

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH THEO F. HARDIES

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Eric Nolan: This begins an interview with Theo F. Hardies on April 8, 2008, with Eric Nolan and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: ... Sandra Stewart Holyoak, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Just for the record, Colonel Hardies, could you tell us where and when you were born?

TH: I was born on July 11, 1944, in Belgium.

SH: Do you remember the name of the town?

TH: Oh, absolutely. The name of the town was Wilrijk.

SH: Can you tell us a little bit about your family background?

TH: I was born at the very end of World War II; I guess about a two months, before the liberation of Antwerp. [Editor's Note: The port of Antwerp was liberated by the British Eleventh Armoured Division on September 4, 1944. Canadian and Polish forces cleared the surrounding area of German fortifications in the following weeks, allowing the Allies use of the port to supply their advancing armies in Europe.] Liberation of Antwerp was in--I think in August or September 1944. So, at that time, of course, it was occupied by the Germans before that. ... I never really knew my real father because my mother and he got separated and divorced shortly after I was born and he moved away to ... what was then the Belgian Congo. He was a builder, and so, I really had no contact with him, per se. I was raised by my mother. She was a hairdresser and was very close to my immediate family. My grandparents on my mother's side were [close] and I was over there a lot. I had an aunt and uncle and one cousin who lived in the same house. Actually, they owned the house and my grandparents lived on the second story of the small brick row house in a place called, believe it or not, Hoboken, Belgium. ... I went to kindergarten there, went to elementary school through the fourth grade. The school was small enough so that the first and second grade were combined and the third and fourth grade were combined. So, the teacher, basically, was teaching two groups. I was a relatively good student and I was moved ahead. So, when I got into the third grade, I was actually shifted over into fourth grade--same classroom, but I sat on the other side of the room and did fourth grade work. At some point in time, my mother knew ... the man who was to become my stepfather. ... She had met him. He was also a Belgian, but he worked for IT&T, International Telephone [and] Telegraph Corporation. He'd lived all over the world--four years in Brazil, Puerto Rico, during World War II. ... After the war, he ended up in Newark and then in Clifton, at the plant, the big plant that ITT had there, right off of Route 3. They started corresponding and one thing, I guess, led to another and they got married. ... I came to the United States when I was nine years old, I had just turned nine, so, that was in August of 1953. ... Of course, we'd moved to Clifton. Interestingly enough, we arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey--so, I moved from Hoboken to Hoboken. [laughter] At that time, Hoboken was still a very active port, as was New York City, and the Holland America Line, which we came over on, had their docks in Hoboken, New Jersey. So, it was kind of a strange story.

EN: You moved to the United States as a direct result of your stepfather's job.

TH: No, he was already living here. He was a naturalized US citizen.

EN: You came to the United States.

TH: Yes. He was divorced and he was living here, and so, we came to the United States. He worked for IT&T and ... he was already working here. He began working [there] after the war. During the war, he was in Puerto Rico, also working for [IT&T]. He was a telephone test engineer and he helped install automated telephone exchanges all over the world, yes, I think beginning in the '30s. They had lived in Brazil for four years, in Rio de Janeiro, he had been in Romania, in Germany, during the late '20s and '30s, and then, they moved to [the United States], but, originally, he started working for them in Antwerp, Belgium. Antwerp had a big manufacturing plant that belonged to IT&T. I think, when he retired, he had forty-three years [of] service. He had a lot of time with the company.

SH: Did you hear any World War II stories, growing up in Belgium?

TH: Well, I heard a lot of stories. My grandfather was already too old to serve and he was on a veterans disability pension from the war . He served in World War I. He had been called up when World War I ... broke out, but he had already served three years before that, in the early 1900s, in the Belgian Army as a draftee. ... Then, he worked for the Belgian railroad system, and then, when ... the war broke out in 1914 he was mobilized, spent the next four years away from his family. I told Eric that the interesting thing about it is, the way the trench warfare system worked out that the Belgian Field Army, did not capitulate, like they did in World War II. ... They fought on the extreme left flank of the line in the part of Flanders where they blew up all the dikes, and flooded the lowlands near the Belgian coast. They were on the extreme left flank of the Allied line, going all the way to the English Channel, and to the right of them ... were the "Brits." The strange thing about it is, as the crow flies, he was only maybe, eighty or ninety miles away from his family, for four years without ever seeing them. So, that's kind of an interesting story. During World War II, my uncle was in the Resistance and at one point he was actually picked up by the *Gestapo*. One of the things they used to do was, since he worked for Bell Telephone Manufacturing Company (ITT) in Antwerp--he was a trucker and did a lot of driving and hauling of cargo. ... The biggest thing that they did was, they misrouted cargo, so [that] goods that was supposed to go to one place, they would route it to another place. I don't think he was ever involved in anything involving sabotage or things like that, or with weapons, but he was active in the Resistance, I know that. My aunt told me the story, that, one day, the *Gestapo* came and picked him up. ... It's almost like you see it in the movies-- guys with leather trench coats. There were two of them. ... They picked him up and they took him in for questioning and, luckily for him, he was released the next day. ... I know for a fact he was fairly active near the end of the occupation. ... I had seen books. There's a book that was published after the war, very thick, with all of the people in the Resistance who died at the hands of the Nazis, People ... who were in the Resistance and who were arrested and executed or were sent to concentration camps. ... As a child, I visited a Nazi concentration camp. There was a big concentration camp in Breendonk, one of the old forts that protected Antwerp and which is now

a national monument, and I've been there, subsequently, several times. [Editor's Note: Colonel Hardies is speaking of the concentration camp located in the fortress in the village of Breendonk, Belgium.] ... It was basically a place--it wasn't like the death camps that they had ... in Germany and Poland and in places like that, but it held Jews, suspected people that were in the Resistance, people that were not desirable, I know, a lot of [people]. There were executions that took place there as well. ... Like I said, now, it's a national monument and people go there and "remember." That was part of the huge ring system of forts, around Antwerp. ...

SH: Did your mother talk about how difficult it was during the occupation and the difference when the Americans came?

TH: Oh, yes, because they adopted a couple soldiers that were stationed in Antwerp after the liberation. One of them was a Canadian--I have pictures of him at home, his name was Ken, and there was a GI, named Tommy Morganti, who was from Buffalo. ... After we came to the States, we actually visited him in 1955.

SH: Did you?

TH: Yes, and my aunt and uncle, they were close, and corresponded with him for many, many years. ... I didn't know them because I was an infant, but ... they adopted a couple soldiers, after the liberation. Antwerp was liberated, ... I think it was in early September of 1944, by the Canadians and the Brits. ... When Antwerp became a viable port--because that was the whole intent of seizing Antwerp was to use the port. If you remember, ... the German objective of the Battle of the Bulge was Antwerp. The German objective was to recapture Antwerp in December of 1944. ...

SH: I just wondered if they had talked about the fear of the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge.

TH: No, but they were not involved in the Bulge--that was in the Ardennes. So, that's quite a distance away.

SH: I wondered if they had talked about the fear of them being pushed back.

TH: I'll tell you what the fear was, and I saw some of that still as a child, the fear was the V-1s and the V-2s. [Editor's Note: German V-1 and V-2 rockets were used as terror weapons to target England. When launching points in France were rendered inoperable, these rockets were used against strategic targets in Belgium, primarily Antwerp.] After Antwerp was liberated the Germans started firing the V-1s and the V-2s at Antwerp, at the port, at the city. Many of those landed in the wrong place because they were not very accurate. ... There were places that I remember as a child that had been leveled or that were still rubble where flying bombs had hit--the V-1s especially. Even in the town I lived in, Hoboken, I'd say "What happened here?" and the answer, "That's where a V-1 hit." ... There was also considerable damage done ... by the Allied Forces in the bombings, before the Germans ... had to leave and were retreating. ... Antwerp was a German port, ... under control of the Germans. There were factories there that

were manufacturing doing all sorts of things for the German war machine. So, they were fair game. Not all of those bombs hit the factories. A lot of them killed civilians, as we know still happens today.

SH: Did your family have a bomb shelter?

TH: ... It depends on the houses. The house that my aunt and uncle lived in--it was an older house, a small row house--did not have a basement. The house that we lived in afterwards did have a basement because ... [they] bought a house [that had one]. ... We didn't talk about that too much. I know they had air raid sirens and things like that but ... I don't think there's really a lot you can do. If somebody starts bombing you in the middle of the night, [you will not be ready]. A lot of the Allied bombings, took place at night, to escape detection by the Germans. ... And, it was carpet bombing and it's a lot less sophisticated than it is today, when they can put a munition on a small target.

SH: You talked about being able to see the damage and the kids playing there. Were unexploded shells and bombs ever a danger?

TH: Not for me, but I know they found unexploded ordnance, ... a lot of times when they were rebuilding ... bombs that had not gone off. I'm sure that that happened. They still find unexploded ordnance now, from World War II.

SH: That is true.

TH: ... Once in a while, you would hear about something like ... they had found a bomb that had not exploded. ... They were not necessarily always German munitions. ... A lot of the bombs that fell in Antwerp were from the Allies.

SH: How excited were you to come to the United States as a nine-year-old?

TH: It was very exciting, I think. We came on a ship from the Holland American Line. We departed from Rotterdam. ... It was an interesting ship, *Sibajak*, because there were a lot of displaced persons on the ship. We had a cabin actually up ... on the deck, but the steerage down below was filled with displaced persons from Eastern Europe, a lot of Poles that were coming to Canada. We had a stop in Southampton, England, and then, we went straight to Halifax, Nova Scotia. ... Many people that were in the hold--down below--they left the ship at that time. I think that was during a time when Canada was actively seeking immigrants to boost their population, because Canada, at that time, ... has a lot less people than we do. ... Fifty-five years ago, it was really in need of people to settle. ... Our ship was largely full of those immigrants coming to Canada. ... Once we dropped them off, then, we continued down the coast to New York.

SH: As a child, were you allowed to play and run on the ship?

TH: I ran everywhere, [laughter] everywhere. Back in those days, the ships had three classes--they had tourist class, cabin class and first class. ... We stayed in tourist class. Of course, the ones that were down below, ... that was fourth [class].

SH: Steerage.

TH: Steerage, absolutely. I mean, they were in bunks piled in there with tons of people. So, it was very crowded--almost no privacy down there at all, but those people were glad to come to America. ... They basically had nothing except what they had in their suitcases, but, for me, ... I ran all over the ship, pretty much. ...

EN: Did you ever get in trouble on the ship?

TH: No. ... I found out how to get into the forbidden areas, because, you know, the classes of travel were, you know, really separate. They had separate dining rooms and cabin areas. First class had a separate dining room, cabin class, which was still very, very nice, and also had a separate dining room. ... What I would do is, I would go down to the bottom of the ship, where the crew compartments were, and then, go down the corridors, then, go up into the other areas. ... I didn't do that that much. ... I was nine years old. So, it wasn't a big thing. [laughter]

SH: What was the transition to the United States like? Were you fluent in English?

TH: I spoke no English at all, and, because of that, [I had to adjust quickly]. ... I arrived on August 9th, so, that was a month before school started. ... We moved into a big apartment [in a garden apartment complex. ... So, I had basically a month to start learning English. ... I don't really remember it all that much. The one thing that did happen is, they moved me back into the fourth grade

SH: Uh oh.

TH: Because of the language thing. ... The strange thing is, my mother ... kept all my report cards, so, I kept [them] and I have those. I looked at them, and I was a real good student. As far as math goes and things like that, I was way ahead ... [of] what we were learning here [in the United States]. So, even in the first report card, I was getting "As." The places where I wasn't getting "As" was in English, in spelling and stuff like that. ... After ... I think the third marking period, which is by ... maybe December or so, I was getting "As" in English and spelling. ...

EN: What language did you speak in Belgium?

TH: I spoke Flemish.

EN: Flemish.

TH: Flemish, which is a dialect of Dutch. It's written exactly the same. ... I still speak and write it fluently.

SH: Do you?

TH: ... Yes, I've been fortunate. We were able to go back, and I can talk about that later, too. ... Every three years, we went back for the whole summer, for two months. So, my mom and I [would go]. ... My stepfather would take three ... weeks' vacation. He would then leave, ... but my mother and I would stay for the entire summer, for two months, so [that] she could be with her family and her sister. ... Of course, that kept up the language skills. There was no television at the time in Belgium, even the first couple trips that we took. I think on ... the third trip there, my aunt and uncle had a television set, but there was no TV in the 1950s. We did ... [go] to the movies a lot. ... Even when I was a little kid, [I] went to the movies. ... So, Flemish was the language.

SH: How quickly did your mother pick up English?

TH: My mother spoke English before she came here.

SH: She already spoke it.

TH: She only went to schools until she was fourteen years old, ... and [then], went to work. ... She went to night school and she learned English in night school, and she spoke, read, and wrote fairly fluent English. So, for a person who didn't go to school all that much she spoke fluent English. She also spoke fluent French. ... The second language in Belgium is French. As a child, and I forgot to mention that from first grade on, I was studying French. That was a requirement in the curriculum in the school. The school I went to was an all-boys school. ...

SH: Was it common to separate the sexes?

TH: Absolutely, that's the way it was, yes. You had girls' schools and you had boys' schools. We had a building on one side of a courtyard, where I went to school. It was an old building. ... On the other side of the courtyard was a kindergarten and the girls' elementary school. ... [laughter]

SH: These were public schools.

TH: Yes, they were public.

SH: This was not a parochial school.

TH: No, they were public schools. ... The parochial schools were the same way.

SH: We hear about separating boys and girls more often in parochial schools in the United States.

TH: Yes, the parochial schools were the same way. I think when I was in kindergarten, ... we were together, and then, we went to first grade. There, you were separated.

EN: It stayed that way in Belgian schools all the way up through high school.

TH: Yes, oh, yes.

EN: It stayed separated.

TH: Yes. ... I should catch up, because now ... the classes are mixed, unless you go to a private school which may still have that kind of thing. ... I think the classes, now, are mixed.

SH: When your mother came to the States, did she continue to work?

TH: ... She became a homemaker.

EN: She gave up the hairdressing.

TH: Yes, but she still did it for some people as a favor. ... She did it on the [side for] some neighbors. She would do their hair. ...

SH: How hard was it to acclimate yourself to the United States? Did you miss anything about Belgium?

TH: No. I think, ... acclimation wise, the one thing, of course, I didn't have here is I didn't have any relatives and I left my friends. We had no family except my mom and my stepfather. So, that was a big change, but I don't remember any ... problems with adjusting, or anything like that. I mean, I made a lot of friends in school. ... So, that was [nice], and, in those days unlike now, ... everybody walked to school. We were close enough to the elementary school I went to, which was Public School No. 9 in the Allwood section of Clifton. Basically, it was across the street from where we lived. So, it was a very short walk to school. And even after we left the apartments in 1954--we bought a small house, which was quite a bit further away--even when we were living there, I still walked to school. ...

SH: What became your favorite subject, particularly in elementary school? Was there something that you found really interesting?

TH: ... I always liked history a lot, especially military history. I was good in pretty much everything. Sometimes, I'm sorry I didn't major in history, even later on. I'm still very much interested in it ...and in traveling, and I've been all over the world. ... I like European history a lot, and I like going to museums and ... touring churches, and castles.

SH: Who were in the circle of friends that your mother created in the United States? Were they neighbors or people from your stepfather's work?

TH: The circle of friends we had were the friends that my stepfather had and the people he worked with. He was close to some of them. Some of those were Belgians that had immigrated to the United States. They were also people he knew from IT&T. ... Most of the friends that we had--with the exception of a couple--were basically people from work, that we socialized with.

SH: When you went to high school, was there any thought that you would go to anything other than the public high school?

TH: No.

SH: Did you participate in sports? What were your favorite subjects in high school?

TH: [I] did not participate in any sports. I was a non-sports person. I followed a college prep ... curriculum. Now, they have a lot more things, but, then, it was considered college prep. So, all of my courses except a few like phys ed and health were college prep. They were not necessarily [honors courses]--now, they call them honors courses. ... Clifton High, which was a huge school--three thousand students, three grades--the whole time I was there, we were on double session. They were building a new high school, which opened in the fall after I graduated, 1962, but the high school was huge. ... I had eight hundred or nine hundred people in my graduating class. ... The first three years--the way they worked it--was that the junior high went through ninth grade, and I went to a school called Woodrow Wilson Junior High School, which was brand-new, a magnificent school. I was in junior high from seventh through ninth grade at Woodrow Wilson. ... That's when you actually started changing classes. You no longer had one teacher. It was run almost like a high school. ... At the end of the freshman year of high school, we moved to ... the high school and, because of the crowding situation, the first two years, I went in the afternoon. We went [to] school ... from noon until five. The morning session went from seven to twelve. So, they split ... the junior class in half, and I ended up going in the afternoon in my junior year as well, which turned out to be kind of neat, because I was able to work. I got a job and worked.

SH: What did you do?

TH: Well, I had several jobs. Early on, ... I delivered newspapers, but, then, after that, I ... actually worked in a ladies' garment store in Steyertowne Shopping Center in Clifton. ... I did sort of everything. [laughter]

EN: How did you get that job?

TH: Just applied.

EN: You wanted to work with ladies' garments.

TH: No, [laughter] I didn't work with ladies' garments. I was a handy man, I swept the floor, I changed light bulbs, I unpacked shipments of merchandise, clothing. I helped the manager, sometimes, on weekends [and did] ... window trimming. So, I was basically the cleanup guy,

you know, picked up the trash, cleaned the bathroom and that kind of thing, but it was a great job. I worked about twenty hours a week and I had plenty of time. So, ... when I was going to school in the afternoon, I worked in the mornings, and I worked on Saturdays. I don't remember exactly what my hours were, but it was about twenty hours a week. ... When you were fourteen years old, you had to have working papers to work, and I had that job all through high school. When I started going to [school] in the morning, then, I worked in the afternoons. That worked out real well.

SH: Did you ever belong to any clubs, such as the Boy Scouts?

TH: ... I joined Boy Scouts, strange as it seems, when I was fourteen years old, ... which is very old. ... I was actually in a troop as a Tenderfoot as a fourteen-year old guy. ... Most kids that are in Boy Scouts were, like, ten [or] eleven. ... What was interesting was, they had ... split off the Exploring program. Within about a year after I joined Scouting, ... we had enough older boys in the troop that we were able to form our own Explorer post. ... I became very active in that. I was president of the post my senior year in high school, and I ... was very active in the local council. I was in the Order of the Arrow, which is the honor society for Scout campers. I was on the Order's ceremonial induction team [and] also went to Syracuse University for the very first ... major regional Explorer conference, representing our council. I was a Scout, actually, through high school, while a lot of kids dropped out. ... When I came to Rutgers, I joined Alpha Phi Omega, which is the National Service fraternity and was founded on the principles of scouting.

SH: I did not know that.

TH: Yes.

SH: I did not know it was based on the Boy Scouts.

EN: I was trying to figure out what the fraternity was and I could not.

TH: It was ... at the time. They changed the rules later on, as they allowed women to come in. ... At the time, when I was in it, [there were no women]. ... I can tell you what I did there, because I was very active in the Rutgers chapter.

EN: What did you do with the money you made while you were working during high school?

TH: I kept the money. I bought records and personal things and saved some. I used it for spending money. Trust me--it was not that much money. [laughter] I remember when I started working, I was getting seventy-five cents an hour, the minimum wage. Then, it went up to ninety cents an hour, and then, it went up to a dollar an hour. I worked here at Rutgers, [too]. I did math computations in the Engineering Department for a dollar an hour. The minimum wage stayed at a dollar an hour for quite a long time. ...

SH: It did.

EN: You said you had bought records as a teenager. What kind of music did you listen to in the early '60s?

TH: Rock-and-roll. I have a lot of records, and I still have them all, believe it or not. Some of them are worth, I think, a lot of money. I have a lot of forty-fives. I started buying forty-fives when I was [young], in 1954, '55. So, I have a lot of old Elvis stuff and the old rock and roll records. I actually had a record player that only played forty-fives. You remember the old RCAs? Did you ever [see them], with the big spindle?

SH: Yes. [laughter]

TH: ... It was an automatic, and you could put six or seven or eight records on it, and you played one song. ... Then, it would drop down, the next song would play, and it would drop down. It was a little square box and they had a big wide spindle. I had one of those. ...

SH: It connected to the radio, so that you could use the radio's speakers.

TH: No, it had its own speaker, and that's what I would play. ...

EN: Did you buy a car in high school or soon afterwards?

TH: When I graduated high school, my stepdad gave me a car. My first car was a 1957 Plymouth Savoy--which was a junkie car--but it was great. We were not allowed to have cars here on campus, freshman year, but I snuck my car on. ... I did it by parking off-campus and, periodically, during the week, I would move the car. So, it wouldn't stay in the same place, back in the area over behind the College Avenue Gym.

EN: Parking was a problem, same as it is today.

TH: Parking was a problem. Freshmen were not allowed to have cars on campus. Upperclassmen had cars. They had parking decals and, of course, the commuters had decals.

SH: The parking deck had already been constructed.

TH: No, there was an old fieldhouse building there, which had a was dirt covered floor, which was built, I guess, during World War II or right after World War II. There were a lot of temporary buildings on campus, especially across the river, ... in the Davidson area [on the Busch Campus] now. A lot of our classes that were out there were in old Quonset huts ... that were built ... right after World War II with surplus materials. ... A lot of labs were out there, chemistry labs and stuff like that, they used those buildings for that.

SH: We would like to go back and follow up with a few questions about your time in high school.

TH: Yes.

SH: Boy Scouts was one of the main social activities that you had.

TH: ... I had a lot of friends, you know. We played outside a lot. I mean, there was television, but it was black-and-white TV. ... Being up [in] North Jersey, we got probably maybe six or seven channels--the New York channels--and that was basically it.

SH: Were there a lot of dances at school?

TH: Oh, absolutely. ... We had social[s], we had dancing. Actually, we had noontime dancing in the junior high school.

SH: How did they have social activities with the split session?

TH: ... Every Friday night, there was a dance at my high school.

EN: Every Friday.

TH: Every Friday night, there was a dance. ... It was attended by ... hundreds of kids, because that was the ... era of rock-and-roll and people were doing all the dances, and that was ... pretty [cool].

EN: What did you wear to social activities? Did you have to wear a uniform in high school?

TH: No.

EN: Just whatever you want.

TH: No, not whatever you want. ... You wore school clothes, ... some people wore jeans, but not ... nearly to the extent you see it now. I mean, jeans [were not as popular].

SH: You were allowed to wear jeans.

TH: Yes, some of the guys wore jeans. ... We used to call them hoods, "the hoods," and the guys with the "DAs." You know what a DA is? [laughter]

EN: No.

TH: The hair slicked back and cut, combed back. ...

SH: "Duck's ass."

TH: ... Yes, it came back this way. ...

EN: Oh.

TH: ... I usually wore slacks and a shirt, or slacks and a sweater, whatever, it was seasonal.

SH: Did you wear loafers or sneakers?

TH: Some kids wore sneakers, but ... we wore shoes—regular laced shoes and loafers. ... I remember one of the pairs of shoes I had ... were Thom McAn Twisters, and they actually laced up on the sides. They came out during the Twist craze--Chubby Checker and pointy toes.

[Editor's Note: American singer Chubby Checker popularized the Twist dance when he released the song *The Twist* in 1960.]

EN: Did you do the Twist at those dances?

TH: Oh, absolutely, also when I was here [at Rutgers]. I was here during a really neat time, the early to mid-'60s. It was a special time to be at Rutgers.

SH: When did you make the decision to attend Rutgers?

TH: Well, I was good in math and the sciences ... [and] in other things, too. ... I graduated in the top ... three percent of my class, ... out of eight hundred plus students.

SH: Congratulations. [laughter]

TH: ... That's not necessarily the best thing. ...

SH: What was the best thing?

