

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEO INGLESBY

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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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Leo Inglesby on April 19, 2002 in Silver Springs, Maryland, conducted by Shaun Illingworth and ...

Jonathan Gurstelle: Jonathan Gurstelle. Mr. Inglesby, can you tell us a little bit about of your family?

Leo Inglesby: Born in Philadelphia, one of two boys, and six girls, and my father died when I was quite young, and, fortunately, my mother had a trade that she could go to, she was a chocolate coater, and that income from her employment got me up to high school, anyway. Then almost, shortly after high school, I was dragooned into the Army, not voluntarily believe me, and then in the Army ... peacetime Army, back in the early, the draft was in 1941, I think, that was a peacetime Army and you look forward to a year of dull Army activity, and they were just organizing the parachute troops then. It looked like an adventure, so I go out there to join the parachutes and enjoyed that thoroughly, and then war broke out. We went overseas quite rapidly, late '42, and went to England. In England, we participated in the invasion of North Africa, and invaded Oran, Youks les Bain, I think, it's covered in my book there. The details are there ... then North Africa into Italy. We didn't do Sicily ... went to Italy, fought there, in the mountains, fought in the Anzio beachhead, where I was pretty seriously wounded, and came back from there [*A Corporal Once*]... you know, convalescence, and all that stuff. Finally, got out of the Army and the first objective I set was go to college, and as I told you beforehand, I tried the University of Pennsylvania. They had made no preparations for this numerous influx of young men coming out of the Army, and it's business as usual at the University of Pennsylvania, and they had so many people in the freshman class, and that was all. I applied, and I had to wait until next February, and I didn't want to wait until next February, so I went to a small school in Philadelphia called the La Salle College, which is now La Salle University, I might add. I enjoyed La Salle, four years, majored in Economics, and graduated in 1948 ... and there at La Salle, I saw this floater that was distributed, looking for applicants for an assistanceship program at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, and applied and successfully was accepted. ... Met Andrew Tulley, who was the director, enormously popular, a wonderful guy who, almost upon my arrival, was killed in a horrible accident, and passed the reins over to (Brodus?) Mitchell. But the effective administration was by Grace (Castelanski?), a brilliant lady, and I had four colleagues, also assistants, and worked with Dr. Mason Gross, Simon (Lapada?), Ken (Kohara?), whose since has published a couple of textbooks ... and a very impressive faculty, very impressive experience I had at Rutgers. Happy memories there. In the meantime, I met a delightful young lady, Eileen Kennedy, and this is part of my graduation in La Salle, and we mutually agreed that we'd put off our wedding until graduation from Rutgers, and we did. We married in 1949. Since then, we've had five children, two boys and three girls. They are all very successful. Unfortunately, three of them are lawyers, and one is a nurse ... oh, one is a nurse-midwife, that's right, and one is very personable and a very successful car salesman, so, I'm very happy with my family and the fourteen grandchildren they've given us. My professional life has been mostly with the Internal Revenue Service, which, after graduation from Rutgers and a brief stint with the United States Civil Service Commission, I went with the Internal Revenue Service, first as, about a grade eleven, something like that, and subsequently into the position Director of Facilities for the entire service, which was a rather heavy, time consuming job, which I enjoyed thoroughly. Anything that made IRS move was in my shop. I had very bright and able junior members of the staff. I stayed with IRS until, into my developing years, and after some thirty

years I finally said, “Enough,” and retired therefrom. Since then, we’ve moved into what you see, and happy ever since. Does that cover it?

JG: In your book you said that your father and your grandfather served in the military. Can you tell us a little bit about them?

LI: Well, both my grandfathers were in the Civil War, okay, and my father’s father had a very rough time indeed. He was shot in the bowels at Chancellorsville, and that was supposed to be the end, and got picked up by the Confederates. He was treated there and was turned over to the Union people at Pearl, Maryland, and recovered. He got better, was assigned to the Western Sector, I guess, under Grant, and finally wounded again at the Battle of Peach Tree Creek in Atlanta, wounded in the hand. The other grandfather, I don’t know too much about him. I know he was in the Civil War, but my father was in the Spanish-American War, and he was, as far as Tampa, Florida, and apparently, Tampa still today ... I mean that Florida, still today, has some, but not as much as then, but is subject to Malaria, and he contracted malaria which weakened him for his entire life, and he finally died at age fifty-four from repercussions of that disease.

SI: Had your family always lived in the Philadelphia area?

LI: Yes, yes. They’re Philadelphians born and bred. As a matter-of-fact, the first thing those breeds came from England, about 1604, no, 1804, right after the [American] Revolution, upon landing, the progenitor, oldest son, Thomas, disappeared and never was found, but then they stayed. They’re pretty famous in New Jersey, not famous, but very evident in New Jersey. They have a very, three or four of them were in funeral directing business in the Merchantville, Mt. Holly area, around that area, they are my cousins. They are lawyers, mayors, and things like that over there.

SI: Which neighborhood did you grow up in Philadelphia?

LI: West Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, in the area adjacent to the University of Pennsylvania. That’s why my first inclination was to go to Penn, because we had a lot of natural, you know, feeling, for the University. That’s why I was so disgusted with them. They wouldn’t accept me, jerks.

SI: What was your neighborhood like? Was it mostly first generation Americans?

LI: Oh, yeah, mostly. Hardworking people, generally. Salt of the earth, as they call them.

JG: What did your parents do for a living?

LI: My father worked for the Atlantic Refining Company, but, as I said, he unfortunately died in 1934 from, again, the consequences of malaria. My mother, fortunately, had a trade that she went to, she was a chocolate coater, and that supported our family, and got us well along, until the Army claimed me.

JG: You said you had a lot of brothers and sisters, were you close to all of them when you were growing up?

LI: Oh, yes, every one of them. I still have one sister. She's eighty-seven now, and a delightful person.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: You were going to tell us how you became a paratrooper.

LI: Well, I was in the Army, and they just extended it from the year that they initially promised until the duration of the emergency. No war had been declared yet, and this looked to be an unending problem with me of being in the Army which I despised, and these three very smart looking sergeants came looking for volunteers to the paratroops, in smart-looking uniforms, fifty dollars extra a month, wow.

JG: How much had the pay been?

LI: Well, we were only paid twenty-one dollars then, but \$6.50 less for insurance, \$2.50 for insurance, then I had twelve or thirteen dollars left, and can't do much planning on thirteen dollars a month, so with that fifty dollars, it was the solution to all my problems, so I joined. That was it.

LI Jr: What was the neatest thing about their uniforms?

LI: We wear natty uniforms, of course, we had a little paratroop emblem up here, you know. very sexy looking.

LIJ: What were the shoes like?

LI: Oh, and we had these high boots, you know, like this, vividly polished, whew, boy ... just enough to just enough to turn the eighteen year old . . .

LIJ: Those boots, what was it like for you, a paratrooper, if you ever saw anyone else not a paratrooper with those boots?

LI: Well, they provoked some resentment among other Army types. They think that we declared ourselves different. ... It will happen though, consequences, sometimes differences of opinion would ensue. Frequently, we could resort to violence. But, happily, I'm the more peaceful type, would never have an argument, hardly ever.

LIJ: If these paratroopers saw someone without paratrooper wings walking around any of the bases here in the States or in Europe, very often those people would find themselves knocked out of their boots.

LI: They were exclusively to be worn by paratroopers. Have you been in the Army?

JG: No.

LI: Do you plan to go in the Army? Don't. You won't like it, coming from your environment now.

LIJ: When you were drafted or when you went into the paratroopers, you were in the first outfit, weren't you?

LI: Yeah, the first one. We were the first battalion organized.

LIJ: What was that?

LI: First called 504<sup>th</sup> and then later became 509<sup>th</sup> and we were the first ones overseas. First ones into action and everything else.

LIJ: How did you get over to Europe?

LI: We went over in the *Queen Elizabeth*, a brand new ship at that time. We were the only combat troops on board, because the rest were all ... well, the books says ... it's pretty much in the book.

LIJ: The rest were what? Paying customers?

LI: No, no civilians at all.

SI: Was the First Division on that voyage?

LI: No.

SI: No?

