a lot of student activities, fraternities and things like that, and among the people I know, all of them were of the same mentality, except one. One feller said that, "If they land on the East Coast, I'm going to the West Coast," and that mentality carried over to other attitudes of his. But I think most of us, as I say, I didn't want to be seen on the street without a uniform. That's where I belonged.

BM: Before Pearl Harbor, did you think that the United States should get involved in the war?

VC: I think that there was a healthy discussion. Some people were pro or con. I don't remember anyone that I knew that thought we were doing the wrong thing. Basically, we were helping the Allies, and, of course, I think some people cite that as one of the justifications for the Japanese to hit Pearl Harbor, because we were creating problems for them and closing them out of markets and things like that, which has always been a little bit of an interest of mine now. When the Smithsonian turned down, wanted to write the script for the *Enola Gay*, it disturbed me a little bit, because I felt that I had a little personal interest in that issue. It turns out that, as I say, when I was in Japan, our division was, according to the *Asbury Park Press* a few years ago, that the invasion was scheduled, I think November 1st was the recognized date of the schedule, that the Seventh Marine Division was going to be the lead division. ... When we landed there in Kyushu and I saw those rice paddies and I went through a valley once, where the rice paddies were on the side, and the road down the middle was shaking because of the moisture, and I thought, "The tank would never make it." And, of course, if a tank wouldn't make it, that means that some of our resources would not be utilized. ... If the Japanese persisted with the same disdain of surrender, they thought surrendering was a disgrace, and my experience on the islands, one of the islands I was on, I saw no prisoners. I saw a couple of natives that were rescued. So that mentality of and the attitude that the Japanese had towards POWs, they were very brutal, very ruthless. So if that same mentality persisted in their homeland, it would be at a tremendous cost. And, of course, the cost that they cited there was between 500,000 and a million men. Other people, of course, claim the official thinking was 83,000 or something like that. But then there were others that came in at 200,000 and like that. But, as I say, if they didn't drop the atom bomb, I may not be here today. Now, in the exhibit that they were going to put on, they reminded me of what they did with the *Arizona* in Pearl Harbor. I went out there, and before you go out, you're taken by ferry over to the, there's a barge sort of sitting right above the *Arizona*. But before you go there, they bring you into a theater and they play a tape, and, of course, you look around you, and most of the tourists were Japanese, and the presentation was so muted, it was so, to me, my thinking, it was that it was written to accommodate, to not offend the Japanese. And I thought, you know, I'm not out for offending them. As a matter-of-fact, Orientals were, there were so few in my neighborhood, they were interesting. I thought their history was interesting, and I had no prejudice against them, because, you know, it was just a different, fascinating life that would be worth looking at.

BM: Sort of a watered down vision.

VC: Watered down, something terrible. And then, in the Smithsonian, they were actually, the way it was first presented and what I read, if what I read is true, it was presenting it in a manner as if though we had, you know, done something comparable to the Holocaust, you know? As a matter-of-fact, I've collected some clippings about it and it's very disturbing. Of course, they abandoned it completely.

KP: You mentioned you had some Asians in your neighborhood. How many were there and what did they do?

VC: No, we didn't have any. There was a Chinese laundry. I think that was about the only thing. Yes, that was about all that was in town. The only Oriental I'd, there may have been others, but they fed into the fabric of the community so well that you didn't look at them as something of an oddity, or anything.

KP: What was it like to actually come to the Marines? It sounds like you were accepted right away to Officers Candidate School.

VC: Well, the thing is this. At that time, all of my personal friends, my peers, other than this one guy that we didn't pay any attention to, they were all going into the service. This was something that was our obligation. We always felt it an obligation and a privilege to join. I mean, it isn't like nowadays, when you pull them in dragging. It was a privilege. ... When we got into, for example, Officers Candidate Class, now we were all people that lived, I think, we had a little more discipline in life and I think our society was a little more disciplined. ... We were, I think, a little more disciplined ourselves than perhaps society nowadays, of people of our age. But the point is that we threw ourselves into the task of learning. Heaven forbid that we'd flunk. You know, it would have been a disgrace. We fought, we did our damndest to succeed. I think I was, the first ten members of our Officers Candidate Class became regular officers and the rest of us were reserved. But I think that my standing was something like seventeen in the class of, maybe, 167 or 200. As I say, we tried hard. What's amusing is the fact that there was a feller from Princeton in our class, a likable person, but I didn't, I didn't differentiate. I didn't think that they were, but one day we both were assigned duties to take out the garbage can, GI duty. So I went over and I grabbed one end of it and he said, "Imagine, a graduate of Princeton handling the garbage." I won't repeat what I said, but we settled that quickly. But he didn't make it, incidentally.

KP: Really? He washed out.

VC: He washed out. And, I think, possibly, that that attitude must have manifested itself in other respects that they detected. And as far, you know, when you've got a class like that, and I did the same thing with the FBI, you don't know where these people come from. Nobody really cares. You have a personal relationship. They are acceptable, they fit in, or they don't fit in, and you don't blame where they came from.

BM: You think that the sense of pride that you took to work was a direct result of your parents being recent immigrants?

VC: Yes, I think it had a tremendous influence, because they had an attitude that, "Here we have an opportunity," and they accompanied that with a desire and a willingness to work hard.

BM: So that translated down to you?

VC: Absolutely.

BM: Do you feel that that tends to get lost with generations?

VC: I don't want to make, or be judgmental, because I'm really not a historian, but my observation would be that I think that some of it is lost. I think that my grandchildren are much more, I mean, that my daughters are much more permissive in handling their children than we would have been.

KP: Going back to Officers Candidate School in Quantico, had you traveled much before this trip?

VC: No. As a matter-of-fact, I think that I once went down to Richmond, Virginia or Fredericksburg, Virginia, and I think my brother moved into, his father-in-law owned a farm down there, and I walked in the streets and I was amazed that a lot of little children were around. We called them "picaninies," not as a, we weren't being insulting, or anything like that, but it was some of the terms that we used in the past. And some terms we did not use in the past, they are used around here. We just didn't use them. I mean, my folks didn't bring, didn't give me that kind of a background. They gave me the kind of background where you respected everyone. But the children were talking, jabbering amongst themselves. I couldn't understand a word they were saying. I thought, "Is this a different language? Do they talk a different language in a different part of the country?" And when I was in the Marine Corps, in Officers training, we had an officer who was a Virginian gentleman. He was a handsome looking guy, he use to walk around with leggings on and, but he was God, you know, he was a Virginian. He was "out and about," very distinctive.

KP: You found the language very different.

VC: Yes, I didn't realize that people talk, there was, the Marine Corp was the melting pot, in a sense. ... I had an experience, which I thought you might be interested in. How do you prepare a person that lives in a peaceful [setting], and is reasonable and decent person, how do you prepare him to be a soldier and as someone who would kill? Well, we went to the grenade course one day. Now, we were all PFCs and our drill instructors were corporals and sergeants and God was standing on one side watching, that was the lieutenant to whom no one ever talked to. He didn't address you directly, either. So we marched about a mile or two, and we had full packs on. They weighed about forty pounds and they have everything you might need for the field, and on the back of the pack, there's an entrenching tool. It's a shovel with a short handle and you can unscrew it and it flaps back up against your pack. ... Everyone has an entrenching tool of some kind. So we line up before we were dismissed and were told to stack our rifles and place our packs down. And so where we were standing, at each spot, there was a pack and the rifles were stacked together. So being in the alphabet, they went alphabetically, I got done a

little early. So we threw our grenades and learned all the techniques, and I came back and I looked, low and behold, my entrenching tool was gone. Now, there's no other soldiers except our class there. How could it disappear? And our training was such that you didn't play games with it. Nobody wanted to make mistakes there. So I went up to one of the corporals and reported in the usual manner and said, "Sir, PFC Campi reporting. I wish to report that I lost my entrenching tool." He said, "You have? Well, we'll have to talk to the lieutenant." Well, I was going to talk to the lieutenant. Now, this didn't happen to anyone else in class. So I went up to him and went through the same procedure and he looked at me very straight in the eye and coldly and said, "A good Marine is never caught short." He turned around, walked away. The corporal turned around and walked away. Now, I'm getting a message. I didn't have a chance to think about it, but I knew I was being given a message. So I went over, the tool was missing. (Dotson?) was next to me and he had a tool. So I took it and put it in my bag and I went to the corporal and said, "I found my entrenching tool." He said, "Very good." We marched back to the barracks and I go to (Dotson?) and said, "Well, what happened to your entrenching tool?" Well, he had the same panic that I had. So I said, "Here it is," and I told him the story. The next day I went down to the quartermaster and I bought an entrenching tool for about a dollar fifty or something like that. Now, I can only think that there was a message there. There was nobody there except our class.

BM: What do you believe happened to it?

VC: Survival. He was teaching the story of survival. But I know that when we first landed in the Solomons, we didn't have anything to spare. I was often in the detachment. There was nothing around, there was no store to go to, no one to help. ... At all ranks, the privates had their way of doing business, the corporals, the sergeants, and I would bargain and plea and beg at my level and they would all do it at their level. But, of course, there was, I think, I never saw it, but I understood it, but there was a supply depot down the street somewhere, way in the jungle, near the jungle area. I understand that there was a little midnight requisitioning done, too. When the Army did it, they did it to a certain extent. Then they changed the guards to Marine guards. They remembered "how to cock the rifle." ... There were strange stories, for example, in an LST, once we were on an island, the Russell Islands, on an island called Banika. ... There were no port facilities and the LSTs, tanks would move right up the beach. Then an Army outfit came in and they unloaded, and at that time, we were experiencing air raids, and so you did these things as quickly as you could, because, obviously, you'd be caught out in the open. So they got everything aboard except, one of the Army fellers said, "Gee, we haven't got our jeep." And they said, "Well, you better look for it." So he went looking for it. But soon, the LST was ready to pull away, and finally the captain comes up to the LST commander and says, "Hey, my jeep is back there." He says, "I'm leaving it there. Are you coming with me or are you getting off?" They stole his jeep.

KP: A number of the people who fought in the Pacific recount the bargaining.

VC: Well, that's early in the war, particularly. Later on, you'd get a court-martial for doing that.

KP: Really, it changed?

VC: Oh, I think it changed. But early in the war, then the place they landed, these LSTs, on this island was a place where they had a (coper?) mill. You know, they took coconuts and processed them. They belonged to Lever Brothers. Lever Brothers owned all the coconut trees. They tried to push the jungle back, and this was the natives' only industry. And the (coper?) plant was like a big warehouse. When we first got there, it was intact. Everything was there. Then, suddenly, you'd look inside and things were disappearing. And then, they found that they had a tin roof. Those things could be used for gun munitions and things like that. Suddenly, the thing was, it disappeared. Eventually, there was nothing but the foundation. A cement foundation. There wasn't a stick anywhere. But the thing was, there was no wood to be had. I mean, there were coconut trees, but you're not going to go in the jungle and chop down a tree. A friend of mine once offered to help the Army, one of the fellers in a neighboring camp. He offered the Army, he said, "Look, the air raids might come. Let me send a couple of trucks over and give you a hand." They said, "Oh, great." But with him, I think it was, "One for me and one for you," and every now and then, you'd see a vehicle that the designations were, sort of, marked over. But I think that no one took anything for self-aggrandizement or for a personal advantage. It was all done for the organization. Everything was done for ...

KP: When you went into the Marines, what did you expect? The Marines were a very small force when the war broke out.

VC: Seventeen thousand, I think, at its low point. I didn't, well, of course, my friend told me, but, of course, he was ...

KP: So you really were briefed on what to expect.

VC: He, well, actually, I only saw the positive, you know, and all that thing, and so I didn't have a decision to make. I mean, I was sold and went into it.

KP: What did you think of the sergeants at the Officer Candidates School?

VC: Well, I think they were DIs, the normal thing. I think that we expected that they would behave in the manner they did. As a matter-of-fact, I don't think that they were unduly nasty or, it was just a way of life. You were disciplined and you'd just, they'd say, "Jump," and you'd say, "How high?"

KP: What type of assignments did you want when you initially went in?

VC: Well, I had some visions of, there again, I didn't know what I wanted. I didn't know what I was getting into. I mean, who knows? You see, you hear all these war stories but you don't know. So I thought, maybe it would be nice to be in the Air Corps, but they assigned me and I just went along with what they wanted.

KP: So you would have liked to be in the Marine Air if you had a ...

VC: Well, I didn't really have that strong a feeling for it, but I flirted with the idea.

KP: So you would have done it if they let you.

VC: Yes.

KP: Did you envision going into artillery?

VC: No, I really didn't know. I think that what they do is, when the class is formed, they decide what the needs are and they assign them accordingly. I think that it's a pretty arbitrary process. I don't know, they may be looking for some people with some special talent. If you had a special talent that they knew about, I think that they'd direct you accordingly. So I left it up to them and I didn't know, most people didn't think in terms of saying, "Hey, what am I offered?" You didn't think. You're disciplined to the point that the good of the service is what you're going to serve.

KP: It sounds like you were pretty gung-ho when you were in OCS.