TH: I thought I was going to be an engineer. So, the schools I applied to[were all engineering schools]. ... Again, my parents were not wealthy, I was the first one ever to go to university ... and there were no student loans for us. I mean, everything was paid for [out-of-pocket]. Of course, I think to come here to Rutgers, was four hundred dollars a year. [laughter]

EN: That is around what rent per month is in New Brunswick now.

TH: No, that was the tuition. Everything, ... room and board, books and fees, was, maybe, I don't know, seventeen hundred dollars, but the tuition was two hundred dollars a semester. I applied to four schools--Stevens Institute of Technology, Newark College of Engineering, which is now New Jersey Institute of Technology, University of Delaware and ... Rutgers-New Brunswick--and I was accepted to all four schools. I was offered a scholarship at Stevens Tech, which would have been really a great school to go, but even with the scholarship, because it was a private school, it was still much more expensive than to come here and be able to live on campus. ... I didn't want to commute and, if I had gone to NCE in Newark, I would have been commuting, because that was very close to home. So, it was cheaper to come to Rutgers-New Brunswick, Rutgers College, than it was to ... go to Stevens Tech and commute. ...

EN: Cost was one of the deciding factors.

TH: Yes, plus, it was a great school.

SH: Were there people in your high school who were encouraging you to look at Rutgers?

TH: No.

SH: Was there any kind of guidance system in your high school?

TH: There was a guidance system, ... but, since I was a good student, I think people [with issues saw the counselors]. I don't even remember, to be honest, meeting much with guidance counselors. I probably did, but, if I did, it was very infrequently or to pick up college brochures. I mean, I had pretty high SATs and like I said, I got into all the schools I applied to. So, it was a matter of deciding.

SH: Did you visit Rutgers prior to coming here?

TH: Absolutely, I visited all the schools.

SH: Did you?

TH: Yes.

SH: With your parents or with your peers?

TH: ... With my parents, yes. [We] went to Delaware and ... went to Stevens Tech. I don't remember visiting NCE [Newark College of Engineering]. I probably did visit NCE, but I knew where the campus was, because we used to go to Newark periodically. So, I knew where the campus was and NCE was basically a commuter school. ...

SH: You were going back to Belgium every summer.

TH: No, we went back every three years.

SH: Every three years.

TH: Went back in '56, '59 and '62. I spent the entire summer before my freshman year at Rutgers in Belgium as well, which was tremendous.

SH: How was that viewed by your friends? Was that just so fantastic that you were able to do this?

TH: Yes, I think so. ... I don't really remember people talking about that. I would say, "We're going away," and we'd come back. ... It was kind of nice. For me, going back, number one, ... kept me in very close touch with my family. Secondly, it got me back into the habit of speaking and reading Flemish, so, that's another reason. ... Even though ... my mom spoke Flemish when she was back home in Belgium, ... we also spoke English, even though ... almost everybody there spoke Flemish and English. We spoke English at home in the US. ... The first time we went over, we went back by boat in 1956. We went on the French Line and that was kind of interesting. ... In '59, [that] was the first time we flew, and we flew on a DC-6--think about this--thirteen hours non-stop from Kennedy Airport, then called Idlewild, [on] a four engine prop plane to Brussels. ... I remember we then flew from Brussels to Antwerp in a helicopter. We flew on Sabena Airlines, which was the Belgian national airline, and there was a helicopter service from Brussels Airport to Antwerp, which is only, as the crow flies, probably twenty-five miles.

EN: Was this the first time you ever saw a helicopter?

TH: ... Not the first time I ever saw one, the first time I ever flew in one. ... In 1962, they had Boeing 707s [a jet airliner]. So, we flew on a 707, which basically cut the trip down to about seven hours. ... That summer was special because ... I was eighteen years old and ... I was able to do a lot of things. ... There was an unbelievable social scene. I mean, in Europe, it's totally different than here. ... [To] give you an idea, Antwerp still has about 2,500 bars and cafes, and a lot of them were *dancings*, where young people would gather and dance and drink beer. ... The music was from jukeboxes. It wasn't live music, it was records. ... You asked what I did with my money. When I went to Belgium, I was a fairly affluent guy, back in those days. I could go out and ... spend some of my savings money, and I had friends that had cars and things like that. ... There's a lady that was my mother's goddaughter, who I still am very close to, and, [as a] matter-of-fact, I talked to her last week. She's a year older than me, and her mom and my mom were best friends from grade school in WWI on. My mom ... was her ... godmother. ... So, they were very close, and ... every time I go back to Belgium, ... we see her--and a couple of times, we've stayed with her. ...

SH: Did you ever consider going to college in Belgium?

TH: I would have been too far behind because I was not educated enough in the language. ... Don't forget, I left with, basically, a third, fourth-grade education in the languages, Flemish and French.

SH: You do not think your US education would have been applicable.

TH: No, it would have been the language(s) [that] would have been the problem. ... I speak the language, but I speak it with a dialect. I don't speak the proper Flemish--number one--and there is a proper way, because every time I go over there, you know, I speak with my dialect and everybody thinks that's so funny. They think it's so cool, because there is an Antwerp dialect, which is what I have. ... No, there was never any thought of that, I had already been gone nine years .

EN: You had a lot of friends your age back in Belgium that you hung out with.

TH: Not really. The last time we visited Belgium, we spent time with somebody who was a neighbor of mine when I was nine years old. ... The strange thing about that ... is, I reconnected with this lady about two or three years ago. Even stranger is, her mom, who ... ran a little grocery store right across the street from where we lived in Hoboken, her mom is still alive, and we went to visit her last year. She's 101 years old. She's in a home, and still likes to drink her beer, and ... it was really neat. ... I re[connected] and ... this lady ... actually found me. ...

EN: She just happened upon you.

TH: She is involved in buying and selling rocks and minerals, and she comes to the United States, to the Southwest, to Tucson, where there is a huge rock and mineral show every year. ... She buys all her products there, ships them to Belgium, and then, she goes to different places in Belgium, France, Holland, Germany, to these big markets and sells ... semi-precious stones, turquoise, and other minerals. ... They spend three or four weeks in Arizona every year. ... The hotel they stay in, ... apparently, ... [has] snowbirds that go down there from the Northeast. She met these women, and these women happened to be from North Jersey. ... One day, she ... mentioned the fact that she knows someone who lives in New Jersey, doesn't know where, but, ... one day, out of the clear blue, I get a phone call from a lady I didn't know. [She] asked who [I was], if I was the right guy, was I from Belgium, [and I said], "Yes," and she said, "Well, ... I know somebody that knows you." [laughter] ... She was very nice and she said, "Can I give her your name and your address?" ... We have computers and had email, and about three weeks after ... she talked to me, I got an email, a very lengthy email from this lady. [laughter]

SH: Amazing. Before coming to Rutgers, did your family travel at all?

TH: ... We traveled a lot, too much. [laughter] ... My stepfather had three weeks' vacation every year, and he loved to take these long car trips. In 1954, as an example, we drove all the way to Florida, to Miami. That was before interstates, US Route 1 went through all the major cities--through downtown Baltimore, through downtown Washington, through downtown Richmond, Charlotte, all of the cities. It was unbelievable.

EN: That was before MapQuest, too. How did you find your way? [laughter]

TH: ... With a map. Those were the long trips. In 1957, we ... took a trip to Canada, [we] drove up through New England, ... to Maine, to Bar Harbor, took the ferry boat to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, did all of Nova Scotia, went up to Cape Breton Island, which is the northernmost part [of Canada], came back down, then, through New Brunswick, Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Buffalo. ... On the Buffalo trip, we visited the GI that my mom knew from World War II, Tommy Morganti and his family. ...

EN: What other activities would you do on those trips?

TH: Well, we drove a lot, but ... we saw stuff. We ... did the tourist things and much sightseeing. [We] went to the fortresses, like, in Halifax, there's a huge fortress. ... We stopped in motels that had swimming pools, so [that] in the afternoon, you could go swimming and things like that. We went to the beach, if there was a beach nearby. So, it wasn't just all driving, but they were very long trips. ... As I got older and older--this goes back to the Boy Scouting days--I had been going to summer camp and my parents were going on a trip. They were going someplace. I don't remember. ... I think ... that was the year they went to New Orleans. So, that was another one of these three-thousand-mile round trips, and I said, "I don't want to go on the trip," and they said, "Okay, what do you want to do?" I said, "I want to go to camp. While you're on the trip, I want to go to Boy Scout camp." So, at that time, I was already really senior in scouting. I was seventeen years old, and I was no longer considered a regular camper and I knew all the people that were on the staff. So, I ended up, even though I was registered as a camper ... with the staff in their quarters.

SH: Where did you go to camp?

TH: A place called Camp Tamarack in Oakland, New Jersey. I actually went up and looked ... for it, a couple years ago, [and] found it. Unfortunately, it's been sold, and I don't know what they're going to do with it, if they're going to develop it into [houses]. I mean, that area up there is very ritzy. ... It was on Skyline Drive. ... Actually, off of Route 287, there's an exit called Skyline Drive in Oakland, and you can just go up. ... I found the camp right away, but, back in the old days, before all those roads were there, ... you were really out in the boonies. [laughter] If you went out ... [on] Route 23 going up north out in that direction, ... that was all in the boonies. Now, it's all built up.

SH: It is.

TH: A lot of those super highways didn't exist then. ... I lived right next to Route 3 in Clifton, so I could see the Empire State Building right from my house. We were twenty minutes away from Times Square.

SH: Did you become a naturalized citizen?

TH: I became a naturalized citizen during my freshman year at Rutgers.

SH: How did that come to be?

TH: I became a citizen when I turned eighteen. When I turned eighteen, I could become a citizen.

SH: I wondered if that affected your registering for Selective Service.

TH: I was actually getting draft notices from the Belgian Army. [laughter] ... I was on deferral because I was a university student, because in Belgium, at that time, as in the United States, they

had mandatory conscription. So, you had to serve, even though at the time it was only one year in Belgium. I had to go register in New York at the Belgian Consulate. ... I had to get a waiver not to be drafted. After I became a citizen, I wrote them, letter, [the] next time I got my "renewal," and said, "Hey, I'm no longer a citizen," and then, that was the end of that. ... I had a Belgian passport, until I was eighteen. ... I had an American immigration green card. When I turned eighteen, I also became subject to the American draft, and I had a deferment ... because I was a university student at Rutgers. ...

SH: Did your family ever talk about the draft because of the troop buildup for Vietnam?

TH: Not in '62, not yet. ...

SH: Not yet.

TH: No, it wasn't at that time, no.

SH: Okay.

TH: No, because we had almost no involvement in Vietnam in '62. There was a very small presence of US forces. The war didn't really start until '65, and 1966 was when the massive buildup started.

SH: You said you went to Belgium, and then, you came back and went to Rutgers.

TH: Yes.

SH: Can you talk about what you saw during your first few months at Rutgers.

TH: Sure. Well, I was in the brand-new dorms, which, at that time, we called ... the Bishop Dorms, which was Tinsley, Brett ... Mettler, Clothier, the buildings that are over there [on College Avenue]. ... Tinsley was my dorm. I was on the second floor, right above the stairwell. ... They also had freshman orientation, so, you came to campus early. ... That was one of the things I had to do. In May, after I got accepted, ... and after I decided to come here, the engineers had to come in on a day and we had an engineering orientation, which included taking an engineering mathematics test. The one problem I had ... is that the engineers--the first two years, basically--had the same curriculum. There was no specialization. There were ten different specializations in engineering, but the first two years, everyone took the same basic core program, and then, in your third year, your junior year, you specialized [in] electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, whatever specialty you were going to go into. When I came in here ... the only elective that I really had was ROTC. 1962 was the first year that ROTC was optional. Up until that time, all freshmen and sophomores were required to take ROTC. You only were assigned your commitment after your junior year, but everybody took military science. ... When I came in, ROTC was huge on campus. Of course, there were no women. ... The combined brigades, ... people look at me like I'm [crazy], saying that now, the combined brigades--Air Force and Army ROTC--was approximately 2,400 students in

ROTC. We had approximately sixteen hundred in Army ROTC and eight hundred in Air Force ROTC. There was an Army ROTC cadet brigade. We had a cadet colonel. I mean, it was huge. There were no classes at all on campus on Wednesday afternoons, because that was ROTC drill. That's when everybody drilled, and we assembled on Senior Street and other adjacent streets and we marched into Buccleuch Park, and we did drill in Buccleuch Park. We ... actually had an ROTC band and the band marched the cadets into the park. They did drill and ceremonies and all sorts of other stuff. Right off the bat, I joined the Rutgers Rangers. We had a Ranger company and that was a very different experience than the regular ROTC guys. ... Did you interview Jack Jacobs? [Editor's Note: Colonel Jack Jacobs, a Rutgers College Class of 1966 alumnus, served in the US Army in Vietnam, where he earned the Medal of Honor. His oral history interview is also available on the Rutgers Oral History Archives website.]

SH: Yes.

TH: Okay. Well, Jack and I were in ROTC together, in the Ranger Company, for four years. In my senior year, Jack was the commander of the company. I was one of the three platoon leaders.

SH: If ROTC was optional, what made it attractive to you and why did you choose to do it?

TH: Believe it or not, I have no idea. [laughter] You know, I probably did it because it was something I was interested in, thinking I might go into the Army later on because of the draft. ... Almost everybody was involved in ROTC. ... It's different now, but then everybody was in ROTC.

EN: You were not worried about going to Vietnam.

TH: No, because Vietnam wasn't going on, '62.

EN: Yes, that is true.

TH: ... It was neat, the freshman year.

SH: You had one elective, so, you chose ROTC.

TH: In freshman year, you studied military history. It was only one-and-a-half credits, you know, and I got "As" in ROTC. ... That always helped your "cume" [cumulative average]. ... I was struggling with the engineering curriculum of five-credit calculus--you met four times a week--four-credit chemistry with lab, two-credit physics [with] no lab, [and] engineering graphics, which was mechanical drawing, which was two credits. ... Then, you had, of course, the mandatory English composition. ...

SH: Did you have Saturday classes?

TH: No.

SH: Okay.

EN: Did you have an ROTC class in addition to the drill days you went out to the field?

TH: Yes, one-and-a-half credits, US military history, and we met once per week.

EN: That was on a different day.

TH: Yes, that was ... a different day, and that was ... in the classrooms. We had to wear our uniform to class. The faculty--the ROTC faculty--was probably a lot larger than it is now. We had a full colonel as the Professor of Military Science. We had, oh, I don't know, probably, maybe, fifteen people on the faculty, mostly officers, some sergeants, we had a supply sergeant, we had an admin sergeant. We had a number of captains and majors that were instructors here. All of the ROTC faculty lived across the river, at what was then the old Raritan Arsenal. Some of those buildings across the way are still here, from World War II. ... I'm sorry, not Raritan Arsenal, [but] Camp Kilmer. Camp Kilmer was across the river ... [in] what became, now, Livingston Campus, and most of that land was wooded, with the exception of the warehouses and where the railroad tracks were and other facilities like that. Don't forget, that was a huge mobilization and de-mobilization point after World War II, Camp Kilmer. So, a lot of people ... mobilized at [Fort] Dix, but they shipped out from Camp Kilmer. [Editor's Note: Camp Kilmer was activated by the US Army in 1942 and became the largest processing center for troops (over 2.5 million) during World War II. After the war, much of the land was acquired by neighboring Piscataway Township and Rutgers University, which utilized many of the existing buildings and eventually turned a large portion of the land into its Livingston Campus.]

EN: Did the officers live in barracks? The Colonel must have had a house.

TH: No, they had great houses. ... They still had the officers' housing available to them. They were magnificent houses.

EN: Okay.

SH: Camp Kilmer was a major embarkation point.

TH: Yes, for World War II, sure.

SH: Tell me about how you got involved with the Ranger Company.

TH: The Ranger Company did everything different, that the regular ROTC kids didn't do. ... Everybody else wore their Army green uniform, their Class-As. That's how they went to drill. In the Ranger Company, we [had weapons], and they did not have weapons. They basically just did drill and ceremonies. The Ranger Company wore fatigues, we had black berets--which nobody else had--and we had weapons. We had M1 rifles, and we had an arms room. ... When drill came, we went to the arms room, we drew our weapons and we marched with weapons, and ... we did drill. ... We did a lot of extra training also. On the weekends--not every weekend, but

on ... certain weekends--we would go up to the Heights, across the river, in the woods. ... We'd do war games and do exercises and patrolling, and things like that. We also went to some neat places. In my senior year, when everybody else was off during spring break and went; ... back in those days, it was Florida. Today, they go to more exotic places, like Mexico and Bermuda and ...

EN: The Bahamas.

TH: The Bahamas. ... In those days, ... the Spring break people went to Florida, Fort Lauderdale.

SH: Right.

TH: And the beaches. ... We spent the entire week at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, training with the 82nd Airborne Division in the Raider School, and ... also part of the time with the Special Forces. We took busses down there and, you know, did all sorts of crazy stuff.

EN: Did the soldiers look down at you?

TH: No, as a matter-of-fact, it was very strange, because, ... when we wore our Class-A uniform, we wore our black berets, we bloused our boots airborne style--which those in regular ROTC did not do--and we had all these ribbons on our uniform from different exercises that we had participated in. ... We were getting saluted at Fort Bragg. It was really funny. ...

EN: I am curious about your arms room. Did you keep weapons on campus?

TH: They were in a Quonset hut right on campus. ... The building is gone now, but they were right here by where the Commons was. We had our own arms room.

EN: Today, there are no weapons on campus.

TH: No. ...

EN: We use dummy rifles these days.

TH: ... I think, but I'm not sure, that the firing pins had been removed, but I'm not even sure of that. ... The first time that anybody else in ROTC qualified with a weapon was during ROTC summer camp. That's the first time they actually fired a rifle. ... We had already gone to Fort Dix and qualified with our weapons. So, that was one of the things we had done as members of the Rangers.

SH: The Rangers became part of your activities in ROTC your freshman year.

TH: All four years.

SH: All four years.

TH: ... Four years in the Ranger Company.

SH: When did you decide to continue ROTC?

TH: When you finished up your sophomore year--that was the decision point.

SH: Okay.

TH: ... Then, you had to decide whether you were going to go into the Advanced program. Up until the sophomore year, you did not get paid. It was an activity, but you did get class credits for it. It was one-and-a-half credits. It was one class a week plus, the drill. So, that was your commitment. In second semester of your sophomore year, you actually had to make a commitment to go [to] Advanced, and then, you actually took an enlisted oath and you became part of the Reserves. You actually got a Reserve service number. ... That was before ... we started using Social Security numbers. So, I had an enlisted member service number. ... In junior year you started getting paid. We got paid thirty dollars a month for being in ROTC, which was pretty good money back in those days. Minimum wage was still a dollar an hour. In my senior year, they upped the stipend to forty dollars, but the only service that had a full scholarship program--which is in effect now for all of the ROTC programs--was Navy ROTC and, of course, we didn't have that at Rutgers. The only school that had Navy ROTC [in the area] was Princeton. So, we did not have a fully-funded program, but you did get paid for being in the Advanced program. ... The way classes worked then was ... you got a three-credit course, but you only did one semester, and I've forgot exactly when it was. You know, like, in your junior year, you took ROTC for three credits, it was in the fall, and you met twice a week, like a normal three-credit class. Then, in the spring, the only requirement you had was drill, and then, in your senior year, it was reversed. ... You took it in the second semester, but, in the fall, you still had to go to drill.

SH: It was between your junior and senior year that you went to Fort Bragg.

TH: No, ... during spring break.

SH: In your junior year.

TH: Senior year.

SH: Senior year, okay.

TH: I'd already been to summer camp. You did that between your junior and senior year. ... So, after my junior year, I went to Fort Devens, [Massachusetts], along with about 160 seniors. ... We had that many seniors here. The ROTC encampment was huge. ... There were two summer encampments. There was one at Devens, and the one on the West Coast was at ...

EN: Fort Lewis.

TH: Fort Lewis. ... Fort Devens was still an active post then. They had a brigade, an Army brigade, there from the Fifth Mechanized Division, which actually was out of Fort Carson, Colorado. ... One brigade was here, and so, we went up to Devens. There were a few deferments, and some people actually went to ROTC summer camp after they graduated, but they did not get commissioned [upon graduation], because one of the requirements for commissioning was that you ... had to go through the camp. ... The purpose was basically to give you basic training and leadership skills. It was six weeks long.

EN: You had to learn a lot of things at camp, or were you just evaluated?

TH: No, you learned a lot.

EN: Because these days, you do not really learn anything. You are evaluated in what you already know.

TH: No, but there was a lot of peer stuff. Don't forget, ... you do have knowledge, because you've gone through ... the ROTC curriculum. The thing about being in the Ranger Company, we had done ... a lot of the stuff ... that was taught at ROTC summer camp. One of the things, of course, you do is, you qualify with a rifle. We had already done that. ... Basically, there was a lot of peer evaluation, and you rotated leadership positions. You know, one day, you were platoon leader, one day, you were platoon sergeant or a squad leader. During the different exercises, you changed leadership positions. Now, ... you were the patrol leader--you have to give [orders], take the notes, then, give the patrol order to your patrol. There was also land navigation and marches. All the things they do, that you learn in basic training, ... is basically what they give you there.

SH: How often did you wear your uniform on campus?

TH: You wore it when you had ROTC class and you wore it during the Wednesday drill.

SH: Was there still the Military Ball on campus?

TH: Oh, absolutely. It was one of the three big weekends, which doesn't exist anymore now. Military Ball was in the spring, and it was huge. ... We had Soph Hop, Junior Prom and Mili Ball. Those were the three major weekends. ... Mili Ball was huge, and it was typically held ... in the College Avenue Gym. ... We also had Mili Field Day, where they assembled the entire corps of cadets. It was a big parade in the football stadium, and, believe it or not, the cadets filled up the entire field. I have photographs of it in our yearbooks. If you have the yearbooks, ... you can see it. I mean, it's huge. We had ... an Army brigade and an Air Force brigade. We had three Army battalions. We had a brigade commander, three battalion commanders, staffs, and ... I think each battalion had four, three or four, companies.

EN: How did the cadets get selected for these positions? Is it based on the order of merit list?

TH: Yes, there was an order of merit list, and seniority, as well. Like, in my senior year, I was one of [the cadet captains]. ... The other thing about being in the Rangers, we had extra rank. ... Company commanders typically were captains, platoon leaders were lieutenants. Well, we were promoted in our junior year. I was already a first lieutenant, and so, as a platoon leader, I became a cadet captain senior year. Jack Jacobs was a cadet lieutenant colonel, the XO [executive officer] was a cadet major. So, he had the same status, if you will, as a battalion commander in the ROTC brigade

EN: Were those ranks respected by all the cadets? Did they have to salute the senior officers?

TH: I don't remember, to be perfectly honest. I mean, it was kind of neat. Like I said, we went to Fort Bragg in 1966. ... You were wearing your three little pips (captain) on your shoulder, and these active duty soldiers had no clue who we were. ... Plus, you had all these ribbons on, and you wore shooting medals, because we already had qualified. On our black beret, we wore the Rutgers ROTC regimental crest.

EN: We should probably talk more about Rutgers in general. During your freshman year, what kind of hazing did you experience?

TH: Oh, hazing, absolutely. You came on campus [and] there was a freshman orientation period right before classes started. You came in, like, four or five days before the upperclassmen came in. Everyone was required to wear a dink, which was a hat--silly, little hat--which had your class year on it. ... I still have my dink. It has "'66" on it. You had a Rutgers tie. The dink and the tie were the big things and you had to wear those. ... Then, at some point in the early fall [you could take them off] but a lot of guys didn't wear them after classes started, even though you were supposed to. ... Upperclassmen would stop you along the street and make you sing the alma mater or make you sing other Rutgers songs, or do cheers or make you do stuff. ... It was very prevalent during freshman week. That was during the orientation. Because you had upperclassmen that came in, especially the fraternity guys came in early, ... they would really harass you pretty good and, of course, ... you have no clue what's going on, so, you just do what they tell you to do. Later on, you tell them to "go fly a kite," or something like that. The fraternity system was really big then, as far as the social aspect of campus life went. It's totally different now. ... My son is a graduate of Rutgers College, and his experience here is totally different than mine. ... I'm very close to the campus. I mean, I'm up all the [time], regularly so. [As] a matter-of-fact, I was here last week for the scholarship reception that they held at the Hyatt.

