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Interview with A.E. "Doc" Hennen

Title: The Boys of Buak

Date: July 31, 1995; Interview #: KK-CT-001-105

SF: If you would please, would you state your full name, your age, your date of birth, and the time you were born in.

AEH: Well, this is **Albert E. Hennen, Jr.** I was born September the sixteenth, nineteen sixteen. I've lived in Wheeling for the last forty-three years but I was born and raised in Wheeling.

SF: And your age, sir?

AEH: I'll be, September, I'll be in my eightieth year.

SF: Can you recall when, your family, your ancestors first came to the Ohio Valley?

AEH: Dad, was a dentist in Wheeling, was, from around Fairmont, West Virginia and he came up here in the early nineteen hundreds. Mother was born in Duquesne, Pennsylvania and went down to Mannington, West Virginia and then moved up to Wheeling about the same time; in the early nineteen hundreds.

SF: But did you, you mentioned, what did your father do?

AEH: Dentist.

SF: Dentist.

AEH: Uh-huh.

SF: Wh, when you were first, growing up as a child, what neighborhood in Wheeling did you live in?

AEH: I was, well I was born in a house out there on National Road three houses up from Washington

SF: Avenue?

AEH: Avenue. Then we moved over to, Walnut Avenue, 46 Walnut Avenue and then hen I was ten years old, we moved over to Orchard Grove which, that was probably number eight but it was right above the Children's Home there. And, that's where we stayed for -- My dad died in '57; mother lived to be sixty-four, so she was there about thirty-five years or so. We've been in this house forty-three (laughs).

SF: Do you remember, who your playmates were? in those neighborhoods and, what some of their folks did to make a living and what times were like?

AEH: Well, I just go over to around the Walnut Avenue area, those were the real early days, Jack Bare was one. His father was a contractor. And Jack and I went to Penn State together and then Bill McCluskey, he was, their family was in the construction business. John Otto, his family had an Otto Shoe Store on Market Street. **Charles Ney, Chuck Ney lived down on Walnut** and an interesting, point here is that, Chuck's father was the first announcer on WWVA and they had a studio on Main Street, just below, I think it was just below Twelfth Street, and he invited the kids of the neighborhood. There were about four of us to come into the studio and he, he said he thought the kids ought to have a little show here and he asked us questions and we fooled around or something. I can't remember that one. But, I look back and I was one of the first people on WWVA (laughs). [[Return to Top](#)]

SF: That's great.

AEH: So, the other kids there. There were, one was, well he was a farmer and he had a big farm out in the country. Bill Watkins, his family. Then next door, the Kepner, the first of the Kepners, the oldest Mr. Kepner of the funeral home. He moved in next door to us on Walnut Avenue. We moved over to Orchard, then dog gone, he come over to Orchard and lived right across the street. Dad said, "I think he's after all of us". (laughs)

SF: What kind of, activities did you engage in as kids in that era?

AEH: **Well our activities were certainly much different** that what the kids are doing today. We had, hockey sticks we made out in the streets. You see, in those days, you could play in the streets. There wasn't all that -- the ice man would come up the street with his horse-drawn buggy and we would all jump over and get a piece of ice and things like that. Then we would, learning, that's, where we all learned our bike, to ride a bicycle. And then at night, of course, you play "Run Chieffy Run" or some hiding game like that, so. [[Return to Top](#)] It was, very quiet and slow life that we led, and, we were all friends together and you, when you moved too far away, like over to Orchard when we moved, gee whiz, we didn't know whether we had to come back

here, 'cause you know, there were new people over there. But then those new people were as interesting as the people that we just left. So we were, it's a very happy situation over there and I think I've been very fortunate. I, I could do it over again. But, we have, of course, after the war and everything, got married, and had six kids. So that gives you a new life to work on and I wonder sometimes how I did all these things such as education and getting, getting them steered in the right direction and sometimes they ask me, "Dad, what did you do in this situation?" I'm at, I said, "Hey, I don't know what I did." Parents react to situations that are not even in the book sometimes to steer you on a right path as far as they are concerned and I think that's true. You can't go to a book every time and say, "Let's see how he's doing this or doing that." But I think that we have as Dad said. He said, "Build your home and just don't let anybody come in and boss you. You, you do what you think is right. They might be right, too, but don't let them disturb you. You just grow up in that -- invite them in and they're invite you out." But, I think he was just talking about people that like to tell others how to run their homes or their business and that was; So, we're now up to the point of going to school. Linsly.

SF: Oh, before I forget, can you tell me please, your memories and recollections of the, Great Depression?

AEH: Oh, the Great Depression. Dad was in a problem because people -- He insisted on taking care of the people. That was his, he wasn't turning anybody out and he, in fact, he took care of the Children's Home over on, for all the years we lived there. No Depression or none, he did it for all the years he lived there. Didn't charge them a penny. So, the Depression was hitting us hard because I just got into Linsly and, of course, Linsly wasn't, I don't know, fifty dollars or something a semester and then, the upkeep, and, of course, I had to walk to school. You didn't have no fooling around like that, and, I knew Dad was having problems 'cause he would come in and see Gus Holden who was the Dean there, or the principal. And they'd make arrangements for you. If you got down and you had to pay ten dollars a month or whatever it was. It was a very, our, my class, I had well, fifteen, sixteen and there are only three of us left. So, Dad would come home and say, "Well, I guess we're not going to eat too much but what we have, we're going to make it enjoyable." And, he, when he died, I found out that he had carried in, on the books about twenty eight thousand dollars, that was an awful lot of money. Twenty eight thousand dollars and the, his nurse said, "Well, what are we going to do about this?" I said, "Well, I talked to Mom and Mom, of course, doesn't know anything about it. She said why don't you just forget it." And, she said, the nurse told me, she said, "You know, there are a couple here that should have been paying your father ten dollars a month and I think that maybe we ought to just scare him a little bit. Let's send the lawyers after, the collectors after them." So, there were two of them there. One of them called me and said, "Do you know that that's happening?" I said, "Yes, because I okayed it." But, we got over the Depression there, pretty good. Mom had a couple of bucks, I think, some Hazel Atlas Glass stock and Hazel Atlas Glass paid a five percent dividend all through the Depression. Now, if you had a little bundle of it, you were wealthy. (laughs) [[Return to Top](#)] But, there were two other, my two sisters and myself and we -- Grandpa had Kirkland, he's back over here on the wall. He was with Benedum and Trees, in Pittsburgh. They all three were together in an oil and gas business and down in the state of West Virginia. But, Grandpa Kirkland separated from them. But, he had six or seven kids and he was able to help most of them. I mean, we, there wasn't a lot of money but Grandpa was always handing out some to keep everybody on a level keel. In those days, you know, if you could, if I could get a buck, five

bucks to go on a date, that was a big thing. Hey Dad, you got five bucks. I'm going on, in an automobile. We had a LaSalle. I told him, I said, "You know, we need tires." He said, "I think we need food more than we need tires." (laughs) So, the car finally -- well, we had to get a couple of new tires 'cause he had to get to work. Then I'm moving along. So, I can drive now, you know. You were driving when you were fourteen. That was when you could get your license. "Cause there weren't too many cars on the road and, kids, well, you know, the fellows always are learning more about cars. I think how you watch Dad, you know. In those days, you, nothing was automatic. You had to, errrr, get it into gear. So, life goes on, and I think it's when you're young, all these things sort of go over your head where a car was necessary. But then, things were moving along and it was necessary that I was going to have to get an education, too. So, we, Jack Bare and myself, we were over at Atlantic City with his father. Coming back, we stopped at Penn State and went in and looked around, and went over to the Registration and said, "We'd like to go to school here." Oh, that's fine. Just put us down. So, Jack had gone, he was one year older than I am. He went to Mercersburg for a year. Then I caught up with him. So, we graduated in 1938 from Penn State.

SF: Do you remember some of the businesses that were around when you were in your youth?

AEH: Well, of course. Hazel Atlas was the main one that went under. And, you have, there is a very difficult question. I, I'm very conscience of Hazel Atlas, but Wheeling Steel, of course, was, teetering there. I, I think they all needed more research instead of -- Sometimes, I think families get in and they just sort of coast along 'cause they don't notice they're being paid dividends and it's -- But I, I think research is one of the most important things today. Well, you're lost, and if you don't -- It's like Hazel Atlas Glass Company. When I came back from the war, I went in to, just to talk to them. I been out in their Chicago office but I wanted to go in to say, "hello". And, this gentleman who was in charge of the company, he said, "Well, Earl", that happens to be my middle name. My other name is "Doc". But, he said, "You know, we, we, we really don't need, salesmen right now." but he said "We will take you back." I said, "Well, no one, I don't get that." "Well," he said, "We, you know, we do have to, we don't need salesmen right now. We're, we're in the throws of we can't even produce enough to, to take care of all the demand." Well, of course, what hapens, the demand went (untypeable sound). Then, then the thing, really blew. That's when the Continental Can came into the town and took over Hazel Atlas and, the way I looked at it, my own personal view. They were the "chopping block" people. In other words, Continental Can had a lot of people they wanted to get rid of. High executives, but they didn't want to do it in their home town where they had been working for many, many years so they bring them into Wheeling and they give them a job on the glass and they'd been working on metal. So, all of a sudden, they call them in and say, "Hey, what the, what's going on here? We can't keep you, you're not ... " I think a lot of them came into town and joined clubs, bought homes, and good things like that and then, zoom, out they went. [[Return to Top](#)] **As far as any others, I, you know,** you have, long time ago, Sterling Products was born here in Wheeling. Dr. Weiss and they had left the, novocaine business here in Wheeling for many, many years. They made about the only novocaine being made in the country. But they went on to New York and got, of course, all the business they needed 'cause they had Aspirin through a long battle, I guess. I read the story on it and it's quite interesting how that all comes about.

SF: Could you tell us just a little bit about that?

AEH: I can't, I can't even begin -- I, I'd, I foul this thing up 'cause it was so complicated. With Dr. Weiss going over to Germany. There was a big battle over there and I guess, he some way -- I wish I'd kept the thing -- That he got back and got control some way, got control there was still powerful interest 'cause they, of course, they went out and got, hair, Vitalis and, you know, a lot of products like that which is very, very good. And that was a big concern 'cause Sterling Products today is still a nice stock to have if you, if you like money. If you don't like money, well you just forget it. [[Return to Top](#)] But, that was one that sort of -- and the coal companies, you know. People like that had problems. Dad used to say, "They're, now they're going to have a coal strike and that we might as well go home and just close the door." See. Well now, someone said, "Hey, they're having a coal strike." A, a what? Where? Oh, well, let them. Didn't pay attention to this as years went on. And the same way with the steel strike. The steel strike, the union, when they walked up to Weirton. They were going to take over Weirton. Weirton had their own union. And, they were going to go, steel, steel people. Well, they met them at the gate and said, "Well, you might as well turn around and go home." 'Cause you're never going to take us over. But they had these steel strikes. The same thing would scare the Valley to death because that was big stuff then. They, they'd go out on a strike and the people, they were all talking and the more they talked, the worse it was. And it wasn't as bad as, you know, -- That I think that they really got involved in but I think it's businesses like those are now beginning to -- Here's Wheeling Steel, Wheeling Pittsburgh coming back. But, what I don't think is of great, that we, we have the (laughs) because the Japanese have come in here with money and they started up this plant up in Follansbee. Well now, you can't tell me there isn't money in this country that we could've started up a plant like that, kept that going. But, they're adding to it up there, now. So, I think our, some of our production people or money people or something are missing the bet when they see that. Now, Rockefeller is interested in them in West Virginia. So that's, of course, neither here or nor there, that's --

SF: Well,

AEH: That's not going to bother me from now on. (laughs)

SF: But usually what I get to later in the interview is, where has Wheeling succeeded and where has Wheeling failed in keeping up population? And keeping businesses thriving in this town?

