

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH HARRY J. ROCKAFELLER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

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TRANSCRIPT BY

FANTASTIC TRANSCRIPTS

Shaun Illingworth: This begins the second interview session with General Harry J. Rockafeller on April 8, 2016, in Manasquan, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth, and also in attendance is ...

Charles Zukaukas: Dr. Charlie Zukaukas.

SI: Thank you both for having me here.

Harry J. Rockafeller: It's major general, not general. General is a four-star, the top of the line, okay.

SI: To begin, I wanted to ask about your days at Rutgers. Can you tell me how you were able to come to Rutgers in 1937?

HR: My uncle came here and said, "Harry, I'm going to get you a faculty scholarship and bring you to Rutgers." He just told me--that was it. There was no discussion [laughter] and I was glad. I had been to Rutgers with my brother. My brother had preceded me in all respects. He was the Alpha of Delta Chapter of Chi Phi, and then, he was out and out of my life after that, but that's the way we all seemed to congregate, Delta Chapter of Chi Phi.

SI: You said that your uncle was also in the Delta Chapter of Chi Phi at Rutgers.

HR: He was the Alpha of Delta Chapter of Chi Phi at 90 College Avenue when he was in college and he was a "big man on campus." I think he also was president of his class at the time. He spent his life and he dedicated his life to Rutgers, really. You can find that in the record, Shaun.

SI: Your uncle was able to get you the faculty scholarship. How was that accomplished?

HR: Because I'm his ward. That's all I knew. I was laying in there on the bed one day. He came in, he said, "Harry, I'm going to put you into Rutgers. I'm getting you a faculty scholarship." I thought, "What the hell have I done to deserve that?" and I said, "That's awful nice of you, Uncle Harry." He said, "I'll be down with you, bring you up, and we'll see the place," all that stuff. [Editor's Note: Harry J. "Rocky" Rockafeller, Jr. (1894-1978) served as head football coach for Rutgers from 1927 to 1930 and again from 1942 to 1945 when then head coach Harvey Harman was inducted into the US Navy. He served as the Athletic Director until 1961.]

SI: You moved in with him for your freshman year.

HR: Right. He lived just up the road from the stadium, on the right-hand side of River Road. You know where that is.

SI: Yes.

HR: Yes. He lived right up that road and he said, "You're going to live with me," which was all right with me. Then, my sophomore year, I got into Delta Chapter of Chi Phi and, also, got into the kitchen.

SI: What was that?

HR: Got in the kitchen. I worked in the kitchen as the waiter, and then, as the steward. Then, the steward was the guy who was responsible for feeding the fraternity and all that kind of stuff. So, I stayed in that capacity for a long while, and then, I moved to Alpha of Chi Phi--you know that alpha is the Greek president, yes--Delta Chapter of Chi Phi.

SI: I do want to ask about that, but what were your first few days and weeks like at Rutgers, getting acclimated to college?

HR: It was the way I thought a college should look, with ivy on the wall. [laughter] It was really college. My brother had preceded me. He was Class of '36 and he'd brought me up there a couple of times. Boy, I loved that. I loved that ivy up on the wall. I felt, "This is really college life here." That's why, when I came in as a sophomore and was invited to join the chapter, I was very happy.

SI: Did they have freshman hazing when you were there? What was that like--not at the fraternity, but for freshman in general?

HR: I'll tell you that story, but I don't want it in this business.

SI: Okay, I will pause.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: I will turn the recorder back on. I wanted to ask about your athletic career at Rutgers. When you first arrived, you were playing four sports in your freshman year. Which sports were they?

HR: Football, basketball, lacrosse and track.

SI: Starting with football, what do you recall about playing in those days?

HR: Well, I was a substitute for a guy by the name of [Raymond] Foster, who was an All-State halfback at Dumont, and he was a pretty good football player. So, I had never played football, fully-equipped, fully-uniformed, all that. I'd never been in any of that kind of stuff. So, I got in, I went over there and tried out and I could kick. I could kick the ball and I could pass the ball. I was not extremely fast, but I could kick that ball. So, when I got mixed up with other things, I got over in--in those days, the freshmen used to practice right off of Neilson Field. There was a field on that side of the road, then, it dropped right down to the river. So, I was playing over there and a guy by the name of--what was his name, Reno or Geno or something like that, was the freshman coach?

CZ: Wasn't it Tommy ...

SI: Kenneally?

CZ: Kenneally?

HR: What was he?

SI: Thomas Kenneally?

CZ: Kenneally?

HR: No, Kenneally was not the football coach. Reno, this guy's name was--Cuno, his name was, Cuno Bender. You remember that.

CZ: Oh, Cuno Bender, yes.

HR: Yes, Cuno Bender, yes. He's an Indian and he don't have too many smarts upstairs, I'll tell you. [laughter] Anyway, he got a job as the freshman football coach. So, we were practicing the first day, and then, he saw me punting, right. So, the next day, I was on the first team. [laughter] I didn't know a goddamn thing. So, the first thing we have, he's going to teach us "the Notre Dame Box," right. I didn't even know what the hell he was talking about. He didn't explain it too well, but, anyway, he must've spent fifteen, twenty minutes trying to get me, left halfback, running correctly and the skip that you did in that--you remember that?

CZ: Yes, I do, the shift, yes.

HR: Yes, the quarterback would call his signal.

CZ: Right.

HR: Down to a certain point, then, he'd say, "Hike," or something. Then, you would jump a couple of steps and get over here.

CZ: That's right. It was a box.

HR: [laughter] So, see, it's funny when you talk about these things, honest to God. You remember "Stumpy Nelson" [Milton Nelson]?

CZ: Sure.

HR: Well, Stumpy was the first and just about the best friend I had in college. He was a great guy. He played football when I played football, he played on the lacrosse team when I played on the lacrosse team, good guy. So, anyway, Stumpy told me about this later. On the second day of practice, I'm on the first team, because he [Coach Bender] had seen me kick this football, right. He figured, "There's my punter. I've got him on the field." So, I liked the idea, but I didn't know

a damn thing about it. I didn't know a damn thing about football, that is, playing team football. I didn't know anything about it. So, now, they're going to teach me how to do the Notre Dame ...

CZ: Shift.

HR: Skip, right? Now, everybody's lined up around and they're watching me trying to do that skip. All of them are saying, "Where the hell did this guy come from?" including this guy Foster. Do you remember Foster?

CZ: Yes.

HR: He was an All-State halfback.

CZ: He didn't show it when he played with us.

HR: No, never, and that's why he got put on second team when they saw I could kick, because he was supposed to be a kicker, too, right. So, anyway, that was the way we got started with the football and, now, I'm on the first team. So, I went home, had dinner and talked with my uncle a little bit, asked him a few questions, and so forth. My uncle says, "Well, Cuno Bender spoke to me today and he said he was surprised about some of the things you could do so well, but there were some other things you couldn't seem to get started with," he says, "like that Notre Dame Box, over and over there, right." [laughter] I feel like a goddamn fool, right; just like a fool is what I felt, oh, a lot of people sitting around there and standing around watching me. I don't have the slightest idea what they're talking about. So, anyway, my uncle says to Cuno, he says, "Don't be too hard on Harry. This is the first time he's ever had a full uniform on. He's not played team football." So, the next day, I was on the fourth squad. [laughter] That was my career.

CZ: Well, that's how you got out of football; now, let's go to lacrosse.

HR: Then, Charlie, comes the marking period, "Swoosh," and you would be surprised at how the guys that were on the squad got, "Swoosh," just like that, and they were not allowed to play. So, then, I played. We went up to play Lehigh and I played. I had started and played the whole game, but that's because Foster was out. He was no student. So, then, Harman came to me in my senior year; well, no, in the end of my junior year, I guess it was.