VC: Oh, yes. Of course, I went to Officers Candidate School and it was the sixth class, and, apparently, it was early in the war. And then, I went to the Ninth ROC [Reserve Officer Class], and they had some of the ROTCP and we could have joined them, I think. Ninth ROC, and all of these things were about close to three months. ... Then I went to the Seventh Base Defense School, which had the antiaircraft artillery, and then I was sent to San Francisco and overseas. Now, what I found, too, is that the reception of the people, talk about attitudes, I mean, this is a, it was everywhere to be found. I stopped at Chicago on my way over on the train. I had to change stations. You'd go from Union Station to the Lafayette Station, I think it is. But I had a layover, so I walked into a bar. Well, I was out of uniform, and everyone stopped. The Guadalcanal [campaign] was underway at the time. I walked over to the bar and I couldn't buy a drink. The first thing I knew, a couple of girls that were sitting down came over to me and pulled me over to their corner. ... One of them had a brother that was in the Marine Corps and she thought that he was at Guadalcanal, and I'm telling you, it looked like they intended that I wasn't going to leave that evening. But I looked at my clock and said, "I got to go." "No, no. You can't go." Just about that time, like magic, the door opens and in walks another Marine officer. So I go over and I introduced him and then said, "I'll see you, pal." ... I saw him about three months later in an Officers' Club at an airfield in Hawaii, and he was in his cups and he looked at me and said, "Oh, thanks, buddy. You did me a favor." But that was the attitude. But San Francisco, I'm telling you, I never lived in an atmosphere like this before. I got, I was supposed to call-in at twelve o'clock. You had a phone number and was supposed to ask them whether or not you were wanted. They would tell you. You were billeted in the civilian sector, but they would call you in when they needed you. So I got there at eleven o'clock, and my roommate, a feller I went to school with in the Marine Corps, he was beside himself. He said, "Where were you?" I said, "It's eleven o'clock. I don't have to check-in until twelve." Well, it turns out, he says, "Well, I have a date." And so he had a date with some gal, there was an afternoon club, we went there and she had a friend, and so I had a date. ... Later that night, when we were going home, his date comes to me and says, "Vic, can you stay with us? Can you say goodbye to your friend?" I said, "No, why?" She said, "Because your date and I have someplace we want to go." I don't know, she arranged it and took care of it. The next thing I know, I'm going out with them, and, nothing funny, we went to parties here and there, and the next morning, I walk in at eleven o'clock. ... I didn't see him, and don't know what became of

my calls, and took a nice shower and was getting ready to go to bed. The next thing I know, someone knocks on the door and a guy walks in. It's a feller by the name of (Bordis?). His father is a federal judge in Oklahoma. And he has a little guy behind him with a tray of liquor. I said, "What's this all about?" He said, "You've got to get me out of here. I'm here with my sister and my father and it's Dullsville. You've got to get me a date. I've got to do something to have some fun before I leave." I said, "Come on, (Bordis?), I'm dead tired and I want to go to bed." Well, the phone rings and somebody's asking for a feller by the name of (Cork?) that was in our group. I said, "No, he's not here." He says, "Who is that?" I said, "(Bordis?), it's some babe." He says, "Find out if she wants a date?" Then she says, "We were going to go to the USO, would you like to come?" So that was how it was. She was the guardian of some general, or something like that, a very lovely gal. And so I got home about midnight, or something like that, and my roommate said, "Where in the hell have you been?" But that was San Francisco at that time.

KP: How long were you in San Francisco?

VC: Oh, just four or five days.

KP: It sounds like it was very memorable.

VC: Oh, the thing is this, one thing right after the other. I mean, everyone was so damn friendly.

KP: What did you think about going to San Francisco?

VC: Well, it was all a new adventure and a new challenge. Things were going to change. We didn't look at the negatives. I was where I belonged and I was doing what I was supposed to do. ... I wasn't calling the signals and I was disciplined enough to accept, you know, what they had to offer. You don't win a war unless you have that attitude.

BM: Does it make your job easier as a soldier to know you have the support of the people?

VC: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. You know, if you're going to go out in harm's way, and you know that they love you, how can you not do it with a great deal of heart?

KP: How many officers would travel together? It sounds like you were sharing civilian quarters.

VC: Well, it was just the two of us because we were in the same classes, went through the same schools, and were sent out at the same time and headed to the same destination. It was Fleet Marine Pacific, you know, you didn't have a specific designation, San Francisco. But I had this phone number. They knew who I was and they told me when and where to appear. Then I got into a ship and went to Hawaii. It was interesting aboard ship. There were a few Army personnel. There was an older feller and he was walking the decks and he looked so dejected. So one day, I said, "What's the problem? You don't look very happy?" He said, "Well, they're not fooling me. They're sending old guys like me out there as cannon fodder until they train the young kids."

KP: What ship did you travel on?

VC: I think it was called the (*Holbrook?*). It was part of the President Lines. These were converted passenger ships. The only problem is they didn't have their air conditioning. I don't think they had it and there was a blackout all the time. So, as a result, you couldn't have a light on and a porthole open and it was my first sea voyage. I found, for example, going to supper, they had a canvas over the hatchway into the dining room, and you'd go in there and the odors of the kitchen were; ... but you'd sit down and the salt shakers used to drift from one side of the table to the other. There were some times that I didn't have dinner because of it.

KP: Did you get seasick?

VC: Yes, yes. But it got even worse on troopships. Every day, I had to go down and inspect my troops. Now, they are in troop quarters at the time and they had bunks. There was a little passageway in between, bunks on either side, which went up about four or five high on either side. Well, a guy would get sick on the upper deck and he "blessed" the rest of them. ... At the end of this little passageway, there was a little open area with some showers and the head, and the air conditioning is not too good. But I'll tell you, I use to grit my teeth because, you know, after all, if you have troops, you can't [get sick] in front of them, you know, you've got to really keep yourself together. And so, with a stiff upper chin, I use to go down there, do it as quickly as I could and get the hell back.

KP: But you were very glad to be an officer and to have better quarters.

VC: Well, the thing is this. Our quarters had no air conditioning on the first ship we went on. It was a converted, well, it had been planned as a banana boat and it was converted to hospital ship and troop carrier, and the air conditioning went out. ... I was in a room with about seven guys, and, as I said, the air conditioning was so miserable there that I went up topside. But, of course, I stayed there. And, of course, some Marines are not good sailors, because we had one feller that was a Midway veteran and he was an excellent, a corporal, you know, he was an excellent enlisted man. He could take weapons apart blindfolded and things like that. But he looked at a ship and got sick. And you know, they all marched down there with a full pack and we had to lift him, actually carry him aboard. ... All during the voyage, he was on ship, and he was a mop. He was just useless, useless. And then, when we disembarked, we had to use a rope, you know, and the LCTs down below, carrying us, they were bouncing up and down, and you had to carry your pack unbuckled so that in case you got in trouble, you know, you'd throw it off your shoulders. ... I don't know how we got him down, but we got him ashore.

KP: What did you expect Hawaii would be like?

VC: Well, of course, I think that we were all exposed to some of the, well, I don't know, because some of those films were not done at that point.

KP: Hawaii was a staple for some movies. The Hawaiian Islands was a very exotic place.

VC: Oh, yes. Well, it was my first exposure to a completely different setting other than the States, and I found it very interesting. What was interesting to me was the fact that the native population in some areas were predominately Japanese. For example, when we returned, we returned to Kauai. Kauai was something like sixty or eighty percent Japanese, and some of the natives told us that in the event that the Japanese had landed, they would be on their side, not on ours. So, you know, it was a different situation. ... Some of the old Japanese, even when I worked after the war on the West Coast, I found out, of course, a lot of them were interned, and they were interned in Tully Lake, or one of a number of places. I had an informant that was a Japanese-American, who was pro-American, and when they went into those internment camps, they were polarized. Of course, it was a pretty rough thing, and it's not pursuant to the American way of doing business. But, I think, sometimes, when you have an element among you and you don't know what they are, you're fearful. ... The [Germans] and Italians, we had no problems with, because the FBI had a security index. In fact, we had dossiers on anyone we had to worry about. But the Japanese, we didn't have that, and on the West Coast, they were worried about someone landing and people seeing submarines and all kinds of things. So they arbitrarily said, "Hey, we don't know what this is." So any people, I think, in the past would do the same thing, and will do it in the future, unfortunately. You know, there are, because, you know, you have to pay a price on freedom for self-survival, and having the security index, at that time, helped us, and we didn't have to take and intern a lot of people. But in the camps there, there was a pro-American and the pro-Japanese. ... They were so polarized that, he told me that the pro-Japanese controlled a common kitchen and they wouldn't feed the other side. ... He said, "We use to go over to the PX and buy candy and stuff like that to supplement what we could get." ... He was eventually sent to a farm and somewhere, and from there, he joined the military and went over to Europe. So there are a lot of things that occurred over the passing of time that I think that are lost, and sometimes I think some think, "Oh, look how we treated those poor Japanese." Well, of course, we did. They [US government] were ruthless. They [the Japanese-Americans] were told, "Within twenty-four hours, you leave," and they did the best they could to see to their property and things like that. It was terrible. But the point is, what is the alternative? The thing is that people are worried about the fact that they are going to be invaded. Look what happened to Pearl Harbor. Now, of course, some of their fears may have not been well-founded. As a matter-of-fact, old man Hoover didn't want this interment. He was against it, but he imposed it anyway.

KP: How long were you in Hawaii before you were shipped out?

VC: I think I arrived in Hawaii, I left, I think, the States about the end of October and arrived there early November. ... I think we left Hawaii, our outfit was just being formed then, as I say, by NCOs and the like and veterans of Midway and those islands out there, and we came up to strength. We were a reinforced battalion. We left, I think, in February '43 and we arrived; ... incidentally, of course, the Japanese had expanded to the point where they took Wake, of course, which was, I think, the Central Pacific, which was the line of demarcation, and they had gone down to the Gilbert Islands and the 'Canal was their last, southern-most penetration, and they arrived there in about May of '42. ... Then they went through Borneo and New Guinea and all those islands, and then, of course, they were in China and Manchuria. ... In China and Manchuria, they started in the '30s, and they supposedly killed, some quotes were 300,000 people or something like that. ... I had read one figure where twenty million Chinese were killed

over a period of time. ... Our first successful defense was in Midway, I believe, in the Pacific, and then, secondly, of course, the Guadalcanal invasion occurred on, I think, August 7th, or thereabouts. ... The landing, initially, was at Tulagi. Tulagi was a little island right off of Florida Island. ... At the other end is Guadalcanal, with Guadalcanal being on the west and Florida Island being the east and Tulagi being right, hugging up to Florida, and they landed there. But I think, and then a couple of weeks later, on August 18th, they landed on the 'Canal. But, of course, we fought an action with the Japanese for a period of time, until about January of 1943, at which time, they evacuated something like 14,000 of their troops and got out of there. In the meantime, we were in Tulagi there, and a little island, Savo, that they took, and then they took the Russell Islands, where I was located. We landed, initially, right within sight of Tulagi, and we landed on, what we called, New Florida. There was, Florida Island consisted of two islands with a causeway, waterway in between, and the southernmost was referred to as New Florida. ... We landed there and I don't think we unloaded. But initially ...

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

VC: Well, we lived in (?) in the jungle area. But, as a matter-of-fact, we found out that the place was loaded with scorpions and we didn't realize, you see, sometimes, when you go out into new areas, you run across problems you hadn't thought about. But from there, then one day, I was asked to scout for possible gun positions, and we went to, close-by the water on this island, and there was the only native village that I actually saw in this area, and it was called "the Dadala," D-A-D-A-L-A. ... The Dadala was apparently typical for that area. They had thatched roofs and they had an Episcopal church. What was unusual was the fact that it only contained old women, old men and children. All the young girls and young men had disappeared. ... The story went that when the Japanese arrived, they found it expedient to put them back in the hills where the Japanese didn't have access to them. And we built a, there was not road to speak of, and so, we had built a bridge one place, and things like that, and went out and scouted the area. But before we actually set on any gun positions, we were moved and the war was moving up again and we had gone through the 'Canal. Now, we had the Savo Island and next were the Russell Islands, which is part of the British Solomons group. ... There, on this island called Banika, that was, I think, the landing there was something like February 21st, or thereabouts, of 1943. ... Our mission was to, I had this detachment of 40mm guns at the end of the airstrip. It was the northern-most airstrip in the sector at the time. And then, of course, I had a sector to protect, basically the airstrip and the low flying airplanes. But, of course, we were subject to air raids at the time, and that was our principal dangerous thing then. The only thing that was very annoying was the fact that they had a feller that we called "Washing Machine Charlie." Washing Machine Charlie was a single plane that would come in low over the water, under the radar, and he'd be upon you before you knew it. But, of course, then the radar would pick him up and we'd go into signal red and everybody would man their stations. ... This would always occur at two or three o'clock in the morning. It would louse your night up. And he'd go there and we sometimes heard him before the alarm was given. The reason he was called Washing Machine Charlie was because his engine was synchronized differently, so that it had a humming sound and you would hear him. It sounded different than any other plane that we had. ... We knew that when we heard him, we'd know he was here, and he'd drop a few bombs and he'd ruin our night's sleep. Of course, this happened nearly every night. Oh, it was disturbing. ... Then every now and, initially, we had some daytime air raids. But, of course, it was like looking at a movie. You're

sitting down there and you'd see the fighters tangling and you'd see a kill, and it breaks into flame and it falls down and you'd see parachutes sometimes and things like that. It was very fascinating. But, of course, we couldn't shoot, because there were friendly planes there, too. Then, at night, you'd have the, of course, the 90mm would pick them up, if they were up high, and they'd have the spotlights on and they'd be searching the sky. And then, every now and then, you'd see them catch one in the lights and they'd have a pretty good shot at them. ... Then, too, after a while, they had a night fighter that went up, and the night fighter would shoot tracers and we could see them. But if he hit something, well, of course, we could see that, too. The Japanese, at that time, of course, were trying to stem our progress in the area and also, of course, in the hope of coming back. ... From the Russell Islands, they went to, I've forgotten the name of the island, and then Vella Lavella and then Bougainville. ... In the meantime, the Army, I believe, was landing in New Guinea and starting that war.