AEH: Well, I think you're, -- A person like myself, I was in, involved in, retail because I worked for the person whose papers in Detroit and I opened up an office in Pittsburgh, a rep office for newspaper advertising. Then I came down to Wheeling and talked to Mr. Wood who was running the papers then about, his -- that we were happy that we had joined the Ogden Newspaper group. He turned it over to us to represent and I was hardly representing them and I guess he must have decided to get rid of his advertising director. So, I stopped in one day and he said, "Doc, would you like to come back to Wheeling?" I said, "Well, I'm almost in Wheeling now. I only live in Pittsburgh." "No," he said, "Come back to Wheeling." I said, "Mr. Wood, I just moved to Pittsburgh. I just, we just had a fourth child and we're very comfortable right here." He said, "Is that so?" I said, "That's so." "Well, what's your number up there, your telephone number?" Well, he, he knew my wife, Nancy. So, he called her. "Nancy," he said, "how about,

would you like to move to Wheeling?" She said, "Well, when should I pack?" That, would you repeat that? And, he gave me the phone. I said, "What did you say?" (laughs) She, "Well, what was I supposed to say?" I said, "I don't know." (laughs) So, on that little note, we moved back to Wheeling. So, all these jobs -- it's, it's funny. You go, it goes like this and I didn't -- The one with Hersht, I didn't seek it, that job. I, of course, wouldn't even know if there was a job opened. But the man that called on me, I was selling patching plaster, and cement, and paint and stuff like that. A territory in Ohio and Michigan and placing some ads with the Detroit Times and he said, "You seem to be interested in advertising." Well, I said, "I, I guess I am. It's fascinating. I, I took a course in, college and I thought it was interesting." Well, he said, "just keep that interest up 'cause it's real good, you know." I was thinking, well, he's going to give -- I'm going to give him more advertising than he's -- So, all of a sudden, he called me one day and he said, "How about coming down and talking to the boss," he said, "there's an opening here." I said, "I don't know anything about newspapers." He said, "Just come down and talk to him." So, down I went. And we were talking and in about fifteen minutes, Mr. Burke, who was the boss, -- Can't forget him. He said, "Well, we'd like to have you come to work with us." I said, "Mr. Burke, I, you know, I would like to come but I don't think I know about advertising, newspaper advertising." He said, "You don't have to. We want somebody that can go out on their own, talk to people. You're not going to sell the world to them but you go out and talk to them, you know. We'll teach you the advertising, the operation of a newspaper." He said, "Why do you think I have a job here?" (laughs) He said, "We, we could learn all about the newspaper but you can't teach anybody to go out and deal with people," which is the answer to then. Always will be the answer, no matter what. So,

SF: What was your schooling at Linsly like back in the day when it was still,

AEH: Well, we were doing close ordered drill and all that, had a uniform and got, tagged for guard duty round the field when you were throwing spit balls and things like that at people. (laughs) But, the education that you received there is what is, I, I think -- They had some good teachers and they didn't have a great big two or three hundred in a class. They'd have fifteen or twenty and they -- You got more individual attention, I think, which is helpful to anybody today that's going to school, if you can get that. When you go to college, there's two or three hundred sitting out there and number six up there is about what you are. But, Linsly, I think, was a great help to me. That and Dad. He, watched -- He got so mad at me, I couldn't get algebra. Well, he said, "You're going to get algebra before, (laughs) before you ever go to college." So, I had to go to summer school and it's amazing how that thing, all of a sudden, had another teacher, and I got algebra. It just fell into line there and I thought, "I don't know where I'm going to use this other than to makes the wheels turn up here a little bit for your..." So, and then French, I couldn't, couldn't do. But, I got a little personal attention on French. He told me, "Well, you, you know enough now. We can kick you out of here." (laughs) So, that's

SF: Do you remember the names of some of your professors, teachers at Linsly?

AEH: Well, Mr. House was English, English literature. Pete Stewart was math. Boberly was geography and then there was Mr. Bagby that taught me my algebra during that summer. let's see. I think that's, hmm, that's about all I can remember right now.

SF: Do you remember any of your classmates from Linsly?

AEH: Well, I was just looking at the card here. I got a card here, wait a minute; we'll just keep on talking here. I just wanted to get this -- Here's a picture of my class and this is, -- that was taken a couple of years ago. Now, there are a few missing.

SF: Could you, recite your name, please.

AEH: This is, this is, Jack Runner. They had the Griest Drug Stores here in Wheeling. Hank Banagy worked for Bloch Brothers. He was in their production. well, Lou Kline and Bob Strider. Bob Strider is the President of a girl's college up in New England. I can't even remember the name of it. And, here's my smiling face. (laughs) and Louie Kline here was an engineer who moved back here to retire. But, the, --You can, I think, if you really sat down and had to name some of the people, of course, I -- There were some older and some younger. Raymond, Eddie Raymond was in there in the Raymond Brewery which is gone. Of course, all the breweries are gone now. They had, one, two, three, four, five, about five or six of them in the Valley, here. They were working like they do in Europe. Europe is like the milkman, the brewery. You call up and say, "Leave two six packs," and they come down and drop off the six packs or a little keg. But, I think you -- What's, what's, tough is like in college now, I'm, I was going, hopefully, going back to sometime this August. But, we have, there again, there are four of us left in the, my class, in the fraternity house, Phi Delta Phada. But, you walk -- I went back for my fiftieth anniversary and I think I passed everybody I should've known that I, I, in fact, I roomed with some of them and we were all the same way 'cause we hadn't seen each other fifty years. Now, what do you think? (laughs) So, we were -- there's one that lives at state college, one lives in, over there in the Cleveland area, and one lives in York, Pennsylvania and I'm the other one. But, I can't, I can't move because of the situation with Mom up here. I have because our daughter is going to teach and I'll be the only one home when I -- I can't very well. But, she's going to get better so I can do it, but I can't do it right now. (laughs)

SF: How old, how old were you when you left Linsly?

AEH: Linsly? Well, let's see. I got out of college when I was twenty-one. So, it must have been about sixteen or seventeen or some place around there. Seventeen. Eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one. Yeah, because I went in the Army in twenty-five. But, you have to look once in a while, you know.

SF: Did you, did you have any schooling between Linsly and your induction into the Army?

AEH: No. I was just -- What I was doing in summers were, of course, great because we all partied differently. we didn't have to have a keg of beer and we just have a great time, costume parties and new things like that. But, we played a lot of golf and a lot of tennis. I guess we were getting in shape physically to hit the road for the college. But, there were a couple of summers -- Dad had some tooth powder he had rigged up. Worked on them for years and he wanted to get them out and Earl Runner of Griest Cut Rate said, "Well, bring us some and we'll take them and sell them." So, I was running around town, calling on some of these drug stores and there used to be a lot of them. If they would just put half a dozen bottles in on consignment, that's, well then

they realized they didn't have to buy it. But, I'd be around later to collect if they did sell it. So, that was about the activities that

SF: Did you meet your wife before you went away to war?

AEH: Well I knew her thirteen years before we were married. (laughs)

SF: And,

AEH: (laughs) at St. Michael's church.

SF: That was before you got involved in the war?

AEH: Oh, yeah.

SF: How did you meet her?

AEH: Well, Girl Scout Camp. Friends of mine, couple of gals and a fellow, Jimmy Rogers. They were going out to Girl Scout Camp to see his, one of his girlfriends out there and they said, "Now, I should pay attention. Now, there's this girl that has this beautiful black hair and a, you know." I said, "Okay." So, she came over with Sally and was introduced and I thought, "Gee, I've seen her some place before." Then all of a sudden, walked into church there and there she sits and, the relationship, of course, we were getting, to a point, I thought, "With this war and everything coming along, I said, I don't, I really don't want to get married. I, I don't know what your thoughts are on it. But why don't we wait until we -- If everything goes right and I get home, why, I think it just doesn't make sense." So, she agreed, and I guess, I guess after I got myself organized over there from the tail end of my experiences over there where, I thought, "Well, maybe I better write home." So, I, wrote a letter home to Mom. I said, "I think when I get home, I think we ought to get married." That was my proposal, like that. She, I, she probably -- I never took through her parents, so they thought they'd let her wait until I got home. See what I was going to be like. I might be one leg and an eye missing and not very healthy or anything else. But, the dear Lord takes care of many, many things and he certainly took care of me and at the time, I didn't think that. But you have to look back at life and see exactly what is, what went on and how come that happened that way. And, I have quite a few experiences I can relate here, though, that no one else could have done it other than the dear Lord must've been there, taking care of me. So, we've been married forty-nine years. How time goes. (laughs) Forty

SF: How many children?

AEH: nine years. It was six.

SF: How many boys and girls?

AEH: Four boys, two girls. (laughs)

SF: How many of them, still reside in Wheeling, if any?

AEH: Oh, yeah, well, Mike lives over here. He's a CPA out in, St. Clairsville. Doug works for Ed Carenbauer, the beer distributor, has Bud Wisner and all those goodies. Mary, still lives with us. She's teaches in at the Central, volleyball, tennis, and stuff like that for the gals. Jack's in Cincinnati. He's an artist. He started off over here in Carmel Road. He had a framing business over there and, boy, the money -- I didn't know he was doing so much. I think everybody in Wheeling must have been hiding all their art work. 'Cause they had him working over there -- Of course, when you're working for yourself, you can work six, seven, eight, nine o'clock at night and get something done or go to someone's house and these older women, well, they, you know, well, um -- "Jack could you come out to the house. I, you know, taste in colors, maybe you could help me." "Oh, I'll be out and I'll hang the picture." He'd do anything. So, then he decided -- I don't know whether he wasn't getting too far or what was going on, but he, he left there and he ended up in Cincinnati, went to the art school for four years and he graduated from Notre Dame. But, he, he is now working for the art school and he has a business on the side and single. I said, I told his mom, "Why don't you get after him? Get him to" -- Too, I told him one day when he was here. I said, "You know, this would be more successful if you had some gal that was taking care of the books and could wait on the customers while you're" -- he said, "Are you mention, going to mention marriage or something like that?" I said, "I didn't, you did." I -- But he doesn't seem to want to get married. Then, I have a son, Terry, out in Chicago and he's a, he works for a, privately owned insurance business that seems to be very, very successful and he's now in charge of seminars, the yearbook, going around to all the offices, printing the new, what's new in our business and stuff like that. So, he 's very happy. So, we've -- Everybody's placed and they -- I said, "They all have to, you know, lead their own life. I can't lead it. We can't lead it for them. If they want to go through life without getting married, that's their problem." I often think "Oh, gee, you know, we'd like to have a couple more children." I said, "Mom, we had six, now, that's -- the grandchildren." We have four grandchildren but -- It's, there again, it's been a good life for us. We've had no, no trouble. None of them ever smoked cigarettes. Some of them like to drink their schnapps but that's about -- We never had any trouble with any of them except the ornery stage for boys. I told Mom, I said, "We're going to have a policeman, I know, for each one of them. I, we'll have to put a badge on them." And, sure enough, something silly they'd do and somebody tells, you know. It's like throwing a tomato at a car or etcetera, etcetera. It's amazing how they, their mind, they're smart but this one little time, they get caught. **And, I told them, I said, "You know, anytime I ever did anything wrong,** real wrong, I was caught, and I don't know why." But, I was, so I, I got this -- The worst one I can remember, that wasn't -- It wasn't my fault. I was with some older fellows. Over on Edgewood Street, there's a Mr. Etz who was an optician, way back up on the hill there. I don't know whether you're acquainted with that area or not, But, the old Etz Mansion, it's a beautiful big old home. And, he had a couple of German police dogs and, oh, these older boys -- I was running around with them and we were over -- He had a garage at the bottom of the hill and one of them pulled open the mail thing and there was a box. One of them said, "I bet that's candy." "Oh, that's not ..." "I bet you it's candy", you know. So, they opened it up and sure enough it was candy. So, we all passed it around, all took a piece of candy. Now, what are you going to do with that box? Oh, of course, dumb us, them or whatever, we put the paper and through it in a little dispenser and the candy, they threw over in this field. (laughs) Well, Mr. Etz was expecting this candy because it was some home made stuff his sister was sending to him. So, he tried to learn who the guys were that did that dastardly deed. My name got mixed up in it and Dad called me and he said, "Now listen, I don't know what you did and how far you all went and what the story is, but you were involved in something that you should never

