

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH TIMOTHY KILLION

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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FANTASTIC TRANSCRIPTS

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Timothy Killion on May 24, 2016, in Indianapolis, Indiana, with Shaun Illingworth. Thank you very much for coming in today. I would also like to thank Chuck Little for helping put this interview series together and the RUAA for sponsoring this trip. To begin, can you tell me where and when you were born?

Timothy Killion: Yes, I was born January 14, 1945, in Brooklyn, New York. My dad was in the Army. He was stationed at Fort Hamilton and, from there, we moved to Upstate New York, where my mom and dad were from Schenectady.

SI: What were their names?

TK: Don Killion and Anna Killion, and they were both native Schenectady-ians. So, I mean, what else?

SI: Looking at your father's side first, do you have any idea how the family came to settle in Upstate New York?

TK: I don't. I know his father worked as a machinist for the General Electric Company, my grandfather did, on my dad's side. My grandfather on my mother's side, he was a pipefitter. I know he worked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard during the war, during the Second World War, and I think he was actually involved or a member of the military during, maybe, the Spanish-American War, early in the 20th Century. Now, how they got to Schenectady, from where? I'm not sure. My dad's side of the family was Scotch-Irish, primarily, and then, my mother's side was more English/German type ancestry. That's about as much as I [know]. My dad had one brother, who was ten or eleven months older, so, they were very close, throughout when I was growing up. I mean, they just did everything together. Then, my mother had two sisters, who have both passed away as well. My mom and dad are both passed at this point.

SI: Your father was in the service.

TK: My dad was in the US Army from '41 to '45, I think. He was a tech sergeant, and then, he went to Officer Candidate School and got a commission in the Transportation Corps. Then, this was in 1944 and he worked in--my dad was a musician, not as a vocation, but as an avocation, and he had a dance band. They had been playing popular music at the time. So, he got involved in Special Services with the Army, and then, at that time, you were allowed to leave the service if you had a certain number of points. So, he got out in mid '45, I think it was, or, no, he got out in probably mid to late 1945, just at the end of the war. My mom and dad were on their way to the West Coast when he was notified that he had enough time, and everything was winding down anyway. So, he got discharged at that time. They came back to Schenectady.

SI: Did he ever go overseas?

TK: No. He spent his four years in the States, yes.

SI: Did your mother work outside of the home?

TK: Pretty much inside the home, taking care of my sister and I. I have a sister who's two-and-a-half years younger. No, my mom never worked while I was growing up.

SI: Tell me a little bit about your neighborhood in Schenectady.

TK: Yes, well, when we moved to--of course, I don't remember much before I was, like, in kindergarten or anything like that--but we lived in Scotia, New York, which is a suburb of Schenectady. We lived there until I was probably six years old. [At] six years old, I believe my grandfather, my dad's father, had passed away and my dad wanted to take care of his mother, my grandmother. So, my dad bought a home over in Niskayuna, one of these two-family homes where you have an upstairs flat. My grandmother lived in the lower flat and we lived in the upper flat for a number of years, and then, my grandmother passed away. We lived there for a while longer, and then, we moved to another home, but, again, in the same town, which was Niskayuna, which is a suburb on the outskirts--I couldn't tell you whether it's north or south of town--but they have their own schools, school district and things like that. That's where I spent probably from first grade all the way up through the time I graduated from high school in 1963. It was a nice suburb. You might say it was affluent; I mean, we weren't particularly affluent. My dad worked for *The Schenectady Gazette*, which was the newspaper, in the circulation department, and my uncle, again, he worked with the same newspaper. Then, [I forget] what year, my dad wanted to be in business for himself. So, he ended up--he didn't own the place--but he ran a service station. First, it was Shell, and then, it was ARCO. That's pretty much how his career was, probably from the time I was maybe in middle school or junior high, we called it at the time, up until he retired, and I think he was sixty-seven when he retired.

SI: What had he done for the newspaper?

TK: He was involved in circulation. When I say circulation, I mean, in other words, distribution. They call it the circulation department, but it's distribution. He worked with the paperboys or mail carriers or whatever you want to call them, but delivery in those days was done by kids on bicycles. I had my own route growing up, with the morning paper or the afternoon. We had two papers at the time, a morning and an afternoon. So, I would [deliver them]. I had a small route and did that, made money, some money on that, and kind of a first introduction to business, trying to collect, because you had to go knock on the people's door and [they would say], "Oh, sorry, I don't have the money this week," or you had little cards to [leave]. So, it was pretty interesting. I went to elementary school at Van Antwerp Elementary School, and then, I went to Van Antwerp Junior High School. There's a lot of Dutch influence up in that part of the state. Schenectady was settled by the Dutch. Then, I went to Niskayuna High School, which was a four-year high school. I think that we were the first class that went for four years. They switched from three-year high schools to four-year high schools when I was in eighth grade, I think it was.

SI: What interested you the most in school?

TK: Frankly, I was going to say, in high school, I had a good experience. I know I've talked to a lot of people, some people don't care, don't like to think about their high school times. I mean, it's usually one or the other--people have a good time or they have a lousy time--and, a lot of

times, the people that don't have a good time, they don't ever want to go back for reunions, but I had a good time. I enjoyed school. I found schoolwork fairly easy. I did pretty well in school and I played sports. I played basketball and track. I had a girlfriend for a couple years, junior and senior years in high school, but a pretty good life, really. I have no complaints. My sister was two years behind me in school and she's still in Schenectady. She still lives [there]. She's the only one of--well, I only had one sister--but, I mean, she's still there in Niskayuna.

SI: You played sports growing up. Were you involved in other activities, such as Boy Scouts or Little League?

TK: I did Cub Scouts. I did not do Boy Scouts. I joined the Key Club, which was the school equivalent of the Kiwanis. It was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. I think that was the major, the only other, extracurricular activity I did in high school, other than sports. So, I'm trying to think--I mean, I didn't join the A/V club or the German club or the French club or any of that. Yes, I mean, I liked high school, got along pretty well with most of my classmates. We had a small class, probably 160, compared to my kids' classes, these days, are six hundred or nine hundred. It's just unbelievable, the size of the high schools, at least where I live; go ahead.

SI: Was the area ethnically diverse?

TK: We had two black kids in our class, Harold and his brother, and I never even thought about it much. I mean, I don't know what it was from his standpoint, but there were a few Jewish kids in our class, a few Jewish girls, I think. At that time, there were local private country clubs that, if you were Jewish or Catholic, you couldn't join. This was the '50s and '60s, but, no, it was not very diverse at all. I mean, everybody was--they weren't all WASPs, but they were mainly whites--other than two black fellows, two blacks in the high school, in the four years that I was there. I think one, Harold, Hal, was in our class, and then, he had a younger brother who was a year or two behind and that was it. No black teachers that I recall. We really never had any problems in school. I mean, like, somebody pulled the fire alarm one time, but, other than that, kids were--it's just so different. I hate to sound like some old crone, [laughter] but, I mean, times have changed. Even raising our kids, it was much different and, now, with our grand[children]--we have two grandsons, one's in college and one's in junior year of high school--I mean, things are so different. I'm just glad I grew up when I did.

SI: When you were growing up, was religion a big part of your family life?

TK: Yes, I would say not a big part; my dad was Catholic, my mother was Protestant, and my sister and I were brought up Catholic. We never went to Catholic school. We went to public schools, but we did go to Catechism. I don't know if you're familiar with Catechism.

SI: Yes, CCD.

TK: Yes, we had to do that. I don't even know what they taught us at the time, but that was probably when I was in middle school or junior high school, we did Catechism, made our First Confirmation. We used to go to church every Sunday and Easter was a big deal, getting dressed up. I mean, I don't remember it. I've seen pictures, so, I know I was there, all dressed up for

Easter, those types of things. My mother would go along. When my mom and dad got married in 1942, they couldn't get married in the Catholic church because my mother wasn't Catholic, had to get married in the rectory or something like that. Times have changed. So, I guess that's about as much religion as I can share with you. [laughter]

SI: What other types of things would you do growing up? Were you outdoors often?

TK: Oh, yes, playing sports. Growing up as a kid, we played a lot of sandlot baseball and football, those type of things. I mean, I played Little League, Niskayuna Little League, for years. I'm not sure how many years, but four or five years of that and I played a couple years of Babe Ruth Baseball after that.

SI: You said you played basketball and track in high school.

TK: Basketball and track, yes.

SI: What events did you compete in, in track?

TK: Long jump and triple jump, and I did a little bit of that at Rutgers, freshman year, I think, was it. I must've done something, because the Rutgers Track Association keeps sending me stuff, [laughter] of which I don't remember, but they do, so, yes.

SI: Was there a rival high school?

TK: Yes. We were in what they called the Suburban Council, suburban schools, and I'm not sure which high schools were our [rivals], it's so long ago. I know the names of the schools, but which ones were the [rivals]? There was Colonie and Guilderland and Rotterdam and some other ones, but, honestly, Shaun, I can't tell you which one was our major rival, like I could for my grandsons, Avon High School versus Plainfield or Brownsburg, one of those, here, locally. Growing up, when I was in high school, I had a couple best friends, and so, we'd go double-dating. You went to the drive-in movies or you went to coffee houses to hear folk music. I remember being a junior and senior in high school--I had an early birthday and my best friend had a January birthday--and, in Schenectady, Union College is a private college and that was a big [draw]. So, we would be able to go down and get served beer at the local tavern on campus down there. So, getting to college, alcohol wasn't a big deal, for those of us from New York, I mean. New Jersey still had the twenty-one age limit. So, I remember, we'd do that, nothing crazy, but, yes. There were local lakes around. Lake George was up north. Galway Lake, my mom and my dad and his brother had a camp, summer camp, very primitive. I mean, we had an outhouse. My cousin, who was two years older than I, we'd have to haul water from a communal pitcher pump up to the house, up to the camp, so [that] my mother and my aunt could cook dinner. You had a chamber pot underneath the bed, if you had to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. I mean, it was [primitive]. It was my sister and I, and then, my uncle, he and his wife, they had a son who was two years older than I was and they had two daughters who were a year younger and two years younger, and then, they had a couple other girls, that were almost like they had three families. So, we had a lot of kids there. We'd wait for our dads to come home from work, when they did come up for the night, when they were working for either

the newspaper or the gas station, I'm not sure which. So, we'd wait for them and it was good times. We weren't too far from Saratoga, so, sometimes, when we were old enough, they'd take us to the horse races. You couldn't bet, of course, but you'd go up to Saratoga to watch the [races]. You could either watch the trotters at the raceway or you could go to watch the thoroughbreds. So, there was quite a bit going on around, and then, there were some state parks that you could go to. Your questions, certainly, you've had a lot of practice at that; this, I can tell, because it elicits more responses.

SI: Yes.

TK: There are things in my memory. So, it's great.