CZ: That's Harvey Harman.

HR: They had started intercollege football, which I thought was great. They had the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Agriculture, College of Engineering and I think there was one other school. That was the league that played on the gridiron right up from the stadium. That's where we played. What I liked about it was, it was practice two nights a week and play one night a week. I loved that. Now, two of my best buddies, one of them was Stumpy Nelson and the other was Jim Wallace. You remember Jim Wallace.

CZ: Jimmy Wallace?

HR: Jimmy Wallace, yes.

CZ: He was from Asbury Park.

HR: From Long Branch.

CZ: From Long Branch.

HR: Yes, sure. So, we were having a couple of beers during the week in my senior year, 1941, and we were talking. Stumpy got to talking about, "Rock," he said, "that day when you couldn't get to do the goddamn 'Sunday little skip,' I thought, 'How the hell is this guy ever going to run with the football?'" This is the way I was looking to the guy. He was funny that way. So, I said, "I thought it was funny, too." So, we talked and they told me their view of college football. We'd never had that discussion before. The sense of it was, and what they told me was, "Rocky, you didn't miss a thing." This is what he said, "You didn't miss a thing, Rock." He says, "Between three o'clock in the afternoon, six o'clock at the training table, seven o'clock in the instruction room, nine to nine-thirty, get out and go to bed, more dead than anything, right," but both of them, and Jimmy Wallace was a pretty good football player. He came from Long [Branch] on scholarship. He had been a big guy up here in Long Branch. So, the consensus of the two of them was, "Rock, you didn't miss anything." That was it.

CZ: Then, how about track now?

HR: Well, track, what's-his-name came back to me. I learned, after a while, I could almost give you their speech. [laughter] What the hell was his name, the track coach?

SI: I am not sure [Bernard Wefers].

HR: He was an Olympian at one time in his life, but I don't remember his name right now. He came to me and he says, "Harry, why don't you come out for track?" I'm playing lacrosse in the meanwhile, right. So, I said to him, "I don't know, Coach." I said, "I'm not in love with running too much, for long ways, and I don't know what I would be doing up here." He said, "Why don't you try the field part of it, the discus and the shotput and the javelin?" I said, "Well, I'll try." So, I got out there and I tried the javelin. So, I threw the javelin for the freshmen track team and I wasn't all that great at it. In those days, javelin was totally different than it is today. Along about, oh, twenty years after I got out of college, the Swedes, I think, or the Finns, completely revolutionized javelin. Before they got into it, the usual javelin throw, you went down and you loped down and you went like this with the javelin on your shoulder, here. Then, you stopped, and then, you threw it. Well, any momentum that you had running down towards the line disappeared when you stopped. You lost all that momentum. The Swedes and I think the Norwegians got into it together, but they found that the way to do it is to run up at the line as fast as you can run, and then, go into a side-spin and throw, right. You've got all that momentum from the running up to the line, right. So, in those years, where the average college spin might be up around 200 feet, it went up to 300 and 350 feet, by the simple thing of running at the line as hard as you could, and then, turn and throw. That changed the whole face of javelin.

CZ: So, you fell into that or what?

HR: No, no, that was after. I'm out of college now when this happened.

CZ: Oh, but how did you get into track?

HR: The what?

CZ: How did you get into track?

HR: That was it. Bernie Wefers, the guy's name was, the track coach. Do you remember him?

SI: I have seen the name.

HR: Bernie Wefers. He said, "Harry, I want you to come out and try. Let's see if you can do something in the field, like the shotput or the javelin or the discus," and I said, "Coach, I've never done any of those things." "You're a natural athlete, Harry." That's their follow-on, always, "You're a natural." I said, "Well, I've heard this before, right." [laughter]

CZ: And baseball?

HR: I never tried baseball.

SI: Basketball?

HR: I was playing baseball.

CZ: What was the other one?

SI: Basketball.

CZ: Oh, basketball.

HR: No baseball.

CZ: No, but how about basketball?

HR: Baseball, I never got into in college, but I came home here and I'd had big-time baseball playing for Lewis Lumber Company.

CZ: Oh, really?

HR: You know where Lewis Lumber was, up in (Crow's?) Avenue in Asbury Park, Lewis Lumber?

CZ: Not really. I'm not familiar with Asbury Park.

HR: Yes, I played for them two summers. I enjoyed it.

SI: Was that in the industrial leagues?

HR: It was the Shore League, yes, the Coast Guard and Deal AC, and I think it's eight or nine people that were members of the league. The guy, Marvin Day, who owned the Day Tom Thumb miniature golf thing on the Asbury Park boardwalk, he got ahold of me and he said, "I watched you pitch at Asbury. I want you to come over and pitch for us at Lewis Lumber Company," and I said, "I don't know whether I can get up to that level." "You'll be all right, you'll be all right. You're a natural." [laughter] Well, that was it. Then, I pitched for Lewis Lumber for a couple of years there and enjoyed it fully, but I never pitched--I pitched for Asbury--but I never pitched in college.

SI: Did the Rutgers basketball coach give you the same talk? How did you get involved there?

HR: He called me when I was a freshman, my freshman year, all right. I broke loose on a fast break, went down the court, jumped up, went to make a triple and I didn't turn myself correctly and the result was, the ball went over the basket. He comes up, you can hear him all over New Brunswick, right, "You look like the biggest sissy that ever came to this University." That was freshman year and I thought, "The hell with you. I don't want to play for you." [laughter] So, I said, "The hell with basketball." Then, the lacrosse [coach] came to me and said, "Come and play lacrosse for us," and I told him the same thing I told everybody else. I said, "I never played lacrosse." My brother played. He had his nose and his eyes smashed, but I never played it. "You'll be all right, Harry. You'll work right in, Harry. You'll be okay, Harry," all that crap, right. So, I went down and Kenneally was the coach of the lacrosse team. So, he started--he and I came to odds, at odds end, right from the beginning. I didn't quite meet his standards of doing certain things and we tolerated each other, the lacrosse coach and I, Tom Kenneally. Do you remember Tom Kenneally?

CZ: Tom Kenneally was a big factor in teaching me how to back up the line. He was a first-class coach, as far as I was concerned.

HR: Well, he had a pretty good career at Notre Dame before he came to Rutgers.

SI: He had a pretty good career at Notre Dame.

CZ: Oh, is that so?

HR: Yes. So, I played basketball for him and lacrosse for him, after Coach [Frederick] Fitch, who was very friendly with my uncle, came down to the fraternity, said, "Harry, why don't you come out and play lacrosse for us?" I thought, "Jesus, I never played that game. How the hell am I going to step in there and play that game?" [laughter]

CZ: That's what they did with all the football players. They just grabbed them. Half of them didn't know anything about it, didn't even know what a lacrosse stick looked like, but they all turned out pretty good.

HR: So, I had a few run-ins with Mr. Kenneally, but I got through it and, now, at that point, I've got him for lacrosse. So, I went out and I didn't know anything about it. I didn't know how it was played, I didn't know what the score was, what the field dimensions were, didn't know anything about it. So, now, it's Friday night and I'm not playing anything. Nobody says, "You're going to be this, you're going to be that or anything else." So, Kenneally gathers us around the cage and he says, "We're going to Long Island tomorrow and we're going to play Manhasset High School," and I said, "Hmm, Long Island." He says, "They are very good," said, "We're going to have a tough time with them." He said, "Now, that doesn't mean we can't go out and make a good show for ourselves," but he said, "I've got a problem. We don't have any goaltender, right." Nobody had ever stepped in the goal before. "So, I'm going to ask all of you-I need a volunteer to play goalie," right. So, I thought about that a minute and I thought, "If I volunteer to play, I'll be sure to start, because there'll be no other volunteer, right. I'll start now." So, I said, "I'll volunteer for it." I didn't even know what the hell to do, whether I wore a jockstrap or an armor plate or anything else. I didn't know. [laughter] Sure enough, we went up to play Manhasset and they gave us a good kick right in the bottom. They beat us. They were good, yes.