SH: Okay.

TH: Post [career] stuff, what I did, what I've been involved in. ... The fraternity system was big. We had ... twenty-seven or twenty-eight national social fraternities. Every weekend, *every weekend*, there was a live band at the fraternities that had their own houses. ... I mean, there were probably ten or twelve fraternities just on Union Street alone, and you had the ones that were scattered in other places [on] College Ave, the ones that are still here. So, that was the

social scene. You were allowed to drink on campus. Beer was allowed. Alcohol--hard alcohol--was not allowed. The drinking age in New Jersey was twenty-one. We went to New York to drink, to the city or to the north end of Greenwood Lake where the legal age was eighteen. That was our place. We went to Greenwood Lake a lot in the summer or the city. ... You could drink in the dorms. ...

EN: Easton Avenue did not have all the bars that it does today.

TH: Sure they did. They had bars.

EN: That would be hangout spot for you then.

TH: No, because ... the drinking age was twenty-one. After I turned 21 we would go to bars and clubs in the area.

EN: I forgot the drinking age was twenty-one.

TH: So, you would get older guys to buy you beer and we could have it on campus. ... The social fraternities all had bars and they drank. ...

SH: What kind of oversight did you have in the fraternity? You talked about Dean Cornelius Boocock.

TH: Dean Boocock, Cornelius Boocock. No, they were there. All the social fraternities had housemothers. They lived in the house. When the parties were going on, they locked themselves in their rooms and whatever. [laughter] The things we did, if you did them now, ... we'd all have criminal records. [laughter] No, it's true. ... We're not any worse for it, and the sad thing about it is, kids still do the same thing today, except, now, they're breaking the law. "The Ledge" was the big hangout. [Editor's Note: The Ledge, located on George Street, was the social hub of Rutgers College, where concerts, gatherings and events were held. The building currently houses the Student Activities Center.] That was the student center. The union that's over here now was not built. That was the student union. So, the Ledge had dances every weekend, live bands. Every fraternity house had live bands. You could get a band--three guitars and a drummer--for forty or fifty bucks, and they would play for four hours for that money. They would come in ... at eight o'clock at night or nine o'clock at night, and they would play until one o'clock in the morning. We had no curfew. Douglass had a curfew--eleven o'clock during the week, one o'clock on Fridays and Saturdays. ... They would bring in girls. They would come in by the busload every weekend.

EN: From Douglass?

TH: No, from all over--Bryn Mawr, Beaver College, Centenary, Georgian Court, all the state schools, which were, at that time, ... basically, state teacher's colleges, Glassboro, Paterson State ...

SH: Montclair.

TH: Montclair. They came from all over the area and they were bussed in. They came in busses, and then the guys would dance with the girls. ... People would ... hook up and they'd call. ... They left at a certain time. ... [At a certain time], it was time to get back on the bus to go back to their campus. ... The townies came in, [too], the girls from "Zebra High" [New Brunswick High School]. ... See, I've read Jack's bio.

SH: You have.

TH: His experience was totally different. He was married and didn't live on campus.

SH: I know. This is why this interview is valuable, to offer a different perspective.

TH: I'll tell you [about] when I first saw him ... later. We never met up, *ever*, during the whole time we were together in the Army.

SH: Really?

TH: Yes. I saw Jack in preparation for our fortieth reunion. That's the first time I'd seen him since 1966. ...

EN: What was dating like at Rutgers while you were here?

TH: Well, of course, ... you had Douglass. ... I dated Douglass girls, I also dated girls from home. I guess I played the field quite a bit the first couple [of] years. ... In my sophomore year, I met my wife, because she went to Douglass, and she ... was one year behind me. ... Actually, the reason how I met her was, I was actually dating her roommate, and, at some point in time, [we started dating]. This was before cell phones, this was before people had private phones. Nobody had a private phone. I don't know, do dorm rooms now have private phones in them?

EN: I think they have phone lines, but nobody uses them because we have cell phones.

TH: Okay, yes. Well, we had one floor per ...

SH: Phone per floor.

TH: Per floor, per dorm section. Unfortunately for me, my room freshman year was right next to the phone, and that phone would ring at one o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock in the morning and nobody would pick it up, and it would just keep ringing and ringing and ringing. It was nuts. ...

SH: Were you ever preceptor?

TH: No.

EN: Did those guys give you a hard time about a lot of things?

TH: No, most of the preceptors we had were pretty cool guys. They were all smart guys, ... because they got paid to be preceptors. Most of the preceptors didn't hang around the dorm sections. They went to study in the library or someplace else, because it was loud ... in the dorms. You had some people doing crazy things, and drinking at night and partying going [on]. If you wanted to study, you didn't study in your room, put it this way. You went to the library. Later on, I discovered the benefits of studying at the Douglass Library and spent a lot of time in the Douglass Library. ... The thing about it is I had a car. There was a bus system, and you could take classes at Douglass, and Douglass students could take classes here, but it was extremely rare. As an example, we had a couple of lady engineers and they took all their classes over here, but most of the Douglass girls, they were over there. They did their thing. So, you know, you saw them, you met them ... at fraternity parties ... and they had their own social functions. ... They had dances over at Douglass that we would go to.

SH: How much time did you spend in the City of New Brunswick itself? Was everything you needed right here on campus?

TH: Oh, yes. Don't forget, New Brunswick was kind of seedy, that section between the railroad tracks and Albany Street. ... Just going to Douglass was very seedy. There's been tremendous urban renewal and progress that's been made. So, people didn't really walk around that much. You could walk, like I said, to Albany Street and the George Street area. There were things to do there, but not nearly as many places to go as there are now. There was a movie theater that's been torn down in the block that's just past the railroad tracks. I think it all belongs to J&J now. ... In that area, where all those new buildings are, those were all, you know, kind of seedy areas, low-income areas.

SH: How often did you go home on the weekends?

TH: I went home fairly regularly, not every week, but very frequently, and there was a method to that. I went home to get home cooked meals and I went home to get my laundry done, [laughter] and I had a car, so, I could do it, but, even when I didn't have a car, I took the train. I could take the train and the bus. I could hop on the train here in New Brunswick, go to Newark, and then, in Newark, catch the bus and go home. It was really good service, didn't take all that long, but, when I had my car here, I drove my car back and forth.

SH: How difficult was the engineering curriculum?

TH: [It] was very tough. Part of it, for me, was the fact that I'd never had calculus in high school. You had five-credit calc, ... [which] was a "weed out" course, I'm sure. So, even though I was in the college prep math program, ... and I had solid geometry and trigonometry in my senior year, [I] never had any calc and calc got to me. My math prof was not a great teacher. He was a foreign guy and ... it was pretty tough, and a lot of people left engineering, as I did. ... I didn't flunk out, but I was [close]. I got a "D" in physics, I got a "D" in five-credit calc, and that

hurt you. What saved me, again, from going on academic probation was my "A" in ROTC. ... I actually had a very good grade in chemistry with the lab, ... but the grading system was different than now. You know, there were no in-between grades. Now, there's in-between grades and in-between points. ... The grading system, the whole time I was here, was reversed than what it is now. ...

SH: It was "1," "2," "3," "4," "5."

TH: "A," "1," was high, and a "5" was an "F," and academic pro [probation] was under "3.2," which is a "C-." ... So, when I ended up, I think my first semester, I had a ... "3.1" something.

...

EN: That was academic probation, a 3.1.

TH: 3.2.

EN: Because it would have been backwards.

TH: Yes.

EN: Okay, yes.

TH: To make the dean's list, you had to be under 1.8.

EN: Okay.

TH: Not 1.8, under 1.8. ... I'll tell you about that. I missed the dean's list, the second semester my senior year, by one one-thousandth of a point. I had a 1.8.

EN: Wow.

TH: ... There were no in-between grades, so, if you got a seventy-nine, you got a "C." If you had a seventy-one, you got a "C." If you got an eighty-one, you got a "B," you know. ... You got an eighty-eight, you got a "B." That's the way it worked. A lot of the science and math courses were graded on a curve, because a lot of my engineering scores, you know, on the tests [were low]. ... I remember tests where the high grade was, like, a sixty-one an A and the low grade was a thirty-one, and that was a "D." ...

EN: How did you do once you switched into economics?

TH: I switched into economics ... because I was interested in it. ...

EN: When did you switch?

TH: ... At that point in time, I was thinking, you know, I could go into business or something like that. So, that intrigued me, even though history, like I said, was my love. ... I actually took the history achievement test. To come into engineering, you had to take the advanced math and ... science achievement tests, and I took history as my third one, because you had paid for it. So, I took a third achievement test and I scored very high on the history achievement [test]. I had over seven hundred, I think, on it. I forgot what it was. ... The courses were hard. English comp was a tough course, believe it or not. A lot of people failed English comp [and] went to summer school, ... [or] took it over the second semester, [rather] than to have to take it over again ... in summer school. I mean a "C" was not a bad grade.

EN: When did you switch into economics?

TH: I switched at the end of my first semester.

EN: That was fast.

TH: But, I kept ... the engineering chemistry. Normal undergraduates that were in the College of Arts and Sciences, they had a chemistry course that was a three-credit course. I think there was a lab, but not as extensive. I had a four-credit course with lab, and because I did well in chemistry, I just stayed with the chemistry and I dropped calc and physics. I picked up Spanish, because engineers didn't have to take a language. So, I had to take a language because it was [required that], by the end of your sophomore year, you had to have two full years of a foreign language. So, I took Spanish and kept ... ROTC. ... I think I took economics; I've forgot exactly what I took. I mean, I have my grades somewhere, but it doesn't matter. The only thing I had to go to summer school for was ... the second semester [of] Spanish. ... Of course, I still had English comp and Spanish, [which] was four credits. So, I had four-credit Spanish, because you met four times a week.

SH: Was French an option to take?

TH: Believe it or not, I probably should have taken French, because I took French in high school. ... I was kind of afraid, because I'd been out of it for a long time, and I thought, "They're going to put me in an advanced program." ... I didn't think I was going to do as well, so, I said, "Well, I'll just take another language ... that's complementary." So, I took Spanish, and, in retrospect, it turned out that that was a pretty good choice.

SH: I was just curious, because you spoke all these other languages.

TH: ... So, I took Spanish.

SH: When you came back your sophomore year, where did you live?

TH: Sophomore year, I was in Ford Hall, College Ave, right across from what was then DU, Delta Upsilon fraternity house, which is now something else. I think there's a sorority in there now.

SH: Did you keep in contact with your roommates that you had?

TH: ... I had pledged Alpha Phi Omega in my freshman year, so, [my roommate and I] ... stayed really, really close. ... The guy that was my roommate was a guy who was in my dorm section in Tinsley. So, we ended up rooming together. We put our names in [together]. ... We had a strange kind of living situation, because our room was one of the larger rooms. It had a fireplace in it. Of course, it was not used, and there were two small rooms off the side. So, it was actually a four-man room, but my roommate and I were in the big room, and then, the two other rooms were small rooms. ... One of them, ... it was a senior in there and the guy was a DU, and there was another guy who ... we didn't see very much of. So, that's how we ended up in Ford Hall. It was very convenient.

SH: Did you stay in Ford Hall in your junior and senior year?

TH: No. ... After sophomore year, the fraternity got a dorm section. ... We were on the fifth floor here in Clothier, and we had an entire dorm section, nothing but the fraternity guys.

SH: Really?

TH: ... We were all Alpha Phi Omega brothers in there. ...

EN: You did not have a fraternity house that you lived in.

TH: No, because we were not a social fraternity.

EN: Okay.

TH: ... We had a dorm section. I mean, we were very active. We did a lot of good stuff. It was a service fraternity and we did a lot of service projects, but we also had a social side, too. We had our own parties and things like that. We'd go ... up to [the] Davidson dorms, [because] they had lounges over there. ... We got the log cabin over at ... the Ag School, on the other side of Route 1, which was a great place to have social functions. ...

SH: What were some of the service-oriented projects that you did?

TH: Oh, we ran a "give a ride/take a ride" board at the Ledge. Basically, it was a board where people put their names in to share rides, you know, ... "I want to go home on Friday night ... to Hackensack," and somebody would ... pick him up and they would share expenses kind of thing. [They] got somebody who had a car. So, it was a "give a ride/take a ride" board-type thing. So, that was one of the big projects. We had the "Ugly Man" contest, "Ugly Man On Campus" contest. ...

EN: I hope you did not win that. [laughter]

TH: "Beauty and the Beast" [contest]. ... That was a charity [contest], ... where we raised money. It was done at the Ledge, and you'd have different groups--mostly fraternities, but also some clubs--and they would get somebody to be the "Ugly Man," and they would team up with a good-looking girl. ... It was the "Beauty and the Beast" contest, and you voted by putting money in jars. All the pictures were on a big board, and then, you would vote with your money, and, at the end, we had a big dance. We had a "Beauty and the Beast" dance. ... We declared who the winner was. It was pretty neat. Again, if you're looking in one of the yearbooks, ... you'll see pictures of that. We used to go to a place, and I don't remember the name of it, in New Brunswick, where we did rehabbing, some of the shelter kind of places, or people that dealt with the poor people or the homeless, kind of things. ... We would go in there and clean up the property. We painted the rooms inside, one year. One year, we did, believe it or not, ... a twenty-four-hour traffic survey for the campus. The traffic light that's at the corner of College Ave--what's the name of the street?

EN: Hamilton Street.

TH: Hamilton, yes, College Ave and Hamilton--very much traffic, very dangerous. So, what we did was, for twenty-four hours, the fraternity sat there and counted cars. "Did they go straight? Did they turn right? Did they turn left?" It had to do with the amount of traffic ... during the day versus the nighttime, during the peak hours, the off hours. ... The idea was, "Did this intersection merit a traffic light?" which, of course, later on, they put one there. There's a lot more traffic lights now, but that was one of the things we did. ... We did ... some projects that were Scouting related, went up to Scout camps and did service projects. Like I said, I was very active in the fraternity. ... In senior year, I was president. I was pledge master one year [and] I was service chairman, [also]. ...

SH: Who was your favorite professor?

TH: ... I don't really have any close ties with professors. I mean, we had some good professors. Alexander Balinky from the Economics Department was a favorite, even though he was not very student friendly. He was a terrific teacher. ... I had some good profs. Believe it or not, ... my senior year, I cut a lot of classes. I didn't go to class a lot. Most profs did not take attendance, some profs did. The ones who took attendance, you went to class. The ones who didn't, you got the notes or you got the material from reading ... the textbook assignments. A lot of profs had readings on reserve in the library. You had to go do [the readings] in preparation, and after I got myself settled in a study/party mode, [I did that], as opposed to my freshman year. I didn't know how to study properly, but ... that's the ... memories I have. I don't really remember a lot of the profs. We were not very close to the profs. A lot of the profs, a lot of the classes we had, were overcrowded. A lot of the profs were in lecture halls with several hundred students, especially the first couple years. So, you had ... your basic psychology or basic sociology ... in Scott Hall, in the big lecture halls. So, you really had no contact with ... the profs. One of the things that ... I could have done better and should have done is, I probably should have gone and seen [the] profs, but I never did. My son did, based on some advice I gave him, [laughter] when they were ready to throw him out of the school. ... I said, "Go back and see the prof."

SH: Who was the President of the University?

TH: Oh, geez. I should know, I should, [it is on the] tip of my tongue. Who was President in the '60s? I've forgotten. [laughter]

SH: Mason Gross.

TH: Mason Gross. Dr. Gross was the President. [Editor's Note: Dr. Mason Welch Gross served as the sixteenth President of Rutgers University from 1959 to 1971.]

SH: Did he interact with any of the students?

TH: No, not really. I mean, you know, you saw the President and their offices were on--where was the office of the President? I think they were on--well, the President, of course, he was in Old Queens.

SH: I believe they are still there.

TH: Yes, the Dean of Men, and I think [the] Dean of Men was in there, too. ... Mason Gross was [there], ... but you really had very little interaction with them. ... The campus was smaller. ...

EN: Did you know any of the deans?

TH: No, not really, ... either because they were too busy ... [or] because I wasn't interested in interacting with them. Like I said, I probably ... could have done a little bit better had I got to know some of the profs better. The guys who did very well with the profs--in interaction with profs--were the guys who were in very small majors. Like, I have a fraternity brother and classmate who was in geology, and he was a Henry Rutgers Scholar. ... The Geology Department was very small, with very few majors in the department, and they got to know their chairman--their department chairman--and their profs really well. They did stuff together. They did a lot of field trips, too, in geology. So, they were out in the field with those guys, doing coursework, and they also socialized after hours with them. They went and they drank with them and socialized. So, that was kind of neat. ... My department was kind of big, and it was difficult to get to know the people. A lot of the courses were oversubscribed. ... I don't remember very many classes where I had less than thirty-five or forty students. Professor Balinky's classes, he was the Russian expert in the Economics Department and his classes were always oversubscribed. We had ... non-majors taking his class, because he was so well-known and so well-respected in his field. ... He was basically not interested in socializing or interacting with students. I mean, he would walk in, he'd put his notes down and say, "Where was I?" and somebody would say, "You were talking about this," and he would talk for an hour and fifteen minutes, slap his book shut and leave. ... I think the first semester of "The Soviet Economy," the only textbook we ... had to read [was] *The Communist Manifesto*, which is about thirty-five pages long, and the rest of it was all his notes. So, you did not want to miss his class. Why his

notes? because his book was not finished and there was no other book that was suitable. ... We had a final exam--that was it. Your whole grade was based on a final, both semesters.

EN: Was it a written exam that you took in class, or just essays?

TH: Yes, it was basically essays answered in a bluebook.

EN: We still used bluebooks then.

TH: The bluebook.

SH: As a college student, how aware were you of what was going on in the rest of the world? How involved were you and other students in national politics?

TH: I think some of the students were involved. ... It was a time also ... with the ... desegregation marches and things like that. I was never involved in that, per se. ... During my-- I think it was my junior or senior year--there was a teach-in ... about the Vietnam War, which was in Scott Hall. ... We had ... a prof in the--I think he was in the History or Poli. Sci. Department--who was an avowed Communist and they had a teach-in about Vietnam. [I] didn't go to it. I was in ROTC, so, it didn't interest me. I was not politically active on campus. I had other things going on. ... [Editor's Note: Colonel Hardies is referring to the 1965 teach-in where historian Eugene Genovese took a pro-VietCong stance, which led to criticism from New Jersey politicians. The Rutgers administration defended Genovese for exercising his academic freedom. Genovese later taught at Sir George Williams University in Montreal between 1967 and 1969 before moving on to other universities.]

SH: What about the Bay of Pigs, was that a major event?

TH: ... It was part of the [time]. ... The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Bay of Pigs, I mean, it was all stuff going on, the Berlin Wall, [too], but me personally? no.

SH: That is what we wanted to know.

EN: What about the anti-war movement? I remember hearing stories of the ROTC building being taken over and a major getting kicked in the groin.

TH: That was after I graduated.

EN: Was it?

TH: Yes, that was after I graduated.

EN: Did things like that happen during your time at Rutgers?

TH: No, no.

SH: Do you remember when Kennedy was assassinated?

TH: Yes, absolutely, I do. ... Everybody stopped classes. ... [As] a matter-of-fact, I think it was on a Wednesday, and they suspended classes. ... [Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Friday, November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas.]

SH: How were the students notified and how did the news spread?

TH: I think ... just by word of mouth. It came out on the radio, and TV, I guess, ... but that's how everybody found out.

SH: Did students react to the news?

TH: Oh, yes. I think everybody was shocked and amazed that it actually happened. ... There was a big to-do about it. Other than the fact that everybody was concerned I don't recall anything other than that. ... I'm sure this went on for a while. It's kind of hazy, but ... we were notified and everybody was shocked. ... I know they cancelled classes for the rest of the day, that particular day.

SH: When events like the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred, was there any chance that you would be called into the service, being that you were in ROTC?

TH: No, because, don't forget, we were not even involved in the Bay of Pigs. The CIA was. [laughter]

SH: Was everyone put on alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis? I understand that Reserve units were put on alert.

TH: No, we were not in the Reserve.

SH: I just wanted to see if that affected you.

TH: ... We're in ROTC. ...

EN: When did you choose what branch of the Army you would get into?

TH: The way it worked was based on [merit]. ... In my senior year, because of my ROTC grades, I was designated a Distinguished Military Student, and I graduated as a DMG [Distinguished Military Graduate]. DMGs could get Regular Army commissions. Everybody else that graduated, that got commissioned, received a Reserve commission.

EN: All of them.

TH: Except for the DMSs, the DMGs.

EN: Wow.

TH: So, when I graduated, I got a Regular Army commission. They don't have that anymore now, that program. Regular Army ... [was] the same commission that a West Pointer got. So, there were, out of my class of 160 or so that graduated, I think there were, like, maybe, twenty Army DMSs.

EN: Wow.

TH: ... I had ... top grades in ROTC, so, that was significant. ... Plus, [in] your summer camp, one of the things you did was, ... after summer camp--and I don't remember exactly when, whether it was in the fall or in the spring--you were required to make your branch selection and you had to choose three branches. One of them ... had to be combat arms. So, I chose Armor, Ordnance, and I forgot what the other branch was. ... Anyway, what happened was, because of my eyesight, when I took the physical, I couldn't get commissioned in a combat branch. So, I got commissioned in Ordnance, detailed Armor. ... The way that worked was, for the detailed officers, and this was, again, only for the ones getting regular commissions, you served your first two years in your detailed branch, and my detailed branch was Armor. ... The rationale behind that was ... that people who were in the combat support and combat service support branches would get a taste of what it was like to be in the combat arms [branches]. So, the first two years of my career, I was basically an Ordnance officer, detailed Armor. ... After I came back from Vietnam, ... there was such a need for officers. ... Because of people I ... knew in Vietnam ... from Armor branch--I had never served in Ordnance branch, all my schooling and all my assignments had been Armor--I put in a request for branch transfer, which was approved almost immediately. So, even though I couldn't do it initially, the eyesight didn't make any difference at all, because I served in combat wearing eyeglasses. ... But that was the system. ... I don't know if they still do detailing now.

EN: Yes.

TH: They still do detailing for ... combat service support?

EN: Yes.

TH: Yes, okay. ...

SH: Can you talk about your graduation and commissioning.

TH: Yes. ... We had a separate commissioning ceremony.

SH: Prior to graduation or following?

TH: It was prior to. There were three ceremonies, okay. We had commencement, which was done on the lawn here by "Willie the Silent," ... then, we had commissioning, which was done in

the College Avenue Gym, and then, we had graduation in the stadium. [Editor's Note: "Willie the Silent" is the statue of William the Silent, the Dutch leader who led the revolt against Spanish rule in the 1700s, on Voorhees Mall on the College Avenue Campus.] ... I believe that they brought people ... from Newark and Camden up here as well. It was one mass. I mean, the whole football stadium was filled, and that's when we actually got our diplomas, or I should say, our empty certificates, because they had no clue who was going to graduate or who was not going to graduate, who owed money for overdue library books or dorm damages. So, they withheld your--if you owed parking fines, they withheld your diploma until you were clear, [laughter] and I'm sure they still do it.

SH: What were your plans?