SI: We get into all different aspects.

TK: Yes.

SI: You mentioned your paper route. Did you have any other part-time jobs?

TK: Yes. The paper route was one thing. Then, I always remember my dad, I wanted to make some money, he said, "Well, listen," he said, "I'm going to go out and buy you a bushel of peaches," he says, "and then, we'll get some small containers and you can go around and sell these peaches." So, this was kind of my first introduction to business. So, I went out, I sold the peaches and I said, "Hey, look, I've got all this money." He said, "Well, then, now, you've got to pay me back." So, that was kind of my first [experience] in that. Then, when I was in high school, I worked part-time during the week, when I could, and then, I worked summers. I do remember working at a couple filling [stations]--I'd work for my dad sometimes, washing cars. You hand-washed cars, if somebody wanted it done, or I could help him take tires off cars if they were changing tires. So, I worked for him some and I also worked for a couple, one of these, I want to say cut-rate gas stations. You see them on the interstates. It wasn't BP or Sonoco or anything like that, but it was ones where people would come in, I'd fill up the car. It was twenty-five cents a gallon--I mean, it was just ridiculous--and then, you'd add oil. I did some work doing that, and then, one summer, I worked at what they called an enumerator. An enumerator is someone, it would be similar to what people do when they do the Census, okay, but we did it for a city directory. Before computers and all that, they had city directories, if you wanted to see who lived in a certain place. So, we would just go around to these houses, knock on the door and just get an update on who lived there. So, I did that and made some money during summers. That was in high school, yes. Then, maybe in college, I did it as well; I don't recall exactly all of the details.

SI: In talking with folks from your generation, when you were in high school, it seems like the Cold War was at least apparent--you were at least aware--but some places would have a lot of drills, for example. Do you recall being aware or thinking about it?

TK: No, I don't. I mean, I don't remember any of that in high school, maybe middle school, and, elementary, I'm sure we did it. We had to duck-and-cover under the desks, air raid shelters you

had and that type of thing, but, I mean, we didn't stockpile food at home or anything like that. Yes, I know what you're talking about, but I don't have many recollections of doing that.

SI: As you were going through high school, were your teachers and parents encouraging you to think about college?

TK: Oh, yes. I'd say, well, the high school that I went to was really a college prep type. I mean, it was a public school, but, I mean, God, I'll bet seventy-five percent of my class went to college and a good percentage of them went to Ivy League colleges. I mean, I had four in my senior class went to Brown, also to Stanford, Princeton, and then, a couple of the women went to places like Wellesley or Smith, yes, and we had, like, three or four went to Cornell. So, we had a lot that went to [the Ivy League], much more so than I'd see out here in the Midwest. I think it's more difficult in the Midwest to get into a lot of the Ivy League schools, for whatever reason, but it was certainly no trouble at that time from Upstate New York.

SI: Would you say that most of your classmates came from similar backgrounds? Were their parents, perhaps, working for GE?

TK: A lot of them worked for GE, yes. We had a lot of people get transferred, because that was GE headquarters, was in Schenectady at that time. Besides that, you had the GE Research Lab, which was in Schenectady, you had Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, which was part of General Electric, still is. It's a division of some type with them. So, we had a lot of engineering people there, would transfer from one place or another into town. I'm trying to think--that was probably the main, yes--friends of mine, their dads, or mothers, worked for General Electric, yes, quite a bit of that.

SI: It sounds like a high-achieving group, but was it also very competitive when you were going there?

TK: I don't remember it being competitive, I mean, not like it is today, probably. I don't remember it being like that.

SI: What attracted you to Rutgers?

TK: Well, like anybody, I guess, you had an advisor in high school. They had advisors and I applied to two schools, Boston College and Rutgers, I got accepted at both--but this counselor, he was pushing me to go to Wabash, which is out here [in Crawfordsville, Indiana]. I had never even heard [of it]. All of them were men's schools at the time. There was one other fellow in my class in high school who went to Rutgers. Boston College appealed to me because my older cousin started out at BC. He ended up graduating from Holy Cross, but he started at Boston College. So, I took a trip down there for a weekend and he showed me around Boston College. I don't know that I actually went to Rutgers to check it out. There was a fellow from my high school who was two years ahead of me who had gone to Rutgers. I don't know what ever happened to him. His sister was in my class. I can't sit here and tell you why I decided on Rutgers. It was less expensive than Boston College, which was a private college at the time, still is, I guess, because I was paying out-of-state tuition, like Chuck or any of these other people

from New York. Something else just came to my mind about--it'll come back to me--but, so, that was, I guess, the only [reason]. It wasn't some blinding [revelation]. Oh, I know what it was--my dad and mom never had a lot of money, but my dad said they could pay for two years of college wherever I went. So, I just chose Rutgers. I mean, Boston College wasn't any further away than Rutgers was, because I used to hitchhike back home from New Brunswick to Schenectady, when I wanted to go home. Not always, but it was pretty easy at the time and it wasn't very dangerous. So, a lot of kids did it, a lot of guys did it. You'd just hop on, I guess, Route 1, which is, what? 95 now, or the Parkway, and then, I'd go up to Suffern and get on the New York State Thruway. I'd get off and call my mom and dad, they'd pick me up at the exit up there or something.

SI: Hitchhiking was a lot more common back then.

TK: Oh, yes, absolutely.

SI: Was your first time down on the Rutgers Campus your first day of school?

TK: Oh, yes, well, a couple days, freshman week, orientation. You had to wear a beanie and the frickin' tie and all the stuff. We were supposed to, anyway. So, we did it for the first week and that was about it. There were a few upperclassmen around to give you a hard time, but, other than that, there was not much to it. So, that was it. My mom and dad, maybe, I don't know, maybe my sister, came with me and dropped me off at Clothier. That's where I stayed freshman year, dropped me off and we got set up, and then, they drove home. So, it was about two hundred miles from Schenectady, I think, roundtrip, or one-way, rather.

SI: When you entered Rutgers, did you have an idea of what you wanted to study or what you wanted to do there?

TK: Yes. Well, I knew that I wanted to study business, I guess, at the time. I mean, if I had to do it over again, I probably would've gone to the Engineering School there, because that's what I ended up working in. Most of my career was in engineering, but, no, I just signed up for the College of Arts and Sciences and took some business courses and economics, that type of thing.

SI: Do you recall any impressions from those first few days and weeks on campus?

TK: It was a good time. Clothier was a fairly new dorm at the time and I think it was seven or eight stories. I always remember, there was one telephone booth on each floor. So, you'd call home on that, if you could get in there and stuff. My roommate was from New Jersey. He was from Clifton, New Jersey, and Kenny Van Dalen was his name. He was there on a basketball scholarship. He lasted one semester and he was gone. So, he flunked out. Some good guys on my floor. I met a guy from Schenectady who is a good friend of mine to this day. He didn't go to my high school, he went to Scotia High School, and so, he and I--I can't remember if he was in the same building as I was or not. So, yes, it was good, I mean, going to the mess hall, or not the mess hall, that was in the Army, [laughter] but going to [the Commons]. Everybody had a meal plan at the time.

SI: Yes. Did they have Brower Commons then or was it still in the airplane hangar?

TK: No, I honestly don't remember. I know it was a big place. I was always a slow eater, so, guys would give me a hard time all the time about how slow. I mean, I'm still a slow eater to this day, but, yes, the food was okay. I was not a picky eater, so, I never had any trouble with getting things to eat and it was good times. I remember, some of the classes were very large, the classroom size, Biology 101 or whatever it was. College courses were much more difficult than anything I'd had. In high school, I never had to study a whole lot to get good grades, but, at Rutgers, it was a little different at the time and I didn't study very much. I mean, I got by; I was pretty much a "C" student.

SI: Do any professors or classes stand out in your memory?

TK: The only class, it was a class that I didn't--yes, there's two of them--one of them was my biology class freshman year. It was, I think it was a big deal at the time, about DNA and RNA. Those things were just coming [out]; this was in 1963, '64. So, that was a big deal. That's what I remember. I do remember being in class, in political science class, on November 22, 1963, when Kennedy got killed. The professor, he told us to go home. He told us what had happened. So, that was a big deal at the time. I always remember that, being there. [Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Friday, November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas.] The other class, well, a couple other classes, the one class was one of the best classes I ever took, was over at Douglass, and it was "Greek and Roman Civilization" or "Greek and Roman Mythology." Anyway, the professor was good and the readings and everything were just things like *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*. I mean, to this day, I still enjoy that subject. I subscribe to Great Courses. I don't know if you've ever heard of [it], all those DVDs you can get. So, I still enjoy those. Then, the other class, I don't know, [laughter] we were seniors and everybody's looking for some gut class to take. So, we ended up taking "Economic Geography" and everybody [said], "Oh, yes, take this." Well, it turned out to be really a tough course and, when most of us took it, it was in the evening. So, I do remember that. Those were the ones. I took two years of Italian, didn't do very well in it, but business courses were okay. I had classes with Jimmy Valvano and Bobby Lloyd, who were in some of my business classes. Those were the only people that I remember of any notoriety, other than my close friends. They weren't in my fraternity or anything, but I remember both of them from school. [Editor's Note: Under head coach Bill Foster, star players Bob Lloyd and Jim Valvano led the Rutgers Men's Basketball Team to a string of successful seasons in the mid-1960s, culminating in the 1966-67 season, when Rutgers made the post-season for the first time ever and finished third in the National Invitation Tournament. Bob Lloyd became Rutgers' first All-American in basketball that year.]

SI: You were on the track team for a little while.

TK: A little bit, yes. I don't think I did [more than] maybe a semester or two, that's it.

SI: Did you play or tryout for any other sports?

TK: No, did some intramural things, maybe, some intramural football. I think I did some of that, but just putzing around with fraternity brothers, all informal stuff.

SI: Tell me a little bit about what attracted you to your fraternity and what the process was of getting in.

TK: Okay, I think it was second semester of freshman year. You couldn't rush before that. So, there was a fellow who was a year ahead of me who had gone to a rival high school, Scotia in Schenectady. I don't know if he had my name through this other fellow that lived in Clothier with me, Bruce Hasse, and so, they gave us an invite to Alpha Sigma Phi. Then, I had another fellow from my high school who was in Delta Phi. So, I visited those two, and maybe a couple more, I don't recall, and then, I got an invitation to join Alpha Sigma Phi. We had a pledge class of probably twenty. Chuck was in it for a while, and then, he went to Teke [Tau Kappa Epsilon]. I think it was Teke that he went to. You're not a member of Teke, are you?

SI: No, I was not in a fraternity.