CZ: And that's how you got to be a goalie?

HR: Yes. From that, I was Honorable Mention All-American in my sophomore year. Can you imagine that?

SI: Wow.

HR: I never played the game, I didn't know a goddamn thing about it and I got Honorable Mention All-American in my sophomore year. Then, I got up into All-American in my junior and senior years. Then, in my senior year, I was playing in this intercollege football I told you about, the School of Arts and Sciences, and we won the intercollege championship. We had a hell of a lot of fun and we had a lot of guys playing with us who didn't play for the varsity freshman team because their marks weren't high enough to get up there. That's what they did to you. I don't know how it works now, but, if you didn't reach a certain mark level, you did not play on the team and the losses were very big. You must remember it, Charlie. Do you remember guys dropping out with their low marks?

CZ: Oh, sure.

HR: Yes. Well, they were enforcing it then. So, that was the entry into lacrosse.

CZ: When did you ruin your knee?

HR: At the start of my senior year.

CZ: Yes. He was seeded to be the number one guy in the country, goalie, because of his work as a junior. Unfortunately, he banged up his knee and he never was the same guy that he was when he was a junior.

HR: No. What happened was, we're going to play Montclair AC and Montclair AC is peopled by--you know Montclair Athletic Club?

CZ: Yes.

HR: Peopled by star lacrosse players from New Jersey, Philadelphia, along that way, and, also, up in New England, so that Montclair AC had a bunch of professional guys playing for them and they were good. They were very good. You could see, the one guy had been playing for fourteen years. Can you imagine? I was talking to him while he's standing in front of the goal, "Hey, how long you been playing lacrosse?" "Fourteen years," he said. I said, "Where the hell did you play?" "Every place that I've gone, grammar school, I played it in high school, I played it in prep school and I played it in college, and here I am." [laughter]

SI: When the team would play these athletic clubs and the high school, were those pre-season games or scrimmages? Did they count in the schedule?

HR: No, it was not. I think they'd stuck it in toward the end of the season. Then, we played them. So, at the end of--I think it was going to be at the end of the time for the game--the score was 2-0 Rutgers. That was one of the best games I played the whole time I was in college, 2-0 Rutgers. So, here comes Coach Fitch, comes over, he says, "Harry," he says, "now, listen to me." He said, "I'm going to take you out." He says, "You've got a shutout on your hands and that's most unusual." The score is 2-0 in favor of Rutgers, right, "Most unusual that is, Harry, and you've got it, but I'm taking you out." I said, "What's the matter, Coach?" He says, "Well, I'm going to put in Jim (Chandler?) to play, because, Harry, you're not going to be here anymore. You're going to graduate. We've got to have somebody playing goal next year, so, I want to give (Chandler?) two minutes of experience, which are available right now in this game. I want to put him in right now." So, I said, "All right, Coach, that's up to you." So, I went over, sat down on the bench, right. Two minutes later, the score was 2-2. These bastards had scored twice in that two minutes that they got there and Fitch was almost crying.

CZ: His name, I don't think it was Chandler.

HR: Fitch was almost crying because ...

CZ: He went in the Marines.

HR: Who was that?

CZ: The guy that was the second to you in lacrosse.

HR: Chandler? Stu Hurlbert.

CZ: Stu Hurlbert, yes. He was the guy that was following him.

HR: Yes, but Chandler was the guy that Fitch put in.

CZ: Oh, really?

HR: Yes, put him in to play the last two minutes of the game. It's 2-0 Rutgers, and, two minutes later, it's 2-2. These guys came awake and threw in a couple of quick goals.

CZ: Sure, tend to do it, yes.

HR: So, those were the little experiences along the way and I enjoyed every bit of it. I loved lacrosse.

CZ: How did you manage your academic program with all that?

HR: How did it manage me? [laughter] I was not a superb student, I'd be the first one to admit it, because I loved athletics far more than I did reading books. So, I played everything. The last thing I played was on the golf team. [laughter] My uncle called me one afternoon and he says, "Harry, get yourself a ride over here right away." He said, "I'm playing eighteen holes with the golf coach and I want you to come over and play with us." So, I get (Skippy?) going over to the course, meet the golf coach and we play. I don't think I had much, 85 or something like that. So, the next morning, I get a call from the coach. He wants to come over. They're going to play Lehigh. "And they're good, Harry," he says, "and I want to come up and juggle our players, so that maybe we'll have our number one play their number five and our number two play their number one," and all that kind of stuff, so that by juggling, maybe you get a break, might do something. Anyway, he teams me up against this guy and, after ten holes, the score is 10-8. In golf, 10-8 means that you have lost the first ten goals or the first ten holes. You've lost them and you've got only eight to play. The game is over, in match play. In other words, if your opponent has scored eighteen holes and you're going to the eleventh hole, the match is over. There's nothing in playing anymore. So, anyway, this guy says, "Harry, I'm going to put you in. You're going to play their number one," [laughter] and I thought, "That's going to be interesting." This guy shoots a 69.

CZ: Wow.

HR: I said to the coach, "Where do these guys come from?" He said, "All four of them, from Lehigh, came out of the same high school, prep school, and here they are," and they were good. So, that was my last exploit, was to play for the golf team, one shot. [laughter]

SI: What was your major?

HR: Business.

SI: Do any professors stand out in your memory?

HR: I thought the money and banking guy, I thought he was terrific, Aggie or some such name like that, Aggies or Aggers [Eugene Agger] or something. You don't remember him, Charlie, the head of the Economics Department?

CZ: No, because I was far from Economics there.

HR: Well, I spent most of my time in the office of the secretary to the department chairman and she was awful good to me, a good person. She knows that I could type just as well with my feet as I could with my hands--I stunk. [laughter] I did. I just stunk and I'd come in there and go hunt and peck. I never got to be any kind of a good typist. It was then, in those days, you worked for the National Youth Administration [part of the New Deal].

CZ: Yes.

HR: You remember that?

CZ: Sure, twenty-five dollars a month.

HR: Yes, and, Charlie, that was a lot of money and I enjoyed it.

CZ: That was a big help.

HR: Her name was Mrs. (Reilly?). Did you ever meet her? She was an awful nice person.

SI: You would do work for her in the office for the NYA.

HR: Yes. I could file all right, but, as far as providing her with a piece of typed production, no, I had never typed. It takes a lot of experience, but, when you're good--when I got to work, later on, years later, I could realize what it was like to have a secretary [General Rockafeller imitates fast typing] right through the thing. The NYA paid you every month and it was helpful.

SI: You worked in the fraternity and you worked in the department. Did you have any other jobs while you were in college?

HR: ROTC.

SI: Okay.

CZ: What you did, you probably were an usher in some of the ballgames or something like that?

HR: No, no, I didn't get into that. I used to go to watch the ballgames.

CZ: Well, what we used to do, that was our Saturday job, was being an usher at the football game for the freshman football guys.

HR: What I enjoyed in the way of a job was, I was the steward, *the* steward, of the fraternity, responsible for running the kitchen and setting the tables and washing and all that crap.

CZ: Yes.

HR: In return for that, I got my meals all the way through.

