

HISTORICAL MEMORIAL CENTER

Pennsylvania State Police

Oral History Interview of:

Sergeant Ronald W. Kratzer

INTERVIEWER:

This is the Pennsylvania State Police Oral History Project. The date is November 16, 2006. My name is Corporal Bob Mertz [ph], PSP, retired, and I am interviewing Sergeant Ronald Kratzer. The interview is being conducted at Sergeant Kratzer's home in Saxonburg, PA. Sergeant Kratzer, do I have your permission to videotape this interview?

MR. KRATZER:

Certainly.

INTERVIEWER:

Welcome, Sergeant Kratzer. This is tape one. Okay. Sergeant Kratzer, to begin the interview, could you give us a little bit of your general biographical data, your personal background, where you were born, family structure, et cetera?

MR. KRATZER:

I was born in Greensburg, Pennsylvania on July 5, 1932. My father was Percy Kratzer, who was born in Likens [ph] in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania in 1900. His father was a blacksmith. My father was one of the first original clerks, four

original clerks at Greensburg. He was hired in February 1921, and he worked at his position there in Greensburg until 1956.

INTERVIEWER:

By "clerk", can you expand on that, what the clerk duty would be at a troop headquarters?

MR. KRATZER:

Okay. Up until that time, according to the information, I can remember my father talking about it, the State Police had founded in 1905, and for the next 15, 16 years, there was no filing system, reporting system, as we know it today. And so they wanted somebody -- they wanted men that could type and take shorthand, take statements, and also to set up initial reporting system and a filing system, a particular file for criminals and so forth. So, my father attended Lancaster Business School and -- or Pennsylvania Business School in Lancaster. And somebody from the Department came down there and asked these young men if any of them would be interested in joining the State Police, and so he talked it over with his father, and his father said, "You can't go wrong working for the Commonwealth. You won't make a lot of money, but..." So, my dad decided to go that route, and he took the job and was sent to Greensburg. And the

other three clerks were Frank Hamm [ph], Blaire O'Neill [ph], and Jimmy Seacrest [ph], and they all started about the same time. And because of budgeting problems, my father was enlisted. He took the oath, just as any other State Policeman. He worked, at times, in uniform, not often, but mostly all day long, he worked in the clerk's office, but at night, they would -- he would go on raids. He would go to speakeasies in plain clothes and take an old bottle along and get a drink and pour a little in for evidence so they'd raid the place later on. He had worked -- they sent him into body houses in at the McKeesport in Pittsburgh where he'd be solicited. And then they would raid these places. And after two years, they had necessary monies, then, to hire civilians, according to him, and they gave him a discharge, which I still have. His discharge was signed by Lynn G. Adams [ph], and he got a formal discharge after two years. And from then on, he was a civilian clerk. And I had a great opportunity, as a young man, in that. I got to see, firsthand, the workings of the old State Police, because he used to take me up to the barracks on many, many occasions, particularly he would have to work a half a day a month on Saturday. And sometimes, he would take me up there, and I got to see the men taking care of the horses,

currying the horses, and cleaning out the stalls. I remember the blacksmith shoeing horses and the saddler working on harness and stirrups and what have you in his shop. And it was a unique experience. And also inside, I can remember, at times, he would be called up to go up in the evening, and I would go up with him where he might have to take a statement in shorthand, and I can remember the men playing pool. They had a pool table in the living room, and the men would be up there with their -- just there britches and puttees on. And they'd have their blouses off, and they'd just have their undershirt on and a top. And -- but they'd be there playing pool. And other men would be sitting in the living room, reading the evening newspaper, and listening to the old Atwater Camp radio, because most of those men didn't have cars. And they spent their whole live there at the barracks.

Yeah. They had a mess hall, and they ate there. And in fact, they even had the mess hall at Washington, Troop B at Washington when I got there in 1956. But the following year, or the year after, they closed all the mess halls in the state, and the men went on subsistence. But also, in the early '40s, they -- the men built a swimming pool up at the barracks in Greensburg. And it wasn't a large pool, maybe 25 feet by 50 feet. But in the

summertime, the men could go out there in the afternoons or the evenings, if they were off, and go swimming. And if you had a family, of course, you could bring your family up there, and they were allowed -- you were allowed to bring one guest. And of course, I was raised in the city, and at that time, the only place you could swim in Greensburg was the YMCA. And so it was a treat for me, on many occasions, where my dad would take me and a friend, and we'd go up to the barracks in the evenings or on a Sunday afternoon and go swimming. And I got to know a lot of the men up there as I got older in my early teens. In fact, some of the men I met in my teens later on were officers at Greensburg when I went there in 1973. And so, it was a very unique experience being brought up. And of course, I went to school with some of the sons and daughters of other troopers: John Bricklemeyer [ph], John Schrinn's [ph] daughter, Dave Drenning's [ph] son, Major -- now I'm showing my age, Major Udalk's [ph] son John, and there might've been a few others. But there was -- of course, a lot of the men had children my same age, and I went to school with them.

INTERVIEWER:

So, your father's employment with the State Police probably had a tremendous impact on your motivation for becoming a State Policeman, I would imagine?

MR. KRATZER:

Absolutely. And a great -- I always had a great deal of respect for them. And of course, one thing, in those days, too -- and they had horses at Greensburg back in the late '30s and early '40s. There wasn't a parade that was ever held in the county, and of course, even in, I imagine, in Pittsburgh, that the leading detail in the parade was always five Pennsylvania State Policemen on horseback, one carrying the state colors, another carrying the national color. And they would always lead the parade, whether it was the State Firemen's Parade or the Memorial Day Parade. But they were always out in front.

INTERVIEWER:

What about your mother? What did she do? And what was her name?

MR. KRATZER:

My mother's name was Bernice Draughts [ph]. She was born and raised in Fayette County, near where Seven Springs is now located up in the mountains. And then, at a very young age,

their house burnt down up there, which they rented, and they came to Greensburg. And my grandfather, whom I never knew, he died in 1929, he was a janitor of the Lutheran church in Greensburg, the Zion Lutheran Church, and my mother -- and when she reached her late teens, got employed with the Bell Telephone Company as a switchboard operator. And she worked there until she was 25, and her and my father married. And she quit. And then, in the Second World War, they called her up one time and said, "A lot of our girls are leaving," because they're going to war plants where they make -- were making big money, and they asked her if she might come back and help out. And of course, mother and dad never owned their own home. Dad didn't make that much money. And so she went back to work in 1942. And she worked split shifts so that she'd be there when I left in the morning for school and was there when I came home. And I had an older sister, Bearl [ph], who was six years older than me. And -- but anyway, she worked there until -- in the meantime, they put in a pension plan, and she worked until she got a small pension. And then, in 1949, her and my father bought their only home they ever owned in Southwest Greensburg at 511 Foster Street, and they lived there until they

were in their 80s, and we brought them up to Butler here when they were no longer able to take care of themselves.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, you speak of your father doing all of this work at the -- as a clerk and also helping out on the raids and whatnot. Do you know how much money he made, at that time?

MR. KRATZER:

Not at the beginning, but I can remember, as I got older, like other kids, you know, you always want more than your family can afford. And I can remember one time I was wanting something, and I can't -- I can remember my mother said, "Ron, your dad only makes \$125 a month and \$25 of that goes to rent, so we don't have too much to go on." And that would've probably have been back around 1940, somewhere around there, '41. But...

INTERVIEWER:

You have a sister Bearl?

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, isn't she -- is her husband part of the State Police, or was he...

MR. KRATZER:

My sister, Bearl, married William J. Steiner [ph], who was also from Greensburg. He came home from the Second World War and enlisted in 1947 and was sent to Troop D Butler and served his time in Troop D and also at Mercer, Warrendale [ph], Kittanning. But he retired in 1973, I believe it was. He put 25 years in, and he was a good carpenter and a painter, and so he retired when his -- he was -- had his time in and he was over 50 at the time, and he then went to work for himself.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. And your spouse's name?

MR. KRATZER:

My wife is Jean Roland Kratzer [ph]. She is originally from Jefferson in Green County, Pennsylvania.

INTERVIEWER:

Where did she work when you were in the State Police?

MR. KRATZER:

I met Jean before I went to the Army. I met her through some friends of mine that I went to high school with, and they attended Juniata College. And they were always coming home on -- or not always, but occasionally, they'd come home on the weekend

and would say, "Why don't you come down and see us?" and so forth. So, I had a car of my own, at that time, and I went down to Juniata, and through them, I met her. And I started dating her. And I dated her until I went into the service and came home and we got engaged in May of 1953. And then I -- of course, when I came out of the service, I had decided to come on the State Police, but I -- we, at that time, you had to put two years in to get -- before you could get married, so we got married, finally, in 1957, I believe it was.

INTERVIEWER:

And your children?

MR. KRATZER:

I have two children, Gretchen, who is a nurse that works at the -- in the operating room at Butler Memorial Hospital. And I have another daughter, Pam, who worked -- she's not a nurse. She ran the office for one of the surgeons at Children's Hospital for many years. And then, she met her husband down there. And when he retired here last year, she got a job up at the Butler Hospital, and she works up at the Butler Hospital, too. Gretchen's husband is presently a lieutenant in New Castle. His

name's Tom Hill, and they have two sons: Alexander and Trevor, 15 and 12.

INTERVIEWER:

So, Gretchen married a State Policeman. Apparently...

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Apparently, her life with you as a State Policeman was an influence on her wanting...

MR. KRATZER:

Well, that...

INTERVIEWER:

...to marry a State Policeman.

MR. KRATZER:

I had nothing to do with that. I had also had a niece, my daughter -- my sister's daughter, who got a job at the barracks in Butler as a PCO, and when Gretchen's husband, Tom, came to Butler, he had been here a year or so, and one night, he was working when she was on the desk. And he said something to the effect that they were -- are there any women around town, decent women you can date? And at the time, my -- her cousin,

my daughter, wasn't dating anybody. She says, "Well, I have a cousin, and she's a nice girl." And so, she was the one that was influential in getting them together. And then, my niece, she met one of the troopers up at -- while working up in Butler. His name's Schuller [ph]. And -- Gary Schuller, and he's presently a sergeant at New Castle. And she just retired here this past summer. She put her 25 years in. The last five or six, she transferred to the clerk's office. So, my whole family has a history, really, I -- with the State Police: my father, my brother-in-law, my son-in-law, my nephew, my niece, myself. And I even had a cousin in Greensburg who was on the city police in Greensburg, Luthy Rodihaver [ph].

INTERVIEWER:

So, PCO, that's a police communications operator?

MR. KRATZER:

Communications officer. She worked the desk, handled the radio communications, the telephone calls. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Prior to your joining the State Police, what was your occupation?

MR. KRATZER:

I got out of high school in 1950, and I started to work for Robert Shaw Fulton Control Company [ph] in Youngwood, Pennsylvania. And I worked there until December 1952 when I gave my two-week notice, because I had all -- I had got notified I was going to be drafted into the Army in January. So, I entered the Army in -- January 15, 1953, and I was sent to Fort Meade, Maryland for about eight days where we got our shots and our uniforms and what have you. The Korean War was on at the time. Excuse me. And from there, I went Fort Hood, Texas for infantry basic. And ironically, when I was done with that, they told a bunch of us that "we're going to send you for Fort Sam Houston for military police training". So, I went to Fort Sam Houston, Texas and took eight weeks of military police training there, and we were to ship out to Korea. And we were out at Fort Lewis, Washington. And a -- the armistice was signed, and they were in need of military police at Fort Lewis at the time, so they just took about 50 of us and put us in the 436 MP Company at Fort Lewis, Washington, and I served out there, then, the remainder of my term at Fort Lewis. And I might mention here of an interesting situation at -- when I entered the Army, I met a man by the name of -- or a young man, my age at the time,

William A. Schneider [ph]. He was from Penn in Westmoreland County, near Jeannette. And we went through basic together, and we served out at Fort Lewis together in the military police. And we're rather close, and we decided -- of course, I told him about -- my thoughts about the State Police, and he was interested, too, so, while we were still out there, we rode in and got applications for the State Police. And before our discharge, we had an Army doctor out there give us our preliminary physical and send our papers in. And we came home, and I got called in August of '55 to go to the Academy and was quite surprised, when I called him up, that he hadn't received notice. And here, it turned out that the investigator had marked on his papers that he was in the active reserve. And at that time, the state didn't want anybody in active reserve. So, through that mistake, he had to wait until April of the following year, I think it was, until he went in. And of course, when I came out of the Academy, I was sent to Troop B Washington. And when he came out, he went to Troop D Butler. And -- but after five years, I transferred from Troop B to Troop D, so we worked together for -- at Troop D for 25 years, both retired, both went to work at the Butler Area High School as security officers together and worked for eight years

together there, so -- and we still see each other. Our wives, we go out socially, go out to dinner together, and -- but we've been - - the two of us have been together since we were 19 years old.

INTERVIEWER:

That's amazing. Amazing. So, your initial contact with the State Police goes way back to when you were a young teenager.

MR. KRATZER:

Even younger than that.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. KRATZER:

When I was, you know, 6, 7, 8 years old, my dad used to take me up to show me the horses.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

My next question, I think you've already answered it, but what motivated you to become a State Policeman, the fact that you were around the State Police ever since you were a young boy?

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, yeah. Definitely. But then, that -- what really gave me the boost was when I got in the Army and got military police training and -- working in the military police at Fort Lewis was just like being in the city police. I mean, we answered calls out there, domestic problems in the non-comms [ph] quarters, enlisted men's quarters, you know. And of course, we worked town patrol in Tacoma and Olympia and Seattle...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. KRATZER:

...and -- but being brought up the way I was and my associate -- the association my father, of course, had with the State Police had a great effect on, you know, me wanting to join. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

How old were you when you came on the job?

MR. KRATZER:

I was -- I just turned 23 in July, and I come on in August.

INTERVIEWER:

And that was -- what year was that?

MR. KRATZER:

1955.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow. Okay. When you come on the job, then, what were the physical and mental requirements, if you recall?

MR. KRATZER:

I knew -- I can't remember some. Like, you had to have, I think, like 22 of your own teeth. Now, I'm not sure about that number. You had to have 20/20 vision. You had to be no less than 5'11" and no more -- they wouldn't even take you like -- they wouldn't take somebody that was 6'6". I mean, if you -- it might've been 6'3" or 6'4", which was tops. They just wanted you a certain height. And of course, your weight had to be -- they didn't want you overweight or real skinny. But the one thing they had then, which I thought was real good, you had to have military service, because there were so many men getting out of the military then that they would only take people with military service. And this made it a -- much better at the Academy when they were -- they didn't have to teach you close-order drill. You had discipline. You already had discipline, so you -- it was easier for you to get along in a semi-military organization, because you had already been in the military.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, had -- were there any cadets in your class that weren't in the military, or were they all in the military?

MR. KRATZER:

To my knowledge, they were all in the military. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

It would make it much easier to train someone.

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER:

Where did you -- was there a background investigation? Did you...

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah, my background investigation was done by Trooper Luther [ph] and Trooper William Smith [ph] at -- and then, later on, I had known -- or maybe Smith, at the time, was a corporal. I can't remember. But anyway, later on, he was my lieutenant at Butler. He -- when he made lieutenant, he had been first sergeant I think at Greensburg or some other troop, and he made lieutenant and came to Butler while I -- that would've been in around 1961.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Did you have to have any letters of recommendation from anyone when you enlisted?