TH: ... I'd been dating ... seriously for almost two years at that point, to Diane, my [future] wife. ... She was a Douglass student, and my plan was to go on active duty immediately, or as soon after graduation as I could. They gave you thirty days. They called it leave. ... We ended up getting married in July, after I graduated, and I pulled her out of school. We left for active duty in August. I kind of fell through the crack. I was waiting for orders, because I was an RA, and some people had orders, you know, three months, four months down the line. Some people ... got commissioned, went to graduate school [and] they were deferred again. So, I'm at home, waiting for orders--nothing happened. ... My dad says to me, "You can't just hang around here." So, I got a job working in a warehouse in Carlstadt, loading and unloading trucks in a huge warehouse. ... A buddy of mine and I worked there. ... We got married that summer, and the strange thing about it is, on my marriage license, it says, "Occupation of the Groom: Warehouseman." So, here I am, with a Rutgers degree, but I'm a warehouseman, and her occupation said, "Student." [laughter] So, we got married and still no orders. Finally, I picked up the phone, I called the ROTC Department, which was on Senior Street at the time, right across the street from ... the College Ave Gym parking lot. ... I called ... my class advisor in ROTC and I said, "Hey, I'm still hanging around. When am I getting orders?" He said, "What do you mean, you don't have orders?" I said, "No, I don't have orders." ... We had [been attached to] II Corps, [which] was headquartered at Fort Wadsworth at the time.

EN: Fort Wadsworth.

TH: Fort Wadsworth, yes, on Staten Island. That was II Corps. We were actually under II Corps. All our ROTC instructors and staff wore the II Corps patch.

EN: Wow.

TH: ... So, he said, "When do you want to go on active duty?" I said, "As soon as possible." He said, "You got it." ... A week later, I get orders in the mail, "Report to Fort Knox, Kentucky, to go to the armor officer basic course," which I did in ... late August.

EN: I wonder how you fell through the cracks like that.

TH: Who knows? There was a lot of people in the Army at that time. The Army was big, much bigger than it is now.

SH: Where was your wife from?

TH: My wife was from Northvale, New Jersey, but she was a military brat. Her dad was in the Air Force his whole career, and had retired in 1960. ... They moved to North Jersey, where they had family, and they got involved with the family golf course. So, Diane was living up there, before she came to Douglass. ...

SH: Did you have time to take a honeymoon or did you expect your orders at any moment?

TH: ... Believe it or not, she was still in school, because she was a med tech. The medical technology program, requires a twelve-month ... hospital program. So, ... even though she was at Douglass, she was actually doing her senior year at Muhlenberg Hospital in Plainfield. ... We lived in a small apartment after we got married, and then I pulled her out of school in August. We left New Jersey, and I went to the ... the armor officer basic course, and then, from there, we went to Fort Riley, Kansas. ... Less than five months after I arrived there, I was levied for Vietnam.

EN: Did she go with you to that training?

TH: To Knox?

EN: Yes.

TH: Yes. We lived in a trailer, at the Bonnie View Trailer Court. It's still there. I was there last year, drove past it, [laughter] and [it was] very interesting.

EN: When you left for Vietnam, she returned to school.

TH: Yes. ... I had to report to my port call, which was where ... you report for overseas duty. We flew out of Travis Air Force Base [in California]. Actually, I reported to Oakland Army Terminal. That's where ... all the incoming guys came. ... The soldiers that came back from 'Nam flew into Oakland, into the West Coast, which is only about, probably, an hour-and-a-half from Travis, driving time. ... I flew to Vietnam from Travis Air Force Base on an Air Force C-141 [Starlifter, a military cargo plane].

SH: Do you remember the month? This would be in 1967.

TH: August '67.

SH: It is a year later.

TH: Yes.

SH: Okay.

TH: The interesting thing about it is, when I got to my first unit, I was one of the very few people that was married. The unit had been depleted for Vietnam. ... It was part of the First Infantry Division, which had deployed in 1965, and they activated and deployed the Ninth Infantry Division out of Riley and the only thing left behind on the post--when I got there, because the Ninth was already gone--was the tank battalion, which they did not take to Vietnam, and the Honest John field artillery battalion, Honest John missiles. [Editor's Note: MGR-1 Honest John rockets were surface-to-surface rockets capable of being armed with nuclear warheads.] They were left behind. There was nobody on post. We got there with everything we owned in a U-Haul trailer. I had a 1960 Buick convertible, which I bought second semester of my senior year, and we drove from Fort Knox to Fort Riley. I went to family housing and because I was married was entitled to family quarters. They gave me ten sets of keys and they said, "Go look at these. If you don't like those, come back and we'll give you ten more sets," unheard of in the military.

SH: Yes.

TH: We owned no furniture, and we're wandering around, we had no clue, we're brand-new officers, and we found this one place. Not even realizing we could get more furniture, all the furniture that we wanted, ... we said, "Oh, let's take this place. There's furniture in here." ... So, that's the quarters we ended up choosing. After we chose the quarters, we were put on orders, because once you occupy quarters, you lose your housing allowance, ... then the lady in housing said, "Now, you have to go down and choose your furniture." ... We went to the Quartermaster warehouse and we said, "We need a buffet, we need a dining room table." I mean, this was all beautiful solid wood furniture, ... old-fashioned-type furniture, but all the quarters were furnished similarly, and it was really nice. ...

SH: How long were you at Fort Riley?

TH: ... We graduated from the Officer's Basic Course just before Thanksgiving. ... We drove directly to Riley during that interval. I guess ... [it] probably took two days to drive there. ... Then, I got to my first unit. I was assigned to a tank battalion, the 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor. There were very few people in it. There was only one company active besides Headquarters Company--which was a huge [company]. There were a lot of Vietnam returnees that had come back from the Quarter Cav, which was the armored cav squadron deployed with the First Infantry Division. [Editor's Note: Quarter ("1/4") Cav and Quarterhorse are commonly used abbreviations for the First Squadron of the Fourth United States Cavalry Regiment.] Many returnees had family in the Junction City/Manhattan Kansas area. Unlike today, where units deploy as units and come back as units, and spouses and families can stay in quarters, when I was in the Army--the whole time--when you were deployed to a short tour area, like Vietnam or Korea, an unaccompanied tour, your dependents had to leave quarters and go on the economy, move out. ... I got to Riley in early December. I became the scout platoon leader of the battalion. About six weeks or seven weeks after that, ... I was moved to a tank company and

became a tank platoon leader. The unit was interesting. ... When I first got there, almost all the tanks were dead-lined. When the cav squadron, the Third of the Fifth Cav [Third Squadron, Fifth Cavalry Regiment] deployed with the Ninth Infantry Division, they took every low-mileage tank, every low-mileage APC [armored personnel carrier] that was on post, many of those vehicles being from our battalion, and left us with all of their broken down and inoperative vehicles. Of the fifty-four tanks in the battalion, we had thirty-five in post field maintenance. They were not in the unit. When I took over my tank platoon, I had one operational tank and ... I had eighteen people, and I remember going to the company commander, who was a young West Pointer, Class of '64, who was only two years older than me, All the officers in my company were bachelors. The other two platoon leaders, the executive officer, the company commander, they were all bachelors. I was the only married officer. ... I remember going in his office one morning, because he had said, "Take your platoons out and train them." We could just roll out the back gate of the motor pool and we were in the training area. So, I went in there and said, "How am I supposed to train my platoon when I only have one tank?" He looked me straight in the eye and he said, "Lieutenant, take your tank and your crew and go out and train." That's exactly what he said. [laughter] ...

EN: What kind of tank did you have? Was it a Sheridan?

TH: No, we had M48A3s [Patton Main Battle Tank], but we were also the first battalion in the Army to get the Sheridan [M551 Light Tank]. ... Very shortly after I got to the battalion, the battalion was brought up to full strength. ... We even had an Air Force ALO assigned to the unit, an air liaison officer. We had a surgeon, which was unheard of because there just weren't enough doctors available. We had all our officers and we went up to full strength. The Army's intent was to deploy the unit as a light tank battalion, to see how it would function, and the Sheridan vehicle was classified. It was treated like a [secret]. It was classified, confidential.

EN: The Sheridan was classified.

TH: Yes. We had special Greenleaf high security locks [a commercial lock] on the Sheridan hatches on the turrets, and one of the jobs you had was when you were battalion staff duty officer, the turrets were [to be] covered with canvas. ... When you were staff duty officer, ... we actually had a guard mount and you had your roving guards. You physically had to go--as staff duty officer--and twist the locks on the Greenleaf lock, which meant untying the canvas, crawling under it to where the hatch was, twisting it, and then, pulling the shackle, to make sure that the tanks were actually locked up, [laughter] because the vehicle itself--what was inside--was still classified. In retrospect, it was probably silly. When the tanks arrived, they had covers on them. They came in on railroad cars, because ... they came straight from the factory to Riley. ... The covers completely covered the vehicle. All you could see were the road wheels, [the rest was] completely covered up. ... Then, after they started coming in, we had to deprocess them--they had technical representatives that came ... from the plant to help us deprocess the tanks. ... They were kept in a special [area]. They ran two Sheridan courses at Fort Knox. An M-551 tank leaders' course for the tank commanders, platoon sergeants, and all the officers, and then, the enlisted crew members went, in two increments, ... to an enlisted course. The courses dealt with the weapons systems and turret, the automotive and hull systems and the communications.

EN: You went to the officer basic course at Fort Knox.

TH: Correct.

RN: You were trained on an entirely different type of equipment.

TH: ... When I went through Knox, ... we received two MOSs, military occupational specialties. ... When we graduated, we were qualified to go into both armored cavalry squadrons or tank battalions. So, we received training on armored cavalry tactics and equipment, as well as the tanks, and the tanks we were trained on at Knox were the M48A3 and the newer M60 series, [Patton] tanks. They were different tanks, and but there were still M48A3s. They were mostly in Vietnam then. ... Europe had received the M60 series already, then, the ... M60A1s [variant].

EN: Was it difficult to transition from the M60 Patton Main Battle Tank to the M551 Sheridan Light Tank?

TH: Not really, but they had a different main gun system. ... Let me tell you what happened. ... After we received all the vehicles, then, we had to go through tactical training, but there were things that were wrong with the vehicle and, when parts broke, ... they would fly parts in, just to repair them. We had technical people from the factory right there to repair them, so that they wouldn't be dead-lined if something broke or malfunctioned. ... They were rather flimsy, in retrospect. The Army decided after we actually went through Sheridan gunnery also at Riley-- there were too many things wrong with the vehicle, and they were concerned about deploying the light tank battalion before it was ready for combat. ... With the exception of a relatively few career officers, most of the junior people in our battalion were OBV2 lieutenants [obligated volunteers on a two-year commitment]. These were the officers who held Reserve commissions. They only had a two-year obligation, and, [also, we had] many enlisted draftees. So, the Army said, "Wait a minute, we're not going to get our pound of flesh out of these guys. We've got to deploy them," and, all of a sudden--I mean, literally with the stroke of the pen--in May of 1967, they levied about 350 enlisted men and about thirty junior officers out of our battalion for Vietnam duty. Now, the battalion only had only about five hundred forty people in it and only thirty-seven officers. So, every lieutenant in that battalion was levied and some captains also were notified. Soon we were on orders to deploy overseas. I was initially placed on orders to go to Jungle Warfare School in Panama. Some people were selected for that training. I went to Panama for two weeks in June. While I was away, my wife cleared us out of our on-post quarters. I came back to Riley, and I ... still remember it, there was a big [celebration]. It was right around the Fourth of July. We had a big officer's party--and we left Fort Riley on the 5th of July. We returned home to New Jersey. I had thirty days' leave. Diane went back to her parents' home in North New Jersey, and then, went back to Douglass in September for her senior year ... while I was in Vietnam. ... I departed for Vietnam in early August of '67.

SH: When did you begin to understand how committed the US was to the Vietnam War?

TH: I don't think we ever really understood. We knew the war was going on, [but] I think most people in the service were not really that committed to it. I mean, we talked about Vietnam when ... I was on active duty, and a lot of the training was geared to that, but, don't forget, we still had a massive army in Europe.

SH: That is what I was going to ask.

TH: So, even though the war was building up, [we still had commitments in Europe]. ... By '66, '67, we were getting large amounts of troops going into Vietnam, but ... at the expense, by the way, of Europe and Korea. ... I ended up going to a unit in Europe in 1972 that still felt the aftermath of Vietnam, because the priority had gone to the war. ... We're talking about things like fuel, repair parts, ammunition and people, going to the war [in Vietnam], as opposed to backfilling units in Europe and other places. Yes, if there was ever a time for the Russians to attack, it would have been during the Vietnam War, because we had a massive army deployed there. A massive amount of our leadership was deployed, and our equipment and supplies were in Vietnam. When I went to armor officer basic course, people talked about Vietnam. Most of the officers that were there--the instructors--had already been [in Vietnam], the more senior people, captains and majors. So, you had officers walking around who had decorations from Vietnam and you knew they had been [there]. They were wearing combat patches. Some guys had been wounded and ... some were disabled. ... So, that was really the first time you were exposed to it. Then, after I got to my first unit of assignment, almost all the senior NCOs had deployed with the First Infantry Division and had already come back, they had served their time. It was a draftee army, and there were a lot of ... very junior officers. ... When I left for Vietnam, I had just turned twenty-three. ... I was a young guy, and, yet, I was probably three, four, five years older than most of the soldiers in my platoon, except for some of the sergeants that I had who were ... the careerists.

EN: The majority of your training was focused on conventional warfare against the Russians, tank versus tank battles.

TH: Yes.

EN: Did you get any training on how to support infantry operations in the jungle?

TH: No, not really, because, don't forget, we really didn't do any combined arms training. Now, where you got that training was in armored cavalry, because it's a complete package. As an armored cavalry platoon leader, I commanded three tanks, I had four scout tracks, I had a mortar track [with a] "four-deuce" [4.2 inch mortar].

EN: For a platoon.

TH: ... I also had a rifle squad. I had four different MOSs. My authorized platoon strength in Vietnam was fifty-four people.

EN: That is a big platoon.

TH: It's huge--ten vehicles, fifty-four people--and you signed for that platoon. You signed for all that equipment. [laughter]

SH: You did not have that until you were in Vietnam.

TH: Well, tank platoons are smaller because there's a four-man crew and there's five tanks. So, tank platoons have twenty soldiers in them, and the platoon leader is one of those twenty, because, as a lieutenant, you're also a tank commander. .

SH: Do you think that you were well-prepared for combat in Vietnam?

TH: Oh, I think so. You were trained on the weapons, vehicles, tactics, and in leadership of your platoon.

SH: Yes.

TH: Yes. Once you came "in-country," you were [trained further].

SH: Just start from Travis Air Force Base and go from there.

TH: ... I met a fellow lieutenant who--strange as it seems--I've kept in contact with all these years. ... He lost a leg in Vietnam and ... he visited me last summer, here in New Jersey. ... I met him in San Francisco, and I actually ... left early, just because I'd never been to the West Coast before. So, we partied and he ended up finding me in a hotel in the middle of the night, [and he was] banging on the door. He was drunk and kind of crazy. The next day we drove around, went to the Napa wine country. He had a car which he ended up selling. At one point, ... he actually talked about driving it off a cliff into the Pacific Ocean, but he ended up selling his car for a hundred dollars to a Specialist 5. That rank doesn't exist anymore, ... returning from Vietnam. He sold him his ... '59 Ford.

EN: Was that a good price or was that just giving it away?

TH: He basically gave it away, but you could buy a used car cheap, back in those days. ... For my convertible that I had, it was six years old--beautiful car--I think I only paid 750 dollars for that car. ... Don't forget, people didn't make that much money.

EN: Yes.

SH: They were still making a dollar an hour. [laughter]

TH: My base pay as a second lieutenant was 253 [dollars] a month.

EN: Wow.

TH: 253 a month, forty-seven [dollars and] eighty-eight [cents] food allowance, and 110 dollars [for living] quarters. ... I was able to save money with that, believe it or not. I had a savings bond.

SH: You took out a small bond every month.

TH: Yes. The strang thing, ... I didn't tell you about this, when I came to my tank battalion, it was in the wintertime. It was horribly bleak. Everything was brown, the plains in Kansas. I kept saying to my wife, "Where are we going? Where are they sending us?" When we got there, the battalion was way understrength. There was only one tank company active, plus, the Headquarters Company. After we arrived on post, I went to report for duty. ... I went into the battalion headquarters building and the first person I saw ... was the battalion personnel sergeant. I think I gave him my orders, or the Adjutant--the adjutant is the personnel officer--and he said, "Welcome aboard." He was a lieutenant. ... He wasn't even a captain, but a lieutenant. "Welcome to the battalion. I'll take you and introduce you to the Battalion Commander." The next person I saw ... was the battalion command sergeant major and he said, "Sir," he says, "do you belong to AUSA, the Association of the United States Army?" I said, "No." He says, "Oh, well, you have to belong to AUSA." I said, "Well, ... how do I join that?" He said, "Here," and he gave [me] an application form. It was like ten dollars [to join]. So, I said, "Okay" and I signed up, and I gave it back to him. Then, they took me and I met the XO [Executive Officer]. "Welcome aboard, Lieutenant," he was a major, and he said, "Do you belong to AUSA?" I said, "Yes, sir, I do," and he then said, "Do you belong to the United States Armor Association?" I said, "No, sir, I don't." He says, "Well, everybody in Armor belongs to the Armor Association. You're an Armor officer and you have to belong to the Armor Association." I said, "Okay, how do I join?" and he reached in his desk and he said, "You fill out this form, [laughter] ten dollars," or whatever it was, and then, he said, "Okay," and he took me into the Battalion Commander's office. ... The Battalion Commander, real nice guy, shook my hand, and he started chatting with me. ... "Lieutenant," he said, "do you belong to AUSA?" I said, "Yes, sir, I do." He says, "Great, that is great." He said, "Do you belong to the United States Armor Association?" I said, "Yes, sir, I do." He says, "That is great," and that was my welcome to the battalion. [laughter]

EN: He did not come up with another association for you to join. [laughter]

SH: I was just going to ask the same question. [laughter]

TH: The interesting thing about it is, ... back in those days, and later on in my career, too, the officers and the enlisted people were very much segregated and you rarely socialized with enlisted people. They still had social calls--you made formal visits to the commander. ... You were notified by the battalion adjutant that, on a certain Friday night, ... the battalion commander was going to have calling hours, and it was typically at six o'clock or seven o'clock, and you and your wife went to his quarters. ... They lived in a big house, because the battalion commanders had great [houses], and ... Fort Riley [was a] very historical post. They lived in these houses that were built in the 1870s, 1880s. They were big stone houses and huge rooms, and you arrived exactly at the time you were told to be there. ... There were two trays in the hallway, two silver trays, and in one tray, you put your calling card--which basically had your name, your rank and your branch--in the one tray. In the other tray, you put your card, and your

wife also had a card and she put her card in there--which was for the commander's wife--and then, you went in. ... They had cocktails and ... they had hors d'oeuvres and snacks and you socialized. ... The other new officers in the unit were also there. ... They had a receiving line. It was very [well-planned], and at the exact right time, you left, and that's how it worked. That went on for many years. I had calling cards until I was a lieutenant colonel. They still did it in the 1980s.

SH: Did they?

TH: Yes. Some of the commanders had started doing away with it. ... Not only the battalion commander, also, the brigade commander [did it]. The brigade commander had calling hours, but, then, they would bring in people from all the battalions subordinate to the brigade, those units that were organic or subordinate to the brigade. They would come in, but that's how they would get to meet you. ... There was socialization, also on the weekends. ... All the clubs had happy hours. ... The officers club scene was big in the Army at that time. That's all been pushed to the back burner now, with the alcohol and people afraid to drive. I mean, back in those days, ... drinking and partying was part of the system--all went away.

SH: I have heard there were polo games at Fort Riley.

TH: Not then, only when Riley was a cavalry post. ... Funny you should mention that, because in the post chapel, there were all these plaques lining the wall, and guess who they were honoring? Some officer who died in the 1920s, in a polo accident. They were honoring polo deaths. Fort Riley was a cavalry post until after World War II, So that's interesting. ... A lot of history there--you know, that the Custer house is there on main post.

SH: Yes.

TH: You know. ...

SH: I had heard that the polo matches, though not officially sanctioned, continued on.

TH: Yes. I actually had two tours at Riley. Much later on, I was back at Riley in a tank battalion. ...

EN: Going to Vietnam, you left from the West Coast.

TH: So, we went to Vietnam. ... I had a port call date at Oakland Army Terminal, which was the date you had to physically report. Like I said, we'd been running around the San Francisco Bay area for a couple days beforehand, but, then, you had to report, and, basically, all that was that you checked in. They knew you were there, and then you had to wait for your flight. You reported in and, basically, you were told, "Okay, check back tomorrow morning." ... You stayed in officers billets at that time. I don't remember how long I was there, maybe a day or two, and then, all of a sudden, you were told, "Hey, your port call flight is at this time." You got on a bus with your personal gear, and you were taken to Travis Air Force Base. ... I remember, we flew

out in the middle of the night. We flew out, like, at one o'clock in the morning on an Air Force C-141 Starlifter.

SH: You were all replacements. There were no units.

TH: ... There were no units. We're all individual replacements. So, we flew ... non-stop from Travis to Guam. Guam was interesting, because that's where they were flying the B-52s [Stratofortress strategic bombers] out of. So, the first thing that everybody was told is, "You're not allowed to take pictures of the planes." ... The C-141s only have a couple portholes where the doors are, and, of course, everybody's clicking pictures because they told us not to. So, everybody was doing it. As a lieutenant, I was ... a fairly senior guy. I mean, most of the soldiers on the flight were junior enlisted people. There were only a few ... officers. ... I can't sleep on planes, plus, the nylon seats were extremely uncomfortable on the C-141. From Guam ... we flew to Clark Field [in] the Philippines, and our arrival was very early in the morning. Everybody in the plane was asleep. I was awake, and I'm talking to the Air Force crew chief, and he said, "Hey, sir, you want to come up to the cockpit?" So, it was kind of neat. They had a jump seat sitting right behind and between the pilot and the copilot, and so, I was there when they landed the plane in Clark Field in the Philippines. It was pretty neat; we landed in a rainstorm. We deplaned and had breakfast there. They fed us in an Air Force mess hall. Then, from there, ... after they refueled the plane, we got back on the plane, and we flew a fairly short flight to Tan Son Nhut, which is the big airbase outside of Saigon.

EN: How much time did you spend in Guam and the Philippines? You were only there for a short time.

TH: Just to refuel and to eat.

EN: Like a couple of hours?

TH: Yes. They refueled the plane, and ... they took us off the plane. They fed us a meal in the Air Force mess hall, the dining facility. When we got to Tan Son Nhut, we were assigned to an Army replacement company at Long Binh, and, from there, everybody was assigned all over the country as an individual replacement. I ended up being assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, which was not that far from Saigon, and then I was assigned to the armored cavalry squadron. ... As soon as I got to the division, they gave us an orientation.

SH: What did that consist of?

TH: Well, we called it the "ambush academy." [laughter] The ambush academy, was where they gave you an orientation, I think it was two or three days. One of the things you did was, you zeroed your rifle.

EN: A good start.

TH: You zeroed your weapon, because, by then, ... you were already in a unit and were assigned a rifle. You learned about Vietnam, the war in Vietnam, about the Viet Cong and their tactics, and basic survival skills about ... booby traps, the pungi stakes. [Editor's Note: Widely used by the Viet Cong, pungi stakes were sharpened sticks concealed in the ground, designed to incapacitate enemy soldiers.]

EN: Was this the first time you were exposed to that kind of information about the Viet Cong?

TH: We received some of this information in Jungle Warfare School.

EN: Pungi stakes.

TH: Yes. Well, you had heard about it, you know, but, really, that's the first time you actually saw them. ...

SH: This was very different from the jungle training you had in Panama.

TH: The jungle training in Panama was basically survival training, land navigation and small unit tactics. There was a lot of individual confidence building training.

SH: Okay.