SI: Did you live in the fraternity house?

HR: Oh, yes.

CZ: You did?

HR: Yes, my sophomore year. My freshman year, I lived with my uncle, Charlie.

CZ: Oh, that's right, yes.

HR: My sophomore year, I lived at 90 College Avenue.

CZ: The big, white building.

HR: No, that was Chi Psi or something, across the way.

CZ: Yes.

HR: Ours was on this side, on the corner of College Avenue.

CZ: It was sort of a reddish color, sort of deep red or a maroon building?

HR: Yes.

CZ: Yes.

SI: It was right on the corner. Did it have pillars?

HR: We had four or five, right, and, when you went out, you went down two or three steps, you were on the level with the base of the piling. Then, you go down a few more and you were down on the street level.

SI: Okay. I am interested because my office is now at 88 College Avenue, so, it would have been right next-door.

HR: Right.

SI: Tell us a little bit about what life was like in a fraternity house then. What sort of activities would you do?

HR: Well, I started living in it when I was a sophomore and I don't think you should incorporate this.

SI: Okay, I will turn it off.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: I am turning it back on. You were in ROTC for all four years and, eventually, received your commission. What was the ROTC training like in your day?

HR: You know something, Shaun? Right now, I can't even remember if ROTC was a four-year course or three. I don't. Were you in ROTC?

SI: No. It was not required when I went to Rutgers.

HR: It was not required?

SI: No. I think it stopped being a requirement in the 1960s.

HR: Was that the time they came over to get me? Was that around Korea and Vietnam?

SI: It was more the Vietnam era.

HR: And the students came over to my headquarters, up at Camp Kilmer.

SI: Okay, when you were with the 78th.

HR: Right, and [they said], "General, we want you to come over and walk the streets with us," [laughter] and that's when they set fire to the ROTC house. Do you remember that?

SI: I have heard about it.

HR: Yes. It was bad times for ROTC and some of these clowns, these are the same guys who wanted me to come and march down College Avenue with them in the protest parade. I said, "Fellows, I may feel the way you do, but I am not going out to make a public spectacle of myself for that." That was the end of that.

SI: Going back to being in the ROTC in the 1930s and early 1940s, what did the training consist of? Was it mostly classroom work? Was there any fieldwork?

HR: Very little fieldwork, I think. Classwork was laid on and followed through all the time and there was some work inside, in the gymnasium, that stuff in there. We really weren't paying a hell of a lot of attention because the war wasn't close. So, we figured, "If it comes, it comes, that's all. What are you going to do?" We found out what we were going to do. [laughter] So, three or four of us got--I don't want this in the ...

SI: Okay.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Okay.

HR: What would you like to hear about it, Shaun?

SI: You earned your commission when you graduated in the Spring of 1941. Were you ordered to active duty then?

HR: Just cut this off for a few minutes.

SI: Sure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

HR: Sure, okay.

SI: Tell us about your first assignment in the Army. You said you went to Camp Pine.

HR: It was called Pine Camp then.

SI: Pine Camp.

HR: Then, it was changed to Camp Drum, because General Drum had been an Army hero. [Editor's Note: Pine Camp was rechristened Camp Drum in 1951 after Lieutenant General Hugh A. Drum, Chief of Staff of the US First Army during World War I.] So, it was called Camp Drum, okay, and that's what I was assigned to. I was assigned to--where is it? Where's that fancy book you had? [Editor's Note: The participants look for the text.] You got it? 51st Armored Infantry Battalion. Well, I was assigned to the 51st Armored Infantry Regiment. When I first went in, the three infantry battalions were lumped together in a regiment. That's why it's called armored infantry battalion and we actually were assigned to the armored infantry regiment. My friend Stumpy Nelson, right, his way of greeting you and my way of greeting him was to hit him, right. He would come around--you wouldn't see him coming--and he would hit you here in this deltoid or something in here, "Bang," and then, he'd look around like that, kind of walk away. That was his big thrill and, not too long after that, I'd give him one, right. This is the way we fooled around. So, we're going to go to Pine Camp together and Milt had never been a great fan of ROTC, but, now, he is a Reserve commissioned officer and he wants to do the job. So, we got the train up at Grand Central Station and we were not in uniform. After we got out and started to roll, we took turns--can you turn that off just a minute?

SI: Sure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: They came around inquiring if you wanted to join the ground forces of the Air Force.

HR: Right, and some of our people went off and Milt was one of them. He was in that big oil raid.

SI: Ploesti?

HR: What is it?

SI: Ploesti, Romania? [Editor's Note: The oil fields at Ploesti, Romania, were a major target for the US Army Air Forces throughout the war. The heavy antiaircraft and fighter protection established by the enemy led to high casualties for the USAAF, such as during the August 1, 1943, Operation: TIDAL WAVE raid, in which over three hundred American airmen lost their lives, nearly two hundred became prisoners of war and many more were wounded.]

HR: Ploesti, he was in that. Now, he didn't fancy he was going in something like that, because, when he went in the ground forces of the Air Force, he didn't visualize any planes dropping bombs, all right. He figures he'll be in the supply cabins and stuff like that. Do you have any way of knowing if he's still alive?

SI: I can check.

HR: Could you do that, please?

SI: Sure.

HR: I have a feeling he's not alive.

CZ: You've never seen him since?

HR: Never, never, in all the gatherings and all that kind of crap. I'll tell you a little story about Milt, which impressed me a great deal, all right. We gathered in his fraternity room and there's about maybe ten guys in there, about maybe five Hebrews and five "no Hebrews," right. It's a bull session, up in the place right opposite the Rutgers Gymnasium, that dormitory there. There's a bull session in Stumpy's room and these guys are taking off, "You know the one thing I don't like about this place? We've got too goddamn many kikes in here." "Oh, who's talking like that?" Milt's sitting over on his cot and he is Jewish, wholly Jewish, and then, more talk by these bull shitters sitting over here, telling how great they are and how bad the Jews are. Milt says, "You know, I've got to interrupt you fellows. I want to tell you something. When you are talking about the Jews and the kikes and a few other things, you're talking about my religion." It got very quiet in there; nobody said a word. Finally, they all got up and left, but I admired him for that. I mean, that took a lot of guts, right. "I have to tell you that you're talking about my religion." So, that was Milt; okay, go ahead.

SI: When you got to Pine Camp, in the months before Pearl Harbor, what were your activities and daily duties?

HR: Well, when I got in, I think there probably were around fifteen commissioned officers from Rutgers, went to Pine Camp, and every one of them got assigned to a troop unit. I was assigned to the heavy weapons company of the 51st Armored Infantry, right, and then, the next thing that came out, I was the platoon leader for the heavy weapons company platoon, right. Really, we were into the action whether we liked it or not. We were in there trying to tell guys who had been in the Army for many months how to spread your feet when you wanted to stand at attention and things like that. [laughter] We knew we had to go some before we could catch up with those people. So, we got in, we worked hard. There were a lot of us in the same boat, and then, the big change happened. At that time, the Army was looking to build twenty armored divisions. Now, having decided on that course, they thought, "The way we'll do this, we will extract a cadre from each of the existing Army divisions and send that cadre to the new division that's being set up over here," and it went beautifully for a long while. So, each of the, you might call them, "live" armored divisions that had enough people, that could spare them, were tasked to build up a cadre and send it to a parent division in the active Army and it worked very well. Inside of, I'd say two years, the Army had all the way up to the 14th and 15th Armored Divisions. We were the Fourth Armored Division, all right, but that was the way we got into the real world. When I went in, I was there, I was a second lieutenant and that's not very high up the officer chain. Now, don't put this in the book. [laughter]

SI: Do you want me to pause?

