

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS LACOSTA

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Professor Thomas La Costa in Westfield, New Jersey, on November 1, 1994 with Kurt Piehler and...

Grant Dietrich: Grant Dietrich.

KP: Before getting to your military service, I would just like to ask you a few things about your growing up in the 1920s and 1930s. What was your community like? What community did you come from in growing up?

Thomas La Costa: I came from this area, Plainfield-Westfield. I lived in Plainfield for some twenty years, but I've been living in Westfield since 1953. I'd say I've been living for 44 years in Westfield. ... Except for the periods that I spent in Venezuela. I spent a lot of time in Venezuela because my wife was from Caracas, and I used to go there very frequently and stay there over the summers and sometimes for longer periods.

KP: How did your family come to this area?

TL: Well, they came here from New York. My father used to live and have a business in Flatbush. And back in those days this was being out in the country, and they moved out of the city to the country and that's how I got to be over here. As a matter of fact, a lot of people are still doing that today. People are moving here from New York thinking they're moving into the country, as they say, but that's really how I settled here. I was born in Plainfield and went to schools in Plainfield, but then, right after the war, I started teaching at Rutgers.

KP: When you went to high school, did you know you were going to college?

TL: Yes ... I took what they call a classical course. I was a pretty good student. I was [in] a graduating class of 364 and I was number 11, so I knew I was going to college, but I had to do it all on my own. There were no guidance counselors in the high school. We just got five or six penny postcards and sent them out to the different colleges. "Please send me your catalog and an application blank." That is the way it was done back then.

KP: What about your parents? Did they expect you to go to college?

TL: Yeah, although ... things were pretty tough. That was near the end of the Depression and there wasn't too much money around, but they made a sacrifice and that's one of the reasons I went to Rutgers, because I thought I could commute, and that it'd be close. It would not cost me much money, but as it ended up, I lived there. But I never got any scholarship or any help from Rutgers, even though I made Phi Beta Kappa there, and I had good grades and all that stuff. For some reason I never got anything from them, not a cent. So my parents had to pay for everything.

KP: Was this much of a struggle for your parents?

TL: Yes, I think it was.

KP: Your father, he was in business in New York?

TL: Yes.

KP: How did the Great Depression affect his business?

TL: Well, I had some old photographs here, I don't know where they are. I think those people, ... back in those days, just more or less got accustomed to it. It must have affected his business, but he kept on working, and ... that was it. It worked out all right for him.

KP: What type of work did he do?

TL: Well, he owned a couple of stores, produce stores and something like a modern small super market. He had a couple of those, in Brooklyn, in Flatbush.

KP: Your mother, did she ever work outside of the home?

TL: Never, ... she was strictly a housewife. Never worked any place. She worked like heck in the house, though, keeping things together. But, you know, they kept the family together. Things seem to be a little bit different now. The concept of family, today, is not like it used to be then.

KP: In what way?

TL: Well, the family was considered to be a group where everyone helped and everyone cooperated, but my experience and my observations are that you don't have that today. I mean, I've taught enough to see this. I've taught for many years and I've seen the situation change from that sort of a thing, that I mentioned to you, to maybe kids even hating their parents nowadays. They tell you, "I hate my mother, I hate my father," and I've had that said to me many times. So, I have seen the concept of family over the years disintegrate and ... that's why we are in trouble right now, I think. It has a lot to do with it.

KP: Why did you chose Rutgers?

TL: Well, I told you one reason. I started off at Villanova, and one reason ... I went to Rutgers was because I could commute there, but I ended up living on campus anyway. I lived in Winants Hall. It was strictly a matter of money, back in those days.

KP: What did initially attract you to Villanova?

TL: I don't know. It was just one of the five postcards that I sent out. No, really, nobody got me into any college. There was no such thing as a guidance; I did it myself. One of them was Villanova, so, I went there. That's the only reason.

KP: When you started college, what did you think you wanted to do?

TL: Oh, I knew what I wanted to do right from scratch in Rutgers. You see, I was only in Rutgers maybe two years when I took every Spanish course that the university offered, in the first two years. I used to just go to Professor Billetdoux's office and make up courses. So, I knew that's what I wanted to do right from the start. So, there was no big decision to make there. That's why I married my wife, a Venezuelan. That's why I've spent a lot of time in Latin America. It's always been my interest.

KP: You had that interest in college?

TL: Yeah. You know, right at the end of my time in Rutgers, during my senior year, the big news was ... the Spanish Civil War. And, that was another big interest I had. I always had interest in the Hispanic world, in Spain, and Latin America.

KP: You mentioned you had an interest in the Spanish Civil War. Were you following the events in Spain?

TL: Yes, pretty closely. But most of the people at Rutgers, if I remember correctly, had no idea what was going on there. It didn't mean anything to them. They didn't read anything about it. But ... I did and I knew what was happening. And even when I got into the service, one of the first things I did as a special agent in the Counter Intelligence Corps was to interview a lot of those Spaniards who had fought in the Spanish Civil War and enlisted. Somehow they got here on a quota, which was very unusual. They had about the smallest quota of any country. So, one of the first jobs I did was to investigate many of those people. Not many of them got clearance for access to classified material, because they either fought with Franco or against him, and either way ...

KP: They were ...

TL: Blackballed. ... I always had that interest. It was not a matter of starting off on one thing and then suddenly changing. I had that one goal all the way through.

KP: You mention you followed the Spanish Civil War. Did you favor one side? Did you hope for a Republican victory? Or, did you favor Franco or did you just watch?

TL: No, ... I just kept track of what was going on. It was very difficult to favor either side, either extreme. ... It's just like I told you. The people I interviewed, it was the same thing, I couldn't clear many of them, ... either extreme. So, it was not a question of favor on the one side over the other. It was a question of knowing what was [a] very important current thing going on at the time, which most of the other people didn't care about, or didn't know anything about.

KP: In fact, I've talked to one of your classmates, in [the] class of 1942, and he said that most students did not read the paper, probably because they didn't have the time.

TL: That's true, I agree with him. They were very weak on, just plain geography even. I have to admit, ... that was one of my faults. I never dreamed of all those places I went to in the Pacific, and never knew they existed. Words, names, I had never heard of before. But, that was one thing that the war did for most of the people. It enlightened them a little bit.

KP: You mentioned that you followed the Spanish Civil War. Did you follow other events in Europe, and what did you think was happening in 1938, 1939, and 1940?

TL: Well, I knew more or less what was going on. My main interest at that time was Spain. But, I knew we were heading for a war, and I knew when I graduated from Rutgers that something was about to happen right then, and it did. But most people were unprepared; most of the students at that time were unprepared. ... They didn't have any television and didn't have time to read the newspapers. Probably they didn't even listen to the radio. So they didn't know much about what was happening in the world.

Grant Dietrich: You were in two honors fraternities, Phi Beta Kappa/Sigma Delta Pi.

TL: Yes.

GD: And I was wondering, obviously, you were worked very hard through school. How did you manage to relax?

TL: Well, I didn't really knock myself out working. It's just that I had such a keen interest ... in Spanish and the work that I was doing that, I don't know, it just came to me easily. Not without any work at all, but, also, we had some good instructors here. So, I don't think I worked any harder than anyone else. I used to go home every weekend. I'd get out of New Brunswick on Friday and come home. ... You know, I'd take every weekend off. I didn't really knock myself out too much.

GD: What did you do when you came home?

TL: Oh, nothing much. Just ... what was there to do? Nothing, just hanging around. That is all we used to do back then. Go out and have some beers somewhere, and, you know, stuff like that. Nothing unusually exciting, just a sort of ... rest day, take it easy.

GD: Did you go to any of the football games, or any of the ...

TL: Oh, yes ... I did a lot. I went to the games, most of them. I was involved in the ROTC there also. But, I just took the basic course, I decided against continuing.

GD: How was the spirit there, the mood?

TL: It was good, because it was a very small place then. The only thing they had there was Queens campus. You knew every one there, practically. It's not like it is today, where you have thousands of students. A very small school in the early '40's, Rutgers was a small school. You

knew everyone there. And you spent a lot of time going across town, going to NJC, ... and so on. That was basically what you did. We used to have plays which we put on in the Spanish Club. You know, some of the girls from Douglass, ... which used to be called NJC, would be in those plays and would be traveling back and forth across town. There were no girls enrolled there at Rutgers, per se, at the time. So things were a little bit different.

GD: You enrolled in ROTC. Why did you decide to go into ROTC?

TL: I don't think it was a decision. I think we had to, if I remember correctly. It was a requirement.

GD: Oh really?

TL: Yeah, I think it was.

KP: It was mandatory the first two years.

TL: ... I didn't enroll in it. It was just part of my course.

KP: But you decided not to take the advanced ROTC.

TL: Yes, because at the time I wasn't interested in being in any military service.

KP: You knew you wanted to become a teacher?

TL: Yes, that's it precisely. You know, getting out of chronological order, I've done a lot of unusual teaching assignments, for example: the first Peace Corp training program after the war was at Rutgers, the Colombia Project. I was teaching in that, which very few people can say the same. And I did a lot of unusual things like that, ... while I was taking my course work and teaching at Columbia and NYU in the summers. So, I did a lot of teaching.

KP: Did you ever join a fraternity?

TL: No, I never joined one, but I always used to hang around a couple of them there, but I never joined one because I didn't like the hazing. So I never joined any fraternity. Didn't think those guys studied enough.

GD: Was that something that everyone did at Rutgers, at that time-go into a fraternity?