LI: The First Division didn't come over ... they came over with the invasion of North Africa. I think the First Division landed in Casablanca. They were at Port Lyautey, right outside Casablanca. The Ninth Division and others.

SI: We want to step back and ask a few more questions from before the war.

LI: Sure, sure.

SI: What were your elementary school and your high school days like? Which schools did you go to?

LI: Well, parochial school all the way through; Good Shepherd Grammar School in West Philadelphia; West Philadelphia Boys Catholic High School, and from there I intended to go to the University of Pennsylvania. But, because of the block that ensued, because of, full up, bad

planning on their part, I went to La Salle. I thoroughly enjoyed that. Then from La Salle I went into Rutgers.

SI: What were your favorite subjects in grammar school and high school?

LI: English, all the way through, I'm sure. I enjoyed English. It was the one that was easiest to me. I never had any problems writing compositions, for example, and I was always biased to teachers in my papers. Then, I got some interest in mathematics in college, enough to get interested in statistics, and I don't consider statistics sophisticated math, but interesting ... when I was teaching statistics, one student I had, at La Salle ... I taught at La Salle first for a couple of years and then, later, at the Agriculture and Technical College in North Carolina ... but I only had one student down there who would ... have you had statistics courses?

SI: No, actually I avoid them.

LI: You avoid them. Well, there's three areas of statistics, dispersion, and central tendency, and time-series. Dispersion is the interesting one. Dispersion, if the same repetitive task is done by a person or a number of persons, the results of the tests has what they call normal curve. You heard of normal curve, right? Right in the centers, most of them, in extreme ends in this and in that, and I remember, I had this one student who had to inspect, his job was to inspect completed work, and he'd come up with an arbitrary formula for reviewing the results. It was very satisfying to me as a teacher for him to come and tell me this is. . . He did this at work and this is what he found out, that he could accept them up to this point, but on this one he couldn't accept them and they wouldn't make it, and he did this all statistically He thanked me for it. Quite rewarding as a teacher to get that kind of reaction.

SI: It sounds like you used some of this statistical interest or training when you were a time study man before the war?

LI: A little bit. I forgot about that. Before the war, yes, I got a job as a timekeeper at La Salle, at the J.T. Bill Corporation in Philadelphia, and they offered that night course there, taught by a teacher from Drexel in time study, and I kinda enjoyed that ... After that, there was an ad in the paper for a time study man at this aircraft factory in Bristol, Pennsylvania. I got that job, and before you know it, I was the actual time study man doing the job, and it was great, great job. You know what time study is?

JG: No, I don't.

LI: If you got a job like putting that box together, you see, cutting it up, and I time you for how long it took you to cut it, and timing how many seconds I'd also rate your efficiency, like were you operating at 100 percent, sixty percent, forty percent. You know, if you're goofing off, down around thirty ... but this is for each individual operation, and you have a time for constructing that box, you see, and that would be the standard. Whatever standard, that was set. That's time study in a nutshell, okay? We did this at the aircraft factory in Pennsylvania, Fleet Wings. I did a few studies up there too, which were very beneficial. They had a contract with the French Air Force for bombers, French Air Force, which I don't think ever took off. Not

because of me, you understand, but because of the demise of the French Air Force, but anyway, and that was the limit of my experience at time study, but I thoroughly enjoyed it.

SI: Were you able to tell, when you were working for Fleet Wings, whether production was being increased in preparation for the war?

LI: Absolutely, absolutely, yes. We worked around the clock to meet these ... Of course, French, money is no object. It all comes from Uncle Sam, anyway. I could work as many hours as I wanted.

SI: What kind of planes were you working on?

LI: They were doing bombers, bombers, yeah.

SI: Do you remember the specific type?

LI: No. I worked on ailerons, control surfaces mainly, ailerons, rudders, tabs, stuff like that.

SI: How did the great depression affect your family and yourself?

LI: Well, my dad chose a very bad time to die, 1934. It could hardly been worse. It's a very interesting story. My mother says we had nothing when he died, had actually nothing. It is providential, really, my mother had a dream and she, from a dream of my uncle who said to go see such and such a person, my mother went to see such and such a person, and she said that in her brother's candy company in Philadelphia, they were looking for chocolate coaters, and that was what she had done as a girl before she got married. She made very good money for that time. She'd make like twenty-six dollars a week, which is very good. That got ... and, of course, my sisters and my brother was working, too. That got us along. So, it was tough times from 1934 on.

SI: What kind of job did you have during that period?

LI: I was in high school, mostly. Oh, yeah, and then, as I said, I got out in 1938, I graduated from high school. I got a job, first at ten dollars a week. It was a lousy job. I only had that job for about three months, and then I got this job at Brill's, as a timekeeper, sixteen dollars a week, very good. Then as a time study man, twenty-six dollars a week. From there I was drafted. At twenty-six dollars a week you're living in the lap of luxury.

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

LI: He was a saint. Does that cover it?

JG: Were your parents Democrats?

LI: Absolutely, as was everybody else in that part of the city, for economic reasons mainly.

LIJ: What was it like prior to FDR?

LI: Prior to FDR was Herbert Hoover, a man of no noticeable ability. Total inability to confront the situation he was faced with in 1928. He was a total loss as a president. I don't see if he deserves any honor at all.

LIJ: What was it like when FDR first became a president?

LI: Revolutionary, really. People expected great things of him, and he delivered great things, too. The Alphabet Parade was enormous, you know. This was totally unanticipated, at the federal level, for this whole parade of agencies, temporary agencies. Tennessee Valley Authority was a magnificent achievement for the Midwest. Farm acts and other acts.

SI: Did you see any of these programs at work in your neighborhood like the WPA or the CCC?

LI: Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely. So many people were absolutely dependent upon these forms of assistance, really, and we were not the poor area, but we were definitely middle-class to lower middle-class ... tough times.

SI: Growing up, were you ever in the Boy Scouts or anything like that?

LI: Yes, for a little while. I couldn't get involved with the major, you know, like camping. I couldn't do that. It was too much. Maybe buying uniforms, too.

Eileen Inglesby: Did you ever tell them about the trip coming home on the Red Cross ship when they wakened you out on the deck, when you were wakened at night they were shooting, and then when you wakened and looked around what all did you see?

LI: I don't remember that, hon.

EI: Yes, you do. Japanese. Japanese.

LI: Japanese?

EI: You were wounded and they were sending you home.

LIJ: When you woke up on the hospital ship and the fellows from the 442<sup>nd</sup> were all around you.

EI: Maybe they weren't Japanese. They had frosted toes, frosted feet.

LI: Oh, yeah, well, most of the fellows in the hospital ship with me were, a lot of them were frostbites, frozen feet, terrible. We spent a long time in the mountains in Italy by ...

LIJ: Venafro.

LI: Have you ever heard of Venafro? It's up in the Po Valley, no, not the Po Valley. Po Valley's north. This is below Rome, it's below Rome. The beginning is siege of Rome. My battalion was on left flank, the advancing Forty-fifth Division, coming up to Volturno, the Volturno River in the Volturno Valley, and we were in the mountains. Well, the Tenth Mountain Division was there, too, somewhere, but I don't know. We were in the mountains, too. They got all the credit, but we were up there, too. We all lost a lot of guys from frozen feet, because there's no way of keeping your feet from getting wet. No way to keep them warm. We had fifty percent casualties, about fifty percent casualties in the mountains, and most of them, as I said, were frozen feet. Happy I wasn't one of them there. I was later, at Anzio, I got hit.

SI: A lot of veterans and historians often compare the war in Italy to World War I, on the Western Front, where it was a lot of fighting for yards, because you couldn't bring in tanks or anything.

LI: Absolutely. You couldn't bring in tanks because it was mountains ... and it all had to be this hard, hand-to-hand fighting. We had to dislodge, fundamentally, physically, over mountains, dislodge these Germans from there. I survived that until I got to Anzio, where this shell fragment got me.

JG: Going back to your childhood, were your parents very religious?

LI: We're Catholics, and they call that religious.

SI: You said you went to parochial schools, did you go to church?

LI: Oh, yes, yes, absolutely, every Sunday.

EI: Your mother had been a Baptist.

LI: My mother had been Baptist before she got married but. . .