HR: Well, I think, when it comes to me, I would cross it out if I saw it.

SI: Okay, let me pause it then.

[TAPE PAUSED]

HR: Where do you want me to talk from, getting in a boat and going to England, and then, landing?

SI: Yes, let us pick up there.

HR: All right. We went to, I think it was Camp Myles Standish in New England. The first thing that happens, on the train, I'm the train commander going up to the boat that night and this wiseass conductor comes up to me and he says, "You know, the average loss per unit is thirty-nine men, between here and the boat." In other words, guys are getting and running. I say, "Well, you won't have anybody missing here." "Oh, we'll see," he says. I said, "You'll see, yes. Nobody will be missing," and nobody was, getting on that boat. So, the following morning, we went to get on the boat and I've got a big (valet pack?) right here. I'm lugging it across the gangplank to get on the boat and the handle breaks, right. There's no way I can handle this thing except by wrapping my arms around it like this, right, and I started across that gangplank. I'm telling you, the damn gangplank, I think, was going like this [swaying]. I went, "Jesus Christ Almighty, what a time for this to happen." I can't carry this thing. I'm lugging it along the

gangplank. Well, a guy comes up in back of you and the guy says to me, puts his hand on my shoulder, older-looking man, on the boat, he says, "Kid, let me tell you something," kid, too, I'm still a kid, [laughter] "Let me tell you something." He says, "By the time you get on this boat right here, you'll be drawing a twenty percent increase in pay, because you're on overseas duty now." That made me feel pretty good. So, that was it. We got on the boat and we started out the next morning. That was a sight like I will never see again. It was amazing, really. As far as you looked, in any direction, were Allied boats going back and forth, trying to find submarines, right. Then, we got into heavy weather and that was bad, and then, we got into Liverpool. I think it was ten days or so for the trip. We're watching, all day long, these sub chasers and destroyers going around, circling, dropping mines and, "Pow," big explosion. It was quite interesting. Now, we're going into Liverpool and Axis Sally comes on. You know who Axis Sally is, right? "And we would like to take the time to welcome the Fourth Armored Division to England." Can you imagine? We said, "Jesus Christ, how do they know this?" We're young guys, we don't know much about this stuff, "How do they know that we're here and we're going to disembark here?" and so forth, but that's what it was, Axis Sally [a female radio personality who broadcast Nazi propaganda to Allied troops].

CZ: It was what?

HR: Axis Sally was the name of the woman and she says to us--we're all listening on the radio, she's got her own broadcast, talk show--she says, "And I would like to welcome the Fourth Armored Division to England." It just gives you news to everything, "Oh, Christ, do they know it's us on this boat? Boy, they must have some kind of an intelligence system." So, that was the first thing that happened. Then, we got on the train in blackout and the whole countryside, that was impressive, no lights in the countryside, all right. Then, we got in our mess hall and the first thing we got was powdered eggs. I thought, "Oh, this is going to be jolly." [laughter] Of course, I had a little problem with my stomach then and powdered eggs don't sit. That's how we started. We went to a place up in middle England and we stayed there from December to July of '41; no, not July of '41. We landed in England in December.

SI: Of 1943?

HR: Yes, and then, we went to France. D-Day was '44, I think, right, yes.

SI: June 6th.

HR: That's when we went to France, but we were not in D-Day. No armored divisions participated in D-Day, because there was no [space]. They've got to wait until there's some clear terrain that they can move over without being mired down in mess and muck, okay. That's what that was. So, we got up in there in the barracks and had powdered eggs.

SI: Were you still commanding the heavy weapons platoon?

HR: No.

SI: What was your job at this point?

HR: I was a company commander then.

SI: B Company?

HR: B Company, yes, and I was most pleased. I'd been made a captain in fourteen months. A little while later, I was talking to my regimental commander, telling me how he had been a captain for nineteen years. That was a little different story.

SI: For the record, can you describe how your company was set up, what the general size was, how it was organized?

HR: The size was 254 men and that was full strength. We had a few put in as we neared our transmission to France and combat. For example, there was a space created--we called it a TO&E change. You know what that means.

SI: Yes.

HR: Table of organization and equipment, and, in the case of armored infantry companies, the company commander had a space added, authorized, in his company of a bodyguard. My bodyguard was a Virginia gentleman, a fine guy, and we never did find out whether he was black or not and we never questioned him, but he served as my bodyguard for one day, one day. When we got into combat, the first night that we were in heavy fire; well, let me put it this way. When we got into combat, we were watching the retreat of large numbers of American soldiers coming back from B Company of the 53rd Armored Infantry. There were three infantry battalions in the Fourth Armored Division. So, we saw a lot of soldiers coming back from B Company of the 53rd and these guys were--they've had it. Can you cut it now for a few minutes?

SI: Sure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

HR: Soldier comes up to me, a sergeant, one of my platoons. He says, "Sir, I've got bad news for you." Now, here's an interesting thing, for I have now known a long while, after many years of being associated with war, there's an interesting thing which says, "You will gain in combat how you trained towards it before you get into combat. When you get into combat, you will be doing the things you trained yourself to do. So, it's important to make your training all-inclusive." That's the word, right. The soldier says, "Sir;" this guy is running my sixty-millimeter mortar squad and his men, three or four of them, were ammunition carriers who have a vest, which is sewed up here and they can get a shell in there--got the picture? So, he said, "We did what we did in practice. We never took the vests off when we were in practice to leave the boat. We just took the vests off and left it in the halftrack," because they were cumbersome and heavy. He said, "Sir, we don't have any mortar ammunition." I said, "I'll tell you what you do. Go right back down this road and go to where the vehicles are parked. We're not going to use the vehicles tonight. Go to where the vehicles are parked and get every bit of ammunition you can carry and get back up here right away. I will be standing right here waiting for you to

come back with the ammunition." "We're on our way, sir," okay, and, sure enough, maybe ten, fifteen minutes later, here they come, they're all running back with the mortar shell outlined on their vests, right there. So, those are the things that happened. Then, I figured, I could sense that my men were getting tired, not only tired, but they were scared, because we had been getting a hell of a lot of fire and watching these guys coming back this way, "Don't go up there. They've got those eighty-eights zeroed in on every road and they'll kill you. Don't go up there, don't go up." You know what I did? [General Rockafeller motions] to them, right, "Get out of here," and they left. So, they left us alone, but I knew my men were feeling a little bit tight. So, I told them, "Get the squad leaders over here and put them down in a circle, right around me, get them over here." The First Sergeant goes and gets all the squad leaders, comes back, puts them in a circle around me like that. All of a sudden, over here, in the hedgerow, I hear this big clatter and clutter and out of the clatter and clutter, out of the hedgerow, comes Major (Walski?), who's from the 53rd, which is the company from the battalion, 53rd Battalion, I told you, B Company, 53rd, is running, running. It's not retreating--they're just panicked and running. So, anyway, (Walski?) comes through this with this soldier, comes through the hedgerow, "Where's everybody? Where?" I stood there and I looked at him. I thought, "Jesus Christ, he doesn't know what he's talking about. This guy's nuts." So, he says to the soldier--oh, he says to one of my men, who's laying on the ground, "Get up out of there and come with me." So, he says to him, "Sir, we're listening to Captain Rockafeller." "Where is he?" "That's him right there." "Oh." I'd known this guy as long as I've known Charlie, all right; I know him very well. So, he comes over and he says, "Rocky, I think you ought to come with me. Bring your men with me." I listened to that. I said, "Frank, my orders are to get up this raised highway until I meet A Company of the Tenth Armored Infantry. When I meet them, I'm to extend their flank back over the highway, and then, out and set up a company defensive position. That's what we were going [to do]. We're going that way and we're not going any other way, Frank." "Oh, okay." He's got his pistol in his hand, no helmet on. He's got some kind of an Air Force hat on, but no helmet, and he's out of it. Here's a major and he says, "Rock, it's awful up there." He says, "Those eighty-eights are zeroed in on every corner." The eighty-eight is the top German field gun. "They are zeroed in on every corner and it's awful up there." I said, "Well, Frank, I wish you good luck, see you again," and so forth. I called the First Sergeant, told him, "Get the company on their feet and let's go, same formation we had before we stopped there." "Okay." We got out of there. Here was a guy that I had known for at least five years, around five years I had known him, Frank (Walski?), and he didn't know me. I mean, he is absolutely stricken. In World War I, they used to call it "shellshock" and, in World War II, it was something else and, now, you've got "World War II extended out" here and they're coming up with all kinds of names, but the results are all the same. So, that was the way it was going forward to get in our positions. When we got up there, it was dark. In the hedgerow country, it seemed to be much darker than elsewhere, principally because those hedgerows were not like mine; they're close to ten feet higher than mine, right, and that's what you encountered. It made things look a hell of a lot darker. With no moon coming in and helping out and stuff like that, it was just dark and dead. So, that was the first night in combat and, the following night, we're in a different position. We're up in where this B Company has gone away. My men [were] carrying binoculars around and I said to the First Sergeant, "Find out where those men got those binoculars from. What the hell's going on here?" So, he goes and he comes back. He says, "Sir, they've been picking them up from the dugouts of the men from the 53rd who just left them, the binoculars, here and ran." That's one of