TL: Yes, a lot of, most of, the guys did. I thought they had too many parties on weekends. I never saw any of them doing much studying. ... Frankly, that's why I never joined them. I had my own room in Winants and in Ford Hall and in the Quadrangle, and I felt better there-- where I could do what I wanted to do.

KP: Where were you when the attack on Pearl Harbor came? Do you remember?

TL: Yes, I was down in the basement in my house, there, when I heard about it. And I remember very clearly, I was looking for something in the basement when the news of Pearl Harbor came. And I thought it was a horrible thing. And just about then, I was ready to do something about getting into the service, or something like that. And, well, it wasn't too long after that.

... Here's another thing, I had no choice in the service, either. When ... Pearl Harbor happened there was really no intelligence whatsoever in the services. They had what they called the "counter subversive system," which was a very simple thing, where one guy would squeal on somebody else, and all that. But there was no intelligence. And, then, all of a sudden Pearl Harbor happened and, a little bit after that, I think they realized that we were very, very weak in that aspect of the work. So I think they got me for the languages mostly because most of the guys who went in there were lawyers, a lot of them were lawyers, and some of them were people who had already [been] in the investigative fields, in border patrols. But yes, I remember Pearl Harbor. As a matter of fact, I knew a friend of mine who happened to be there when it happened. ... He was a friend of the family. So, it was something that really impressed us a lot.

KP: Which branch of the service did you initially want to go in?

TL: I don't know; I didn't have any preference. And I wanted to be a part of it. I didn't know which branch of the service I wanted to go into, but I did hope that I could use my language. So, I think that had a lot to do with my being called. You remember Professor Turner? He taught French, before your time. He just made it, the age thing. So, they grabbed him, also. ... He ended up in the European theater and I went to the Pacific. So, they did take some people because of their language background.

KP: Were you drafted into the intelligence service?

TL: Yes, ... I'd never heard of the Counter Intelligence Corps.

KP: How were you approached? Did you go to your local draft board, and they gave you orders issued for you to report?

TL: Well, I reported even before I was drafted.

I remember I went to Governors Island and everything was all secret, hush-hush stuff. And they started to investigate me. It was a very comprehensive investigation, you had a report a couple inches thick. So they were doing that while I was hanging around doing some substitute teaching and just waiting. So, when they finished that and I got the clearance, they had "no reason to doubt my loyalty, integrity, and discretion," which is the way you end up all those reports. Then I got into it and they called me up. I went to ... 50 Broadway in New York, where they had a school, the Counter Intelligence Corps School. ... Basically what we went to was the FBI school, and we shot ... on the pistol range. I never had any basic training. I never had a rifle or a carbine. I was issued a .38 stub-nosed police special and a .45, and that's all I ever had. I never went to

any basic training. I never had to salute. ... I went through the whole war without ever saluting anyone because, you know, we were operating as civilians.

KP: So, you didn't wear a uniform?

TL: No, not while I was in New York. Later we wore ... a patch like this. I found one in this file. ... That meant we were civilians. It's a civilian patch. Or just the U.S. on the collar. But everything we did there was as civilians. Here are my old travel orders, see. They never ... showed any rank or anything-- all civilians. We had ... blanket travel orders to travel any place we wanted in that area. So it was a very unusual set up. I never belonged to anything, any large unit.

KP: Your training. How many people were in your class for CIC?

TL: It was a small group, a very small group. I would say there were maybe 20 or 30 people there.

KP: And most were lawyers?

TL: Yes.

KP: And people who had worked for the FBI?

TL: Yeah, right, right. As a matter of fact, when we finally got to Manila, everybody was doing the same work. We had the one office there: the FBI, the ONI, and the CIC. So we had the navy, and the army, and the civilians in Manila. It was just one office. I had some interesting times which, unfortunately, nobody knows about. There are not any records. I didn't get any Purple Heart or anything. I still got a piece of shrapnel in my finger, right here. Nobody knew I got that. I had malaria and dysentery. I never went to a hospital, no record of anything. I was in Borneo which was very unusual for Americans. No mention of that in my service records. They don't even know I was there. So, that's the kind of war I was in.

KP: One of the things we found in trying to do some background research is that very little actually has in fact been written on the Counter Intelligence Corps ...

TL: Yes, there is very little.

KP: ... There has been a lot written on the OSS. What branch of the government did CIC report to? Who in fact did you report to during the war?

TL: Well, basically, just look at these travel orders. There are a whole bunch of them here. They're just by order of MacArthur, General MacArthur. We didn't report to anybody else. We were out there alone; there was nobody to report to. Half of the people didn't [know] what we were doing. ...

KP: What types of missions would you perform?

TL: Well, it depends upon ... two things that are important. One of them is that you can only operate in an area for a short period of time. As soon as you're made, as they say, as soon as they know who you are, you have to do something else. So ... in the combat areas in the Pacific, they tried to alternate assignments. You had a difficult one, and then for a month or so an easy one, and then go back. ... I was on three or four beachheads. And then, I was also living in a hotel after that, which not many guys did. So, I even worked in a factory in Brisbane, Australia, undercover. And I got paid for that; I got paid for the military service. I had a liquor ration from the military service, I had a liquor ration from the Australians, and I lived in a hotel. So you went from one extreme to another, and you kept on varying your assignments.

KP: Would you work in teams or would you work individually?

TL: Individually mostly. A team, if you would call it, might be two or three guys, that's about it. Never had more than two or three people, depending upon the area. In a combat area, you were supposed to try to get prisoners first and capture documents, and capture any other materials. So, you're supposed to be the first among the ... first landing people to go in an area and, in case of retreat--and we didn't have much of that--you were supposed to be the last one to leave so that you could destroy whatever documents were around, and other classified materials.

When we were on the easy assignments, we'd go to the movies in Australia and wherever and see the newsreels, and we would see long lines of Germans and Italians, marching as prisoners, hundreds of them. I mean, after a battle, you got hundreds of prisoners. We couldn't even get one or two of them out there. And, even if we did, we weren't really sure that they were Japanese. At the time, we didn't know if they were Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, or what. And it was only, ... at the very end of the war, when we were able to distinguish what they were, from looking at their toes, because each of those people wore different types of sandals, and the thong went in between different toes. So, finally we got to the point, at least, where we could tell who were the Japanese, but the Australians wouldn't take any prisoners. So, ... we just couldn't get any prisoners. It was tough out there. ... Those Japanese were pretty vicious soldiers. They would not surrender.

KP: You mention you were on four assaults. So, you were with the first wave.

TL: Yeah, as a matter of fact, in Borneo, the last amphibious landing in World War II, I was there in the first group.

KP: When you say you landed, how many people did you land with?

TL: It was an Australian landing. There were a lot of Australians. We were just mixed up in the group.

KP: But in terms of your particular mission, did you work with a team of people? Two or three other agents?

TL: Yes; there were at least five agents there.

KP: When you took part in the landing, you did not work as a team of three or four, you instead worked individually on a beachhead landing.

TL: There were at least five of us, you know, I have ... I'll show it to you later-- a tape showing the invasion of the Leyte Gulf, and it shows the sign we put up there. So, as soon as we hit the beach, we put up a CIC sign, and people knew that meant they were supposed to take prisoners or whatever might have been captured there. But that didn't work, no prisoners, very few Japanese materials.

KP: Why was there such a problem with getting prisoners?

TL: They wouldn't let themselves be taken as prisoners, they were fanatics-- just like those kamikazes and those one man subs in Borneo. A lot of them were around there in those little one man subs, and they knew they were gonna die, and they did it for the Emperor. ... You'd have to burn them out of their pill boxes with flame throwers. They wouldn't come out alive, so there just weren't many prisoners. One interesting thing, though. You know we didn't have time ... to even try to learn Japanese. So we had Nisei boys as interpreters. Some of them, their parents [were] in those concentration camps in California, and those guys are out there being shot at. I thought that was unfair. [In] one of those places, I think it was the Admiralties, we captured a whole bunch of documents and papers which looked like they were very important things. They were different colors: red, blue, yellow. We thought we had really found something important. And then the Nisei interpreted what they were, and it was, that the little red one said short time, so many yen; and the blue one was long time, so many yen and the yellow one was all night, so many yen. So they had their prostitutes there with them ... right in ... combat.

KP: You had a hard time getting prisoners, but, in fact, did you ever manage to collect any prisoners in any of your assignments?

TL: No. We used to go out looking for them. I remember we would get into a PT boat and go up and down the rivers looking for them. And you knew they were up there in the trees. ... The soldiers were watching movies at night and the Japanese were up in the trees, strapped in the trees. We actually went out searching to try to find prisoners and didn't. I don't know how they got all those prisoners ... in Europe, hundreds of them. ... Whole groups must have surrendered, I guess.

KP: I would like to definitely go back to your overseas assignment, but you were based for a time in the USA.

TL: Yeah, that was interesting because I used to commute from Plainfield to New York, to 50 Broadway in civilian clothes, riding the train, and, you know, all the people looked at me and stared at me and wondered what that draft dodger was doing riding in[to] New York. But, in the summer time, it was awfully hot, so ... I would take my jackets off or open it, and they could see

my .38 and the holster, so they were really ... [wondering] what was going on there. But we had some very interesting assignments here in New York before we went overseas. For example, we used to go to ... Yorkville in New York, and they'd give us 15 dollars or so, and we would go buy drinks for the wharfies {dockhands} and see if they would be spilling out any classified information as to what they were loading on to the ships. So that was fun.

KP: Did you find that there was people talking after a few drinks?

TL: Oh, yes. That's ... why we started putting those signs up there, "Loose lips sink ships." We went around posting those signs all over the place.

KP: You found that it was very easy to get information?