EI: She just loved the songs ...

LI: My father was quite religious, too. He'd spend every night saying his prayers.

SI: Were you able to do anything for recreation when you were a child?

LI: Oh, baseball everyday almost. We used to go over ...

EI: Tell him how much the movies cost.

LI: Six cents from Livingston. Tough.

LII: It's interesting. I had asked you one time what the greatest development that you think that you've seen in your life was and you told me the virtual eradication of polio. What was polio like?

LI: Polio is terrible. They used to close movies and close, tried to close supermarkets because of the ... well, they didn't have that many supermarkets, it probably just closed big department stores downtown, because of the fact that it was so readily acquired by kids. Everybody knew some child who had polio, and it was just a terrible affliction, because, you know, what it does to your limbs; your limbs just evaporate, really, under you.

LIJ: I remember growing up, a lot of older aunts and uncles with braces that had had polio. In your family, how many people were afflicted?

LI: No, we kind of survived, really. Oh, no, my one sister had somewhat slightly withered arms...

LIJ: What did your father do? Where did he work?

LI: My father worked at the Atlantic Refining Company was a still operator ... The crude used to be delivered right up to the Point Breeze in Philadelphia, Schuylkill River, and ... most of the derivatives come from there, mostly gasoline and kerosene, things like that ... big still. The process is just to take the good oil, boil it and at a certain temperature gasoline comes out, another temperature, kerosene, and other things. In the bottom is a residue, which they used that as a kind of substitute for coal.

LIJ: How much was he paid and how was he paid? Do you remember that?

LI: He got paid in gold. His salary was three twenties and one ten-eye gold piece. It was good money for two weeks, seventy dollars, good money. We lived rather well on it until he died in 1934. They had no social security then, of course, at that time, and when he died, that was it.

JG: After your father died, did you or any of your siblings get jobs to help the family?

LI: Ah, yes, all of us did. I worked for the bowling alley, pin boy. They didn't have pin setting machines then. We got rather adept at setting bowling pins, four cents a game. Big night was eighty-five cents.

EI: Tell them that story about Uncle Bill and your mother ... twenty-five dollars a month for this apartment, I mean for the house, for rent, you didn't have the rent, and your mother had a dream.

LI: Oh, yeah. That's how my mother got that job. She used to do it as a girl, and then she dreamed one night about my Uncle Bill. If there was anybody worse off than we were, it was my Uncle Bill, because he is severely handicapped and he said to go see such and such a lady, a friend of my mother's, and she saw such and such a lady, who suggested Linder Brothers Candy Company was looking for chocolate coaters. My mother got that job, twenty-six dollars a week, which was a god-send for us. It got me up through high school, anyway.

SI: Did you have to pay for school at that time, or was it covered by the church?

LI: Church covered it, mostly.

SI: Were you taught by a certain order like La Sallian Brothers?

LI: La Salle Christian Brothers. Brothers of Christian Schools, they called themselves. They're not priests, but they are parallel to nuns, okay.

SI: Oh, yes, I was taught by La Sallian Brothers.

LI: Were you really? La Sallian Brothers?

SI: Well, they're called Christian Brothers but they always say La Sallian Brothers.

LI: I didn't know that.

SI: They get confused with the Christian Brothers from Ireland, and they were started in France.

LI: Oh, yeah, they are Brothers in France. St. Jean Baptist de La Salle, yes.

SI: They make the brandy, too.

LI: Where did you go to school?

SI: It's called Christian Brothers Academy, in Lincroft, New Jersey.

LI: Where, in Lincroft, that's North Jersey, I guess?

SI: No, it's Monmouth County by Sandy Hook.

LI: Oh, Monmouth, down the coast, yeah. How about that.

SI: Whenever one was applying to college, they say, "Oh, you either go to La Salle or Manhattan." They always try to send us to Manhattan College.

LI: Well, Manhattan, yeah. Well, that's what I said, when Penn ranks on me, I went to see the assistant principal at West Catholic, where I had gone, and that was Christian Brothers, too, and he immediately suggested La Salle. Fortunately, I got in, because they were almost ready to close their doors, too, because of the influx of veterans coming in, and I just made it to get in under the wire.

LIJ: What was that like with all the veterans coming back after the war? Everybody was in college, what were the campuses like?

LI: Pretty good. Of course, it was naturally a community of interests there, with the backgrounds by most students, and the strangers there were those who were not the Army, the

young kids, you know, "they didn't know what the heck they were talking about, what do they know, they haven't been around," ... but they were all veterans, otherwise.

EI: I remember when the war ended, they signed the peace treaty with Japan, and, eventually, we were down at the beach, and got the word. You never saw so many people. The Atlantic City hotels, at that time, were converted into hospitals for the soldiers.

LI: Oh, yeah, I spent some time at Atlantic City Hospital, England General Hospital.

EI: You just couldn't believe it. Mob scene, everybody is kissing each other, running up and down.

LI: That was the day when peace was declared, yeah.

EI: There was a picture in *Life* magazine

LI: One of the hospitals was England General Hospital, which was the old ... two hotels they had taken over there, and it was a blast, oh, jeez. At this time I was able to hobble around, and girls were there by the score.

LIJ: How was it that you were wounded? What were you doing?

LI: It was on Anzio beachhead, and I was communications corporal, and shellfire had been coming intermittently and blew out one of our lines to our company headquarters ... all we had to pack it like that, because these are sound powered phones. I heard this shell coming out over there, I said, "It's too far away." It wasn't too far away, it hit me, and that was it. My ticket home.

SI: Just to talk about Anzio for a little bit. You weren't dropped on, you came in on LTIs, right?

LI: On LTIs, that's right.

SI: Were you on the first wave?

LI: Oh, yes, yes. The invasion was connected by ... one sector was a British division, and the rest was a group of the First Ranger Battalion, and us, and the Fourth Division. In other words, the First Ranger was a supplement of the First Division, I guess, it was the First Division. So, we landed on the southern sector, the British in the northern sector, virtually unopposed. Virtually unopposed, we caught them by surprise. Pardon me, hon?

EI: Did you tell them about being captured by the French?

LI: Don't like to talk about that. [laughter]

LIJ: Back to Anzio, you were unopposed. Why didn't they move on, what happened?

LI: Oh, because the Germans began to oppose them. They could see their position in Rome was threatened, so you come in there, pull a couple of divisions up to block us. They stopped us then, a stalemate for awhile.

SI: I was just curious, since you were an enlisted man, how much do they tell you about what the overall strategy was?

LI: No. Nothing. You just had to divine this yourself. You can see it's obvious all around you what was happening. We knew where the Forty-fifth Division was. We knew that the British were here. We knew the Rangers were here, too, so all these things, almost by osmosis, but you know it, and you know what the objective is, too. You know why the Germans are opposed, just because Rome's sitting there just like a great big plum. Eventually, their lines to the south of us, called the so-called Gotlieb Line, crumbled under the pressure from the Americans, and when that crumbled, the Germans were outflanked, so they just took off and went north.

SI: A lot of the people that we talked to who were at Anzio talked about the artillery being very heavily used.

LI: And very effective, yes. They were just throwing it in at us, you see. You dug deep. You had one guy, gets ahold of me, "You go any deeper, and they'll drop you as a deserter."

EI: What was that?

LII: He said one of his colleagues dug his whole so deep, the guy said if you dig it any deeper, you'll be a deserter.

EI: Do you think it was funny, about being the only American prisoners of war of the French?

LI: Well, what happened, on the flight down from England, we were supposed to take, our objective was Tafaroui airport, outside of Oran, and our pilot got lost. It happens a lot with the Air Force, because these are quickie graduations from navigation school. He knew he was in Africa because of the Sahara Desert, and all that, and he told us, "You got to jump out of here because I'm running out of gas ..." We're just about, when we're ready to crash, he said, "Hold it." We looked out there and there was this fortress, like, right out of *Laurel and Hardy*, these fortresses. You ever see *Laurel and Hardy* comics? We landed there and we were taken prisoner by the French for less than a week or so, because by that time, their forces had landed at Algiers and at Casablanca, and the French were anxious to surrender to us anyway, rather than to the Germans, so they did. They yielded to us and freed us ... got a hundred gallon drum of gasoline dug up for us, we flew out of there. But, I was a prisoner of war for four or five days, something like that.