TH: ... We did night navigation, we did rappelling, escape and evasion. ... When I went through Panama, it was during ... the rainy season. So, it was really miserable. It rained very frequently. ...and your clothes would be soaking wet. The sun would come out, then, it would rain again and get you soaking wet, and, at nighttime, you get cold, because you're running around in your wet clothes or ... trying to sleep in your wet clothes. I ended up surviving the nights because we had jungle hammocks. That's one of the things you learned how to build, but it was basically survival skills, you know, night compass course, patrolling. ... We did some riverine exercises, and that kind of training. Did it prepare me that much for Vietnam? No, because I was in an armor unit.

SH: Okay.

TH: For the infantry guys, ... it was probably more helpful. They walked, we rode everywhere we went--a big advantage.

EN: What else did you learn when you first got to Vietnam?

TH: Well, I was kind of lucky, because there was no platoons open when I came into my unit. So, I was assigned as the assistant S-2 [intelligence officer] of the squadron. For the first three or four weeks that I was there, I got a chance to see how the squadron functioned and operated. ... One of my duties was ... TOC night shift on a rotational basis, because we had people from the S-3 [training and operations section, who] operated the TOC during the day. ...

EN: TOC is the tactical operations center.

TH: Yes. I should show you these pictures.

SH: I will put this on pause.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Please, continue.

EN: I wanted to ask a question about the cadre members that you had when you were in ROTC.

TH: Okay.

EN: They must have been World War II and Korean War veterans. Did they give you a lot of advice based on their experiences?

TH: No. We had a couple of officers that were Vietnam vets, and they talked a little bit about Vietnam. ... They didn't really talk about that much, because that was not in the program of instruction. But, we had a couple of captains that had been to Vietnam, but, again, you're talking about a time when there were relatively few people in Vietnam. I'm sure, had I known them better, [maybe I would know more details]. ... The Professor of Military Science was a full colonel. I'm sure he was a World War II and a Korean War veteran. Some of the sergeants that were there, might have been Korean War vets, but I'm not so sure if all of them were even in the Korean War, because, don't forget, the Korean War ended in 1953, so, ... this was nine, ten years later. So, a captain ... who was here on the faculty probably wasn't even in the Army during Korea. The majors probably were, and the lieutenant colonels and the full colonel ... that we had here as the PMS [Professor of Military Science, probably was]. ...

EN: You never found out details about their careers.

TH: No.

SH: During the break, you showed us your photograph album. Do you want to talk about some of those photographs, or do you want to continue with the questions? What would be your preference?

TH: ... I still have [the photographs] and I ... finally bought a copier. I have about 250 slides, thirty-five-millimeters.

SH: That was the way you took photographs back then.

TH: Yes, and I'd like to ... digitize them, and my new printer does that. I just haven't figured out how to do it yet, and I know I've got to do it in the next two months, because I'm going to my Vietnam unit's reunion at the end of June and I want to take that with me. ... Two things that

you find out--maybe not now, with all the technology and with the camera phones ... and the digital stuff--is, I didn't identify everybody. The other thing I find out by going to the reunions is that a lot of the enlisted veterans don't have many pictures at all. An example, one soldier in my troop was a full blooded Cherokee Indian. His Indian heritage precluded him from having pictures taken of him. So, there are very few pictures of him around. There's one picture, I think, of him, graduating from basic training, and there's a couple more that some people took of him, but people just didn't take that many pictures, or they took them of the wrong stuff. They took them in their platoon huts at night, when they were partying, or something like that. ... That's kind of one of the things that I feel kind of bad about, that ... I didn't identify everybody in my pictures when they were taken.

SH: Perhaps, at the reunion, you can bring the photographs.

TH: The problem with the reunion is that my unit was in Vietnam for, probably, five years and, because of the casualties, the rotation of the people in and out, people coming and going, you only have a relatively small group of people that have come together. ... I went to the very first squadron reunion. We started having them in 1988, and we have one every two years, and I've been to all except two. ... They were all in different places, and the last one we had ... was in Kansas City, Missouri, and there were about 450 people total, including spouses [and] girlfriends. Some people are even bringing their grandchildren. ... Believe it or not, the veterans [who] have died, ... their children are there, because they want to connect for some ... reason. So, in all the time that I've gone to reunions, I've only actually found three people who were in my platoon at the same time that I was their platoon leader, and one of them and his wife we've gotten really close to. They live in Baltimore. He's a retired city cop from Baltimore, and we see them fairly regularly and they've been coming to the reunions. ... I met another trooper and his wife, who lives in Kansas City and they came to the Kansas City reunion. I don't know if they're going to attend this [next] one. ...

SH: You had talked about the divide between officers and enlisted men. Was it the same when you got to Vietnam?

TH: No, you were close, you were somewhat closer, because as a platoon leader you were with the soldiers all the time in the field, even if we were in base camp, which was periodically, because we weren't in the field all the time. We did not hang out with the enlisted people. We had an officers' hooch, as we called it, a tent. ... The squadron had its own officers' club. So, if you wanted to go off, you went to the officers' club. The enlisted guys had enlisted clubs or they drank beer in the billets. ...

SH: Where was your base camp?

TH: ... Initially, I was at Cu Chi. When I took over my platoon, I went to a village... called Dau Tieng. ... The Third Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division was stationed there. The troop that I was in, the armored cav troop, had been detached to that brigade. ... I don't want to go into all the technical things that happened, but, ... shortly thereafter, the troop--that picture that was taken there--moved back to Cu Chi and the whole squadron was reunited. What the Army

actually did was, when they deployed the 4th Infantry Division and the 25th Infantry Division to Vietnam, they deployed one brigade to a different part of the country. The Third Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division ended up in Pleiku and the Third Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division ended up in Dau Tieng. Because of the huge distance between those units, they decided to simplify matters of command and control and they basically just had everybody switch patches. The Third Brigade [of the] 25th, became the Third [Brigade of the] 4th ID [and] the Third Brigade [of the] 4th ID, became the Third Brigade of the 25th. So, my unit, which ... was actually Charlie Troop, 1-10th Cav [First Squadron, Tenth Cavalry Regiment], ... when we switched patches, we became Charlie Troop, 3-4th Cav [Third Squadron, Fourth Cavalry Regiment]. That's how it worked. ...

EN: Complicated. [laughter]

TH: And it was all done with the stroke of a pen. ... I have a general order, which basically says, "On the 1st of August, 1967, this is what happened." ... It's an order that has many units on it. Every little detachment, every oddball unit, every separate platoon as well as the battalions, they're all on that order. ...

EN: When did you take command of the platoon?

TH: In September of '67.

EN: Okay.

TH: I was in the S-2 shop for about ... three, four weeks.

EN: Did you have an opportunity to train with your platoon before you started running missions?

TH: Absolutely not.

EN: Yes.

TH: The day you are assigned is the day you take over. There's no time for additional training. You are expected to function effectively immediately and you have your NCO's and the other officers in your unit to help you do that.

EN: What was your first mission?

TH: Well, the first mission was ... convoy escort. We escorted supply convoys from Dau Tieng to a city called Tay Ninh which had a large base camp. ... You basically provided armed escort for the supply vehicles, the vehicles that carried food, fuel, clothing, ammunition, and, basically, you commanded the convoy. The cavalry platoons were also used to guard portions of the road. Much of the area that we were in ... was actually inside a large Michelin rubber plantation. ... The building they used as the officers' club was the former planter's house. So, that was quite

interesting. ... Rubber plantations were cultivated plantations--I mean, all the trees are in rows and they've got little containers on each tree that collect the raw rubber.

SH: Were the plantations still operational?

TH: Somewhat, but not inside the base camp, because we had taken it over, and we had ... put a huge perimeter around it. I have a photograph someplace that was taken ... of the Cu Chi base camp, and people don't realize, you know, the number of people that were there. ... The Cu Chi base camp, ... let's call it a small city--of probably fifty thousand people. ... The outer perimeter alone was twenty-five miles long, which was protected. Every unit that was in that base camp had a designated piece of that perimeter to defend, especially at night, ... when it was dark. The camp was surrounded by minefields, barbed wire, fencing, a berm with bunkers, and every unit had to supply people to man the bunkers. The troops hated it. It was very boring duty. ... I had troopers, wounded soldiers, that were sent back to base camp. They'd have to go back and stay ... to recover, ... if they were minor wounds, and, all of a sudden, you'd see them back on a re-supply helicopter or on a supply truck or something like that. They'd show up and ... they still had bandages on. I'd say, "What are you doing here?" "Sir, I can't take it anymore. ... They're driving me crazy out there. I've got to do all these details." They would rather be in the field and in harms way.

EN: It must have been pretty bad if they wanted to go back to the field.

TH: No, it was just boring, very boring duty.

SH: What was a typical day like?

TH: Well, depending on the kind of missions, we were doing ... a lot of convoy escort. At some point in time, the division decided that we wanted to control the roads at night. The Viet Cong had said, ... "You control the roads during the daytime, we control the roads at night." There was a curfew in Vietnam, so, there was nobody allowed outside between 8pm and 6am. There were also areas called "free-fire zones," where anything that moved was considered to be hostile ... [and] could be engaged. ... What the division did with the cav, one troop at a time--we rotated the troops--they would put us on the road at night. We would leave the base camp at five o'clock in the afternoon, and we would patrol our section of the main supply route, which ran from outside of Saigon, ... where all the depots [were], and where all the supplies came in, to Tay Ninh City, which was a distance of about, oh, let's say ninety miles. We didn't patrol all of that, but each cav troop was given a piece of road to patrol, you just ran up and down the road, stopped, listened. We also put out ambush patrols.

EN: You are referring to Highway 1.

TH: No, it was QL [National Route] 22. Highway 1 ran north and south.

EN: Okay.

TH: ... So, you would get ambushed at night, ... you hit mines. They call them IEDs now, improvised explosive devices. They're homemade land mines, very simple, very effective, very deadly.

EN: You were not using jeeps. Did IEDs affect your unit, considering you were using APCs and tanks?

TH: Yes, bad.

EN: It would rock your track, but it probably would not do much damage.

TH: ... I'll tell you what a homemade mine can do. ... There's not enough pictures in there, but I have other pictures. A typical homemade mine ... consisted of C-4, plastic explosive, packed in a plastic bag using a blasting cap and two thin wires, and a pressure device, consisting of two little bamboo sticks and two pieces of tin and a six-volt battery. ... If you detonate one of those with a [M]113 [armored personnel carrier you] would probably blow a hole six or seven feet deep in the road, eight to ten feet across. If it was a 113, it would completely flip it upside down, 180 degrees in the direction of travel. ...

EN: That is pretty bad.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Let us start again with what a typical day was like in your unit. As you said before, you had been in two different units.

TH: ... When I was in the armored cavalry squadron there was no time off. So, you were on duty seven days a week. Typically, you slept whenever you could. If you were in base camp, ... you'd sleep probably six or seven hours, but you were always up early. Breakfast was served at six-thirty in the morning, and, if you didn't have any missions that day, most of your time was spent in the motor park performing maintenance on your vehicles and maintaining the weapons. If you're in a combat unit, you clean your weapon all the time, every time you stop, because of the dust that's involved. So, as an example, one of the things we did was, we put towels over the machine-guns to keep the dust off of them. The other thing ... was that we never over-lubricated them, because the lubrication attracts dust and dirt. ... So, one of the things that most of my track and tank commanders did, who had fifty-caliber machine-guns, is, if there was ever contact, the first thing they did was rip open the receiver cover, and they had a can of thirty-weight motor oil, and they just dumped it right on the receiver, close the receiver and started firing. ...

EN: Thick oil for a machine-gun. [laughter]

TH: The scariest thing that can happen to somebody in combat--especially if you're getting ambushed is ... having your individual weapon malfunction and being unable to fire it. . If

you're a machine-gunner on a track and your machine-gun ceases to function or jams, you know you're basically sitting there in the open and defenseless.

SH: The pictures show some of the inventive ways you protected your vehicles from IEDs and rockets.

TH: Yes. ... We hit a lot of mines, being in an armor unit. At one point we came up with the idea to have the driver on the ... armored personnel carrier actually sit on top of the hatch instead of inside the vehicle. ... We added extensions to the steering laterals. Have you ever driven an [APC], a 113?

EN: No.

TH: ... Basically, the steering ... is done with two handles and you move them back and forth. ... The guy who's the most vulnerable to mines is the driver. Even though they were armored personnel carriers, everybody rode on top. You didn't want to get caught inside, even though you were more exposed to fire, because the danger of getting killed or injured was much greater from mines or from having rocket-propelled grenades [RPGs] go through the vehicle. Small arms, like rifles or pistols, don't penetrate those type of vehicles, but the larger caliber weapons, of course, do.

EN: RPGs went through.

TH: Absolutely. I have a picture of an RPG that hit on the star painted on the side of the APC. We never even painted over the stars, because ... we were not afraid of anything when we were there. ... The RPG hit in the middle of the star, the jet stream from the shaped charge penetrated one side of the vehicle, went through the radio on the other side and came out the far side.

EN: Wow.

TH: ... We were ambushed one night. This was in a village when we were doing a sweep, and that tank took five or six RPG hits ... and never injured anybody. ... After it was all over, one of the hits was on the front slope of the tank at an angle. To give you an idea of the penetration capability, I stuck a stick inside the hole and the depth was about eight or nine inches deep, but did no damage because of an angle. If it would have been on the side--in the hull--it would have penetrated the hull. The biggest danger on tanks from RPGs was that the jet stream would cook off the main rounds, so [that] you'd have a fireball inside the turret. The crew would get burned, and that was always a big danger. ... One of the things we did on the tanks was, we actually installed brackets on the sides, and then, hung perforated steel plating on the brackets, which covered the hull and ... half of the road wheels, as a stand-off for rocket-propelled grenades.

EN: What would happen if an RPG hit one of the brackets?

TH: It would smash the the metal, blow it up, and knock it off, but at least, you know, the stand-off [was there], because, with the RPGs, the whole idea is to create a stand-off. The RPG

generates an extremely hot jet stream of force that will melt the metal of the hull. The 113s, the armored personnel carriers, are made of aluminum. So, that's a much softer metal and ... much easier to penetrate than a steel hull of a tank. ... In the tank, the heaviest armament's in the front, on the front slope and on the front of the turret. The sides and the rear are much less heavily protected.

SH: You talked about several ways that you jury-rigged your equipment to be more efficient or to perform better. Was this something that you learned as you went along, or did you learn it from someone else?

TH: You learned it as you went along [and] you learned it from somebody else. ... In the Army, weapons and weapons systems have a basic load. For every weapons system that's on a vehicle, or for an individual soldier, a basic load is a specified amount of ammunition that is carried. If it's a rifleman, it may be ten magazines of twenty rounds, or whatever. That's 200 rounds for a rifle. For a machine-gun, it's so many bullets of a certain type. For a tank main gun, depending on the type of tank it is, it can carry as many as sixty or seventy rounds of main gun ammunition, which is then split up between different types of ammunition that was specified for the theater and the mission. So, for example, in Vietnam, our tanks did not carry any armor-piercing rounds. We ... carried high-explosive ammunition. We carried high-explosive plastic. We carried canister, which is basically a huge shotgun round. It's a metal canister that's at the end of the round, and it has small steel rods in them. I don't know how many there were inside. We also had tank ammo called a flechette round, which shot ... several thousand little--they looked like nails, with little flechettes on them, like arrows--and the design for that, of course, is that ... there's actually a fuse on it and, when you fire it, you can set the fuse to go out to so many meters before the round actually detonates. Once it detonates, it shoots out this massive amount of these flechettes. They don't make them anymore.

EN: Did those go in all directions?

TH: Oh, they're concentrated, ... they come out in a cone. ... The last ... kind of ammunition we carried was white phosphorous, which is extremely horrible stuff, and we used it sometimes on bunkers. ... White phosphorous burns with a very hot temperature. You can't extinguish it unless you go under water. ... So, basically, what we did was, we took out all of the antitank type of ammunition and replaced it with high-explosive and antipersonnel rounds.

EN: The armor-piercing and antitank stuff would not have been used against enemy bunkers.

TH: You could use HE [high explosive].

EN: It would be just as effective.

TH: Yes, because ... the armor-piercing rounds ... they're really for pinpoint accuracy against armored vehicles. So, you'd want a high-explosive round.

SH: Would you go out every day?

TH: ... Depending on what the mission was. When we had supply convoy escort, we went out every day. Basically, what we would do is, we would meet [the convoys]. ... In Cu Chi they would load the trucks at the docks in Saigon during the night. They would marshal the convoy at Long Binh, which was the massive base ... where all the supplies and all the rear support units were. ... Then, they would leave there fairly early in the morning, like, five o'clock in the morning, and they would roll past Tan Son Nhut Air Base, once it got daylight. ... They were only escorted at that point by military police [in] gun jeeps. I don't know if you know what a V-100 Cadillac Commando car is. It's a four-wheeled armored car and it had a twin turret of ... two thirty-caliber machine-guns on top, and that was normally the MP lead vehicle. If you were assigned convoy escort duty, then, you would meet the convoy in Cu Chi. ... To give you an idea [of] the scope of the task, as a first lieutenant platoon leader, once I joined the convoy, I automatically became the convoy commander. ... I outranked every person that was on that convoy. If there was a lieutenant colonel in that convoy in a jeep, traveling with the convoy, I outranked him, because I was the senior combat arms officer present. The convoys had anywhere from 150 to 175 trucks in them. They occupied thirty to thirty-five miles of road space, and I was protecting that with seven or eight tracked vehicles. So, the way you did it was, you had a plan and you said, "Okay, every fifteen vehicles, we put a combat vehicle." At the very end of the convoy, ... they had 5 ton wreckers, and they also had "bobtails," which were 5 ton tractors without trailers. ... Many vehicles in these convoys had tractor-trailer combinations, especially for ammunition and for fuel. They had five-thousand-gallon fuel tankers and also flat beds as the trailers. ... At the base camp at Tay Ninh, which was ... another huge installation, [the lead] of the convoy would close at maybe eleven o'clock in the morning. The rear of the column would close at one o'clock. So, that was the time distance factor on these convoys, because of the horrible road conditions. ... We'd beat up these roads badly because of the weight of the vehicles, plus, even the main roads were not in good shape to start off with. They were two-lane roads ... or one-lane roads. They were constantly being repaired by the engineers ... We would then have lunch in a unit mess hall that somebody had coordinated for us, and then, at four o'clock or so we would pick up the empty trucks that were ready to go back to Saigon. ... We took them all the way back to Cu Chi and then ran them, ... in daylight, all the way back to the outside of Saigon, and the cycle would start all over again. Trucks would go to the port, they'd be loaded up during the night, and then, they'd marshal the convoy and do it again the next day.

EN: Did the planning that you did for that type of convoy become standard operating procedure?

TH: It was fairly easy, yes.

EN: You did not have to change anything. You just kept doing the same thing.

TH: Each platoon leader had his own way of doing it and, as ... [we became] more experienced, at the end, and ... before I got wounded, I was the senior platoon leader in the unit and we had some real good procedures in place. For example, when we did night road duty, we never ran with blackout markers, ever--almost always totally in the dark--and that was before we had night vision goggles. We had starlight scopes and infrared devices that we could use, ... but you

couldn't use them to drive vehicles. We didn't have night vision goggles for the vehicle drivers.
...

EN: The tracks did not have anything big on them that you could look through.

TH: ...No. We had ...NODs (Night Observation Devices) and starlight scopes. Starlight scopes were small. You could hold them in your hand. They'd pick up the ambient light from the stars and from the Moon. ...

EN: Cat eyes were small lights in the front and rear of the vehicle.

TH: Yes. So, ... on the front of the vehicle, we had a special light that was obscured and only shone down right in front of the vehicle. We rode totally blacked out--that was my own tactic--and it was great, because, every time we got ambushed, I think [it] ... helped us. ...

SH: Were you always ambushed?

TH: No. There were a lot of times when we would go out at night and nothing would happen. So, you'd be out there all night long. Periodically, we would move, then, we'd stop. We used a technique called herringboning, and the reason we could do that is because first, we were in armored vehicles. Second, during the rainy season, you couldn't maneuver off the roads anyway. If you moved a vehicle off the road, you were in the rice paddies and the ditches all had water in them. So, you'd mire the vehicles. If you [only] knew how many hours we spent recovering tanks and other vehicles because somebody drove off the road or got himself stuck. ... So, you were confined to the road in the rainy season, and we used a technique called herringboning. You'd move ... maybe a kilometer or two kilometers, [then], you'd stop on the road, in the middle of the open area, so [that] ... nobody could really sneak up on you. ... The herringbone technique is that one vehicle turns to the left at a 45 degree angle [and] the next one to the right, and so on, so [that] you're covering both sides of the road. The vehicle in the back, they would cover the rear of the column. I always ran a tank in front with the searchlight on, ... because you're sweeping the light to look for any possible mines or obstructions in the road. The VC used to put little mounds on the road and they'd put little VC flags on them, and, sometimes, they'd booby trap them. They'd put a hand grenade in them. A lot of that was to scare the civilian populace, because, when the people got up in the morning and started using the roads, that's the first thing they would come to. If there were local civilian vehicles-- Lambrettas, which were the three-wheeled vehicles, that were very prominent in Vietnam--they would stop. The MSR, the main supply route, was swept for mines by the combat engineer battalion every single morning on foot. They went out ... the Cu Chi base camp gate, ... as soon as it got light [out], and they physically had engineers walking the road with minesweepers. The same thing happened from the other end in Tay Ninh.

EN: Did the engineers get ambushed? Who provided security for them?

TH: [laughter] The combat engineers provided their own security. The ambushes that took place were always at night. Again, the concept, "We control the roads during the day," and the VC said, "We control the roads at night." So, the ambushes were always at night.

EN: You got ambushed at night.

TH: The VC didn't have the firepower that we had.

EN: If your convoy of 150 to 175 vehicles was ever ambushed, how would you react to contact?

TH: ... We were never ambushed. I don't recall if any supply convoy was ever ambushed. But we would handle it. We had our own vehicles, plus air and artillery on call. And you had the Vietnames forces throughout the province.

EN: The big convoys never got ambushed.

TH: No, because it was daylight and there were helicopters in the air and with all other security measures, they really couldn't get real close to you. ... They're not going to go out and ambush you in a town during the daylight, but, at nighttime, ... if they were going to ambush you, it was always in the villages, because they had shelter. They used the shadows from the houses there, the banana trees and other vegetation that was there, the little fields that they had. That's when the ambushes took place, and ... the minings took place on the roads and they also used culverts. Typically, some were command-detonated, some were improvised explosive devices that used very simple pressure device detonators.

EN: For the command-detonated devices, did they use radios?

TH: No, they were wires.

EN: They had to be close to the site.

TH: Yes, they had to be close. We had one incident. ... When we moved, we moved at a fairly high rate of speed. Normally, if you're looking at the Army tactical manuals, you would move at fifteen miles per hour at night. We moved at thirty, thirty-five miles an hour, because ... it makes it much more difficult. ... Again, if you go with standard doctrine in those days, you know, the vehicles were spaced fairly close together, because you had to be able to see the cat eyes of the vehicle in front of you. ... If you can see both of them, you're so many meters behind; if you can only see one light, ... you're so many meters behind. ... One night, we were moving along and it was in the darkness and there was this massive explosion behind my vehicle. ... The first thing that everybody does is, everybody opens fire [on] both sides of the road, because you have no idea what's coming. So, everybody opens fire, and the most difficult thing to do is to get people to stop firing. That takes, normally, five minutes or ... even more, because they're scared. By the time everybody stopped firing, the first thing I thought was, "The track behind me hit a mine," which means they're gone. ... Well, when all the smoke and the dust cleared, the track behind me was sitting about twenty-five, thirty yards behind this massive

crater in the road. My track is the one that actually initiated ... the explosion, but, because we were traveling so fast, we went over it before it actually got us. ... You have no idea [of] what caused it, whether it was command-detonated or whether [it was] a pressure device, but the crater [was huge]. ... I didn't take any pictures of it. It was dark, and you don't have time to think about all that stuff. The hole was six or seven feet deep and eight or ten feet across, a massive crater. ... [Do] you know what we did when something like that happened, even when we had casualties or vehicles destroyed? They would send out an engineer work party, and ... that road was completely repaired before daylight, as if nothing happened. If we were ambushed and we lost vehicles, or if we had people injured, that was also cleaned up during the night and, the next day, it was as if nothing had happened. ... We were very lucky, because, like I said, we had twenty-seven helicopters in our air cavalry troop of my unit. We reacted to our own contact with the enemy. We evacuated our own casualties. Every cavalry platoon had a medic in it, even though the medics were assigned to Headquarters Troop. ... We had a medical platoon. Every platoon had a mechanic assigned to it from our troop maintenance section. Because I was the platoon leader, the two other soldiers on my vehicle besides the driver, were the platoon mechanic and the platoon medic. The platoon medic was probably the best machine-gunner in the platoon. The mechanic was probably one of my best ambushers.