TL: Yes. And I learned a very important thing doing that. I learned how to have a little stub of a pencil and a piece of paper in my pocket and take down notes like this, just write stuff without looking at what you are writing. Then ... we did other interesting ... things. In ... wartime you could do so many things that you can't do in peacetime. You could have a suspect under surveillance 24 hours a day, have his mail checked, incoming and outgoing, and read all that, have his telephone tapped 24 hours a day. You can't do that nowadays. So that ... was interesting.

And, I remember, I had another case in Princeton investigating one of the professors there. Somebody said he was a Nazi and that he used to have secret meetings at night in his ... home there. So we had to conduct a big investigation on him. And it ended up they were playing poker. There was nothing wrong at all.

And, I remember, I went to the Elco Boat Works, in Bayonne ... where they made those small boats, PT boats, and checked on a couple of the workers there who were suspected of sabotage. So we got rid of those guys fast. We did all sorts of things like that in the States here. We started investigating Eleanor Roosevelt, because somebody submitted a complaint case against her. So, the higher-ups didn't like that. And another one was, they discovered that right across the street from the office building--we were here in 50 Broadway, right across the street--someone was taking pictures of all the agents as they went in and out of the building. So they knew everybody there. That did it! Everybody was sent away and spread out all over. ... You see, later on, when the war started going heavy they had those schools in a camp in Maryland. There was no such thing when I got into it. So we were right in the middle of New York City.

KP: You mention that you were investigating Eleanor Roosevelt. What was the complaint?

TL: They said, she was a communist. Somebody said she was a communist. As simple as that. You see, you have to investigate every complaint that you get. Most of them amount to nothing but, every once in a while, one was for real.

KP: Which ones were for real? Do you remember any cases which were for real?

TL: Oh lots of people, lots of people. If we wrote at the end of our investigation that we did not recommend that subject to have any access to any classified information, then ... that was it! They'd keep them in the service and put them in the quartermaster corps or something like that, so a lot of those investigations were very thorough. I think we knew more about the people after we finished than they did themselves--checked everything, their school records, their neighborhood, their friends, their church. There were fourteen parts on the outline, which we had to check. And then you had to decide whether the informants were reliable or not, so you had to check some of them. So it got to be a very big investigation, and there were many soldiers, and civilians that couldn't be cleared. I don't think to this day that half of those guys realized why they just had ... insignificant jobs, and they didn't know why that happened.

KP: In terms of clearances, why would certain people be unable to get clearance? What would you find in their backgrounds that would disqualify them?

TL: Different organizations they may have belonged to, for example. Right here, locally, up in Warren and Watchung. ... There were a German American Bund meetings. We'd go up there, and they had guys marching in uniforms and so on. There were Nazi sympathizers there, and a lot of those guys were drafted.

KP: And this was in 1942 when the Bund was still meeting?

TL: Yeah, sure. It wasn't done so secretly either.

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TL: ... So you know, ... that would be one thing. Now if any record had something negative about the person, that would be enough to not recommend him. It could be a number of things, a number of different things like that.

KP: There was a very active German-American Bund and apparently it continued in 1942 and 1943.

TL: Yes, yes.

KP: What about Italian-Americans?

TL: Well, I don't think we did much of that here, but you know what surprised me was in Australia. I really felt sorry for those people. There were some there, especially in Brisbane. [There was] this one family that ran a little restaurant, and they had excellent food, so we used to go there all the time. But the Australians distrusted the Italians. ... Anybody with an Italian name in Australia was, you know, on their list right from the start. Those poor people; ... they didn't know what was happening. They didn't know who Mussolini was even, but because they had an Italian name, they almost put them in concentration camps. They didn't exactly do that, they kept a close eye on them. They were very distrustful of any foreigners in Australia, but not so much here. There were a lot of Italian names that had access to classified materials here.

KP: So, being of Italian or German descent did not automatically disqualify you?

TL: No, as a matter of fact, we needed some of those people. We needed the people who knew the culture and, particularly in Europe, some of those Italian soldiers really did an awful lot of work there, really important work. And ... I don't think you had ... the prejudice here against the Germans and Italians as much as they did in ... Australia, that I know of.

KP: Your agency also was in charge of security for the Manhattan Project. Did you have any involvement?

TL: Yes, indirectly. We used to do security checks ... of installations and projects of that type, and we were very active in that particular project doing those investigations. They were very carefully done there. And, I mean nobody, no matter how much we knew about fission and all that business they were working with, if he didn't pass our security check, he couldn't get anywhere near the place. So we did a lot of that. ... I was involved in some of it.

KP: Did you know what the project was?

TL: Well, not completely. We had a pretty good idea what it was because, ... I remember even before I went into the war at NYU, where I was taking some courses there, I knew they were fussing around with that stuff. And they had one of the first, big, awkward, enormous atom-busting machines there, and I knew what was going on there. I was somewhat familiar with what was happening there. Later during the war, we had a very unusual ability to get into places that no one else could get into. You know, you'd flash your credentials and your badge, and they didn't know who you were.

KP: Do you ever wonder why it was so easy to get into all these places, and that, in itself might have been a problem?

TL: No, because we had ... badges and credentials. And it was clear that we could get into any place we wanted, and we did. We didn't have to stop at any gates to get into a place. However, some of the guys would pull out any old laundry ticket and flash it and get right by. That's how lax it was. So, there was a lot of work to be done there, ... I'm not joking. I knew a guy who just put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a laundry ticket and flashed it in front of the guy at the gate, and they just waved him on. So we worked security there.

KP: You were sent to the Pacific, and you mentioned that you were sent there because your office was under surveillance.

TL: Yeah.

KP: Where were you sent to first when you were sent to the Pacific?

TL: Well, ... I went to New York; I had a train ticket. I took a train, I had a nice ride, a sleeper and all that, to San Francisco. I went by myself there. And I waited for four or five other guys to come from different parts of the country, and we met there, a small group, five people or so. And while we were waiting for those guys to get there, ... we had a lot of fun. We'd go to Top of The Mark, Mark Hopkins, or Finocchio's. When they arrived, we got on a Dutch ship, The Klip Fontaine. I'll never forget that ship. It was a Dutch ship, and we went from there to Brisbane, Australia, not in any convoy. The ship went by itself, zig-zagging all the way from San Francisco to Australia. It took seventeen days to get there. ... Two things I remember about that trip. One of them was, one day we were just hanging around, and everybody saw it, the periscope came up and we were out in the middle of the ocean. Nobody knew where the heck we were. But the gun crew saw it and blasted the daylights out of it. And they sunk the sub, and we don't know to this day whether it was a Japanese sub, an American sub or what. You don't wait to find out. The other thing I remember is that they had an Indonesian crew on that ship, and they'd be cooking all day goat meat and curry. The smell of that stuff had everybody sick almost the whole trip there. I haven't eaten curry since 1942. I can still smell it. So that is how I got to Australia, on the Klip Fontaine.

KP: You were taking intelligence and you had a wide access to information. How bad was America's situation in 1942? What did you know and what did the public know?

TL: Well, it was bad because they had no intelligence organization. It just was almost nonexistent. There just wasn't anything, and they just put this thing together. As I said, I went to the first school they had. After a while they improved that. They gave the guys better training, ... but I went to the very first one they had. It was an emergency measure. It just ... was nonexistent. There was no intelligence. It's amazing how we got by with ... none of that available at the beginning. I think we won the war in the Pacific mostly because of the huge amounts of personnel and equipment that we got there from the United States. I myself, ... I lost three jeeps; nobody cared. You go get another one. One of them is probably still in the river there in New Guinea. It happened as I was going over one of those rope bridges, and I got to the middle of it when it broke.

But we had so much equipment there, and I think that's how we won, because some of the Japanese stuff which we tested, I must say, was better than the Americans. Their flame throwers were much better, much more efficient. Their gas masks were much ... better than ours, and we were prepared for gas warfare. I remember in Oro Bay there was a ship lying in the bay with all this stuff for gas warfare. And every night, you didn't have to look up, you could hear the Zeros coming over. You could tell from the drone of the motor shum, shum, shum, it's [a] Zero. They'd drop a bomb or two in the bay and then leave. Fortunately, they never hit that ship. But we never got to use gas, but if we did, the Japanese had better gas masks than we had and they had quinine for their malaria.

Everybody had malaria. I was sick with malaria. ... The Japanese had the whole market on quinine and someone here invented atabrine. ... We started taking that and everybody's flesh turned to a brilliant yellow color from taking the atabrine tablets. So, if it weren't for the amount of stuff that we had here, we would have had a tough time there.

Even the Australians were surprised at all of the materials we had. The Australian soldier had a little duffle bag about this big and the Americans had a huge one. ... Americans got paid twice as much as the Australian soldiers. The Americans ate better than the Australian[s] did. Whenever we were working with the Australian soldiers, you knew you would be practically starving in the combat area because ... they used to have this bully beef in a can. It was like Spam, but much worse. So the guy would line you up, the mess sergeant would hand one of those cans of bully beef to every other guy as he marched by, and he said, "This is for you and the bloke behind you. This is for you and the bloke behind you." And that's all they had to eat. But, ... we had so much of everything there. {I think that's why we won that war} But because the biggest project I was involved in was trying to find a good place for a landing in Japan. ... In Europe the CIC helped to prepare ... the Anzio landing. We just couldn't find a place to land ... in Japan without killing thousands and thousands of Americans and Japanese. Despite all of the equipment we had there, that would have been impossible. I believe that that's why we dropped the bombs, the atomic bomb. Well, we did do a good job there, but ... a lot had to do with the equipment and supplies that we had also.