KP: How big was your particular detachment?

VC: Oh, we had four gun crews and, maybe, a hundred people.

KP: And you were the lieutenant for this?

VC: I was the, I was in charge. It was my detachment. [I ran it] by myself. I think our colonel only came to see us once and he was looking for a place in the jungle where he could find some water, a water supply.

KP: So once you landed on Russell Island, you were pretty much on your own.

VC: Well, yes. I had, of course, we were tied in by communications, but we were on our own. ... The reason I was sent to that place, originally, I was just a member of the, a platoon leader in a sense. The reason I was sent there, there was a Captain (Seaberson?), who was a classmate of mine, and he was there and he developed malaria. ... That was typical of most of them, most of them get it sooner or later. You take Atabrine. We use to take Atabrine and you would turn a little bit yellow and you take it every day, and, of course, if you became sick, as I had, I had malaria once, then they send you to sickbay and they give you quinine for one or two days. As a matter-of-fact, I went there one evening and I stayed the night, and the next morning, I kept bitching about, you know, I wanted to get back, and they said, "You guys all sound alike." While I was talking, I looked at my bunk and my bunk was occupied by the next guy. So, at any rate, what we had to do, you know, it was bad in a sense, you know, no one could move around, there wasn't a PX or anything else, and every now and then, they would let one guy go who had a mission to perform. The trucks would come in once a week with food and sometimes the food was spoiled. I think it came from World War I. We used to have corned beef and Spam and things like that. The cans were popped. You know, obviously, it didn't take much of a scientist to realize that they were [bad], so we'd have to throw them out. But we found of a way of supplementing. It turned out that Lever Brothers operated there. It was the only industry there, with the coconut trees. They had planted all these trees, or they were there, I don't know whether they were there, a natural growth. But what they did, they imported a number of cattle, of various kinds ...

BM: Which island was this?

VC: This was Banika, and the Russells. ... The cattle would go underneath and graze underneath the coconut trees and keep the foliage down. ... They experimented. They had Texas Longhorns, they had (Bremmer?) bulls, you name it, Holsteins, all kinds. But, of course, when I saw that, and I had a couple of old hands from the West. One of them reminded me of Lenny in Steinbeck. I don't know if you remember Lenny, the big [guy], except that he was brighter than Lenny, and he could do anything. ... He was a big hulk of a guy and [we had] a wonderful relationship. But, as a matter-of-fact, in those days, you know, here I am, just a kid out of college, and anything you said became law, and if they didn't agree with you, they'd handle it very diplomatically. But, of course, I had a platoon sergeant that was a China Marine at one time, and he, actually, I gave him a free hand, in a sense, that he handled the day-to-day operations and I just handled the policies and things like that, and I used to, at night, censor their mail.

KP: Your platoon sergeant was an old Marine?

VC: Oh, he was [in] seven or eight years, and, in those days, that was, and our gunny sergeant was [in for] twenty-two years, and they had been to China, and, of course, they gave us some stories about what the Japanese were doing in China.

KP: They must have had first-hand knowledge of what the Japanese were doing.

VC: Well, they had come in contact [with them], I think, in China. In Shanghai, of course, there was a, the Japanese had taken over Shanghai, and I think one of them was there, or both of them were there, and they were telling us about how cruel the Japanese were. For example, there were guards on a bridge, and they see civilians approaching them and the guards would begin to verbally abuse them, and then sometimes take them and smack them with their swords. They had what was called "Navy swords," and they used to use them in place of a club or something like that. Now, what I didn't realize, and what I was going to get to, is that when I got to Japan, there was a cultural difference that we didn't understand. In Japan, when two people meet, one bows first, the one that's inferior, and the other responds with a bow, and that was being civil. They thought that the Chinese, and certainly, Americans, were barbarians. They were uncivil. In other words, they expected them to respond as the Japanese would, and that cultural difference, I think, explains some of the times when we may think that they are abusive, they thought they were being insulted. But, at any rate, my platoon sergeant ran the show, pretty much, as I say. So while we saw all of that cattle out there, and I had two cowhands, so I got ahold of my cowhands and said, "That looks like edible beef out there." ... They said, "It certainly is." But, of course, some of them had tuberculosis. ... They said, "Don't worry, lieutenant. I can pick out a healthy one, a heifer." And so we'd take them along at dusk, because, during the day, we had no refrigeration, and, of course, the heat. So at dusk, I'd go with them, because if they had any problems, ... he'd point one out and he [would] shoot, and it got to be one of the fun things in camp, to be the guy who shoots. Then we'd kill the heifer and clean them and things like that and hang them up. ... Then the next day, we'd really eat. But there was one time, the cook, incidentally, we had such bad food to begin with, and I eventually found a guy that was from a CC Camp, he'd been a cook there, and so I made him my cook. ... Now,

when they become a cook, they are no longer a soldier. I don't know what happens. They have a different attitude.

KP: Really?

VC: I don't think they're as intense in their discipline. They live a different life. They run their own thing and they're self, I call it "self-employed," in a sense. But anyway, the cook, who improved our kitchen a great deal and made it more bearable, he decided, he asked me, "Can I shoot one of these." I said, "Okay." ... We take him out next time and the guy picks, "That one." ... He [the cook] says, "That one?" And the feller says "Yes, that one." Now, he was looking at a (Brummel?) bull and the feller picked a heifer that was next to him. So he shot the bull. ... He had a ring in his nose. He was an enormous animal. He must have weighed a ton. But, of course, we wounded him, and then we had to kill him, so we had this enormous animal. I said, "Cook, cut me the biggest steak you can," and we had a Navy dish, and this steak flopped over the sides. ... Just about that time, we also killed a crocodile and we had some of that, too. So we supplemented our food.

KP: So you did quite well on your first island.

VC: Well, you had the, the point I was pointing out was survival. The colonel was, the colonel came to see me. I think the colonel of the battalion came to see me once, looking for a water source, and the other colonel came to me, I think, once, and his concern was to see how you were doing. ... He sees something that he didn't provide and he says, "Oh, you're doing very nicely." He didn't ask where you got it or anything like that. "You're doing very nicely." He wants you to be functional. ... He was giving you everything he could, but he was hoping you'd be enterprising enough to make do with what you had and to supplement, but he didn't encourage us to steal, though.

BM: That gets back to the lesson that you learned from your lieutenant when you lost your entrenching tool.

VC: Precisely, precisely. A good Marine is never caught short.

BM: That's interesting.

KP: What about the medical care that you men got?

VC: Well, we had a couple of surgeons from the Mayo Clinic, and they were happiest when they had someone to patch up. One day, I think they were delighted when one of the airmen was parachuting down and claimed that the Japanese made a pass for him, and anyway, he wound up with a foot that had to be amputated. ... I went there one day and had my tonsils removed, not of my own choice, but, and during that night we had a bombing episode, and I was just recovering from the morphine they gave me, so all we did was just roll over on the ground and hope for the best.

BM: Did you experience any of the anti-Japanese propaganda? Did it contrast when you went to Japan and you actually saw the people for what they were?

VC: The Japanese, of course, were the enemy, you know, and you heard all the bad things. As far as I'm concerned, it's like, you know, being unhappy about a race, and, basically, you judge individually after a while. You judge individually and to stereotype people is wrong. But, of course, after Pearl Harbor and after changing, uprooting all of our lives, the Japanese was our enemy. And he was not someone that would make friends with you. He was not someone who'd accept you. All he'd want to do is kill you.

BM: Did you take any prisoners?

VC: No. There was evidence of Japanese loss. But there, again, I think, some years after, they found those fellers still there. Most of them made no effort to, you know. They concealed themselves as best they could, and if you happened upon them, of course, we'd be in a fixed position, where we had a responsibility in a certain area. We weren't moving around. We would have run across them. Then, I think, when the Japanese left the 'Canal in January of 1943, they took, all the fellers that were caught behind the lines, they were just left behind, period. Another aspect that was rather interesting, and I think, historically, when I went into the Marine Corps, actually, it was basically a white operation. I mean, there were no Afro-Americans that I saw. Now, of course, later on, we understood that some were taken in. ... When we left the Solomons, this is in February of 1944, that's a year later, we were replaced by a black battalion. But that battalion was serviced by white officers. But, of course, we were told, at one point in time, that we might get that kind of assignment. In fact, nobody wanted it because of the fact, that basically, they weren't being used in the combat area. It was a fact. But I thought, "What a waste of manpower," you know. I think it was a terrible thing. But at that particular point, I think even the black community had a different mentality. They had been subservient so long that they didn't become, you know, expressive, until a later time. Of course, Truman did away with that. But, of course, what the hell's the difference? A man's a man. He's a good man or a poor man. He's a good soldier or a poor soldier and his race has very little to do with it. ... The only one that we actually did business with, the only one I saw in that area, other than the Melanesian from New Zealand, the native from New Zealand, I think, I've forgotten their name. At any rate, they came through once as scouts. They were headed for some of the islands to go, they go into these islands and set up a radio station and things like that. And they were scouts, I think. But when we left, there was a black stevedore, and they were so lacking in motivation, because they were treated like second-class citizens. ... One of my managers became so upset that he pushed them aside so that we would load it ourselves. ... What a shame, but I think that you don't remember that day, your generation wouldn't. ... In my generation, the blacks I knew at home they, we went to school with them, played ball with them and didn't differentiate. ... We socialized, basically, with our own ethnic groups to begin with, and, basically, I didn't detect. They were integrated, as far as I'm concerned. We didn't have any ...

KP: It was a surprise to you when you saw segregation?

VC: Segregation? The mentality, the treatment, it was as though they couldn't have their own officers. It was a surprise, a surprise. And, of course, the only other place I saw Negroes was

aboard ship. They were mess men. Of course, things changed tremendously since then. But I think, in relating to World War II, it's, well, there weren't any women there, either, when I first went there. When I was on Russell Island and I got a note one day, we had a grapevine of information sharing, there was a nurse that was going to land at the airport. Now, we hadn't seen a white woman, as a matter-of-fact, the only women that we saw was these old black women. So we drove down to see [her], at a time when we didn't expect any business. So we drove down and I saw someone in overalls, you know, descending from the plane. But I said, "When are the women going to arrive?" And they said, "That's her." I said, "What the hell have they done with our women while we were gone?" And that's as close as I got to, until the next island. I think that's a story that you might enjoy here.

KP: How good was the mail service when you were on the islands?

VC: Well, it was terrible. You know, you'd sit at night and you had a marker, a black marker. You crossed out, if not, you had a scissor and you'd cut ...

KP: What did it feel like to read other people's mail?

VC: It was boring. I'm really not interested in other people's mail. You know, you'd think that you'd get your kicks from it. But, actually, I found that it was a boring chore. But you felt impelled to because, at that time, it was for real. Everything was for real out there. As a matter-of-fact, when Tokyo Rose got on and wished us well and gave us some news, we knew that people knew where we were.

BM: What were the types of things that you had to censor?

VC: Well, any reference to where we were, any reference to anything military. Personal things we had no problem with. But everyone inclined to sometimes say, "Oh, you know." For example, one night, the kind of thing they might report is that "one night we had an air raid." ... Before that, to supplement the, or to shore up, the supply of gasoline for the airport, what they did, of course, away from there, where they stored their planes, underneath the coconut trees, right near my campsite, they put fifty-five gallon drums. ... They spread them around, so, you know, if you hit one, you didn't get them all. And then, not too far from where I was at, there was a gasoline, large tank, I don't know, maybe 20,000 gallons or something like that, and so the bombs hit on that. Well, there was a, you know, there were Roman candles going off all over the place and it was a little shaky. But I've forgotten what my point was. I was trying to make a point.

BM: About the censoring.

VC: Oh, censoring. Now, that is something they might have said, well, they might have made a comment of some kind indicating, and that's what you, of course, didn't want and you couldn't permit. The mail came through. I wasn't a great letter writer myself, although I maintained, the mail I had, you know, was light, but it was reasonable.

KP: Did you ever get movies or any USO shows on Russell Island?

VC: Never on the Russell Island, nothing. [There was] no USO cantina, or anything like that.

KP: Were you on the Russell Islands for over a year?