EN: Did any females go out on the convoys with you?

TH: Never.

SH: Were there any females at Cu Chi?

TH: Yes, they were mostly in the [medical units] and some administrative and logistical units.

SH: Nurses.

TH: Oh, sure. We had the 25th Medical Battalion, and we had the Twelfth Evacuation Hospital. There were other units. ... The adjutant general units, the personnel units, that had females in [them, also]. ... Females were restricted to serving only in non-combat support type units. There were no females in the combat engineer battalion, there were no females in the combat aviation battalion, nor in the field artillery units, and there were no females in the infantry or armor.

EN: They could not be MPs at that time.

TH: No.

EN: They can today. I remember seeing a report in Iraq where females were in MP units.

TH: No, [not in Vietnam]. ... There were females in country, but not that many.

SH: What kind of accommodations did the Army make for them?

TH: They had their own hooches, ... if they were officers, like nurses or something like that, ... or doctors. I don't recall seeing any women doctors, but almost all the nurses were women. They had nurses' quarters for them. They were off limits to males.

SH: When was the first time you came under fire?

TH: First time I ever saw action, ... directly, was when we were on the move. ...

EN: Was this when you were a platoon leader?

TH: Yes.

EN: You never saw any action when you were in the S-2.

TH: No, but I saw a lot of the post action stuff, because one of the things I had to do was, when I was in the S-2 section, was I had to go out and do after-action reports and collect battlefield items. As an example, I have a photograph which I took as the S-2, and it was the first RPG-7 launcher that was ever captured in the 25th Infantry Division area of operations, and that was in August 1967. That was quite interesting, even though the launcher was damaged. ... It was picked up ... after an ambush of one of our troops, a night ambush. ... So, I got a chance to go out. I also had a chance to go out and photograph battle damage of vehicles that were combat lost or had been hit by various [weapons].

SH: Was this because you were responsible for the equipment?

TH: I was serving, initially, for a short period of time, as the assistant intelligence officer of the unit. ...

EN: Did you make friends in the S-2 shop that you could rely on for information when you became a platoon leader?

TH: No. I had no dealings at all with the S-2 shop, but reported often directly to the squadron Tactical Operations Center during operations when I was running convoys or if I was on a platoon mission. ... First of all, the troops pretty much operated independently, even though the squadron was in the same place. I had ... very limited contact with the squadron staff because almost all the missions that we did were troop level and below. Out troop commander and XO dealt with the squadron commander and staff. Convoy escorts were platoon and troop missions. The night missions that we did were troop missions. ... Because we were armor, you were able to cover a lot more ground than the infantry. So, you were able to ... disperse a lot more and do a greater variety of missions.

SH: When was the first time that you physically came under fire?

TH: I didn't physically come under fire, but we were making a move ... and we were on our way to a fire support base and my troop was moving as a unit. It's really interesting in how the luck

of the draw goes and how things work out. There are three platoons in the troop. ... The way we were moving was ... one of the platoons was in the lead, the second platoon was in the middle and the third platoon was in the back. I was the platoon leader of the First Platoon. I was in the middle of the convoy and we were escorting the troop headquarters, which consisted of the troop commander's vehicle [M113], the supply truck, the tank recovery vehicle, the maintenance truck, which is about all we had as far as support vehicles. We're traveling down the road in late afternoon but still in daylight, but getting darker. The entire lead platoon in front of the column had gone over this one spot. All of these other vehicles that were in the center of the convoy had gone over this one spot, and one of my tracks [M113] detonated a landmine, probably because he had gone slightly off the track, rather than where everybody else had gone over, and that's where I took not only the first contact, but also the first casualties. The track driver was killed and everybody else in the track was wounded and medevaced out. The sad part about it is, the trooper who got killed was a "short timer," and a replacement had already come in. He was a sergeant and he had volunteered to drive and to teach his replacement the ropes and help out. He was ... maybe a week away from going home and he was killed. So, that was very sad. The mine was a homemade explosive device, with a couple wires and a simple bamboo pressure device and a six-volt battery.

SH: You have a Purple Heart. When were you wounded?

TH: I was wounded in early February 1968, during the Tet Offensive, the big attack ... on all the cities and facilities by the VietCong and the NVA [North Vietnamese Army]. Our squadron was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for saving Tan Son Nhut Airfield. [Editor's Note: The Tet Offensive of 1968, in which every major city in South Vietnam was attacked by the VietCong, is seen as the point when American public opinion began turning against the war.]

SH: Can you talk a little bit about that?

TH: We can talk about it a little bit. It was a massive attack. The VietCong were attacking all over the place, and my platoon was sitting on top of a bridge that night. We had gotten intelligence and, when Tan Son Nhut came under attack, they took my troop, which was closest, and because we could move the fastest, because we had the armor vehicles. All of the units in the 25th Infantry Division were infantry. They had no vehicles. Each brigade had one mechanized infantry battalion, but we had a great amount of firepower in the cav, because we had tanks and we had helicopters. My troop was dispatched immediately to go brunt this attack and they ran right into the [VC], basically cutting an attack in half. There were enemy on both sides of the road. They were attacking the perimeter fence. It was a VC battalion that was attacking the airbase, and the Air Force didn't have a lot of security. They had some security personnel, they have their air police, but they don't have any heavy weapons. It was a huge firefight. My troop commander was wounded very badly. We took a lot of casualties killed and wounded, but the unit survived. ... It was unbelievable. We killed over three hundred enemy, and ... The squadron lost a lot of people, too, but the brunt of the casualties were in Charlie Troop, because we were the first ones to arrive. ...

EN: This is the first night of the Tet Offensive.

TH: That was the first day of Tet. It was January 31st. I was wounded on February 10th. ... Tet was still going on. We were in the vicinity of Saigon and we were operating with the infantry at that point in time. We had gone into an area and, at that time, ... fighting as a squadron, which is the whole unit working together. Up until that time, it was basically small-unit operations at the platoon and troop-level, but, after Tet, ... the squadron operated as a whole. We had a lot of units attached. At one point, ... the squadron had an entire artillery battalion attached to it under our commander. ... It was pretty rough. ...

EN: Your unit was responsible for defending a portion of Saigon.

TH: Yes, and fighting in and around Saigon. At one point in time, we were towing an M113 track around that ... was dead-lined. It was non-operational, [but] completely filled with captured enemy weapons-- ChiCom [Chinese Communist] rifles, AK-47s, RPG launchers. These weapons later became trading material for other things. [laughter]

EN: Was there a lot of urban combat during Tet? Was your unit in the city?

TH: ... No, we weren't in there that long, because you had other units that were responsible for the defense of Saigon. They had a lot of MP units. There was an MP battalion stationed right on Tan Son Nhut Air Base. There was also a separate light infantry brigade in Long Binh. I mean, these locales were all fairly close together. But, the MPs were heavily involved. They were involved in ... protecting the embassy. [Have] you ever heard the story about the 716th MP Battalion [and] ... what happened with the embassy? ... We were mainly outside of Saigon. I had gone on R&R, so, I missed some of the action when I came back, and ... found a lot of my guys ... had been killed and a lot of them, wounded. ...

SH: Where did you go on R&R?

TH: I went to Hawaii.

SH: You met your wife there.

TH: Yes, I was one of the few guys that went to Hawaii. We had a choice to go anywhere in the Far East. You could go to wherever the quotas were. You could go to Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia, Taiwan, Japan. Those were the places that the single soldiers went to, but the married guys went to Hawaii.

SH: What month and year?

TH: I was there ... during late January and early February.

SH: This was after you were wounded.

TH: No, before. After I was wounded I was in the hospital, ... I don't remember exactly, for a week or so.

SH: Were you in a hospital in Saigon or somewhere else?

TH: No, at Cu Chi. We had an evacuation hospital at [Cu Chi]. It was the Twelfth Evac, and they ... [had] a lot of business tending to the wounded. We actually had two medical units. We had the organic medical battalion that was part of the division, but there was also an evacuation hospital there as well, which ... had a lot more capability.

SH: Was there a chance that you were going to be sent home because of your injury?

TH: No, I was lucky. I ... received multiple shrapnel wounds when my track [M113] was hit by RPGs. ...

EN: Were you on a convoy operation when your track was hit?

TH: No, ... we were attacking a ... VietCong position. They were dug in and hidden in hedgerows, and we were supporting ... an infantry unit and my platoon was with an infantry company when I got wounded. We had a lot more firepower than the infantry commander had under his control. I think the infantry company probably only had about sixty or seventy people. One of the things to note is that these companies and most combat units ... were very depleted due to combat losses. I was authorized fifty-four people. Normally, when I went to the field, I had between thirty and thirty-five available for duty. I never had all ten of my vehicles. I always had at least one or two tanks that were not available because the tanks used to hit land mines. A tank was the lead vehicle all the time, so, the tank would hit the mines.

EN: I guess it is better that the heavier armored vehicle hit the mines.

TH: Yes, the mine would blow off road wheels and road wheel arms, ... but it didn't kill the people.

EN: Did operating at the platoon level prepare you for when you started working as an entire squadron?

TH: Oh, absolutely.

EN: Was it very different?

TH: No, because, as a small unit leader, you're still only leading a small unit. You're not concerned with what's going on a thousand meters to your left or right. It would be of a concern ... to your troop commander, because he's not directly on line, or you're too far ahead or you're too far behind, ... especially if you're doing a sweep of an area. The troop commander's concerned about keeping his three platoons on line, if it was that kind of a formation that you're using, and he's concerned about the side boundaries and where his flank units were in

relationship to the other units. ... As a platoon leader, you don't worry about it--your main concern is your platoon and the units operating on either side of you. ...

SH: While you were in Vietnam, were you considering staying in the Army as a career officer or were you thinking about leaving the service?

TH: Well, no. Once I came home basically the war was over for me ... the day I got home, because I had reverted to Ordnance Branch while I was in Vietnam. So, the last four-and-a-half months or so, I was serving as an ordnance officer in the division maintenance battalion. It was a totally different kind of experience and a different mission. I remained in the Chu Chi base camp, ... no longer subject to direct hostile fire, except for sporadic rocket attacks or mortar attacks. ... When I came home, ... back to the States, I had never been formally trained as an Ordnance officer, and I was sent to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland--which is where the Ordnance School was to receive my branch training. I checked into post personnel and the warrant officer that was checking my records said, "Oh, Lieutenant, you're eligible to be promoted today," and I said, "Oh." He said, "Hang on." He's gone for about fifteen minutes, and my wife is also there, because she had gone in with me. He came back and said, "Here's your orders." I never ... had a promotion ceremony when I made captain. The promotions were so quick during the war, because you made captain in two years, first lieutenant in one year, one year later, [it] was captain. When I walked into the Ordnance Officer Basic Course, which was designed to teach ... brand-new second lieutenants their jobs, I was a captain, but there were a bunch of other captains to be trained as well. My class leader was a major.

EN: Wow.

TH: ... I think we had nine captains and ... the rest of them were second lieutenants. The major was an officer who was in ordnance ... EOD. He was an explosive ordnance disposal specialist. ...

EN: He was that before he went to the ordnance school.

TH: No, because ordnance branch had several different MOSs. So, EOD was one specialty, mechanical maintenance was a specialty, there was also a nuclear weapons specialty, for nuclear ammunition. So, this class leader had served his early career after having gone through the ordnance EOD officer course. He needed another MOS, because there's no grade higher than major in EOD. So, he had to go back to school to get his mechanical maintenance MOS. We were pretty hard on the instructors. These instructors would teach you the schoolbook solution, "This is how you do it." Then, a classmate would raise his hand and say, "Wait a minute Captain, I just came back. I was a shop officer of a main support company ... in Vietnam. I had 202 people under me. Here's how we did it in the real world." ... So, we were kind of bad. [laughter]

EN: Plus, the instructors had not really been in there.

TH: Some had.

SH: I wanted to ask again, did you consider staying in the Army as a career officer or did you think about leaving the service?

TH: No, at that time, ... I knew I was going to make it a career.

SH: Did you?

TH: Yes.

SH: Okay.

TH: During my stint at Aberdeen, ... I worked first in the director of instruction's office as an operations officer. I didn't like that job at all. ... I didn't like my boss and when there was a chance to become a company commander, I took it. This was in a school environment. I had a very small cadre to command a bunch of ordnance enlisted students who were receiving Advanced Individual Training. They were really smart students. One of the courses that my unit trained was the instrument repairer[course]. That was a fifty-six-week long course. These are the technicians who calibrated and maintained all the instrumentation in the Army, all the scientific test equipment, such as the multimeters and other items. ... It was a very difficult course, with a lot of electronics and math. They actually allowed failing students to be recycled. They would move them back four weeks in the cycle. They would repeat that portion, retest them and then let them continue on with the course. So, it was almost like having permanent party soldiers in your unit, because they were there so long. The other students that I had in my company were the helicopter armament repairmen, which was a long course, too. ... That was a twenty-eight-week course, and they ... maintained and repaired all the subsystems that are on the attack helicopters, the grenade launchers, the miniguns, ... the machine-gun systems, ... the rockets systems.

SH: Did your experiences in Vietnam help you in your new duties?

TH: No, not really, ... because you're in, basically, an administrative situation, but you were their commander, their leader, and you had to provide all of the services and support that any company commander provides to his assigned soldiers. ...

SH: There was nothing your experiences in Vietnam could be applied to.

TH: I was not involved in the instruction at all. I was only involved in taking care of the soldiers, ... the students. We were responsible for making sure they got fed, that they got housing, supplies, inspecting them, military justice, and personnel actions--all those kind of things that you normally do administratively at the company level. ... When the students left ... to go to class, they were under the control of the schoolhouse. They spent seven hours in class. The other interesting thing was that we operated and trained around the clock. I had a second shift company. So, my students, when I came to work at seven o'clock in the morning, were still asleep. We didn't get them up until eleven o'clock in the morning ... or nine o'clock, I forgot

exactly, but, then, they had to go get cleaned up. They had to clean and prepare their barracks, and they ate a meal, and then, they went to class. ...

EN: Why are you operating around the clock in the school?

TH: Because the Army needed many people to be trained because of the war.

EN: They would have classes at night.

TH: Three shifts. You had first, second and third shift companies in our battalion. The mess hall fed nine meals a day.

EN: Wow.

SH: This would have been from 1968 to 1969.

TH: '68-'69, yes.

SH: You were still turning them out for either Vietnam or Europe.

TH: They were mostly going to Vietnam, especially the helicopter armament repairmen.

SH: Were they?

TH: Every [student], ... just about. ... Another thing about the calibration course students, because the classes were so tiny, by the time they graduated, they'd only graduate seven, eight, or nine people. There were very few of those specialists ... in the entire Army, perhaps five or six hundred of them stationed all over the world. So, from every class that we graduated, half of the class stayed behind at Aberdeen as instructors ... because there were so few of them. The faculty rotated regularly and had to be replaced. Class leaders, back in those days, ... we had Specialist grades--Spec-5s, Spec-6s, and Spec-7s.

EN: Spec-7s.

TH: E-7, Spec-7, but they were only in the technical specialties. It was not a good decisions that the Army did away with them. ...

EN: It sounds like a warrant officer.

TH: Yes, but we had warrants, too. Many came from the senior specialist grades, so they were really skilled in their field when they became warrants. There were some soldiers who did not want to be leaders, but who were excellent soldiers in the technical specialties. Now, in today's Army, ... it's up or out, if you don't go to the right schools and you become a sergeant and you progress along the way as an NCO. I saw guys retire as Spec-5s [with] twenty years' service in the 1960s and the 1970s.

EN: On active duty.

TH: On active duty.

EN: You see that in the National Guard.

TH: ... I had a wrecker operator, when I was commander of the Headquarters Company in a tank battalion in Germany. One of ... my five-ton wrecker operators, he received a commendable on an Annual General Inspection [AGI] that was conducted by VII Corps on our battalion. ... He received a letter of commendation ... A wrecker has all of this equipment and tools, and they inspect everything. It has to be all accounted for, it has to be clean, has to be operational. His vehicle was immaculate, with all the power equipment that's on it, and I said to him, ... "We want to promote you." He said, "Sir," he said, "I don't want to be promoted." "This is my vehicle.".... "I'm going to retire;" he had, like, sixteen or seventeen years' service. "I want to be a wrecker operator, and that's all I want to do." He had no command responsibility, had no leadership responsibility, but he maintained and operated that vehicle as if it was his own personal car ... and he was a topnotch soldier. ... We also had them in the medical field. You had Spec-6s and Spec-7s. ... A senior specialist from our squadron medical platoon worked on me in Vietnam, not a combat wound, and actually performed a minor operation on me, without supervision. They were like enlisted PAs. The Army didn't have PAs [physician's assistants] then. They have them now, they have the PAs and those warrant officers are outstanding.

EN: Wow.

TH: ... Very long courses. They went to Fort Sam Houston, in San Antonio, where they were training the medics. ... They were technician specialists and they were really good at what they did, and they supervised and taught other technicians in the unit.

SH: When you were at Aberdeen, were there draftees in the Ordnance branch?

TH: Oh, absolutely. Sure, they were mostly draftees.

SH: Okay.

TH: They came out of basic training. There was basic training at every branch MOS producing school. Fort Knox had basic training, Benning, Sill, of course, and even Fort Dix actually had MOS producing courses. ... If they flunked out of a course, they went into a ... lesser demanding MOS.

EN: Infantry. [laughter]

TH: No, infantry is actually not that easy--but wheeled vehicle mechanic, for example, ... if they flunked out, because that's a much lesser demanding course. ... The reason they got into

those courses at Aberdeen was because they tested high in certain areas on their aptitude tests. ... Do we still give the ASVAP [Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery]?

EN: Yes.

TH: Okay. ... So, that's the way the Army looks at you. We say you're qualified to do this. ... If you score high across the board, then, the Army tells you you can do anything you want to do, but, back in those days, ... a lot of these draftees were not even high school graduates. Some of these soldiers couldn't read very well. There were certain things that they were good at, not that they were bad soldiers, but everybody has a niche. I mean, we had our bad eggs, just like [now]. ... I'm sure they have bad eggs now, even with the all volunteer army, and I served in both. ... Back in those days, when you had draftees, you could choose your people. For example, every company clerk I had was a college graduate--didn't matter what MOS he had. If this soldier was a tanker or a scout and I knew he had a college degree, he became my company clerk, because he ... could function. You could tell him something ... once and it would be done correctly. My training NCO in Germany was a scout. I yanked him out of the platoon. He became my training NCO, even though it's an additional duty. He was my full-time training NCO. He was a college grad. I mean, that's the cross-section of society that you don't have much anymore. The college grads now ... are the officers or senior NCOs. ...

EN: I wanted to ask you about some of the draftees in Vietnam that you had in your command. Were any of them very disobedient?

TH: No. ... I'll tell you what most people don't understand, unless you've served in a combat unit, is that survival depends on doing what you're told and survival depends on what your buddies do for you. That's the big difference. I think there's probably a lot more ... drug problems in the Army today. In Vietnam. ... I did not ... incur that in my unit, even though there was probably a hint of that going on, but not a great deal. It was much worse in Germany and in Korea. ... Plus, in those days, too, ... you had sergeants who took care of the "problem children" in-house. ...

EN: You could do it a little more informally.

TH: Yes. ... I'll give you an example, how the Army worked. I took over my scout platoon and my first platoon sergeant, who was probably one of the most respected guys I had--and, sadly to say, I lost track of him, but I kept track of his career over the years. I'm not even sure if he's alive anymore, because, ... when I was twenty-two, he was already in his mid-thirties, a Vietnam vet. ... His name was Oswaldo Medina. He was from Texas, and his comments to me were, when ... I came in, ... we sat down and he said to me, ... "Sir," he says, "you and I are going to get along really good," he said, "as long as you follow the rule," and I said, "What is the rule, Sergeant Medina?" He said, "Sir, in garrison, I run the platoon. In the field, you command the platoon," and that's how it worked. So, when he asked me to do something in garrison to somebody, it was really serious. The scout platoon was the platoon that everybody came to look at when they inspected the battalion. PSG Medina's wife had made red-and-white curtains for the barracks rooms. I mean, you could eat off the floors every day. I inspected the billets with

him every day. He came and got me when they were ready and said, "Sir, we're going to inspect the billets," and I would go with him. He would take me to every room, every common area, like the latrine, and we would conduct the inspection.

SH: Where is this?

TH: This was at Fort Riley, my first unit.

EN: This was his idea to do the inspections.

TH: No, we did inspections every day, but ... he led me through. ... He led me through when he knew they were ready. ... During many of the inspections the troops weren't standing there. ... All the formal inspections that we did were conducted on Saturday morning, because we still had a liberty pass system and you couldn't leave the post unless you had a pass. ... Once, there was an NCO. He ... had been drunk the night before, couldn't get out of bed, missed the formation, and he [Medina] ... barged into his room, screaming at this guy, how he had embarrassed him in front of the platoon leader. I didn't say a word, I just stood there, but he wanted this guy to know that, now, it was so serious that he actually brought the platoon leader in. Then, we left. I saw ... some "behind-the-barracks Article 15s" and stuff like that, too, ... but some people needed that. [Editor's Note: Article 15 of the Uniform Code of the Military Justice refers to nonjudicial punishment, allowing company commanders to administer punishment without a court-marshal.]

EN: I wanted to ask about discipline in Vietnam.

TH: I'll give you another example. The heavy mortar platoon was in the barracks above us. We shared a two-story building. ... The platoon sergeant in the mortar platoon was a real good friend of Medina's. ... He was Platoon Sergeant Juarez. I still remember his name. ... The mortar platoon, ... had a lot of problem soldiers in it. One night, they had gone crazy. They'd been drinking and they broke porcelain fixtures in the bathroom, sinks, some toilet bowls, and they punched some holes in the sheetrock in the walls. ... You know what we did with them? It was not my platoon, and since they did not have a platoon leader, I was the only other officer in the unit besides the company commander. We moved the entire platoon outside, in December at Fort Riley and they lived in pup tents for thirty days. ... [laughter] You know how cold it gets at Fort Riley?

EN: I do not think I want to know.

TH: [We did this] with the blessing of everybody, [including] the company commander [and] the battalion commander. ... They would have inspections. They'd have all their field gear laid out, outside on the ground. ... Yes, it was "old Army." I don't think they stayed out for a full thirty days. The commander finally let them back in the billets. First, they had to repair and pay for all the damage. I think we moved them back inside because it got really cold and windy.

TH: Fort Riley is always windy.

SH: You are now at Aberdeen.

TH: ... While I was at Aberdeen, I branch transferred. My squadron commander had come back to the States, his name is General [Glenn K.] Otis. He retired as a four-star general. [As] a matter-of-fact, I spoke to him last week. He ended up retiring in 1988 as the Commander-in-Chief, US Army Europe.

EN: Wow.