KP: You mentioned that when you arrived, you took a Dutch ship to Australia. When you arrived in Australia, what were your first assignments in Australia?

TL: As a matter of fact, we stayed in Brisbane for a while and did a few security checks there of installations. And then we went up to Darwin, which was pretty much [a] combat zone way up in northern Australia, and then from there we just started, following MacArthur's moves, right through New Guinea to Japan.

KP: What did you think of MacArthur?

TL: Well, I thought he was pretty nice. He was my hero at the time. I know a lot of people didn't like him. I think he was a little vain, and he did have a mistress there, this Filipino woman we knew, but he was a good guy. He did like to fake things a little bit. As I remember, they'd have a newsreel in Australia showing MacArthur getting off a landing barge, and saying ... that this took place two days before when he was making a landing up in New Guinea, and it was done right there in Australia. I saw him do it. And I saw them photograph it. So he did pull things like that. He was a little bit of a show-off, but I always thought he was a great guy.

KP: Did you have any dealings with him personally?

TL: I used to work right near his office. And, every day I'd see his son, just a little tyke there with his Filipino nursemaid. Yeah, I worked right in the same building where he was, right next to him. So, I saw him a lot, but probably he never knew that I even existed.

GD: Were you part of his Allied Intelligence Bureau that he set up?

TL: I would think we did because, as I said, most of these travel orders do read at the end, "By order of General MacArthur," so I think we were part of that. Everything depended upon where

we were and what was happening. For example, in the Philippines, we found ourselves all of a sudden, doing a lot of work with the Hukbalahaps {Hucks} ... And started investigating them, and they were a pretty mean bunch. And it just depended on where you were and what was going on at the time. You could have been doing anything, anything that came up.

KP: When you said you could be doing anything that came up, did you ever think, "Why was I assigned to this?" That it was simply given to intelligence because in a sense there was no logical place to give it, so give it to intelligence?

TL: No, ... we did a lot of other things besides that ... not to mention them all; for example, panelling ships. Every time a ship came in we'd climb up the ladder and board it. We'd always go around lunch time, especially if they were Dutch ships. ... Boy, those guys really ate! They had turkey and ham during the same meal, a lot of Boll's gin, and more. So, we used to panel those ships. We would interrogate the captain to see if he ran into ... any intelligence information on the way or if he had any subversive activities among the crew. And you know that was just another aspect of it, doing that, ship panelling.

... Another thing was really [a] military police matter, ... The troops were segregated then; you didn't have any integrated units. There were all black units. Once there were ... a couple of scuffles there. One night a few black soldiers were killed by another outfit which was down the road-- whites. And, of course, it was a police thing, military police. But we even got involved in some of that just in case there might have been a security problem there.

TL: In that particular instance what had happened and what was done?

TL: Nothing was done. These guys were reported having died in service, that's all. Hey, if you reported all of the people who were killed and say how they were killed, you would be shocked, because on everyone of those beachheads, we would kill almost as many Americans as Japanese. And you're shooting bombs from a ship off shore, and a lot of Americans were killed as well as the enemy.

KP: There has been a great deal of recent news about friendly fire and that is not a new problem.

TL: Not at all, not at all new, that ... always went on. But, you know, getting back to the matter of ... [these] segregated troops, once when I went with another CIC agent into the Halmaheras, the Dutch Islands, we ... did a few investigations with the Dutch troops and saw what they had there. It was really amazing because they had blond guys with blue eyes all the way up, different shades, to pure black, you know. There were all together in the same outfit. I never saw that before. In Venezuela they called that "Cafe con leche," you know, coffee with milk. Keep on pouring in milk, and you get different shades. So, they were way ahead of us in that regard. The Americans didn't like working with those Dutch troops so much, for that reason.

KP: That was a source of tension.

TL: A source of tension, definitely.

KP: You worked with a lot of different intelligence agencies and a lot of different troops and what, for example, in terms of the different intelligence agencies you worked with, which ones did you respect the most? Which ones did you have the hardest time working with?

TL: Well, we worked a lot with, let's say, the base intelligence officer, they call[ed] him that. I mean, he didn't do any intelligence work, he just collected reports from the different units. And he had a stack of reports like that, and one of our jobs was to collate those things, cut and paste. Cut all the things out, and paste them under different headings and make a booklet. And when we organized all of those we had a lot of very important intelligence information, put all together and organized. So, we went from that extreme, which was just like playing with paper dolls, let's say, to actually being right in the combat. So we went from one extreme to another.

KP: What about other countries? You mention in your resume that you interacted with the Australian and Filipino intelligence.

TL: Yes. And also ... in New Guinea with the government, not the army, not the Australian Army, but the government-civilians who were up there in Papua. That's where I learned how to speak Pidgin English. I worked with them a lot. They were not military personnel, and I learned how to speak Pidgin English there, which was pretty interesting. ... What do you think this would mean? It's Pidgin English. "Me like catch 'em. Big fellow box. You punch him, he sing out." What do you think that means? "Me like catch 'em. Big fellow box. You punch him, he sing out."

KP: "We will catch an enemy and they will talk?"

TL: No. It means, "I want a piano." "Me like catch 'em" means, "I want." "Piano" is "big fellow box, you punch him, he sing out." ... And I also worked ... in Malaya and I learned Malay too, there. I did a lot with those people. I remember some Malay. Saya lapar. Dimana saya bisu makang? Saya mau dua telur setenga masak, roti pangang. That means, "I am hungry; where can I get something to eat, I want two fried eggs and toast," in Malay. So, those are the people, beside the military people, that we worked with.

KP: In terms of the assignment in Malaya, was that actually in Malaya or what was your assignment?

TL: I was for ... a few months in an area where Malay was spoken. That's another thing nobody knows. It's not on my record, but I learned to speak Malay.

KP: What was your assignment in there?

TL: Just to learn the language. Just to live there, and to learn the language, that's all. We didn't do any other thing, but learn the language. See, we tried to learn all those ... languages, except Japanese. We just figured the war wouldn't last long enough to really learn Japanese. That was

considered to be a really tough language to learn. But then Tagalog ended up the same way. That was not easy, in the Philippines.

You talk about working with the other organizations. One of the big things that I thought was important, ... when we got into Manila, the first place we went to was a Bilibid Prison and released the prisoners. And that's where we really got to work with the FBI, and the ONI, and the CIC. It was very difficult interrogating those people to find out which ones were collaborators and so on. That was a very busy period, so you had cooperation there. There were a lot of civilians in there, too. A lot of American civilians who were caught up in the war. They worked for oil companies mostly there. The ones who managed to escape usually received commissions, but a lot of them were captured and put in the prison. So, that's why the FBI was there, because of the civilians.

KP: You had mentioned, and I want to follow up on quite a bit on the beach landings you took up. Was your first combat area in New Guinea?

TL: Well, as I said, in Darwin, up in northern Australia, there was almost [a] combat area, but, yeah, that was one of the first ones there that-- I think the first one was the Admiralties. ... I remember that because, although when the landing barges hit the beach there wasn't much resistance, because they had bombarded the daylight out of that place for two or three days preceding that. So, we got on the beach and the word was to dig a foxhole any length, to protect yourself. There was one second lieutenant who saw that there was no activity there, so he got out his hammock he was carrying and strung it up between two palm trees. And, the next morning, he was still there, but ... blood was dripping out of the hammock, and his throat was slashed right open. So, I remember that.

And, the one where I saw some resistance was the one in Balik Papan, Borneo. The Japanese, as they retreated, really did a heck of a job on the natives there. They just slashed them with their swords and all that. When we got there we saw a bunch of them with their arm hanging by a tendon and stuff like that, and there were two Chinese doctors who looked like they were twins; I think they were. And they had those guys lined up, leaning against a building, and they just went down the line amputating arms and legs. It was an awful sight. I didn't like that.

In Balik Papan we found the remains of a still habitable house and it served as our headquarters. As an adjunct to the house there was a monkey with a long chain around its neck. The other end of the chain was strung around a heavy gauge wire which went from one end of the house to the other, across the front, forming a type of run, allowing the monkey to cover the entrances to the house. We learned soon enough that the monkey was not a pet. Anyone who dared to approach it would suffer from the very painful bites inflicted by the monkey. Apparently the monkey was the Borneo version of our watch dog ... a watch monkey instead of a watch dog. There was also a one-room structure next to the house, but not attached to it, and there we found a Malayan man, apparently the house boy, who for lack of any place to go, decided to stay in the abandoned house. We found him there sleeping with his "Dutch wife." A Dutch wife is not a woman, but rather a pillow about five feet long which the male embraces during the night in lieu of a woman companion.

I was with an Australian in the jeep he had. And we saw a Japanese soldier climbing up the hill, side of a mountain, so I said to the Aussie, "Let's go take him as a prisoner." And the Australian said, "No, let's wait until the bloke gets to the top of the hill." So, he waited until he got up to the top of the hill and he pulled out his carbine and killed him. They just wouldn't take any prisoners. By the way, the Borneo thing was the last amphibious landing of World War II.

KP: The Australians simply never had a ...

TL: Never.

KP: Even when you wanted them very badly.

TL: Yeah, they didn't believe in it. They didn't want to be bothered with prisoners. But, they had an intelligence organization similar to the CIC, also. That's why we worked very closely with them. It was, you know, basically the same type [of] thing.

KP: How did you find working with them? Were they as competent as your unit?

TL: Yes, except for this prisoner bit. I just couldn't understand. They were in ... intelligence where you would think you would capture prisoners to get information from them.

KP: They would not.

TL: They wouldn't want to do it.

KP: Did you ever have any dealings with British intelligence at all?