SI: How were you received by the French? Were they good toward you?

LI: Wonderful, wonderful. Particularly the American cigarettes, wow. They never had it so good. They plied us with their red wine, that was delicious. It wasn't really much of a ... it wasn't what you call a rigorous period.

SI: I thought it was funny reading your book that they thought, the French thought one of the men in your unit was Caesar Romero!

LI: Henry Wilburn. "Artiste American." Henry Wilburn, yeah. I still write to his wife every once in awhile. He's passed on, Artiste American.

SI: I got the impression from reading your account that, were any of your unit able to make it to the airport or were they all blown off course?

LI: Oh, yes, yes. Well, we had twenty-four planeloads, okay, two went into Spanish Morocco. We went into Algiers, deep into Algeria, but the rest of them landed, they dropped down, and it was a very perfuncturous fight at best, because as I said, the French were anxious to ... and, I think, there was not much of an exchange of fire, but they yielded to us and gave the signal to our Air Force come on in, "The airports are yours, help yourselves." So, it was a factor in the easy occupation of North Africa. The fight was the French Navy at Port Lyautey, which is north of, right adjacent to Casablanca ... and the battleship *Jean Bart*, pride of the French fleet, navy, we had to sink it, with considerable loss of life of French sailors. It was just a pity, but, as I say, Casablanca and Algiers surrendered rather rapidly to us.

LII: The first American killed in Europe was from your battalion.

LI: Yeah, his name was John McCall, a paratrooper. He was killed at Oran. As I said, there was some fighting there, he was killed, and now they have a camp down at the paratroop training center, North Carolina, called Fort McCall, Camp McCall, Fort McCall, something like that, named after him ... John McCall. He wasn't in my company, another company.

SI: You were in England for a few months before jumping into North Africa. How were you trained in England? Was it just building on your training in the States?

LI: Oh, yes, continuation, the same thing. Unit tactics, principally, long marches, sessions of long marches. Once they had a 40-mile march, all packs, all ammunitions, all weapons, forty miles, it was terrible. A lot of guys didn't quite make it, and a lot of us did, and we were then called the winners and those guys are losers ... and we got to Ilfracombe ... a beautiful time there at Ilfracombe. It was a little port on the Bristol Channel, a little, not a port, a resort on the Bristol Channel ... and we who had made it, we had our nights off, but the dropouts every night had to march again. So, we had a good time. I met a girl there, she was a very pretty little English girl whom I, I only had like a couple of nights there. I would go walking with her, that's all you could do there, and later on, when I got back to our base in Chilton Foliat, I went to visit her at her family home down Kingston-on-Thames, right outside of London, a couple of times, very hospitable, very nice. All we did was visit Hampton Court. Hampton Court was the residence of Henry VIII ... beautiful palace and lovely grounds. Take a bus ride out there, stroll around, that was our date. No food either, no feed, because, first they didn't have their food there at the restaurants. We had baked beans, once.

LII: What did London look like in those days? Was it a bombed out city?

LI: Well, it wasn't that bad, no. It wasn't as bad as the papers said it was ... but all I remember are the nights. It was blacked out every night. All you did in London was drink, that's all.

SI: When you were in London, were there any air raids?

LI: Happily, no. We weren't there for any air raids. That was all in the past by that time, it's all gone.

EI: Tell them about the time you got arrested.

LI: Me, arrested? I don't remember that.

SI: It sounds like you had trouble going on leave a few times.

LI: It was the usual sorts of trouble. I enjoyed my time in the Army.

LIJ: Was there a big American pressure in England in those early days when you were there?

LI: We were the first combat troops to arrive in England. All the others were those who were with me on the *Queen Elizabeth*, were there mostly to build the airports, that would be necessary for the Eighth Air Force. Of 15,000 onboard, only 500 or 600 of us were the paratroopers, the rest were all construction maintenance personnel for the airports, you know, building types, and cranes, and derricks, all that stuff.

SI: What was it like interacting with the British people?

LI: They were ... the most moving experience I had, when we finally landed in Gourrock, in Scotland, they put us on a train at nighttime. Apparently word had gone ... no matter what time it was, there would be a crowd out there [makes clapping noise.] It got to you.

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

SI: When you were there, Eisenhower and SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force] really wanted to impose a lot of rules on American GIs, on what they could and couldn't do. One rule that I think lasted throughout the whole war was, you're not allowed to let the British people buy you anything because they were so ...

LI: Never heard of that one. Nobody gave or bought me anything. I did trade a British soldier for one of their watches, their issue watch, a great watch, great big, bright, you know. I don't know what I gave him for it. I never think anybody bought me anything.

SI: Did they buy you a drink or something like that?

LI: No. They're not quick on that, besides, their beer wasn't worth drinking. Have you ever tasted British beer?

SI: Yes.

LI: Horse piss, very weak. I don't think they probably got any better today.

JG: Did you make any friends in England?

LI: Betty Burdock. Yes, I did. I have never corresponded with her, but a very pretty girl, very sweet girl, very proper British girl, and a very proper British family. That's the only one.

LII: Did you have joint training with the Brits?

LI: Oh, yeah, quite frequently, different maneuvers.

LII: What was it like?

LI: We're on the maneuvers once, it was a wet, cold, night, and we had found this little cave to stay dry in, and the British soldiers used to come in and say, "All right, come out of there, Yank. Play the (guarn?), Yank, play the (guarn?) Yank, play the (guarn?) Yank." "Bullshit. We're dry, you stay out there." "Play the (guarn?) Yank, play the guard."

JG: Do you think the GIs had more interaction with civilians in England, or Italy, or was it the same?

LI: Well, because of the language identity, I think, England, England. But the Italians were enjoyed, no problem there at all. The very fact that, you know, they had formerly been our enemies, never was a problem.

SI: In doing interviews with other paratroopers, they talk about how jumping in one environment is different from jumping in another, like jumping in North Africa, because of the heat and all sorts, you come down very soft, whereas jumping in Sicily or Italy you come down hard. Did you notice any difference between the different jumps in different areas?

LI: It depends upon how well you could, how solid the impact was. Happily, I never turned any ankles, or anything like that.

LII: Salerno was a nighttime drop, wasn't it?

LI: Yeah. There I was kind of scared, because you never know when you're going to hit the ground. You're just ... then suddenly, boom, you're there. They were all night drops. You don't want to be out there in daylight.

LII: At Salerno, didn't you say that when they let you off the plane you were pretty low? You didn't have much time in the air?

LI: Usually, they try to get you out under a thousand feet, but this one time it had to be close to 700 feet, because we did about one oscillation then you suddenly hit. Have you talked to other paratroopers?

SI: A few, yeah.

LI: 82<sup>nd</sup>, I guess.

SI: Some from 82<sup>nd</sup>, some from 101<sup>st</sup>. I think one was from, what was that unit that was in the Pacific? It's a whole division.

LIJ: 517<sup>th</sup>?

SI: No, the 17<sup>th</sup> was in Europe. The 11<sup>th</sup> I think.

LI: The 11<sup>th</sup>, yeah, they were out there.

SI: The 11<sup>th</sup> I think, yeah, the 11<sup>th</sup>, but I didn't do that interview.

LI: Well, see, we never had another battalion, and we felt rather distinguished in that regard.

SI: Were you kept as a battalion, a separate battalion, so that they can just put you in where you were needed?

LI: Yeah, Clark was our commanding general and he leaned on us quite heavily.

SI: What was your opinion of General Clark

LI: Very admirable I thought. I don't think the papers had treated him that well but, he looked like a second-rater, don't you think?

SI: Well, a lot of men that served in Italy had a lower opinion...

LI: Pardon?

SI: A lot of other veterans that I've interviewed from Italy had a lower opinion of Clark.

LI: Clark?

SI: Yes. When you were in combat in North Africa and Italy, did you work alongside other allied units like the French and British?

LI: No. Third Division, Ninth Division, that's all I can recall. The others, strangers to us, but British and French, no.

EI: Tell them about those Germans that you captured and they were so thrilled.

LI: A pair of losers. Where was that?

EI: That was when you jumped ...