TH: A four star General, like General Fritz Kroesen. Kroesen, I think, was CINCUSAREUR also and ... Kroesen was also Armor Branch. I'm sure he knows General Otis very well. [Editor's Note: General Frederick Kroesen, a retired US Army four-star general and Rutgers College Class of 1944 alumnus, preceded General Glenn K. Otis as CINCUSAREUR. General Kroesen's interview is also available on the Rutgers Oral History Archives website.] ... At that time, each branch has its own personnel management team for its officers. I went to Washington, since we were so close, and I'd put in my paperwork and it was approved in two or three weeks. People in Ordnance thought I was insane. They said, "Why do you want to go back to Armor? You're going to go back to 'Nam." This was in early 1969, and the war was still going on. Then, I spent another probably five, six, seven months at Aberdeen, but now I was wearing ... Armor branch insignia, instead of Ordnance brass. "How is that an Armor officer is commanding an Ordnance training company?" I was in the School Brigade, while I was waiting for a slot in the Armor Officer Advanced Course. We left Aberdeen in February 1970 and went back to Fort Knox. At that time, the branch advanced courses were very long. They were a permanent change of station move, so, you could bring your family. It was a nine-month course and I was at Fort Knox from ... February '70 to just before Thanksgiving. We had twenty-five infantry officers in my class, we had ninety-nine armor officers and one field artillery officer. We also had about fifteen allied nation students. Strange thing about the allies, some countries that were represented are no longer allies. We had countries that don't even exist anymore--like South Vietnam. We had a Brit, who was a cool guy, Robert Hayman-Joyce, distantly related to the poet.

EN: Wow.

TH: We had Venezuelans, we had officers from Saudi Arabia, an Ethiopian, a Greek, a Tunisian.

EN: Did they all speak English?

TH: Yes, more or less, yes, pretty good. Robert Hayman-Joyce spoke perfect English.

EN: I am sure he did. [laughter]

TH: ... So, Armor Branch came down, and told us, "Anybody that has not had a second tour in 'Nam is going back for a second tour." ... I had returned in '68, so, this was 1970, and I was

going back for a second tour. "Anybody who had never been to 'Nam," we had one officer who had never been to 'Nam from our class, "they're definitely going." All the aviators that were in the class [were going], because, at that time, ... there was no Aviation branch. The Army aviation assets were split up amongst all the services, Armor, Infantry, Field Artillery, all had aviators. So, those were all going back for second tours. The infantry officers in my class, and they were the cream of the crop and were already fairly senior captains, they had all had two tours already. I went home and said, "Hey, I'm going to 'Nam, ... [on] my second short tour." About a month later, branch returned to Fort Knox and said, "We're canceling all the orders. The only ones that are going back are aviators, [or] anyone who's never served in Vietnam, and the rest of you are going to be reassigned." They gave us choices of all these horrible places. I'm face-to-face with the assignment officer and I said, "I want to go to Germany." [He said], "No way, no." "Where can I go?" "Anyplace that has basic training, Fort Dix, Fort Knox," because that's where there was a need for trainers. "But, if you'd like to get your second short tour out of the way, you can volunteer to go to Korea," which was also an unaccompanied tour of thirteen months. So, four of us in my class volunteered to go to Korea. I talked it over with my wife. We already had [two children]. My son was born at Fort Knox, during the advanced course. So, after we graduated, I took thirty days leave and left to go to Korea. ... I commanded an armored cavalry troop in the 4th Squadron, 7th Cavalry, 2nd Infantry Division in Korea for thirteen months from early 1971 to the end of January 1972.

SH: Where were you?

TH: We were close to the DMZ. When I was there, ... we had an Infantry brigade right on the DMZ. Most of the Demilitarized Zone is controlled by the South Korean Army and the US Seventh Infantry Division had just left Korea a couple months before to return to the States, and there was a big shift of tactical responsibility. Initially, when I was in Korea, I drew combat pay, because, every time we went off in a helicopter, ... we were within range of anti-aircraft fire from North Korea. We moved back off the DMZ, because the sector that we were responsible for, even though we were not right on line--the infantry units were--we moved back and a piece of that sector was given to the Koreans. I returned to the US for mid-tour leave. I had a chance to come back for thirty days. ... I traveled to the Armor assignment branch and there was an officer, a lieutenant colonel named Tom Tait. Tom had been my executive officer in the squadron in Vietnam. He was happy to see me and he said, "Ted," he said, "you've got to go see Colonel Otis. He's on his way to Germany to command the largest brigade that the Army has in Europe, a brigade of five battalions." ... He was going to the Third Armored Division. He had the divisional cav squadron under his control, as well as ... three tank battalions, a mech infantry battalion, plus the cavalry. It was a massive unit. Diane and I went to the Pentagon, and there's this full colonel who ... was a hero in the Vietnam war and had all these fantastic assignments, stuck in a cubbyhole about half the size of this office surrounded by safes. ... The safes were cabinets that had combination locks on them to secure classified documents. He was getting ready to go to Europe. ... I was so into the cavalry at that time that, he said, "Ted, if you want," he says, "I'll have you assigned to the brigade," and I was so in to the cavalry at that point in time, I said, "Sir, I'd really like to go to the cav," blah, blah, blah, and so, I didn't. I ended up being assigned to the First Armored Division and I was placed in a tank battalion in the 2nd Brigade, ... never did get to the cav, because I had as my assignment choices ... to go to certain

cavalry squadrons or to one of the cavalry regiments. We had two regiments deployed at the time on the border of East Germany and Czechoslovakia. ...

EN: You went to First Armored Division in Germany.

TH: Yes, right.

EN: In Korea, what kind of training did you do? You did not do combat operations, but what kind of things did you do daily?

TH: We didn't do any combat operations, but you were always training and preparing for combat.

EN: Right.

TH: The biggest problem in Korea was strength. All the units were shorthanded, because the priority was still to Vietnam. ... Korea was on the back burner for everything--people, repair parts, fuel, ammunition, and other logistical support. Vehicles would become non-operational for something like a simple repair part and it would take months to get it fixed. It would sit in the motor pool. It was kind of a tough [time], and we had a real mishmash of equipment. We had Sheridan light tanks there, ... we had gun jeeps for scout vehicles, we had the M114s Scout vehicles, which were horrible. We also had 113 APCs in the platoons for the rifle squads and the mortar carriers, the M106s which carried the 4.2" mortar. ... You were always preparing for combat, you were always training. ... We did tank gunnery, we did ... scout squad proficiency course, we did mortar gunnery. Plus, we spent a lot of time in the motor pool maintaining the [equipment]. ... When you're in an armor unit, you spend a lot of time maintaining your equipment.

SH: Were there other NATO forces there at that time?

TH: No.

SH: It was just the United States.

TH: You had the ROK [Republic of Korea] Army. They were tough, very professional soldiers.

EN: Did you interact a lot with them?

TH: No, because ... they were in their own sector.

EN: Did you train with them?

TH: No, [but], in one way, yes. They had a program called the KATUSA program, which stood for the Korean Augmentation To the United States Army. I actually had twenty-four KATUSAs in my armored cav troop. They were junior enlisted men and NCOs who were apparently

smarter or better connected than most of the conscripts in the Korean Army. Allegedly, they spoke some English. I remember, we were doing mortar squad proficiency testing and I had an ... all-KATUSA mortar crew in one of my platoons. It was the funniest thing, because they were giving all the fire commands and adjustments in Korean. It was a very interesting experience having those guys serve with you. ... It was great for them, because the ROK Army was so Spartan and so tough. ... Living in American barracks with American food and comforts [was a great improvement]. An example of the ROK Army, one of their divisions had just returned from Vietnam. I don't know if it was the White Horse or the Tiger Division, but these were ... mean guys, tough, and the VC didn't mess with those guys over there, because they were extremely cruel. Once, we had an inspection of the Korean soldiers. Every battalion had a ROK sergeant major. He was assigned to the battalion headquarters, and the worst thing you could do if a Korean soldier screwed up or ... did something wrong, is you threatened him with going to see the Korean sergeant major. The first thing that would happen is, he would probably beat the hell out of him. The second thing is, probably, depending on the severity of the offense, he'd get reassigned back to a Korean unit. They would be gone, you never saw him again. ... One time, during an inspection, they had an inspection in ranks and they had all the Korean soldiers lined up. ... A major had come down to inspect all the KATUSAs that were in our squadron. ... He's walking along, looking at each soldier, all of a sudden, he lets out and hits this one soldier as hard as he could in the face. This soldier fell down to the ground and immediately jumped back up, stands at attention, and this officer is screaming at him, and then just continues his inspection. Another example, I was driving ... in a jeep, in the middle of the winter. It was very cold. Korea is cold. It's hot in the summertime, very humid, but very cold in the wintertime, the wind is always blowing. ... We were quite a distance away from where the division headquarters was. We were in the Third Brigade, in what they called the Western Corridor. This was the traditional main invasion route from the northern border to Seoul. We were only twenty-five miles north of Seoul, and we passed a Korean compound. It was a Korean tank company. They're always doing physical fitness. The national sport in Korea is Taekwondo, which is their hand-to-hand combat. You always see them practicing in formation. ... I'm was wearing my "Mickey Mouse" boots. ... Do you know what "Mickey Mouse" boots are? ...

EN: Tanker boots?

TH: No, they're the arctic boots, rubber.

EN: I have never seen them.

TH: Well, they're used for ... extreme cold weather.

EN: Okay.

TH: ... We also had winter parkas with the fur roughs and hoods. These were the long parkas. ... We were not allowed to have tops on the jeeps--division commander's policy, no tops on the jeeps. The idea was to discourage dispatching the vehicles, because of the joy riding. There was also danger for rollovers with jeeps. The intent was that, if you didn't have any canvas on your

jeep, you wouldn't be so apt to use them as much on the roads. We had a lot of vehicle accidents on the roads.

EN: Okay.

TH: ... We passed this compound. Those Koreans [were] out there and about a half a mile from the compound, we see the ROK company running in formation. Now, ... it must have been maybe fifteen degrees outside--and they're running in their fatigue pants, white T-shirts and bare feet, in formation.

EN: Wow.

TH: They were chanting, "Who, whoo," and doing their little shuffling. ... You talk about a hard army that's used to harsh conditions.

SH: Oh, my gosh.

TH: ... I had Koreans assigned to my unit, and they were all pretty good soldiers. Like I said, we didn't have any real problems with them. I mean some of the American soldiers thought that they were somewhat lazy, and they probably were. They had the best of both worlds. They got all the American holidays off, which we had being in the American Army. ... But there were also many Korean holidays. All these different religious holidays and all their special holidays, such as Liberation Day, the national independence day. They had many ... special days, and they took those off, too. ... It was a pretty good deal to be assigned to an American unit as a Korean. [laughter]

EN: Were there a lot of draftees in your unit in Korea?

TH: Absolutely, it was horrible. Korea had a big drug problem, plus ... the Black Power movement was going on big time in Korea at that time, and then, subsequently for me, from Korea to Germany, and more drugs problems and Black Power.

EN: Why was it so prevalent in Korea and not in Vietnam?

TH: Because it started later, in the late '60s and I was already gone.

EN: It is just a timeframe thing.

TH: It was a timeframe thing, yes.

SH: It shows up in Vietnam towards the end of the '60s.

TH: Don't forget, when I came home in '68, that summer is when they had all the riots. I missed the riots by a month, the riots in DC, the riots in Newark, Jersey City, Plainfield. I saw the aftermath of that, but, ... being in the Army, believe it or not, you lead a sheltered life. You say,

... "Did you get involved in that stuff?" No, we didn't. If you live on post, you lead a sheltered life, especially then. Now, probably not so much so. Today, because of the mass media and the fast communications and people talking, [it is easier], but, back in those days, [no]. ... We had our own problems. When I came back from 'Nam, I had thirty days' leave and I was on my way ... to Aberdeen Proving Ground, but that was already in the past. ... All that turmoil had taken place that summer. ... [Editor's Note: In April and May 1968, race riots erupted in 125 US cities, including Chicago, Baltimore and Washington, DC, sparked by the assassination of Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968.]

SH: Prior to the riots and the Civil Rights Movement, were there any problems between white and African-American troops?

TH: There might have been, but, I wasn't around the billets with these guys at night.

EN: It would have been the NCOs that handled those problems.

TH: Yes, the NCOs. ... As far as my platoon goes, my platoon sergeant in Vietnam ... was an African-American, an outstanding individual. I had ... a mishmash of races. I mean, you had a draftee army. I had Mexicans, Hispanics. I had a full-blooded Indian ... in the infantry squad. ... You had a variety of people, some from, you know the "middle of nowhere" home towns. The young sergeant that was killed on my track was from Walnut Bottom, PA. You know where Walnut Bottom is? It's just outside of Carlisle, between Carlisle and Shippensburg. He was a farm boy. He went to school there. I've been to Walnut Bottom, so, I can tell you that there's not much there. So, ... by having this draftee army, you had people assigned from all over. An example, my rifle squad leader in Vietnam, ... it was a staff sergeant position. I had a buck sergeant as my rifle squad leader. He was the old man in the unit. He was as old as my platoon sergeant, maybe in his mid-thirties. His name was Kittredge, and Sergeant Kittredge had a master's degree in geology from the University of Colorado, had been in the Colorado National Guard and had volunteered to come on active duty, as an enlisted soldier.

SH: What was the morale like at that time? I have heard it plummeted.

TH: I think I left at the right time. I missed ... the drug stuff. ... They talk later on about the fraggings [killing of officers by their men] and things like that. I think a lot of that came about in places where troops were bored or where they had a lot of free time on their hands and where they could do things like that. In combat units, you really were ... never bored. You were always doing in the field and you didn't spend a lot of time in the base camps. You were out doing your mission. It's the kind of units where you do the same thing over and over again ... and the soldiers have time on their hands. ... That's what part of the problem is. ... Probably in Iraq, too, ... who is really outside of these massive compounds? If you go outside ... the compounds, ... you're bound to get shot at.

EN: Were there any problems with violating the rules of engagement or with killing civilians?

TH: No, we didn't have that many problems, no.

SH: What kind of interaction did you have with Vietnamese civilians?

TH: [laughter] We bought Cokes from the "Coke girls." These were young Vietnamese girls. They would suddenly come up to you and sell you everything, always ... when you're out in the field, because we moved about a lot. And we could carry stuff on our vehicles. ... If you were in the infantry and you were on foot in the boonies or in the jungle. ... We were on the roads. We're in the villages. You really didn't have much interaction, because you didn't speak the language. ... So, there really wasn't that much interaction with the civilians.

EN: Did you ever travel with a Vietnamese translator?

TH: ... They had a program called Kit Carson Scouts. Kit Carson Scouts were Viet Cong defectors who had been re-indoctrinated. ... They allegedly spoke some English, and, for a while there, we were getting a Kit Carson scout to go out with us on missions. How trustworthy were they? I don't know. ... They spoke some English, ... I guess to talk to us, but not really. You know, it's not like what you see now, where, you know, every squad has a translator with them, or some captain's walking along and he's talking to all the populace. ... We were not really interested in the people that much. We were interested in the bad guys, the VC. At that time there was a national Vietnamese Army in existence. ... Just up the road from Cu Chi was a Vietnamese airborne battalion, and then, you had other forces, the paramilitary forces. ... We called them the "Ruff-Puffs," RFPFs, Regional Force/Popular Force, and they were basically militia units who were armed and were designed to protect their villages or specific areas. That's where those little forts were. We were really there to, number one, ... root out the bad guys, the Viet Cong, but also not to interfere ... with the local population and ... the local government, because all these towns, districts and provinces had governments. The VC were very brutal. ... They they would kill village chiefs or mayors. ... We didn't really get involved in any of that. We had a program called MEDCAP and every battalion-sized unit that had a battalion surgeon, ... a doctor, would get responsibility for a village. [Editor's Note: During the Vietnam War, MEDCAP, the Medical Civil Action Program, provided outpatient (non-surgical) health services to the South Vietnamese civilian population.] ... The MEDCAPs would go out. ... I did those when I was temporarily assigned in the S-2 shop. I would go out with the S-5, the civil affairs officer, and with medical teams and we would go into a certain village and they would treat people. The local populace didn't have ... much medical care. ... They had some medical care. I mean, it wasn't like they never saw a doctor. ... They would treat people for free and minor procedures. ... We went once a week into this village. Well, I'll give you an example, what happened to that village. One night, a mechanized infantry unit was ambushed in that village. We [the cav] rolled through there a couple days later, and I mean every house on both sides of the road was gone.

EN: Whoa.

TH: They'd gone in and they'd leveled everything, ... either burn[ed] them out or they [the dwellings] caught on fire, ... because that's where they got ambushed. So, ... you say, "What happens to civilians?" They're always the [victims]. The people in Vietnam, they were pretty

astute. ... We called their houses hooches. Every house had a shelter--had a hole in the ground ... where they could go into--and the people knew when the VC came. They were not allowed outside their houses because of the curfew. ... If I remember correctly, the curfew was from eight o'clock at night until ... five o'clock in the morning. If any of them were caught outside of their houses, ... they were fair game. When I was in Korea, even in Korea, where the war had been over for seventeen, eighteen years, we had a curfew in Korea. The curfew in Korea, ... in our division area, was midnight until four A.M. ... Nothing could move.

EN: Did the curfew affect big cities, such as Seoul?

TH: I don't know. I was not in Seoul, but we were up north, but we weren't that far away from Seoul. ... There was a four-hour curfew, so, ... nothing moved at all, you know, no taxis or any other vehicles. The GIs got around [in what they] called "kimchee" cabs. That's how GIs would get around in Korea. They'd just grab a cab and go off to the village, see their girlfriends or to party in a local bar that catered to them.

SH: Cu Chi was famous for the tunnels. Did you ever see them? [Editor's Note: The Cu Chi tunnels were an underground tunnel network that the VietCong used to conduct guerrilla operations against enemy forces. They have since been converted into a war memorial and tourist attraction.]

TH: No, that came out afterwards.

SH: Okay.

TH: Yes. The interesting part about it is, they were there all along. ... [laughter] I told Eric that I've been thinking about going back, ... the 25th Infantry Division Association runs tours to Vietnam, and I know a number of former soldiers that have gone back. One of the things they always show you, of course, is, if you go back to our particular area of operations, is the tunnels of Cu Chi. You see only a little part of them, very elaborate, very intricate. They were three levels deep. They had storerooms, hospitals, command centers, barracks, all underground. ... We didn't know they were there.

SH: Where in Germany were you stationed?

TH: When I arrived in Germany, it was late February 1972. I had left Korea at the end of January '72, had thirty days' leave, and then, my family and I went to Germany. I received concurrent travel orders for my family. You were not allowed to bring your family--if you were married and you were going to Germany, if you were not given concurrent travel orders. This meant your family could travel with you, because there were family quarters available. ... Because I was separated from my family for the entire thirteen months I was in Korea, I got credit for all that time on the housing list. So, when we arrived there, I bumped people on the list that had already been in Germany, waiting to bring their families, for six, seven, eight, nine months. I went to the head of the list and I moved into temporary quarters, and shortly thereafter, we actually ... moved into our apartment. The temporary quarters were neat, because

they were in the attics of these buildings that had been built after World War II as American quarters. ... They were the rooms where the maids used to stay. Back in those days, I guess, ... all the officers had maids. We had a small kitchen, a small ... living room, which was like the dining room/living room, and then, there was this long corridor that stretched the entire length of the building. ... There were seven or eight bedrooms along this corridor because that's where all the temporary quarters [were, on] ... the attic floor. ... My kids, they had a playroom and they could run up and down the hallway, ... because my kids were young. ...

EN: Normally, when you come off a tour in Korea, you would be sent to a duty station in the United States. Why were you sent to Germany?

TH: Remember, I requested it.

EN: That is right.

TH: ... They had to give me my choice. I already had completed two short tours and had been wanting to go to Germany for ... all those years. ...

SH: Why the fascination with Germany?

TH: Because I'm from Europe, and I love Europe ... and it's beautiful. ...

EN: Your wife wanted to go to Germany.

TH: Yes, of course. ... She actually spent, I think, three or four years in Germany ... when she was a little girl. Her dad was in the Air Force in Germany, from, I think from '50 to '53. So, she was still a little girl ... when they left. I think she was only eight years old.

SH: Where in Germany were you stationed?

TH: We were in the Second Brigade of the First Armored Division, which was located in Erlangen, Germany, just north of Nuremberg. We were in Bavaria, a beautiful part of Germany, not too far from the Czech border, not too far from the East German border. If you went straight north, ... you hit East Germany. If you went straight east, you hit Czechoslovakia. It was a time when there were a lot of American troops in Germany. ... There were still two full corps. We had two armored cavalry regiments. We also had four divisions. There were 160,000, 170,000 troops in Germany and many American installations.

SH: What was your assignment?

TH: I became a company commander again. ...

EN: You were still a captain.

TH: I reported into our battalion, I was a senior captain in the unit, and there was a young officer who almost kissed me when I walked in the door. [laughter] He was an OBV2 lieutenant, getting ready to go ETS ["end of term of service"], and leave the Army, and he was going to grad school. They had made him the headquarters company commander. ... In those days, the headquarters company in a tank battalion had over three hundred people in it. Well over half of the battalion was in the headquarters company, because a tank company only had only about ninety people. So, the headquarters company was huge. All the problems were in headquarters company, all the discipline problems. You had the cooks, the mechanics, the staff, the medics, the scout platoon, the mortar platoon. It was a large organization with over a hundred vehicles ... they had you responsible for. The Battalion Commander said, "Ted, I need you to go down and take this company. It's out of control. The incumbent is going home. He's given up, he's leaving ... in a couple weeks. We've been waiting for you to show up." So, I took over the headquarters company and I started cleaning house. ... I'd been in the Army approximately six-and-a-half years [and] I had four-and-a-half years' time in grade. I was the senior captain in the battalion, because most of the officers were still in Vietnam. Germany ... had a lot of soldiers, [but] we were short officers, especially majors, in the units, ... same problem [as Korea] there, low priority on repair parts, fuel, and ammunition. You also had old and obsolete equipment. The newer items were still going to Vietnam. On top of that you had the massive drug problem, and you had the racial problems.

EN: How was that dealt with while you were in Germany?

TH: Well, I don't remember exactly, but I think I probably eliminated fifty or sixty bad soldiers out of the Army.

EN: Wow. Did they go to jail or did you just throw them out?

TH: Court-martials and administrative discharges. I'll give you an example. One soldier in my company shot my battalion commander with an M-16 rifle as he was walking across the parade field in Erlangen.

EN: How did he get the ammunition?

TH: It's a long story. I'll tell you that.

EN: That is amazing. [laughter]

TH: ... I wasn't even there. I was on REFORGER. ... I was a referee, an observer/controller, on REFORGER, [an annual military exercise that stood for REturn of FORces to GERmany]. So, all the senior NCOs, all the officers, all the special platoons, scouts, mortars, red eye, they were all on REFORGER, and the rear detachment commander had decided to go to do rifle qualification for the rest of the unit. My XO was left behind. Somebody took a live round away from the range; somebody didn't put his rifle in the arms room. He got caught trying to stick it under his bed. ... Somebody said, "You can't do that." It was time for lunch, and then, the guy ended up doing it anyway. He went to lunch. Some other soldier had seen him put the weapon

away, grabbed the weapon, [and] was playing with it. Another soldier produced a round, and somebody said, "There's the commander." It was the battalion commander, a Lieutenant Colonel. He opened up the window [on] the third floor and it wasn't even his rifle, not zeroed for him--and shot him in the side. Fortunately, he was not killed. The soldier was court-martialed, convicted and sentenced to prison, and then thrown out. He was from Los Angeles and had gotten into trouble there. He had been a big-time drug abuser. The judge basically told him, "Join the Army or go to jail."

SH: I have read that was pretty prevalent across the country.

TH: So, ... he was a dirtball in civilian life, and I had the same thing in Korea, too. Some of the guys we would get --[to Eric Nolan] and don't feel bad about this--were activated National Guardsmen. During the Vietnam War and at the end of the Vietnam War, everybody was in the Guard, because that was a way of getting out of going overseas. ...