do. Steal something from somebody." So, Dr. Etz will meet you at the top of the hill there. You go up there and apologize. Tell him you're sorry. So, I thought, "Hmmm." So, I looked up there and here he is with these two big German police dogs. I thought, "He'll turn them loose. They'll eat me." So, I got half way and I looked back at Dad and Dad said, "Go on, go on." So, I finally got up, oh about here to the wall from him. I said, "Oh, Mr. Etz, I'm sorry I took your candy," and turned and ran down the hill. The dogs were barking, but of course, he had them on a leash, so. But, that's, that's some of the whole neighborhood that just is interesting when you look back on it comparing today. [[Return to Top](#)] Here, you don't have the same relationship with all the people. Used to be, if a new family moved in, you went over with some cookies or something, a piece of cake or a cake and say, "Welcome to the neighborhood." Nothing has ever happened here in the forty-nine years we've been here. I mean forty-three years we've been here. But, we're friendly, see? But, we're the oldest people on the block in this block here and we've been here longer. But these are all young people, Gompers. Other doctor, John Mark Moore over here, he's just, poor guy, he's just waiting to die. He's, eighty-five or six and he's blind in one eye and the other one's going and but his old heart keeps pumping and he, he was a wonderful doctor. And the doctor profession in this town, I think, is -- I think, we've got some very good ones and mediocre ones, but on the whole, I think we have a pretty good setup here with everybody yelling about two hospitals and another hospital and all this. But, that's the way it started off and I don't know -- You just can't go over and shut up these hospitals and have one. I mean we need more but that's, that's not my judgement to do it. That's my thoughts.

SF: Do you remember, do you remember where, where you were when you first heard that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor?

AEH: Well, yes. I was, I, wait a minute, I got to get this in right. I was drafted in June 27th, '41. So, I was in the Army. I was drafted.

SF: Even before they bombed Pearl Harbor?

AEH: Oh, yeah. I was -- the three of us lived out in Chicago and Bob Rogers, that was one. He was number one in the draft. The number was like 2-7-8. Roosevelt pulled it up out 2-7-8 and he had 2-7-8.

SF: Just so I understand. You mean, they had, a draft service even before we were involved in the Second War World?

AEH: Oh, yeah. They had a -- Roosevelt started it and he started it back in, well, it would have been maybe May or June in here someplace in this year 'cause they knew something was coming. I, you know,

SF: May or June of '41, you mean?

AEH: Yeah. So, we all got in it. And, you had to go to the draft board. [[Return to Top](#)] I had to go to the draft board out in Chicago instead of in Wheeling 'cause I was working out there. So, I, they took me and I, this is, let's see, I was in Camp Roberts, California. Wait, no Fort Lewis, Washington and I was, I had gotten a, week's furlough to come home. I had the air tickets and

everything else to fly home. And, I was supposed to leave on the seventh of December to fly back to Wheeling. (laughs) Well, everything broke loose. We were, closed up the Fort Lewis Camp and we were out of there that night, the whole camp had disappeared. And, that's where the story begins. (laughs)

SF: That's right.

AEH: It's,

SF: Just so, just we're following along. How old are you at this point?

AEH: Right now?

SF: No, I mean,

AEH: Oh!

SF: When you

AEH: Twenty-five. I'm a few years older now. (laughs)

SF: you find out about Pearl Harbor. You camped, your camp empties out, what transpires between, when your camp empties out and your first, combat action?

AEH: Well, what we did. We closed up the camp and moved the troops out as fast as they could and we all had places to go. I, our group, we went down to the coast along Oregon. There was a very important bridge across the river there and then we, went down into the coast area because there were always reports of Japs all over the place. Like they were falling out of the sky. But, we had to get all the control we could right then and there because, you know, we were expecting they must have been outside, throwing some stuff in. So, we, we had a time there for a while because I was in charge of the bridge contingent and we had a 50-caliber machine gun and we had to sign the size of this wall, there. It said, "STOP, MILITARY INSPECTION". Now, there wasn't anybody that could have missed that and the road went up like this to the bridge and over. We had the, this 50-caliber up there that even scared us. So, we had to stop everybody, buses and everybody and inspect their trunks and things like that and, oh, going through a bus. Here you are with a, not a Tome gun, but a gun of some sort, you know. I'm only -- I told the guys, I said, "Don't, please don't act like you're going to shoot anybody. Just hold onto it. They, that's enough to scare them. And then go through their purses and don't get too personal. You can feel a gun or a hand grenade or stuff like that." But, we were there one day and here comes this car, oh, just coming like hell and I thought, "Oh, they can't miss that sign." (Laughs) Wheeeee - I yelled, "STOP". We were running. So, the gal, she was a gal. She had been to a, pre-wedding party and she was dreaming stars and all the wonderful thing like that. Well, I, I let off a couple of shots of my rifle. She stopped and backed up. Oh, she said, "You're not going to kill me? What happened? What did I do?" And I said, "Well, you see that sign up there? It says 'STOP'" "Ohhhh," she said honestly, "wouldn't that have been terrible to have been shot before I got married?" Well, anyway, we went through her trunk and all she had were all these boxes,

presents and all these gifts. I told her, I said, "You know, young lady, please be careful 'cause the soldiers are going to be all over the place for a while, so you just be careful." "Oh," she said, "I will". Well, then we were packing as fast as we could and went down to San Francisco.

SF: Before you tell me about San Francisco, the bridge you were assigned to guard, what town in Oregon was this closest to?

AEH: Well, I'm just, you know, I'm trying to visualize this. It's I'd almost have to get a, um, atlas or something to -- It was the main river coming [Tape 1 of 2 -- Side "B"]

AEH: coming that flowed out into the ocean there and a very important -- this bridge was so important for transportation 'cause the only place you could cross within miles and they said, "Now, you have to make sure that no one gets on that bridge and drops a...", you know, it had to be a pretty big bomb, a hand grenade doesn't do it.

SF: Continue please.

AEH: Yep. After we got ourselves well situated and we knew we had to do the clean-up of the area and I think everybody was satisfied that the Japs weren't hiding in places. We, we had one more experience where we got a call that there were two or three Japs in a house. I got a truck load of people, down we went and I thought, "Now, what do we do? Start shooting or, you know". But I -- This woman came out and she said, "It's the house up the street." I said, "Now, what did you see?" before we go up there and cause some trouble. Well, she said, "I'm sure it was Japanese people." I said, "Did they sneak in or did they walk in or--" "Well," she said, "I haven't been here that long, but I was getting very nervous that something was going on so --". I thought, "Well, we're going to have to go up there in a truck and I had about ten men and, keep an eye on me, will you." I walked up to the front. This woman came out when she saw the truck stop and all the soldiers. I said, "Mam," I said, "do you have any Japanese in there?" "What, of course not." "Well, could we come in and look around?" "Well, you sure can 'cause we don't have any Japanese". I said, "Okay, that's good." So we left. Then that's from there on, we get on a train and go down to San Francisco and the time going over was to Melbourne, twenty-three days. We were in -- this was a complete 41st Infantry Division with all of the equipment, all of the arms, all of the everything. You can imagine how we were, we were just going like this all the way over. We had cruisers, battleships, airplanes flying. We had a couple of submarines that were following us and, every once in a while, you know, they'd get a little shock that maybe there was a Jap submarine because if they would ever hit one of these boats with all of us, thousands of us on a boat. In fact, I was seventh up. We had to climb up seven ways to your bunk. I said, "God, if you would ever died up here, they wouldn't find you for a week." (laughs) And, the worst part of it was, like myself, none of us have ever been on a big boat and the second night out, a group of us said, "Why don't we get a little air. Let's go up on this landing." The steps went up like this, big landing and on up into the, this was the Argentina. So, we were on this first landing playing poker. Well, pretty soon, you know, you're playing poker and you're beginning to move like this (laughs) and one guy'd get up. He said, "I think I'm going, going outside." Well, you had to go through black curtains to get out. So there wouldn't, no lights showing. And, I thought, gee whiz, "I don't know whether --" Well, anyway, I thought I better get up and go -- I thought I was going to die, you just, get that, that, just everything must have

come up, see. Well, we all went through that eventually. Then you get used to it and it wasn't -- Then we ran out of money (laughs). Somebody, somebody always gets the money. Well, we didn't have that much too loose, anyway. But after twenty-three days going down and getting into Melbourne, Australia. We were all guessing where we were going to go. And, they gave us, we had these big heavy army coats and gloves and stuff like that and I thought, "Well, with equipment like that, now, we wouldn't be going any place but over in Europe or someplace, the Alps, or something." (laughs) Well, we all guessed wrong, of course, none of us knew. When you're on a boat, you don't know where you are. So, when, as soon as we got to Melbourne which was the southern part of Australia, we had to -- they would put us out in the camp which was pretty chilly and wet. But, the seasons stopped quickly and they called for all of our equipment to be turned in. They had other light equipment for us. Well, there wasn't anything to do but we were going to go up into New Guinea.

SF: Excuse me, what month and year is this, now?

AEH: This was, we left for Australia, April the 22nd, '42 and we landed in Melbourne, May 13th of '42. So, the blackouts existed so there wasn't any fun being in a place like that. You might as well just stay in camp and try to entertain yourself. All cold water. If you wanted to shave, you shaved in cold water. If you wanted to shower, you showered in cold water. So, we were getting out of there about as fast as we could.

SF: How did your troops entertain themselves?

AEH: Well, there wasn't much entertainment. Some of them thought they would go into town but where -- it's a big town. The, me, the, Melbourne is the big, big financial district of, the way you'd put it, where all the business seems to be. And, being in the other day time, we were busy in the day time, getting organized and get more people coming in, getting up tents and eating and all this stuff and going over and getting new stuff. And it keeps going and going and finally, they blow a whistle. We're already to go. We're going north. So, I can't remember the time. How many weeks we were there, but we then got on a wonderful train rides over in Australia. Every time you get to a new division, the track goes like this so you all have to empty out and go over and load up on this one, then you go so far, and then all of a sudden, the track is like this, so you have to get out. They have, instead of having one size track, they had it all different that time. Now, I think they have it all, you know, the same. So, we, if you look it. You can see here. Here's Melbourne. Here's Sydney. Sydney was the American colony of Australia. They had beautiful harbor came in here and all the red roof, every, every house was white with a red roof and they had a tennis court. Everybody had to have a tennis court. It was on the top of the house. Well, I had some people here from Wheeling had relatives that lived there. And they said, "Now, while, you're over there, we'll tell them to look for you."

SF: What town is that?

AEH: Sidney.

SF: Okay.