TK: So, anyway, we joined. I joined, became a pledge. We took a lot of shit at the time. I mean, there was some serious hazing at the time, push-ups and hosing you down and all that kind of stuff. I wouldn't say anything that was demeaning that we had to go through, but somebody in our pledge class didn't like it and reported it. The fraternity got in trouble for it. I don't know if that was after I was initiated or not. So, yes, we had maybe fifteen in my pledge class and we got initiated in April of that year, in a ceremony at the fraternity. Then, the next three years, I lived in the fraternity house.

SI: Where was the house?

TK: 106 College Avenue.

SI: Is that on the corner?

TK: Yes, on the corner.

SI: Is it Bartlett and College Ave?

TK: Yes, I think it is Bartlett. So, we're on the corner. It was Alpha Sigma Phi--here's College Avenue--Alpha Sigma Phi, Chi Psi, and then, we had Chi Phi; yes, Chi Psi was next to us and Chi Phi was across the street. I think Chi Phi is gone, across the street.

SI: Yes, it is a sorority now.

TK: Okay, yes, and then, there was nothing else close by there. I think those three were the only ones there at the time. So, yes, I lived there for sophomore, junior and senior years.

SI: What was life like in a fraternity house in that day?

TK: Oh, it was--I don't think mayhem was [the word]--but we had a housemother, which you would think would calm things down a little bit. [laughter] Well, just to go back, when I was a

pledge, I mean, they encouraged you, "Unity, we want unity in the pledge class." So, every once in a while, we'd try to raid the house. When the brothers were all asleep, we'd break in and have water balloons and you ever hear of Crank's?

SI: No.

TK: Crank's was a brand of shaving cream, but it had high pressure. So, it came in cans. You'd just wake these guys up in the middle of the night with water balloons and Crank's, and then, you'd run for it, run like hell, to get out of there. Of course, they knew who it was. There was no question and you'd try not to get caught. So, we did that and, after I was a brother, we took all our meals there. We had a cook. Gertie was her name. She was a big black woman. She cooked lunch and dinner. The brothers cooked breakfast. I cooked. I cooked breakfast for a couple years, not every day of the week, but maybe two or three days a week, to make money, to pay for my room and board. One of the other things I did, we had an upstairs maid and a downstairs maid and the brothers did the work. I did that, because I was upstairs maid. You'd collect the laundry, the bedsheets and towels. I don't even remember how we did our laundry. We must've gone someplace to do it, and then, somebody cleaned the bathrooms. So, we did all that stuff to make money, to help pay. I think the only person that had a free room was the president and the treasurer. Because of the work that they had to do, they got free room and board or something like that, but it wasn't a big house. We had maybe thirty [residents]. We had a big membership, but we only had about thirty people who could actually stay in the house, on the second and third floors. We would have sit-down dinners, family style, and sit-down lunches, as I recall, or maybe I forget exactly how lunch worked, but dinner was always a fairly [formal affair], except Fridays and they sometimes had food fights. It was terrible. [laughter] I mean, anything that was on that table that was edible was thrown, and then, it had to be cleaned up after that.

SI: Did you have to wear a jacket and tie?

TK: I think we did some nights, yes. I don't recall--hopefully, it wasn't Friday nights, when we had food fights. I don't want to tell you they had a food fight every Friday night, they didn't, but, yes, we had [some]. The fraternity headquarters is here in Indianapolis. They used to be in Delaware, Ohio, and they moved over here years ago. Then, some alumni who had a shitload of money, he gave millions of dollars to the fraternity and they built a place, a new HQ. They have two staffs. One of them takes care of the endowment, I guess you'd call it, and the other one takes care of the fraternity. So, when somebody from headquarters would come, Ralph Burns was his name, he was like the--he was *the* fraternity. I mean, he wasn't the only staff member, but he was the big guy and he'd come out and visit us once a year or something. Yes, we did wear coats and ties some nights for dinner, not every night, but I honestly don't remember how much. I know that the poor housemother, she must've--it was just tough. She got free room and board, but, I mean, listening to [us], hear guys running around nights, but it was good times. The fraternity did pretty well academically. I don't think we were ever on academic probation. We were on social probation, I know that, a couple times for things that happened, but the only thing--I mean, nobody smoked dope or anything, at least in my sphere. There was a lot of crap going on in the country, Vietnam and all that, at the time, and people marching. We had this one--what the heck?--there was some professor there who was Genovese, maybe, was his name?

SI: Yes, Eugene Genovese. [Editor's Note: On April 23, 1965, at a teach-in at Rutgers University's Scott Hall, professor of history Eugene D. Genovese declared, "...I do not fear or regret the impending Viet Cong victory in Vietnam. I welcome it." A firestorm of controversy ensued and became a focal point in the 1965 New Jersey gubernatorial race, but Rutgers University President Mason W. Gross, with the support of the faculty, resisted public pressure to dismiss Genovese, on the principle of academic freedom.]

TK: Yes, I mean, Christ, he was a lightning rod for stuff. I forget what it was. I just didn't think that much [about that]. Now, maybe some of my fraternity brothers thought more about the politics going on. I didn't get that involved with it, but there was stuff going on. Things were mainly beer drinking or maybe some alcohol, but nothing worse than that. I don't know when all that changed. It must've been after I graduated, but it was good times. We'd have weekends, homecoming, try to find dates--not the easiest thing when you're in an all-male school. You look for townies or Coopies [Douglass College women] or somebody had a friend. My sister and my cousin came down and I fixed them up with fraternity brothers.

SI: Would the men move out those weekends? Were they still doing that?

TK: I think we did, yes. I think that's right. I don't know where we went, but I guess we did. [laughter] We moved out someplace, yes.

SI: You mentioned earlier that you were in a poli. sci. class when Kennedy was shot.

TK: Yes.

SI: What was the reaction for those couple of days, that weekend?

TK: I don't remember. All I remember is this guy saying, "The President's been shot. Go home," not that brutal, but, I mean, something to that effect. That's all I remember. I'll tell you one thing else I remember was getting salmonella poisoning.

SI: Okay.

TK: And I got it, many others got it, from the bakery that supplied us with doughnuts. I mean, there was an infirmary on campus or something at that time (not far from College Ave).

SI: The Hurtado Health Center.

TK: And they traced it to jelly doughnuts and I couldn't eat a jelly doughnut for years after that. I mean, you had diarrhea and vomiting. I mean, it was pretty serious at the time. I was in the infirmary for a couple days, along with lots of other [students]. It wasn't just our fraternity, I mean, any fraternity that got doughnuts from that bakery. As a cook, you cooked eggs or French toast for the kids, for your fraternity brothers, and bacon, and we had doughnuts. We always had a big variety. A couple dozen doughnuts would be delivered every morning, but that, I remember getting sick. I think that was really the only time I got sick during the [years], other

than maybe a cold or something, but seriously sick at the time. I don't recall students occupying a building. They may have, but I remember they did march down College Avenue, antiwar.

SI: From when you were there?

TK: Yes. That probably would've been '66, '67.

SI: Was it students? Was it outsiders?

TK: Oh, yes, mostly students; well, I don't know. None of my friends did it, or walked or marched or whatever or burned draft cards. That stuff was going on, but I don't know who it would've been.

SI: When you came, was ROTC still mandatory?

TK: No, it was not. They had Army and Air Force at the time. My dad encouraged me to join one or the other, which I ignored, [laughter] "Oh, no, I don't need that. I don't have to worry about that," little did I know! So, yes, I had fraternity brothers that were in Air Force or Army. You could drop after your sophomore year. You didn't have to go [for a commission]. I think when you got to be a junior or senior, you got some kind of a stipend, as I recall, but I don't know that much about it. Oh, one other thing about the fraternity; Little Anthony and the Imperials played one time at our fraternity. Well, they didn't come there, we hired them to perform. I mean, it was a pretty big group at the time, and then, we also had, at least one year that we were there, we had Kreskin, the mentalist. He came and put on a show, hypnotizing guys. I mean, that was a big deal. He would say that we didn't have to pay him if he couldn't find the check. So, we would hide the check someplace in that room and he always found it. [laughter] He'd take some person from the audience who was receptive and he'd just hold their hand. He probably felt their pulse or something, and then, he'd go around and find it stuffed in a drape hanger or something, or something like that. So, those were the two major social things that I remember, was Little Anthony and the Imperials and Kreskin coming to our fraternity. I know there were shows on campus, but I don't think I ever [went], I don't remember ever going to see [those], no.

SI: Would you go over to the Ledge?

TK: Yes, probably. I had a girlfriend. I was still going out with the same girl from high school at the time. So, she would come down. She went to some school in Boston and, yes, I remember going to the Ledge for--I don't know what I went there for, maybe for food or snacks or something. I'll tell you the thing I remember is those trucks, food trucks, and the people that ran them were mainly immigrants, I think, at the time. So, we would ask for something like a blueberry "krumpkie" or something that made no sense, but they knew what we wanted. Yes, the food trucks were right there on College Avenue, too. Yes, that was usually at night, you went over there for that, for a snack or something. I'll tell you, the other place we used to go all the time, once we became old enough, was Patty's. You've heard of Patty's?

SI: Yes, I have heard of Patty's. It is not there anymore.

TK: Yes, well, now, it's something else, but I've been in there the last couple times I've been to campus. The inside is very similar, but it's called something else now.

SI: Is it the Olive Branch?

TK: Yes, but we would go in there and, actually, there's pictures in our senior yearbook of some of my fraternity brothers in there, sitting at the bar. We would get these bar pies, bar pizzas and drafts. It was good times, yes, fond memories of that. [laughter] That was the main place that people [ate]--I mean, we'd never go out for a fancy meal, pretty much. It was mainly at Patty's.

SI: When you entered Rutgers, Vietnam was probably not even something you thought about.

TK: Oh, no, '63, nothing.

SI: Yes. When did you start to become aware of what was happening?

TK: Probably not until my senior year, yes.

SI: Okay.

TK: So, yes, I majored in business. I had some economics courses and accounting and all that stuff, and then, senior year, probably second semester. I took job interviews. Who did I interview with? I interviewed with the NSA, down in Washington, DC. I remember taking a train or a plane or something to get down there for [it], had to take a lie detector test and all this other stuff. I didn't get a job offer. I interviewed with New York Central Railroad. The problem was, it was you either had to go--some people went into teaching, just to avoid the draft. When I was back at Rutgers this past year, one of the other fellows in our group--there's myself and a couple other guys who did a lot of active duty--and he was a Navy pilot and he said, he told me, he says, "Yes," he said, "I knew guys that went into teaching to avoid the draft and they were miserable for thirty years, staying in it." Some of the engineers, electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, went to work for oil companies or they went to work for IBM and they got a draft deferment, because that was supposedly critical. If you graduated with a business [degree], a BA, which I did, there was not much chance you were going to avoid [the draft], unless you wanted to go to graduate school, which many people did, but, frankly, I'd had enough college at the time. So, I just knew my number was going to be up. So, I didn't pursue too many job interviews at the time.