TL: No. We didn't run into any British there, whatsoever; just Australian and Dutch.

KP: You mentioned the first combat zone you were in. What was your first incident where you were under hostile fire?

TL: Well, right up at Darwin there were a couple of subs that shot some missiles right near where we were, and they were close to the beach. So, that was the first shell I ever heard exploding near me.

KP: What was your reaction?

TL: The reaction was [that] the noise was so loud that it almost seemed to burst my ear drums. That's the thing that got me. It was such a loud noise.

PHONE RINGS, PAUSE

TL: Our CIC group was traveling in three jeeps to go into Japan, Nagoya and Osaka. We drove our jeeps off of one of those landing barges and we were the first Americans in Nagoya. And that was interesting.

KP: In terms of your landings and when you were in the battle zone, did you wear a uniform at that point?

TL: No, we just wore these patches here. We just had, you know, regular khaki shirts and pants. ... These were the same patches (shows patch) the journalist[s] wore.

KP: Suppose you were captured?

TL: They were prepared. If we were captured, the first thing we were supposed to do was to get rid of the credentials and the badge, and destroy any evidence of who we were and what we were doing.

KP: Did any of your group get captured?

TL: I didn't know any personally.

GD: What equipment would you land with, meaning guns?

TL: Very little. Let's see what we had. It was a .45 and a .38. Had a .38 shoulder holster and a .45 down here. I don't even know how to shoot a rifle, I never had one. You know part of basic training was to take the thing apart and to put it together blindfolded, I never had any of that training.

GD: How did you manage to survive with the minimal training, the light weaponry?

TL: That's what we learned in New York. We learned how to shoot the ... two guns we had, and we used to practice on wallabies and kangaroos. When you shoot a .45 into a wallaby or a kangaroo you got a hole in them that big. That .45 will blast you. So, I tried to keep it after it was all over, but they took them away from me, both of them.

... The only thing that I am a little bit upset about is that nobody knows where I was, or what I did, or what happened to me. I mean it's like it never happened. Whenever we would talk about this with friends, they would say, ... "I'm in ... [the] Fifth Army Corps and this and that, ... in my battalion." I'd say, "What are you talking about?" I never belonged to any battalion or any organization or anything like that." So, that was the bad thing about it.

KP: What did people know when you were overseas? What did they know you were doing? What were you allowed to tell?

TL: Nothing. They didn't know anything. They didn't know a thing about where I was. As a matter of fact, when I came home, I went to look for my golf clubs, so I could play golf and I

couldn't find them, so I asked my mother, "Where are my golf clubs?" She said, "Oh, we didn't think you were coming back. We gave them away." Really, I mean, that's how little they knew. Nobody knew anything.

KP: What did you tell your parents after being gone for three years?

TL: You see, I didn't really know how long I'd be there, but I was there for a long time; there for an awful long time. I told them about some of my experiences, but not all.

KP: Did your mother even know you were working for the government?

TL: Yes, ... they found out from one of the lawyers here who I was with for a little time on one assignment. And he was sent home because he got this awful jungle rot stuff that they could not cure. They poured sulphur on him and everything else, ... he was just rotting away. So, he came back, and he contacted my family, and told them what I was doing, and where I was.

GD: When you were trying to gather intelligence across the lines, how could you keep yourself concealed, being that you were with a completely different race, you were a white man?

TL: ... You know, that was one of the dangers of this thing. And besides, as I said before, I had my own Nisei boy. He was my constant companion. I mean, he translated and spoke Japanese, so I think a few times, I'd probably be hiding behind him or something like that.

KP: And he also worked for the CIC?

TL: No.

KP: What was his ...

TL: He was just an interpreter.

KP: But he was from the United States?

TL: Oh, yes ... his parents were in the concentration camp at California while he was doing that. I felt sorry for him.

KP: And if he was captured, he was also not in the army or in other branch?

TL: No, he was in the army.

KP: So, he was actually in the army.

TL: He was in the army; he was a translator. ... One of the job classifications was "translator." I don't know what number it is-- 03 something or whatever it was--but that's what he was. But he had been investigated thoroughly.

KP: When he worked with you in the field, was he in uniform?

TL: Yeah, he was in regular army uniform.

KP: So you would be in civilian dress?

TL: Yeah, but it was hard to tell because I wore regular khakis and all that, like all those other guys. The only way you could tell was from the patch.

GD: Did you have the same Nisei boy throughout the war?

TL: No. ... You know, I went to so many different places that we got different ones. There was like a pool, ... almost like a motor pool, where you would draw your own translator from this pool. They'd just [be] hanging around there. So, I had several of them.

KP: They would be the ones who would actually read the Japanese captured documents. What kinds of documents did you end up capturing?

TL: Mostly diaries and, boy, we got a lot of information from the diaries. And that ... psychologically, ... from that point of view, is very important. We started seeing how the Japanese morale was disintegrating and how they were starving. They'd only have a handful of rice to eat all day. And near the end of the war, those guys were ready to give up. They had very poor morale. So, we got a lot of diaries. They liked to keep diaries, which I guess you shouldn't do, but they did it anyway. We had a lot of that. And sometimes other orders and so on. ... Also a lot of equipment of the Japanese. Seems like so long ago. I don't remember the details.

KP: You mention that you worked very closely with MacArthur's staff. What did you think of the rest of his staff - particularly his intelligence officer, Willoughby.

TL: Willoughby? Yes, we worked actually most[ly] with Willoughby's office for a while, there next to him. I think they were all good guys and I think Willoughby did a very good job as MacArthur's assistant. I know a lot of people who didn't like MacArthur much. And they didn't like much that MacArthur did, but, you know, I think Willoughby was a great man and so was MacArthur.

KP: What was his leadership style like?

TL: Well, he was not one to be out in front of troops, you know, and marching around. He sort of kept to himself a lot. You never saw him much in public or anything like MacArthur. It was just the reverse. MacArthur was an extrovert. Willoughby was somewhat of an introvert; he just kept to himself. Maybe his job forced him to be that way, I don't know. But, he just stayed in his place there. I never saw him, [nor] any examples of his exerting his leadership or anything. He just stayed in the office. But he was a nice fellow, nice guy. I would back up any of those people

I knew, even MacArthur. I know he did a lot of crazy things, but I think MacArthur was a great man.

KP: You saw a lot of different fighting on a lot of different landings. What was the worst fighting mission you encountered?

TL: I think the one in Borneo. No, no. ... Maybe Leyte, getting back to the Philippines. Maybe that one was perhaps the worst one. I would say that was it.

KP: But you also mention that Borneo was a very hard operation.

TL: That was hard for me because I was beginning to feel I had enough of it all by then. Little did I dream that it would be the last amphibious landing of World War II without even any mention of it on my service record!

KP: When you were in the field how much sleep could you get?

TL: Very little. You know, some of the closest calls I got were not from the enemy at all. This also happened in Borneo. This one guy who was on the border patrol was Texan. We got one of the few buildings which was sort of semi-standing. ... They had five cots lined up against the wall where the people slept, and this guy from Texas ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with Professor Thomas La Costa in Westfield, New Jersey on November 1, 1994 with Kurt Piehler and ...

GD: Grant Dietrich.

KP: You mentioned you were sleeping in a series of cots and there was a Texan from the border patrol who used to grind his teeth.

TL: Yeah. And, you know, in the middle of the night, 2-3 o'clock, whatever it was, we heard three shots and everybody jumped. Well, this guy insisted on sleeping with his .45 under his pillow, and he had a nightmare or something, and he just grabbed his gun and bang, bang, bang. But it wasn't until the next morning that we saw the bullet shells in the wall there. And they just missed the two guys on the other side of him, I'd say by a half inch or something. And, I was one of them, right over my head, just missed me. So that was a close one. It had nothing to do with the enemy; that was one of the closest ones.

KP: In terms of the enemy, what was your closest call?

TL: Well, ... remember when I told you about at Oro Bay, where every night they'd come over and drop a bomb there where we had that ship? ... Although we had a little ridge in the rocks that we'd hide under, one of those shells exploded real close to us, and I got some shrapnel in me. I

was hit. Here it is right here. See it's still there. See this piece of shrapnel, right there? Little piece, that was close. It really stung. It hurt, but I was lucky. Others were not.

KP: You mention that there was within the battle zone a whole ship full of poison gas.

TL: Yes. We were really prepared for gas warfare, chemical warfare, if it should happen. But it never happened.

KP: Why do you think the United States would not use poison gas first?

TL: Well, I think there was an agreement that neither one would use it, but the point I'm making is that we had it there in case the Japs snuck some in. Then we would use it. It was an agreement that they wouldn't have chemical warfare.

KP: Why do you think the Japanese did not use poison gas? Do you have any sense of that?

TL: No, ... I still think it was part of that same agreement because, you know, it was a different kind of fighting from the European place. Everything was in such close range. If they tried to use gas on the Americans, it would probably go right back to them. I mean you were always so close to each other-- the pill boxes and the places they were hiding in the caves. There weren't big distances like there would be in Europe, for example. Everything was so close together. It would have backfired [on] which ever side used chemicals. It would have gotten them as well as the enemy. So, I think that's perhaps the reason for their not using it. But there was an agreement, there were a lot of agreements we had there. Another one was--I don't know if you realize that, or the average person does, but every palm tree that we shot down as we invaded all these islands--after the war we had to pay for. And, every palm tree that we cut down-- we would cut down a whole palm tree to get this little bit of stuff at the top and make millionaire salad out of it. Yeah, ... that's what millionaire salad is. It's a little thing at the top of the palm tree. That cost us money just to do that. So everything cost money. ... We had to replace everything.