VC: For about a year. We got there February of 1943, and we left for Eniwetok, which was to, at that time, Tarawa had gone, that was in November of 1943, that was in the Gilbert Islands. We were in the lower, the Solomons group, and they were moving up the chain to New Guinea, Bougainville. ... Then they were beginning in the Marshall Islands, and Eniwetok was in the Marshall Islands. Kwajalein was in the same area. ... Kwajalein was taken, I think, in January, 31st, '44 and Eniwetok was February, I think, like the 17th of 1944. ... We were closing in their area, and, of course, I think we kept moving there, except for the Carolinas, with Truk. They left them, you know, just left them there and just bypassed them. ... Then, of course, they went to Saipan, which is in the Marianas. Now, when we left Eniwetok, what I found was fascinating for us is the fact that 22nd Marine Regiment was the infantry part, and it was in an atoll, which means that there were islands and the tops, I guess, the mountain tops that are in a circular, roughly a circular area. ... We came in through the lower opening to Eniwetok itself, the large island. ... We arrived there as the 22nd Marines were, you know, they had already bombed the place and prepared it. There was hardly a live tree standing, as a matter-of-fact, and the 22nd Marines were taking it and we watched them softening up Porky Island, which was the next island around to the east, and it was a picture. I think it was like watching a movie, because the destroyers would be close to shore, the cruisers were further out, and the destroyers would fire their salvos to soften them up and the cruisers along the, the destroyers made more noise than anyone else, and then they'd ease off and the dive bombers would come in. You could see it. It was just like a picture show. We were watching it and then they told us that, "The 22nd Marines were going to land there and if they're short, then you'll be their backup." Of course, I felt a little apprehensive, because, you know, I always feel, the thing that concerned me about, even any operation, is when you can't see what you have. You know, in the infantry, you might have foliage or something, and there's a squad over here, and a squad over there, and a squad in front of you, and to try to control what's happening is very difficult. Of course, in the artillery, my guns are in front of me. I know where they're at. But even in field artillery, you have an observer out front, and, you know, when he gives you the coordinates, you set it and you bracket it and you bring it in. But in the infantry, how do keep control with people? If one feller moves his head to one side and the other guy is held up and they can come behind you, that is, it always was a challenge in my mind. The thought that, and in situations like that, sometimes you do foolish things. But instead of keeping your cool, you could lose your head and you can lose your life. But, at any rate, we watched this operation, which I thought was, you know, what a sight to see. But, of course, they cleaned it up and we came ashore. ... When we were on the shore, I saw the only inhabitants of the island that we knew were there, that we were exposed to, and there were two women and an old man and a couple of little children that looked like they were of mixed race. The women, I think, what are they? Micronesian? They're darker than the Polynesians, but they're not of the black race. But, at any rate, these two women, apparently, had been rescued. And a funny thing, they were breastfeeding, apparently, and they had a little hole for their nipples, so that they wouldn't have to take their dress off. It was the strangest thing. That's the only live people that we saw. Of course, then, on shore, why, of course, there were a lot of dead there. And then, what we had to do, of course, on this island, just as on all the other

islands, you had to bring your own water, that was very vital, because, I think, the elevation at its highest, was less than ten feet, I believe. ... Of course, if you dug water, you were digging into brackish water. So we had our own. ... Of course, for bathing and laundering, you'd tied strings, telephone wire, and put it in the surf and let it wash back and forth. Of course, it was a little sticky. But then, of course, we went down and assumed our positions. Each one, of course, we had the airport. It was a big thing. ... The reason for this advance was [that it was] preliminary to the next jump, which was Saipan and Guam. ... When we got there, we knew that something was happening. First of all, which was unusual, we were given, they opened an Officers' Club. Now, we never had such luxury. I thought, "Well, aren't they being nice to us?" ... We could buy, we all contributed fifty or sixty dollars and we even made some profit on it, ten or fifteen dollars, and we finally sold our shares. But we could buy a bottle of whiskey for, we never had this before.

KP: You didn't have alcohol on the Russell Islands?

VC: Oh, no. The only alcohol was when one of the fellers on the neighboring camp made his own, until one night, I think, the thing blew up and violated the "no lights" [regulation.] That was a serious situation. But, at any rate, we thought that this was for us, but later on, we found out, of course, the invading fleets stopped, and it was the last R&R for them. And then, I went to the Officers' Club and I would see people like Henry Fonda and all kinds of characters that were from visiting ships. But they brought in, I recall, thirteen *Essex*-type carriers. Now, preliminary to their arrival, however, there were a lot of planes flying in, and these planes, there were so many of them that they surrounded the airport completely. ... They were just stacked one right after the other and, of course, they were planes that were going to be available to these *Essex* carriers. What, unfortunately, happened was that they were all loaded, ready to go, gasoline, because they had to make this hop to the carrier. One of them, while taking off, stalled, and dove into the ground in the midst of all these planes and the thing blew up. And there were just Roman candles going all over the place. They lost ninety-nine planes. What they eventually did, they took bulldozers and just pushed them into the sea to control it.

KP: When was that?

VC: That was, well, that was just before Saipan. Saipan occurred in June of '44.

KP: It also sounds like what happened at Pearl Harbor, when they had all these planes very close together.

VC: Well, these were, you know, preparing, they were replacement, or they were planes that were going to stock these carriers, but, of course, they had them gassed, from what I understand of things like that. I was at the other end of the island. Of course, the island was small, and you'd see these things popping up. It was terrible. ... They lost a lot of planes. Of course, then they took off. Of course, all the other ships took off. And then, I took my binoculars and I counted something like 600 masts of ships in the lagoon. Of course, that's why we won the war, the logistics. And here, they had everything out there, toilet paper, screws, guns, you name it, anything that an invading army needed was out there, and that's, as I say, how we won the war. ... You'd think that, apparently, with the mistakes we made, and I can tell you one, we were

obviously better prepared and better supplied than the others. ... As far as Eniwetok, there is another comment that you made, as far as USO shows. After I'd been out about two years, at that time, a little over two years, Bob Hope came to the island, and that was a big event, and he always brought girls with him, of course. ... We were all looking forward to that. Remember, no one came to see us, or entertain us at all, so the Bob Hope Show was put on. ... After the show, I don't know how this was arranged for him, but Marines can be enterprising, and I went to a neighboring campsite, a friend of mine that had the 90mm battery. In his campsite and in his tent, he had one of the performers, one of the gals, lying on his bunk. ... She was laying there and in hysterics and surrounding her were all of these hungry Marines. One was patting her hair, the other was patting her shoe. She was the safest person on the island.

KP: That was probably one of the highlights of your time there.

VC: I still remember that with a great deal amusement.

KP: Did you get to watch any movies?

VC: I think, as I recall, on the Russell Islands, there may have been a movie site. You know, if you're in the main campsite, you might see it, but not out in a detachment area.

KP: I read in the *Rutgers Alumni Magazine* that your unit was very successful. It said that you shot down thirty-four planes over Savo Island.

VC: Something like that.

KP: It also noted that the area you defended in Eniwetok suffered very little bomb damage.

VC: No, that was, see, that was an extended, they were being pushed back. And to do anything about the Eniwetok thing, was, at that time, they hoped to recoup, you know. But, let's see, Eniwetok ...

KP: Did any of your men get killed on either island?

VC: No, no, we were very fortunate, as I say. I think that when we were landing on the Russells, I remember, I have a written order that the colonel sent to us. It told us to observe the blackout, because seven people had been killed where we were going in that area, because of violating the blackout. It also told us not to fraternize with the natives, but we didn't get to see any.

BM: Perhaps there were none.

KP: Well, in the Russell Islands there weren't many. Did you to fraternize at all with them?

VC: Well, in the Russell Islands, no. We didn't see any natives at all. I think when the Japanese came, I think they regrouped, as I say, the young men and young women went to the hills.

KP: So you didn't see any natives.

VC: No, none in sight. We didn't run across them.

BM: Did you only stay in your area?

VC: Well, this was our responsibility twenty-four hours a day, because, you know, you'd have daytime as well as nighttime raids.

KP: What about Eniwetok? You mentioned there were a few natives there.

VC: Well, they took them off. When we arrived, they took them off. There was nothing left on Eniwetok. There were stubs of coconut trees. Most of us ...

KP: So you never fraternized with the natives.

VC: No, no natives. I think on some of the other islands, they had natives. I think I put a thermometer out on the beach once and the thing broke at 140 [degrees]. It just went right through the top.

KP: Did you guys ever develop a liking for coconuts, or anything of that sort?

VC: No, we weren't turned on to that. I hadn't met any Cuban friends to teach me the desirability of using coconuts.

KP: Did you eat anything exotic on the islands?

VC: No, not really. I think that Eniwetok, or rather, Russell Islands, at one time, someone built a little dock, just a small dock out in the water. ... Somebody got the idea that they could get some fresh fish and they dropped grenades, and the explosion would bring them to the surface and then they would scoop them up. But we weren't, but it wasn't ...

KP: You weren't close enough to the water?

VC: Well, we were close. There was a lagoon close to where we were, and, for some reason, it was rather dead. The only thing I saw there was a shark and the crocodile that we killed.

KP: You mentioned that you were relieved by a black unit. Which island was that?

VC: At Russell. Now, see, the war had gone by, and, as I say, this is ...

BM: Because they didn't even use them?

VC: Yes, that's right. They were just in an area that the war had passed, by that time. They moved up the islands up to Bougainville, and the like, then the bombing runs became too long, you know, and Washing Machine Charlie couldn't make as many visits.

KP: How often did you see action on the islands?

VC: Oh, well, Eniwetok was basically, I don't recall. On the Russell Islands, as I say, sometimes Charlie would come over every night. Then you'd have, you'd have the fighters, occasionally, then you'd have the bombers coming through and things like that.

KP: Would you say, in a given week, you might see action four or five times?

VC: In the Russell Islands, there was a time, initially, in the early stages.

KP: Was there any fear that the Marines wouldn't be able to hold Russell Island?

VC: We didn't think in those terms. We never thought of those things.

KP: You thought that you were there to stay.

VC: Absolutely, here to stay, and we were damned well intent on that. ... The only concern was that, sometimes, there were stragglers that might be around.

KP: Where there any discipline problems over the years?

VC: I, frankly, had no problems at all. What happened was that, one of the things that was a diversion to some, was the fact that inasmuch as they had cattle, they had horses. But, of course, these fellers from the West, they would catch a couple of horses. ... Then, also, we were originally living in a tent, and, of course, we had an apron above us, [made] of coconut, you know, the coconut trees gave us excellent cover. Other than the fact that we were at the end of the airport, an obvious target, our campsite underneath there was pretty much invisible to the air. ... After a while, what they did, they were tired of living in a tent, they built log cabins of the coconut trees. They'd take them, notch them and just build them up. I have some pictures at home. They'd throw a tarp over the top. But, of course, they had no windows or anything like that. They had open air for a window. And, of course, down there, there were a lot of little lizards, and they used to keep you company. They were the only bedfellows that you had.

KP: You mentioned that you caught a case of malaria. Which island was it?

VC: On Russell Island. That was my first bout with malaria. As I say, it was very prevalent. ... The feller that I replaced, I think, was sent back home, not only sent back home, but he wound up at Earle Naval Air Station, which is right close to home for me. That, I got over rather quickly, and, the second time, it was a reoccurrence when I was on Eniwetok. Then I went in for my Atabrine, and after I finally convinced my male surgeons that I could leave, he broke out a bottle of medicinal brandy, which was the first drink that I [had], other than at the club when that opened.

KP: What other diseases did you worry about? Obviously, you were concerned about scorpion bites.

VC: Well, I understand that the natives had yaws, and I saw some of them in that general area. We stopped at [New] Hebrides before we got to the Solomons. ... It would be open wounds, but we weren't exposed to them. But, of course, basically, malaria was the big thing, and every day, there'd be someone at the chow line handing them out to make sure that you took them. You wouldn't even depend upon them to give you a week's supply. They didn't do it that way, right at the chow line, they'd hand you your Atabrine and you took it right away.

KP: What about chaplains? Did you have any chaplains on your island?

VC: Periodically, when we were in an area where there was headquarters there. But when you're on detachment, we didn't have ...

KP: Did you ever have a minister or priest come out to perform services?

VC: No, not to my recollection, not to my recollection, and even on Eniwetok, I don't remember seeing a chaplain. So then I went home from Eniwetok, and we went to Kauai, and that was the island that I was telling you about, a large percentage was Japanese. And they had the feeling that had the Japanese ... landed, a lot of the local Japanese would have joined them. ... Whether it's true or not, I'm giving you the sentiment at that time. ... Sometimes, in hindsight, they see something different, but that was a real concern at the time.

KP: Did it surprise you now to see this many Japanese in Kauai?

VC: Not only seeing them, but they owned most of the island, I think. I have no personal animosity. The only thing that disturbs me is the posture that some of them take, that they weren't responsible for the war, and the Smithsonian type of thing, I think that mentality is very disturbing. You got to think in terms of what existed in the minds of men [at the time]. In retrospect, you can always be a Monday Morning Quarterback, "Maybe we could have done this or that." ... I think that, for example, that the atom bomb was absolutely justified. Well, as a matter-of-fact, they firebombed Tokyo, and, in one raid, I have an article I read, in one raid, they had something like a hundred thousand dead. They didn't use the atom bomb in Tokyo because it was destroyed already, and a lot of other cities, and they still would not talk peace. So they picked Hiroshima because it was the Japanese command center, I think, for the defense of the islands. I think that they were go to another, (Nakamura), I believe, as a second target, and Nagasaki was the third target because it was a Mitsubishi industrial center. But after I came home, I went down to Quantico and I met this colonel who said, "You want to get into artillery?" ... I thought that it would be a nice change, and I was flirting with going with the infantry. ... So he sent me to Quantico and I finished there and then went out a second time. ... I flew from Hawaii to Kwajalein to Saipan.

KP: You returned to Kwajalein and then flew out to Saipan.

VC: Well, actually, it was just a way stop. It was a PBY, which is the noisiest, it isn't like a conventional airliner. It didn't have any noise abatement, or things like that. But, hey, it got there fast. I was delighted. It was a flying boat, you know, a PBY, and we stopped at Kwajalein,

I think, maybe to refuel or something like that. ... Then I got into Saipan, and, I think, actually, I landed in Tinian Harbor. Tinian, being the island immediately south of Saipan and there ...

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

VC: Because I didn't have troop command. But, you know, I didn't have ...

KP: You'd had a lot of responsibility.