SI: I have heard from other people who were looking for jobs at the same time, they say, "People knew I was going to be drafted, so, I did not get any offers." Do you think that played a role?

TK: I wouldn't be surprised, yes. I mean, I'm sure the companies knew it. I'm sure there were students there who had something wrong with them and they were 4-F. Plus, I'd had fraternity brothers who'd flunked out and got drafted. We had a fraternity brother, Roger Spence. He was either my age or a year younger, he flunked out, got drafted, went to Vietnam, got killed. I was

kind of wondering why his name wasn't up on the Vietnam Veterans Wall, but I think that's only maybe for graduates. I don't know.

SI: The one at Rutgers?

TK: Yes.

SI: He is not on there.

TK: No.

SI: I will look.

TK: Because I looked. I took pictures two visits ago, when I was there, because I wanted to see it and I don't know why his name wouldn't have been there, but maybe it's only people that graduated from the University.

SI: It could be. That could be the deciding factor.

TK: Yes, and then, there was another fellow, John Kraker, who was in my pledge class--oh, Roger Spence was in the pledge class right behind me, but I don't think he was the year behind me in college. I don't remember, anyway, and John Kraker was another fellow. He dropped out and he got drafted, spent a couple of years in the Army. Then, you know who else was in my fraternity? was Ray Lesniak. You know who he is.

SI: The state senator.

TK: Yes. He was a year behind me. He was a big player of the ponies. We had two or three guys in my fraternity who would go to Monmouth all the time. Is it Monmouth Racetrack?

SI: Yes.

TK: I mean, these guys played some serious betting on horses and Ray Lesniak was one of them. Then, Ray, he flunked out, and then, he went in the Army. I guess he came back, finished his degree, and then, he went into politics. I think he went to law school as well. He got a law degree, I believe.

SI: You were talking about people who went into the service.

TK: Oh, yes, the fellows who flunked out. So, yes, I mean, senior year, unless you wanted to go to get a graduate degree. I don't think there were a lot of my friends that went on to graduate school. I know there were people ahead of me that went to vet school and medical school. I don't know what happened to them, but those were people I didn't keep in contact with, but we had a number in the fraternity who did go to ROTC, either Air Force or Army. Several of them were pilots in the Air Force and some of them had ground duty and things like that, but, to answer your question, yes, in '67, I don't know what it was like earlier than that. Well, in 1967,

they had a draft, they didn't have a lottery. Everything depended on your local draft board. So, yes, I didn't get any job offers and it was just a matter of time before I was going to go in the Army.

SI: It sounds like you were pretty accepting of that.

TK: Just resigned to the fact. It was going to happen. [laughter] So, I wasn't going to go to Canada and, I mean, it never even crossed my mind to do anything like that. My dad had been in the Army, and so, I just decided I was going to see what happened.

SI: Did you think about the Navy?

TK: I did. I thought about the Navy, I thought about the Air Force and I took the exams and I got accepted--well, I passed the written exams for the Navy, I passed the written exams for the Air Force, but I couldn't pass the eye exams. I was quite nearsighted at the time. So, that was that, but, when I went to the Army, I got accepted at Officer Candidate School there. I passed the exams and ended up spending four months at Fort Dix. I did my basic training in June, July, August, September.

SI: You got your draft notice right after graduation.

TK: Yes, I didn't actually get a draft notice. It was only a matter of time, so, I went down to the Army recruiter in Schenectady. I graduated from [Rutgers], went home, decided, "I'm just going to take the test for Army Officer Candidate School," which I did and I passed it. I got sworn in in Albany, took a bus, and this was in June, late June. I mean, I graduated in May, less than thirty days later, I was at Fort Dix, took basic training, which was eight weeks. It was basic combat training, eight weeks. Then, I had advanced infantry training, also at Fort Dix for eight weeks, and then, I went to Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, which was Combat Engineers, and that was twenty-three weeks.

SI: Did you choose Combat Engineers or was that just where there was the first billet?

TK: At the time--this was late 1967--they still needed officers. So, they opened a lot of different Officer Candidate Schools, whatever service it might be, whether it was the Marines, they increased class sizes, same with the Navy. That was up in New England, I think, and then, the Air Force was a Lackland [Air Force Base in Texas], but the Army had them and they had it at Fort Benning, Fort Knox, Fort Sill, Fort Eustis, Fort Ord. The Army had probably seven or eight OCS schools. Well, they started to shrink it down. So, when I was in AIT, advanced infantry training, at Fort Dix, they said anybody that was going to be in the Engineers, Transportation, Ordnance, Quartermaster, would go to Fort Belvoir for Combat Engineer training. So, that's where they sent me and a lot of people that were in training with me. There was a lot of other--they called it a college option officer candidate. In other words, you signed up, but, by signing up, you had some choice. You didn't have to be an Armor officer or you didn't have to be an Infantry officer--you had some choice if you did it that way. So, yes, I went down to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, in November, early, mid-November, about the 15th or 17th of November, 1967, after finishing all the crap that we went through at Fort Dix.

SI: Tell me more about Fort Dix. Were these men from all over the country or mostly the Northeast?

TK: We had people from all over. We had four different types of people there. You had draftees, you had people who'd enlisted, you had National Guard, you had Reservists, all going through training at the same time and all together. You also had what was called McNamara's Project 100,000. Because they were having trouble getting enough people, there was such a demand for soldiers and Marines, they dropped the IQ standards. So, I don't know if anybody's mentioned this to you, Project 100,000 of McNamara's. They dropped the [standards]. I mean, we had people in there who were pretty [pathetic], who had very bad hygiene, who had very low IQs, that were drafted. Yes, it was pretty sad. Some of them were just [from] very poor backgrounds, I guess, is what I'd say and very poor upbringing, maybe not of their choice or they just were not very bright. They didn't have a lot of common sense. Some people got "blanket parties." I don't know if you've heard of a blanket party.

SI: Yes.

TK: Yes, well, they'd give some blanket parties to guys in my platoon that I remember, who just had very poor hygiene. So, yes, it was a real [mix]. It was eye-opening. I mean, it was a real challenge at times. I never had any trouble with the physical part of it or the academic part of it, just keep your mouth shut, do what they tell you. A lot of the people that were in there with me-- I was probably one of the younger guys that went to Officer Candidate School. Several of the guys were twenty-five to twenty-seven-year-olds. They'd been doing whatever they could to stay out of the military by going to graduate school or the Peace Corps. They just had run out of options. They were going to go in, and so, it was interesting to run into some of these people who tried to go to law school and didn't like it and said, "Oh, screw it, I'll just go in the Army," or whatever service it might be. OCS was a real challenge and it was probably one of the bigger accomplishments that I've ever been through. It was twenty-three weeks, but I did real well. I graduated seventh in my class of 120 we started out with, and we graduated sixty-three. So, yes, it was quite an experience.

SI: What kind of things did they teach you in Combat Engineering OCS?

TK: Well, we learned how to build bridges, you learned how to blow things up. You learned basic military stuff as well. You think you know how to march, but, until these tactical officers get ahold of you, it's [another story]. You learned to use your time wisely and "cooperate and graduate" was one of the things, you have to [do that]. Supposed to be lights out at ten o'clock-- well, you never get everything done by ten o'clock, so, everybody's studying or cleaning their boots or doing all this other stuff late at night, and eating square meals. I mean, it was brutal the first eight weeks. I mean, not only did you have--every platoon had two tac officers, tactical officers, who were commissioned officers--besides that, you had upper-class candidates who were getting close to being commissioned. They were probably worse than the tac officers as far as yelling and screaming. I mean, you couldn't walk anyplace. You always had to double-time everyplace. I mean, we literally ate square meals for I don't know how many weeks, but you'd be lucky to get much to eat. They then gave you--if nothing else, you had to choke your milk down

at the end of the meal, just so you got something to eat. You weren't allowed to have snacks. "Pogey bait" is what they called it. Some of the candidates were married in OCS and their wives lived close by. They would sneak in McDonald's or other snacks at night. I mean, they'd bring in duffle bags of milkshakes and burgers and, sometimes, they got caught and all that stuff went in the dumpster, all the money they'd spent. [laughter] I remember, there was a fellow in my platoon, who is a good friend of mine still, he and another candidate were looking out their window at night. They saw that the company next-door--we were in Delta Company and Charlie Company was next to us. They were probably a month ahead of us. They graduated a month earlier. They got caught sneaking McDonald's in and it was thrown in the dumpster. Well, this friend of mine and another guy, they saw them dumping it. So, they went out, got in the dumpster and they just ate all that uneaten, brand-new food, [laughter] and so, I'll never forget that. So, that was pretty interesting. We weren't allowed to use hot water in the shower. So, we've got all these guys in the barracks taking cold showers. Then, I don't know how we finally figured it out, I said, "Look, if we don't keep that water too hot, these upper class guys aren't going to know it." Well, of course, they knew. They probably did the same things themselves. So, we went through that. I smoked cigarettes at the time and one of the guys in our platoon, he got caught smoking, so, everybody lost their smoking privileges. So, everybody was pissed off at him. So, you learned a lot of discipline and, if you got too many demerits on [an inspection], they just destroyed the place. They'd knock all the beds down, the bunk beds, you'd have to clean everything up or you had to walk tours. The academics, they weren't easy, so, you had to study, I mean, there was a fair amount of mathematical and engineering type things to learn. Then, you would go and learn to shoot all the various weapons, grenade launchers and all that stuff, and hand-to-hand combat. Then, in April of 1968, we got put on riot control when Martin Luther King was killed and we were in Washington, DC, area, Fort Belvoir is. So, the government was worried about rioting in Washington, DC. So, they put us on riot control duty. We had to learn how to march with a bayonet. We knew how to do it, but they'd put you in these flanking operations, so [that] you knew what to [do to] keep people back and all that. Fortunately, nothing ever transpired in Washington, DC, so, we weren't called up for it, but I always remember that part of it. That was in April. I do remember how we had field training exercises, which Washington, DC, gets very cold in the wintertime, like New York and Indiana, too. I remember, we were just sleeping outdoors on a field training exercise, probably in January. I remember having to keep our M-14 rifles inside the sleeping bags with us, just to keep everything warm and operating. Field training exercise, you just go out, you kind of apply everything you've learned in the classrooms to [it]. You have an escape-and-evasion course and, if you get caught, you get tortured. Fortunately, a friend of mine and I, we did not get caught. We managed to evade the aggressors, they called them, were the other guys trying to capture us and stuff. So, we went through that, and then, got commissioned in May, May 17, 1968. My mom and dad came down for the ceremony, from New York, and so, that was a big deal.

SI: You mentioned you had an M-14. Did you have that all through training or did they switch you over?