the things and other things came out of musette bags, stuff like that, because more people were interested in getting their butt out of the fire zone than anything else.

SI: Was the artillery fire as bad as they said when you got up into the position?

HR: Well, the eighty-eight fire was always bad. The eighty-eight is the dimension of the bore of the muzzle of the famous German eighty-eight gun, okay, like we call our eighty-one-millimeter mortars. Well, the eighty-eight was eighty-eight millimeters, but it was a cannon fire and it had a fantastic speed, velocity, to the shell. It really held our attention, and a lot of people's attention early in the war, when its fire was coming in. It was heavy and it was devastating and very accurate. Then, later on, we came up with the ninety-millimeter antitank gun and that was two millimeters bigger, but longer, faster muzzle and it was as good as the eighty-eight was, later in the war. Now, what else can I tell you?

CZ: How many tanks or units were you responsible for at that time?

HR: Well, when we went into combat, I had a company.

CZ: You had a company. Now, that included--did that include machinery?

HR: 250 men, 254 men.

CZ: 250 men.

HR: Twenty-five half-tracks.

CZ: Twenty-five half-tracks.

HR: Right, six machine-guns.

CZ: Six machine-guns.

HR: It was a big, powerful force.

CZ: And trucks or anything with ...

HR: That's back in the supply trains. The only people up forward were the fighting things. The fighting vehicles were the half-tracks and the half-track, like the name implies, half of the track extends beneath the vehicle that it's propelling. It goes just like the tanks do. The tank motor, right, gets this cogged wheel going and that's what turns around and pulls the tank track through and that's how tanks move forward.

SI: In this initial action, you went up and took over the position from B Company of the 53rd. Was this in the push towards St.-Lo?

HR: No.

SI: Okay.

HR: Now, I'll tell you another story. One of the things we saw which made us so happy--Christ, everybody's hollering and cheering--here comes the most magnificent display of aircraft I have ever seen, thousands of planes coming from England. The object is to come in and cut off the Brittany Peninsula, okay. Then, having cut off that peninsula, then, we would reduce it by having ground forces go in there and obliterate them, but, now, it was a magnificent sight. My god, as far back as the eye could see are these aircraft in perfect formation coming, like this, and the men are all happy about it, because it shows we've got a lot of stuff and that kind of talk. So, the next day, we're going to take off. Now, in that same day, we had fired what we called surrender leaflets. I don't know whether you ever heard of those, but it's a little document, not bigger than this, postal card like, and this is advice to the German soldier, "Look, the war is lost. Everything is gone. Don't throw your life away. Come and live with us. We'll put you in a prisoner of war camp," all that kind of crap. The *bocage* [hedgerow country] is filled with it. So, the message is very simple, "Stop beating your brains out. Join us, enjoy life, enter the world again. We're all your friends, the Americans," and that crap. So, we were opposed in the line at that point by the 17th Grenadier Division, 17th, and these were combat troops who had been shipped from Russia to try and get over here and combat the waves of power coming off the boats and starting across France, okay. When that happened, things changed around a little bit. So, we had, in our position in the line, there's a hedgerow here and there's a hedgerow here and right here is my company, laid out here, and up there is the German company that we're fighting, right. That's the way it was and the word was, "Tomorrow morning, at early dawn, around five o'clock or so, we will be starting away. We're going down to St.-Lo, all right, and we're going down along the coast to Lorient." Lorient is a French seaport which the Germans had created submarine nests out of and Lorient and Saint-Nazaire, very few people know this, but both of those forts, submarine nests, were in existence when the war was over. They stayed and they fought on for the whole war and they were getting their supplies flown into them, flown into them. They persevered and they stayed all through the war, Lorient. The word [that] came to us was, "There's twenty thousand Germans in Lorient and they're waiting for somebody to capture them. They want to surrender," all right. So, that's how we started down to Lorient and Saint-Nazaire. Then, we got close to Lorient and there's two columns of the Fourth Armored Division going down on either side of this big river, which is on our left out here, and the river goes out to sea at Lorient. So, it's big, big stuff here. So, somebody forgot to tell the Germans that, "You're supposed to surrender," [laughter] okay. So, they let us come in. We come in and close in. Meanwhile, they had observation posts in the trees and places like that. Then, when we got enough of us in and circling for bivouac areas, they opened up with fire from the shore guns, from the costal shore guns, and that was big stuff. We were able to watch, across this river and up on the high ground right next to the river, and we watched those shore guns. We'd hear, "Boom," and then, you'd hear, "Whoosh," the whistle from the gun, the shell coming, right, and then, down and down. There's a bunch of our tanks over there, trying to get by to get into Lorient. This is the other column of the Fourth Armored; not [the Fourth Armored], it's the other column of the Third Army advance, all right. So, we're watching and we see the shell explodes down here and, good God, we saw how high the smoke rise was from those shells. It gave us a lot of food for thought, I'll tell you, because we had never seen anything that big. This is far bigger than any tank gun or any artillery piece that we had ever seen, big, big stuff. So, we didn't

take Lorient. We went into position looking at them, down the hillside, and stayed there for about five days or so. Meanwhile, no Germans came out and said, "Come on, we want to surrender." This was about the time, an interesting time, that we received explicit orders, "Don't take a vehicle someplace you can walk to." Do you remember that, in September?

SI: No.

HR: Well, that's what happened. Gasoline supplies were so low, the word came down, "You won't ride from your company headquarters to battalion headquarters. You walk there and save gas." That's all it was and that was September of the year. There was a big fuss over the shortage, the fact that the Allies didn't have sufficient gasoline to keep all going. They're already edging into the valley between France and Germany, okay. So, that was that.

CZ: How did Patton fit in that?

HR: In what?

CZ: How much did you see of Patton at that time?

HR: Not very much.

CZ: Oh.

HR: Yes. We heard a lot from him. After Bastogne, he sent us a piece of paper which said, "I believe that the Fourth Armored Division is the greatest military fighting organization in history."