AEH: Well, of course, we never got near Sydney. They went way out around Sydney. This was our place, Rock Hampton, where we finally got ready, got equipped and knew where we were going and what time we were going to leave and how we were going to get there. Now, the Japs had moved clear down into the southern part of New Guinea, right in here. Now, here's Australia. Now, this was causing quit a concern. So, the future was -- They're bringing all these boats and landing craft down here to get over into the, these small islands that are out here, but especially get to the Philippines. So, we, we went up to Rock Hampton and we were fortunate. The great barrier reef, the most fascinating boat ride you'll ever get. It's all enclosed and even the Japs don't have any, maps to show where their lumps or whatever it was. Just beautiful. And nothing to disturb you 'cause only these guides, you might say or whatever you call them, took us all up through there and we got here and got over to Port Morrisby. Then we got to Port Morrisby and our next, here was our first exciting, engagement. We did, none of us had ever shot at anybody or done anything.

SF: But, before we get into the engagement, would you identify your Company, Battalion Regiment Division?

AEH: Yeah. This, forty -- Well, we were all the Forty First Infantry Division. One hundred and eighty sixth Infantry Company E. Right down to that point. And, I had the what was called the -- You had three rifle units that one what we called "heavy weapons". That was bazookas and flame throwers and stuff like that you don't monkey with too much. But anyhow, we went over to Port Morrisby and then we had to get on these planes and fly over to Boomi. Now the Thirty Second Infantry Division out of Michigan had been in here in Boomi. This is where they landed first and just had one awful time. This was the first time that we'd ever, they had and we were going to go in and get them out of there and with fresh troops, we thought maybe we would wear them down. So, we flew over and the landing field, you could, when we were going over like you could reach out and touch these mountains. We were going through these, I thought, "My God, we're going to be killed before we get there." But, they flew over down this old field there and as soon as that plane stopped, the bullets started. We, of course, we had, they had people there. They weren't just going to let us drop in there. They had people there that waited. They knew that the Japs were strays. They were strays at this point. And, they had these machine guns lined up and they just sprayed the area over there and then that stopped that. So, we could get out and go to our unit up in the, a few miles up here and then it, it all broke loose. They, they, some of them, these Japs were always staying there until they got killed. They never thought about going, going home or anything. And, they had cut down all these coconut trees and made a fortress out of it. Of course, a bullet can't go through a coconut tree. So, they, they had us and we learned this, they -- When you come to a path and it has any distance to it at all, that usually means there's a machine gun right down that path. So, we always, you know that after a few of them get killed. So, we stayed around there as long as we possibly could and we thought we've cleaned this area up except for some that ran back into the jungle or something. And, you're not going to find them anyway and they won't probably live but might shoot themselves. That's what they tried to do. So, we, we were in a hurry because MacArthur wanted -- He thought that we were going to jump like this. He said, "No, we're not going to do that. We're going to leave this Boomi area and we're going to go all, just pass them all up and let them sit there and rot and we're going in Hilandia. Now, Hilandia was -- We went in there and I thought, "Well, we were in a LST, it's a landing ship, where we had alligators and an alligator was a unit that you could take at least a squad with

all your weapons and everything else. And, it has a front flap up there like they used them, of course, over, World War, over in Germany and those places. But this was exciting. With the time you'd get up here to Hilandia, you're sleeping in these things and you're sleeping on the floor. You're sleeping every place. It's just, you know, whether we are going to make it or not and then they opened up the front end of this LST and you look out and here this boat's going like this and the water is going like that and they just zoom, and you can go out. God, that thing went down like this. I thought it was going to fill up with water. It filled up with quite a bit of water but we got it out of there pretty fast but we have hundreds of these things going in. All these boats -- They'd already bombed the area. The Air Force had bombed and, going in, we had these, oh, disbursed among all of us, these missiles whatever they called them. They just shoot those off and there would be about ten, ten units here on either side of the boat and they'd send them all in and shoot them all over the place. By the time we wore ourselves out getting in there, there wasn't anybody around. Now, here we are, a great big landing. Now, when I say there wasn't anybody, there wasn't enough resistance in here other than to cause little confusion with us. So, we were digging in, digging fox holes and climbing in at night and moving around. And, scouts out and going through all of that but most of them had moved out and we got, we got the airport here which is what we needed and this -- Oh, here's Hilandia. We were up in here. So, I thought, "Well, isn't that great. Now, we can all just sit here and take our time." The order came in "repack and we are going up to Biak Island," which is a little island sitting out in here. So, the time element is beyond, this is all part of the three years up in here we were moving around. So, we got into Biak. We got out here again, the bombers, oh, the cruisers, they were strafing. They did everything -- I thought, "Well, they're going to blow that little island away, they're just --" So, we all started in again, just like we did down at Hilandia and all of a sudden here you come now. They told us, now as soon as you hit the, the shore, you drop your pack. We will pick them up because you're going to be in combat so fast your head -- you don't want to be held down by a heavy pack and all that and we'll pick up your equipment for you. Number one, we landed one mile off of where we were supposed to land. Number two, I guess they must have forgotten about the tide, but we dropped all our packs and the tide came along, washed them out. Now, we had nothing there but our rifle, ammunition; didn't even have a toothbrush 'cause we had all that in our pack. So, we were there for two or three weeks, never brushed your teeth. Never had anything to do it, but we's, you know, you don't think about that. You're only thinking about me. I'm going to -- self-preservation. I can't brush my teeth but I'll be able to brush at least some time and all of us were getting a beard. God, we looked like bedraggled bunch. But, we finally -- these guys in here. I guess maybe they thought that we would pass up the small island but they were down in, in a coral caves and then we found one place that was open. Oh, my God, it was probably a couple of hundred feet across and we were way down inside this thing. They had walk ways. They had electricity. They had lights and everything. They were living down in there, having a great time and then we found other coral, caves where we could go in there and God, the some of these things I -- this was my time to take the smoke grenade and we'd throw it back in the cave like that, a hole and then we could trace where the smoke comes out where this thing goes, see. Well, this other guy's sergeant said, "Hey, give me that. I've, you know, I've never been up here." I said, "Why don't you just stay right where you are. I'll throw one, then you throw one. Then maybe we can -- You throw the red one, then I'll throw the white one or something." "No," he said, "Let me throw it." So, he threw it and guess what happened? The whole thing blew back on us. There was active gas that accumulates in these holes that you don't know about and the flame came right back across him and he was right in front of me. Oh, God,

he got the work -- Oh, it was awful. And, I got singed a little bit and I'm backed out and I'm pulling him back out of there, yelling for help, and of course, he had third degree burns. It was, he was just -- God, I don't know what his face ever looked like, but the whole thing just blew right back on him. So, he got to go home, but I wouldn't want to come home that way anyhow. But anyway, Biak was my -- I often wonder just what going to keep happening because we were going to keep going up into the Philippines which wasn't -- I mean, as far as, relative distance, is Mendenhow was right in here but that's not too far. I woke up one morning. Boy, I was hot. I thought my God, "I have malaria," and I've been taking Adiprof bills, pills religiously. Well, I got over to the, where the doctors all of them were. I said, "I'm hot. I think I have malaria." And he checked me out. He said, "You have typhus." I said, "I have typhus?" "Yeah." They had taken my clothes off and showed me right down here, this little red spot where a tic had gotten in. My temperature was 106 and a half. Now, over there, your 98.6 doesn't, you can go up over a hundred just and you're about the same. Now, 106 and a half, you're burning up pretty good, too. So, they had us lying -- There were five of us. We were lying on the cot and no ice to help, but they had alcohol. So, we're at this point, we're sort of our of our minds anyway and they used alcohol, just kept rubbing alcohol on us, night and day, and our temperatures finally came down and I went from a hundred, a hundred and thirty eight pounds to a hundred and sixteen in a matter of three days. So, I was, you know, like this pencil. I thought, oh boy! Well, anyhow, this is another one somebody had to be there watching out for me because here I should have been burned good. Number two, with getting typhus, I can't move. I've got to go back now, go back to Finch Haven, this was the field hospital and I had recouped there and I was -- I can't remember how many days or weeks, but I was there quite a long time and I, the nurse came in one day and she said, "My that beard and everything looks terrible on you. Why don't you, let me shave that off." And I kept thinking of cold water and you're going to shave my beard. She said, "Well, it, it may help you." And, I, I was still a bed patient. I said, "Well, maybe." She said, "Well, I'll get you a dish of ice cream if you let me do it." I said, "You're on." So, she came at -- Oh, what a time. I thought I was going to loose my cheeks and everything else, you know. But she got it off as best as she could and I got a big dish of ice cream. Then it wasn't too long after that that probably the following week, a fellow by the name of Quick, he married a Wheeling girl and they lived up in Watertown, New York and they were in the boating business, yachts, things like that. I don't know how big they were, but he got in this, got in the, rescue business, I guess it was. And, he had heard that I was at Finch Haven here and he brought some patients in, victims I mean. What he did. He had the, nice big yacht and he would at night under covers they had along the coastline here so no one could see him and bring in the -- because they were bombing everything if it was Red Cross ships or anything else, not the real big ones but the -- So, he, he had about five minutes to say hello that he had just brought in three or four guys that were pretty well shot up but I said, "Well, I don't know about them. I'm just going to mind my own business." But, he left. Now, the weeks went by and I had to get, I needed more rehabilitation 'cause I didn't have too much strength but they, they wanted to-- I could move. I was now a walking patient. I could get out of there because the place was getting pretty full. So, they sent me down to this area between Boone and Finch Haven. By the way, Finch Haven is the last place that Amelia Earhart was seen. She flew out of Finch Haven and disappeared. So, that's what that's noted for. But, anyway, I went down to the New Guinea Detention and Rehabilitation Center which is right in a building. And, when I say building, it was just a big compound. It was where all the bad boys came back and this was quite an interesting operation. When I got there, they, the Captain called me over and he says, "Now, Sergeant, what I want you to do." He said,