KP: You mentioned that you had worked in the Philippines with the Huks. What was your assignment?

TL: Not with them; we worked against them. Well, we were trying to find out who the leaders were, where they were hiding. You see, these guys were communists fighting for some sort of agrarian reform. I'm not sure what they were fighting for, but it was the same idea--to try to capture some of them; to destroy their encampments, wherever they were hiding in the hills. It was almost the same as looking for the Japanese. We were looking for them.

KP: Now, they had been fighting the Japanese before you had landed?

TL: Yes.

KP: And your mission against the Huks, what time frame was this? Was this 1944?

TL: Yes I believe it was 1944. In '45 I was in Manila.

GD: Returning back to MacArthur for a little bit. MacArthur made a point of keeping the OSS out of the Pacific. Do you have any personal experiences with the OSS?

TL: No, I don't know. I don't really know why they were kept out, unless he thought that he had enough intelligence people there between the Australians and the Dutch, the CIC, the ONI, and the navy. He probably figured he had enough there. The compounds were by no means crowded with Japanese prisoners. We'd see one or two guys sitting in there, in the compound. So, I guess he probably thought there wasn't enough need for those people. There was a different type of warfare. It was [a] more individual type [of] fighting, instead of in big groups.

GD: Did you ever have a chance to interrogate a Japanese soldier?

TL: Yes we did. I remember we had this one guy there, but, as I say, when we finished, we weren't sure whether he was a Japanese or a Korean or a Filipino. ... You couldn't tell from just looking at him.

GD: What type of questions would you ask?

TL: The Nisei would try to talk [to] him in Japanese, for example, and the guy would say, "I no Japanese, I Filipino. I speak Spanish or English." They had their ways of faking it.

GD: I know a gentleman who fought in Vietnam, and he would talk about how he took in Vietnamese soldiers and how they would try to kill themselves. He would have to practically strap him down so they would not be able to.

TL: Oh yeah.

GD: Did you have any? ...

TL: Oh sure. With Hirohito, I was in on that thing, when they finally nabbed him at the end. We were marching him out and he said through his interpreter that he had to go to the men's room. So, they let him go in there, and they ran in after him and here he was just about to commit hari kari and they stopped him. But, ... he almost killed himself. So that's ...

KP: Who was with him?

TL: Well, there was ... an MP, a couple of them. They were the guys who yelled out, you know. And we ran in there.

KP: So you were there?

TL: I was there when that happened, but I ... didn't actually see it happen.

KP: But you were in the ...

TL: In the place, in the building.

KP: You had a lot of contact with both the enemy forces and the American forces, armies of different countries. You also came in contact with Australians and Malay and Filipinos. What did you remember about the different people encountered, starting, I guess, with the Australians? What did you think of Australians?

TL: Well, as I say, I didn't have anything against the Australians other than their being suspicious so much about foreign-sounding names. But they almost forced you to be on your guard against them a little bit, because they really resented all that the Americans had, more pay, more clothes, more food, and frankly, they would be very apt to steal stuff from you. That time I was living in the hotel, I was robbed three times. They stole my Rolls razor and a couple other things, and they didn't think that they were doing anything wrong. They just thought that they should have what the Americans had. Why should they have less? So they sort of felt that way, but a lot of Americans married the Australian girls, but I really don't know of any of them here in the States. I don't know what happened to all those marriages.

KP: Was there any tension between the American GIs, who had a lot of money, and the Australians, who had very little money, over dating women?

TL: ... Well, I think they did resent a little bit that the Australian girls like[d] to go out with the Americans, simply because they got silk stockings, they got chocolate bars, they got things like that. And they preferred to go out with the Americans, I think.

GD: How did the American military accept you?

TL: Oh, they didn't know exactly what we were doing. I think a lot of them were afraid. They knew something was strange here ... "Who were these guys flashing credentials and a badge and walking around with a shoulder holster? Who are these guys?" I don't think they knew what we were doing, and they really had a tendency to be somewhat distrustful. I mean you couldn't make friends in my job. You had to be a loner almost.

KP: So you, in a sense, had no buddy, no comrade during the war?

TL: Not really.

KP: The people you worked with would invariably change?

TL: I know a couple of guys like Ed Thrift from California and Hal Beaton from Michigan. I had a couple of friends like that, but I had no guys that I have ... met with or had reunions with over the years, after the war. I don't know anybody now from the war time period.

KP: And even during the war you never developed friendships or working relations where you would stay in touch during the course of the war?

TL: Well, no. It would be during short periods where you would ...

KP: You would work closely with someone? ...

TL: Yeah, maybe as much as three or four months, but ...

KP: Then three months later you would be sent someplace else?

TL: Sent some place else and start all over again.

GD: Did you find it difficult to keep up your morale, with not having that kind of contact?

TL: Well, no, because ... one thing compensated for the other. I had nobody ordering me around, nobody telling me what to do, nobody examining your bunk to see if you had it made properly, and you didn't have to salute anybody. So all those things helped. I didn't have to wear any official clothes. I wore regular shoes, for example, you know, my own socks. [laughter] Stupid things like that. So that made up for it. I could hide really, I could hide, like in Australia. ... I had cases I was working on. I would work real hard during the morning and then maybe go to the movies in the afternoon until it was time to go home to the hotel. So, you know, nobody else could do that. So ...

GD: Did MacArthur and the other commanding officers treat you as a vital source of information?

TL: MacArthur got all our reports first hand. I think he was one of the few guys who really knew what we were doing, and Sutherland, too. Nobody else knew what we were doing, it seemed to me.

KP: Let's say you went into the field, say in Borneo or New Guinea on an assignment. Who would you report to? Would you report directly to MacArthur's headquarters?

TL: Right. ... I was going to show you some of these travel orders. ... Let's pull out this old file, here. For example, see, ... there are a whole bunch of them here. They're all the same.

KP: I'll read "Subject: Headquarters United States Army Forces in the Far East, 19 July 1944."

TL: USAFFE, yes.

KP: "Subject: Travel orders to civilians concerned. The following named civilian employees assigned to this headquarters. WP at the proper time to APO 503 for TD with one CIC regional detachment. ... APO 503 and such other places and such order north of the continental limits of Australia and the Southwest Pacific area, as may be necessary on TD for the purpose carrying out

instructions. Upon completion of this TD they will return to this headquarters: Mr. Richard T. Searight, Mr. Arthur J. Jackson, Mr. Ralph W. Seagress, Mr. William H. Keser, Mr. Frank Adamo, Mr. Thomas La Costa, Mr. William G. Geigher, Mr. George Rikert. TCNT TDN TEWN, followed by MOC (authorized) and travel by commercial aircraft (authorized), AR55120 travel by rail, motor, and water transportation (authorized), if necessary. Personal value not to exceed 15 pounds (authorized) while travelling by air. By Commander General MacArthur and C. J. Engel, Major AGD, Assistant Adjunct General."

TL: They're all different here, but they all say the same thing basically.

KP: These men listed in this travel order, are they all CIC?

TL: Yeah, they're CIC guys.

KP: Do you know anything about these?

TL: No.

KP: You didn't even? ...

TL: Oh yeah, I knew ... who they were but I completely lost track of them. I never knew after the war was over where they were or anything like that.

KP: But during the war did you know what assignments they did? For example, you have William Geigher checked off on this order.

TL: Yeah, well, I probably ... worked with him on something, there. Maybe we went to the same place, I don't remember ... clearly. ... But all of these are the same type of things. Oh ... here's one, for example. When I did get there, from the place where I was going, on the back, some captain from the infantry sent this. It was S-2. He says: "La Costa arrived this station 17 January 1944. La Costa is presently in bed with light attack of malaria. It has not been necessary to hospitalize him and it is believed that he will show rapid improvement under increased atabrine dosage." Big deal! Rapid improvement. So, you see how we operated. There's no mention of being connected to the military whatsoever; we're civilians. That was the reason that we were able to do the job. Because if we had interrogate and question generals and if they knew it was some PFC or corporal or sergeant, you wouldn't even get anywhere near them.

KP: Say you had to interrogate a general. How would you have to do that?

TL: Well, while you're doing an investigation if the lead leads you to the general, [and] if he's asked to be one of your informants, you have to go in and question him, and so, it depends. I mean, if somebody that we were investigating might have worked in a general's office as a clerk or something like that, we would have to question the general.

KP: Did you have any fears of breaches of security in the Pacific region itself, combat zone?

TL: No, I don't think there was much of that. There was carelessness, there was a lot of carelessness because we'd go around to these different installations, you know, simple things. Like: There's no fence here. You need a guard standing here at the entrance, and things like that. It wasn't really a breach of security, it was just being careless. So, we did a lot of that, too, that sort of stuff.

GD: Did you have a specific instance where security was breached?

TL: Yes, we had some cases where we checked on guys, sent in our reports and recommended that they should not be in this particular spot or not have access to ... the type of work that they were doing, and they would just quietly be transferred out someplace. I tell you, the favorite place for that, not that I have anything against it, was the quartermaster. If we found something wrong with someone, they'd just ship them into the quartermaster corps, keep them away from trouble.

KP: What about civilian military contact, say in the various islands. Was there any concern in terms from the CIC perspective?

TL: With the civilians? Oh yes. ... We had, for example, even in Papua, New Guinea, we had to deal with the native population there who were civilians. And, I thought I had a couple of photos here. I guess, I don't. Yeah, here. We had to make friends with these guys and take care of their needs. See the little top one there smoking the cigarette? I'm lighting a cigarette for my friend. [laughter] So, we had civilians of all kinds from that point of view, important ones and unimportant ones.