CZ: How about that? I'd quote that.

HR: And he added to there, "I want this circulated and distributed to every man in the division."

SI: Did you have any interaction with Creighton Abrams? [Editor's Note: Future US Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams served in several command positions in the 37th Armor Regiment (later re-designated the 37th Tank Battalion) in the Fourth Armored Division, including commanding Combat Command B of the Division during the Battle of the Bulge.]

HR: Well, a number of times. Creighton Abrams was a West Point graduate and he had a wonderful war record. He had a fine tank regiment. They performed beautifully, did a lot of difficult tasks and he was rewarded with the Distinguished Service Cross for his activities and some of his men were also rewarded [with] the Distinguished Service Cross for other activities. When I met him, I was going to an officer training school. They had taken young guys like me just coming into the Fourth Armored Division and sent them to an officers' training course, right, to teach us more about the Army and he was a teacher of that course, right. Then, he got into the tank battalion--not tank battalion, tank regiment--and he made a name for himself as the tank regiment commander. His column that he had was the first American unit into Bastogne and ours was the second, the following morning and maybe five miles from where he was over in

there and we're coming along here. I wanted to tell you--I told you about cadres--every five months or so, they would come in, "You send a cadre to the Eleventh Armored Division. You send it to," these are all new divisions coming up, right, "You send it to the oncoming Twelfth Armored Division," 15th Armored Division, right, cadre, cadre, cadre. We had a saying that to get on the cadre and go away, to get out of the war--now, you're going to go where you're starting all over again, doing training and everything, right, you're lucky and all that crap--but we used to say, "If you get selected for a cadre, you are either a ---- up;" you got that, you got what I said?

CZ: What?

HR: If you are selected to be on the cadre; this is a skeleton force to go to a newly formed division and get them hurriedly trained, so that the new division could come into being, right. So, anyway, our opinion was, and you could see it, right, "If you got picked for a cadre, you either were a fuck-up or you were a star performer. [laughter] So, you can take your own choice," and we laughed. "You know it's easy to see how you got to be going to the Eighth Armored Division," we'd say right along, that the people going on the cadres are either fuck-ups or good Joes, right. So, anyway, a bunch of them went out--oh, when did they go? oh, maybe September of '43--and on one of the cadres, out of the Fourth Armored going to the Tenth Armored, was a guy named George Renoux, R-E-N-O-U-X, Rutgers graduate, Class of '41, gone with us to the Fourth Armored, and then, cadre-ed out to the Tenth Armored, right. Going up to Bastogne, they got trapped into the circle that the Germans had erected around Bastogne, right, and they couldn't get out of it. [Editor's Note: The Battle of the Bulge, also known as the Von Rundstedt Offensive or Ardennes Offensive, was the failed German attempt to break through the Allied lines in the Ardennes Forest in Luxembourg and Belgium launched on December 16, 1944, and which lasted into late January 1945.] George sent a message down through Army channels to me, saying, "Rocky, I understand you're coming this way. I'll be glad to see you." That's all he said. They didn't want anybody capturing mail that could give military information. So, we started on the 20th of December. On the 28th of December, my driver said to me, "Sir, I just saw a soldier come out of that V-trench in the side of the road." Now, all across France, Hitler had had the prisoners that were political prisoners and all that kind of crap, "Get your ass out there, get your pickaxes and your shovels and dig," right. So, all during the war, they'd put these V-trenches in the side, the road side, on either side of a road, right. You went in in a "V," a "V" in the side of the road, and it would be this high. You went in like that, and then, came back out the other side, all right. So, my driver said, "Sir, I just saw a soldier come out of that V-trench." We could see the outline of the V-trench and knew what it was. Hitler wanted it so [that] his troops could take cover when the Germans were getting their pants kicked off by the Russians and were falling away towards the French coast. There were a lot of aerial attacks coming in and the Germans wanted places where their troops could jump in a V-trench and be protected, okay. So, that was the way it was with the V-trenches. My driver says to me, "I saw this soldier come out on to this road where we are right here and I saw him stand there and look down here at us, and then," he says, "he went back in the V-trench." I said, "Well, John, you know we've been told repeatedly, 'Watch out.'" We had known since October--this is now almost the 1st of January--we had known since October that the Germans were accumulating large quantities of supplies, ammunition, food, whatever you wanted, and storing them in the Ardennes Forest. In the Ardennes Forest, this is where they had started before in 1940, when

they kicked the British into the sea at Dunkirk. That's exactly the same road that they were on, coming out of Bastogne, exactly the same, on the same mission, get out to Antwerp and grab that big harbor, right. So, anyway, my driver had told me, here, these guys were in there and I said to him, "Now, John, remember what we've been told time and again now, 'Watch out,' and these guys may be doing anything and they may be German soldiers in American uniforms." So, I said, "Get your carbine out, lay it across the wheel and let's go down to the V-trench." "Okay," he says. So, he gets his carbine out and he lays it right across the wheel, so [that] he can [provide cover]. He has his hand on the stock here, he's steering with his other hand. So, he pulls down to the V-trench and here comes this soldier out. The first thing I noticed, immediately, up here, Screaming Eagle, 101st Airborne--you follow me? These are the guys that have defended Bastogne, right, together with a brigade of the Tenth Armored Infantry Battalion. Have you got that now? The Germans had them surrounded and pinned down, from the Eleventh [Tenth?] Armored Division. George Renoux is one of the people pinned down in Bastogne as part of the Tenth Armored Infantry Brigade from the Tenth Armored Division. You got the picture now? Okay, now, I had had a discussion with my battalion commander a few days [earlier]--not my battalion commander, but my combat command commander, General [Herbert L.] Earnest. He says, "Harry"--he really laid it on me and I felt very pleased when he said it, but, anyway, that was his view of how he saw things and everything--he says, "I want to know, you call me, I want you to call me, when I can come up here and get into Bastogne." He says, "My college classmate, General [Anthony] McAuliffe, who is now, temporarily, commanding the 101st Airborne, right, I want to get in there and see him and shake hands with him and tell him how glad we are about everything. If you'll tell me when it's safe to go in, I'll come back up and I'll go in to Bastogne to see him." So, I said, "Okay, General, I'll take care of it." So, after I've talked to this soldier, lieutenant, from the Tenth Armored, I've assured myself that the first house that I can see from here, like across the road, is filled with his soldiers. He's got a rifle squad in that house, right, and he's just waiting for things to be developed further. So, he assured me that all his men and only his men are in that first house and he says, "You can tell your combat commander, 'Come on up, go past that house, stay on that what becomes a street. Where the street converges with another one coming in down there, that's where McAuliffe's headquarters are.'" Now, McAuliffe is the guy who said what?

SI: "Nuts."

HR: "Nuts." Did you know that, Charlie?

CZ: Pardon?

HR: McAuliffe, did you ever hear of him?

CZ: Not off hand.

HR: He was the commander of the 101st Airborne because General [Maxwell D.] Taylor has gone home for forty-five days R&R. So, it meant General McAuliffe is the commander. Here comes two or three guys with a stick up and the white flag on top of the stick, Germans, coming into Bastogne to come to his headquarters, right. They've got a note from the German commander and the note says, "We're coming in and we want you to understand this clearly--we

want absolutely no conditions attached to your surrender. We want a complete unconditional surrender on your part, okay." He's telling McAuliffe this.

CZ: Yes.

HR: Complete and unconditional, and McAuliffe gets the note that this guy had and he says on there, "To the German commander," and then, he says, "Nuts." That was famous.

CZ: That's famous, yes.