EN: With that kind of incentive, you would probably try to join.

TH: ... So, what happened was, and I even remember ... when I came in the NJ Army Guard, talking to our brigade Sergeant Major and others in Second Brigade, they would say, "We had waiting lists of thirty and forty names waiting to come in the unit. We were at 110, 120 percent strength and we had thirty and forty guys waiting to join." ... What the penalty was, if you missed drills, they activated you in the regular Army. You'd signed a contract and you had a six-year obligation. So, they would activate you until the end of your term of service or until you served two years. So, you got some of those guys. You were getting the bottom of the barrel in these active duty units. ... They were often bad soldiers in the Guard and they were bad soldiers ... on active duty. ... Some of those individuals, we ended up throwing out, too. ... A lot of guys didn't want to serve, a lot of them didn't want to have to take orders and hated the military. ... You eliminated them, and there's ways to do that, probably much more so then than there are now. I think there's probably ... much less of that because of the volunteer army.

EN: Right.

SH: How long were you in Germany?

TH: I served four years in Germany.

SH: Did you get a chance to go to Belgium, to show your family where you grew up?

TH: Yes. ... I actually changed jobs, and I had a permanent change of duty station. I left the tank battalion after about eighteen months. Then, I was assigned as the brigade adjutant, the S-1, in Erlangen. We had over thirty-five hundred soldiers in the brigade. It was huge. ... Later, I was transferred, to a place ... [called] Vilseck, which was much closer to the Czech border, and I served in a teaching assignment at the Combined Arms Training Center. I ran the company commander's course for all of US Army Europe. Every company commander, every first sergeant, every brigade, battalion commander that was going to command in Europe had to come

through that, through our department. ... My responsibility was the company commander [course]. At some point in time, I ended up probably meeting every company commander from all over Europe, including the nuclear weapons custodial detachments that were supporting NATO allies, like Holland, Germany, Greece, Italy. So, it was very interesting. Because we had such a good tour there--because, in the tank battalion, ... you were in the field a lot and you didn't have a lot of [free] time, but, while I was in the schoolhouse, ... since I was making up the schedules of the classes, I was able to several extended leaves.

SH: Were there any serious problems your unit encountered while you were in Germany?

TH: No. When I was in the Armor brigade, the Baader-Meinhof Gang [a German domestic terrorist group] was running around and people were scared about that. That was one of ... the extreme radical groups, very small, but ... everybody took it seriously. ... If they wanted to do something to the Americans, they could have done it. ...

SH: Did you have any interaction with other NATO forces?

TH: No, not really. ... When I was in the tank battalion, we had a partnership with a German *panzer* [armor]battalion, and we socialized with them occasionally, but never performed joint training with them.

EN: Did you do REFORGER? That is the joint NATO training you previously mentioned.

TH: ... I did REFORGER twice, once from the States, when I was in "The Big Red One" [First Infantry Division]. My second divisional tour [was] when I was the S-3 of a tank battalion at Fort Riley. ... The first time, my tank battalion, specifically, was assigned as observers/controllers for a deploying unit from Fort Riley, Kansas.

EN: Okay.

TH: So, we went ... to where they were drawing their prepositioned equipment, getting all set up, ready to deploy, and then, we stayed with them throughout the entire maneuver phase of the exercise. That's when the battalion commander got shot. I was away from the caserne when that happened. I was on REFORGER with the rest of our battalion.

EN: Is that an annual training event?

TH: Not anymore. It used to be ... annual, very expensive to do. ...

EN: Did you ever visit Berlin while you were in Germany?

TH: No. I could not go to Berlin because of my security clearance.

EN: Oh.

TH: ... You either had to take the duty train or you had [to] fly in. There was a duty train that ran from ... Frankfurt to Berlin. ... I got a chance to see quite a bit of Europe. I'd been to Belgium, and I learned to ski while I was in Germany. We went to Austria every year to ski. We took one vacation to Mallorca in Spain, one of the Balearic Islands, you know, the big islands in the Mediterranean, which was very nice. ... I really couldn't do that when I was in the tank unit. I did it when I was ... in the instructor assignment. ...

EN: According to the survey, you completed your master's degree while you were in Germany.

TH: Correct. That's why I extended my tour.

EN: Okay.

TH: Boston University had an overseas program where they brought faculty in. ... These professors took sabbaticals from their teaching assignments in the US, and they were located in different places in Germany. There was a graduate program, an MBA program, at Grafenwoehr, which was nearby. Graf is the big training area for all of Europe, where all the armor units and all the field artillery units go to shoot qualification every year. BU had a resident center at Grafenwoehr. They were very good professors, I mean, all those guys had PhDs. It was a good program, very much math-oriented. I did well. I'd taken the ... the GRE [Graduate Record Exam]. ...

EN: GREs.

TH: No, it was actually the ATGSB, The Advanced Test for the Graduate Study of Business, which was different than the GRE. I took the ATGSB ... and it was amazing. I scored very high, and I'd been out of college for almost ten years. I did very well. I did much better in graduate school than I did at Rutgers. [laughter] ...

SH: You had a little incentive there.

TH: "As" at Rutgers were very few and far between. If you got "Cs" and "Bs," man, you were happy when I was at Rutgers. There were relatively few people who made the dean's list then.

EN: I have had professors talk about the differences between a college education then and a college education now.

TH: Yes.

SH: Yes.

EN: They say that the standards were much higher then and that most people got "Cs." It is the way it is supposed to be, according to them.

TH: Yes, not everybody can be an "A" student.

EN: Yes.

TH: ... I was in classes at Rutgers where there was one "A" given out. The rest were "Bs," "Cs" and "Ds" and "Fs." People got "5s." The student I was telling you about before, I won't say his name, failed a required economics class, second semester, senior year. He needed that course to graduate, because it was part of the major and he needed, you know, "X" number of credits in the major. ... That guy ended up not graduating with us. He had to go to summer school for another course. I forgot what he took, because summer school doesn't give you a lot of the junior and senior level courses.

SH: After Germany, where did you go?

TH: Okay, from Germany, ... we went to the extreme opposite end of the world, went to El Paso, Texas, went to Fort Bliss. I spent almost four years at Fort Bliss. So, we went from beautiful, green Bavaria to the desert, the American desert.

EN: We withdrew from Vietnam while you were in Germany.

TH: Yes.

EN: How did you feel about the withdrawal?

SH: Good question.

TH: Not a big deal. It was time to get out. We started winding down in the early 1970s.

EN: No.

TH: No. ... When you're in Germany, you have limited access to information. You have access to the *Stars and Stripes*, and that's ... the military newspaper. For the last two years, we lived on the economy. All you got was a few German TV channels, and I do pretty well in German. We go to Germany and Austria to ski and I get along real well, and I can read a lot of German. I can understand most of it, too. ... I think it's probably interesting for you to ask these questions sitting here, but ... we didn't talk a lot about that kind of stuff.

EN: You did not talk about the fall of Saigon to the North Vietnamese Army in 1975.

TH: I really don't remember it. Maybe we did, but don't forget, the wind down took years to accomplish. We started pulling troops out--[if] you remember, I told you I was on orders for a second tour, [but] never went, I was supposed to go in 1971 and they were already starting to pull back. Nixon pulled the troops out. ... The last thing ... that's always remembered is the famous shots of the helicopter lifting off from the US Embassy in Saigon. Interesting story, one of my War College classmates was on that last helicopter.

EN: You went to the War College later in your career.

TH: He was a full colonel at the time, when he was in the War College, and he was MI [military intelligence] branch. He was assigned to the embassy and he was on that last helicopter.

EN: Wow.

TH: ... When you had the people, you know, literally hanging off the skids and dropping off, yes.

EN: Did you care about President Nixon's resignation from office and the Watergate Affair?

TH: When did he resign, '74, something like that?

EN: I did not write down the date that Nixon left office. [Editor's Note: President Richard M. Nixon resigned from office on August 9, 1974, in response to the Watergate Affair].

TH: I think it was '74.

SH: I think so.

EN: '74, yes.

SH: Ford is only in office for a short period of time.

TH: Again, that was probably discussed, but probably not a great deal. One of the things that happens is, ... and you're going to find that out--well, maybe you won't, because you've got cell phones [laughter]--when we went to the field for thirty days, ... you had no contact with the real world, zero. You didn't come home, there was no TV or radio, you didn't go take a shower, you didn't have many hot meals, you didn't see your wife, you didn't see your children--even if you were only ten miles away, like we were at Fort Riley. We spent ten days out of every month in the field, and you could see the lights of main post off in the distance. ... The only guy that went back to the rear was the adjutant or the PSNCO [personnel staff noncommissioned officer], and he went back to pick up the mail and to pick up and ... deliver distribution. The entire battalion was in the field. We had some soldiers that were sick and some caretakers and a few others, [who stayed], because you locked the motor pools and you still had to have some sort of guards on the barracks, but you basically locked up the barracks when we left. I mean, we banded wall-lockers, with steel material, so [that] you couldn't break into them.

EN: Wow.

TH: I mean, you'd have to physically cut the bands off, ... because locks can be broken real easy.

EN: Sure.

TH: We banded the ... wall lockers in the barracks.

EN: Fair enough.

TH: Yes. So, the answer is, if there was discussion, it was probably minimal and depending, again, [on] where we were and what was going on. ... You read about it in the paper. ... Plus, you didn't have all these pundits and all these idiots on TV yakking about it, constantly with their own opinions and who have no clue what they're talking about anyway. ... All they want to do is excite people. ...

SH: When you were in Vietnam, did you have an opinion of General William Westmoreland? Did you ever see Westmoreland while you were there?

TH: No. We didn't see any of those senior people.

SH: I just thought I would ask.

TH: ... You know, that's like saying "Fritz Kroesen, did you ever see him?" no. [laughter] ... The entire time I was in Germany, I saw the CINCUSAREUR twice [Commander in Chief, United States Army Europe]. I was invited, as a company commander, to represent the 1st Armored Division and meet with the CINC [pronounced "sync"]. I had to travel to Heidelberg, and they put me up overnight. I attended a meeting, because he wanted to talk to company commanders, the people from the field, "Doing the real job," as he called it. ... When you're a junior officer or when you're an enlisted man, unless you're in the headquarters of a high-ranking officer, you very rarely see senior officers. An example, at Fort Riley, we had fifteen thousand soldiers on post. We had a two-star general, a one-star general, and we had two brigade commanders who were full colonels. We also had the division support commander, who was a full colonel, we had the post hospital commander--who you would never see anyway--he was a full colonel, and we had a separate engineer brigade--commanded by a full colonel. And we had the garrison commander, who was also a full colonel, ... so, seven or eight really senior officers. As a major, I would see the brigade commander a couple times a month. If he came out to one of our units that was training and I happened to be there, I would see him, or if somebody would say, "Hey, the Brigade Commander's coming out." One of his policies was, "I don't want a dog-and-pony show. I just show up." He would fly in with his helicopter or arrive in with his jeep. ... He didn't want people to be expecting him. So, he doesn't tell anybody where he's going, he would drive around and go and look at "targets of opportunity," as he called it. Now, if things were messed up, then you'd hear about it, and if it was really bad, then the Battalion Commander, the S-3, would have to go out and tank corrective action. But dealing with senior officers is very rare.

SH: Okay.

EN: When did you get promoted to major?

TH: I got promoted to major when I was at the Air Defense School at Fort Bliss.

EN: What were you doing at Fort Bliss?

TH: It was an interesting assignment. I came out of Germany, and I thought I was going to go to the Second Armored Cav Regiment. The Second ACR was stationed at Fort Bliss, all three squadrons, and, when I got to the post, I was immediately assigned as the Armor instructor at the Air Defense School. For the next three-and-a-half years, I spent [them] in the Tactics Department of the Air Defense School. The first year I was there, I taught combined arms and staff subjects to ... the basic and the advanced officer courses. After one year as an instructor, ... I got promoted to major. They made me the department operations officer, which was an ... Air Defense officer major's position. I was responsible for all the administration. I was also responsible for "the cage," which was the secure area where classified instruction was taught. Many Air Defense subjects were classified ... because of the Nike Hawk and Nike Hercules systems. [They] had nuclear missions. I had a bunch of people in there. I also had responsibility for all the academic records and I had administrative people to do that for me. ... Then, the last year I was there, my boss, who was the deputy director of the tactics department and who was an Air Defense lieutenant colonel retired. The department director was a terrific boss, a really great guy--the department director went to the director of instruction and said, "I want Ted to be my deputy." So, for the last year I was in the Tactics Department, I was an Armor major filling an Air Defense lieutenant colonel's slot. [laughter]

EN: How did you get assigned to Fort Bliss, being that you were an Armor officer?

TH: I was assigned to Fort Bliss from Germany, and, when I got to the post, I thought I was going to go to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. They looked at my record and said, "You've got enough time in units," and they needed a combat arms instructor. See, in the school table of distribution allowances (TDA), we had an Infantry instructor, an Armor instructor, a Field Artillery instructor, an Engineer, and a Chemical instructor. So, that was part of the teaching package. Because all the rest of the instructors were Air Defenders, they were teaching the weapons systems and tactics that the officers needed to learn. That's how I got involved. When I arrived on post, there was a need, there was an opening, and that's where they assigned me. It was in a captain's position, an Armor captain's slot.

SH: In 1981, you join the New Jersey National Guard.

TH: ... After I left Bliss, I went ... back to Fort Riley and was the operations officer (S3) of a tank battalion there. I spent another eighteen months at Riley, and then left active duty and came in the Guard. I spent the rest of my military career in the New Jersey Army National Guard. Now, when I joined the Guard, I was already fairly senior in grade.

EN: What made you want to join the Guard in 1981? Why did you switch from active duty to the National Guard?

TH: Well, we had some issues with the family. We ended up deciding that it would be best to leave, but I didn't want to give up my time in the Army. I almost stayed on in Kansas, went for an interview and was accepted for a job in Kansas. But I said, "You know what? This is a small state. What happens when you get higher and higher in grade? There's less and less room," because the Kansas National Guard was small. New Jersey had a division. At the time, we had the 50th Armored Division. ... So, I said to my wife, "Do you want to go back to Jersey?" and she said, "Well, the family is there." My mom was in New Jersey and her folks were living in Vermont. So, ... I wrote a letter, or I called somebody, I guess, and they were excited I was going to New Jersey. ... I got the job as the S-3 of an armor brigade, which, at the time, was the largest brigade in the New Jersey Guard. I had already been an S-3 before then, on active duty. ... Most of the officers that were in the Guard did not have the experience that I had being on active duty. It all worked out for the best, because I was able to stay much longer. I would have been gone out of the Army a lot sooner, because of all the grade limitations. So, I ended up staying in the Guard and was able to have a terrific thirty-three-year military career.

SH: Where did your unit train?

TH: ... Initially, I spent four years in Cherry Hill, and then, ... after I got promoted to lieutenant colonel, I spent the ... last fourteen years ... in Lawrenceville.

SH: Okay.

TH: I was commuting from Marlton every day up to Lawrenceville, eighty-four miles round-trip. Eric knows how far it is, because he's assigned up there, right?

EN: That is where I have been drilling for the past six years.

TH: So, I was up at the headquarters. Strange as it seems, the year after I retired, they moved the whole shooting match down to Fort Dix, which would have been about half the distance than what I'd been commuting all those years. [laughter]

EN: The 50th Brigade went back, of course.

TH: ... I had several great assignments. I spent a stint as the State Army comptroller, and then, I became the training officer for the state. When I was promoted to full colonel, I became the director of plans, operations and training and intelligence, and I did that job for ... over five years. The last four, four-and-a-half years, I was the state comptroller. I was the money manager. When I retired at age 55, I had a chance to go to work. I had a couple of job offers, ... but never really pursued any of them and, even though I took a big cut in pay, I was able to live well. So, it all worked out.

SH: You mentioned earlier about still being involved at Rutgers. Do you want to talk briefly about your involvement before we end the interview?

TH: Sure. When I came back to Jersey, ... for all these years, and I kept in contact with fraternity brothers and other classmates. Some of them had been in the military, but a bunch of them had not served, but we remained best friends. When I came back to New Jersey, the first thing I started doing was organizing homecoming get-togethers. ... I'd bring eighteen, twenty, twenty-four, twenty-five people together and we'd all have a great time at homecoming. That went on for many years. We became season ticketholders for football in 1989, a couple of years before the new stadium was built, and, as luck would have it, I ended up getting four seats on the fifty-yard line.

SH: Oh, my Lord.

TH: ... After the new stadium was built, I retained my four season tickets on the fifty-yard line. So, sadly enough, I had to curtail Homecoming. We can't do the homecoming anymore, because there's no tickets available anymore for the people that want to come to the games, unless they want to pay large amounts of money. ... Since that time, I've reconnected with some additional fraternity brothers, classmates, and we now go to all the bowl games together as a group. The first one we went to was in Phoenix. We went with twenty people to Phoenix. ... [Editor's Note: On December 27, 2005, the Rutgers University Football Team played Arizona State at the Insight Bowl in Phoenix, Arizona, losing the game 45-40.]

SH: Really?

TH: Yes, it was pretty nice. People from as far away as Anchorage, Alaska, came down to join us in Phoenix. ...

SH: Perfect time to come from Anchorage to Arizona.

TH: Then our class started having their reunions. The Foundation was soliciting me for money and I was giving money to the school, nominal amounts, and I forgot when it was, the twentieth or twenty-fifth reunion, I went to one of the five-year reunions and a small number of people showed up. ... Then, the next five years went by and I went back again and there was an election, [laughter] and so, the class president said, "I'm not doing this anymore." He'd been president since we graduated, and so, somebody said that I'd been very active in organizing the reunion, helping the planning of it, so, they said, "Hey, Ted, you want to do that?" I said, "Okay," and I got elected president, and here it is, fifteen years later, and I'm still class president. ... I'm still very active. I was very active with the fundraising campaigns of the last two major reunions' fundraising initiatives and meeting with people here from the Rutgers Foundation, but I come up to campus a lot of activities. You asked me earlier ... about Jack Jacobs. We never ran into each other on active duty. I knew that he'd been awarded the Medal of Honor. I think he only has twenty-two years of active duty and then retired and went into private enterprise, but never ran into him. He was Infantry Branch. He went to graduate school, then, taught at West Point for three years. He went to the National War College. I went to the Army War College. Jack was in the Infantry and because of his assignments we never ran into each other. A couple years ago, somebody had asked him to be on the class fundraising committee and he came to one or two meetings, and that's the first time I had seen him since graduation. We ended up chatting

for about an hour before one of the meetings. We got there early and we had a chance to talk and catch up a little bit, ... but I knew him all four years when I was here at Rutgers from ROTC and being in the Ranger Company

SH: Thank you so much for talking to us and staying involved with Rutgers. Any other questions, Eric?

EN: I wanted to ask one more thing.

TH: Okay.

EN: Over your service career in both the Army and the National Guard, what were the major changes in the Armed Forces you noticed with the end of the Cold War?

TH: Well, I was not only in the National Guard, but I also attended the Army War College. You get a lot more involved with that, plus, the fact that I became a fairly senior officer during all that time. It gives me a pretty good perspective. At the end of the Cold War, I had a chance to go to Europe on a senior officer orientation tour for the Guard. It was a really nice perk, and they flew us--I think the group consisted of sixteen generals and, I think, ten colonels that went on this trip--we had our own plane. We traveled to Belgium, Germany, Norway, England. It was really a fascinating experience. One of the things we were supposed to do on the trip was to go to the [Berlin] Wall, but the Wall had come down that previous year. We never went to the Wall. Ask me when you come over, [Eric], our tour escort officer, who was the National Guard liaison officer to US Army Europe, who was with us the whole time we were in Europe, gave all of us pieces of concrete and wire from the Berlin Wall. I still have that in an envelope someplace, stashed away in my memorabilia. A real piece of the Berlin Wall. [laughter] ...

EN: It is a shame that you never visited while you were in Germany.

TH: I'd like to go now, but it's horribly expensive. I go to Europe a lot, so, I know what things cost and it's a [lot]. ... We were in Europe, in Italy, in January, and I was in Belgium twice last year and Austria last year. So, it's tough to go everywhere. You get a cup of coffee and it's four dollars, and we have a beer, it's seven-fifty, four or five Euros. So, it's tough, but highlights, I think the Berlin Wall coming down and the massive change in US Army Europe. US Army Europe is a shell of its former self. A lot of US installations have been turned back to the Germans. [In] some cases, the German Army actually took them over; but [in] most cases, they became civilian facilities. All our housing that we turned back, became housing for the Germans, and those were great apartments. The German apartments tend to be small and our quarters were big. So, that was a big change. I've had a chance to fly "space-available" to Europe. I've flown a couple times from ... Dover Air Force Base to Ramstein Air Force Base, because I can fly for free, as a retiree and on a space-available basis. ... I've seen Germany, at least pieces of Germany. Each time I went to Belgium, [I] rented a car in Germany, drove to Belgium, and then, came back, and then, flew back home from there. ... There's a lot less troop involvement there now. Two years ago, or a year-and-a-half ago, we turned back half of the Frankfurt Airport to the Germans, which they'd been after for ... twenty-five or thirty years.

There was some cost to them, of course. They ended up having to pay large sums for improvements to Ramstein and Spangdahlem Airbases. That's a political negotiation that took place. [laughter] ... At one point, we controlled one-half of the airport, Frankfurt, the big aerial port of embarkation/debarkation for anybody coming in and out of USAREUR.

The other big change was ... going to VOLAR, the all-volunteer Army. That was a huge change, and I experienced that back in the '70s. The quality of ... recruits coming in was much better.

SH: Better or worse?

TH: It was better. I don't know what it is now, because they've again relaxed the standards because of the wars. They're allowing a lot more of the lower mental categories to come into the service. They were also giving waivers for those without high school diplomas. Under VOLAR, you had to be a high school grad to enlist. They're also forgiving minor convictions. ... The S-2s track that kind of stuff, at the battalion level, anyway. I also saw a lot of modernization. ...

EN: What did you think of the facilities?

TH: The facilities and improvements on most of the active duty installations are magnificent. I mean, the airbases in Europe are first class. ... The sky seems to be the limit and there's a lot of money available right now, because of the war, ... to do things, some of them, maybe, not all in the best interest of the service. ...

EN: As an Armor officer, what did you think when the Army adopted the M1 Abrams [tank]?

TH: It was excellent. They did the desert test of the M1 while I was at [Fort] Bliss. The Abrams tank has been in the pipeline since the late '70s. We did the desert test at Bliss in 1978-79. One of the squadrons of the Third ACR was equipped with Abrams tanks, and they basically ran one squadron equipped with M60A1s ... against the M1 squadron for the test, to do the comparison for the desert-testing phase. ... When the M1 was being developed, the Cold War was still very active and we were not thinking that we're going to have to take on, basically, guerilla armies. ... The army that they're facing in Iraq and Afghanistan--in Iraq, more so--is totally different than what we had in Vietnam. Vietnam was different. I think it's tough being a soldier in the Army today, especially those that are frequently deployed. I talk to soldiers regularly that have been deployed, and it's scary. There's no place safe they can go. The second they leave their compounds, they are vulnerable to attack. That's in Afghanistan, that's in Iraq. You never know when it's going to come, you know. It's not like a conventional enemy.

SH: Anything else? Unless you have some great advice for Eric, knowing that he is going to be deployed.

TH: Yes, he's going to be good. Eric will be a fine officer. He's going to do a great job.

SH: Okay.

TH: Hopefully, by the time he gets out of all his training, the wars will be over.

EN: Agreed.

TH: ... We've got a NJ Guard brigade deploying in June.

SH: I was just going to say, maybe we should finish the interview and talk afterwards.

TH: ... *Ciao, arrivederci.* [laughter]

SH: Thank you so much.

TH: Good-bye.

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

Reviewed by Edwin J. Robinson 1/12/2011

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 8/1/2011

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 8/9/2011

Reviewed by Theo F. Hardies 2/13/2012