"as these people come in from the north or south, wherever they come from, interview them and find out what they're capable of doing or what they've been working at or something because we got to keep them busy." I said, "Well, I'll try." He said, "Well, there's an, an area over here." We were all on sand and we had these grass shacks, no tents. He said, "There are a lot of tools over there, picks and shovels and everything. So, just put everybody on a job and, and we'll be alright." I said, "Gee, I'll be happy to do that." So, got myself organized and got an interesting, interviewing these guys that would come down from up in here. I'd say, "Gee whiz, it must be awful up there, isn't it." "Oh Sergeant, you just can't imagine what goes on up there on the front lines." I said, "Gee whiz, I wish I could get up there." "Oh, you don't want to go up there." "Oh," I said, "Okay". Joking with some of them because they were trying to pull my cork. But anyway, while we were interviewing, this one man came in and I looked at him. Gee, he's sort of a refined looking person and you know, -- I said, "What did you, what is your job in civilian life?" "Oh," he said, "I was in the postal department and I was mayor." I can't remember the town but it was near San Francisco. "I was mayor of the town." Well, I said, "What are you doing in here?" "Well," he said, "I did something silly and I know shouldn't have. A package came for me in the mail and I was sorting the mail and, that was the day the inspectors were there." Now, you weren't allowed to pick up a letter or box or anything with your name on it if you were working there, in the post office department. So they gave him five years. Well, I thought, gee whiz, this guy needs a little help here and I said, "I think I'll put you, put you in charge of the, men that have to go out and dig the sand and shovel the whatever's shoveled around and you stay in -- You can keep track of it. Now make sure you put the, you know, the number down as Army number or Navy whatever it was." Well, I, that was the type of person that got in trouble and five years. Well, now five years, they probably would get out depending on how they treat the Army and treat themselves but if, if he's smart, I told him, "Be good. Get on a boat and go home and you'll probably for something like this, I would imagine, you may get discharged with maybe, you know, only serving a year." Because they don't want to bring a bunch of guys home on those situations. Now, one of the worst we had there. We had quite a few of them. Not the worst. I, Everyday, the ones that had nothing to do, I had close, I had training utensils at this one place, page after page of stuff which was just awful but we had to put them in there and make sure that they were busy for a while. Then we'd have a question and answer period and I had just lit a cigarette and had my Zippo lighter and I threw it over on the table back by the door. We were all talking about something military and this kid looked in, reached in, grabbed my Zippo and I went back and I thought, "what happened to my Zippo?" Oh, shoot. I remember his face. He popped in there and I just got a glance of him. So, I went over to the Sergeant, the guard. I said, "Hey, now, this, there's one of these smart guys here, there aren't too many outside here that reached in and took my Zippo." He said, "Well, Sergeant, just, we'll take care of him." Well, they went over there and anybody that was in sight, they stripped them to see if they had the Zippo. Why, that was the funniest looking thing. A bunch of guys running around naked and I thought, "Well, I don't know, in this sand, I think I just dropped it in the sand some place and covered over and I could go back and find it later." So, they didn't find it. So, the next day, this, one of these prisoners walked by me. He said, "Sergeant, would you like to have your Zippo lighter back?" Well, I said, "Oh, you didn't take it." "No," he said, "I just, do you want it back?" Well, I said, "Yes." "On one condition." "What's the condition?" "That you won't bring any charges against this kid. He's in enough trouble now." I said, "Okay, get me my lighter and I'll forget it." So, that afternoon, he walked by me and just without even looking at me gave me my Zippo lighter back. So, but the, this, we had four prisoners there that were getting ready-- They had done something

awful. And, I, I don't like to get involved with what they did, but they were going to, the official executioner had arrived that day and I was wondering who this guy was. He came in and sat down and ate with a couple of people and I, he's the official Army executioner and he travels all over the world. It's his job to execute the prisoners that get the death penalty. So, I got to know him right away because I, I wanted to keep track of what's going on there myself and he said, "Well, we're going to have eliminate four of your boys, and, I'm over here early 'cause he has to get the ropes tested." He has certain weights then they, so that the rope when he, doesn't stretch. So, he did that and we played cards and we ate and everything. And, these four guys, God, it was just awful, yelling and screaming. We had a place out in the far end of the compound there, they had built scaffolding for two and two at a time he, dropped them. But, he said, he wanted to know if I was going to come out. I said, "Hey, I've seen I think enough dead people and people being shot and yelled and screaming in my life time. I don't want to watch this." "Okay." I said, "Well, now where are you going now?" "Well," he said, "I'm going up to the Philippines." I said, "Where did you come from?" "Well, I came from Europe." And that was, that's what he was doing, he had been doing it for ten years. I said, "How do you get into a thing like that?" He said, "You know, I've been trying to figure out that myself. I must have said 'yes' when I should've said 'no' or something. But once you do it, there's nothing to it." "Okay, I'll take your word for it. I'm not going to try it." But that was sort of interesting that you had that opportunity to because we were, this was a nice compound. Everybody was happy. I, the group that didn't, the fellows didn't have anything to do. I took them out to the beach and I said, "Okay, we're going to rake the beach and when you're all through raking the beach and piling it up nicely then you can go swimming." They thought that was great 'cause I knew no one was going to run away from us and we were in a desolate place. (laughs) So, they would go out and swim and come back and they'd say, "Hey, Sarge, can I be on this duty tomorrow?" I said, "Yeah, you can be on the duty for tomorrow." Then we had problems there of the original, I suppose, clean up of the what they call the homosexual guys, the gays, and they passed them all through our area there and this was, you know, this was -- We had Army, Navy, all of them, just passing through and I didn't know who the dickens they were. They were just like somebody else. They were going to be stationed there until they could get a boat and put them on and take them home, I guess. But, if you were gay, the first thing they did was to send you down there and get you back home so that you would get out of the way and not bother anybody. But, oh, Lord, this one guy. I don't know what his problem was but he caused trouble with his, troops at night when most of them was so hot they don't have covers on and somebody woke up that night and they almost killed him. We had to put him in solitary confinement and he finally -- I said the boat's ready. Get this guy out of here. Take him down and put him on the boat, oh he was a trouble maker. Then we had another interesting, this man or boy, he'd, I had him on latrine duty and that was just sweeping the sand out of the place and get, make sure that they had paper. So, one day, they called -- We, we made cargo nets there, by the way, that was the main industry. Cargo nets. So, the call came in for, cargo net. They needed more people because they were going to be using them up in the Philippines, landing. So, I, -- They said everybody. So, I called this fellow over and I said, "Hey, you got to go over to the cargo nets. It might be a week or two and then." "No, I'm not, Sarge. I's not going to go over there." "Well," I said, "If you're not going to go over there, then maybe they're going to have to take you over there. Is that what you want?" "No, but I ain't." "You know, somebody's got to take care of these things." "Well," I said, "for a week, I'll take care of your job. Just get over there." Well, he wouldn't do it. So, my Lord, they, I told the Sergeant of the guard, I said, "This guy's not going to move." "Yes, he is. Don't worry. Get out of the way."

So, they took him over there and on the way over, they just had one dickens of a time. So, they thought, "Well, we can't put up with this guy. He's going to cause a lot of trouble." So, we put him in solitary confinement. And, solitary confinement, let me tell you, is black. Pot in the corner and he come out twice a day for the light, no letters, no nothing. You just sit in there and after a week of bread and water. We went over and I said, "You ready to go --" "Where's the cargo net department? I'll, I'll go do anything." So, he went over there and spent two or three weeks. But there's things like that were -- We had, I don't want to talk about any color and things like that, but I rode back on the boat with a black boy who had married an Australian and I think that, he was quite worried. She couldn't get on the boat. So, he was going to have to send for her. But, we were on the outside deck talking. He said, "What do you think I should do?" "Well, I think you should have thought before you did what you did then you wouldn't have to be thinking now what you're going to do about it." But, he lived in Philadelphia and he said, "It would just be terrible to take her back there in this atmosphere." "Well," I said, "You got a few more days 'cause we're going to only be about seventeen days on the water and then maybe you can solve it from then on." And, I, to me, I, I didn't want to tell him what to do but I think I would have just left her there. There was so many of them were marrying just to get over United States and that doesn't help the situation. So, it was a fine time but I some of the awful situations that I ran across, I really don't like to talk about them, but they're, they're situations that were sort of weird as you can well imagine. We, we had, well this one night, these, these Japs came down the road and we had, well the last campaign, I had two bazookas, two flame throwers and five 60-mm mortars at my unit and we were digging them out of these caves and you can't really get them out because they've been in there for a long time and I, I just still think they were all doped up but, so who cares. So, I said, "Well, I don't know what we can do. I don't think we can shoot a bazooka shell right back in there and the gas flame thrower." I said, "If he gets up there and messes with that entrance, he's going to get shot. But," I said, "you know, if we could get that flame thrower up close enough to shoot it in there, I think we can get them, get them all screaming and yelling." But anyway, before we did that, we had some dynamite and this guy volunteered to go up above and had it on a rope and he said, he was going to get up there, you know, then just let it, throw it back in the entrance. I said, "My God, don't, don't fall off there. You'll blow yourself up." Well, he, he took a couple of sticks. He knew what he was doing and he threw these things back in there and it exploded. Oh, the noise, the screaming and yelling. Then the flame thrower got the guy ran up, and he just shoved it in there and turned it on. It sucked all the oxygen out of the place, so they were screaming to come out of there. And there were about, I think, fifteen or twenty of them came out and as they came out, now this is horrible, but we had to shoot them. We couldn't let them roll around. They wouldn't have been good for anybody. What would you do with them? So, we'd burn them up. A big pile. Then the next time, they came after us, I think they all wanted to die anyway. But, we, I had the mortars well set up and I had also a 50 caliber machine gun they put in this area where I was and I zeroed all the mortars in. And, there was only one main track but I had, different distances. And, then we had a bazooka. I don't know what we'd do with a bazooka at night but we hit. But anyhow, they start coming about eleven o'clock at night, just yelling and screaming at us and they just kept coming and coming and coming. Now, we just kept shooting, and shooting, and shooting and blowing them up. So, about, as soon as dawn broke a little bit, we thought, "Well, we'd better get out there." We lost one man that night. This Jap crawled in under the 50 caliber and he had a hand grenade and to set off their hand grenade, the Jap, they hit themselves like that and it sets it off. Ours, you have to pull a pin and hold the handle. When the handle goes, why it -- So,

he grabbed this fellow, a very good friend of mine, and held it right in here and held him and it just blew their guts out. But, that was the only -- In here, we had about thirty eight or forty of them in -- We tried to make a good count but they were in places, most of them. And they had to send a truck up there because we can't let anything lie around even an arm when it's dumped, put them in a truck, take them down to the beach where they had a bulldozer that would dig a hole and put them in the hole. And you do all this nice refine stuff and you think, "Okay. Well, what's next?" But, some of the things that go on, I, everybody tells me, "Oh, gee, I'd like to volunteer. I want to go up to the front." I said, "You don't want to go up front. Stay in the back as long as you can because there will be enough other guys that will want to go up front and get killed." It's so easy to get killed and the closest I ever had was there was a Biak there. The Japs had dug this, had cleared a path and then it went up to the top of the hill and this cunei grass is, oh, eight, ten feet tall some of it. And, of course, we had learned this and when you come to a place like that that you can see that it's been cleared, the only thing you can do, if you have to keep going is to get back and just take one hell of a run as fast as you can because their gun up there, they don't want to move it. They just want to keep it in one place. They don't want to try to follow you because then they have to loosen something to move it. So, we had to go. And I told the fellows, I said, "If we don't see each other again, why, good luck." And, I stood there and took a run and just got across there, diving in there and that old machine gun let go and I was going down, a shot went right through my pack. well, made it. Then the next guy that followed got shot in the leg. Well, we had three people that were wounded. So, that, there were carriers that we had carrying the mortar shells. So, you hit the first aid and that takes, if they're not dead, it takes two men to get a wounded person out. That's, the Japs used, used a 25 caliber gun because it wasn't what you call a deadly thing. If they could shoot you and not kill you, they didn't want to kill you. But that meant two people that would come and take care of you. Now, if you're dead, well, we'll check him tomorrow, if he's still there, pick him up and whatever you can do. But, it's, -- We, it's amazing more of us didn't, but we had some real, you know, everybody's works for everybody else. It's, we're all one unit when you get into a situation like this because you, the guy behind you, you certainly want to know that he's educated and comfortable and wants to go along and help everybody. The guy in front got to think about the guy in the back. So, it's, it's quite an experience. But, I, I looked at it as something I had to do. I got drafted and when I came home I checked out Wheeling and then went out to Chicago and got a job. I wasn't going to wait until, I don't know, the state gave me two hundred and fifty dollars, I think it was. But, I got four hundred seventy six dollars when I got out of the Army at Fort Meade, Maryland. So, I thought, well the best thing to do is don't sit around and feel sorry for yourself, just go get a job and you'll just start -- Don't think about it. So, I've, that's what I did and my jobs started out in Chicago and by the way, the name of the town, this was down in Wheeling, Illinois and this was where the plant was where they mixed up the and I had to call on Sears and Roebuck and those big stores for patching plaster and all this kind of stuff. Then all of a sudden, I, from Chicago to Detroit to Pittsburgh to Wheeling and none of it did I see it happened. Now, that's where I think the guy upstairs is looking after me, help in that way because I, I look at some of these things in here at Biak. Why didn't I die there? Three of them did and two of us lived. And, you know, you can't sit and question it but I just would say that I got a little help but I did get typhus. Oh, the typhus took me clear out because I, if I hadn't have I would've been in the boat to going up to the Philippines and maybe on into Japan. [Tape 2 of 2 - Side "A"] And, maybe on into the Japan. So, the good things happen, I think, and the bad things happen, it's just like in the best place to live after living in Detroit and Chicago and Pittsburgh is Wheeling, West Virginia. Now, we don't

always do the best things but we, you can't expect always. But this town, I think is a town that can grow yet. We're yet I think sort of, we're, we don't know what we want and we want to build a big garage there. We want to redo that building and I, where's the retailing go, going? Well, the retailing used to be a real lively bunch. We had parades and we yelled around and had special events. Now, I called on all these guys for thirty years and they don't have the enthusiasm, now. Of course, now they're worried because Wal-Mart's going in out

SF: Montgomery Ward.