HR: That was famous, "Nuts," right. So, the German backed off, swearing, cursing, they were saying, and all kinds of *Deutsch*, curses and swearing, and so forth, but they're not going to get any unconditional surrender from McAuliffe. Anyway, I now call my combat command commander, General Earnest, and tell him, "I'm talking to a soldier, an officer, from the 101st Airborne. We've reached our mission." "Oh, that's great, Harry," he says, "I'll be right up there," and I said, "I'll talk to you as soon as you get here and you can go on in to Bastogne." "I'll be right up." So, maybe five minutes go by and here he comes up. He's got a tank he's been riding around in, but, anyway, he comes up and I run over to the side of the tank. I said, "You see that house, General?" "Yes." I said, "This lieutenant here just told me that he has a rifle squad in that small house. That means it's thoroughly covered and he says you can just drive up past that house on down to where another street converges from the right and right there is where General McAuliffe's command post is." "Oh, that's great," he says, "Harry. I'm going there now. Thank you so much," he says, "I'm coming to see you when this is all over. I've got some news for you." So, he did. He came to see me, told me that, he says, "I'm recommending you for the Distinguished Service Cross." I had a task force, is what I was running up the road, and they were coming up that side of the road. They were using a new tactic we had, which was "reconnaissance by fire." The idea was, you're going along, advancing towards the enemy. You pick up spots where you think [the] enemy might be and you shoot the hell out of them, and then, they'll start coming out. That's just what happened, with the white handkerchief on their head, surrendering, right. So, anyway, I come back over now--General Earnest has gone to get on into Bastogne--and there's another soldier right by this officer I'm talking to. I said to this lieutenant, I said, "I've got a classmate in Bastogne as well as General Earnest has." He says, "What do you mean?" I said, "One of my Rutgers classmates is in Bastogne, all right, and I'd like to go in and see him." I said, "He got in touch with me and told me he was looking forward to seeing me." Anyway, so, this soldier's standing about here and the officer's standing here. The soldier says to me, "Sir, what was the name of your classmate?" and I said, "His name was Major George Renoux," and he says to me, "Sir, Major Renoux ... [Editor's Note: Major George Anthony Renoux, Rutgers College Class of 1941, died on January 2, 1945, as a result of wounds received during the Battle of the Bulge while serving with the Tenth Armored Division.]

[TAPE PAUSED]

HR: That's the way it was there. Now, I'm going back to my headquarters now. General Earnest is there and he wants to see me and he says, "Come on, Harry, come upstairs. I want to talk to you," and we go upstairs. He says, "Harry, I can't tell you how pleased I am with the way you conducted yourself," and all this kind of stuff. I said, "That's very nice of you." "No, I'll tell

you what I'm going to do, Harry. First of all, I'm going to recommend that you get promoted, okay, and, third, I'm going to recommend that you be given the Distinguished Service Cross, okay, and I will ask for a special commendation by the division commander," and so forth, and so on.

CZ: What did he ask for?

HR: Special commendation by our division commander.

CZ: Oh.

HR: He had said, "I'm going to get you promoted, number one, from captain to major," all right, and he says, "Then, I'm going to get you a Distinguished Service Cross," and then, that was about the end of it. I said to him, "General, let me tell you something." I said, "The papers making me a major in the United States Army are in the Chief of Staff's desk back at division headquarters. They should've been sent up here a week ago and they haven't sent it up yet, but the papers making me a major are there, saying just that." "Oh, okay," he says, "I'll get that loosened. You can start wearing the major's leaves [insignia] today."

CZ: Really? yes.

HR: Sure. So, then, I said, "As far as getting me the Distinguished Service Cross," I said, "General, I have been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross three times. Each time, the Army Review Board has sent it back with [an explanation that] it felt that the text, the narrative text accompanying the citation, "Should be enlarged and returned and reconsidered. In the meanwhile, we authorize the award of the Silver Star." That was my third instance where I had been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross and, each time, the damned Army people on the Review Board said, "We think that the narrative text has to be enlarged more." So, that was the way that that got turned aside. He said, "I'm awful sorry, Harry," and things like that. "I'll do what I can to expedite the whole thing." The next thing I see is the division commander, my division commander. He wants to see me. So, I go back to division headquarters, which is about twenty-five miles back of where we are up there with the Germans, and went in, the Chief of Staff was there, he says, "See those stairs? Go up those stairs. At the head of the stairs, take the first door on the right, knock and General [Hugh] Gaffey," who's our division commander, "will let you in." So, I said, "Okay." So, up I go, knock on the door, Gaffey says, "Come on in, Harry." [laughter] He'd been advised by telephone, right, "Come on in, Harry." So, he says, "You know what, Harry? There is no such a thing as an indispensable man." I thought, "Uh-oh, something's coming here." [laughter] Ten times, ten times, I had been the selected officer to go back to the States for forty-five days' R&R, ten times. Each time, a succession of commanders had said to me, "We can't let you go now. We need every experienced officer we can put up and we can't let you go, Harry. Just stay and I can assure you that, next month, you'll go," right; next month, new commander. [laughter] This went on from November, now, this is May that we're talking to General Gaffey. He says, "Harry, there is no such thing as an indispensable officer," and I thought, "What game is this? Is this going to happen again? Ten times, I've been recommended and, each time, the plea was, 'Don't let him go. Christ, he's been in here for ten months now. He knows what he's doing. We need these

people." "We're going down now, our new mission is, to go to Prague, Czechoslovakia, and beat the Germans out of the town, and then, go over to Hitler's love nest in the Bavarian Alps;" you've heard of that.

SI: Berchtesgaden.

HR: With Ava Braun, right. "So, go over, and then, go over there and arrest Hitler and bring him back and put him in the hands of the Allied authorities. Today is Monday and we're going Wednesday. What do you think, Harry?" I said, "Well, General, this is the tenth month in a row now that I was the first selection to go back to the States and I am ready to go to the States now," [laughter] and he laughed. He said, "Well, I know that can happen, but, Harry, you've got to understand, I'm not in here that long, in this division. I know who knows where they're going, how they're doing and, from what I hear about you, we can't afford to let you go. We want you. We're asking you to please stay." I said, "General, I've got a baby daughter I've never seen. That's all I'm going to say." He said, "All right, you go ahead back," and he said, "I'm going to think it over," but he said, "General Patton told me;" first of all, he says, "When I opened the door to Patton's office and stepped up, I said to him, 'What do we have to do, kill this guy, Rockefeller, in order to get him the DSC?'" I'll tell you a little bit about that in a minute. So, Patton says, "Hugh," Hugh Gaffey was the guy's name, Patton says, "Hugh, don't talk like that." [laughter] Patton didn't want to hear anybody speaking that way to him, right. "So, you get ahold of Rockefeller and the next time this happens and they want to recommend him for the DSC, *you* bring it down to *me* and you hand it to me, Hugh, and I'll take care of it from there," end of discussion on that point. So, he said, "That's the way it is, Harry, and I hope you can see your way clear to staying here." I didn't say anything, because I was sickened. This is, like, ten guys in a row, all with the same story, "We need you, we need you." This had been going on since November, the first selection, and I can't get out of there. So, I get on home and I go into the Chief of Staff's office back where we are and he says, "They just called me from General Gaffey's office and they said the mission, going to Prague, and then, over to Hitler's love nest, has been cancelled. They're not following through on that. So, you can go home tomorrow." [laughter] Then, I got scared. I got scared. What can I tell you? So, I got my stuff all together. I didn't know what to do, whether to go hide or what. So, finally, I said, "I'm just going to go straight forward, that's all. I'll accept that I'm going."

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 2/27/2017

Reviewed by Pamela R. Henry 9/28/2017