KP: Which island was this picture?

TL: That's New Guinea.

KP: New Guinea.

TL: Here are some more.

KP: Did you read *National Geographic* ...

TL: That's where I spoke Pidgin English with all the New Guinea natives ...

KP: Did you read *National Geographic* in the 1930s, growing up?

TL: Yes, I used to like to look at it, but I never knew where those places were.

KP: In a sense, did *National Geographic* prepare you for what you encountered?

TL: No, I never dreamed that those places existed. I never heard of places like Oro Bay, Finchhaven, and Admiralties Islands. I never knew what they were. Some of the native people supplied us with a lot of information.

KP: What type of information?

TL: You know, about where they saw Japanese and where they were hiding. Because, you know, we never bothered wiping out all the Japanese. We just went island hopping and they were hiding up in the hills. And these guys knew about it, where they were hiding. That was one of dangers of this island hopping. You never wiped out all of the enemy and there were snipers all over the place. They would tie themselves up in the trees and you'd never know where there was a sniper. But really, at night, when they showed movies, the snipers were up there watching the movies. Here I am in one of my jeeps. I tell you. I wrecked three of them or lost three of them.

GD: Were natives on the islands generally very helpful and willing?

TL: Yeah, oh yeah, sure.

KP: What would you often give them in exchange for their help?

TL: Oh, they would love rations, chocolate bars, any type of ... food items. We used to watch these guys. They were really skilled at getting some of their food. There'd be a rat and they would maneuver it around. They would have a pen knife, that was their favorite thing, a pen knife, and they would maneuver a rat until they got in a corner, ... and jab him with the knife. And that was one of their meals. So, food items and cigarettes were very important for those people.

KP: You mentioned you were one of the first to land in Japan and you were also planning the invasion of Japan. When did you begin your work on the planning of the invasion?

TL: Well, I tell you that was done over a long period of time. It wasn't just, you know, a couple of meetings. Almost all the while when we were there, we were studying charts and maps and possible landing places. Finally ... around '44, we decided that it would not be possible to land in Japan without scores and scores of casualties. So, that report was sent in to the big shots, and that's when they decided to drop the two bombs because it would have really been terrible if we tried to invade Japan. ... There was not a good place for troops to land any place on any of the islands. So, ... that sort of thing went on all the while we were there.

KP: But your part of the planning, did you do some work on the invasion, but then have interrupted by an assignment on one of the island assaults and combat and then you would come back and do some planning?

TL: Yes. Collating, for example, some of the intelligence reports to see if they had any information that would be useful in a possible invasion.

GD: Was the CIC solely responsible for deciding whether there should be an American offensive on Japan?

TL: Oh no, no. That was just part of it. ... That was MacArthur and all the big shots, but the CIC just did part of it. Now, I know Professor Turner from Rutgers was actively involved in the Anzio landing. He did a lot of the work. So, you know, it depended on the situation. But ... I didn't do too much of that, but I was involved in it. I was at meetings, and I worked with some of the people a little.

KP: What was the consensus on where the landing would have to take place? What were the various locations considered?

TL: They tried all of them, you know, all along the coast. And they ... decided, it just couldn't work. ... You couldn't land troops there. Some places were a straight drop right into the water. There was no way to land any landing barges or anything like that. It just was ... the conclusion was that it was not possible. It would not have been possible to make the landing any place in Japan. There were no good spots for that.

KP: When you were doing the planning, you had no idea there was going to be an atomic bomb?

TL: No, that we didn't know. I can remember when they dropped it, where I was. I was in Borneo the day that they dropped the bomb. We were there. The news got to us real fast.

GD: So you had no idea what they were planning?

TL: No, ... we didn't, because that all came from the United States, here. I think they got direct orders from Washington on that. I didn't ever hear of the Enola Gay or any of that, until it was all over.

KP: You mentioned you were one of the first to land in Japan. What were you expecting before you landed?

TL: Well, the war was over then. We weren't expecting much and there were not any soldiers there. It was mostly old men and women and children. So, we weren't expecting any of that sort of treatment, but we did get to see some of the culture in Japan. They still had their theaters there, the Kabuki. We would go there and they had a brewery, in Nagoya, where we went and filled up a half track with beer and everybody got sick because the beer was just made like two days before that, it was green. But the kids were so cute. ... They were the cutest little kids. You wondered after you were fighting a war for years and might have killed some of the kids, that was awful. They were so cute. However, there was too much bowing; we got tired of that after awhile. ... Every time the Japanese would come near you, he or she would start bowing like mad. You had to tell them to stop. But then, I had put in so much time, that it came time for me to be rotated home, and, all of a sudden. I got out of there and came home.

KP: How long were you in Japan?

TL: A few months-- something like that.

KP: So you came home in early 1946?

TL: Well, not early in 1946; it was Thanksgiving Day when I got home, but in 1945.

KP: So you were in the CIC from 1942 to 1946?

TL: That's right. I was overseas in those jungles for months. That's a long, long stretch. My military service was from 10 July 1942 to 11 November 1945.

KP: Your missions in Japan. What were your missions?

TL: Well, nothing there. It was just to establish ... ourselves there, and then MacArthur took over and put in all his political stuff there, and we left.

KP: When you mention all of his "political stuff" what were the changes that took place?

TL: Well, he tried to get the economy going again and the factories, because Japan didn't have huge factories. They were mostly small places, local things. And we didn't use any explosives bombing Japan before the bomb. It was only incendiaries, and a lot of those little places were completely burnt out and that's why we didn't notice the destruction in Japan as we did in the Philippines, in Manila. Manila was just a mess. But whatever we dropped in Japan just burned everything right down to the ground, and you didn't see the destruction. So that was one of things he tried to get going first, right away. Get the economy going, get these plants working again, get those factories established.

GD: How did the Japanese public respond to you and to the Americans in general?

TL: Well, when we were there, it was good, I ... think. They welcomed us. That was another thing I was surprised about. I always thought there would be resentment and all that, but they were very nice. Perhaps they were frightened.

GD: So, there was no sense of unrest at all?

TL: No, maybe they were just glad the war was over. I don't know.

KP: You had come into a lot of contact with the Japanese society, and Japanese were fierce warriors. Why do you think the occupation went so well?

TL: Well, that's a question-- ... one of the things that a lot of people don't like about MacArthur. And they might be correct, partially. He did, to a lot of people, help out a little bit too much, and

he really treated the Japanese, after the war, as friends and not as an enemy. A lot of people didn't like that. ... Maybe he did too much too soon.

KP: Did you feel he was being too soft on the Japanese at the time?

TL: Well, yes. I think a lot of people did and, maybe, I did a little bit, also. I figured, what the heck were we killing and shooting all of those people for three or four years and then, all of a sudden, we're giving them all of these things so fast?

KP: Did you do any investigative work in Japan, check out Japanese citizens?

TL: No, we didn't do any of that because ... we were the first one[s] to just get in there and just establish an American organization there. ... We were the first ones to leave, too. So, all of the other guys came in later and set up the government matters. We didn't get involved in anything like that. Our mission there was to just get some Americans in Japan. As a matter of fact, we took the ... best house we saw standing there in Nagoya and took it over, and it was sort of a vacation for us.

KP: Had you thought of making the military a career?

TL: I did. When I got out, a lot of guys went back to stay in, and I went to Kilmer for a physical, and the guy said, "Your blood pressure is a little high today, come back in two days." And then I thought a lot during those two days and I never went back. But ... for a while there, I thought about staying in the service.

KP: Had you considered, or had anyone approached you to join the CIA?

TL: No, they hadn't; nobody did. I think that became important after the war, after I was out.

KP: But you did not get any calls to come back?

TL: No, no, no.

KP: Are there any more vivid memories of the war that you have?

TL: Well, there were so many of them, so many. One of them was probably at the end, watching the peace treaty being signed. I was on a little barge, a little boat. There were so many different types of boats and crafts there that you could almost walk on the water. We were close to the battleship Missouri where the signing was taking place. I thought that was very impressive. We could see that happening.

KP: Did you hear the ceremony?

TL: We heard some of it coming through the microphones and we could see the action clearly and all that. We saw them signing the papers, and I thought that it was a very impressive thing--

just to see all those ships and all those boats, hundreds of them. You could hardly see the water. They were almost touching each other. I think that was [a] very impressive thing that I will remember always. And there were a lot of sad things, too, [like] watching those Filipinos trying to scrounge something to eat from the garbage pails. Seeing all the poverty and all that, but it ended up that a lot of them--I found that out after--a lot of the Filipinos had diamonds which they buried underground during the occupation, and they dug them up after the war.

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

KP: When you came back from the war, did you take advantage of the GI Bill? Were you eligible for it?

TL: Oh yeah, yeah. I got all my advanced work through that GI Bill. I went to Middlebury College and NYU and Columbia. I certainly did take advantage of it, got all my books. It didn't cost me much, really. So, I did use that.

KP: Would you have been able to go to graduate school without the GI Bill?

TL: Perhaps, because back in those days, I remember at NYU when I was teaching there, ... I think the cost was about eighteen dollars a credit or something like that-- very affordable. I don't know what it is nowadays; probably a couple hundred.

GD: Did you find it difficult going back to living as a civilian?

TL: No, I didn't have any problems. I started teaching almost immediately at Rutgers here when I got back I don't think I was home a week or two when I started working. I got right into it.

KP: You had been to Rutgers before the war, and you were a student there. You came back in 1945 with all the GIs?

TL: Right.

KP: How had the GIs transformed Rutgers?