AEH: Montgomery Ward was in town here. They had a catalog operation which was so-so. So, they went out to the mall 'cause that was, you know, their big store. Boy, they had the store where Kmart is, you know, all that space. After two years, they're gone. Well, I don't know whether Sears and Penny's or whatever got after them, but they just, the manager told me, he said, "Doc, we just -- When you start loosing a million dollars a year, it ain't good. So, you get out." But the other stores, I think, out the mall, if you go out there and look, there are lots of empty spaces and Sears and Penny's had to redo their whole operation out there to change it. They just changed everything for the better, I hope, 'cause that's -- We should've been able to keep them here in Wheeling 'cause that would've been a -- Have Sears up at the north end and maybe Penny's anchored at the bottom. But, now, we let them get away and they didn't do the, as well as you people think out at that mall. The mall is, reminds me of places of Atlantic City where people walk up and down the boardwalk looking and that's a good place to go, malls are when it's cold or hot. Go out and sit there, the older people are sitting there watching the world go by. The younger ones are hustling each other and getting an ice cream cone. Then they have that place where they can go in and stick all this money in all these games and the money goes like crazy and that guy's making more money than any of those stores are making. And then the theaters. Well, they have six or seven theaters out there and we don't have a theater in Wheeling, that is, as theaters as such. And, when I came back, the theater that I -- Well, the first place, let me tell you. **The Alpha, have you ever been in the Alpha?** Well, that was where we went to the theater, that was a theater. Lived over on Walnut Avenue and I'd get fifteen cents, ten cents for the movie and five cents for, we'd stop there's a little bakery up here and we'd get two great big ginger cookies like that or they sold popcorn stuff. Then the gal would wait and the curtain would open and she would start playing the piano and the horses were running. And then the other place was a theater is where this new BP right next to St. Michael's Church. That was a theater. Then they had, out in Elm Grove, they had two theaters.

SF: Do you remember the names of all these theaters? Alpha, the BP

AEH: Alpha, well, I don't know the names like Liberty or whatever they were. I can't even, for the life of me, think what the names would be. The Alpha, of course, that was when I was like that, didn't even know my own name. But I can't remember what the, there's probably one guy that could do it, John, Os, Osbourne who ran all the Wheeling theaters and he just left this afternoon for New, er, up in Maine. But, they had the, the Court, the Capitol, the Vick and the Rex Theater, I think was in town. Now, that was quite a load but all of a sudden, we don't have anything. We had the Colonial, it was the last place down there behind the Custom's House. The, Liberty Theater is where the automobile dealership is, God, I can't even think of the name, they

SF: What kind of cars do they sell?

AEH: Oh, they have Pontiacs and stuff. It's the name of the family,

SF: Straub?

AEH: Huh?

SF: Straub?

AEH: Straub. Yeah. [[Return to Top](#)] Oh, Pops Straub. He said everybody called me 'crazy' because I was putting an automobile agency on the main street. Well, he was crazy and all he did was make money. And his two boys now are whee, so the way the things change and I think now, banking, lawyers, doctors, that, that's what's keeping the place going. But, I don't know who else is making, the, the job situation is and, if they can -- I can always see the, you know, if they can just lower this salary deal like this. The ones that are left, I think, I -- Well, for the newspaper. When I first came here, everybody was paid the same. All of my advertising men and all the production people and I said, "How can you all be paying the same", I mean and I finally got around to Mr. Wood. I said, "Gee, Mr. Wood, there's just -- I've only been here a little short time but I can see out of the seven salesmen they're are two of them down there that are younger and have, hadn't been here a real long time where you're others been here, oh, twenty-five years maybe." Well, now, they're stuck at twenty that whatever everybody else is making, that's where they get stuck. So, these two came along, one of them Jay Smith. I'll always remember, he came into me and said, "Well, gee Mr. Hennen, I hate to tell you, I'm, I'm going to quit." I said, "Jay, what are you going to quit, why, what, did something I did." "No." Well, I said, "Jay, I was looking around this staff in here and you're the, I can see you're the most aggressive one that we have and there's going to be a future for you." "Well, gee, no one every talked to me like that." "Well," I said, "Jay, I, I wanted you to sort of be my right hand man to help me out here because my training and all of my work has been with national advertisers, Herst and all those boys. Now, we're down to the retail level, so I've got to have someone like you who knows that and then we can work together on it." "Oh, gee, well, I'll, I'll stay." Well, as a result over the years ahead, he went down to Fairmont and became the advertising director and then the general manager and he ended up out in Fort Dodge, Iowa as the general manager of the paper and he says he never even gave it a thought that thing, something like that would happen to him. But, you have people here we didn't have -- pension systems, you didn't have much of, a medical programs and it was -- No one seemed to think about it. Just that's the way it was. That's the way it's going to be. Now, we've got, how and why, and we have all these lawyers. Mom used to work for a law firm. They had just the family. Three. Now, they have so many, they don't know, you know, they were out here in this place, then they had to cut that in, the other half went into town, the half stayed here. All these lawyers. And, then these banks. They're all getting to be one bank, here pretty soon. Bank One and, so, the, it's, it's good. But, I hate to see the, the retailer, oh, he's, -- I, I knew practically all of them. But, you talk with them. I, I think they, whether, whether there is a wait and see what's going to happen or well whatever they want done. Let's, we'll just do it. **When we used to have them really jumping.** Well, when is the next pro, what's the next city-wide event. When's -- We had them all once, we had big city-wide events. We had Sears and Roebuck and got all of us a big black mustache made of, cardboard. I still have one upstairs. It

was 1957 and everybody in town, as many as we could pass out, the women, the boys, everybody walking up the street with this crazy mustache. But, that, that, those were the things, you see. These Sears and Penny's and G.C. Murphy and those guys, they were sent in here and they had to be aggressive. By God, they were, they'd push a button and you'd fall through and you're gone. And they expected you to stimulate the community that you're in and do whatever is necessary which they did do and it was exciting. I had meetings out here in my living room with these guys trying to dream up because we didn't have any, chamber or anything that was active like that. So, we did our own. We got it all lined up and we had false money handed out, coupons worth a dollar up to five. So, it was, everybody's going like this. Well, this one program, I got dressed up in a full dress, had a top hat and my mustache, cigar, and rented a truck and had a loud speaker and I'm going through, out the areas around here, telling them go to Stone, Stone and Thomas has a good one. Go see the Had more fun for three days. Now, no one thinks of doing anything like that. [[Return to Top](#)] And, then I always -- When the chance came along, I, I had a cooking school from the Southern Living magazine people. What a deal. Over at the Civic Center and I went around town and got refrigerators, stoves, microwaves, everything to give away as prizes. Well, I did that two or three times. And, I was finally getting ready for retirement and I -- No one seemed to be a bit interested in doing that again and Southern Living just -- They only ask you once and if you don't want, they just won't do it. Then I brought the replica of the White House in. This guy had built. It was from here clear over to there, great big beautiful White House and you could see how he had -- You could see inside and it was just fascinating. We had a lot of people went through there for nothing. We didn't charge them. And, then, I, I'm the first guy that brought in the, the band, the Army Band. I have a big plaque downstairs with a picture they gave to me for thinking about them. But those, they finally decided to the paper did, that's good. The paper, I think, should do things like that to keep the interest going, but I, I don't want to condemn anybody. I just -- 'Cause if I was an expert, I'd be someplace else. But, I'm just a citizen of Wheeling, West Virginia, still hanging around, hoping to, spend another five, six years, maybe. I don't know. I have a four way heart bypass here that -- My only sickness in my whole life, that's it. But, I never had a heart attack or stroke and the doctor said, "If you had either one of those, you wouldn't be like you are now," you're which I agree. So, there again, it's somebody upstairs, I think, must want me to stick around for awhile. (laughs)

SF: When you, when you mentioned that Wheeling let Sears and Penny's get away, what do you think they could've done that time?

AEH: Well, we had a program going called the Fort Henry Program. I guess would be the name and it was going to take that upper part of Market Street where Sears was up there and bring it down and wall away up to the tunnel and just clear that out (clears throat) and keep Sears and, if necessary, I don't know that there'd be room for both, but then we could go south as an anchor. But that's what you do, would be to anchor the community, the selling effort and Penney's could be down below or vice versa or what- ever. But the plans were, Lord, you were going to come in up there at Stone Boulevard and pull right over in the parking garage on top of this and it was endless of things that were going to happen. And, we had a, an awful lot of absentee ownership of - **Stifel and Taylor**, you probably never heard of Stifel and Taylor. Two of the, they were the carriage trade when I was a kid. Mom and Dad would, that's, that's the only where, the only place to shop. Well, you'd pull up in your carriage and they had all the fine brands for the ladies not so

much the men. This is for the women. But, Stifel and Taylor were really, a going concern. [[Return to Top](#)] But, they had absentee ownership and val, Value City came in and, of course, they ripped the town good being aggressive and just doing a lot of things that, they shouldn't have been doing or maybe just for frightening the other retailers and no one knew what to do. Should we take them to court and, you, you know, what are we going to do?

SF: Can you cite some examples of what you are talking about?