MR. KRATZER:

I don't recall having to get letters of recommendation, but they wanted to know your former employers, people that had hired you. They wanted to know names of your neighbors, people that lived around you, that they could go talk to about your character and your demeanor. I -- if there was that requirement, I can't remember it, but I don't recall them -- that you had to have letters. No.

INTERVIEWER:

What was your family's reaction about you becoming a State Policeman?

MR. KRATZER:

Well, my father, actually -- see, my granddad was a blacksmith and had quit school at the age of 10 and went to work in the colliery in Likens County, Pennsylvania, picking slate out of the coal, because he had seven siblings, and he was the oldest, and he had to help out. And I have his first pay stub where he worked a six-day week and got \$2.50. Later on, a man took a liking to him and used him in -- as -- in his blacksmith shop, and

then, as time went on, he became a blacksmith. And my granddad always wanted his son to have an education, and his one sister, my granddad's sister, married the man that owned the Pennsylvania Business School in Lancaster. So, my father, when he went down there, he would work on the weekends, scrubbing the floors, oiling the floors, which were -- at that time, were wood, and it would keep the dust down, and washing windows and stuff. And he worked his way through school that way, through business school. And my father, he really -- he wanted me to go to college. This is before I went in the service. And he couldn't afford to pay the tuition himself, but he said, "If you could get a job, I'll help you as much as I can." But my mother and dad, they never owned a car, and I was like most young men. I wanted to get a job and buy a car, which I did. And so, I didn't go to college. And -- but then, once I come out of the service and I told my father I wanted in the State Police, I think he was pleased.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Talking about the hiring process here, I want to quote President Theodore Roosevelt, back in 1916, who was a great admirer of the Pennsylvania State Police. And I quote, he said,

“No political influence or other influence avails to get a single, undesirable man on the force or to keep a man on the force who has proved himself unfit.” Do you feel this statement held true while you were with the State Police?

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah, I believe it did.

INTERVIEWER:

And did politics have any role in the hiring process, that you recall?

MR. KRATZER:

No, I didn't have to go through any politician. I just -- in fact, I submitted my application when I was still in the service at Fort Lewis. Like I said, I got -- I had gotten my preliminary physical out there, and the Army doctor filled the papers out, and I sent it in. Yeah, I didn't have to go to my state legislator or anybody like that. No.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. How were you notified that you were hired, and how much time were you given to report for training after you were notified?

MR. KRATZER:

I received a letter in the mail to come down to 21st and Herr in Harrisburg and to bring clothing along, and if I had passed my oral interview and my physical down there, that there was a good chance I'd go from there directly to Hershey. So, I drove down and -- the night before, and I got a motel room and reported at 21st and Herr, and the next day, they had a doctor that examined your mouth, checked your teeth, measured you, and so forth, and listened to your heart and so forth. And I -- somebody -- I can no longer remember who it was or what rank he was, but somebody interviewed me, asked me why I wanted to come on, assured me that I wasn't going to become a rich man, because the pay wasn't that much. And he said, "Are you still interested?" And I says, "Yes." And then, he said, "Okay. Go out and have a seat." And I sat for an hour or so or -- as I recall, and finally, they called these names out and said, "Okay. Report to the training academy at Hershey." So, we went out and got in our cars and went down to the -- to Hershey. And then, in the following days, there would be 10 or 12 more come in. And within about a week, why, we had our full complement. At that time, it was 35. And we ended up, I think, graduating 33.

INTERVIEWER:

How long was the training?

MR. KRATZER:

Six months.

INTERVIEWER:

Six months. Do you recall who the director of the training school was, at that time?

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, absolutely. Major Thomas Martin [ph].

INTERVIEWER:

Major Martin.

MR. KRATZER:

Wore four stars in his -- on his sleeve of his (inaudible), designating he had 40 years in the job. And my father had known him. He had been a sergeant at Greensburg when my father had gotten there. And my dad told me that he could remember when Martin used to sit in the living room at night at Troop A, reading the dictionary. He was a self-educated man. I don't think he went to college or anything, but he read an awful lot. And of course, he was the author of our Call of Honor. And at the time I entered the Department, all the regulations and

everything he had written. He was a very smart man. Yeah. I can remember him well.

INTERVIEWER:

Did anyone drop out of your training class while you were there, that you recall?

MR. KRATZER:

No, I can't recall them dropping out. I -- and I'll tell you what. We had like -- in a Wednesday evening, we were allowed to go out and do our laundry, go to the drug store, get shaving cream and this and that and the other thing. And once in a while, they had -- there would be a group of young ladies, like the Rainbow Girls or something, would get a hold of the Academy and would ask if our boys could come to their dance, and so forth. Well, anyway, these two fellows, they had met these -- some girls from Palmyra at a dance. And this one Wednesday night, instead of going up and doing their laundry, they went down to Palmyra, picked these girls up, and they were -- instead of coming up Main Street, they went out behind the chocolate factory, and they come up the back road. And there was a railroad crossing there. And as the story went, the man on duty at the crossing must have fallen asleep, because he didn't get out and drop the gates

down, and here, they were hit by a train. And one young man, by the name of Tom Beverage [ph] from St. Mary's, was killed. And the other three were injured severely. And of course, the other boy, he was left go. And Tom, well, he was buried. We all went to his funeral up at St. Mary's on a bus. But I understand, from the classes that followed us, there was no more Wednesday evenings off after that. But -- so that's how we ended up with 33.

INTERVIEWER:

I see. What was your rank when you were in the Academy?
What did they refer to you as?

MR. KRATZER:

Cadet.

INTERVIEWER:

Cadet?

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

What kind of subjects and skills were you taught while you were there?

MR. KRATZER:

Vehicle code, crimes code, probably tops, firearms training. One thing they taught there that they don't teach anymore, we had horsemanship, which they used the old cavalry drills from back in the Civil War times. I learned how to cantor in a -- column of fours and so forth. We had horsemanship, I think, every -- at least an hour every day, and -- back in the back corral, and plus, they had other subjects. Typing. I learned how to type there. That's one subject that a lot of guys, like myself, didn't know how to type. And a lot of them, they never really -- they pecked at it, and I didn't dare do that, because my father was a terrific typist. And that really helped, as time went on, because in those days, when you went out in the field, everything was typed. You had -- didn't write a citation in longhand or make out an initial report. Everything -- you carried a notebook, and when you came in, all this was typed in on a report, and it was typed on your own time. You put your eight hours in on the road, and if you had two hours of typing when you came in, so be it. You didn't get paid for it.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, you talked about equitation every day, riding the horses.

Did you ever roll in the rodeo?

MR. KRATZER:

No. No. but I know the year we were at -- the summer we were at the Academy, I can remember the rodeo riders were there, and I met a lot of men that...

INTERVIEWER:

Were in the rodeo.

MR. KRATZER:

...were in the rodeo. Yeah. Um-hum. At the time, when we left there, they asked a lot of us if we'd be interesting in coming back for the rodeo, but one thing I dreaded was getting sent to the Turnpike. I didn't want the Pike, because I felt it would be boring. And as it turned out, there was me and one other guy got sent to Troop B, and the rest of the -- all of my class went to the Turnpike. And of course, a lot of them, as soon as their -- where they were able, they transferred off the Turnpike and went to other troops, as they do today. But I -- when they asked me if I wanted to return for the rodeo, I put no. I didn't really want to come back for the rodeo.

INTERVIEWER:

What was the toughest part of your training, for you?

MR. KRATZER:

The -- learning the vehicle code, boxing, because we had a hell of an instructor, Corporal McMillan [ph]. And I had been in a few scrapes in my life, but he tried to teach us how to box. And he did a good job. He just passed away a few years ago, and I -- somebody I'll -- I remember vividly, because, boy, he put up with no nonsense, and he -- when men left there, he wanted them to be able to take care of themselves. He did a good job.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember any of your other instructors?

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, yeah, Corporal Long [ph], Sergeant Dean [ph], Corporal Hennings [ph]. Well, they were a few. There might be others I...

INTERVIEWER:

Who was your roommate? Do you remember who your roommate was?

MR. KRATZER:

In my room, we were on the third floor of the Academy, and the first night we were there, God, it was in August. And it was beastly hot, and we were right under the slate roof, and it turned out, we could look out one of our windows and right below the window, a few feet, you had to slide down a little bit of a slanted

roof. Well, you could get on to the back dining hall, which was an added-on addition to the Academy, but it had a flat roof, so we took our mattresses out and pulled them through the window, and we laid out there in the -- under the stars that first night to get a breath of fresh air. And in the morning, when Corporal Long come up to wake us up, there's nobody in the room. And of course, he saw all the mattresses were gone and the windows were open, and he looked out, and he didn't really chew us out, but he told us, "You don't do that here. You sleep in your room." So, that was the end of that. But I remember Trooper Polk [ph] was one of my roommates. I think there was, like, six or eight of us in the room. Oh, gee. Oskowskus [ph], who became a corporal.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you ever run into any of them after graduation and over the years, your classmates?

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, yes, but there was a few -- oh, Ladeski [ph] was one. I never -- and it was a fine, fine man. I never saw Bob after we graduated. He served his time in the far east, and I was out here in the west. But I can remember one day, looking through, when

I was the officer in charge at Gibsonia. One day, I was calling somebody in the state, and I got this State Police phone book out. It had listed all the troops and stations, and I just was going through the page, and I happened to see this -- it stood right out. It was the name of Bob Oskowskus, and he was my boxing partner. And I thought, "God, I haven't seen Bob since I left the Academy." And this was, like, in 1983, '84, right before I retired. So, I called up in the station, and I says, "Is Corporal Oskowskus in the barracks?" And he says, "Yeah." I said, "May I speak to him?" And he got on the phone. He said, "Hello." And I said, "How are you, Bob?" And he says, "Okay. Who is this?" And I said, "Well," I said, "we were roommates back at the Academy, and I haven't seen you since we left the Academy. Now, who do you -- who have you seen? Through the process of elimination, can you tell me who I am?" He's like, "No, I can't." And I -- he said, "Keep talking." And I said, "Well, we boxed. We were boxing each -- you know, we were boxing partners." And he said, "Ron Kratzer." And I said, "Yeah." He said, "Oh, my God." And we had a nice talk. And he said, "I'll call you sometime. I'll give you a call." And he never did, and I retired, and I have never talked to him since. But other ones I would see at the

Farm Show detail or I would see at promotional exams and so forth. But there was a lot of them that I never saw after that.

Barkovski [ph], I never saw him. Ladeski. Well...

INTERVIEWER:

Now, when you...

MR. KRATZER:

My mind's going.

INTERVIEWER:

The training school was not the present Academy, as it is today.

MR. KRATZER:

No, it's the old school.

INTERVIEWER:

And it was the one on Chocolate Avenue?

MR. KRATZER:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

I see. I see. Well, Sergeant Kratzer, I'm going to put you on a little bit of a spot here.

MR. KRATZER:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

In 1929, and you spoke of it, they issued a mandate for each cadet to memorize and recite the Call of Honor at graduation.

Are you still able to recite the Call of Honor, sir?

MR. KRATZER:

I think so. Do you want me to recite it?

INTERVIEWER:

Give it a try.

MR. KRATZER:

I'm a Pennsylvania State Policeman, a soldier of the law. To me is entrusted the honors of force. I serve honestly, faithfully, and if need be, lay down my life, as others have done before me, rather than swerve from the path of my duty. It is my duty to obey the law and to enforce it, without any consideration of class, color, creed, or condition.

INTERVIEWER:

Very good. Very good. After all these years. It's something that sticks with you.

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

There's a whole lot of meaning to the...

MR. KRATZER:

That's right.

INTERVIEWER:

...words in the Call of Honor.

MR. KRATZER:

That's right.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. So, you graduated. Now, I'll talk a little bit about what life was like for you, as a member of the State Police. Let's give a brief overview of your career, your major highlights, career ladder. We'll go one-by-one with them, but where were you first stationed when you come out of Hershey?

MR. KRATZER:

Well, I come out of the Academy, and I was sent to Troop B headquarters in Washington. And the day I got there, I -- the first sergeant sent me upstairs to a room to unpack, and when I was - - he told me to get in uniform, which I did. And I came downstairs, and he sent me into Captain Fontaine's [ph] office. And if anybody knew Captain Fontaine, he was a very strict disciplinarian, and -- but he was all State Police. And he talked to me for an hour. He had me sitting there for an hour, telling me

about different things that was expected of me. And he said, "I'm going to keep you here for, oh, maybe nine months to a year, and then I'm going to send you to Uniontown, where you'll become a policeman." And then, he started trying to tell me about the way it was in Fayette County, and it went completely over my head. But a lot of things stuck. And when I got over there and worked Fayette County, I remembered what he had said, and it -- he knew what he was talking about. And so anyway, I was -- I started out in just traffic. Sergeant Gunnerson [ph] was my duty sergeant there. And two men, who really helped me out, as a young man there, was Don McCullough [ph], who became a lieutenant and died at -- from cancer at the age of 45, and Keith Macaulay [ph], who became a captain later on and was CO of Troop B. But those two guys went out of their way to help me and teach me the right way of doing things. And in fact, Don -- I was only there a day or two, and Don, one day, said to me, he says, "We're going to have to get you" -- he says, "Do you have any spare change? Or do you have some money?" And I said, "Well, I have a few bucks." And he said, "Well, I want to take you to Monongahela." He says, "You buy a pair of -- you can buy a pair of boots over there, riding boots." He says,

“Staties don’t wear those puttees anymore.” So, he took me over to Monongahela, and I went into a store over there, and I bought my first pair of boots, because most of the guys, after they left the Academy in those days, when we wore britches, boots and britches, why they’d wear riding boots, not puttees.

INTERVIEWER:

Explain to us what “puttees” are. It’s -- a lot of people don’t understand.

MR. KRATZER:

Well, you were issued -- that’s one thing. You didn’t get paid much, but all your clothing was provided. And the clothing that they got was from a company called Tyler & Hersch [ph]. And it - - the stuff wore like iron. I mean, it was, I think, a gabardine and a -- of course, you -- when I come on, even in the summertime, you wore 100-percent wool shirt, long sleeves, necktie. You didn’t have an open collar, you know. And this had to be dry cleaned at your own expense. And the buttons on the shirts, they were metal buttons, and you had to take the buttons off before you sent to the dry cleaner. But anyway, puttees, you were issued a pair of ankle-high shoes. They come above the ankle. And puttees were like the top of leather riding boot, but

you -- they fit around your legs, and then they had a hook, and then they had a strap where you -- so that they fit on top of that high shoe. And it was -- it goes back to the horsemanship, too. When you rode horses, you either had to have puttees or riding boots on. But the puttees, after a while, being that the shoes and the puttees were separate, from your -- the movement of your feet, the puttees would curl on the bottom, and they really didn't make a good appearance, whereas if you got a pair of good riding boots and kept them shined. A and we shined our gear and our boots, at least I did, every day I come off duty, so that when I was ready to go the next day, they were spit-shined. And I still have my boots hanging in the cellar. And -- but anyway, the puttees were -- they fit over the bottom part of your breeches. Your breeches, you know, were form-fitting below the knee. They fitted right to your calf. And when you got your uniforms, every year, they'd come and tell you, "Okay. We're -- what do you need?" "I need a pair of britches. I need a shirt. Or I need a hat and so on." And so, they'd have a guy measure you for them or measure you up. And then, after a month or so, why they'd call you down to quartermaster, and they'd say, "Okay.