TK: Oh, no, we kept [them]. We had M-14s, yes, because the 16s were all going over to Vietnam. Yes, the M-14 was a much heavier weapon, much better in many cases, but, anyway, that's what we did. We qualified on that and the M60 machine-gun and the fifty-caliber machine-gun and the forty-five pistol, all that stuff, yes. One thing I remember, going back to

Fort Dix, was, we were there one time and we were in buildings that were not too far from the stockade, where the prisoners were kept, the guys that were in trouble. I guess they were prisoners while they were there. They had a riot or something, and then, they used tear gas. Well, Christ, that tear gas just blew into our barracks. I always remember that, because we're trying to get to sleep or something or studying at night and our eyes were running. One other thing about basic training you had to do was, at Fort Dix, well, probably most of them, you had to wear a gas mask, you had to learn how to use it. Anyway, you ran into this bunker, this building, filled with tear gas. You had to recite your name, rank and serial number, and then, you could put your gas mask on. I always remember that. The other thing I remember at Fort Dix was sand dunes or something down there and getting all kinds of chigger bites, not just me, but a lot of the other troops. The only way you get rid of them is to put nail polish on them. It kills them. They just disappear, but the other thing about Fort Dix, I would make trips up to Rutgers. My fraternity brothers would come down and pick me up at the gate, if I got a pass for the weekend. So, I'd go up to Rutgers with a shaved head and hang around the fraternity, [laughter] but it was good to get out anyway. It was obvious you were in the military, without any hair on your head.

SI: May 1968 ...

TK: I got commissioned.

SI: You earned your commission.

TK: Yes.

SI: Where were you sent next?

TK: I was sent to Fort Eustis, Virginia, which is down in the Tidewater area, Norfolk, down in that area. So, they commissioned me in the Transportation Corps. So, because I didn't know anything about transportation, I had to go to Fort Eustis, which is the Transportation Headquarters, and spent six weeks in class. There were twenty-six out of our OCS class they commissioned in Transportation. They commissioned us in three different [branches]-- Transportation, Ordnance and Engineers. Well, the fellows who were Engineers, they went to a job of some type or other. The Ordnance guys went to Aberdeen Proving Grounds for training. Then, those of us in the Transportation went to Fort Eustis and we took six weeks of training to learn about the Transportation Corps. So, I was there May through August, maybe July, something like that, the Summer of '68. Of course, then, in June '68, Robert Kennedy gets killed. So, '68 was an unbelievable year. I mean, I'll never forget it, all the things that went on in 1968. So, I went down to Fort Eustis, rented an apartment in Hampton Roads for maybe six months, and then, moved to Newport News, just outside Fort Eustis, with several other officers. I roomed with three other people from my OCS class down there at Fort Eustis. Two of them are still alive, one fellow's passed away, but we lived in an apartment complex. Then, I took another course, which was called Harbor Craft Officers Class. The Army also has boats, landing craft, they call them, landing craft utility and landing craft mechanized. So, anyway, I took another class and that was several months. After that, I ended up getting stationed there at Fort Eustis in one of the line companies for training soldiers. They were truck companies, mainly. So, I was

there through June of 1969, when I got orders for United States Army Support, Thailand. So, sadly, I missed my only sister's wedding. She got married in August of 1969 and I missed it because I left for Thailand on July 15th, just before Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon [on July 20th]. I always remember that. So, I went home, spent some time with my mom and dad, my sister, and flew out to Travis Air Force Base. From Travis, we flew Braniff or Continental. It was a commercial flight, but it was all filled with soldiers going to either Vietnam or Thailand or Okinawa. We flew to Hawaii, refueled, went to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, and then, on to Thailand. I landed in Bangkok with two people from my OCS class, small world. I hadn't seen them in a year and they were on the same flight with me. We landed at Bangkok. They picked us up from [the airport]. In Thailand, there was a lot of activity in the military at the time. This was July of '69. What we did, we supported the Air Force, because there was six Air Force bases in Thailand. You had a B-52 base, which had been built a couple years prior, maybe '66, '67, because the military was flying all their B-52s out of Guam, which was a thirteen-hour flight, round-trip, and so, they built [this one]. So, what they did, they worked with what's called U-Tapao Royal Thai Naval Base and it's south of Bangkok. Well, besides that, you had Ubon and Udorn and Korat and NKP [Nakhon Phanom]. They had five or six other bases for mainly Air Force, flying F-4s and (A-86s?) and all this other stuff. One other thing I didn't know at the time was, they flew Blackbirds, [SR]-71s, like the ones that were the U-2 flights [reconnaissance overflights], but they flew them out of Takhli Air Force Base, which I didn't know until years later, when I did some research into it. So, what the Army did was supply weapons to the Air Force, bombs, foodstuffs and other supplies. So, I got assigned to United States Army Support, Thailand and further to the 519th Transportation Battalion. What we did, we ran convoys to all the bases as well as up to the Laotian border, because on the other side of the border from Thailand was where the CIA operated. So, we supplied all kinds of stuff up to the border, where it would be taken across by unmarked vehicles and that type of thing. I was there for almost a year in southern Thailand, near the Cambodian border. What we did was, we worked near the docks, near the Port of Sattahip, and we unloaded bombs and petroleum and that type of thing, for the Air Force.

SI: What would a typical day be like for you?

TK: We lived in small hooches. Officers had it a little bit better than the enlisted men. I was a first lieutenant at the time and we lived in a small hooch that housed four of us. Two Infantry officers and two Transportation officers. Then, we had a house girl that took care of polishing our boots, washing clothes, and making the bed. We'd pay them three or four bucks a month, I mean, or a week, I don't know what it was. It was very cheap. So, I'd go over to the mess hall, have breakfast. Then, I'd go to the company. I worked at the 53rd Transportation Company. We were short-haul convoys. We didn't do long-haul convoys. So, we'd do some paperwork. I was the senior first lieutenant. When the captain who ran the place left, I took over command of the company for a while until they brought another captain in. So, you'd have some disciplinary problems. Somebody did something wrong and you'd have to give them an Article Fifteen and they'd lose a stripe or they'd lose pay or something like that--not a lot of that, and, again, no trouble with drugs where I was. This was 1969, 1970. Now, I think in other parts of the military, there were drugs and stuff like that, but not where I was. So, then, you'd put in a day's work. We probably worked Saturdays; you probably worked six days a week. We had Thai drivers. They didn't want the Americans driving, agreement of forces. They don't want [that]

because, first of all, all of the Army vehicles had the steering wheel on the left side and they drove on the other side of the road over in Thailand, which is not ideal, when you're driving on the left-side of the road and you're sitting not toward the middle. So, we would hire Thai drivers. There were a couple of attacks on bases, nothing too much near where I was. We had Agent Orange defoliation on the base. I'm trying to think of what else. It was not bad duty. I mean, we had good food and we weren't traipsing through the jungle with a backpack and an M-16 and sleeping in a swamp or anything like that.

SI: When you say there were attacks, were they from Communist sympathizers?

TK: Exactly. That's exactly what it was, yes. They attacked a couple of the bases. I don't know that there were many fatalities, but, again, you still [had a threat]. All of our bases were defended. We had guards. We had local guards and we had some MPs and it was all--biggest problem we had was wild dogs running around. Every once in a while, the MPs would have to come around and kill the dogs that were just [there]. They wouldn't attack people, but they shouldn't have been there. It's too bad.

SI: When you would send out these convoys, truck convoys, would they be set up with armed guards?

TK: Yes. Some GIs would be armed. I took a convoy one time, a container of M-16s and we had some guards on that one. I took it all the way up to NKP, which is right on the Laotian border, because they were trying to equip everybody in-country with M-16s at the time. The Thais would drive, but they usually had a GI in the cab with them. These were five-ton trucks with a big trailer full of stuff. It might've been bombs, it might've been ammunition, it might've been--we had some secret type things that we took to different bases, for listening devices, security type things. They didn't tell us a lot about them. Then, usually, the officer was either in a jeep in front or in back, I forget, and you just checked, make sure everything's going okay. You'd stop if you had to get fuel, but, usually, they weren't that [long]. It was overnights, but, usually, you didn't have to stop someplace in the meantime, but you'd be driving. You'd drive through these little towns and these poor Thais are out there. These women are washing down their [clothes], they have their laundry up on [a line]. I always remember, they had their laundry up on the line and all these trucks would come through on these dusty roads and all this red clay and stuff, it'd just [get] all over the local clean clothes. I don't think I ever got sick over there with the food. I ate a lot of local food. Occasionally, we'd be able to do something for the weekend. So, we'd go to Pattaya Beach, which was a forty-five-minute drive to the Gulf of Siam, something like that. Anyway, it wasn't too far, that we could go down there for a couple nights, have some fun, have some drinks, some good seafood, or go to Bangkok. We usually got an in-country R&R. You could go up to Bangkok or Chiang Mai or some other nice place. Then, I had one R&R. I went to Hong Kong with two other officers that I knew. We went to Hong Kong for a week, had a nice time over there, just did some sightseeing and bought some clothes, had some clothes made. They, of course, didn't fit you two years later, but that was a good trip. So, what else happened over there? Again, several days, after I got to Thailand, Neil Armstrong stepped on the Moon, for those of us that believe he did, but, of course, there's a lot of people that don't believe that ever happened. It amazes me. I don't know if you've ever heard any of those stories. [laughter]

SI: Yes. I wanted to ask about interaction with the local Thais. They were the drivers.

TK: They were employees, yes. We'd pay them. It was a good system. It was money for them, the women that were house girls, you had people that worked in the clubs, the NCO club, the officers' club, the enlisted men's club. We had local [help]. We had a lot of Filipino bands would entertain. They were always big on, the Filipinos were, playing rock music. I saw Bob Hope at Christmastime, 1969. That was something I won't forget. I think he had Joey Heatherton there and a bunch of people. That was at that Air Force base, at U-Tapao.

SI: Did you need to fly anywhere else as part of your job, other bases?

TK: No. Everything was by truck. We'd go by truck or jeep, something like that, yes, no other flights, other than when I flew to Hong Kong, of course, for [R&R]. I forget, that was probably in 1970. Yes, I mean, it was hot all the time. You just had a rainy season and a dry season, but it was hot every day.

SI: Did the monsoon season affect your operations at all? Did you need to go out regardless?

TK: Well, yes, you went out regardless, yes. Behind our supply room in my company, there was a Special Forces unit that was a scuba unit. They were teaching the Thai military Scuba. Yes, there were other Special Forces up in the northern part of the country. They weren't fighting. They were training the Thais to fight the insurgents and things like that.

SI: Were you over there during the Cambodian operation?