LI: Avellino, Avellino. Tom Donlevy and I, yeah, we're dropped at night, and you're supposed to land on a level plain, that's the idea ... Apparently, we straddled the mountain, okay, or a hill, and most of my planeload went that side of the hill, and just a couple of us on this side, Tom Donlevy and I. Now, we looked all around for the guys, we couldn't find them. It was at night, and Tom and I realized, pretty soon, we're on our own. So, we had to make our way back. On our way back, we met these two Germans, which I suspect were deserters, and they were very happy to be with us. We took them along with us ... turned them over to the British, eventually.

LII: They were from Hermann Goering ...

LI: One was Hermann Goering and the other one was one of the Panzer grenadiers, I think. The Hermann Goering-type was an outright deserter, I think, and the other one was just an artillery spotter, and they just pulled away without them and left them there, and he was with one of the Panzer grenadier divisions. He was a nice fellow ... Neither of us could, we couldn't understand each other, only by hand motions. We carried them along with us a couple of nights, and finally turned them over the British. The British thought we were Germans, too.

LII: How did it happen that you found the Germans?

EI: They were asleep.

LI: Both of them were sleeping ... But we'd seen this little Italian boy, and asked him, and he told us "*Tadeski*." *Tadeski* is colloquial for Germans and ... "*Tadeski* there." The Italian boy was excited to see what was going to happen, and nothing happened.

EI: When they got there, they said "You're my prisoner," the Germans said. "No, you're my prisoner." "Oh, no, but we have guns." They didn't have a gun at that point.

LI: But, anyway ...

EI: They had a lot of funny incidents. They were going up the mountain, and they were going down the mountain, and the others were going up the mountains, and one his neighbors, his friend next door, was coming up the mountain.

LI: Oh, yeah. We were leaving one of the battalions of the Ninth Division, and we were coming up and they were there. They were already established there, the Ninth Division, battalion ... and they go by "Frank, how you doing?" He was a lieutenant, "Hey, Leo, how you doing? Glad to see you, Leo ..." He had an ugly looking beard, and all that, and had been there for about a month, or so. I haven't seen them since, but would like some kind of contact with him, don't know if he survived the war. That was a real coincidence. The zone that we were taking over, and he was there, too. We were taking over from him.

SI: Where was that? Was that Mount Croce?

LI: Yeah, Mount Croce.

EI: There were two men in this place from 509. One of them died a few months ago.

LI: In this place?

EI: Sure, John Costello.

LI: Oh, John, yes, John Costello.

EI: ... And then Art Van Dam, or something.

LI: In Leisure World ... John Costello was one of our sergeants, heck of a nice guy.

SI: You told that story about him in the book, about jumping into Ireland. . .

EI: There was another funny thing. We went to church one Sunday, and who then walked into the pew? There was a man there, and I was here, and Leo was here, and at the end there's the "kiss of peace," when you turn around and shake hands with people, and I turned and shook hands with this man. Then he looked over to Leo and he said, "509." The first time they had ever met each other ... I think that was amazing.

LI: He was from another company, but I knew him then. Art Van Ness, Art Van Something or other?

EI: Can I ask you people, lunch is all ready, do you want iced tea, coffee, Pepsi, Coke, or something? What would you like to drink?

SI: Whatever you have.

EI: I have them all.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: I wanted to ask you a question, or two, about your life in the Army before Pearl Harbor and before you joined the paratroopers. I guess it was just you in basic training?

LI: Basic training, that's all.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit about basic training and what it was like? A lot of people that were in the Army before the war tell us about how short they were of supplies, and how all the supplies they got were old, from World War I.

LI: There was a lot of that. The very heavy garb, of which was characteristic of World War I, was not mainly ours, but very frequently ours ... The hats, for example, they were all World War I, terrible looking things, and the fatigues, the blue denim, which I don't think they wear anymore, but they did then. Most of our time were spent in fatigues, fatigue outfits, and on our so called class A's were, you know, a wool jacket, brass buttons and the like, and I don't think there was any particular shortage of them, because the industry had geared up to supply the Army, particularly the textile industry, and they were making good profits as a consequence. I don't remember any particular shortages.

SI: Okay. What about not having rifles, so you used broomsticks, that sort of thing?

LI: We didn't get rifles until about probably about our, let's see ... probably about four months, and the ones we got were World War I rifles, 03s, the Springfield 03s, and all of our range practice was on 03s. We didn't get the M-1s until just about the end of our, M-1 being the Garand rifles, we didn't get the M-1s until about the end of our basic training. I didn't have range practice on M-1s until we got to Fort Benning with the paratroopers. Lots of M-1 practice there.

SI: What do you remember about your drill sergeants, other officers, and non-coms during basic training?

LI: Animals. Animals, that's all I can say. We had a very pleasant first sergeant. He was kind of an exception, exceptional case, but the others were just, they were pre-war, regular Army types, you know. The Army was the lowest employment opportunity available to young men at that time. So, it didn't attract the cream of the crop, so to speak. I found them unnecessarily cruel because it was such a dramatic change, it was a dramatic change from what I was used to. To me, maybe they weren't as bad as I thought they were, now that I've had some experience. But, I think, that you fellows now, if you were in the Army, I think you'd find a very dramatic change. You have to get used to discipline, you know. It's in compliance of what they want.

SI: You trained mostly in the South. Within your unit, was there a mix of northerners and southerners?

LI: No. Mostly, they were southern types. The corporals, the sergeants, the staff sergeants, mostly southern types, because that was the occupational area of choice to most of these fellows if they're, you know, if they are healthy and pass the physical, the best option available to them. Crackers, we used to call them. Crackers, mostly.

JG: Did you encounter any discrimination because of your ethnicity or your religion by some of these people?

LI: Not particularly, no, no. They looked upon you kinda strangely because I was a Catholic, mostly that. But, of course, at that time, the ones who hit there were coming from big northern cities, there were a high volume of Catholics among us, and, therefore, we weren't like one in a hundred or something like that. So we weren't a target by any chance.

JG: Did you have any Jewish-Americans in your unit?

LI: One or two. Not too many.

JG: Were there any issues with them?

LI: No, I don't think I remember any in particular. No blacks, no blacks at all, zero blacks. Door was closed to them. That was functional bias, I guess, you call that one.

SI: When you would go on leave in the South, did it surprise you coming from Philadelphia where things were fairly integrated, seeing the segregation down there?

LI: I just kind of expected it. What cities I visited, Macon in Georgia, and Atlanta, and you just didn't see blacks. Blacks stayed in their own enclaves, someplace. They never come out, and so strolling down the streets of Atlanta, you didn't see a mix of blacks and whites and others, I mean, whites only.

SI: Just one more thing, since you were the very first group of paratroopers, or, I should say one of the first, you said there were a few classes at Fort Bragg before you.

LI: We were the fourth class of about, maybe, about a couple of hundred in each class, and we're those guys, well ... our battalion became the, oh, that's right, the 501<sup>st</sup> were all regular Army, okay, 502<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> were a mix of regular Army and draftees, 504<sup>th</sup>, that's us, was virtually all draftees, virtually all draftees, okay. That's pretty much the way they had them, and then from then on, mostly all draftees.

SI: So, since this was one of the earliest paratrooper training, looking back on how you performed in combat, would you say that it prepared you well? Or were there things that they should have taught you in training?

LI: No, I think we were prepared as well as we could, as we could be. So, they had enough weapons experience, and we knew all the weapons well, you know ... Well, the only small arms weapons we had were rifles, machine guns and mortars, .60 mm mortars, and we knew them well, no problem. Happily, I eschewed the mortars. You could hardly carry those damn things, they're so heavy, but big guys like yourself, you're just naturals. "Oh, you're in the mortar squad." The way you knew you are on the mortar squad ...

JG: Since this was before the US entered the war; did you want the US to enter the war?

LI: Intuitively, I knew that it's a certainty that we're going to be in. There's no way you could get out of it, because our involvement with England, France.

JG: Do you believe it should have happened sooner than it did?