Here's your stuff, your new stuff." And then, you had to turn your old stuff in.

INTERVIEWER:

How long were you at Uniontown?

MR. KRATZER:

I was at Uniontown, oh, about nine months, because we had -- in the meantime, Captain Fontaine had left, and we got a new CO by the name of Garno [ph]. And Captain Garno's theory was a man in a troop should serve on every station so that if there was any emergency or riot, whatever, and they had to call them in from every station to come in and supplement the people on the station you were at where the trouble was, that every man would know how to get there, would know all the roads. So, his theory was every man should serve on every station. So, as a result, he had a transfer every three months or six -- no, every three months. But you -- it didn't mean that everyone got transferred every three months. So that -- I was at Uniontown, then, for, I think, nine months, and then I got transferred to Belle Vernon, and I was at Belle Vernon only three months, and I got transferred to Carnegie. And I was at Carnegie six months, and the only station I had left to go to was Waynesburg. And of

course, that was my -- near my wife's hometown, and that's where we wanted to go housekeeping, because in the meantime, I had gotten married. So, I put a letter in and -- respectfully asking the CO if, in the next transfer me, if he would transfer me to Waynesburg, being that that was the only station I hadn't been on yet. And so, he sent me down there, and so, I was able to go to housekeeping then. But it wasn't the type of living that I had thought it would be, because when I was at Waynesburg, if you worked 4:00 to 12:00, you didn't get to go home. You had to stay there, because there was only seven men -- seven troopers on station, and a corporal, and a sergeant. So, the men that worked 4:00 to 12:00, they went to bed there, and the phone man took the phone to bed with him, and if anything come in during the night, you went out on it. And if you were out in excess of three hours, you could ask the sergeant in the morning, "Could I sleep in?" And if nothing come in, any burglaries or anything, why, sometimes he'd let you sleep an hour or two. But most of the time, there was always work, and you'd have to get up. Maybe you only had three hours' sleep, but you got up in the morning and went back out again. No extra pay for your call-out time. That was all donated.

INTERVIEWER:

So, at that time, then, Waynesburg didn't have a midnight patrol?

MR. KRATZER:

No, Waynesburg didn't have one, nor did Belle Vernon.

INTERVIEWER:

Did Uniontown have...

MR. KRATZER:

Uniontown did, absolutely. Uniontown. But they only had one.

And I can remember I was on the midnight shift at Uniontown in

December, on Christmas Eve, into Christmas morning in 1956

with Trooper Fidel

Ambrose [ph], and we had a call on an accident. It was snowing,

and we had a call on an accident before we left the barracks.

And the whole night was nothing but accident investigations,

from one to the other. One here. One there. You'd call off.

"You've got another one waiting on you." And so we were on the

go all night long.

INTERVIEWER:

And what kind of salary were you making, at that time?

MR. KRATZER:

My first year, first complete year's salary, I made \$2,425. That's without taxes.

INTERVIEWER:

Did -- were you provided any benefits, at that time?

MR. KRATZER:

The only benefits you were provided, of course, you got your uniforms, and you got a roof over your head, because you got to stay at the barracks, which you didn't have anymore. But if you were sent to a certain station -- now, Uniontown, they had a mess hall at Uniontown. But at stations like Carnegie and Belle Vernon, you didn't have a mess hall, so you got subsistence, and they gave you, I think it was, \$1 and a quarter a day to eat on. That was for three meals: breakfast, dinner, and supper. And you'd get that -- you'd get a check at the end of the month for that, you know. And that was what they called a subsistence.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Out of the Troop B stations you served in, Uniontown, Carnegie, Belle Vernon, and Waynesburg, what -- which one would you say you preferred over the others?

MR. KRATZER:

I liked Belle Vernon. Uniontown was -- I mean, that really built my foundation. I mean, I -- any man I've ever talked to that went to Uniontown, I mean, if you've served at Uniontown, you were on your way, because -- well, the first day I got there, I was working -- supposed to work 4:00 to 12:00. I came over from Washington Troop. I went in, met Sergeant Howard M. Janes [ph], and he took me upstairs, showed me where my room was, and he said, "Take your time." You know. "We're going to feed at noontime." And he says, "Unpack your stuff." And he said, "I'll see you at 3:30 downstairs when -- I always talk to the guys before they go out at 4:00." I said, "Okay." Well, 1:00, he came upstairs, and he says, "Did you ever have a fatal accident?" Now, in those days, you usually didn't get them until you had a year or two on. But happened to run into my first one just after a month after I was off -- well, a month after I had started riding by myself. I ran into one near Slovan in Washington County, and they sent Troop Don McCullough up, and he come up there, and I had most of the information. He said, "Oh, you can handle this. One car." The guy that died, I'll never forget his name, was Louis Mussilino [ph]. And I watched him bleed to death. I just happened on it right after it happened. It was early Saturday

morning. But anyway, I said, "Yeah, I had a fatal." He says, "Well, during the night," he says, "there was a car that was going down 166 towards Republic, and there as a bridge that went over the railroad, and there was a big cut, and he went off the edge of the bridge and went down on the railroad track." Well, no train came along until later in the day, and then they -- the train stopped and found this guy dead in there. So, he says, "The other patrols are busy. Why don't you go take care of it?" I said, "Okay." So, he told me how to get there. Of course, being there, I had to ride for a couple weeks with an older man to find out -- to learn the roads, but he says, "Go to the water tower out towards Brownsville on 40 and turn left on 166 and go down there and -- until you come to this iron bridge." And he said, "The car will be down in the hollow." Well, I went down and took care of it, came back, and of course that was three hours extra I put in that I didn't get paid for, but you didn't complain about it. So, I went out 4:00 to 12:00, and when I come back at 12:00, well, I went over, and all the other guys are typing on the typewriter, so I went over to the sergeant's desk, and I took that - - the cover off his typewriter, and Trooper Vick Ladeski said to me. He said, "I wouldn't use that typewriter, if I was you." And I

said, "Well, why not?" "Well, that's the sergeant's. He doesn't like you to use it." And I said, "Well, I'm not going to mess it up." "Suit yourself, kid." So, I sat down there, and he -- I said -- or I went ahead and I typed my accident report up. And of course, that took me a good hour and a half. And then I went to bed, but before I went, I cleaned the typewriter all off, and I put the cover back on it. Excuse me. and so the next morning, well, I -- we came down and after I got breakfast and we came for our morning meeting there, boy, the sergeant said, "Who used my typewriter last night?" I said, "I did." "Okay. You didn't know any better, but from now on, use the other typewriters. That's my typewriter." And so then, I went out on patrol that day with one of the other guys, and when we came back in, I found my accident report in my mailbox, and it has a note on it, "See me, Sergeant." So, I had no mistakes but one. And he says, "Do you have a middle initial?" I says, "Yeah." He says, "What is it?" I says, "W for William." "Okay," he says. Now, like I said, everything was typewritten and had four copies. So, he says, "I want you to use your middle initial all the time." "Okay." So, I had to take and erase the whole name, put it back in, put four sheets -- three sheets of carbon in, put it back in the machine, and type "Ronald

W. Kratzer” on it. And from that day forward, I always used my middle name -- or middle initial. And when I was stationed at Gibsonia many, many years later and he was a major at Butler, I went to give -- I went to Butler one day, because I got my supplies there. And I had to get some oil filters and some tires, and somebody said to me, “Hey, you used to work with James at Uniontown, didn’t you?” And I said, “Yeah.” And he said, “Well, today’s his last day. You ought to go back and see him.” I said, “Oh, heck yeah.” So, I walked back and knocked on his door, and he says, “Come on in.” I went in and saluted him, and I says, “I hear that you’re cutting out, Major.” And he says, “Yeah, today’s my last day.” I said -- he was turning 60 years of age. So, I shook his hand, and I said, “Well,” I said, “it’s been nice serving with you.” And I said, “I want you to know one thing.” And he said, “What’s that?” And I said, “I still use my middle initial.” And he got a -- quite a chuckle out of that.

[Tape 2]

INTERVIEWER:

This is the Pennsylvania State Police Oral History Project. The date is November 16, 2006. My name is Corporal Bob Mertz, PSP, retired, and I am interviewing Sergeant Ronald W. Kratzer.

The interview is being conducted at Sergeant Kratzer's home in Saxonburg, PA. This is tape two. Okay. Sergeant Kratzer, when you left Uniontown, where were you transferred to, then, in Troop B?

MR. KRATZER:

From Uniontown, I went to Belle Vernon. Sergeant Dell Brook [ph] was my station sergeant, the officer in charge.

INTERVIEWER:

While you were at Belle Vernon, were any unusual or -- incidents that stick out in your mind that took place?

MR. KRATZER:

One of a humorous nature that occurred one morning there, if I might relate, as I said before, every day, I'd -- after you came off duty, at least most of the guys did, they shined their gear, and they always wanted to look sharp. And I'd shine my boots and my gear, and the next morning, I put on a clean pair of britches. And I was getting dressed, and the phone man came back, and it was, like, 7:00 in the morning, and we didn't open the station up until, like, 8:00, and he said, "We just got a call." He says, "A bread man stopped" -- no, not a call, but a bread man stopped and came in the front door and knocked on the front door and

said that as he came by on -- today, it's -- presently, it's Interstate 70, but in those days, the road only went from Bentleyville to the Off River. The road had been started during one in a governor's administration, and the next governor, he just left it go, so there was about a 16-mile stretch of four-lane highway there that we patrolled and the local people used, but -- which later on became part of Interstate 70. But he said, "Out along Interstate 70 there, in Fallowfield Township," he said, "up on the ridge to the -- on the south side of the road," he said, "there was a man hanging that must have committed suicide and was hanging from a tree. You could see him silhouetted against the sky." He noticed him coming by. So, the older trooper told me. He says, "You go out and take care of it." I said, "Okay." So, I drove out, and sure enough, I got out across the river there, and a few miles, I could see him swinging in the breeze up in this big oak tree, silhouetted against the sky. And it's one of those mornings where the dew just hung on every blade of grass. And I got out of the car, and I crawled over the guardrail and down through this field. And man, I was -- just in a minute, I was just soaking wet. And I had to cross a creek and got my boots all wet and went through berry bushes and went on up into the woods

going up to the ridge. And I was under a canopy, and I would lose sight of this person hanging there, swinging in the tree up there, and at times, I'd look through, and I could see him. And finally, I got up to where I was up almost at the top, and there I could see him up there hanging above me there. And I looked, and here's a piece of bailing twine that comes down and is tied on the root of the tree. And I carried a penknife, and I cut it, and down comes this dummy. It was one of the finest dummies you'd ever want to see. They went and they sewed a pair of gloves onto an old shirt, and they had a woman's slip used for the face. And they had an old hat sewed onto the head, and it was stuff with straw or something. And it really looked like a human being. Well, anyway, I knew I had been duped, so I drug this thing back down through the woods and the wet grass and through the dang thing in the car, and I went back to the station, and I took it in through the cellar door, and I hung it from one of the beams down in the basement. I went upstairs, and I told them. I said, "Well, I've got the guy downstairs." And the guys went down, and they're laughing. And I had to go back and change my uniform and take a shower. And anyway, the next -- we, of course, didn't give out a news brief on that, for obvious reasons.

But the next day, in the Charleroi paper, somebody had been watching and somebody had set this thing up. And the next day, in the Charleroi paper, on the front page, it had a little article about the State Police being duped in investigating a possible suicide when it turned out to be a dummy.

INTERVIEWER:

That's a good story. How long were you at Belle Vernon?

MR. KRATZER:

I was at Belle Vernon about six months.

INTERVIEWER:

And then, from there, you went to...

MR. KRATZER:

Carnegie.

INTERVIEWER:

...Carnegie. And how long were you at Carnegie?

MR. KRATZER:

I was only at Carnegie three months. As I said before, Captain Garno, he had a transfer every three months, not that everybody was on the transfer every three months, but he kept moving people around, getting them to the different stations. And after I had been there three months, I was married then, and I wanted

to go to housekeeping down in Green County, and that was the only station I hadn't been at. So, I put a letter in asking can I get considered to go to Waynesburg to finish up my substations in the troop, and -- which he went along with, and the next time he had a transfer, why, I went -- stationed and went to Waynesburg.

INTERVIEWER:

What year was that, do you recall?

MR. KRATZER:

It was 1957.

INTERVIEWER:

'57?

MR. KRATZER:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

All right.

MR. KRATZER:

I think it was the 1st of November of '57, if I'm not mistaken.

INTERVIEWER:

How long were you at Waynesburg?

MR. KRATZER:

I was at Waynesburg then until July 1, 1960 when, at my own request, I transferred to Troop D Butler, because my brother-in-law was up here at Butler and my sister lived up here, and I really loved Green County. I liked the people there. The area was very scenic. It was the western part of the county. It was all rural, and the eastern part was mostly coalmines. But we only had seven men there and one corporal and a sergeant. And -- which meant that one man got off Monday, one was off Tuesday, one was off Wednesday, one was off Thursday until you worked your way up that you got Saturday off for this week and you got Sunday off for next, and you got a long weekend. And that was once every six weeks. And that wasn't very good time off. And occasionally, due to court and what have you, you got your days off split and you were coming up for a long weekend and you didn't get that. And talking to my brother-in-law, he said, "Why don't you come up to Troop D?" You know. "We've got all kind of people. You'll get better time off and so on." And of course, a young man, you get wild ideas and do strange things, and I put my letter in, and my God, in about three months, it came back approved, and then, by that time, I had -- I really didn't want to go, and I asked the sergeant to go see the captain, and he says,

“Go ahead.” And I went up to see Captain Moore [ph]. And I walked in. And I told him. I said, “I think I made a mistake.” And he said, “Well, there’s nothing I can do for you.” You know. “You’re going to Butler.” So, I reported to Butler on July 1, 1960, but for ’57, ’58, ’59 and the first six months of 1960, I was at Waynesburg.

INTERVIEWER:

And while you were at Waynesburg, is there any particular incident that occurred that sticks out in your mind?