VC: Yes, I had had a battery of my own. As a matter-of-fact, one of my batteries was even split between two islands. And, you know, incidentally, before I forget, I want to mention something that I think that you might find of some interest. In the Marine Corp, at that time, when you were given your rank, as of that date, your rank is of that date, and [you are] also numbered according to your standing in your class. For example, I was seventeenth in my class, and, as of that day, I was number seventeen in rank. ... Those below me were less and those above me were, well, one of the fellers that I soldiered with, in the Russell Islands, was a feller that had been in the regular service. ... A lot of them hadn't finished their college, and some hadn't finished and enlisted, or due to the draft, at any rate, he was one of the first ten, and so he was a regular officer. I was seventeen. So, one day, I was in this campsite, my camp, you know, and he came to join me for some reason, I don't know. He was in between assignments, or something, so he came into the campsite. I [had] found that the men were not carrying out instructions the way I had given them. So I called him over, I said, "Why are you doing it that way?" He said, "I think I told you, Captain (Gupie?) told us to do this." So I wasn't going to argue with the men about it. I said, "Okay." So I went back into camp that night. I said, "(Gup?), what the hell are you doing here? This is my campsite. I've been here for x number of months. You've just arrived and here you're countermanding my own instructions." He said, "Vic, it's nothing personal. Just remember I have a few numbers on you." I said, "Okay." I figured that he wasn't going to be there that long. You know, some of the Marine Corps regulations are, and there's some reason for some of that, you know, when push comes to shove, you know, if he were in camp and something went wrong, they say, "Wait a minute, you were in camp. Why didn't you prevent that?" But, at any rate, (Gupie?) was a good sailor, actually, a good Marine. But, at any rate, we went up to Saipan and I was disappointed, initially, because all the other slots were, you know, the troop slots were taken. And so, I was ES-2, and I also had the responsibility for the Officers' Club, and I don't know, for censoring and a few miscellaneous, that's what happens when you're on the staff, sort of administrators there. ... I arrived in June, and it seems, and, of course, the war was all through in August. But, in my recollection, I may be in error, but I received, to my recollection, a box about that size, full of maps. They were all classified maps showing what I thought to be the lower part of Kyushu, and it had all of the markings which would indicate the depth of water and everything like that. And this, we also got a Japanese language book, which we taught. ... We were using what, I think, we referred to it as an (Remaggi?) alphabet. That was our alphabet, the English alphabet in place of all their hieroglyphics. Then we were told, and I think that this was before the war [ended], that we were to begin to combat loading, that one of the artillery batteries was already combat-loaded and was at sea. ... They were going to an island that had a, for target practice. ... The reason that they chose that island was because it had a lot of elevation and they felt that in Japan, they would run across this mountain situation and correcting for SI, I believe they called it, they

would get some experience. So we were told, now, if you combat load, what you do is you put on the weapon, you strap to the weapon whatever you need, your entrenching tool, things like that, and what you take ashore, combat loaded, is what you got. That's what you're stuck with. So, obviously, we were preparing for an invasion. But, of course, as we know now, that it was Operation Olympic, which would involve, had a target date of November 1, 1945.

KP: But you didn't know exactly what was going to happen.

VC: No, we had no idea, no idea. We just knew we had to get ready. So I had all these maps. Now, when, of course, August 15th, we heard rumors of these things. ... Of course, the B-29s and all the *Enola Gay* and *Bock's Car* probably flew right over us, because they were taking off and landing all the time. And so, I think, we're aboard ship. The war ended August 15th, we were aboard ship, I think. It was September 18th, we boarded a ship, and, of course, we didn't leave right away. ... We landed in Nagasaki, approximately, I think, September 23rd, or something like that. ... What was interesting, at that time, I think I have a, do I have my folder with me? I wanted to show you. What did I do with it? Oh, here it is. Here it is, right here. Nagasaki was an excellent target, in the sense that there was some restraining geography that limited some of the extent of the damage. Hiroshima was basically flat, and I think, that they lost about 180,000 there. But Nagasaki, I had a map, I could have shown you one of the military maps that I had. You fold it in a way that you can handle it. But the harbor itself is at the southern area and there is a river that goes up, and in this valley, there's this mountain, there's hills. They're not tall mountains, but there're hills that surrounded this industrial site, and they dropped the bomb in the middle of it, because on the northern end of it, there was some sort of a military facility and on the southern end there was the military facility. Well, Mitsubishi is one of their principal, I think, industrial areas, and, of course, an area devoted to war manufacturing of war goods. ... They dropped it in the middle, and what it did, it cleaned out this bowl and the hills deflected the outward force. It sent it upward rather than going across and damaging other areas. So it was a cleaned out area. ... I have some pictures here that I think you may find of some interest. Now, we weren't near a PX. You couldn't buy film. These are small versions of the same thing.

KP: These are pictures of Nagasaki?

VC: Nagasaki. They were taken, as I say, approximately a month or six weeks after.

KP: These are copies of the pictures?

VC: Yes, I have the little one. I had these blown up. These are the same thing. You can have these if you like.

KP: You're sure? We can use these in the exhibit that we're doing.

VC: Yes. Now, when we initially landed, we were put up the first night in a warehouse, or a factory-type building that was a steel building, and it was at the lower fringe. It was at the harbor's entrance. We were at the northwestern corner. ... I have a map that shows a Mitsubishi plant there and I think that's what it was. ... It was partially damaged. And so we stayed there

for the night, and then we began trekking across this area, where I took these pictures, into a place called "Isahaya," which was eighteen miles out of town. That was our assigned occupation site to begin with. Now, because the Second Marine Division, I think, had the general Kyushu area and the Fifth Marine Division had the northern part of Kyushu, and so we were broken up into various battalion areas and we were headquartered in Isahaya. ... Isahaya was a small, little town that looked very rural and looked very lovely, a charming little town. But to get there, we had to go through this bombed out area. Now, the first impressions I got of the, of course, you know, we're dealing with the homeland now. ... We're dealing with a different culture, a different, everything was different. The views were different, the sounds, the smells, everything was different. ... What impressed me was the fact that, in making this trip back and forth over this area, no one thought about radiation.

BM: That was one of my questions.

VC: No one gave it any thought at all. We were in awe of that. Incidentally, that one picture that appears to be a church, one of the, it probably is a Catholic church, because that's where Saint Francis, you know, [went]. I don't know whether it was this church, or one of the churches, that was on the fringe of the area, and being of concrete, that's why more of it stood. But there was one spot on one of the walls that really impressed me. You could see the outline of a human being, as if the radiation hit and he absorbed some of it and his outline was put up there against the wall. But one of the trips I had to make was at night. I got to a crossroad, and I was running a convoy, and I didn't know where to go. So I got out and the lights went on at this crossroads and there was no housing close-by. Suddenly, out of the woodwork come two Japanese men, from nowhere. I had my little (Remaggi?) book and I said something about Isahaya, and he said, "Oh, over there." ... He pointed to the right fork and that's how, now, in retrospect, I think that his presence there was not by accident. It was part of the very well-planned and disciplined Japanese system. I mean, everyone responded to government directions and discipline, and they, apparently, had these people planted, because I had other examples where it indicated that the Japanese government had organized and controlled that. Now, what was interesting, it wasn't the Allied command telling us this, you know, "Hey, do this or that," but rather the Japanese there assisting and cooperating in the implementation of the Articles of the Surrender, which I thought was really unusual. So we get to this campsite, which was a former Japanese camp, and, of course, we can't use the water there because it had blood through it, and so we had to use our own water. And, in addition to that, the food in the area, we were only permitted to eat at three geisha houses, I only saw one in our area and that may have been for the division area, because they had used human fertilizer and apparently there was a health concern that we weren't accustomed to it. So we were only permitted to go to this one area. Now, what I found was my job suddenly became better than anyone else's. To carry out the Articles of Surrender, as the intelligence officer, every day, a Japanese ... interpreter would appear at my office. I didn't ask for him. It wasn't even discussed, he just appeared. That morning, I also received instructions, actually, I think they came down from the Allied command through division and through battalion to me, and they'd say, "Today you will do thus and so. You will go out and check on this, check on that," and so I'd get a patrol and my interpreter with me and we'd go trucking out to this place. Now, our colonel was an old salt, by the name of (Fornie?). Colonel (Fornie?) and his attitude was, "Look, fellers, Marines have been overseas before. Let's not act like a bunch of tourists." So the enlisted men, no one left unless they had some business. R&R was one

afternoon a week. So I was deluged by friends of mine saying, "Hey, can I go out with you today?" because I was doing this every day. ... The thing that impressed me, in reference to how this operation, I don't know in anything I've read, where an occupation was handled with less intrusion and more efficient [manner], and, as a matter-of-fact, with more kindness, than ours, versus the Japanese occupation of China and these other places, where they were brutal. So I guess that the two things that surprised me, which brings some of this into focus, is that, first of all, I, one time, got a note saying, "Go to see the chief of police and check on the collecting of arms." I didn't know what he was talking about. I didn't realize that they were collecting arms. The Japanese high command, apparently, had given it, through government chains, to the local chief of police, to collect arms that, and, apparently, it was an edict by the Allied command that local Japanese were to turn in any arms that they had. So I went into, to see the chief, and, of course, listening to my interpreter, and some were very poor, as far as English was concerned. I had one, for example, that was a college student. He was excellent. So you'd go in there and I was appraised of the fact of certain amenities. Now, we're kind of a brash crowd. You've got business, you go in, you shake hands and you talk business right away. Not so in Japan. This cultural difference comes in. You come in there, and, pursuant to the advice I was given, you make your greetings and you sit down. They seat you at a long conference table, and the first thing you know, a little Japanese woman shows up and pours you tea. Then you sip the tea. You don't have to drink it, but you at least have to go through the motions. That is being civil. Then you talk business. And so we went through this ritual everywhere I went thereafter, and so I told the interpreter that I wanted to ask him about the progress of his collecting arms. He says, "Oh, yes," and he brought us in the next room and then he opened the trap door on the floor and brought me down into a room that was loaded with miscellaneous weapons. I've never seen such a collection. Some of them were so antiquated that you couldn't shoot them. The barrels were rusted through. But when the Japanese said, "You turn in your weapon," you turn in your weapons, regardless of what it is. But of course, there were some items, like hand embellished, rather, gold embellished shotguns. But there were two particular items that struck my curiosity. One, in the corner, I saw a pole and it had, sort of prongs from it. And I thought, "Is this a weapon?" So I asked him about it. He said, "Oh, yes." They use that in case you're trying to catch up with someone and you grab him by his clothes, catch onto his clothes and pull him. And the second one was a little box that was no more than a foot long, a very ornate box. And I opened it and there was the tip of a samurai sword, and a very pathetic note that said, I don't know what the greeting was, but the substance of the note was, "This has been in my family for three hundred years. It is no longer a danger to anyone. May we please keep it?" I took note of that and passed it on for whatever it was worth. So I found out that he had done that. We didn't go out and collect arms, we didn't go into anybody's house. The Japanese government did it in their established structural resources, and, of course, the police there had a lot of authority. I understand they even collected taxes. ... They asked that they be able to retain their Navy swords, because the Navy swords were used for discipline. You know, if they got an obstructive person, they wouldn't hesitate to use it as sort of a club. Well, I passed down that bit of information. So I came back and I told the colonel that this is what we had and made my report. ... Then, later on, I found that I was to make arrangements for us to show up with the appropriate number of trucks and collect everything. ... I detached a detail to pick up all the arms and they brought it to one of our barracks and it was put in the barracks. And then, later on, I went to the barracks and found that I couldn't get in, unless I showed my dog tags, because security had already been established. Some of these items were beautiful and I don't know what became of

them, but they didn't get down to my level. Because one of the very stern and very definite instructions that I got, and there weren't people like myself wondering around, poking around, the colonel said, "Captain, no souvenirs. I mean that." So, one day, I got instructions to "locate the factory system." I saw no factory system. I didn't know what the hell they were talking about. So I went down to the chief of police and chatted with him, and I found out that what has happened is that in this area, they were building airplane engines and fuel tanks, extra fuel tanks that they put on wings. That was two of the items, and I don't know what else they had. So I went and found that they had segregated this material. Now, this was only about six weeks after the bomb. They had segregated the machine tools in one place, the raw material in another place, and the finished product in a third place. Obviously, they were going to lose the finished product. They were hoping to retain the other two. And so I went there and there was this factory and these things all there. ... How did we find it? Through the Allied command. And who had told them? They didn't come down to see it. They had been advised by the Japanese government, obviously. It was fascinating how well synchronized this was and how orderly. We didn't have to go out probing and bothering people, so, as a result, the public, initially, was very, very apprehensive of us. ... The reputation of the Marines included a claim, "To be a Marine, you had to kill a Japanese," which of course, was a lot of nonsense. But, at any rate, there was one point in time when I was traveling through town, we ran across an old convoy, and there was a bunch of school children lining the streets, you know, the sidewalk. And as we went by, they would all cheer. And what was their cheer? "Up your (giggy?)" Some wise-ass Marine had told them that. They thought they were being friendly. So, at any rate, at one of these sites, there was a warehouse-type of thing and they were situated in a park, so that they looked like park buildings, not warehouses and things like that, innocuous, so that no one from the air would think about bombing this. So I had a lieutenant with me from Philadelphia. He saw something, one of the rooms appeared to be a classroom, and in one corner of the classroom, there was an easel on which was a map. Written across the top was "Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere," which was their code for taking Southeast Asia, you know, they were going to include it the sphere. They had a picture of the China coast and as far as New Guinea. So the Lieutenant said, "You forgot to take this." I said, "No. The colonel said no souvenirs." So he said, "But it has intelligence. Look, it shows you what they intended to do." Well, against my better judgment, I took it. Unfortunately, I'm entering my barracks, which housed the colonel's office, upstairs. I no longer got into my office when I got word. The colonel's aid comes and says, "Hey, Campi, the colonel wants to see you now." So I went to see the colonel and I said, "Colonel, sir, what can I do for you?" He says, "Campi, didn't I tell you no souvenirs? What was that you brought in?" I said, "That was a map. It has intelligence on it." He said, "Take it back." I guess this guy, and thank goodness, I never touched anything else, ever. So I put the thing in my room and thought, the next time I'm down in that area, I would drop it off. Of course, every day I was getting assignments in different areas. So I didn't get around to do it. So we were only there for about a month or so. We were actually implementing the Articles of Surrender. We were a show of force, that's what we were. We had very little to do except to be there and make sure that everything was in conformity. So we're moving the stuff out, and I get a call from the colonel saying he wants to see me. He said, "Didn't I tell you?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Do it now." I said, "I'll do it right now."