TK: That was just after I had gotten out of the service, I think. That was in May of 1970. I got home just before Kent State or just at the time that Kent State happened in May of '70 and they may have been protesting that thing. So, yes, I got out. I had a two-year commitment after I got commissioned. So, I ended up being almost three years in the Army, but, if I got out two years to the day, it would've been the middle of May and I got out about a week ahead of that. So, it was just at the time of Kent State, just at the time of that Dewey Canyon/Lam Song 719 or whatever it was, the incursion--Nixon was President at the time--into Cambodia, yes. [Editor's Note: From April to July 1970, American and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces conducted the Cambodian Campaign or Incursion to eliminate Communist forces in eastern Cambodia. On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen fired on students at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine others. Some of the students had been protesting the United States entry into Cambodia, while others had been passing nearby or observing the demonstration. The Dewey Canyon/Lam Song 719 operation Mr. Killion mentioned was an ARVN (backed logistically by the US) incursion into Laos in 1971.]

SI: Does anything else about everyday life in Thailand stand out?

TK: Played a lot of ping-pong at the officers' club. They had a slot machine there. I remember winning. It was just nickels, but what else happened, day-to-day?

SI: After your shift was over, would you pretty much just go over to the officers' club?

TK: Yes. Well, I ate most of my meals there. Also, I bought a lot of electronic equipment. That was big. I still have a few things from 1969, that I bought; speakers, a turntable, amplifier, a nice camera that, sadly, I can't adapt to be digital, but what are you going to do? I still have it, I don't use it, but it's a nice camera. Yes, those are the things that I remember and I bought stuff for friends of mine that wanted something. I said, "Yes, I can get you a tape deck." I bought him, a friend of mine, an amp and shipped it back to the States, tape decks, that type of thing. It was all reel-to-reel at the time, which is kind of a dead thing these days. Yes, day-to-day, I mean, we had a medic. There was a doctor at the base, there was a dentist at the base. I remember having some dental work done, maybe a filling or something, and they had movies some nights you could see. I remember calling my parents on a MARS line. It was where you say, "Hello, over." Everything was like that when you talked to your mom and dad. Writing letters home--you always looked forward to getting letters from home or a package of cookies or something like that. So, I was obviously away for Christmas in December of '69.

SI: Did you ever get a sense of how your parents felt about your going into the service?

TK: I'm sure they were worried, but I always remember, they took me over to the induction center in Albany in June of 1967. I had to give them--I wore civilian clothes when I went to Fort Dix--but I gave my mom a bag of stuff or something, maybe personal possessions that I'd had at the time. I wasn't sure what to do, but, no, I'm sure they were worried, but they never bugged me about it. Of course, I'm sure they told me to take care of myself and be safe and they were glad when I got home, 1970, when I got home, yes.

SI: It is interesting that your father was in the Transportation Corps, too. Was that just a coincidence or did he give you advice about going into that branch?

TK: No. Yes, he left the Army as a second lieutenant. He wanted to become an officer if he had to go overseas and he thought he was going to go overseas. That's why he applied for Officer Candidate School. He thought he'd be better off as an [officer]--it sounds good, but I'm not sure that's necessarily a good thing. I mean, lieutenants in combat have a higher fatality rate than anyone else. I had some choices, because I graduated high in my OCS class, of what branch I wanted, so, I just picked Transportation. That was fine with me. So, I wouldn't call it a coincidence and probably more I had some influence over it.

SI: Do you think your training prepared you well for what you wound up doing, particularly in Thailand?

TK: For later life?

SI: No, just for what you did in the military.

TK: Oh, you mean the training I had in OCS?

SI: Yes.

TK: Oh, absolutely, yes, certainly more well prepared than if I had been an ROTC officer, just a lot more practical, going through basic training, and it was good, good training. You just learned to get organized and you just learned to put up with a lot of shit. You just take it, say, "Hey, that's the way it is, just suck it up, man, and it's going to be over soon. You don't have to do it the rest of your life." So, yes, character builder, they called it.

SI: Being there from 1969 to 1970, what did you think of the war effort at that time, both why we were there, and then, also, how we were fighting the war?

TK: Well, I remember, when we were at Fort Dix, a good friend of mine, he said he wanted to burn his draft card. Yes, I don't know, I guess I never had strong feelings one way or the other, whether we should be there or not. We just were there. It was a mistake. I mean, nothing much changed. We were there for fifteen years, or however many, and, Christ, the place ended up [falling to the Communists]. You had a corrupt administration, just typical of--what the hell?--it's no different than what went on in places like Iraq, for God's sake. I mean, we don't learn from history somehow, this country, I don't know. I guess I just did my job. I'd never been a big political animal. So, I mean, we knew what was going on. We'd read *The Army Times*, we got that, and saw what's going on. Things worked out well for me, frankly. I look back on it and I think, "If I had taken ROTC, I would've got commissioned in '67, instead of '68. Of course, I would've been out of the Army a year earlier, but who the hell knows what I--shit, I could be dead." So, I just look at it as things worked out well for me.

SI: You said earlier that you had some exposure to Agent Orange.

TK: They used Agent Orange on the base that I was living on, for defoliating. It's not as if I handled the drums or anything like that, but they did have it on those bases, yes.

SI: Were there any early indicators? For example, some veterans have said that they got skin conditions.

TK: No, I have never had any problems like that, but, I mean, I'm in contact, through a couple military groups, and, I mean, a lot of these people that served near me, Jesus, all kinds of stuff, with diabetes and skin problems. Knock on wood, I've been very, so far, lucky, yes, but there was a lot of [it]. That stuff's been going on for a long time. I can't tell you much about it, because, knock on wood, I haven't had a severe--I haven't had any--reaction, to this point. So, I hope it stays that way, not like Chuck. I think that probably was the reason for his prostate problems, most likely. You never know, but I wouldn't be stunned. A lot of people have had those same things. I've known people who were not necessarily in Thailand, but in Vietnam, I mean, it affects their kids. Jesus, it was some bad stuff, but there was a lot of protesting about Dow Chemical. I think Dow was the main one that did Agent Orange, and there was Agent Blue and all this other stuff, yes. (In 2017, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and had surgery in October.)

SI: Did you come back on a commercial carrier as well?

TK: I did, yes. I came back to California. The other fellows that were over there with me in Thailand--when you're getting ready to get out, they want to give you a pep talk, "Stay in. Hey, we can guarantee you two years in Europe." So, the Colonel brought me in and I'd gotten a couple awards while I was over there in the battalion. So, he said, "Why don't you think [about it]?" I said, "I think I've had enough of the military." I didn't want to be impolite or anything, because he was a good guy. So, of the three of us that went over together, two of us got out and the other fellow stayed in for thirty years, retired as a colonel. So, that was just an aside, I guess, that they tried to [get me to stay]. I got back, I had enough time in service that I didn't have to get in the Reserves. When I got back, I ended up taking a job in New Jersey, in Rahway, and I got a call one time from a local Reserve unit, asking if I wanted to [join]. I guess they needed a lieutenant or a captain or whatever I would've been at the time. I said, "No, thank you." So, I didn't have to [do that]. If I'd only had two years active duty, I would've had to spend some time in the Reserves, but I had almost three and that was enough. That's how it worked at the time.

SI: You were discharged right after.

TK: I got discharged in California someplace. I want to say Fort Ord; I don't know, it was an Army base, anyway, in California. Then, I flew home. I stopped in Akron, Ohio. I had two friends, two fraternity brothers, who were working there. So, I stopped in Akron, Ohio, on the way home and spent a couple days with them and just had a good time, and then, went home to my mom and dad, went back to Schenectady. They met me at the airport then. Then, I had to decide what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. [laughter]

SI: Did you have any plans that formed while you were in the military?

TK: No, not really. No, I decided to go back to get a job in New Jersey or Pennsylvania, on the East Coast there, someplace other than Schenectady. I wasn't particularly interested in working for the General Electric Company. I don't know why, but probably would've been okay. So, I went down to--at the time, I can't think of the name of the company, but there was military recruiters. They had companies that were specifically geared towards getting jobs for junior officers, what you'd call a lieutenant or a captain, who'd only been in for two or three years, finding them jobs in private industry or the government or whatever it was. So, I had an interview with a couple companies. I ended up taking a job with a company called--at the time, it was Philadelphia Quartz Company. They were a chemical manufacturer and I took interviews in Philadelphia, and then, went to the plant in New Jersey. It was in Rahway, and so, I went to work for them. They made sodium silicates, which are used in soaps and adhesives and things like that. It was a twenty-four-hour-a-day operation. I mean, you had three shifts, running machinery and furnaces and things like that. So, I went to work for them.

SI: What were you doing?

TK: I was a production supervisor. So, you're dealing with union employees and I worked days, eight to five or whatever it was. Sometimes, you'd get called at night. If they had a problem, you had to go in and take care of it. Then, the company also had branches, or they also had factories, in different parts of the country. So, some of them would have labor problems. They'd send us and we'd go work. They had one out in Berkeley, California. I was out there for three or

four weeks working there, helping them run the place because the workers were on strike. I remember being there. So, it was okay. I decided, after two-and-a-half years, I didn't want to do that type of work the rest of my life. I decided to go back to college and use my GI Bill, get a graduate degree. I lived in Woodbridge, New Jersey. I had an apartment in Woodbridge, New Jersey, at the time. So, I'd spend time with fraternity brothers. We'd go down to the Jersey Shore. We'd rent a house for the summer down in Avalon, Stone Harbor, Sea Isle City; you know where those places are, probably.

SI: Yes.

TK: Yes. We went down there because most of my friends lived or worked in Philadelphia or South Jersey. So, we'd go there rather than Toms River or Atlantic City or whatever. We'd go down there, or back to the fraternity from time to time for some parties or homecoming. So, that was fun.

SI: Did you ever have an issue with either people who were prejudiced against the military or, in trying to apply for jobs, where people did not want to hire veterans?

TK: No, I never ran into that. I never had anybody spit on me or I never had anybody disrespect me if I was in uniform when I came home, because I wore my khakis coming home on the plane. I never had anybody give me any grief, just lucky, I guess, I don't know. No, I never ran into anybody that was [anti-veteran]. I guess if you came back and went to graduate school right away, in the late '60s, you might've run into people that [would] call you baby-killers or whatever the hell it was, but, no, I never had any confrontations or anything like that.

SI: Where did you go to graduate school?

TK: I ended up applying to two business schools, Tulane and University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, which is where I ended up going. I lived in Chapel Hill for two years and enjoyed school. I really enjoyed graduate school. We had some great professors and Chapel Hill's a wonderful place. I met my wife down there, got married shortly after I graduated.

SI: Were you working while you were going there?