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah, there’s several. With only seven men there, like I said, and there was one man off every day, that left six guys, and there was usually two men on the road, one on the eastern section of the county, one on the west, one on the phone. Of course, if you had court and what have you, that would change. But this one particular day, I was working with Bob Magincarney [ph], a dear friend of mine and one of the finest guys you’d ever want to ride patrol with. He had a sense of humor that had no end to it, and he was a good, good, efficient trooper. And he and I were working, and the sergeant called us in. And he said, “I want the two of you to get out to Bucktown, which is just west of

Waynesburg near the drive-in theatre. He said, "We got a call from the West Virginia State Police that there had been a bank hold-up at Hundred, West Virginia. And there is a car coming into Pennsylvania on Route 18." I'll never forget. It was a '54 Mercury, two-door, hardtop with a white bottom and a coral top. And it had two white men in it. And he said it had foreign plates on it, but it didn't -- it wasn't West Virginia plates, and it wasn't Pennsylvania plates, but it was some plates from another state. But these two men were heading in with a -- some money in their possession, and you know, they needed assistance. So, he and I went out to Bucktown, and we set out right at the edge of town there where 18 and 22 come into Waynesburg. And my God, it was only minutes. Here comes a '54 Mercury, white bottom, coral top with two white men in it. It had Ohio plates on it. Man, this was our -- this was the car. Now Bob, he had the shotgun. He was the senior man. So, we stopped the car, and I ran around to the back, pulled my .38 out, and was watching the guy in the passenger's seat. And Bob walked over to the guy in the driver's side with a shotgun, and he said, "Get out of the car." He says, "What did I do?" He says, "Get out of that car." And the guy got out, and he -- "Well, hell, I didn't do nothing." "And put

your hands up on the roof,” and he’s prodding him with his shotgun. And he says, “Put your hands up and spread your legs out there.” And Bob started to shaking him down, and the guy’s - - the guy literally started to shake. And as I’m watching him, I’m looking, and my God, here he urinated on himself. He was so shook up, and you could just see that he was urinating in his pants. Well, to make a long story short, it was the wrong car. There was no money in the car. These two guys were coming from Ohio, coming into visit the one guy’s family, and it -- talk about a coincidence: two white guys, Mercury, ’54 Mercury. The colors matched. It was the wrong car. But we had a lot of apologizing to do on that day, because that poor sucker was so scared, he peed himself. Then, there was another time. We were looking, for a long while, for a guy by the name of James Fang [ph]. He was committing crimes around Dillner [ph], Point Marion, Mount Morris, Pennsylvania, down into Morgantown, Fairmont. He’s working back and forth across the state. The West Virginia State Police were after him, too. And I know one particular night, the sergeant and the corporal had went out, and they got a tip that he was going to be at a certain place down near Dillner, and they got down there, and sure enough, why, he

got in a car, and they had a chase through the back roads down there. And the sergeant, he went and missed a turn in the road and smashed into a tree, and he put the corporal in the hospital, and boy, I'll tell you up. We were all fired up after that. Anyway, we -- nobody seemed to be able to get this guy, West Virginia State Police or us. But here, one night, I'm on desk, and I get a call. And the West Virginia State Trooper said, "Hey, we just got a tip that James Fang's over in Mount Morris at a house, and I'm sending a car over with a dog in it." And he says, "Could you have your -- some of your men come down here?" And I says, "Well, I only have two out," I said, "but I'll get them down there." Well, it was just -- it just turned dark shortly before that, and Trooper Bob Doogan [ph] and Frank Alexin [ph] were working that night, and they had come in and doubled up, because, in those days, we doubled up after dark. So, they had doubled up and put one car away and got in the other and had left. And I called them on the radio right away, and I said, "Where you at?" They said, "We're up on 19 going out -- north out of Waynesburg." I said, "1019, back to station." I said, "James Fang's been seen down at Mount Morris." I says, "Stop on your way back," because Route 19, we were -- the barracks was on

Route 19. I said, "I'll have two shotguns for you." So, in the meantime, I ran back to the arms room, and I get these two shotguns, and they were semi-automatics, and I put four rounds of double (inaudible) in the -- nothing in the chamber, but I put four rounds in each guns and had the box of shells laying on the bed. So, when they come in, I said, "Hey, go on back in the bedroom there. On the beds are the two shotguns." I says, "Get going. They're going to meet you down at Mount Morris." They said, "Okay." Well, Frank -- I heard Frank walking back. He said, "I don't want a shotgun. I want the Chicago Piano."

INTERVIEWER:

That's Trooper Alexin?

MR. KRATZER:

Frank Alexin. Frank was an ex-Marine and a good officer. And so, he said he wanted the Chicago Piano. Well, for those that might not know, the Chicago Piano was -- referred to as that, but it was a Thompson submachine gun. So, he gets back, and we had one in the arms room and a 50-round drum, which was always filled. So, I walk back, and I start to unload the one shotgun. And Frank, he sits there, and he puts the 50-round drum on this Thompson sub. And of course, pull the -- you pull

the bolt back and slam on the drum, and it has all kind of switches on there for -- as for rapid fire, single fire, you know, and a safe, and so it has these gadgets. And I can appreciate the fact that you don't use those weapons every day, particularly a machine gun. I never used one on the State Police. So, he says to Doogan. He said, "Well, how do you get the bolt to run forward on this thing?" And Doogan, he's not paying that much attention, he says, "Well, when you pull the trigger, the bolt goes forward." Oh, okay. And he pulled the trigger, and my God, before he could get his finger off the trigger, seven rounds, four in the wall and three went in the roof, and it just rained plaster. Just -- it just, like, snowed in there. My God. Right before a shot went off -- you know, the shots went off, I heard the front door close, and I knew there was somebody out in the front waiting, you know. So, anyway, I ran out, and here's this farmer in bibs, he has his bib overalls on, and this farmer stopped, and his eyes are like pie pans. And our barracks there only had four rooms. The barracks was only, like, 25 feet by 35 feet. It still stands there behinds Hardees' hamburger place to this day, and if you'd see it, you wouldn't believe it had been a State Police station at one time. It hasn't changed much, but it's -- that's all the state

provided, at the time. And we had a front office, a report room, and two bedrooms. That was it. And the bathroom. And anyway, this guy, he -- you could see, he's just scared to death. And I said, "Hey." I said, "The guys are practicing." This just came into my head. I said, "The guys are practicing in the indoor range back there." I said, "What can I do for you?" "Oh, my. I wondered what the shooting was all about." "Oh, yeah. They're just practicing." You know. And he wanted directions or something. But anyway, I got him out of there, and I went back. In the meantime, why, the grabbed the shotgun again, and I said, "Get going." You know. And they -- Frank left the machine gun on the bed, and away they went. Well, it turned out they didn't catch James Fang that night, but I had to call the sergeant and tell him about it, needless to say, and the sergeant came down right away, and he came in, and he -- we looked in the outside with a flashlight. And the landlord had just put new gutters on the place. One round went out through the rain gutter. And he said, "Okay." He said, "When they come in," he said, "I'm going to change their schedule from 8:00 to 4:00 tomorrow to 4:00 to 12:00." And he said, "I want you to call up so and so and so and so and tell him to come in 8:00 to 4:00. you tell them, if they

want to, tomorrow, to go up to the hardware store, and they want to get paint, patching plaster, a section of rain gutter, and tar patch for in the -- on the roof. If they want to patch the walls, clean the room, paint the room, put the gutter up, and fix the roof, and if they can do that tomorrow by 4:00, nothing will be said, at their own expense. If they don't want to, I'm going to call the captain and he'll deal with it." Well, needless to say, they took care of it. And the next morning, real early, they were up and up town, got the paint, and then they worked like beavers, and they got this job done. But that wasn't the end of the story. This is very interesting. But we had a guy by the name of Underwood [ph] who was in the FBI, and he was stationed in Uniontown. And he would come over occasionally working on cases, and most of us guys knew him. He was originally from Los Angeles. And one day, with Sergeant Rock [ph] -- well, he -- Rock got him involved, because Fang was a -- went interstate flight to avoid prosecution. He was going back and forth, and he -- one day, he told Underwood. He says, "Underwood, why don't you make up a wanted -- FBI wanted poster on this guy? Maybe we could get some results." He says, "We have his fingerprints and his photo from previous arrests. And make up one of them."

“Well,” he said, “yeah, I could do that for you.” So, it took him maybe six weeks or so, and finally, one day, he came in with a stack of these and threw them down. He said, “Here.” You know. “Here’s what you wanted, and then they’re being sent out,” you know, “to all the post offices and so on.” And Rock says, “Well, hey.” You know. “Thanks a lot.” and then, shortly after that, Underwood came over one day, and he said -- he come in and he said, “I wanted to stop in and say goodbye to you guys.” “Well, where are you going?” He said, “Well, I’ve wanted to go back home to Los Angeles.” And he said, “It’s a hard place to get transferred to, because everybody in the Department wants to get in out there, because the weather’s so nice. But I can’t get there, because I don’t have much seniority, but I was able to get a position in Phoenix, which puts me pretty close to home and puts me back in the southwest where I like to be. So,” he said, “I’m going to Phoenix.” And he said, “But I wanted to stop and say goodbye to you guys and thank you for your help over the years that,” he said, “I’ve been here.” And we all shook hands with him, and away he went. Some months later, he was in Phoenix, Arizona, and he -- one morning, he went into the post office to get the mail, and as he walked in the

post office, here, this man comes out, and he, later on, told the sergeant. He said, "I looked at him and I thought, 'Where in the hell have I seen him before?'" And he said, "I looked at him, and the guy walked out to the curb, and he took a cigarette and lit a cigarette, and was standing there at the curb." And right away, he got to thinking, "Well, I'll go in and check the posters in there." And he ran in the post office and went over to the board where they have these posters, and God, he only went to about the fifth one and here's the one he made up. Here, it was James Fang. So my God, he went right out and badged the guy and placed him under arrest, and that's where we caught James Fang after all the problems we had with him in Pennsylvania and West Virginia...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. KRATZER:

...Agent Underwood caught him in Phoenix, Arizona.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. KRATZER:

And then, the other interesting thing I had happen at Waynesburg was this phone -- here again, I was on the phone one day, and most of these radio messages from over in Uniontown, and this is early in the morning at, like, 8:15, 8:30. All our guys had left. The sergeant, he had gone some place. And I hear this chatter on the radio. "Well, we see three women laying up here in the road. We know they're dead or we need an ambulance, but we can't get near this -- the bodies, because this guy's shooting at us. Can you send us more help up here? We need more men up here." And then you'd hear this chatter between the radios about something going -- a gunfight going on. And of course, you're interested and you're sitting there between phone calls. You're glued to the radio, listening to this chatter, and you just really don't know what's going on. And then, shortly, why, here the door opens, and in comes the lieutenant, Bob McKee [ph]. And -- no, Bill McKee. There's two brothers that were on the job there. At one time, they were both stationed, I knew them as a kid, in Greensburg. One was Bob and one was Bill. Bill became a lieutenant in B Troop. And I said, "Lieutenant," I said, "what's going on over in Uniontown?" "What do you mean?" And I tell him about this, and he says,

“Well, I don’t have a radio in my car. I have a new car, and it doesn’t have a radio in it. He says, “I’ll find out.” So, he picks the phone up, and he calls over to Uniontown. So, he’s talking on the phone there, and excuse me, pretty soon, he hangs up, and he said, “Oh, God. There’s a guy barricaded in the house up at a little place called Chalkhill near Fort Necessity. And he’s killed several people, and God, anybody that shows their face up there behind a tree or anything, why, he’s shooting at them with a deer rifle. I better get over there.” So, he left, and pretty soon, the sergeant came on the station. So, I’m telling Sergeant Rock. I says, “Hey, you know, they got a big deal going over there in Uniontown.” “Yeah?” So, he sits down, and the two of us are listening to this chatter. And then, pretty soon, why Lieutenant McKee had gotten over there. Now, he’s using the station radio over there, and he calls Greensburg on the radio. And he says, “Check your armory and see if they have any rifles, rifle grenades, bazookas, or anything that we can use to get this guy out of the house.” So, shortly Greensburg called back, and they’d say, “Well, they have bazookas, and they have rifles, but they don’t have the ammo. The ammo’s at the Indiantown Gap. They don’t carry -- keep ammo like that.” And he called Indiana.

He called Somerset, you know, anyplace that had an armory. And I got to thinking, then. I remember in our arms room there at Waynesburg, I never knew where it came from, never asked anybody, but they had an old-fashioned belt that they probably used in the First World War in machine guns, .30-caliber machine guns, and it was the old webbed type belt made out of canvas. And of course, we had .30-06 ammunition galore, because we had about four .30-06 rifles, a Rising submachine gun, a Thompson, and I think four 12-gauge automatic shotguns there. And so it -- I said to him. I said, "Well, Sarge, your neighbor runs the armory there in Waynesburg. Call him up and see if he has a machine gun." I said, "I could take our ammo and put it in that belt back there and we could use it, maybe, in that machine gun and take the machine gun over there." "Oh," he said. "Well," he said -- he called Uniontown, and he said, "Would you be interested in a .30-caliber machine gun?" "Yeah," they said, "bring it over." So, we called his neighbor up, then, and said, you know -- well, first, we had done that. I'm sorry. We did that first. He says, "Yeah, I've got a .30-caliber machine gun here." And then, Rock said, "Well, we -- I think we have ammunition that'll fit it, and we have a belt down here. And

Kratzer knows how to operate them from in the Army.” And he says, “No, you won’t need that, because,” he said, “I have four boxes of ammo, 250 rounds in each box. And,” he says, “they’re in the metal belts.” He says, “Well, hell, I already have the ammo, the only thing I have to ask, if you use my ammo that later on, you reimburse me, get me ammo back from your department.” “Oh, we’ll take care of that.” And he said, “Oh, okay. Well,” he says, “come on up and get it.” So, Rock went up, and I stayed there in the desk, and he told me to call Bob Magincarney, who, here again, was working that day with me. And I called Bob in and told Bob, “You’re going to have to take the desk. Sarge and I are going to Uniontown.” And he had to call somebody else up at home and bring them in on their own time to cover the county. And so, pretty soon, Sarge come in his car, and they had put the machine gun and the ammo in the trunk, and the guy asked if he could go along, and Sarge said, “Sure, you can go along.” But -- so the three of us piled in the car and away we went over to Uniontown. So, we drove up to Chalkhill. We got up there, and it was around 11:30, going on noon, and already, there was a hoard of reporters there really, really causing problems. I know there was -- used to be a

reporter in Pittsburgh on KDK radio called Mike Lavigne [ph], and it's -- he used to have -- Mike Lavigne is talking machine. He'd go to these big fires or anything that was going on. Well, he had already come down there. And right after I got there, why, he was -- went down and stuck his nose around the corner of a Chalkhill store, and the guy kicked snow up at his feet. And so we had to get these guys and get them behind a -- put a rope up and told them, "You guys got to stay back here." And in the meantime, Lieutenant McKee had gone up there, and he said, "Now, where do you want to set this thing up?" Well, there had been a four- or five-inch snow during the night, and they had -- the people that had the Chalkhill Store there, it's a little grocery store out in the country where people bought milk, lunchmeat, and cakes for in their lunch, and what have you, cigarettes. And they had a -- I think, a gas pump there. And they had a -- beside the store, they had a garage and the -- a two-stall garage, and they had shoveled the driveway that morning, and there was a fence that went out from the garage, and they had thrown the snow over against the fence, and it was piled pretty high. So, I said, "I'll just stick it right here at the corner of the garage and this fence." And I dug a hole through the snow with a shovel that

they gave in the garage there, so I could stick the muzzle of the machine gun through there, and I checked the headspace on the barrel, and I put a box of ammo in there, and I cranked her twice. And I told the lieutenant. I said, "Well," I said, "I'm ready." And he had nine other guys with rifles. He had Trooper Milliron [ph], he was up in the third floor of the store. He had a sniper's rifle with a scope on it. It was not a state weapon, but it was somebody's deer rifle, maybe his own. But he had a scope on it, and he had been up there. And there, over in the left, there was a church, and there were some men over behind the tombstones in the cemetery. And there was nine riflemen and myself. And so finally, he had told these guys before they went over, when the machine gun starts, you guys start, and we're going to blast this guy out of this house. So anyway, he told me. He said, "Well, when you're ready, go ahead." So, I started. I opened up on the house. Well, it just took minutes, and I had the windows out of the house, and Venetian blinds and -- were shot out. The curtains. And there was shingles flying off the roof. And these were full metal jackets, shells, military shells, and they were -- which we found out later, they were going through walls, through the refrigerator, and some of them were going out the far side of