BM: So you took this map back to where you found it.

VC: Yes, I took it back. It was, there was one time that we were traveling through and we saw an enclosure and we were kind of curious as to what it was. I don't know, for some reason, we were going to ask a question, so we turned in there. So we drove in there and it turns out that it was the Isahaya family. They lived there, you know, and they were the nobility, apparently, at one time. ... We were standing there and just drove up to the steps in the courtyard, and an old man, who was very excited, and a couple of women in their traditional kimonos came out. A lot of women didn't wear the traditional kimonos every day. ... Chatting through my interpreter, I asked a couple of questions. ... It had to begin to drizzle, and then in perfect English, one of the women said, "Why don't you step out of the rain?" Then I could look in the back and it was explained to me that there was a child back there that was badly scarred. They indicated that she was a victim of the atom bomb. So we left the area. But that was the kind of treatment. We were never intrusive. We didn't go into people's homes, we didn't push people around. We were limited as to where we could go. Nobody milled around. That was for our divisional area. That was not so for other particular areas particularly. ... From there, after about a month, in November, we moved back to Nagasaki and we were the military police for Nagasaki at the time. ... Our concern was not with the local civilians. Our concern was with the military. Basically, we only had one job, because there were red light districts. One of them was a just a street, at a dead end, at a cemetery. We had a guard posted there. ... Another one was right off a city square, I think, like a European place where they have a fountain in the middle. This had a fountain in the middle, and there was a large red light district, you know, houses of prostitution. ... In the center, at the entrance, was the geisha house that we were permitted to go to. Now, across the square, we had an MP station and we had a "pro" station. Now, if the fellers got in there and came out, they could go to the pro station and no record would be maintained as to why they needed the service. Now, without any requests or instructions on our part, every day, the guards would have a woman up at certain hours and pour tea for them, and some women would show up to clean the pro station. And that's the way it was. Now, I wrote the orders for those posts, and so, one time, I was getting feedback that I thought couldn't be. They were telling me that they were having problems. I said, "What's your problem?" Well, they claimed that the guards were going down there doing what they were supposed to do, just patrol, and then the women or girls that weren't busy, would come out and follow them, lock arms with them, steal their helmets, or something and run into the houses. They were just being harassed. So, one day, we decided, my lieutenant and I decided that we'd go down and take a look. So, of course, everybody knew we were coming, I'm quite sure. So, we walk into the area, and sure enough, we round the corner and there's a guard. He's at a military stance, he's properly dressed and he's in military step, and right behind him is a little geisha girl with a very fancy kimono. And every time he'd take a step, she took a step and she was jabbering away. So there was some merit to what they said. But, of course, when we went near the houses, some of the fellers would be coming out and all the girls wanted us to come in and enjoy. I mean, it was a different situation. In Okinawa, they had "comfort girls" that they had recruited forcibly. Here, in the Japanese lifestyle or culture involved, approved or accepted houses of prostitution and things like that. And so they had no concerns about our, of course, we didn't abuse it. The guys slipped in and out, but didn't abuse it. So, one day, I found, I had to meet the governor. He's someone, you know, I always noticed that whenever you met anyone, as I say, they hesitated for a minute, particularly if they had high rank, as to whether or not you should bow first. Of course, Americans don't do that. So he hesitated for a minute and then he bowed first. I put out my hand and we shook hands. But I found my experience there was very ...

KP: It sounds like you didn't expect any of this when you got there.

VC: No, no. When you go to a place where people were taught to kill if you saw them. As a matter-of-fact, the only time that it took its toll, was the fact that, one time, I was interested in maybe buying a something, a souvenir or something, and someone said, I think it was one of my interpreters, "Hey, I know a pearl merchant and he'll take good care of you." So I went over at the appointed time and looked there. I saw this feller, he squatted down and I could trust him about as far as I could throw him. I just felt that, I just had no confidence in, some of the old stories had come back.

KP: Your last assignment was in December with the Fifth Marine Division.

VC: Well, what happened was that, after the end of the war and after we had occupied Japan and we were phasing out, actually, the Articles of Surrender were basically taken care of within the first couple of months, the initial thing. Then they were thinning out the Allied forces and it was decided that one of the divisions should go. The Second Division would remain and the Fifth Division would go back. So, as a result, I was due for, I'd been overseas for sufficient time to warrant a return. So I was given 250 men to take to the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines. But what was interesting was, see, each division was run a little differently. They weren't all run the way Colonel (Fornie?) ran things, because I got there about noontime and we were in a place called Omuta, and we were going to leave from Sasebo. ... Omuta was a complex of factories that built PT boats, suicide boats, and the like. ... We occupied some of the buildings there, and it was a compound that was pretty well self-contained. So I got the fellers there about noon and they were given free time until supper. I found, thereafter, of the 250 men, most of them, had found out from the other Marines how to jump over the wall, go to one of these houses of prostitution and come back in time for supper.

KP: This wouldn't have occurred at your old post.

VC: No, as I say, we had the guards posted there all the time. It wasn't quite as easy. So I joined, as I say, the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines. And I think the biggest responsibility I had, one day their battalion commander left and I was their acting commander for the day, and an order was written out, which were the orders for the day.

KP: Which was ...

VC: Yes, I was acting battalion commander for the day, and, for a young captain, that wasn't too bad.

KP: A lot of credit was given to Douglas MacArthur for the occupation and capitulation. As a Marine, what did you think of Douglas MacArthur and Allied command?

VC: Well, particularly early in the war, MacArthur wasn't our favorite.

KP: Yes, that's why I prefaced that.

VC: Yes, he was competitive. Obviously, he did a great job. The Articles of Surrender were handled so, from my low prospective, I was quite impressed at how well it was done without being intrusive. We hear of all the, the Mongols used to rape, loot and live off the countryside. The Japanese did the same to some extent. Here, we treated them with kid gloves. The only one complaint we had, as MPs, was a rape. It was alleged that this poor prostitute had been raped. Now, we looked into that and we found that she wasn't busy at the time so she began hitchhiking. She wanted to get away. ... One of the fellers in a big six by [six truck] came by and picked her up, without any thought other than he was going to drop her off. She wouldn't leave and they didn't know what to do with her and there was no rape involved. Another thought that occurs to me, in reference to the authority of the police, Nagasaki's military police. I was sent over to the police department to establish a liaison. At least one of the police departments, I think, they were done a little differently than we do, and after the usual greetings and the usual amenities, I introduced myself as [part of] the battalion [who were] the MPs now. He says to my interpreter, "Captain, can you do me a favor?" I said, "What is it?" He said, "Your predecessor, Captain So and So, when you landed, one of the boys stole an armband and he brought the boy to me and said to lock him up. And I still have him locked up. He should be in school." He was a teenager. I said, "Let him go."

KP: Your stories of occupation are great. Did you ever encounter any real hostility towards Americans?

VC: No, as a matter-of-fact, originally, there's an aloofness. You know, they just stayed away, and we stayed away from them, at least people within my sight. Later on, when I found that there was very little shopping I could do there because of our restricted regulations. But I found that they were very affable to us. For example, in the houses of prostitution, they wanted [us] to come in and enjoy and the merchants had no problem. One geisha house I went to, they treated us as any guest, I think. So I got no hostility. We didn't give any, the only time, one thing, I think that they found very hard, other than the obvious, is the fact that there was a whole army of Japanese soldiers that had conquered China. They had been the conquerors and had been in China for years, and some of them came back through this port of Sasebo or Omuta, and they were walking home. Now, here they had been drifters one day and they're coming back to their homeland that is now occupied. I had very little, I saw them on the road, occasionally, but had no contact with them. And I think, I suspected, that there'd be a lot of bitterness, a lot of heartbreak with them. Now, the Japanese, what was interesting was the fact that I found that a chief of police could tell me anybody in his town that was not pure Japanese. He knew all the Koreans. The Koreans were used for unpleasant labor, such as the "honey cart" brigade, [working] with a yo-yo stick. They used to go into the, a lot of the bathrooms would empty into a pit at the foundation and there'd be a window in the foundation where you could, and they used to reach in with their buckets and they'd ladle out the feces. And they used to take it down the street down to the fields. ... I noticed in one of the fields, they had a concrete basin and they would load it with water and then ladle it out to their vegetables.

KP: It sounds like you were very impressed with Japanese efficiency.

VC: Well, the thing is that they were so primitive. Their trains were about twenty years behind ours at the time. Now they're probably twenty years ahead.

KP: Have you ever been back to Japan?

VC: No, and the normal household, which I saw, and, of course, we didn't make a point of going into many, the Isahaya house was, of course, more conventional. It'd be similar to a house we know. But some of the other houses, they were built just as you see pictures of them. ... You went to the front door and there would be a path around an inner structure, and there might be a dirt floor and they'd have implements, you know, if they had a wheelbarrow or a tool, or something like that, it would be there. Then in an elevated inner building, there'd be these paper-type sliding doors and there would be the living quarters, and the living quarters were always immaculate. The shoes were left at the door's entrance and you'd go in and they'd usually have a potbelly stove, or something in the center, or usually, a charcoal burning device. And, very often, what little I saw, there'd be very little furniture and things like closets with sliding doors. They could take out a mat for bedding, or take out something else for sitting on the floor, like pillows and things like that. ... They'd have one, usually bare light bulb out of the ceiling. So, actually, as far as comforts of life and a fascinating lifestyle, theirs was not to be compared with ours. There was one thing that occurs to me, too, that you might be interested in. This complex of factory, machine tool collection and supply collection. One day, we got a report that one of the buildings was operational, and we hadn't been told that they should touch this. So we got together a patrol, went down to find out what's going on. So I go down there, walk in, and here they've got a factory operation going. So I asked for the man in charge, and an elderly gentlemen, not too elderly, but he was an older man, showed up, and I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "We're making stoves." And I said, "And on whose authority are you making stoves?" He says, "Well, on the Allied command. We're making them for you." And sure enough, they had ordered some stoves, sort of potbelly stoves. Then I also found out that this gentleman was a retired admiral. So it occurred to me how these things were segregated so quickly, that there's some intelligence behind this. They had figured out that, one, they were going to lose the war materials, they were hoping to, at least, keep the supplies and the machine tools, and it was functional, I mean, it was happening.

KP: Are you surprised how quickly Japan rebuilt?

VC: Well, the Japan I knew was primitive by comparison. I took a drive, one day, into the Shimabara Peninsula, which was, when Saint Francis evangelized, a lot of Catholics were going, this peninsula was known for a center of Catholicism. ... There were some fishing villages, and I went to this little fishing village and I thought I was back to about the fifteenth or sixteenth century. There were no vehicles in sight that were motor driven vehicles. There was a bulkhead and little fishing boats there and they had fish being dried on the boardwalk area, and it was so quaint. It looked like it was a different century as well as a different country and different culture. ... I drove up one farmer's road, I think, and the guy's eyes almost popped out. A vehicle had never been on that little road before. So it was very primitive, and how it evolved so quickly into one of the, is surprising to me.

KP: Have you ever bought a Japanese car?

VC: I think I had a second-hand Japanese car, but I haven't bought a new one. ... I think I should buy American, except that it's losing its importance now, because, I think a lot of the automobile industry is internationalized, and so who are we kidding?

KP: Had you ever thought of staying in the Marines?

VC: Oh, yes. Particularly in Japan. I was enjoying my assignment there and I gave it some thought. But, you know, everybody was anxious to get home, and so I thought, perhaps it was time for me to go home, too.

KP: It sounds like you also missed your family.

VC: Well, I think anyone of my background has a certain pattern of life and priorities that are compatible with the rest of our family and with the society that we live in.

KP: When you came back home, where did you land? Did you land in New York, because you were discharged in the Brooklyn Navy Yard?

VC: Well, actually, I landed in San Diego. But in the process, they transferred me to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which is closest to my home for final processing. But, of course, I was ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. Victor Campi on March 27, 1995 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

BM: ... Brett Marin.

KP: You were discharged from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but you mentioned that you stayed in the Reserve.

VC: Yes.

KP: Did you have any concerns that you would be called up for Korea?

VC: Well, at the time of Korea, I was in, I believe, of course, I was working for the FBI in San Francisco. ... I don't know when, and, at that time, as a matter-of-fact, I went to one of the summer camps and found it very enjoyable. ... I think there was one other person I know that was in the Marine Corps Reserve. I was in the unorganized reserves, and I think he was in the organized reserves, and what I found to be quite unusual was the fact that, for Korea, they recalled, of course, all the organized units, and I think the return was something like ninety percent, tremendous. ... I think one, some of the units were, I think, activated within about six weeks of the Inchon landing, and they participated. But I found out that they had a vast number of captains, and I was a captain at the time. But they really didn't need them. They needed the foot soldiers. Lieutenants, perhaps, but they didn't need people by rank. My associate that was

in the organized reserve went with him because he felt that he had been with him in an organized unit, and he thought it would be unfair for him to leave that unit in a time of call. ... I don't know when it initially came to my attention, but the FBI has a role to play in wartime, too. ... I think most bosses I worked with thereafter said, "Make up your mind. Whose team are you going to be on?" And it was a valid question. So, as a result, I could not go back to summer camps any longer. ... I could have taken some correspondence course, but they, in substance, discouraged it. They said you can, they didn't say you can't, but basically, you know, in time of war, they would need their own skilled people. So, as a result, I let it go, and, as a result, I had seventeen years of service. You get to a certain point in rank where you're promoted or you're dropped. And so, for me to become promoted, I would have to have a field rank. I would have to go to, you know, general command school, some special schools and things like that, and I wasn't in a position, I thought, to do that.