TK: Oh, no, I was a full-time student. I took out some more student loans. I still hadn't paid off my student loans from Rutgers, [laughter] but they put everything in abeyance at the time and it didn't even add any interest, I think, because I was in the military. I didn't owe a lot. I took out maybe four or five thousand to finish up at Rutgers. Three-percent interest, it was pretty cheap and I'd been paying that while I was working in New Jersey for the Philadelphia Quartz Company, but I was paying out-of-state tuition at UNC. So, I took out loans to go there, plus, I had the GI Bill. I was getting, I don't know what it was, something every month, rented an apartment with another fellow, somebody I didn't even know, but, I mean, it was another student. I didn't work while I was going to college, to graduate school, but I ended up working for *The Raleigh News & Observer* during the summer between to make some money. I was a paid intern, and then, I applied for in-state residency my second year of graduate school. It was a two-year MBA program with military and ex-military guys from the Army, Navy, Air Force,

Marines, along with people right out of undergraduate school. So, I applied for in-state residency to save money the second year. I had to go before a [panel] of half a dozen people asking questions. I talked through it and they gave it to me. So, the second year, I paid in-state tuition. So, that saved me quite a bit of money. I guess that's when I figured I was a good salesman. [laughter]

SI: What did you concentrate on in business school?

TK: The Carolina MBA program was pretty much general business. You could choose if you wanted to take more accounting classes, advanced or cost accounting, which I didn't. I took the accounting I had to take, some economics courses, production management, marketing. So, I took just a general type of [curriculum]. Everything was pass/fail. I got a couple "Hs," which is, if you were distinguished in a class, you got an "H." Otherwise, you got pass/fail. It wasn't a big class. I don't know, I'm trying to think of how many we had, less than a hundred in the class. Women, men, blacks, Hispanics, there was just a real cross-section of people. So, it was interesting, and then, what happened, anything else happen? I had a lot of fun, learned a lot, studied. I did a lot better studying--I mean, I was a better student--at twenty-seven or twenty-eight than I was at eighteen, I can tell you.

SI: Did they have a chapter of your fraternity at UNC?

TK: No, they did not.

SI: How did you meet your wife?

TK: Blind date, was my second year there. During my second year, I had a different roommate. This fellow was ex-Navy, he actually was an ex-Navy SEAL, and he and I, we roomed together the second year. He was a couple years younger than I was and he went to NC State. His sister came down and stayed with us and she was my date for the football game. He had a friend of his from Memphis came to town for the same game. There was a woman who had a couple kids that I was good friends with who lived in the same apartment complex. She had a high school friend of hers who had come back Chapel Hill, and she fixed her up with my roommate's friend from Memphis--and she became my wife. That's how I met her. I met her that weekend, and then, after that, I got her name and number and I called her. So, we started going out in October or September and we got married the following May, pretty quick. Her mom and dad lived in Chapel Hill. Her dad was retired from the Rockefeller Foundation. He was a malariologist. He was a physician and they'd lived all over the [world]. My wife had been born in China, in Shanghai. She's not Chinese, but she was born and lived there for a couple years. Then, they moved to India for four years, and then, she grew up in Brazil, in Rio, where her dad was, again, with the Rockefeller Foundation at all those places. So, he had come back to work and worked at the United Nations Plaza, where Rockefeller was, up in New York, while his wife retired to Chapel Hill. Then, he left Rockefeller, he retired from the Rockefeller Foundation, came back to Chapel Hill, taught at the university in public health. He got sick and my wife was living out of the country and came back. She had just gotten back the previous six months or so before I met her. We got married May 31, 1975. June, we moved to Indianapolis, I took a job with what was then FMC Corp. I took interviews at school with some banks. I didn't think I wanted to be a

banker, but I took interviews with, oh, two or three different companies and one of them was with FMC Corporation out of Chicago. The other one that I talked seriously with was Allied Chemicals, out of New Jersey, I think they were, New York, got job offers from both of them and decided to take the job with FMC Corporation. So, I had two choices. I could've gone to Chicago to work in their corporate mergers and acquisitions department, or corporate something or other, I don't know--planning, corporate planning is what it was--or come here and work for the president of the pump division. So, I talked to my fiancée at the time and we thought, "Hey, let's try Indianapolis." So, anyway, I came out for an interview with the president of the division and they offered me a job, which I accepted, as his assistant. That's where I started. It was just kind of a [starting position]. His other MBA was going off and he wanted another assistant, an entry-level type job, but it was okay. So, then, my wife and I came up for two or three days to look for a place to live. So, we found a place and we came up here. My wife had been married previously and she had a six-year-old son. So, we had our oldest son, Mark, and so, he came--he didn't come with us, he'd stayed in school in North Carolina, stayed with her mother and dad. So, Sarah came up. We found a school district that we liked and an apartment. So, we put an offer in on an apartment, got that all squared away, went back to North Carolina, and then, we got married. So, this was all [prior to that], found a place to live, blah, blah, blah, because we got married on the 31st and I think, two weeks later, we drove up here. I started work on the 15th of June, 1975, at what was the pump division of FMC Corporation, as assistant to the president, which was an administrative type job. You learn about the business and I did that for a year-and-a-half, something like that. Then, I went into marketing with them, did some marketing things for a couple years. Then, I went into sales, domestic sales. I went into commercial sales. I had a territory. Again, all my jobs with this company were right here, out of Indianapolis, for thirty-five-plus years that I worked for them. A year after I came to work, the company was sold. It was sold to a company out of New York City called Indian Head, which was a division of a corporation called TBG, which is Thyssen-Bornemisza Group out of Europe. Thyssen-Bornemisza is a big conglomerate. They owned several other pump companies, they had Wayne School Buses out of Richmond, Indiana. So, they were all over the place, but they wanted more pump companies, so, they bought us and didn't change much. What ended up happening was, the president was a California guy, he wanted to move back. So, they came up with some plan that said, "Oh, yes, we need to be out in the West Coast." So, he transferred there and I went to work for the local general manager, before I went into marketing, and then, I went into sales. I had a sales territory that went from Tennessee down to Florida and west to Texas and everything in-between, selling our product through distribution. Manufacturer's reps, distributors would buy our products or they'd work on a commission, mainly for the commercial market (office buildings, hospitals, universities). They need air-conditioning pumps, they need fire-protection pumps. So, I did that for three years.

SI: Did you need to travel all around the territory?

TK: Oh, yes. I would fly out on a Monday, rent a car, drive to some offices, find out why these guys were not selling. If they weren't, I had to cancel them and find somebody new. If they were doing a good job, you took them out, have a nice dinner, thank them, give them a plaque. I mean, it was industrial sales is what it was, and it was fun. I enjoyed being out of the office; get out of the office, you get into the real world, because the office is not the real world, [laughter] in most businesses, anyway. I can't speak for all of them. So, I did that for two-and-a-half, three

years, and then, I got an opportunity. The fellow who was the product manager was retiring. Product managers have to know a lot about the different products and processes. So, anyway, the general manager, who I had worked for previously, he offered me that position and I did that for seven years. I was a product manager, mainly for the products that were manufactured here in Indianapolis, and so, that was good. I was working with sales, I worked with manufacturing. It's kind of a cross between a staff job and a line [job]. Sales is a line job--people expect results [laughter]--whereas if you're at the factory, it's more of a staff job. It's not that it's not important, but it's different pressures, and the product manager's kind of a mix. So, I did that for about seven years. Then, what happened then? Then, the fellow who had been the long-term president reached sixty-five years old. If you were at a certain level at our corporation, you had to retire, unless you get--I'm sure there's exceptions. Anyway, so, they spent--God, I bet they spent eighteen months trying to find somebody to take his place. Now, there were two candidates that I knew in our company that wanted the job and neither one of them were offered the job. One of them was the operations manager in California, the other was the sales manager. So, they brought in somebody from another pump company who took over. This was 1996. So, he reorganized everything. This new guy, he was going to combine--they had to make the decision, they were going to move everything to either California or Indiana--and they made the decision, which was the right decision, to bring everything here, because most of our business was, frankly, east of the Mississippi. So, they did that. They brought this guy in. He supposedly had experience in doing this before. Well, he ended up almost bankrupting the company, because he just let--the finances just got completely out of hand with spending and lack of oversight. He was the kind of guy, he was a very smart guy. He was a couple years older than I was. I remember going into meetings with him. I don't know if you've ever been in meetings with people where you sit down with them and you tell them your story and you can see that he's thinking about something else. It wouldn't take long before he just--that was enough. So, you had to tell, "Okay, we're done," and I'd leave, something like that. So, I didn't work directly for him, but I was in meetings with him. He's a nice enough guy, but, oh, he just--he hired a CFO who just didn't know his ass from his elbow, I think. He just spent too much money. Anyway, so, he got the boot a couple years later. In the meantime, they'd kind of reorganized sales and marketing and I had another opportunity. Sometimes, things come up and you have opportunity, you have a choice to make, and I've always been very fortunate in making the right choice at the right time, I guess it is. They offered me two positions. One of them, I was the commercial manager--you'd be in charge of product managers, as well as customer service, field service--or I could be the marketing manager, and they were equal. They just reported to different areas. I picked the marketing manager, which, fortunately, worked out well for me. So, I did that for another three or four years. By then, they brought in another president--they went from a guy who was a big picture [person], the first guy was a big picture guy--they go from him to a fellow who was a micromanager. They bring him in from England. He was a nice enough guy, but he was a micromanager. Actually, you talk about, "It's not rocket science," well, this guy was a rocket engineer. He came in and he was just way off to the other end of things, and so, he didn't last too long. What ended up happening, they thought, "We've got to get all these VPs, we've got to get them in a separate building, so [that] they can think about where the business should go." So, they ended up getting a ten-year lease in a building, downtown Indianapolis, on a top floor, beautiful place. It must've cost them an arm and a leg. So, these guys, they're not involved. They don't want them involved in the day-to-day business, and so, then, that just completely goes away. Then, they're stuck with paying this lease or they have to sublease it or something like