the house. And I might add here, too, before I started shooting, I said to the lieutenant. I said, "I can see a barn out there in the distance." I said, "Is there any homes out there that I'm going to -- might hit with this?" I said, "This thing will go a couple miles." You know. "No, there's -- don't worry about the barn roof. We'll pay for -- the county will pay for the repairs of the barn roof. Just don't worry about that," he says. So, I said, "Okay." So, anyway, I laid into it, and these guys started shooting, and we just shot the hell out of the place. And then, finally, the lieutenant come over, and he says, "Let's stop for a while." And so, I quit shooting, and everybody quit shooting, and we waited. And after about an hour, we thought maybe he'd come out and give up. But after about an hour, why, here smoke starts coming out of the chimney, and we found out later that here he had gone down into the cellar, which was below the level of the ground, and the chimney of the house ran down the whole way. It was a brick chimney. It ran the whole way down in the far side of the house to the cellar floor, and he had a coal furnace there with a -- the coal was in a -- beside the furnace. And he was back in that corner and had his guns. He had brought his guns down from upstairs. And of course, with all the windows and everything out

of the house, the house was getting cold. So, he was getting cold. So, he threw a few shovelfuls of coal on, and of course, that made the smoke come out of the chimney. So, we knew that he was still alive in there. So, we opened up again. I might mention here before, while we were waiting, I went in the Chalkhill Store, and they had coffee for us, and I drank a coffee. And somebody said Milliron was at -- had been upstairs, so I said to the lady, "Would you mind if I go up to your third floor?" And she said, "No, go ahead on up." She says, "There's a -- as you get up there, in the closet," she says, "there's a -- like a ladder that's pulled down." And so you went into this closet and you went up this little pair of steps. And when I got up there, why my God, I -- as soon as my head got above the floor, I looked and here's Milliron laying there in the floor and his gun's laying across his chest. And I thought, "Oh, my God. He's got shot." And I said, "Bob." And all at once, he started laughing, and here he heard me coming up the steps, and only a policeman can appreciate this type of humor, but he heard me coming up the steps, so he played like he had got shot. Needless to say, it scared the hell out of me. But anyway, we often laughed about that afterward when I would see him. He's dead and gone now,

but he was a great guy. But -- so anyway, why -- getting back to the story, we shot again, and this time, we didn't shoot as long, but here again, we just shot in the house. And then we waited. And pretty soon, we -- more smoke come out the chimney. He was firing the furnace again. So, somebody, I never found out really who -- it might've been Major Oldham [ph], because he had come down from Greensburg. He was a squadron commander, the district commander, at that time. And the first sergeant was William Smith, who investigated me to come on the job. He was first sergeant in Greensburg. He had come down, and we had guys there from all over. Excuse me. and somebody come up with the idea that there was a reserve -- Army Reserve detachment down at the Connellsville Uniontown Airport, and it was an armored unit, and they had tanks down there, Walker Bulldog tanks. And somebody came up with the idea that, "Hey, if we get one of those tanks to come up there, we could use that as a shield and use it to get down." Well, Army personnel are not allowed to shoot on civilians, so anyway, when they came up, of course, they had no live ammo, but they had a .30-caliber machine gun in their tank, just like the one I was using, only it was mounted on the turret. You know. And so

what we decided, Sergeant Rock, he took the tear gas gun, and I got in the tank. I took one of my boxes of shells in and put it on the machine gun, and we decided we were going to go down to the house and pull right up to the house and see if we can get some tear gas in the house. Well, Rock was up in the turret, and we got down, and Rock says, "He just looked out the window and -- at me," and he says -- by that, Rock jumped up on the turret, and he tried to shoot this tear gas projectile. And he looked out the cellar window, and he tried to get it in, but it bounced off the wall. And he only had the one projectile. So anyway, the guy in the tank says, "Well, wait a minute." He said, "I'm going to turn my turret and see if we can get some rounds you can fire through that window." So, he moved the turret, and then he says, "Give me a burst." And I'd give him a burst, and he'd say, "No," you know, "wait a minute." You know, I was chewing holes the size of softballs into concrete block with these steel-jacketed shells, and he'd, "Give me a burst." And I'd give him a burst. Finally, he said, "Okay. You're in the window. Let it go." So, I just laid on the trigger, hoping the ricochet would get him down there. But the way he was in back in the corner behind a brick chimney, no. We didn't know, again, until later that, you know, he had good

protection down in there. So anyway, why, we come back then. We come back up to the store, and the riflemen, in the meantime, they decided they were going to put the riflemen behind the tank. And I can't remember all the guys that went down. I know the first sergeant at Greensburg, William Smith, he went along, Sergeant Rock, Sergeant James, Corporal Magincarney went, but there were other guys. I can't remember who all went down with -- behind that tank, but the -- also, at that time, they all carried tear gas grenades. So, when they got down by the house, they -- we pulled alongside the house. Now, all the windows were out, so they started throwing these grenades in through the windows, and some of them landed on the bed clothing, and immediately, we had fire. And so we pulled over to the back of the house, and the wind was blowing, and it blew the gas out through the house. The wind went through the house, and it blew it out the back window, and it was right down in the turret of the tank. And oh, I started to get gassed. And we were down there. And Rock wasn't with me on this trip. It was just the two guys from the Army, and they were getting it. And I said, "Well, I'm getting the hell out of here." And as I'm coming out the tank, here, right to my left, looking through the cellar window,

was Sergeant Smith, First Sergeant Smith from Greensburg, and he yells. He says, "He's going out the cellar door on the far side." And one of the troopers at Uniontown, who was an ex-flyer in the First World War -- or Second World War, Jack Bingaman [ph], he had a Thompson submachine gun. And he had gone down, and he ran over to the corner of the building. And just as I get up, I'm coming out, and I'm jumping off the tank, he steps out around the corner, and from the hip, I see him, and he lets go with a 20-round clip. Well, here the guy -- he's getting gassed. So, what he does, he grabbed three guns. He just grabbed three guns he had down there. My God, one of him was his son's BB gun and two other weapons. And he went out, and he had a '56 Mercury sitting there. And he opened the door, and Jack Bingaman said later that he said, "The house" -- he -- all he said was, "The house is on fire." And he reached out and slammed the door, and Jack just emptied the clip into the car, blew the back window out, and killed him. And in the meantime, during all this time, more and more reporters came there. There was reporters flying in from cities, and they were getting Miller Aviation that had a helicopter service in Pittsburgh to fly them down to the mountain. And I'm not exaggerating when I tell you,

there was 150 or 200 of these reporters waiting. And they kept telling them, "As soon as we get him, we'll get -- let you go down to take all the pictures you want. Just let us do our job." So, anyway, why, I think it was Sergeant Rock, went over and grabbed him and drug him out. And we drug him out on the road where the two women had laid. Now, I didn't get into that, but what originally happened here, in the morning or the night before, the story that I had heard at the time, that his wife had gone to town and bought a portable sewing machine and brought it home, and they didn't have that much money. And he became infuriated. He took the sewing machine and threw it out through the window. And of course, she grabbed the -- got the children. I guess he was swearing and carrying on. She got the children and got in the car, and she went to her parent's home in at Uniontown or down at Fairchance or wherever they lived, and she spent the night there. So, he stewed in there all night long about this. And the next morning, of course, like I said, it had snowed during the night. And the next morning, the township supervisor's coming up with a little dump truck. And in those days, townships, not like today where they have a lot more money, when they would cinder the roads, they would just take

one of the helpers, and they'd put them up in the truck with a shovel, and as they'd get on a little grade, he'd just take -- shovel cinders off. And as they come up -- they're coming up the road there, why, he knew the supervisor, so he went out and waved him down. And he said, "Hey, Bill. How about throwing some cinders here at the mouth of my driveway, so" -- because he had to get up the driveway to get out on the road. And so the guy's there throwing cinders, why, he just reaches in the door, and he comes out with this .30-06, and he shoots the township supervisor and kills him. And the helper jumps off, and he runs around. He gets in on the driver's side -- or in the passenger's side, and he puts it in gear, I guess, and tries to -- he's going to try to back down the road. And he shot a round in, and it took his right eye out. And he went into the ditch and -- with the truck. And he was in there wounded with his eye out from, like, 8:00 there in the morning until this was all over, like, 4:00 in the afternoon. He laid in there with this dead body of his boss. But in the meantime, two ladies came along. One was a minister's wife. They came along. As I recall, they were in a '55 Buick. I'm not sure. But anyway, they think there's an accident, so they stop, and as soon as the one woman got out of her car, my -- the

-- I think it was the minister's wife, he dropped her, and the other one come around to render assistance to her, and cranked in around, and he shot her. So, there we have the two women. That's what I had heard early in the morning that -- the guys calling and saying, "We can see two women. We can't get near." Well, then, there's another guy that comes up the road, and he has his wife and two kids in the car. And he shoots and he kills the wife. She was driving. And I think, at that time, he ran out of ammo in his -- if my memory serves me correct, in his deer rifle, and he grabs a shotgun. And the man, he tries to put the car in gear and starts to back up, and he shoots the shotgun, and he wounds the man and one or two of the children, and they, in turn, they go back so far, and they went into the ditch. And of course, they just laid still, too. And there was another lady. She came up past. She was driving a '56 Plymouth. And she sees all this that's going on, and she -- I guess the last part of the shooting, and she figures, "Hey, I'm not stopping here." And she got around the car, and she's heading up to the Chalkhill Store. He let a round fly after her, and it went through the trunk of her car, through the back seat, through the front seat, just missed her, went through the front seat, up through the dash, and hit her

battery. And the car, I guess, went dead just as she coasted in front of the Chalkhill Store, and that's when she ran in and told them, "Call the State Police." And that was the initial report that they had gotten on it. Then, later on, there was a businessman in Uniontown by the name of I.N. Haagan [ph], and he owned ice cream stores all over western Pennsylvania, Haagan Ice Cream Store. I know when I was a kid, why, we had a store in Greensburg that you'd go get these big, five-cent ice cream cones, hand dipped.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. KRATZER:

And he come by there in the morning and saw this guy standing on his porch with a rifle and never thought anything about it. I guess this was before anybody else had gotten shot. But then, he's in his office later on, and he hears this on the radio. And he thinks, "Well, God. He -- I saw that guy on the porch when I got by." And so, he went out and checked his car, and here, he had found he had been in the rear bumper with a round. So, he had taken a shot at him. So, as it ended up, there was four killed and five wounded. And so, after they dragged him out of the car

there, they drug him up on the road and laid him down beside the two women. In the meantime, help came from the other direction. They come up the road, and they had an ambulance come up and get the guy and the children out. And this truck driver that got his eye shot out, they got him. In the meantime, somebody waved up and they left these reporters come down. And I tell you. It was like an infantry regiment going over the top in the First World War. I mean, they come down, coat tails flying, cameras in hand. And they got down there, and everyone that -- everybody wanted to get in there and get a picture, and this guy would step in front of the other, and the next thing you know, we had fist fights going on between the reporters. And I can remember the anchor for Channel 11 in Pittsburgh, Ed Conway [ph], he was there. Bill Burns [ph], who is now deceased, was the anchor for KDK-TV. He was there. But I mean, they really had a lot of coverage there. The news had a lot of coverage. In fact, the next day, I got a call from a cousin of mine in San Francisco, California, and they had said that they had seen -- she seen me on TV in California, which blew my mind. But then, we got their exam -- I got to check in the car, and here, nine rounds from my machine

gun had gone through the whole way through the house. And nine of my rounds had gone through the side of his car sitting on the far side of the house. And I'll never forget, there was a nine in his license plate, a figure 9. and when Bingaman shot that submachine gun, he must have held it low, and as it rose up, it blew the back window out, but the -- I think the first round, it -- the circle in the nine, it just hit that dead center. I always remembered that. I can't remember anymore how many holes he had in him. But another thing I remember, when I got up there and started to get -- set the machine gun up that day and dig the hole in the fence and stick the barrel through and get it -- I got really warm, and I had my old overcoat on, which, in those days, was 100-percent wool. And I took it off, and I hung it in the garage on a nail. And I -- all I had on was my wool shirt and a tee-shirt under that, and I was comfortable all that day until it was all over. And we were standing, milling about down there, smoking cigarettes after it was all over, and all at once, I just got so damn cold. But here, the adrenaline had kept me warm all day. And man, I beat her -- beat it up to the garage and got my coat on. I was freezing to death. And like I said, we had the fights with the reporters and that. And the people in the store,

they come out, and they brought a rug out and left me lay on a rug. They gave me a rug so I could lay on the rug that I wouldn't get wet. And in all the excitement, we left there, then, later on, and I left all my brass laying there. I left the rug laying there. And that always bothered me. I didn't clean my brass up like they teach you in the Army: always clean your brass up. I didn't even take the rug in and say thank you to these people, yet I really, truly appreciate it. And they did an awful lot for us that day. I mean, they gave us -- I didn't have anything to eat, but I had coffee in there, but they gave the guys sandwiches and stuff, these people that had the Chalkhill Store. And the farmer that's - - the farmer's roof, back in the distance, the county had to repay to put a whole new roof in his barn, because the rounds -- you know, I was shooting, and the lieutenant told me a couple times, "Rake the attic," because he figured maybe he'd go up in the attic. And I would shoot. The shingles went flying off the roof. And of course, they went down and ruined the roof, the slate roof on that barn, so the county paid for a new roof on there. And later on, in July, I was on patrol in Butler here, and they called me in one day, and they said, "Hey, you're -- get down to Washington. You're going to have a formation down there in two

hours. The Commissioner's there. And all the guys at Chalkhill, he wants to -- he has a letter down there or something he wants to read." We never got any commendations or anything in those days, but he wanted to congratulate us for a job well done. But anyway, when I was down there that day and I got to talking to some of my old friends at Uniontown there, they said that about a week after this all was over, that two old retired schoolteachers that lived with each other that lived back in the mountain there, about two miles from where this took place, they came in to see the District Attorney. And here three rounds from my gun, two of them had gone through the garage door, and one went through the wall of the house and into the head of their bed. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but some years later, oh, God, 15 years later, I took my mother and dad for a drive one day when they still lived in Greensburg and ended up down in Uniontown, and I said, "I'll take you up," I said, "that time where there was a gunfight." And I went up the mountain, and we went down past the house real slow, and there was a guy sitting on the porch. And of course, somebody else had owned the house then. And I turned around and come back up, and he apparently thought there was somebody that was lost and needed directions. He came down

on a -- the edge of the road there. When I saw him, you know, he -- I just stopped, and I says, "You're probably wondering why we're staring at your house." I said, "There was a gunfight here one time, years ago, I was involved in. I was with the State Police." Oh, yeah. He says, "You ought to see up in my attic." He says, "There's a lot of bullet holes in the beams up in my attic yet today," he said. But that was quite an experience. And then, when we left there, we went down to Hopwood, down at the bottom of the mountain, the little town of Hopwood, and we stopped at Howard Johnson's to get something to eat, because most of us hadn't eaten since breakfast that morning, and it's now 6:00. So, we went in the -- there, and Sergeant Rock and I and the fellow that had got the machine gun for us and what have you. And I said to Sarge -- I'm getting ahead of my story a little bit. Before I left, I told Bob Magincarney. I said, "Bob, if I'm not back by 4:00, call my wife up, and tell her that I'm on a criminal investigation and working overtime, but don't tell her where I'm at." He said, "Okay." Well, he had done that, but my God, my wife had TV on during the day, and all day long, they had news -- you know, the news had it on, and she knew where I was at. But anyway, so I said to Sarge, "I'm going to call my wife

up and tell her what was going on, that I'll be home a little later." And so anyway, why, I got some change from the girl at the register, and I went to the payphone, and I called home. And she picked up the phone and said, "Hello." And in the background, I could hear this screaming. And I said, "My God, what's wrong?" And she says, "Oh, my God. Pam just fell against the coffee table." We had a coffee table, and my daughter, then, was just about a year old, and she fell against the coffee table, and Jean said, "I think she broke her nose. My God, there's blood all over the place." She says, "Can you hurry up and get home here and help me?" And I says, "Oh, my God." I says, "Okay." So, I went to Sergeant Rock, and I said, "Hey, Sarge. You're not going to believe it." And I told him. And he says, "Go take the car and get going." He said, "I'll find a way home." So man, I beat a path. I went to Jefferson, and by the time I got there, she had called her mother and dad up. They lived a couple blocks away, and they had come down. And they got the -- took her to the local doctor. Well, she hadn't broken her nose. She just bloodied her nose, but she still carries that scar today on the bridge of her nose where she had cut it. So, that was quite a day in my...