LI: I really think that Roosevelt just awaited the first opportunity that presented itself, and before you know it ... there was no reason why you had to fight Germany, because the enemy

was Japan at that point but because there was a link-up between Japan and Germany, suddenly you threw Germany in, too, because he knew we had to get in over there. So this was a good excuse, in my view. Now, Germany did no hostile acts, they didn't sink any of our ships, or anything like that. It could have, and they had ample opportunity to, but they didn't. But Roosevelt, "here's our chance to help our British cousins." I liked Roosevelt. He was very much of a pragmatist.

JG: How aware were you of what was going on in Europe, with the Nazis, at this point?

LI: Well, I wouldn't think I could be considered someone totally unsophisticated, that I couldn't appreciate what their problem was. I was a little bit brighter than the average person, not that I want to brag, but I think I was. To me, it looked to be a certainty that eventually we would be in it, because our entry in the First World War was superficial enough that this would be as bound to come.

JG: Do you want to tell us where you were when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

LI: We were in Atlanta. My friend and I were in Atlanta, and having breakfast at Miner and Carter's Drug Store at Five Points, downtown Atlanta. Have you been to Atlanta?

JG: Yeah, I have been to Five Points.

LI: You know Five Points? Miner and Carter's Drug Store there? It might not even be still there, it's right in the center. It's like being at Broad and Chestnut in Philadelphia or Times Square in New York. I'm in there, having breakfast at the bar, the girls said, "Did you hear Japs bombed Pearl Harbor?" "Why the hell did they do that?" We heard the war was on ... and they had some demonstrations that were just very moving to me. As a matter-of-fact, I almost fill up when I think about it. My friend and I, his name is Cecil, we used to call him Cecil ... we're walking down one of the streets of Atlanta, this car pulled up, an older woman, she was probably only about fifty at that time, and then she said, "Boys, come here, come here." We went, "What do you want lady?" and then she said, "Get in the car. You're coming to house for dinner." That was the most embarrassing dinner I've ever had, because, you know, they were so emotional, because their son was out in the Pacific at that time, he was a flyer, and they figured they had to do something to somebody, and here we were, and she grabbed us just like that. We had dinner with, the most unpleasant dinner I ever sat through, she's squeaking most of the time, jeez, but anyway, that was her demonstration. But to me, I never told my wife about that, but that's just incredible. How would you feel if something like that happened?

SI: That reminds me of the demonstration you wrote about in your book, in Charlotte, where you jumped out of a plane for the public.

LI: Oh, yeah, did I mention that she only had one arm? Maybe I didn't want to mention that in the book, I was afraid she might get it. She was a very pretty young thing, only about eighteen or nineteen, something like that ... and the deal was that whoever captured the paratrooper ... [became their] weekend guest. She only had one arm very pretty girl. Yes, there's something about two arms ... I found it a very uncomfortable weekend under those circumstances.

SI: You were the first troops to be in England. Did you find that Americans living in England, just starting, had a lot of problems? Some people talk about how the rations didn't get there and they'd eat British food.

LI: Exactly. Those are a problem too, British rationing. We were on British Army rations, which were just terrible.

JG: What did they feed you?

LI: Heavy on the mutton, heavy on the mutton. Well, for example, when we came over on the *Queen Elizabeth*, it stopped in Australia and picked up I don't know how many thousands tons of mutton, okay. That's about the only food we had. Lamb is one thing, but mutton is something else. It's terrible food. Ever eat mutton?

SI: No.

LI: Don't bother. We had that for about three or four ... then one morning we were out, maneuvers, come back, "Something's different here." It was chili con carne, oh God, did we go hogs for that. The cook wisely prepared triple quantity ... Do you like chili con carne? Just hamburger and chili, stuff like that. It's all that stuff.

SI: This is going back to the States, could you tell us about the time that your unit fought the Ninth Division in the war games?

LI: Yeah. We were dropped, this was in North Carolina, we were dropped, in battalion strength, and the company's here, company here, company there, and we were very lucky, my squad. The squad I was in, which broke out squads too, because the whole idea was to try to when we get there, to penetrate the defenses of Pope Field. That was our objective, and could we neutralize Pope Field? We found these Ninth Division guys, four or five of us, about eight of them, asleep out in the woods. They had a truck and a recon car, a big car, a radio, a silencer radio. We took their cars and we took off, and we landed at the gate of Pope Field. We had a force of about three or four times ... meantime, a bunch of them jumped us. As I said in the book, the only chance in my life I'll ever take a swing at a lieutenant colonel, I missed, but I got a captain. They were taken prisoners, but the umpire declared that we had silenced Fort Pope, just that one truckload, we were able to do it. We come in with machine guns on the hood. We didn't fire them, of course. But it was enough for us, and our colonel gave us all "Well done" for that. That was the only one maneuver I was ever in, that one with Ninth Division. Didn't see the Ninth Division again till Algiers. They ... locked me up.

SI: Can you tell us about that?

LI: A couple friends and I were out in Algiers. They had the automobiles, but they did have these voitures they called them, these horse driven cabs ... Bob David and I went to a nice restaurant, good restaurant, and enjoyed ourselves, come out and there was a voiture standing there, and these three or four Americans over there, arguing, until we jumped in and told him,

“All right, let’s go.” Oh, it was their cab and they were arguing about who’s gonna pay for it, and we jumped in “Gun it!” we preempted, in other words. They went and got a brick and threw it at us, missed me, but hit the cab driver and he started, “God damn, the Ninth Division again.” Locked us up in jail overnight, but no blemish on my record, happily. Just disorderly conduct charge or something like that, but we weren’t disorderly. What we did was steal a cab. It’s fair game.

SI: That wasn’t the time that they told you you were going be a private?

LI: That was in Casablanca.

SI: Wasn’t there another incident when they said you were going to be a private?

LI: That was in London, the one when they reduced me to private. They sent orders that reduced me to a private, he just ripped them up ... but Colonel Raff, he’s still alive. He lives out in Bora Bora. Yeah, he’s well over 100 years old, I think, or deeply in his nineties, anyway. Hell of a fine guy.

SI: What about the time that you and your friend visited the French bar, or French PX, shortly after the French had given up in North Africa?

LI: That was in Casablanca. We had been prisoners, and the French released us there from Algiers, from the Maison Blanche, and we flew to Casablanca. What was the question we asked? Just so I can get back into focus.

SI: About being in the French PX?

LI: Anyway. Oh, that’s right, we’re at Casablanca, yes, and we went over to visit ... We had been told that the French had a PX. When we were released from that prison, POWs, we flew to Casablanca, at the airport, and we were supposed to stay at the airport till the next morning and fly back to Algiers, but Bob and I heard that the French had a PX on the other side of this field. We went over to the French PX and as soon as we walked in ... of course, there’d been a lot of fighting, the French, the Americans, lost a battleship and everything else. We walked in and the place was loud, and noisy, that’s what you expect with PX. We walked in, total hush, because our status was unclear to them, were we enemies or were we friends? We were unaware of what had happened around Port Lyautey in Casablanca, we hadn’t heard about the fight ... and a deep hush. But then a couple of boys, French boys, start talking to us in their language, and we knew a little bit of French and they little bit of English, and then, and finally, a big crowd around, all talking all kinds of questions going back and forth. Finally, one of us suggested that we sing our National Anthem. Bob and I, neither has got a good singing voice. Imagine you two guys trying to sing the *Star Spangled Banner*. We were in an awkward position. So, slight pause at the end and they sang the *Marseillaise*. Are you familiar with *Marseillaise*? "*Allons enfants de la patrie, Le jour de gloire est arrive.*" Sung with great intensity. I thought we were going to get killed. As I said in the book, I don’t think the Mormon Tabernacle Choir could have done a more emotional job than they did. We’re gonna get out of there alive.

SI: What can you tell us about fighting in Tunisia, at Gafsa, trying to blow up the bridge?

LI: There were five of our demolitions specialists, happily we were not involved in it. But they were sent over there. They got to the bridge, I think they blew the bridge, but they were not able to survive the Germans who were advancing up that way. Most of these fellows were captured. But we still got to the bridge, a tank could have blown the bridge, which slowed the German advance, and made it difficult for them to continue in Tunisia, and because they couldn't get their forces there, because to cross that hard ground there you had to go out in the desert. They didn't want to do that ... But it enabled our guys to build up, the so called II Corps to come in and build up with the British, and defeated the Germans in North Africa, as a consequence. So, I think our battalion had a significant part in slowing their ability to marshal their forces. I was not involved with that. Only five demolition specialists who did that. It was an enormous bridge that they blew up, a railroad bridge. That was the end of rail traffic for the Germans. They couldn't do anything.