AEH: Well, one of the examples of, you know, most of the merchandise that was out in years gone by now not today. They'd come into town, a company like Aero Shirt. They'd pick one merchant to handle that. They'd do it. Other brands like that always had -- Stifel and Taylor had a lot of hang overs there that they were the only, the only one. so, they would -- One day, the guy that had Aero Shirt went walking by there. They had a whole window full of Aero Shirts. So, he goes into and tells them, "Hey, I have them, you know." "Oh," I said, "that's too bad, so do we, I guess." Well, the sources, you see, these guys have sources that, that they buy from and they're all over the country so you can buy anything you want to buy and they got, running like that pretty good. But, they were losing their manager, he died, and then his brother tried to take over and he wasn't very good. So, they sort of pulled out and thought, "let's regroup here." And, they're down there at Benwood, you know, the big Value City store down there. Well, God, they're, they're doing alright. But these guys, they're the Schottenstein's out of, I think it is, out of Columbus. They make furniture. They had a, this furniture business -- They had Earl Rogers who used to be the furniture store on Twelfth and Main where the parking lot is now. There's a parking lot there, I think. But, they came in with this -- And furniture, I don't know if you know it or not, is probably the highest profit item you can buy. If this costs a thousand dollars, they're making five hundred at least. See, so they can jazz these -- I don't want to accuse anybody of jazzing anything, but they, they can say now, you have to sell it at least once for whatever the thousand. Then you can start reducing it. Half price. Well, it's not really half price. They probably bought it for maybe four hundred or making a hundred, see?. But, the retail should be a thousand but there is a lot of that that goes on and you have to keep up with it. But, retailing is the, I think sort of the backbone of the downtown area. We just can't let this thing wonder on where we're going to end up with a six million dollar art place and a Civic Center and a big parking garage and things like that. I think you need more retailing and I think that you can find a lot of people going up to Oglebay. They're doing a good job of retailing. Below, you know, hey, action's up here. Well, of course, that's limited up there. It's glass and some other gift shops but they get them up there and they have good time with it. **But, I don't know what the future -** - I think Wheeling, we've always climbed out of things and we let them go so long and then all of a sudden, but I think, they got to get out and whip up the thing. I, one of the things I talked to the merchants about getting some excitement going. I said, "Now, get your, the Wheeling flag. Now, the Wheeling flag should be put out in every store, front or hanging from the --" They said, "Wheeling flag? Where, what do you mean Wheeling flag?" "Oh," I said, "Don't you know, there's a Wheeling flag?" "Do you?" Well, many years ago, they had a contest with artists to submit, a flag and they selected one and they had, I think, two flags made. one's for, supposed to be hanging up, I guess, at City Hall. But one disappeared. So, one day, when old, our, lady Mayor, what the hell is her name? oh, well anyway, I was working with her. We did some cleanup stuff. We had cleanup week and all this stuff. But, anyway, -- I'll think of her name in a minute. she called me up and she said, "Hey, if you're in town, stop by." I said, "Where?" Well,

I'll be in the City Hall. Okay. The Boy Scouts were having a big national promotion going on up in Massachusetts and our scouts were invited to come up but they had to bring their city flag because they were going to have a big parade. So, the kids were up, wanting to know where the city flag is. Well, we looked and looked and looked and we finally found it. And it had a nice cover on it and everything else. So, we, we told them, "Hey, now take good care of this, you know. Just don't --" "Oh, we'll take care of it, don't worry." So, I guess they went up and came back and then the flag was put away. Now, it seems to me, for just for the excitement of it and people wondering, "You know, what happened?" So, here's the flag and we used to have flags up but they were American flags long time ago. There's a hole in there, the city put a hole in the ground so they could and I, the Jaycee's would put them it, take them up, store them and whenever there was a need, they'd put them up again. But, you, you need a Wheeling flag and you need a flag that maybe it's just like they're hanging up there now says something about Heritage. [[Return to Top](#)] Well, Wheeling Days are something or do something that's theirs. They're -- Everything that's happening is not theirs, it's somebody else's. And, you, I think, you've got to -- Yet you can have all kinds of , you could have a beauty contest or you could give away an automobile at Christmas. It might be a second-hand one. But, hey, anybody can get a good second-hand one is doing it and when you spend your money here, get some tickets and have a big to do about who wins the car or the automobile dealers are not real active on it for themselves and you get the lawyers, the doctors, all of them. You know, I think, they would like to be participating in something but there isn't anybody generating that excitement of participation that should be there because there's a lot, there's money that's needed. Well, let's say, maybe they're all get onto it. The town is not folding up by a long shot. There's gross sales tax is up but I think the gross sales tax is up because there are less people that have to pay more. 'Cause one there, that shoe store on Market Street, he told me, he said, "Doc, I can't even pay the gross sales tax. I've got to close up." They keep raising it and raising it and raising -- And there's no, well, he had a second floor that was empty, wasn't even using it and the basement. Oh, that didn't make it, you have to pay for the space. Well, I thought it was selling space that you have to pay. So, I don't know. That's the way the cookie crumbles, so, you crumble with it.

SF: If you were given an opportunity to give a future mayor of Wheeling some advice on how to bring retail business back to the town and keep it here besides the drilling up of, enthusiasm for civic pride, do you have any other suggestions?

AEH: No, you got me. You got me stumped there. I, I don't want to get involved in that when you have a -- The Mayor one day said that to the retailers, he said, "No, you know, we want things to move along and anything we can do to help you, why we want to help you." But, here's a Mayor that doesn't know what the help -- Where, where do they need help? Why doesn't he go out and find out from them? And find out from the merchants from the, the Board of Trade or the what's the new, name of it? When I came here, it was the Board of Trade. But, they're in the Crohn's Building. Well, anyhow, they -- He's interested, Jack is, in running the city but when you have a mayor say, "Hey, you know, anyplace we can help you..." -- Well, if they went down to -- We met, we want twenty five thousand dollars. We're going to put on a big program here. What? Get out of here. He's, I just don't want to say that

SF: Well, what if it was, an individual who is seriously open to constructive ideas. What, what might you suggest?

AEH: Well, I, of course, I think all the retailers eventually should, the remaining ones should get together with the help of the Chamber of Commerce. That's, you know, we have a lot of members of the Chamber of Commerce but all they out, they just want membership. Well, now if they just want membership, that means they need some money. Well, what are they going to do with the money that they take in? I, I know and I told one of them one day, I said, they asked George Bernard Shaw one day what he thought of Rotary and he said, "Well" -- Oh, he, they asked him where he thought Rotary was going? And, he said, "I guess to lunch." So, I thought, "Well that's a good answer, I suppose." I was a Rotarian once myself but you get so involved in doing things like that, that I know that it's the people are intelligent and are capable but it, it's, you get into a habit. You sort of like we all do. I, we're in the habit around here that this has to be just like that. Mom comes down here and says, "Now, who put that there?" "Well, I don't know. But, let's, don't worry about who put it there. It's there. Do you like it or don't you?" There could be more people doing, I think, you have to meet and you can't -- I don't like to criticize it, but they do have a evening cocktail party or something once in a while and they talk to each other and I don't know what comes out of all that but -- I'm, I only wish I were -- I don't, I like to work that way but I've lost all my get up and go because my get up and go is gone and I, I just forced it to be along here. Someone says you're eighty years old. "Well," I said, "I'm going to be eighty years old." But, I don't want too many things on my mind and I have a few things that were on -- We're closing out, Joe Funk. I don't know whether you've met Joe Funk or heard of him?

SF: No.

AEH: He's up in Wellsburg and he was advertising director of Stone and Thomas and then he was down with the Wheeling National Bank as their advertising man and then he retired when I did. He's a year older than I am, er, a month older than I am. And, we had a program, talking about wars. This is just a small version. This is a, shows all the wars that we had to fight to save our freedom and I forgot Desert Storm while it -- This is pretty old. But there is a, an example of an awful lot of work and we thought we would just hit the top bracket with this. This, guy would take it and put his Army service, what he did down here, see. And, we advertised it nationally and, in the Army magazine, and for some reason or other, we had too many of these Korea, Vietnam Wars that followed the, the World War Two and all that. This would have fit in World War Two but those little wars like that just killed the you, we, I can't get that. So, we've, we have them packed away in the, in some in the bank in town. Some some place else. It's a -- We had a, -- Then, we had another program. We had unique profile. That was taking a person's life and putting it up in a book titles with embellishments of things that maybe, a golf clubs and stuff, whatever he was interested in. And, we did Linsly. It's right up here. It's the history of Linsly and that took us -- I spent three months down at Linsly digging in old cupboards, drawers and everything. Because they had, at that time, they had no semblance of filing pictures or anything else, you know. I thought, "My God, we got to.." Well, I found enough and then we added a couple and of the statue, I spent a time getting that statue made. And, they, they used them. I, I think they bought, I don't know, maybe fifteen hundred of them and they gave them away to the Alumni and now, -- They all of a sudden, have come to life again down here at Linsly and I thought, "Hmmm, I better call." So, I called John Hershey down there. He's the Alumni secretary and stuff that handles this. And, I took one of these down to John. Well, John had never seen one of them. So, and he's very actively interested in promoting better relationships with, relationship with the Alumni. Well, I said, "This is one. Now, you, the girls have come in down here . We'll

put the girls down one side and the boys down the other, the, the pictures of the .." "Oh, gee, that would be great." And, then, if anybody sends in a donation for anything, send them one of these. Now don't ask him. Don't send it. Say, "Hey, we'd like to have a donation from you." And then work. You got to get the donation in and then send one of these things to them or if the guy sends a thousand or more, have it framed and have one of your Alumni take it to him and say, "Hey, Steve, how would you like this? A present for you." It's a good way for an Alumni to help send, get kids interested in Linsly 'cause it's all right in front of them, the history of it. It's very interesting history but it's, I'm, I hope I get, I just want to see one more of these things but we've done quite a few of these from people and companies, churches and they, they all seem to work out. But it's, it just takes a long time to get them to think. And, I've been over to the Wheeling Jesuit over here. The place is in such a mess they can't get any decent pictures yet, but they're interested. We did one on Arnie Palmer. Oh, my God, tremendous deal on him. His world of golf. But, we're not getting rich from it. We're getting, experience and time that you, you use constructively instead of sitting around looking at the television or doing something like that. (laughs) But, this is the program is good. Joe's son was killed in '67 over in Viet Nam and from then on, we were, we tried to get into a couple of schools to have -- We have a program on the spirit of freedom and it's, it's all very simple. And, we've gotten it in schools because schools are not prepared on any patriotic programs at all. They, they don't even know how to start one other than pull the flag up or let's have the Pledge of Allegiance there or, or something. But, God, we found out a lot of them didn't even have flags. A lot of them never said anything about the Pledge of Allegiance. Now, all that's faded away. Now, that's the backbone of our country.

SF: Why do you think it's faded away?

AEH: Because of Viet Nam and all this, Korea and how the, I think, they were all just it was so ridiculous. That, those things should've never happened. It was all politics and that MacArthur who I happen when I was over there had the same -- They announced that MacArthur was coming into our area to see a, one of the graveyard. And he did. He came in his jeep and he stood up, saluted, and looked around like that and turned around and left. But, MacArthur had that Korean war finished. He was up behind them. Then the Chinese came running in some areas but he would've won that war. Then they fire him because he disobeyed an order 'cause somebody told Truman, "Hey, my God, don't let them get this war stopped. We got, you know, it's what happens?" It seems so obvious. Why pull MacArthur out of there? Why not let him finish the job? But, these things, you know, people were so really disturbed 'cause we were, I think, some of them thought we were, pacifists or something and Joe was in the war over that way. And I said, "We're not pacifists. We're just trying to --" But I think it destroyed everything we did 'cause it didn't flow out like it should've. That they were proud to have one of these to put their record on and save it for the kids or whatever but I, I think, that's, that played a very important part to -- We just felt, Joe, Oh Lord, the guy let one school principal said, "Hey, now get out of here and stay out of here. We're not going to set up tables or anything else to try you know, for getting these guys interested." We just want to -- "Well, get out." And they watch you. Now, that, you know, that's wasn't even thinking. He'd call you in and say, "Look at the whatever you want to do" and then make up his mind, "Well, let us think about this. This sounds good or..." handle it right. They never do it. But just handle you right so that you think, "Hey, there's a pretty good guy. He's thinking about it," but they weren't. And that, was, it was tough. And, you think, then you get mad at yourself. You think, "Well, I got so mad at," I guess, I, I just thought of

Mollihan because I never write to these people but I -- The year that, the, the Congress, of course, these guys decided they could do anything if they -- They gave all the Japanese on the West Coast that were displaced and had to move up into areas where they could have their little gardens and -- I don't, well, that's nice and, I thought, "Well, I don't know what, why, why that? Why not the rest of us?" So, I wrote him a letter and I said, told him, I said, "That was very nice thing you did for all those Japanese that we had to displace because of being out in the West Coast and they had to probably sit there and just have little gardens and grow their food and they didn't have to dodge bullets and things. And I just thought maybe, I was in a position where I think maybe I had to do, be displaced a little bit more than they did. I had to go over and spend three and a half years and I had to have bullets shot at me and I had to do this and I lost probably four years of my life, my business and everything else and I think that's called displacement and I think maybe we ought to get at least ten or twenty thousand a piece." I waited and I waited and finally, -- The letter I read, I don't what the, what he said. And I just thought, "Well, there you are." But, those things count, I think, a great deal in everyday life and they've, I think, they've told, voted here last year and what they think. That was quite an upset and I think if they keep doing things right with other people, why should they keep -- They have every, every senior guy is now worrying about his Medicare. And then there's Medicaid. And, then I wrote on the Social Security that, they just, I said, "You just reach over," this is Mollohan again, "and you take a big hand full anytime you need it." "Yeah, but," he said, "we sign the slip that says that we took that." Well, I wrote back, I said, "When will you pay that back?" Billions of dollars. They take them for all those entitlements we have floating around. I'm getting getting rusty.