INTERVIEWER:

That's...

MR. KRATZER:

...life in the State Police.

INTERVIEWER:

That's probably -- would you say that's, like, typical of Uniontown, only in Uniontown?

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Who was the commissioner then, do you remember?

MR. KRATZER:

McCartney [ph].

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah. McCartney was the commissioner, because he came out in July then, and we had this big formation at troop headquarters. Like I said, I was on the road in Butler, and they called me up and said, "Get a fresh uniform on and get it -- get down there." I said -- so I beat it down there to Washington, and I just made it

for this formation, because he wanted all the guys that were involved in Chalkhill. And I have some pictures that they took that day of all the guys. A good many of them are dead now: Jack Bingaman, Milliron, Geroda [ph], Magincarney, John Rock. They're all gone now. At the time, heck, I was only -- let's see. I was only 27 years old. I'd have been 28 in July. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So you left Uniontown finally, I would assume, and you went up...

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...to Butler, is that correct?

MR. KRATZER:

Well, no, I was at Waynesburg when all this happened.

INTERVIEWER:

Or Waynesburg, I'm sorry.

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah. And like I said, I got a little disgusted down there, and I had a brother-in-law on the job who, at that time, had about 11 years on the job. And oftentimes, I'd go up to my mother and dad's in Greensburg and my sister and him would come down for

the weekend, and I'd get to talking to him, and he would say, "I don't know how you can put up with that kind of -- the work you're doing and all the extra hours you're working." Now, one thing down there was standard down there that you had to be to work -- if you worked 4:00 to 12:00, you had to be in the station at 3:00. He always wanted an overlap. So, actually, you worked nine hours a day. But like I said, during the night, oftentimes, you'd get called out for two or three hours. You never get extra pay for it. You only got one weekend every six weeks off. Six weeks. And that was a Saturday and a Sunday, because we only got one day off a week. And he said, "Heck, come on up to Butler. We've got all kind of manpower," and this and that. So I put this letter in, and later on, I thought, "Man, oh, man, I'm making a mistake," because I hated to leave these guys. You got like brothers with these guys. And -- but anyway, I had to go, so I came up to Butler, then, in September -- I got -- July 1 of that year, and then, in September, I had -- by then, I had got a home and moved my family up. And so, I lived there for 40 years until I moved here to this townhouse seven years ago. But that -- I then worked in Butler for -- from '60 to '65, and in '65 -- well, in

'62, they asked me if I wanted to do criminal work, plain clothes work, so in '62, I went on a criminal detail with...

INTERVIEWER:

This was in Butler?

MR. KRATZER:

In Butler.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. KRATZER:

And at that time, they made the detectives, and Sergeant Barger [ph] was the detective sergeant. Roy Tittler [ph] and Metro Pulaski [ph] were the two detectives. And then, to supplement the -- them on the detail, criminal detail, there was Bernard Standalonus [ph], who was then a trooper, Bill Molsan [ph], and myself, and Jim Porter [ph], and Bob Ivory [ph] - - or no, Ivory came later. It was John Lothis [ph]. And so I worked crime for a few years. And then, in '65, I was sent to New Castle on vice as a vice man. And I had an interesting story -- or interesting thing happen over there. One day, a lady called the barracks and said she wanted to report a big card game

going on down there at Ellwood City. And so the sergeant told me about, and so I went down and saw this lady. And she took me down the road and pointed this farm out to me, a big old farmhouse and a barn in the back. And she said, "Every Friday night," she says, "they have a card game in there." And she says, "You wouldn't believe the people that come here." She says, "You have -- you won't be able to see the cars after dark, because they're all up back behind the barn in the backyard, but," she says, "they have a -- quite a game going on." I said, "Okay." So, I said, "If I come down here and I go back through the woods to check this," I says, "can I park in your driveway?" "Yes. Yeah, you can park in my driveway." So, I started to go down there on Friday nights, and I would go back through a field, over a fence, through a woods, and come out behind this place. And oh, the cars. I'd sit there in the dark, and I'd watch. And these cars would come in. And after a while, why, the house was pretty well loaded. Well, then, I'd -- I carried a flashlight and a little notebook and a pen, and I'd crawl on my hands and knees down. I'd get behind these cars, and I'd get the license number, and I'd write the license numbers down of these cars. There were some from Ohio, but most of them were from Pennsylvania.

And then, I'd get back to the barracks, and then I'd find out who owned the car. And then, I'd get the names, and I'd check them in our files to see if they had ever been arrested for gambling. God, over half of them had, you know, at one time or another, because they were gamblers. So, this -- that way, I was able to establish the fact that there was going on there with known gamblers, and I was able to get a search warrant. So, I picked this certain night out, and we were going to raid this place. So, I needed help, so I come over to Butler and got a hold of Sergeant Barger, and he gave me Corporal Loftis [ph] and a couple guys. And I got a couple guys from New Castle, and we met over at New Castle this night around 9:00. And I laid this whole thing out for them, and I told them, "We have to get down, and we've got a place to park down there." And I said, "We're going to have to go back through a field, through a woods, and come down behind this place," and so on and so forth. "Okay." So, we worked our way down. We got behind this house, and I -- there was three doors: a front door, back door, and there was a cellar door. We assigned guys to the front door, the back door, and the cellar door. And just ready to get up out of this high grass and go down and hit this place when I see a -- headlights of a

car coming up the driveway, and I said, "Hey, wait a minute. Here comes another car. Hold on." So, we just sat down there. And pretty soon, the car come up and parked up with the other cars in the back. And two guys get out of the car, and it -- I couldn't hear what they were saying, but they were giggling. And they walked down to the back door. Now, the back door was dark, but there was an old light. It had a -- oh, had one of those porcelain shades on it hanging over the back door, but they didn't have the light on. And the back door had a blind on it, and it was always pulled, and it was locked, because the people would always go there and knock on the door. And usually, a lady come, and she would open the door, and let them in. Well, these guys are giggling going down there. And when they got down to the back door, the one guy just beat on the door. He just pounded on the door, and he yelled, "Open up. State Police. This is a raid." Right away, Corporal Loftis turned to me. He said, "What the hell's going on here?" I said, "Well, hell, that's none of our guys." "Well, how do they know about the raid?" I says, "John, I don't think they do. I think this is a God damn coincidence." He says, "Oh." He -- "A coincidence?" In the meantime, the door opened, and this lady says, "God darn you,

Charlie, if you ever do that again, I'm not going to allow you to come in here anymore. God, you scared the hell out of everybody." And oh, they're laughing, and so anyway, she turned the light out, and they went in and shut the door. And so we up and went down within 60 seconds, man. We're in through the doorway with a search warrant, and I'm in the -- upsetting the tables and the cards and money flying all over the place, lined these guys up against the wall. And we're going down, getting ID off them, and I come to this one guy, and this guy says, "God, please, please, do me a favor." And I says, "What's that?" He says, "That woman over there that's running this place, please tell her that I had nothing to do with this raid." He says, "Did you -- were you -- did you see me knocking on the back door?" And I says, "Yeah, I -- we were watching that." He says, "My God, I didn't know you were going to raid this place." He says, "We were just carrying on." Talk about a coincidence.

[Tape 3]

INTERVIEWER:

This is the Pennsylvania State Police Oral History Project. The date is November 16, 2006. My name is Corporal Bob Mertz, PSP, retired, and I am interviewing Sergeant Ronald W. Kratzer

at Sergeant Kratzer's home in Saxonburg, PA. This is tape three. Okay. Sergeant Kratzer, you were working vice in Butler Troop. From the vice detail, you were then promoted to corporal in 1969, is that correct, sir?

MR. KRATZER:

Okay. Before I was promoted, I worked youth aide for two years.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. KRATZER:

I was in the Youth Aide Division after I come back from vice from New Castle. I was assistant youth aide officer for a while under Corporal Fanelli [ph], and then he was transferred to Warrendale, and I took that over for two years. And then, I was promoted to corporal in 1969, and at that time, they -- the promotion to corporal only was still within the Troop. And so I was promoted to corporal and went back to traffic. And only then did I, looking back, realize that -- and I feel this way, to this day, that the best job in the Pennsylvania State Police. And the best way to get ahead is be a roadman, because when you're on the road, you get a little bit of crime, you get a little bit of this and that, but you're on top of everything. When you specialize, I think it

hinders your advancement. If you're in crime and you get handouts for traffic or new laws, you just throw them in your folder and forget about it, because you're not on traffic anymore, but when you're on traffic, you read everything. But anyway, I went back on traffic. We had a platoon system, then, at that time, in Butler. And I went back on traffic, and I worked in traffic for about a year and -- well, maybe not a year. Maybe around six months. And then, they sent me to Kittanning. And I was over in Kittanning for a year. And then they brought me back over here again, and I was back in traffic in Butler. And had a good group of guys working with me. And one thing I might mention here that's -- might be amusing, in those days, when you worked midnighters, you didn't have very few places. And you could go in a county for even a cup of coffee, and in Butler, the only place we had was a place clean out on Route 19 near the Lawrence County line called Eppinger's [ph], which was a truck stop on Route 19. And of course, you'd go in there in the middle of the morning, why you could hardly drink a cup of coffee, because truck drivers would just talk your ear off and ask you questions and stuff. So, this platoon of mine, we got together, and we decided that -- it was

Wednesday -- Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday was quiet nights. We didn't, normally, have too much going on those nights. So, what we would do, when we were on midnight, and in this platoon system, you got midnight one week out of every six. Why, one of the guys would bring in some paper plates and maybe some plastic knives and forks. Another guy would bring in pancake syrup and butter. Another guy would bring in an electric skillet and a coffee pot. And another guy would bring in the coffee, and I would always make a big batch of blueberry pancake mix. And of course, we had our refrigerator in the downstairs of the barracks, and when we'd come in at 11:00 at night, why, I would put our stuff in the refrigerator. And around 3:00, 3:30 in the morning, when things are real quiet, why, I'd go in the barracks, and we'd set this stuff up in the traffic office, clean the table off, put the skillet up, start making blueberry pancakes and call the guys all in. And in those days, we were running, like, four patrols at night. And we'd sit there and have blueberry pancakes and a cup of coffee and had some good times. But in the morning, the old sergeant, who, at that time, was Sergeant Ebbenisco [ph], he'd come in in the morning, and he would smell, and he'd say, "You know, this damn place smells

like Dan's Diner. Honest to God." He says -- because he could smell the pancakes we'd been making. But I enjoyed those years. And then, in '73, I worked from '69 to '73, I -- with the exception of the time at Kittanning, I worked at Butler in traffic. And then, in '73, I made sergeant, and I went to Greensburg, and -- which was another experience like Uniontown. And the men in -- I worked with down there, I have nothing but admiration for, because those guys would go out down there on any given day. And there was no free days down there where they would go out and make a couple arrests and didn't have anything to do, because down there, you would get two, three accidents, a couple initial reports, four or five assignment slips. And the thing I admired about those guys, I have been on stations where guys would get loaded down on complaints and stuff, and they'd come in, and they'd be bitchy and carrying on, because they had to do these reports on their own time and stuff. The guys down there, they'd come in, and they'd hang around until 1:00, 1:30 in the morning, getting the reports on, and they'd joke around. They were really a good bunch of guys. And another thing while I was there was some of the old-timers that I knew as a kid, they were young troopers, were now my officers, like Homer Red [ph], he

was my captain. He was -- well, first, when I got there, he was a lieutenant, then, he came back as a captain. And before I left, he was major. I worked there with Carl Metz [ph], and let's see. Oh, and -- well, John Schrinn, who I knew as a young -- when I was a young lad at Greensburg, he was my CO at Butler back in the '60s, and -- but a little -- I can tell you a little human-interest story about Carl Metz. When I was a young fellow out of high school and working at Robert Shaw Fulton Control Company, I was working a 3:00 to 11:00 shift, and I had an old '49 Ford. And one night, I came up to Greensburg. We got off at 11:00, and I drove up to Greensburg. And I knew all my buddies hung around up around the corner near the courthouse at night. And I went up to see if any of my buddies were up there. And nobody was there, so I headed down Otterman Street [ph] and -- to go home, and it was a 35-mile-an-hour zone, and I went down and got the green light down in -- oh, I forget the name of the street. But anyway, and I got the next green light, and I'm going up the hill at West Otterman Street, and I hear a siren, and I look in the mirror, and there's a car right on my tail. And I pull over, and here a State Policeman comes walking up. He said, "Do you know the speed limit?" He

asked me for my cards. I gave him my cards. "Do you know the speed limit?" "Yeah, 35." "How fast do you think you were going?" I said, "I have no idea." And of course, this was late. There wasn't much traffic, but he said, "Well, you were going 45." He looked at my cards, and he said, "Who is your father?" I says, "Well, you probably know him." I said, "He's a clerk up at the barracks." He says, "Well, I'll see him in the morning. Does he know you drive like this?" And I says, "No, sir, he doesn't." so, he didn't say any more to me, but I -- when I got home, my dad was asleep, and I woke my dad up, and I said, "Dad, I got stopped by a State Policeman." And he says, "What for?" And I says, "Speeding." And he said, "Who stopped you?" And I said, "I don't know just what his name was." And he says, "Well, Ron, I told you before, and I'm going to tell you right now, if you don't obey, you're going to pay," and he says, "because I'm not going to intercede for you. I work with those men, and I'm not going to embarrass myself and ask them for a favor. They have a job to do, and they do it. So, if he's going to arrest you, you're going to have to pay the fine. That's all there is to it." I said, "Okay, Dad." So, he went back to bed, and I went up and went to bed. The next night, he came home, and he said, "The trooper that

stopped you was Carl Metz.” He said, “He’s one of the best men we have up at the barracks, but,” he said, “he told me he’s going to cut you a break. He’s not going to arrest you, but if he ever catches you again, he will, and he means it.” I said, “Okay.” Well, from time to time, going swimming up there, I would see Carl, and I would always recognize him. But I spoke to him. I said, “Hello, Mr. Metz. How are you?” You know. And a couple times, he said, “You keeping the speed down, lad?” And I said, “Yes, I am, sir.” You know. But then, I went in the Army, and I come out and I joined the State Police. When I reported over to Washington, the day after I reported, well, I went to Sergeant Stein [ph] to get my .38, because they didn’t issue us guns at Hershey. We had to pick them up at our quartermaster. So, I went down and Sergeant Stein said, “I don’t have any gun here for you, lad.” He said, “You’re going to have to go to Greensburg to get a gun.” Well, I had got all my uniforms and all my leather gear and everything before I left Hershey. So, I went up and I told Sergeant Gunnerson, “I’ve got to go to Greensburg to pick up a gun.” He said, “Well, pick -- get a car up there. Get car 13 up there, and get going.” So, here I am. I don’t have a gun. I don’t have any bullets in my belt. So, I head over to Greensburg,

and I go into quartermaster over there, and I told them I was sent over by Sergeant Stein, and I was supposed to get a .38. He didn't have any, and this grumpy old sergeant said, "Oh, okay." He says, "I don't know what the hell's wrong," and this and that and so on. And he gave me a .38, and I says, "Well, do you have any shells?" And he says, "Get your shells off your own quartermaster. I'm not going to give you any shells." So, I thought, "Oh, boy." So, I put my gun in my holster, and I walked out. And who's gassing their car up at the pumps, but Carl Metz? And I said, "Hello, Mr. Metz. How are you?" And he said, "Oh, hi, Kratzer." He said, "I heard. Somebody told me you come on the job." And I says, "Yeah." He said, "Are you stationed here?" I says, "No, sir." I said, "I'm stationed in B Troop." And he says, "Well, what are you doing here?" And I said, "Well, I just reported yesterday," and I said, "they didn't have any gun for me over there, so I had to come over here and get a gun." And he looked me over, and he says, "Well, where's your bullets?" And I said, "Well, I didn't get any." I says, "He told me to get them back over at Washington Troop." And Carl said to me -- now here's a guy who stopped me when I was a kid. He says, "Well, lad, you know, anything can happen between here

and Washington.” And he pulled his pistol out, opened the chamber up, and jacked out five rounds. And he says, “Here, put these in your gun, because,” he says, “you might run into something on the way back. You need your -- to have bullets.” And I said, “Well, thank you very much.” And that’s something I never forgot. And when I got to Greensburg, it really made me feel bad when I got to Greensburg as a sergeant, July of 1973, Carl Metz was the fire marshal, but he was still a trooper. And I guess maybe I shouldn’t have felt the way I did, but I felt now here was a guy that had all these years and experience on the job that stopped me when I was a kid, and now he’s a trooper and I’m a sergeant. But he was a fine, fine man. And I’ll never forget him. But anyway...