SI: Now, you didn't jump on Sicily.

LI: No, we were in reserve on Sicily. We waited there three days in the hot sun and, fortunately, we weren't committed.

SI: Were you aware of what had happened with the C-47s and the Navy?

LI: We heard about that the day after. I forget how many planes, well over twenty planes were knocked down by the Navy, which is a lot of loss for the 82<sup>nd</sup>. That was their baptism of fire, and that was really a fiery baptism, I would say, for them.

SI: You mentioned in your book there was somewhat of a rivalry between your unit and the 82<sup>nd</sup>.

LI: Well, mostly created by those fellows, because they were pissed off with us because we beat them over here. Mostly that, that's all. Just a little rivalry, there wasn't any hostility by any means.

SI: Did you find any other kind of rivalries within the military, like rivalries between paratroopers and infantrymen, or Army and Navy, that sort of thing?

LI: I think the average infantry ceded to us, the upright position, because they wanted the chance to be paratroopers, but declined, if you know what I mean? Am I coming out of this more vain, glorious than you think. I don't mean to.

SI: Do you have any questions about North Africa?

JG: Can you tell me about some of the people that you met in Italy, like the fellow you received the letter from and how you came to meet them?

LI: Well, we were on our own, finding our way back to our base. You know, the Air Force had dumped us away from where our objective should have been, and the rest of the battalion

someplace between us and Avellino, and we were over closer to the coast. We knew we were on our own then. It was either walk towards the Germans, or walk toward where we came from. So, we opted to walk back toward Avellino, right toward Naples, and the one Italian ... well the two Italians we met, first a young boy was very helpful to us, and very likable kid, and also this Chief of Police advised us about the British were coming up the road, that's right, we invited them, we got a little dinner at his place that night, and it turned out to be a very large affair. I got a chance to meet the Bishop of Salerno, who left Salerno because of the hazards to life and limb over there. We had a chance to even ... are you familiar with the practice of when you meet a Bishop, kiss his ring? Yeah, well, we kissed the Bishop's ring, cemented our relationship with that portion of the Italian population ... but not long after that, we got back to our outfit.

SI: How soon after the Salerno invasion were you dropped on Avellino?

LI: Oh, almost within days, I would say. Almost within days, yeah.

SI: After Avellino was completed, you were sent into Naples. What was Naples like at that time?

LI: Well, Naples was not seriously damaged, except down around the dock area. We were not in Naples proper. We were in a suburb of Naples. I've got the name of it was someplace. It's in my book, the name of the place, but we were situated in a school, and we were there a couple of weeks before we left again. We left there and went into the beachhead, Anzio beachhead. But we had lots of interesting adventures, personal type, in downtown Naples, which was very hazardous in one respect. A lot of guys caught ... diseases down there. The Germans had ... the clap. Not guilty, never happened to me. It got so bad, the hospitals couldn't take all our guys. We had about thirty guys. Our battalion surgeon built a little chicken wire enclosure, and they'd get the shots every four hours, or whatever the treatment was. Think about it "clap, clap, clap," applaud them, "Hey!" They knew what we were doing. We had a little interplay with the population. The ones who had it made were the boys who came from Italian backgrounds, because they could speak Italian, or knew enough of the language to survive, and the fact that they were Italians enhanced their popularity with the people ... and were good access points for us, if we wanted anything ... We had a pretty good ratio of Italian-Americans with us.

SI: Did you ever encounter any mines, or snipers, or any kind of harassment action like that?

LI: Mines are always, you know, a danger. We lost a lot of guys by mines, because they were just not careful where they're moving, and when in our own position, we'd mine our own positions, we wouldn't proceed across them unless we were accompanied by somebody who knew where they were. You always go and head for that corner of the school, or this corner of the church, or something, you knew that's a straight path. Yeah, they were a factor. The ever-present problem for us was artillery ... theirs.

SI: When you were at Anzio, did you come under fire from the Anzio Annie?

LI: I guess it was. I guess it was. It might have been the one that hit me, I don't know.

SI: How long were you at Anzio?

LI: About a month. There was this one night, we went out to repair our line, hit by shellfire, and got me.

JG: Can you tell us a little bit about your injury, and then the treatment you received, and your recovery?

LI: Well, as the shellfire increased about that big ... a little under two inches by half inch thick. It hit with enough force to just propel my legs right out from under me, okay. I knew that it was *fini* for me. I was walking out to repair this line towards the German positions, I knew where they were, but our line was out in that direction. I wandered just, toward our company headquarters, which was on the direction of the German positions from where I was. I heard the shell coming in, I figured where the hell it was going, it would land pretty far away, and I wouldn't have to hit the ground, so I didn't hit the ground, but it hit me. Now if I hit the ground it could have hit me here, or my head, something like that. I would have been finished, that's why I'm glad I didn't. But then, one of the guys, I was only about fifty yards from company headquarters, where company headquarters was, which is hole in the ground. It was a cave, or a stable, or something like that ... and came out and carried me in. They carried me in and a battalion surgeon came, wrapped me up,

SI: A surgeon, you said?

LI: A battalion surgeon, Captain, what was his name? It's in the book, I think ... carried me in to the hospital. That night, ambulances came up and carried me off to the hospital ...

SI: So they just dressed the wound there?

LI: Just wrapped it up, that's all. One of the aid men wrapped it up, but blood continued to pour out of there, "Get Captain ..." Oh, it was Captain Alden, the battalion surgeon, "God," he told this (Jack Sanker?) who was the aid guy, "Jack, that's not the way to wrap a wound." He actually had wrapped the wound. Then it cut the circulation off, but that was the end of the bleeding. My shoe was full of blood, the whole works, but anyway, that night the ambulance would come up and take me back the station hospital. In Anzio beachhead, they did superficial work, or whatever they did. They did surgery when I got back to Naples, the hospital in Naples. They treated the wound.

SI: When did they send you back here?

LI: Well, they had some kind of standard ... if they anticipated you had more than like a four or five months period of recovery ...

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

JG: This is tape two of an interview with Leo Inglesby in Maryland on April 19, 2002. You were telling us about being sent back to the States to seek treatment for your injuries.

LI: They anticipated I'm gonna be at least four months ... some figure like that, an arbitrary figure. It's gonna be four months, it's best to get out of the zone of the action, get back to the zone of the interior, as the United States was called. So, then I came back on the hospital ship.

JG: When did you come back?

LI: It must be before ... I wish I knew. I guess it was about ... well, that was in January ... I guess it was about March or April of the year of the invasion.

JG: Of '44?

LI: Of the invasion period, yes. I came back to South Carolina, and, eventually, back to Fort Dix, Tilton General Hospital. Is it still there, by the way? Tilton General?

SI: Yup. Yeah, yeah. You were telling us a story before, I'm not sure if we got it on the tape about, earlier you had mentioned it, about the Nisei troops, the Japanese?

LI: Nisei troops? Oh, yeah. That was funny. They took me off the beachhead in an LST, okay, that was a terrible trip ... and we come back to Naples, and they keep you doped up all the way. I didn't come to until the next morning, and the nothing but Japanese faces all around me. Holy Christ, and these were all Niseis, from the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion who were fighting in the mountains, okay, where we were. They all had the same problems as our guys had, frozen feet, some of their guys had frozen feet. Cordial bunch of guys, nice fellas, I suppose. Imagine, you know, it's quite a shock coming to. I knew it was the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion, from some division.

JG: How long were you laid up with your injury?

LI: Let's see, January, came back, I guess, until January the next year, I guess. When I finally got out, they assigned me to the Army Ground Service Forces Redistribution Center, in Asheville, North Carolina. What an easy job that was.

SI: What did you do?

LI: I was an interviewer for them, interviewing soldiers, much as you're interviewing me now. "Where would you like to go?" If you're a rifleman, you went back, hold your rifle again, but if you're injured and had to be reassigned someplace else, based upon your education and what your history was, we'd be assigned someplace. Not too many options available.