KP: But you didn't work for the FBI right away. You worked at a phone company, right?

VC: Well, I didn't know what I wanted to do. There, again, I was, as a matter-of-fact, I came to Rutgers, here to a placement office, and they sent me, one of the options I had, was go do the New York Bell Telephone.

KP: Was it because of your brother was working for them?

VC: Well, I was influenced by that. I knew that my brother had, always had a secure job and I wasn't an entrepreneur. ... I thought I had some interest in that direction, but there again, I didn't have the profound interest. In engineering school, I didn't have the interest either, you know, although I like to work with mechanical things and I think I would have enjoyed it. So they didn't have a formal training program at the time. But what they said is that they would keep an eye on people such as myself, but they wanted us to learn. They could put you in the engineering department, but I thought, you know, I had gone through this before. I didn't want to get in the engineering. "We'll put you in the practical aspect and you start off as a lineman, then a repairman. And what we'll do is work out the bread and butter personnel we have that are keeping the phones operating on the field." And so, I stayed with that for about a year and a half. But during Ma Bell's first strike, I believe it was the first strike, at least I know of, that, it was 1947, I believe. I had a friend, there again, the friend that steered me to the Marine Corps and to Rutgers, Bill Tilton, Class of '40. He was going to law school at Georgetown Law.

KP: Bill Tilton was the one who urged you to go to the Marines.

VC: Yes, yes. So during the strike, I thought I would go down and see Bill. ... He asked me down a number of times, so I went down and saw Bill. ... Bill was married at the time and had one youngster. ... His wife was the daughter of a congressman from Iowa. ... He was telling me that a lot of the fellas are going into the FBI, that his class had been approached and that some of his friends had decided to join. And he said, "Why don't you look them over?" Well, I frankly didn't know too much about the FBI, but I didn't know too much about the Marine Corps, other than, you know, common knowledge that every man, every ordinary person has. So, on the way back home, he stops at Pennsylvania Avenue. I said, "What are we stopping for?" He said, "The office is there." I said, "I'll go when I get home. I'll take care of it." He says, "No, you'll

go now." Well, he was like a brother to me. So I went out and talked to one of Mr. Hoover's assistants. And there on, I was interviewed in Newark and again, and that's how I got in the Bureau.

KP: So Bill Tilton was pretty crucial for you to come to Rutgers and Marines. He really looked out for you.

VC: Well, we were very close.

KP: Yes.

VC: Very close. But I think that I was closer to him. He had one brother and he wasn't close to him, and his mother was dead, which was something that impacted heavily on his life. ... We were, like I say, brothers.

KP: You had a very long career with the FBI.

VC: Well, thirty and half years.

KP: Yes. What was it like to be in Mr. Hoover's FBI?

VC: Well, I'll tell you, 'till this day, I'm still proud. Everyone has negatives and positives. ... I think, in fairness, I don't see a balanced report of what he did. That's the thing that troubles me, because I know that some of the things they accused the Bureau of doing, I worked under. As a matter-of-fact, sometimes I like to think I worked under the sword. ... If you didn't conform, away you went. ... One of the first offices I went to up in Seattle, as a resident agent, a place called Richland, where the atomic bomb was, I think, U-238, first developed, the ingredient of the bomb. ... We were in an unusual community. The original town of two hundred and sixty-seven souls were moved out and the place was bulldozed down. ... Then the atomic, the center for this atomic energy, the Manhattan Project, was initiated. ... They had these plants along the Columbia River and as much as a wide, expansive desert area. It didn't intrude upon, you know, area and activity. Sixty thousand people moved in during the war, and then, when I went there, the Manhattan Project was phased out and there was the Atomic Energy Commission, 1947 [which] I think took effect and the Bureau was responsible for clearances. And so they sent a number of us at one time. There were forty of us there, reprocessing everybody in town. And, inasmuch as they brought in workers, they didn't have the homeless, they didn't have the lame and the lazy. There wasn't a normal cross-section of a community. These were all workers and, sometimes, their wives also worked, and, as a matter-of-fact, there was nothing to do there. The birth rate was the highest in the country for one of those years. And so I was sent there and one of the few married people that were with us were given government housing. Everything was owned by the government and run by GE for a dollar a year. ... One of the fellows there suddenly disappeared, and that same morning, for some reason, the boss showed up. We never saw him. We were 250 miles from our headquarters in Seattle. He suddenly showed up. ... I saw him in the bathroom and so I passed the word around, "Hey, the boss is here." And, usually, if the boss comes around, there is a meeting of some kind and he had some good words and bad words, or he has a message for you. This didn't happen. ... We looked around and poor Danny

was gone, and we found out later on that his wife had alleged that he was philandering. ... Nobody was asked, nobody knew about it. Usually, the Bureau, in the past, if you embarrassed the Bureau, but this, nobody was embarrassed as far as I could know. But they picked up, allegedly, picked up his credentials and his gun and he was fired, just summarily fired and with prejudice, which he means he wasn't eligible for government employment, and that's as severe as it was at that time. But we're living by a different standard then, and so in your behavior, you always had to think in terms of not only being right but looking right.

KP: I saw you coming into the building and I thought that you looked like a FBI agent. There must have been some kinds of dress code in the FBI back then.

VC: Well, there was. Now, you can't tell the agent from the criminal. They all look [alike], and I think that the thought then, I think Mr. Hoover's approach was that if you rolled in the dirt, why, some of it's apt to stick. And he didn't, he maintained it was white shirts and hats and things like that, and that, of course, has eased off.

KP: Yes.

VC: We were supposed to look like a businessman, and I think the code in business was similar to what we used.

KP: It was new to the FBI, but it lasted a long time.

VC: Yes, absolutely.

KP: How often or did you get a chance to meet Mr. Hoover during your tenure at the FBI?

VC: Well, I only met him once, on entry, and we shook hands. ... I had an opportunity at, we had a program, and I had an opportunity to see him during those programs. Every three years or five years, the program varied, we would go back to Quantico and to Washington for a refresher, and, at that time, of course, sometimes you chafe in fear of why did they do this? Why do they do that? ... There, you have a chance to talk, and they tell you their problems, and, in a sense, bring into perspective some of their regulations. And anytime you're there, you have an opportunity to talk to them. ... It's a little bit of a gamble because, sometimes, if he's had a bad day, what would happen if you see him, they'd bring a file, your file, and if he writes across it, it's pretty hard to overcome that comment, if it's good or bad, if it's bad. But I've had friends of mine, I've known no one that's had a bad experience. As a matter-of-fact, a friend of mine, who was an accountant in San Francisco, he got on the stand and, during the course of his testimony, he gave certain facts, his figures, and then going, after testimony, he went back and reviewed some of his notes and realized that he said some things that were erroneous. So, immediately, he went to the United States attorney and says, "Look, I'd like to clarify this. This is wrong." So the next day, they put him on and he corrected his errors. Well, that got a little publicity and it was embarrassing, in a sense. The first thing you knew, in San Francisco, which is a very delightful place to work, at least by comparison to others, he was transferred to Oklahoma City. So he was a little not too impressed with that, and, of course, his family, if he wanted to work, this is where his job opportunity was. So when he was at one of these training sessions, it so

happened it coincided with this right, half of this, came into being right after this incident. He asked to see Mr. Hoover. So he went in and Mr. Hoover, of course, thought, "Well, this is another guy that's, you know, did the wrong thing and he's looking for me to forgive and overlook him." So when he got in, he shook hands with him, and he says, "Mr. Hoover, the only reason I'm here is to apologize for embarrassing the Bureau." He says that's the only thing he got out of his mouth. Mr. Hoover then spoke for about an hour and half telling how everyone is taking shots at the Bureau and all kinds of problems they were having and that their image was very important. When he got back to San Francisco, his transfer was squashed, so the man had a heart.

KP: It sounds like that you could eventually talk to Mr. Hoover if you really wanted to.

VC: Yes, yes, you could talk to him

KP: And that the agency pretty much identified with him.

VC: Oh, well, as a matter-of-fact, I think that he created the agency. And I think that he created an investigative agency that, I think, was far superior to most others throughout the world. ... Towards the end, perhaps he's an autocrat, and he lived, perhaps, in a different era and, perhaps, the man should have resigned a little time before.

KP: Was that the sense of the time, that it would have been good if he had retired?

VC: Well, in retrospect, one thinks that.

KP: But, at the time, did you think that it would have been a good idea?

VC: Well, look at the time. We were very proud of some of the things he demanded of us. ... I could tell you instances where people told me things that they would never tell anyone else. Sometimes their mate didn't even know. ... They had that much confidence in you. ... It was a time when I could say to them, "This is confidential," and say it honestly. Course, later on, one couldn't say it. But you could understand, you're holding contempt. At that time, though, early on in Hoover's day, if I was instructed not to, you know, to maintain a confidence, and then, if the judge insisted, you would say, "I respectfully decline," because I, and if he held you in contempt, the United States Attorney General was supposed to bail you out, and that worked pretty well for a while, but certainly not in recent times. ... A reporter can do that nowadays, I presume, but not a member of the law.

KP: What were your assignments for the FBI?

VC: Well, I started out from New Jersey and went to Washington. ... Then my first assignment was in Seattle, and I was sent out to place called, as I said, Richland. And after a year and a half, I came back to Seattle for a short while and then went down to San Francisco. ... After a short while in San Francisco, [I was] sent to Sacramento and I had a territory about the size of New Jersey, with four counties and thirteen law enforcement departments in the upper part of Lake Tahoe. It was a to-die-for situation, because there were only about thirteen law enforcement

heads for the law enforcement agencies. There were nine, I think, police departments and four sheriffs who [really] ran [everything]. ... They had little contact with other professionals, and some of them, you know, [didn't have too] much schooling in law enforcement. And, so often, they relied upon you for advice, to the extent that one of them, for example, called me one day and says, "I got to talk to you." ... I said, "What's the problem, Bill?" He said, "Well, I want to run for sheriff." I said "Well, what's wrong with that?" He says, "Well," he says, "I'm going to, in substance," he told me, "I'll have to sell a little bit of my soul, because I'd have to accept some funds." I said, "That's a decision you must make for yourself." But I was very flattered to think that he would ...

KP: He would approach you on something that sensitive.

VC: Yes, absolutely, and something that he didn't want anyone else to hear.

KP: After your assignment in northern California, where else did you go?

VC: Well, then I came back to Newark and I worked in the Newark office for about five years and I went down then to a place called Red Bank, one of our satellite offices. And the last ten years or so, I was an agent in charge, supervising agents.

KP: What were some of the cases that you worked on?

VC: Well, I, when you're in a resident agency, such as I was in Sacramento and those four counties, I was it. You know, if the Bureau had any work, unless it was [some] special thing, I would handle anything and if I needed help, I'd call, and anything they did from bank robbery to security to, you name it

KP: So you had a range of assignments.

VC: Anything. Yes, everything.

KP: Are there any cases that stick out in your mind?

VC: Well, some of the cases I had, for example, sometimes you get the, you get involved in the fringe cases. For example, the Colonel Abel case. I got a little bit of that case. Colonel Abel was an espionage agent, and out of the New York area. He had a transmitter and he was transmitting coded messages and no one could figure out what those messages were. And he wasn't, then we doubled one of their spies and he identified them in his operation. And, of course, that's the case in which there was a hollow coin found, and in that hollow coin there was calendar, pages, and they were in gold foil, I believe. ... The letters on that calendar-like creation were a code for the day. I mean, the code changed rapidly. So if you even deciphered an old one, you wouldn't know what the new one was on. ... It so happened that one day, I got a call from the boss and he said, "I want to come down and see you, and I want you to make arrangements for me to see the commanding general in Fort Monmouth." ... He didn't go into details and I knew enough not to ask. So I called him and I called his agent and set up an appointment. ... When we got there, the general said, "Gee, what took you so long?" He said, "I

was briefed in Washington," and he says, "I feel like I've got a bomb in my backyard." ... It turned out that it was a master sergeant there that was in the meteorological, I think, a unit of some kind, and he apparently was a person of interest to the Colonel Abel network. ... We had received inquiries before for a mechanic in Red Bank from the Colonel Abel, you know, apparatus investigation, and we couldn't figure out what it was. Well, it turned out that this master sergeant, fortunately, had applied for a transfer to another section in Long Island City, and so they accommodated him so they could keep an eye on him there. ... I used to put him on the train every morning. So that poor guy, the last morning, I put him on the train, I said, "Oh, boy, you don't know what's going to happen on the other end." What happened was they ...

KP: So you would tail him.

VC: Well, I would just put him aboard the train and we'd make sure he didn't make any stops between New York and here.

KP: You said you put him aboard the train.

VC: Well, well, I followed him.

KP: Oh, yes, yes.

VC: From his home, picked him out of his home, put him on the train, and watch him get on the train and radio ahead, "He's on his way." What happened was he was running a motor pool in Belgrade for the embassy there, and he was transferred to Moscow to the embassy there. Also, the motor pool, my facts, you know, maybe in error, and so when he got there, of course, he knew how much gas they were pumping and the condition of the vehicles. He didn't have an intimate access, or he didn't have, I don't think, access to real delicate information. But, at any rate, one morning, he awakened, his wife hadn't arrived as yet, and he went out drinking, and he awakened and there was a young lady beside him, and he didn't have any recollections. But anyway, he went home, and then a couple, a month or so later, I don't know, some short time thereafter, a couple of Russians tapped him on the shoulder and said, "What are you going to do about my sister? She's pregnant?" Well, then they suggested that he'd be a little cooperative. And then later on, he had an accident, and they said, "Don't worry about it. We'll take care of it." So he owed them twice. ... So then he was, see, I don't know what, I'm not familiar with anything he may or may not have given him. But, anyway, I'm just giving you the outline of something I think is public knowledge anyway. And so he came to the States and he made a point of ignoring it and they were looking for him. And, of course, the message we were getting was through the Colonel. The Colonel's investigation was an effort to locate him.