TL: Yeah, a lot; they were good. I had an awful lot of GIs here. They were older and more mature. ... Mature people who were, you know, disciplined. They were adults and they had seriousness of purpose. Actually, it was good teaching them. Good students and all that.

The bad part of Rutgers was those few years when they put in the open enrollment business. Then they got, all of a sudden, many poor students. Then you had to pass them. So, what did they care if they got all 4's, they got a diploma. But I think its changed now for the better, but for a while it was bad.

KP: You also taught high school, during part of your career.

TL: ... See, when I left Rutgers, ... Arts and Sciences, I started teaching in Westfield here but I never really left Rutgers, because ... I was on the University College faculty and taught there. So, actually I taught at Rutgers from 1946 to 1981, in one way or the other. And I retired in '81.

KP: You mentioned that you were also involved in one of the first Peace Corps initiatives.

TL: Yes.

KP: How did that come about?

TL: I don't know how it came about. They just decided somehow, Sergeant Shriver and those guys decided to have it at Rutgers. I don't think it was really successful because after that they had them training ... in the Philippines and in South America areas where they would find [a] climate similar to where they would be going. So, Rutgers was the first one, perhaps not the most successful one, but it started the whole Peace Corps business. It was the Colombia project.

KP: What year was this, 1961?

TL: Yes. About that, yes.

KP: And who taught? How did you get involved?

TL: ... Because I was teaching Spanish at Rutgers, along with a couple other guys who were teaching there at the time. And they used all of Rutgers' facilities.

KP: And Rutgers faculty?

TL: And Rutgers faculty. Part ...

KP: Part of it.

TL: ... And also, part of it took place during the summer at Douglass, on the other side, because they had the cafeteria there where they could feed the guys.

KP: You were at Rutgers for a very long time, and you saw Rutgers both before World War II and then after the war and then through both the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

TL: Yes.

KP: From your position, what had been the major changes at Rutgers, for both the better and worse?

TL: The major change was that it finally became classified as a state university. During of many of those years that I was there, we didn't know whether it was a state university or not. It was half state university, half not. And, as a result, it ended up being perhaps the most expensive

state university in the whole country to go to. So, once that was established, that was a good thing. And the other thing was the rapid, sudden increase in size. It went from a small place all concentrated there in Queens Campus to what it is today, and I had the experience of teaching at Rutgers also at Newark in University College. I used to teach there in Newark. ... It just got so big, I mean ... it was all over. And then Livingston got started and that became sort of a problem. But ...

KP: What was the problem with Livingston?

TL: Well, one of the problems there that people complained about was that it was mostly all pass/fail. You got no grades practically there. And another problem was they, all of a sudden, were hit with a matter of discipline. It became a discipline problem. You'd go through there and you'd see those guys carrying furniture out of the buildings and putting it in their cars and trucks and all sorts of crazy things.

GD: How do you think students have changed within that same time frame?

TL: Well, I liked the students right after the war mostly because they were older, as we said before, and they had more self-discipline. I think they had more seriousness of purpose, also. They had specific aims and goals, much more than the younger ... regular students you have now. Some of those people were in their 30s right after the war. They were, you know, adults and ... quite knowledgeable in things. For example, I was teaching Spanish, and a lot of those people knew some already from their military experience. They picked up a lot of Spanish in the Philippines, for example. So, that made the difference.

GD: How about in the 1960s? What was your impression of the students during that time period?

TL: Well, I recall, you had some good students there in the '60s, but I think that's where we started to also get some problems, maybe because the crowding became such a big thing. That's why you had some problems with the fraternities and their parties and their initiations and all that stuff. And, I don't know, ... I think, as it got bigger, the students didn't completely feel themselves part of anything. They were just mobs of people, and they were just always in the middle of these big crowds. I think when Rutgers was a small place, there was complete loyalty to the school, the morale was good. I don't think it's that good now, is it?

GD: Well, the new stadium kind of helped it a little bit. It's still confused, definitely.

KP: What did you think of the Vietnam War at Rutgers? Rutgers became quite the center of things with its teach-ins.

TL: Well, Vietnam, ... really ... we shouldn't have been there, I think. That's how I feel about it. And people I know who were in Vietnam don't really feel that they did much of anything there, whereas the guys coming from World War II had somewhat [of] a feeling of satisfaction. They almost hated to leave after it was all over because they saw something accomplished, and, in Vietnam, it was just the opposite. Why were those people there anyway? What did they do

besides getting killed and getting sick? Was there any big peace after Vietnam? There wasn't any of that stuff, just a lot of Agent Orange. I don't think Vietnam was even classified as a war. Was it?

KP: I think it was, but it was never declared.

TL: Now Korea, I don't know, ... it's just breaks, I know somebody who fought in Europe, went to the Pacific near the end of the war, and then to Korea. Some people got stuck in something like that.

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

TL: No, because I knew, ... I had more then the required amount of time, and I could have gone home sooner even if I wanted to.

KP: Why did you stick it out?

TL: I wanted to see Japan after all that fighting. I wanted to see Japan. Because really there was no fighting there. It was, as I said, almost a tourist thing once we got into Japan. The war was over.

KP: Did you think the United States did the right thing by keeping the emperor on the throne?

TL: Well, I told you before, he almost didn't stay there. He almost committed hari kari. ... Yeah, I suppose so. ... I would say, I would have agreed with that. ... Otherwise the change would have been too sudden, I think. It had to be done more gradually. To kick him off and start something new right away might have been too abrupt. But, I do think we were a little too easy with the Japanese after the war.

KP: Do you ever feel any animosity toward the Japanese now?

TL: Well, no. You see, I bought a Japanese car and it bothered me so much that I didn't keep it for more then eight months. I said, "What in the hell am I doing here? I was fighting those Japanese for all those years, and I go buy a Japanese car." So I didn't even keep it a year. ... That shows you how I felt about it, sort of.

KP: What has been the most rewarding part of your teaching career?

TL: Well, there were some good aspects of it. The one thing I really liked about it is that you meet and have met so many people. For example, just last week, I was in town and waiting for the traffic light to turn green, and somebody comes up to me, and he's waiting for the light and he looks at me and he says, "Were you a Spanish teacher?" I said, "Yes." He says, "Your name is Mr. La Costa?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Oh, I was in your class." He said, ... "I'm a veterinarian now. I was in you class at Rutgers in 1954." He said, "I still have the textbooks we used in the course. I still try to speak Spanish with all the Spanish people who come in." So, I think that's

one of the rewarding things about teaching: for a guy to come up to you-- and say that to you. So, some people, I guess, appreciate it. I think that's the reward. Certainly it isn't the money you make out of it, or the vacations, although they help. I think it's just an interesting job; it's pleasant, particularly on a university level. High school is another crazy ...

KP: Was it crazy in a sense of discipline in a high school?

TL: Yes, ... and the thing is it got worse each year whereas in the university, it didn't. The high school got-- every year it got a little bit worse, until right now they're messes. They lowered the standards, the test grades are down. In my field, do you know what they do in high school now? They take the first year ... Spanish book and make two books out of it-- two different books. So, in other words, they are doing 50 percent of the amount of work that they used to do before. So, then they wonder why test scores are low and people are not well prepared. How can you if you're only doing half the work? So, anyway, I don't have to bother with any of that now.

GD: Do you feel education is pretty much obsolete because of all these changes? Have these changes made it too easy? How has it effected society on a larger scale?

TL: Well, yes. ... I just think that we're not doing as much as we should, particularly in the secondary level. Surely there are lots of exceptions to that. You get some really bright kids who are in high school and taking college courses already, but the masses of secondary school kids are just not learning enough. And, there are certain things that they're not learning even little things like handwriting. I used to have the Palmer method and all that, but now their writing looks like chicken scratching. They never learned that in school. And now the kids are printing, little kids print. They don't even learn how to write. So, those little things are important, and they cut all that out. Imagine not learning how to write.

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask you about the Second World War or your experiences before or after the war?

TL: Well, I don't know. I had a lot of stuff written down once, just so I wouldn't forget it, but I can't really think of any of that now.

KP: If you're willing to give us copies, we are also creating an archive.

TL: I don't have much stuff. Copies of what?

KP: Of your travel orders ...

TL: Oh yeah, you can have copies of that, sure. But I'd like to save them. That's all I have left.

KP: Did you ever join any veterans' organizations?

TL: Nope, never did. I never joined any organizations in general. I'm not a joiner of organizations. Do you want to take a few of these, ... or should I make copies?

KP: Yes, I would prefer not to take originals.

TL: Yeah, I'll make some copies of these and send them to you. I don't know how clear they're going to be, but I'll try to do that.

KP: Because we are planning an exhibition in the spring on World War II.

TL: I used to have lots of stuff, swords, Japanese flags, and all that.

KP: What happened to it?

TL: Oh, I gave them away. ... I cleaned out my basement last year. I had so much junk there. I just threw everything away, just threw it out. Yeah, I could make you copies of these things and send them to you. Let's see if there's anything else around here. I don't know.

GD: How dramatically do you think World War II and being in the CIC has effected your life?

TL: Well, I think it's made me a little too secretive and introvertive. People say I never say anything about what I'm doing, and that my favorite expression now when they ask me something is, "I don't know." I think it all stems from that experience. ... I don't think I'm very open with people now as a result of that. Way back then, it's 50 years ago or more, I was so accustomed to not saying anything to anybody about anything that I was doing. I think that that has carried over with me. At least that is one of the criticisms I get from people. "Oh, you never tell us anything." Every time I ask you something you say, "I don't know." That's your favorite expression, "I don't know". I do know, but I don't feel like saying it. So maybe that's the way it has effected me somewhat.

KP: Thank you very much for your time.

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

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