JG: Where you glad to be back in the States, away from the front?

LI: Very much so, very much so, and that was in Asheville, North Carolina which is a ... have you been to Asheville? Beautiful, beautiful city, all mountains all around it, nice area. I was there when peace was declared.

SI: Do you remember the day that Franklin Roosevelt died?

LI: Yes. I was in chow line one day, down there, when he died. The general feeling was one of sadness, because he was extremely popular, don't forget that, as his vote count will tell you. Are you interested in politics at all?

SI: A little bit.

LI: I'm just as you'd call it, dedicated Democrats. I used to work for the party, too.

JG: Did you really? What did you do?

LI: Committeeman, you know local politics. Well, somebody said all politics is local.

JG: Tip O'Neill said that, right? Tip O'Neill said that, I think?

LI: Was it Tip O'Neil? I think so, yes. It was Tip.

SI: I think the last three people we interviewed had said that at some point. De Sante said that last week.

LI: What's that? All politics is local? Were they all Democrats too?

SI: Yeah.

LI: God loves us, he made so many of us.

SI: Could you tell us about VJ Day, what the mood was like where you were?

LI: I hate to acknowledge this. Actually, it was a redistribution station, all right, and it's just soldiers coming out of hospitals, coming out of prison camps to be interviewed and reassigned, and because of the pressures that the poor boys had been under, we only had morning schedules, okay. We scheduled things in the morning. The afternoon was theirs, and ours, too. As a consequence, every afternoon was primarily at the Asheville country club golf course, and I was on down the second hole, midway down the fairways of the second hole, when all the whistles went off. I thought, "What do you suppose that is?" "I think we don't have any more war," somebody said. That's what it was, V-J Day.

SI: So, after V-J Day ...

LI: So, I think I celebrated V-J Day by getting a double bogey.

SI: After that, were you reassigned or were you just discharged?

LI: Soon after that, I was discharged. As a matter-of-fact ... You needed eighty-five ... Oh, yeah, that's right. I did not right away. The discharge requirements, to be eligible for discharge you had to have eighty-five points. I think I had 125 points, but by that time they were demobilizing the Army, and the job I had as an interviewer to help the poor boys find a slot in the civilian society, I went out quick. I need it. Wow, critically need it. The outrage for the population of parents of critically injured people was tremendous. "Let my boy come home, he's been there all the time..." Oh, there's guys with lots of service, lots of background and we found ourselves in jobs which suddenly became more needed, including myself. My mother joined the crowd that was writing to their congressman about "Get my son home now." After about a month or so, that hiatus, out again, and this was 1945.

SI: I've heard about that. I heard that Walter Winchell used to get on the radio and announce which camps weren't letting people out fast enough. There'd be like crowds of people around the camps.

LI: Four years, two months, twenty-four days and five and a half hours was a long time. Every minute was against my will.

SI: When you were on the service, were you ever allowed to go on R&R?

LI: One time, we did. No it wasn't R&R, just leave, got leave ... one break at Fort Benning, only recently in the paratroops, it was Christmas and they were gonna split the breaks, you know, like twenty days, half the guys could go this, half the guys this other ten days, so I got the second ten days till New Year's Eve and I had a good time. By this time, I was pretty much well recovered. Went to a dance. Met some nice girls, good time.

SI: Did you ever see any USO shows when you were in the service?

LI: Yes, I did. Overseas, I did. In England, I saw Al Jolson, and then later on, another big, famous personality, forget who it was.

SI: Bob Hope?

LI: It wasn't Bob Hope, but I remember Al Jolson. It was in England. It was going to be outside, but it rained, they took over a local movie theater, cancelled their program for that day, and fit in all the seats, but there wasn't a square inch of space in those aisles, because all the locals came in, too. They were invited in to see it. That place was bulging at the seams. He put on a fantastic show. I remember that. So, I saw at least two.

SI: What is your opinion of how your officers handled things during combat?

LI: They were scared like anybody else, but I've got to commend them, they knew what they had to do, and I never found an officer that I didn't think was worth the bars he was wearing.

SI: Were most of your officers graduates from OCS or were some of them West Point?

LI: Virtually all were [OCS]. Our colonel was a West Point graduate. Our first colonel was. He was the only one I knew of after that.

JG: How did the war in general, you know, help you grow as a person and make you who you are today?

LI: I think it was a very maturing experience for me, really. Of course, I had never been in such close association with other men my same age, pursuing the same objectives. In this case, you know, staying alive. All of us were conspicuously successful at doing that. I think, very maturing. You're scared as hell most of the time, but the fact that you succeeded in overcoming that, is in itself, a maturing experience. Had you ever experienced that you might know what I mean.

SI: I notice you have the Bronze Star. Do you remember which action you were in for it?

LI: Someplace I have the ... I think it was because of our service in the mountains more than anything else, because we were able to ... I don't know.

SI: We've skipped around.

LI: Well, you might be able to make sense out of it if you put it in order.

SI: I just want to make sure we didn't miss anything. Is there anything before we wrap up that you would like to put on the tape that we missed, or any questions that we haven't asked?

LI: You're somewhat assisted by having read my book. Pretty much take that and transcribe that ... but between that and what we talked about is pretty much covered the whole gamut.

SI: I think the one story we didn't get was, you told us at lunch but we didn't get it on tape, was how you met your wife.

LI: Oh, yes. A nice club in Philadelphia, not exactly a gentleman's club, well, like an academic area, it's the Philopatrian Club. Philopatrian means Greek for love of country, okay, you know. These were people of substance in the Philadelphia community, who are members of that club, and it was made available for this group of college students, of which my wife was on the board, that's right. We'd have a nice dance down there and meet a lot of pretty girls. So, I went down there once, that's when I just a student at La Salle, and met my wife there, and one thing led to another, and here we are today. So, I met a Philopatrian Club while I was in college, she was already graduated. She was working for John Hancock, one of the insurance companies there ... I was a student. We didn't get married until I left Rutgers, until I graduated from Rutgers. It was 1950, I guess ... You never asked me about Rutgers, but I enjoyed Rutgers.

SI: Oh, we talked about it before, I think, with Mason Gross.

LI: I went there. While I was at Rutgers, oh, that first summer I was there, the students vacate the campus, and I was there for the whole summer. I lived at Chi Psi House on ...

JG: Mine Street?

LI: That sounds familiar. Do you know the Chi Psi?

SI: Well most of the houses are different now.

LI: Are they really?

SI: I think most of the fraternities were on Mine St.

LI: I guess that was it. Yeah. I know we'd go quite often at a bar on the corner ...

SI: Corner Tavern?

LI: CT, yeah. CT. Ever eat there?

SI: Yeah. Still there.

LI: The CT. ... Did you ever know Dean Miller?

SI: No.

LI: Dean Miller's son, Norm, was with us too. A hell of a nice guy, big tall fellow like yourself, red hair, and Dean and Jim (Blatchey?) and I had dinner there quite often. He lived down there. He lived at Highland Park. His parents did. His father was on the faculty. I enjoyed Rutgers.

SI: It was different for you being a graduate student, but was there any kind of social life like dances and that sort of thing?

LI: Mostly went home weekends, that was back in Philadelphia. I wasn't that much imbued there. I wasn't driving then, I don't think I was driving at that time. I used to get back and forth by train.

SI: When you went to La Salle, was it a coed institution?

LI: No, all men.

SI: All men.

LI: It only had that one building then. Now it's a big, spreading campus now. Ever been there?

SI: I think I've driven past it.

LI: It's a pretty big place now.

SI: I've been told all about it.

LI: Yeah, a university. University, one truth.

SI: So, if there's nothing else you'd like to put on record ...

LI: I think we're done. Great job fellows.

JG: Well, thank you very much for participating.

SI: Thank you.

LI: It's been my pleasure. You're very good company.

SI: I must say you wrote a very good book.

LI: Did you enjoy it?

SI: Yes. It's very informative. It's not like other history books. You're very good with your words.

LI: Do you have a copy?

SI: Yeah.

LI: Okay.

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

Reviewed by David D'Onofrio 1/15/04

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/6/04

Reviewed by the Inglesby Family 4/3/06