that. So, this Englishman, he leaves for Canada to run a couple operations they have up there. They bring a new fellow from Sulzer Corporation out in California. So, I'm marketing manager at the time. I'm trying to get the chronology here a little, as best I can. He comes in. He brings a couple people with him from Sulzer and, one of them, he puts in as marketing director. At the time, I went from marketing manager to--what was it? I was running major projects for the company. These would be large contracts, where we would have a two or three million-dollar order with a company like Hyundai, where we were supplying them pumps that might be fifty-inches in diameter with two-thousand-horsepower motors. So, there was a fair amount of that. I'm trying to get my chronology right; yes, that would've been about right. So, I was doing that. Let me back off here a minute; okay, so, we're up to 1995. 1995, I end up taking the job as the international sales manager, sales director, for the company, again, working out of Indiana. We had, probably, twenty-five to thirty percent of our business was export, mainly Far East and the Middle East, okay, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Korea, Japan were the big contractors, big, big projects. So, I did that for--I started that in '95. '96, they bring in the micromanager guy and a fellow above him over in Europe. They decide that they're going to split the company up into three different areas, Asia, the Americas, North and South, and Europe, because they didn't want people from the United States calling on these other areas. They'll sell our products with their own people, which sounds like it would work, but, again, it was a bad mistake. It did not work. So, anyway, what I ended up doing was spending all my time on South and Central America and the Caribbean. We did a lot of business from '95 up through 2000. That's what I did. So, I was traveling down there. I took Spanish lessons, so [that] I could speak Spanish in most of the countries in South America, except Brazil, where they speak Portuguese. So, I did that. We built the business up, and then, in 2000, they make another change--(oh, also, we had Mexico). Well, then, they come up with the idea that, "Well, we think because, Mexico, they speak Spanish in Mexico, in South America, they speak Spanish, so, it makes sense for them [Mexico to take that on]." Well, this other thing hadn't worked very well, splitting it up, because a lot of our customers, they wanted to deal with Americans. They didn't want to deal with the Brits or they didn't want to deal with a guy working out of Singapore. So, that kind of flopped. So, then, they come up with the second idea, and this was our president, here--I think he was the one, yes, it was the fellow who [was here]. I had a vice-president of sales above me, in-between me and the president, and we had two domestic sales guys running divisions like mine. So, they said, "Well, Mexico, they speak [Spanish], so, let's do that." Well, come to find out, most everybody in South America, they don't trust Mexico. They didn't even trust people in their own countries, from a sales standpoint. They looked down on Mexico as how we might look down on some Third World country--I mean, I'm not saying it's right, this is the way it is--and they want to deal with the Americans, because they trust the Americans. So, this doesn't work. Here's another thing they tried. So, when they do that, when they give that to Mexico, then, that's when they give me the job of taking care of the large projects, which I have, like, half a dozen project managers that work for me. You're constantly [being challenged]. When you're dealing with big customers like Mitsubishi, they're sending in people all the time, inspectors, and you've got terms and conditions this thick. So, it can be a real headache. So, I did that for a couple years, until the fellow who was our vice-president of sales, he goes to the president, he says, "Look, this stuff's not working." He says, "Let us take back Korea and Japan and some of these other territories." So, I go back into international sales, and I'm working on that from 2000 up until 2005. Again, I'm doing a lot of traveling. I travel for two weeks at a time, sometimes a little more, sometimes a little less. I have salesmen in Singapore, I have salesmen in Europe and

business is going well. This is 2005, I'm sixty years old. I talked to my wife, I said, "You know, I'm going to check with the company and see, maybe retire in a couple years." I like my job. I'm sixty years old. I'm over in Latvia, I think; my mom falls and breaks her leg. So, I get back from Latvia, I go see her. She's not doing too well. She's eighty-six years old. So, I go back to Indianapolis and I said, I talked to my wife, "Maybe retire in another year." I go down to see the HR manager and I said, "I'm kind of interested and wanted to talk to you about the possibility of taking a retirement when I'm at sixty-two." So, he says, "Well," he says, "why don't you wait a couple weeks, because the company's coming out with an early retirement package?" They'd never had an early retirement package. "They're coming out with an early retirement package and you're in it. You're one of the people that's being offered the early retirement." I said, "Okay." So, it was kind of good timing. So, two weeks later, I get a package in the mail and they're offering early retirement if you're fifty-five or older and you've got fifteen years or more with the company. Well, I'm sixty years old, I've got thirty years with the company, so, I'm right [there]. They offer it to twenty-eight people. So, I go home and talk to my wife about it. I said, "You know, I don't think I want to retire right now." She says, "Okay." [laughter] So, about three or four days later, I'm thinking more about this and I said, "You know, I think I want to take this early retirement package," and I thought she was--I don't think she really wanted me to retire at the time. So, she said, "Well, okay, if that's what you want to do." So, I end up applying to take the retirement package and we're supposed to take it in July. You had ninety days to make up your mind. What they did, they offered you--we had a traditional pension at the time, which was very fortunate, which you can hardly get it anymore--you can start drawing your pension now, whether you were fifty-five or whatever age they offered. They offered it to twenty-eight people, ten people took it. So, I went in to talk to my boss, who was the president at the time, and he didn't put any pressure on me to retire. I think he had some things he wanted to do that were probably different than how I was doing them, but I think he would've been good either way. I just thought it was--I wasn't unhappy with my job, but I thought, "Here's an opportunity for me that I think I'd like to take." I told him, "I'd like to take the early retirement, but I'd like to work part-time for the company until I reach sixty-two," and I was sixty-and-a-half at the time, so, a year-and-a-half. He says, "I'm sure we can work something out." So, I took it and I think I finally retired December 1st of that year. So, it was just before my sixty-first birthday, and then, the company rehired me through a third party, which is how they do some of these things. I worked part-time for them for a couple more years, well past sixty-two. I would work from home some days. What I did, I did hardly any traveling anymore, which was fine with me. I did sales support. I worked with new people that they'd hired, training them on the products, and I did a lot of training. We had a couple sales meetings I went to; I went to one in Turkey, took my wife with me. We had a great time, went to Turkey and Egypt, places she'd never been, I'd been on business before. So, I did that for three or four, maybe, years, and then, just, I think, I finally just had enough. I was down to working two days a week, and then, I just stopped. So, I've been very fortunate. I spent over thirty years with the same company, which you don't hear much of anymore, either.

SI: Yes, very rare. Let me take a break for a minute.

[TAPE PAUSED]

TK: No, I retired. That's where we are now.

SI: You had mentioned your wife and your son, Mark, earlier. You had other children afterwards.

TK: Yes, we have a daughter, Jennifer, Jenny, and our youngest son is Michael, Mike, yes. Our daughter lives in Barcelona. All three kids graduated from Indiana University. Mark and his wife, Heather, live here in Indianapolis. They live in Avon, where we live; it's a little town outside Indianapolis on the west side. We lived in Indianapolis from '75 until 2007, and then, we downsized when the kids were gone and we live in what they call a paired-patio home. It's kind of like a condo, out on the west side of town. Our son and daughter-in-law live over there and they have two sons. One's a freshman, just finished his freshman year at Indiana University, and the other one is a junior at Avon High School.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: One question comes to mind that I forgot to ask. You mentioned briefly that you were part of a line company the year before you went to Thailand. What would you do with that trucking company?

TK: Oh, well, the trucking company, we were at a unit at Fort Eustis called the Seventh Transportation Command. What they did was training, training GIs, soldiers, to take care of vehicles, trucks, jeeps, cars, mainly maintenance and operation of cars, also of boats. There were boat companies on this transportation command. So, it was mainly [training]. Most of the bases in the US at the time were involved in some type of training for the war effort. That was pretty much it. I mean, we worked five-and-a-half days a week. I lived in an apartment. I came in to the base every day and, I mean, it was okay. That part of Virginia's pretty nice and I bought a motorcycle. I had a motorcycle down there, for a couple years, for a year, and I kept it until I went overseas. Then, I think I sold it, or I left it at home at my mom and dad's place, I don't know, something like that. Yes, so, it was pretty much a training type effort. Yes, that was it.

SI: At any time since you left the military, have you gotten involved in any veterans' groups?

TK: Yes, I've been very involved in the Vietnam Veterans of America, here in town, now, not much anymore, but I was very involved in their monthly meetings, planning events with them. We used to have--we no longer have--the local chapter doesn't have reunions here anymore, because they have a big one up in Kokomo, which is just north of here, that's huge, in September. I would arrange the speakers, get people from the Governor's Office to come and address the veterans that would attend it and things like that. So, I got involved with that. I also belong to the VFW, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Legion. I don't do anything with those, but I'm a member of them. So, yes, the Vietnam Veterans of America, I was very involved with that for a number of years and, also, I work at the USO at the airport.

SI: Okay.

TK: Maybe once a month. Out there, the USO is open from seven in the morning until eleven at night, seven days a week. So, they have four shifts a day and either one or two people working

on it. It's been very busy. It was very busy during Iraq and Afghanistan, because they had a lot of training going on at Camp Atterbury, which is south of town. They would be training soldiers, sailors, people deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq, Kuwait, wherever it might be. That's really wound down now, although they still do training down there for government people. FBI, Homeland Security, I don't know who the hell is down there, but those people are not allowed in the USO. I mean, when Iraq and Afghanistan were going, they'd let people, Department of Defense people, use it; not anymore. It's just mainly for active duty military and their families, or if you're retired and you're coming through. People look at it as, like, an airline club, which it's not supposed to be. It's a refuge for a soldier. Sometimes, guys get stuck here for a couple days if flights are cancelled. They can't stay in the USO, but we get them a room close by for a reduced rate. So, that's kind of a fun thing. I've also done some work with Habitat for Humanity and the other outfit that I've been working with lately is called SAWs. It's Servants at Work and what they do is, we build ramps for people's homes or, not RVs, but, like, a mobile home, people that have disabilities that need a wheelchair and can't get out. We go out and we build a ramp for them, but they're temporary ramps. When they no longer need them, either they get better or they die or whatever happens, we go and take them apart and reuse them at somebody else's place. So, it's kind of interesting. I had been doing work actually building them, but, since I've had foot problems lately, it's tough work, because you're on your knees building these ramps. So, what I've been doing lately is qualifying people on the telephone, which is unbelievable, the stories you hear. Oh, man, I mean, you talk to people, I don't even know how they can rub two nickels together. "Yes, my husband's got emphysema and I had hip operations and I'm in a wheelchair," and you know these people probably have other problems. "And is there anybody living there?" "Yes, my daughter's here. She's on disability and her child is here and my youngest son's here. He doesn't have a job," and, oh, my god, it's just--you thank God that you're so fortunate, what your life is like, yes. I mean, I tell my wife every day, "We're just so fortunate to live like we do." Things have worked out well for us.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add?

TK: Did I mention about my children?

SI: Yes.

TK: Okay, you got the kids there. No, right now, we just do a lot of traveling. With our daughter being in Spain, we were there for eight weeks and we got back, and then, went to Denver. So, no, I mean, life has been good for this Rutgers graduate, [laughter] really, and it's been fun working with Chuck and meeting some of the other local alums here. I'm glad I've been able to get back to Rutgers for the last two years and I'm going again this year for reunion, because it'd been years and years since I'd ever [gone back], never had a reason to go back. I mean, my wife didn't know anybody there, but getting together with some fraternity brothers has been a nice thing. Plus, we've got our fiftieth coming up next year, yes.

SI: All right.

TK: I can't think of anything else, Shaun, to tell you of impact that you'd be interested in. What do you do with all this? It's for historical [research].

SI: Yes, we put the transcripts on our website and in the library, so that people studying the Vietnam War or, perhaps, the 1960s ...

TK: Oh, okay.

SI: Or even business history, that sort of thing, could get something out of this interview.

TK: So, it's a resource that's available for people.

SI: Let me conclude and I will tell you more.

TK: Yes.

SI: This concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

TK: You're welcome.

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 9/27/2017

Reviewed by Timothy Killion 7/10/2018