INTERVIEWER:

What...

MR. KRATZER:

...I -- oh.

INTERVIEWER:

Didn’t they -- when you come out of training school, was that policy that you weren’t issued a weapon, the weapon you trained with?

MR. KRATZER:

When I left there, we didn't have -- they didn't give us a .38. they told us, "You get your .38 when you get out to -- you get your .38 when you get to your quartermaster wherever -- you know, at your headquarters, where you're reporting. You go to your quartermaster, and he'll issue you your gun." Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. KRATZER:

Now, some of the guys had bought their own side arms while we were down there. Some guys bought snub-nosed .38s. My father had an old .32 pistol that he had given me, and of course, I used that. once I had my badge and, you know, I used that in plain clothes. Well, I had that ugn I carried, you know. But for going out on the road in uniform, the gun that I was to use, I had to get off my own quartermaster, and that's -- but...

INTERVIEWER:

I don't think it's done that way today, but...

MR. KRATZER:

Probably not.

INTERVIEWER:

...there's a lot of things that aren't done...

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, I'll tell you another thing. In those days, they gave you a blackjack, but I had to buy my handcuffs. They didn't issue you cuffs. You got your gun and a blackjack, and that's it. and of course, the old breeches -- the old britches you had in your back pocket, but down here, you had a slit, and you carried your old jack in your britches pocket, and that's the first thing you wore out from sliding in and out of the car with the old blackjack in your pocket. But I can honestly say, and I'm proud to say this, that I never used my jack on a man.

INTERVIEWER:

Did they -- do they issue blackjacks today?

MR. KRATZER:

Not to my knowledge. I don't think they get a -- I think today, you get a collapsible baton, and you have mace. But those old blackjacks, you know, if -- well, if you'd have hit a guy on the head, you could kill him, but they were used mainly to hit them on the biceps, you know, across a leg or something to disable a person. But I was fortunate that I never had the jack in my hand, and I'm proud of that.

INTERVIEWER:

Have in your tenure as a State Policeman, have you ever had to use your weapon?

MR. KRATZER:

To shoot at a man, no. The only time I ever shot at a man -- I pulled my weapon a couple times. One time when I was in crime here in Butler County, a guy come out on his porch, and he had a gun at port arms, and said, "Don't come on my property." And I ended up pulling my weapon, and -- but he laid his gun down. But outside of Chalkhill, no, I never had to shoot at a person.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you...

MR. KRATZER:

Uh-uh.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you ever -- have you had a personal friendship or relationship with anyone -- any man -- any other trooper on the job who has lost his life in the line of duty?

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, yeah. Trooper Richard Barnhardt [ph] of B Troop, he lost his life chasing some -- after I had left B Troop, he lost his life

chasing some drag racers down near New Salem one night. I had a good friend, Leonard Strapple [ph] from D Troop, who stopped a car with two men, two women, and two children in it one night right outside of the city limits of New Castle for speeding. And he didn't know it, but they had committed a robbery about four hours earlier in West Virginia, and they thought that they were being stopped for that. and the guy didn't have an owner's card or something, and he went back and called the number in, and when he went back up to the car, the guy got out and says, "Give me your gun." And he says, "If you want my gun, you're going to have to take it." And the guy -- Leonard put his hand up, and one round, as I recall, went between two fingers. Another round went in the corner of his mouth, and he chewed tobacco, and the chew took some of the inside -- lodged back in here. Another round went across his chest, and one round went in his shoulder, and he was -- he fell to the ground, and the guy got in the car and tried to run over him, but he rolled, and he managed to crawl to the patrol car, and the door was still open. And he reached in, and he got the mike, and he said, "6 to New Castle. I'm out near Trojo's Restaurant [ph]. Send an ambulance and a priest," because he

thought he was going to die. But he -- it took him a year to come back to duty. And this was in 1961, I think, in January or February of '61, if my memory serves me correct, because there was a lot of snow on the road at the time. But Leonard, as a result of the wound in his shoulder, always had a crippled hand. His hand was like this. And when I was there in '65, he was a good ping-pong player, and he used to put the ball in his hand, and we'd play ping-pong after work in the afternoons, down in the basement. But they made Leonard the garage inspector. And he finished his career out. I think Leonard, at the time -- at that time, I -- he might've had ten years in the job. He finished his time out in the job up in Evansburg, but he was in his troop for a long time afterwards. But he had that crippled hand. Today, they'd have -- they would discharge you today and put you in workmen's comp. But he worked all those years. He was out in uniform with a gun on, checking garages but stopping people for traffic violations, and he had a crippled hand. And I'll tell you another story with a sergeant in this troop. This happened before I come on the job in 1953, but when I came to Butler, he was my duty sergeant, and his name was Sergeant Harold Rice. And Rice was with Trooper Klauss [ph] of Beaver

Falls, and they were serving -- a constable asked for assistance, and they were serving a warrant to put this guy in a mental institution. And they went to his house, and they said, "Does he have any guns?" They said, "No." And he's upstairs, and he's barricaded himself in his room. So, he went up. Rice was a corporal, and he kicked the door open about this far, and a hand come out with a gun on him, and bang. Rice, also, was shot in the mouth. Rice fell back against the wall and slid to the floor. Trooper Klauss grabbed the guy's hand and started wrestling with him. The gun went off, a bullet hit Klauss under the ear. He rolled down the steps dead. Rice pulled his gun out, double-action, killed the guy. He went to the hospital. In those days, we had 15 days sick leave. And how we got in the subject, Rice and I went to Harrisburg one time to pick up new cars. We got caught in a snowstorm down at 21st and Herr, so we had time to spend down there before we got back. So anyway, he always carried this keychain, and he had a plastic -- in the shape of a keystone, and inside this plastic was a spent bullet. And I asked him, "What's the deal on that?" He said, "Well, they dug that out of my jaw. I was shot one time." And he went through this and told me. But the thing was, he said, "I was in the hospital, and

after my 15 days sick leave was over with," you only got 15 days sick leave in those days, "they put me on annual leave. Put me on vacation, my own vacation. So," he said, "after I was -- I'm still in the hospital, one day, the local legislature come in and thanked me for doing a good job and this and that and said, 'Anything I can do for you?'" And he says, "Well" -- he told him about putting him on annual leave. Now, this would be unthought-of of today. You know. Of course, you have workmen's comp. And that legislator, he couldn't get over that, and so he said, "Well, I'll take care of that for you." And he went to Harrisburg, and I don't know who he talked to, but he got his vacation days back. But they were -- after 15 days, they put him on vacation, and he had been shot in the line of duty. But then I -- there was -- let's see. My -- I know there's others, and I can't -- oh, God. I -- at the moment, I just forget, but there's -- there were several others that I knew that -- oh, Herb Warfel [ph], who used to be in D Troop, working radar up at Evansburg. He left here and went to Evansburg. He was killed in a car accident. But there was others, too, and I just can't think who they were at the time.

INTERVIEWER:

In summary here, in your mind, what are some of the most noteworthy changes that have occurred in the State Police during your career?

MR. KRATZER:

Well, the biggest has to be pay and benefits, because when I started out, I can remember my hospitalization, I paid \$15 a month out of my own pocket for hospitalization. And like I told you before, my first full year in the job, I made \$2,425. When I left the job, in 1985, I was a sergeant, had been in grade 12 years. I was making \$35,000 a year, and at times, I thought, "Am I worth it?" Because I had worked many lean years and worked an awful lot of overtime and never got paid for it. And I had good hospitalization where I could take care of my family if they got sick, and myself. And even today, I -- well, I retired with good benefits, and I have no ill feelings. That's just the way things were in those days, and I went into it with an -- open eyes, and I knew that the job didn't pay that much, but it was the type of work I wanted to do. And I'm proud to say that I served in those years. And I'm proud of the fact that I was on the job, and I met many, many fine men over the years. A lot I -- you know, I'd be proud to call brother.

INTERVIEWER:

From 1955 until you retired in 1985, the changes in the radio system, the changes in the reporting system, were they significant?

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, yeah. Just a plain traffic arrest, when I came on the job, you went before a Justice of the Peace, and he took a form out, and you had to type in there. And before me, this was -- personally came Trooper Ronald W. Kratzer, a member of the Pennsylvania State Police, under oath, supposes -- says that such and such happened in such and such a road, and such and such a township, such and such a time, and it's against the Vehicle Code of Pennsylvania, Pamphlet Law 903 or so on and so forth. And then you had to sign each it, each side, and sealed it, and a copy was sent to them, and you had 15 days to file. He had ten days to appear. And then, you had to go back to the barracks, and then they had an arrest report, a traffic arrest report. You had to type it. It was, like, five copies, a copy to, say, the station and, you know, go to Harrisburg and so on. But then, of course, today, you have citations. You just write them out and pull a copy, give it to them, bring it back. You know. One copy goes to

departmental headquarters, and the rest go to the magistrate and so on. And then we used to have an initial report and it -- God, the preamble on it, you'd -- having been ordered by Sergeant Howard M. Janes on such and such a date at such and such a time, I left the station at such and such an hour in troop car such and such a number and proceeded to such and such an address and such and such a township to investigate a burglary that was reported by so and so. And you had to start interviewing the victim. And all this had to be typed out on your own time. And there was, oh, many, many hours, you know, spent typing reports in your own time. I'll tell you, there were times when I was in the criminal unit at Butler in the '60s, and you -- that -- you got behind in your reports or you had so many cases you were working on, that I would say to Sergeant Barr [ph], "Do you mind if I take a typewriter home tonight?" "Just as long as it's here in the morning." And I'd take a typewriter home at night so I could be with my family. And I'd sit at the kitchen table after supper and type my reports. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

How about your tenure in Troop T? How long were you there?

MR. KRATZER:

I was in Troop T from February of '77 until I retired in September of 1985. And I tried to get back to get back to Troop D Butler, because all those years I was in Greensburg. I still lived in Butler, and I commuted 50 miles one way. I tried to get back, but there wasn't any openings. So, Lieutenant Robbins had been promoted, who had been a sergeant at Butler at one time, and knew me, he had been promoted to captain and sent to Troop T Highspire. And he was having a problem at Gibsonia with a sergeant there. And...

INTERVIEWER:

Gibsonia is the Troop T station?

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah, Gibsonia is Troop T. And he was the captain at that time of Troop T. So, he called me one day, and he said, "You know, I'm having a problem." And he said, "Are you still trying to get back to Butler?" And I said, "Yeah." And he said, "What's it look like?" And I said, "There's just no openings that I can see." He said, "Would you be interested in Gibsonia, if I could arrange it?" And he said, "You'd be traveling, like, 16 miles compared to 50." I said, "Well, I believe I would." And he said, "You'd -- you know, you've got to be a station commander. You'd be -- have your

own station." I says, "Yeah, I -- yeah, I'd probably be interested." And he says, "Well, let me get a hold of personnel." And he said, "I'm trying to work something out. I'm having a problem there." And he said, "I'll get back to you." So, he called me back in another month or so, and he said, "Yeah." He said, "If you're still willing," he said, "it'll take effect on February such and such." And that's in 1977. And so, the order was cut, and I left Greensburg and went to Gibsonia.

INTERVIEWER:

What kind of duty was that? Did you enjoy -- not enjoy, but...

MR. KRATZER:

No, I really didn't enjoy the duty on the Turnpike as much as I did other stations. I'll tell you why. Of course, I had my own station. I had a bunch of good guys there. I didn't get out on the road that much. I had the roster. I had 13 cars. And at that time, the state was buying Dodges and Plymouths, and we were having an awful lot of trouble with them. And I -- every day, I had two and three cars I had to take to the garage. I'd get my corporal. I -- you know, we'd take one down, bring one back, and you were always jockeying cars around. You know. I always -- I took care of the roster myself. I took it -- I -- one thing, after working many

years with bad rosters, I wanted to have a good roster for my guys, and...

INTERVIEWER:

By "roster", what do you mean by that?

MR. KRATZER:

Well, when I got there, I looked back at some of their rosters, and I -- excuse me. There was guys there. I know there was one guy that had 23 weekends off a year prior to me getting there. There was another guy that had three. So, they had a red book there, and I asked the corporal, "What's this red book?" And he said, "Well, if a guy wants a certain night off or a day off, he writes it in the red book, and when you go to make a roster up for that week, you give him that time off." So, I got a hold of this guy that had three weekends off in one year. And I says to him. I says, "Why is it that you only had three weekends off?" And he says, "Well, you know, they have the -- use the red book, and I don't want to abuse the system, and I want to make sure that -- I always feel if I don't need the weekend, I'm not going to take it. I'll work, because when I want a weekend, I want to make sure I get it, so," he said, "I never asked for a weekend." Well, that's not fair. And then there was one guy that always had -- wanted

Friday nights off. Well, that's your busy -- on the Pike, Friday night and Sunday night are your busiest nights of the week. And I said to him. You know, "What are you always asking for Friday night?" "Well, I have bowling." Well, that's nice that he has bowling, but still, he ought to share -- work his share of Fridays. So, I told the guys one day. I got the guys together and had a class. I says, "Look, we're not going by the red book anymore. I'm going to make the roster. I'm going to give you every third weekend off, and when I give you the weekend, I'm going to give you Friday and Saturday for one week, Saturday and Sunday for the next. If you have a holiday coming and I can work it in, you'll have five days off. And if you want to take a PO day with that and make it six days and I can work it in, fine." Well, the guys right away, "Oh, hey." You know. "We have this to do. I have," you know, "this." "Okay. That's fine. If you want this night off for a certain reason and you don't have -- if you're going to -- if you're scheduled to work, you trade with your buddy." "Oh, that won't work out." I says, "Oh, yes, it will." I says, "When everybody is in the same -- you know, gets the same, it'll work out." Well, it only took me a few weeks, and the guys were coming and saying, "Hey, I'm working Friday, but I've got so and

so to -- I'm working Friday night. I wanted off. I got so and so to work it for me. We're going to switch." "Fine. Mark it on the roster." And pretty soon, why, I think I had a pretty good roster going, because -- except in the summer when there was vacations, June, July, and August, those months, unless you were on vacation, of course, you got a week's vacation, you got a weekend before and a weekend after. But if you didn't have any vacation, you worked -- you got only one weekend a month. But during the rest of the year, every third weekend you were assured to be off, and it was a long weekend, at least four days, oftentimes five or six. And I thought it was pretty good time off. But it was something you -- there was no secret to it. I mean, you just -- you didn't -- I mean, you had to sit down and work with this thing. I mean, it took you hours to work it out. But I think that's -- if you give -- get men good time off, they'll do a good job for you.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think that when Captain Newton Robbins [ph] said he had a problem at Gibsonia, perhaps, maybe, it was over the schedule?