KP: So the sergeant was not really involved with ...

VC: Well, he cooperated in Moscow.

KP: In Moscow.

VC: To the point where they gave him five years.

KP: Oh, okay.

VC: See, of course, what he should have done was to report it.

KP: Yes.

VC: You see, he didn't do that, and so for whatever it was worth, but, I think, sometimes, you get involved in things like that. ... We had another case down there in Lakehurst, near the railroad station, called "The Lemonade Case," where the Russians were reaching, had reached out in one of their ships, the TV program was based on this song. None of this information is, you know, is confidential. ... They had contacted some pastors, the crew ship that went, I think, between here and Bermuda, or somewhere in the warmer climate. ... So they decided they'd exploit a potential opportunity, and so they located a lieutenant commander in the Naval Air station, and he used an engineering command, I think, the one they're going to close pretty soon. ... In cooperation with the Bureau and the Navy, he went aboard the ship and he wasn't approached. So he made known the fact that he was military, and so he eventually slipped a note, slipped a paper to one of the stewards and said, "I'm a naval officer and I'm discontented and I think I could be of some service to your something." I don't know what the note was. But in substance, he gave an invitation to contact them, and they did. And doing that investigation, why they did contact him, and, of course, we were able to monitor it, and he had a system where they, and I am only giving you a sketchy outline. What would happen is that he would go to a phone booth in front of a service station of some kind and then they would send him somewhere else, and, of course, they would probably have had the service station covered, and if you tried to [put him under surveillance] him, they would catch the surveillance. It posed a lot of problems. Then they sent him to another phone booth, and they would say, "Now, look under the third step at the Metro Line Station in Metropark and you'll find an old orange container, orange soda container, and in there, you'll find thus and so, or you'll put thus and so." And they'd tell him what they wanted, and the Navy and Bureau worked it out. And, eventually, they had difficulty following, and one day, he remembered, he saw a car that took off from a place where he is supposed to make a drop. ... He remembered some of the numbers of the licenses and, of course, the New York office had, at that time, a computerized record of all the Soviets, and they came up with a car, and they came up with the people. And eventually, as a result of his cooperation, while there, two of them, I think one of them was dispatched immediately with head diplomatic status. The other two did not. But they swapped him for some others. And the Colonel Abel case, he was swapped for Powers, the U-2 pilot.

KP: How did you feel about the FBI's handling of the drug problem?

VC: Well, to begin with, I think Mr. Hoover did not like the idea of drugs. It was a dirty business. I think ... that he didn't like the people that roll in the gutter with criminals. The informants were something you did business with, but he didn't like his agents to. And I don't think that my comments will be completely accurate in this respect because I didn't talk to him about it.

KP: Yes.

VC: I got that general impression it wasn't done at that time. ... The drug enforcement is a different type of thing, and I don't think he was too enthusiastic about getting it. ... I think we did not, the Drug Enforcement Agency, you know, handled it and we didn't, until recently.

KP: So it was not viewed as a FBI problem.

VC: I did not. Usually, drugs were a part of the criminal activity involved, and sometimes you pick up a fella, he's under the influence, you know, and sometimes, he has some stuff on him.

KP: Why did you leave the FBI?

VC: Mandatory retirement.

KP: Oh, so you had no choice.

VC: They threw me out.

KP: Would you have liked to stay longer?

VC: Well, I was comfortable. After all the years, I had, you know, I've gotten to the point where I was running a satellite office and I had a handle on what I was doing, and my job didn't require, at the time, you know, knocking down doors, particularly. ... I thought I was more efficient when I left than when I had been there before.

KP: When you were up in California, it sounds like you had a lot of responsibility but not a lot of support.

VC: Yes, yes. No, I know. Well, you learn how to operate and there are certain things you don't do alone and certain things you do. Of course, every now and then, you go looking for somebody and suddenly you find them, what do you do?

KP: Did you have experience knocking down doors?

VC: Well, there are some cases, yes. Well, apprehending fugitives.

KP: Did you ever have to shoot in anger?

VC: No, we never shoot. I only had a gun drawn.

KP: But you never had actually fired.

VC: Well, usually, particularly in supervision, the thing you keep in mind, you prevent that kind of thing. You should always outgun and outman the people involved. The cop on the beat sees something, he's got to react immediately. Where, in some of our cases, we had some chances to

work with it and anticipate, we should anticipate this and avoid that kind of situation wherever possible.

KP: You had a second law enforcement career. When did you start teaching at Monmouth College?

VC: Well, I taught at Monmouth for just a couple of semesters when I was working for the State, the Division of Criminal Justice.

KP: This was your second law enforcement group. What did you do?

VC: Well, yes, I was sixty years old at the time, you know, and I had only been able to stay in the Bureau thirty years. Because I spent, you know, to my late twenties, in the Bureau and then, in the interim for a year and a half, but when they passed a new retirement, they made mandatory retirement fifty-five with (grandfathering?) three years, and I was already over fifty-five and so I was able to stay until sixty. And then, I find that I still didn't want to sit at home and twiddle my thumbs. I wanted to do something. I am not an entrepreneur and I felt comfortable working in law enforcement, because I felt I knew my way around a lot better.

KP: So you worked for the State ...

VC: Yes.

KP: ... of New Jersey. How was it to work in a whole new different organization?

VC: Well, completely different.

KP: What was the most surprising difference?

VC: Well, I think that Mr. Hoover's great accomplishment was the structure, a structure where, for example, I get a teletype with two lines, with a line in it, one sentence, and I knew what I was to do. The caption was of a certain kind and that mandated that you, you were talking about a certain statute and the elements of the statute were something you know. And, therefore, they would say, they would tell you, what little you had to know and [then] go talk to him. You knew. I mean, I'm oversimplifying it. But a lot of it, and I would handle part of an investigation, something else might happen in Albuquerque, or in Phoenix, we all knew what each other was talking about. ... It's that kind of, I think, organization, and those practices are ...

KP: What did you find working for the Attorney General's office?

VC: It's different. ... It's more lawyer-oriented, for example. Of course, when you're dealing with white-collar crime, you have to work very closely with attorneys. ... In the Bureau, I was working with reactive crime, like bank robbery. I didn't, he didn't have to tell me what the elements were or anything like that. I didn't even have to call the man until I had a suspect and I had that information and evidence, which pointed to the man, and I presented it to the United States Attorney at that time, and he'd tell me, in some cases, over the phone, authorize it, you

know. And other cases, he would ask you, tell you what he needed. ... Very often, the investigator makes a mistake if he thinks it's not his. They've got to, you know, the crime is prosecuted in the courtroom by the attorney, and you give him what he needs. But I found that there was never a United States attorney down in Red Bank. There was one in Trenton and there was one in Newark. Most of our contacts were by phone. And we assist and work so that I give them what they want or they state, the attorney that's assigned to the case, at least for the work I did, and basically, it's their case and you're ...

KP: You're there to help them.

VC: Yes, yes.

KP: How did you meet your wife? Did you know her before the war?

VC: Well, she was a social friend of my brother.

KP: So it was a family connection.

VC: Matter-of-fact, my nephews who were, I think, at the time, one of them was in their teens, they thought I should get to know her.

KP: Had you known her?

VC: No, I hadn't known her. My sister-in-law invited her to a party that she was giving, and I think they were going to do in her date at the time.

KP: When did you marry?

VC: Oh, I got married in 1956.

KP: So it was late.

VC: Yes, yes.

KP: You had actually been in the Bureau for a few years.

VC: That's right. The same day that JFK was killed, November 22nd, but not the same year.

KP: I can imagine that you had some very irregular hours when you started at the Bureau.

VC: Yes. Well, yes, you really don't know.

KP: You were an only son and now you have a few daughters.

VC: Yes, I was only a son and I've had nothing but daughters. My wife said the only reason she married me is because she wanted a son and she thought her chances were better with me. I

often like to kid, "It's not a matter of losing control, as never having it." I have two granddaughters, too, you know, even there.

KP: Have any of your daughters expressed any interest in joining the military?

VC: No. No.

KP: Or law enforcement?

VC: No. No. Two of them are social workers, basically, and one of them, let's see, one of them works in New York. She's a businesswoman. ... The second one, she has two children now and she's not actively involved now, but she was working in the garment industry.

KP: So your children took very different career paths from you.

VC: Yes, except one of them works for ARC and she's worked with retarded citizens for some time, and she's a supervisor with adult services. She has five programs and 130 clients, as she calls them, I believe, and she does a good job. It's not something for everybody. The other one, my oldest, works in a crisis center and they take people off the street, sometimes, you know, that have problems. ... She's the kind of girl, I think, if you have trouble, the more you're going to see of her. You don't have any trouble, you don't see her quite as much. I'm very proud of my [daughters.]

KP: Is there anything I forgot to ask?

VC: No.

KP: Is there anything you want to add? My questions are by no means exhaustive.

VC: No. I think that what impresses me is the fact that, over the years, I found that there has been such a dramatic change in attitudes. We accepted World War II as an obligation, a responsibility that we, I felt it was something I had to do. I mean, there was never a question of, "Hey, can I avoid this, or should I, or shouldn't I?" It was decided and I accepted it. ... Any nation that's going to successfully pursue a war, the Vietnam War being an example, unless they come with that attitude, I don't think they have much chance of succeeding.

KP: Was it hard for you, given your experiences of World War II, to understand what was going on in Vietnam?

VC: It's very disappointing, very disappointing. When, you know, some fellows that will get loans for college, then go to college, and then during the Vietnam War, they'll go to Canada to avoid the draft and come back and still expect to be supported through college. What kind of government, I think, well, not the only people, but, certainly, a great number of young healthy men are needed. I think there's no escaping that. About the use of women, I don't know. It wasn't in my era. ... I find that even in working in law enforcement, they began hiring, I think, women when I was still there, and they were excellent. They were excellent. But I think they

are no different in the other, some of them are good and some are not so good. ... I think some can do a better job in certain areas and some do not so good in certain areas. ... I think if you had a rape case, I'd certainly want a woman to help me. Whereas, if, in certain kind of cases where I'm breaking down the door, I'm not so sure. Not if you're going to give me a five foot two, you know, gal. It just, on the basis, forget the gender, just the other attributes that can address the job or that cannot address the job. I think, eventually, you know, sometimes people are trying to insist upon quotas and things like that, and I don't think that's the answer. I think quality, if you got it, use it. But the Vietnam War is very disappointing and it didn't accomplish anything. And it was too, I think, too politicized, and, now, at Fort Monmouth, I used to maintain contact with Fort Monmouth then, maintain a liaison with them, and I got the impression, from talking to some people that have been over there that sometimes, battle decisions were cancelled or changed to accommodate political considerations. Can't fight a war that way, at least in my humble view.

KP: Were you back in New Jersey for much of the Vietnam War?

VC: Let's see, I think I was in New Jersey, but then I got back in New Jersey around the '50s, the early '50s.

KP: When did you join the American Legion?

VC: Oh, I joined them originally because they had one at Richland. As I said, there was nothing to do, for we bachelors. There was a couple of clubs and they had one, maybe it was the VFW, but I thought that just the support, the concept of, you know, veterans, a group of people that should be shown some consideration. There are still people in hospitals wasting away and I think, I don't see how we can forget them. ... I think the American Legion, the other organizations, make an effort to keep people, keep them in mind and, you know, the political arena, it's the number of votes you have that counts.

KP: Have you been an active member of the Legion and VFW?

VC: No. No, not really. No, the agents have an ex-agent association, and I am more active in that.

KP: You mentioned that you had gone to a reunion of your unit.

VC: Yes, the unit, the Tenth Defense Battalion. But, as I say, I saw it in one of the magazines and just called and they sent me the literature. ... I found though that I didn't know too many of the people, but we had a common experience that we loved to talk about, and we felt very comfortable in each other's presence. ... Of course, there was no differentiation at rank, you know. No one cared what your rank was.

KP: What was it like to see people you'd been very close to ...

VC: Well ...

KP: ... and hadn't seen in fifty years?

VC: Well, it's always comfortable to find out what the ex-agents, I have gone to conventions and some I hadn't seen in forty years, walk up to me and say, "Hello," and it brings back a lot of good memories. ... Sometimes, you know, particularly when you get to my age, you know, you wonder how relevant you are to the rest of the world, and at least you have an area of discussion where you understand each other. You talk to an old friend, he knows who you are, you know who he is, you're not going to kid each other. ... You have a great beginning, you see, and then you enjoy each other for what you are. You might dislike, you like a person in spite of what their shortcomings might be, and, hopefully, they do the same for you.

KP: Well, I thank you.

VC: Well, if there is some memorabilia you think would be useful, I have a few things. There, again, you have so much. You're covering the entire war and you're covering a hell of an area.

KP: Well, we are actually planning to do that more systematically and ask people, but these are very helpful and we are going to try to use these in the exhibit.

VC: Well, you see, we didn't walk around, the average GI didn't walk around with a camera.

KP: No, I know, although some did.

VC: Oh, yes, in certain areas, too.

KP: And some people had diaries when they were not supposed to. Someone I interviewed kept a diary the year he was in a bomber crew. It was strict orders against that, but he has this thick, thick diary. But thank you very much.

VC: Well, it's been my pleasure.

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

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