SF: because of the exhibition at the Smithsonian with the Enola Gay, I was wondering as a veteran, if you would like to share your views on Truman's decision to use the bomb?

AEH: I think Truman's decision I think, it was the proper thing to do and that because, I say, I think in war, you know, we have the agreement on war, no poison gas, no da-da-da, now this is all bologna. I think that he did the right thing because I couldn't imagine sending our, any more boys in there and what would happen to them? First thing they'd do, they'd probably -- I don't know how many prisoners they had of ours, fifty thousand, twenty five -- They would kill them right away. That would start the numbers going and then, you know, to get in there, even landing, we'd have to have two or three million troops and we'd probably have casualties of another million or so. And, I don't know how you can do that with a straight face if you have a bomb that's going to tell them and oh, by the way, it's going to tell Russia, too, this is what happens. Now, I, I, just, I think, it was -- I don't think there was anything else we could do. All this business of pushing all those people up in there and bringing them all over from Germany that had oh, that weren't busy and they were going to shove them all right in there. I'll bet you about three million, now that is, what a mess. More of them would get kill. It's like, more of us over in, you know, we had more casualties from the disease in the jungle than we had, I think, being killed. God, it was just, I mean, why we, -- I didn't get malaria until I got home in Wheeling, West Virginia. I took my pills, Adipen pills, faithfully. A lot of them put them in their mouth and (untypable noise). Well, they're only fooling themselves. You might as well take the - - It turns you a little yellow. But, I was walking up Market Street, turned up Twelfth to meet Dad up at the Twelfth Street News Stand and I thought, "Oh, what's wrong?" So, I went up Twelfth Street News Stand and, oh, Mickey that run, ran the place, he said, "Go back and sit down. The back room." Of course, Mickey thought I needed help so he got me a little shot of booze, about

that much. Doc, you might as well shoot yourself with malaria of taking that. That really set me off. So, Dad came in and I'm sitting there and, of course, still had a breath on me. He said, "What have you been doing?" I said, "Well, I, think I'm sick." He said, "I'll say you're sick." (laughs) Well, now, "Dad, I came in here and had a, oh, I'm hot." So, I said, "Why don't we go home and we can call the doctor or go, you know." So, we did. And those were the days that the doctors made house calls. Took my blood and everything and tested it and said, "You have malaria."

SF: Did you bring it back from overseas or did

AEH: It was in my system.

SF: I see.

AEH: And, I stopped taking malaria, it was almost -- They said you could stop within a month or something and I was taking, Quinine pills I guess. Didn't stop it and I, I caught this fast enough and I could feel it coming and this was unusual. I got a dispensation. I went out to Chicago, no it was Detroit, (knocking on door) Um, I don't know who that is. Hold it. Can you?

SF: Sure. Pause. Picking up where we left off. Do you remember what the month and year was when you came back to the continental United States?

AEH: Hm-um. Gee, I had this all written down. I came back in September and I was discharged in October

SF: Of what year, please.

AEH: That's '45. Because we, we hit San Francisco and, of course, there we had to be checked out, yeah, changed clothes. You do all that. It takes about a week to do that and then we got on a plane, interesting ride, the seats were long like this, just the, like the for the, parachute people, you know, you sit like that. We flew all the way to New Jersey. I didn't think I could get up. In fact, I, I got a blanket. It was cold. I got a blanket and rolled up just to, so I could lie down. It was, I thought, "My God, we got to make this, though." Then, we went to Fort Meade and that's where I got four hundred and seventy six dollars. I don't know what I did with it. Did you take it?

SF: No. (laughs) Um, let's take a moment. Through the years of living in Wheeling [Tape 2 of 2 - Side "B"]

SF: Let's take a moment. Through the years of living in Wheeling, have there been, persons you thought had contributed something to the life blood of the city that some how went by accident or other unherald that you think are worth mentioning?

AEH: Well, this is a town, that a lot of people really don't want to be recognized for doing things. I don't know why they become embarrassed or something. But I have found -- Well, for instance my Dad over there, he gave them and the Children's Home and I had to find out at his funeral. This woman came up to me, she said, "I'm from the Children's Home next door." She said, "We certainly are going to miss your father, etcetera, etcetera. He had been so good to all of

us over the years." And, I thought, "Well, what what are you talking about? Sending food?" "No, he took care of all the children's teeth." Now that was expensive. Dad never mentioned it. And, then another guy came up to me and said, "You know, I never, appreciated your father as much as I do now and I'm just going to miss him." I said, "Well, you have some nice bridge work or something, I don't know what you ..." "Oh, no," he said, "I made appointments. I didn't have my teeth fixed. I, I talked to your father. He talked -- He's the only, made any sense to me, just had a speech for half hour, an hour." I said, "Did you pay for it?" (laughs) "No, he never charged." But, there are other people I know, in Wheeling here that have given substantially to programs and to other things and you never hear their name mentioned any place and they don't want it mentioned and it's ...

SF: Percentage wise?

AEH: Percentage wise, we had more millionaires in this town than in any town in the country at one time. And, you can look that up.

SF: Do you have any idea what year that was?

AEH: Yeah, well, you had Sterling Products. You had all the steel business. You had a lot of coal business. **You had a lot of stuff that has disappeared long, long time ago.** Hazel Atlas, as I said. Hazel Atlas paid a five percent dividend all through the Depression. Now, no one got a five percent dividend from very few places during the Depression and that was, a pretty healthy thing but then it, it, it falls apart. The whole company. They had to fold up. How, how can they? They had two plants up in -- I worked for them. They had two plants up there, a couple out west, two, all over the place. And they had all these patents. Hazel Atlas had patents on all the cold cream jars, Lady Esther in Chicago. All of them. Then they, how this all of a sudden fades away? We had a -- Kraft Cheese was the largest, I have to use the word 'consumers' of glass containers in the world. Little cheese, little mayonnaise, or whatever it was but we sent car loads out, eighty or ninety a week that went in, worked, put in storage, went through production out the other side and went out into the market. Now, that's how big they were. And, we had all the business practically.

SF: So, what happened?

AEH: And, it disappeared. Well, I wouldn't want to put it in print. I just worked there.

SF: Would, it be in the ball park and would it be fair to say management might have been the cause?

AEH: Well, you know, you had, Harrison McNash was President and he retired. Then they put two people in charge. How can you, how two people in charge? You can't have two presidents of a company. I don't know. I worked for them but I -- Some of them got, pretty bad deals in there, I think, when they came back from -- But I wasn't going to sit around just -- When after I talked with one of the Vice-Presidents, I, I sort of suggested that I'd be better off getting unemployment compensation. I told -- He called my father up and told him, what I had said. He said, "You better watch your son. He's not going to go to work." So, that night at the dinner table, Dad said,

"Well, did you have a big day? Did you go in and visit the people?" I said, "Oh, yeah." "Were you at Hazel Atlas?" I said, "Yeah." "Oh, so, you got a call, did you?" he said. "Well," I said, "I, so I told him what happened." Oh, Dad got so mad he just, first time I ever heard him swear at the dinner table. [[Return to Top](#)]

SF: How old were you then?

AEH: I was twenty-eight, twenty-nine. So, it, you know, there, the towns and, I think, all over the country are, a lot of them are in a state of confusion of what do we do next and then, what do you supposed to be happening here? If the Honorable Senator Byrd hadn't gotten all these millions and millions for doing this, suppose we just cancel that out. Where would, where would we be? People, some are excited about and they say, "What the hell do we need that for?" "Why do we need all that?" Because, there's a lot of it up at Oglebay. The arts and crafts and things. Do we need that big parking garage over there next to the Civic Center? So, then you have always, there's a little mix up that comes from what part does the city play in this? What part does who play in this? I, you know, I just sit out here and mind my own business because I'm sure I don't, couldn't come up with the answer, but there's an answer some place.

SF: Where would you send a future mayor of the city of Wheeling to find the answer?

AEH: Well, that would be pretty tough. I think he's got to come in and learn the city quickly. What makes it tick? Who are important people and get together 'cause this town used to get together the way they built the second outlet from downtown, the Stone Boulevard. Mr. Stone, Mr. Good, Mr., Paull, Mr., Bob, Bob sat around the table and one day, they said, "We've got to have another outlet for downtown that, we have one coming down here. We need two." So, they all pitched in. It started off, I guess, Mr. Stone said, "Well, I'm throwing ten thousand in." Looked at Sam Good said, "Bull shit, I'm throwing ten in." This was -- Dad told me this. He said so they built the road. But, the idea in Wheeling over the years was keep the taxes low and you keep the salaries low 'cause they don't -- If you want something, you got to have taxes, like a school up on the hill. We, I worked on that program and we had to, I think, it was three or four times for an election and the people that were, were going to participate in this wouldn't vote for it. We thought, "Well, how, how do we know that?" Well, we got so sick and tired of it being turned down on an election that these people didn't -- So, we checked it out. All of the 'no' votes came from the areas where the people lived that were going to, well, move into some nice new apartments instead of the dump they were in. So, we told them what's, this is what we are trying to do for you. Well, then, we just worked those areas and my God, we got, got the school in. We got these high rises in and stuff. So, we got that all done but that's -- The high rises, they, they don't contribute that much. They're just people that I don't think work too hard. If they do, they don't make too much money. The school up there, I don't know whether that's the best thing that ever happened to us or not. You get so many. You get so big and it just looses all, I don't know how you'd, how they work a school that big, there -- We were better off in our sectional schools and there was more competition with them. But, now we need a big one and they're having all kinds of problems but that's

SF: What is the best thing, in closing, what is the best thing that has ever happened to Wheeling?

AEH: The best thing that ever happened to Wheeling that was the day I was born, I guess. I don't know. (laughs)

SF: In all modesty, he added.

AEH: well, I, I think that the best thing about Wheeling is that I don't know what, how it happened but I think it's the people. And it's always, I, I just can't figure out, of course, they, they get into non-thinking times, but they're out there and they're all good people and if we could just get some way of pulling them in so that they know what's going on. No one knows what goes on much in City Hall, you -- They don't understand what's going on. So, these are the, the, these are the leaders and they should -- I tried to sell them on the idea years ago that they should publish a tab section to report to the people what is going on in every department in there and it isn't that tough and it would make them do better. They said, "Oh, God, we'd better, don't forget that up here don't just, well we have to." And, then it gets so far and then someone says, "Oh, what the hell, let's keep this to ourselves." But that's the way, that's one step you can start and tell the people. Look what we're doing for you. Look how each department is working. Look, look.

SF: This is a good place to stop. Thank you.

AEH: Okay.