MR. KRATZER:

No. No, it was a personal problem that the -- my predecessor had. He had a problem, and I don't want to mention his name or...

INTERVIEWER:

No.

MR. KRATZER:

...the problem, and it was a case where he was actually being disciplined.

INTERVIEWER:

I see. Talking about discipline, what was the discipline system like when you first joined the State Police in comparison when you left?

MR. KRATZER:

Well, I'll tell you what. I liked it the old way.

INTERVIEWER:

And what was the old way?

MR. KRATZER:

I -- myself, I never -- I always toed the line, and I think -- I thank the military for that. I was in the military. I learned to take orders. If they told me to do something, I did it. I got in the State Police. They told you, you know, "Pay your bills." You know. I

mean, there's certain regulations, you know. You had to have a good reputation and so on and so forth. Now, I had only been at Troop B headquarters a month or so, and there was a certain individual down there. He was married, and his wife worked at -- of course, he was a State Trooper, and he was a very dapper dresser. He had no children. Well, we'd go to court, and some of the poor old married men, you know, that had lots of kids, they would wear suits that -- or shirts that the -- you know, they were over -- a little overweight, but they couldn't afford to buy others. But he was all -- he looked like an attorney, always dressed good. Well, here, one day, the owner of the Hub men's clothing store in Washington, Pennsylvania, come up and saw Captain Fontaine. He said, "Hey, this man's owed me \$500 for over six months and never attempted to even give me \$1." That -- quick, he called the first sergeant in, and he said, "What's this individual working?" I'm not going to mention his name. So, he says, "Out on the road." "Call him in." He called the clerk in. He says, "Type up his resignation." The guy come in. He called him in. He says, "I understand you owe this man 500 bucks." And he says, "Yeah, I've intended to pay it off. I'm going to pay it off." And he says, "Well," he says, "you've brought discredit on the

organization. When a man comes up here and has to complain to me about one of my men not paying his bills, it's bringing discredit on the organization. Now," he says, "I'm going to give you the opportunity to resign or you can stand court martial." Now, if he stood court martial and he got fired, which he probably would have, and he went to apply for another job, they'd have said, "Well, where did you work?" "The State Police." "Well, why did you leave?" "Well, I got court-martialed." But, if you resigned and you went to get another job, "Well, what did you leave for?" "Well, I didn't like it. I resigned." So, the man, right then and there, he signed on the dotted line, and he was -- he turned his clothing in, and he was gone that same day. That was how things were handled then.

INTERVIEWER:

How are things handled now?

MR. KRATZER:

Well, and let me give you another example. This wasn't just Captain Barger, but there was other officers, too. One thing he had a fetish about was wearing your hat. Okay. And if he ever saw you in -- for a while, when the cars were still a little higher, if he even saw you in the car without a hat, you were gone. I know

a man that he saw in the car one day without his hat on, and he was in Mercer the next day. And he left him up there for a couple months and then brought him back down and the man learned to wear his hat. Okay. Today, I've seen corporals out at accident -- scenes of accidents directing traffic without their hat on. They don't wear the hat anymore. People used to tell me -- I'd stop people when I was on traffic, and they used to look at that man and say, "Boy, you know, those hats of yours, they scare me." You know. Now, that's no reason to wear a hat, but I mean, they had a -- you were in full uniform, but today, men don't wear the hat anymore. I don't know whether they like to show the girls their hair or -- but there's a few. But like one time, I saw a news release on TV, and it was out at Greensburg, and in the background, there was a man that had his hat on, but he had the strap -- it was a winter hat, and he had the strap hanging down the back, which it should be worn under the chin. And there was another man in the background, he didn't have his hat on at all. They were at the scene of some disturbance or something. But the young lady that was talking to the reporters, young female trooper, she had her hat on and had her strap under her chin, and she looked sharp. But it's stuff like that, I think, in talking to

some of my old friends on the job, that's one of the biggest gripes today. The guys don't wear their hat. That's part of the uniform.

INTERVIEWER:

Why do you suppose that is, because years ago, wasn't it that you wanted to come on the job because you wanted to wear that big hat? Why do you suppose -- what do you think has changed?

MR. KRATZER:

That's what I'd like to know. I don't know why these men today don't want to wear their hat, because I was just in a restaurant here not long ago, in fact, it was Arby's up at Clearview Mall, and a trooper parked his car outside. He come walking in there, went up, got -- ordered himself a sandwich, which of course, you know, he has to eat, but he didn't have his hat on. I'd have never walked in -- I'd have never been in a restaurant -- walked in a restaurant without my hat on. Now, there were times, as the cars got lower, tall guys like myself, and we had a few others at Butler, you'd get in and your hat would rub the roof, and at that time, it was brought to the attention of, I remember, Barger, and he said, "Okay. If you can't wear it in the car, but you're going to

wear it outside.” Well, you’d lay it on the seat, but if you’d go to get out, you’d always put your hat on. But today, I’ve seen guys have been coming up New Castle Road up to the barracks, and I’ve seen guys come out. In fact, I’ve left them out in front of me, get out on the road, and they’ve had their hat on the -- by the back window, on the ledge. Now, if it’s way back there, you know he has no intention of wearing it for the eight-hour shift. I can’t understand it.

INTERVIEWER:

It would be interesting to -- wouldn’t it be interesting to ask some of these younger troopers why they don’t?

MR. KRATZER:

Well...

INTERVIEWER:

It...

MR. KRATZER:

...I asked one one day, and he said, “Oh, hell, that’s just the way it is today. We don’t worry about stuff like that. We have bigger things to worry about.”

INTERVIEWER:

But there -- isn't there such a thing as a (inaudible) relations manual, which dictates how their uniform will be worn?

MR. KRATZER:

I would think so, but if I see it, I'm sure the corporals see it, the sergeants see it, the lieutenants see it. Why aren't they on their backs? You know. Because it took very little to keep us in a -- walking a straight and narrow. When we knew -- we were married and had a home here in Butler, and we knew if we got caught without our hat on, we were going to take a trip to Beaver Falls, Mercer, or Kittanning. We wore the hat. You know.

INTERVIEWER:

Don't you think that's the most impressive part of the uniform?

MR. KRATZER:

I do, because it's different. Now, like, the State of Virginia has a hat like ours. Of course, they have the two acorns on the top. And there's other police departments that -- I think Allegheny County Police wear a hat like ours. For the most part, it's different. Most of your municipalities, which wear a hat with a beak on it. And of course, they have the chinstrap. That goes back to the days of the troopers on horseback. And when they

used to tuck it under their chin to keep it blowing off. And -- but you know, that's one thing I've noticed.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, you retired in 1985, so that means you've been off the job for...

MR. KRATZER:

Twenty-one years.

INTERVIEWER:

...21 years. Let me ask you this. Is there anything you would have done differently in your career with the State Police?

MR. KRATZER:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

And what would that be?

MR. KRATZER:

I would have -- well, first, I used to take promotions. When had the promotional test, I'd just take it, and then the guys -- I started to study for them, and I didn't bother for many years. And finally, one day, I was in Kittanning, and I was a youth aide officer, and I was talking to the OIC at Kittanning, who, at that time, was Blaire Swisstock [ph], who later on was also a captain of mine at Troop

A. And we got to talking about the promotion system, and I complained about it. You know. I said I didn't think it was fair and this and that and the other thing. And he said, "Well, it is what it is." And he said, "It's just like if you're standing on a corner in a city and the bus stops, you can get on it and ride or," he said, "you can walk." And he said, "If you want to get ahead in the job, you're going to have to study a little." And then he said to me. He said, "I have the crimes code broke down in questions and answers that I've used. I'll be glad to get -- make a copy for you if you want to study it." And I said, "Okay." So then, I started to -- three months before the test, every night that I could that I was off, and I wasn't off every night, I tried to study one hour. So, the first time I tried, I came in first in the troop for corporal. So then, I set my laurels for four years and didn't do anything. And then, finally, I figured I better try some more. And I studied again, and I came in ninth in the state for sergeant. And then I got shipped to Greensburg, and I had to commute for four years. Then, when I got to Gibsonia, I got complacent. I thought, "Oh, I don't want to move again." I'd have to travel. So, I quit taking the tests. And but then, when I retired, and I found out what I could've been -- had on retirement as a lieutenant and

so forth, I thought to myself, you know, "I should've continued."

And -- but you know, I was grateful for what I had.

INTERVIEWER:

So, what's -- what you're telling me is you would've put more effort...

MR. KRATZER:

More effort in on promotions, you know, studied a little more and try to keep on top of things. You know. There were so many regulations, like, by the time I retired, you know, with all your AR manuals and your training manuals and your vehicle code and your crimes code and -- oh, my, there was just a wealth of information you had to know.

INTERVIEWER:

AR manuals are administrative regulations?

MR. KRATZER:

Right. And you had to know all that stuff. And you just couldn't go from test to test without looking through it, because there was so much that you'd forget. You can only retain that, you know. But there was men -- I had seen men come on the job and, like, at their three years, they made corporal, at five years, they made sergeant, at seven years, they made lieutenant. And God,

before they had ten years on, they were a captain. Myself, I had 14 -- well, 13 years on before I made corporal and then another four years before I made sergeant.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, I imagine you're pretty proud of your son-in-law, then, because...

MR. KRATZER:

Oh, yeah. Tom's done real well for himself. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

If you could do it all over again, would you still join the State Police?

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah. Of course, I'll tell you, it's a -- I sit here and I complain about the guys not wearing their hats, but on the same token, these guys today have a lot more work today than what I did. With the drug situations today -- I mean, they get a lot more money, paid a lot more money today than I did, and I don't begrudge them a nickel, but there's a heck of a lot of work out there today for a State Policeman. I mean, there -- you can -- just read the papers. I mean, they're going constantly. I don't know what the -- you know, what you'd do without the State

Police. And they're really -- and truly, there should -- they should hire a couple thousand more.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. KRATZER:

You know.

INTERVIEWER:

And that's easier said than done, I think -- I would imagine.

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Since -- okay, you retired now. Have you had any involvement with the State Police since retirement?

MR. KRATZER:

Not other than, like, the Fraternal Order of Police. And they'll -- and the retirees, we get together once a month here at Butler and have a luncheon together. After I retired, I went with Bill Schneider, who was the friend of mine that -- we joined the outfit together when we were in the Army. He and I went over to the high school and worked eight years at the Butler High School as security officers. That was right across the road from troop

headquarters. And of course, we would go over, occasionally, and have a coffee with the guys. And back in those days, the barracks were still open. But now, the barracks are all locked up. And you can't even -- you talk through a telephone. And so it isn't the same as it was when, you know -- but I used to keep in pretty close contact with the guys. But of course, there isn't anybody anymore on the job that I served with. You know. Oh, there might be -- well, there's nobody in Butler that I ever worked with. No. And...

INTERVIEWER:

(inaudible).

MR. KRATZER:

...I think, of the guys on the Turnpike, all my guys, I think, are retired now.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you have get-togethers, like breakfast or luncheons with retirees every...

MR. KRATZER:

Here at Butler, yeah. Once a month. The second Wednesday of every month, we have a luncheon. We get tighter.

INTERVIEWER:

All right.

MR. KRATZER:

One of our -- poor soul, he's a -- he walks with a walker today, but was Lieutenant Colonel Evans [ph]. He comes up from New Kensington, and he -- with his wife every month. Yeah. He was the last first sergeant in the state. He was promoted to first sergeant and sent him to Butler, and then they discontinued first sergeants. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Sergeant Kratzer, in closing, is there anything else you'd like to add?

MR. KRATZER:

Only that I was -- am proud of the outfit, proud to have served. I can honestly say I never saw a State Trooper mistreat a prisoner. You know, you see a lot of things on TV today about this department in LA or this and that and the other thing, beating. I never saw a State Policeman mistreat a prisoner. I know I never mistreated anybody. I always tried to be courteous with people.

INTERVIEWER:

For the most part...

MR. KRATZER:

And...

INTERVIEWER:

...wouldn't you say that most State Policemen that you've dealt with are a lot...

MR. KRATZER:

They've all been of the highest character.

INTERVIEWER:

In general?

MR. KRATZER:

Um-hum. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Very well.

MR. KRATZER:

Now, there were exceptions.

INTERVIEWER:

There are exceptions to everything.

MR. KRATZER:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

That's true.

MR. KRATZER:

I can remember one man, when I was a young man, that I hated to go out with him, because he liked to chew people out, and I didn't like it. Unfortunately, I won't mention his name, but he's one of the men I forgot who was -- he was killed in the line of duty. I've said before I forgot some of them, but I won't mention his name. But I was ashamed to be with him because of his mouth. But to look at him, I mean, he was just -- his gear was always shined, and he -- God, he looked good. But he just -- he'd get out there, and he'd just chew on people, and I never wanted that. That was the exception. I mean, I can only -- he was one of a kind. Most men I ever went out with, older men, you know, senior troopers to me, when -- the junior trooper always walked to the back of the car. Years -- you know, when you -- years ago, when you were doubled-up, the senior trooper always went to the window and talked to the people. They were always courteous, because that's what the training -- you got that training at the Academy. They always told you, you know, "Remember this: you're working for the person you stopped. They haven't offended you, in the least. All they've done is violated the law, so there's no reason for you to jump on them

with two feet. All you have to do is tell them what they did wrong and write them up. That's all."

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Well, Sergeant Kratzer, I want to thank you for taking part in this project. It's been a pleasure talking to you. And I suppose, you could probably go on for another four or five hours, you and I, but I guess we have to end it here. And once again, it's been my pleasure.

MR. KRATZER:

One thing I can -- I'd like to say before leaving is the Department, when a man leaves the Academy to go out to his Troop, he ought to be given a diary and told to keep a diary, because there is so much humor, and of course a lot of sadness in -- over the years, you forget a lot. But I'd just like to have kept a diary...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. KRATZER:

...and -- about some of the things I experienced, because it's a very unique occupation.

INTERVIEWER:

It certainly is.

MR. KRATZER:

You get to see the worst in life and the best.

INTERVIEWER:

That's true.

MR. KRATZER:

Thank you.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you, sir.