

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

FRANCIS J. JENNIK

Medical Administrative Officer, Army, World War II;  
Career, Army Reserves.

2002

OH  
61

OH  
61

**Jennik, Francis J.**, (1924- ). Oral History Interview, 2002.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 44 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 44 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 1 videorecording (ca. 44 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

**Abstract:**

Francis J. Jennik, a Milwaukee, Wisconsin native, discusses his experiences as an Army medical administrative officer in the Pacific Theater of World War II and as part of the Army of Occupation in Japan. Jennik speaks of enlisting in the Army Enlisted Reserve Corps while attending Marquette University, being called to active duty in 1943, and basic training with the Army Air Corps in Atlantic City (New Jersey). After attending Signal Corps school at Camp Crowder (Missouri), he touches on spending some time in the Army Specialized Training Program at the University of Missouri before it was ended and the “disgruntled college kids and Army Air Corps cadets” were sent to infantry training. Jennik states he became first gunner on a 60-mm mortar squad in the 66<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, attended Medical Administrative Corps Officer Candidate School at Camp Barkley (Texas), and was commissioned a second lieutenant in December of 1944. Assigned to Nichol General Hospital (Louisville, Kentucky) as an assistant medical supply officer, he mentions inventorying narcotics, working with patients returning from Europe, and seeing doctors allow patients two ounces of whiskey a day. Sent to the Philippines as a replacement, Jennik discusses being seasick aboard the troop ship and his first impressions of Manila. He describes duty as transportation officer and acting engineer at the 251st Station Hospital. Jennik reports that most of his time went towards the digging of latrines due to a low water table and the patients’ all having gastrointestinal problems. After the atomic bomb was dropped, he recalls his unit being blacklisted to go to Japan, packing thirty days of supplies into an LST, and seeing all the ships turn their lights on after the surrender of Japan. He describes arriving in Yokohama as part of the occupation force, getting his first flu shot, and seeing men get sick from the vaccination. Assigned to a Japanese Naval Medical Hospital in Tsukiji (Tokyo), he portrays the devastation from Allied bombings and the disappearance and eventual return of Japanese civilians. Jennik comments on censoring mail, being jealous of Navy food, and packing up the Philippine hospital equipment in custom-made crates. He tells anecdotes about requisitioning a motorized hand saw and about a frightened guard posted alone in the morgue. Jennik describes the medical problems his hospital handled: “odds and ends, hemorrhoids and circumcisions,” appendectomies, and venereal diseases. He relates sightseeing in the Philippines and Japan and noticing the Southern Cross constellation. Jennik talks about the female head nurse demanding the installation of some western-style commodes, and he tells of duty as fire marshal and getting water everywhere while testing a rotten hose. He mentions giving his whiskey allotment to his motor pool drivers and being Trial Judge Advocate in a court martial against a soldier who had sold Army sugar to Filipino civilians. Returned to the United States in March of

1946, Jennik touches on staying in the Reserves and returning to Marquette University under the GI Bill. He recalls discovering, years after the war, that the men of the infantry company he had been in were drowned when their ship sank in 1944; if he had not left for OCS he would have been with them. Jennik talks about his civilian career as a salesman and real estate assessor and his career as an instructor in the Army Reserves, teaching National Guard and Reserve officer courses. He touches on getting access to secret information during the Vietnam War about how the targets were being picked from Washington, D.C. rather than by soldiers in the field. Jennik speaks of involvement in the American Legion and VFW, the poppy fundraiser for VA hospitals, and attending 251st Station Hospital reunions.

**Biographical Sketch:**

Jennik (b.1924) served in the Army from 1943 to 1946 and in the active Army Reserves from 1946 to 1977. Retired at the rank of colonel in 1984, he eventually settled in Greendale (Wisconsin).

Interviewed by Mike Hollander, 2002

Transcribed by Bruce Stone, Wisconsin Court Reporter, 2009

Edited by Joan Bruggink, 2012

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2012

**Interview Transcript:**

- Mike: I'm interviewing Colonel Francis Jennik in his home. I'm his grandson, Michael Hollander. So were you drafted or did you enlist?
- Jennik: I enlisted in the enlisted reserve corps while I was going to Marquette University. Then we were called to active duty in March of '43.
- Mike: So you were living in Milwaukee at the time?
- Jennik: Yes.
- Mike: Why did you join?
- Jennik: To fight the war, and win.
- Mike: Which Service branch did you join?
- Jennik: Army.
- Mike: Do you recall your first days in Service?
- Jennik: Sure, went to Fort Sheridan. Got shots in both arms and sat down and did all these tests, written tests, one of which was the IQ, or so-called AGCT, Army General Classification Tests, so they decided what to do with you.
- Mike: What did it feel like?
- Jennik: It was exciting.
- Mike: Do you remember your boot camp training experiences?
- Jennik: Basic training was with the Army Air Corps on the fifth floor of the Traymore Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The Air Corps took over all the hotels on the boardwalk in Atlantic City and in Miami Beach. It was hell, walking and marching in the sand. The boardwalk was all right, but to work in the sand was not. Then when you finished basic training you were a CASHO [? ph] waiting shipping, and you had either guard duty or KP, so I had KP for twelve days.
- Mike: What's "KP"?
- Jennik: Kitchen police. Dishes— [laughter].
- Mike: When you were walking through the sand, did you have all your gear on?

Jennik: No. In basic training we didn't have all the combat field packs and stuff. You didn't have any weapons. You were just learning how to march and take orders and turn around and that sort of thing.

Mike: What year was this?

Jennik: '43. March '43.

Mike: Do you remember your instructors?

Jennik: No, none.

Mike: How did you get through it?

Jennik: Easy. Finished it and was promoted to a T-5, Tech Corporal, right away, and sent to Camp Crowder, Missouri with Signal Corps work with the Army Air Corps, and I was sent to a school as a wire chief, central office. Camp Crowder is in the southwest corner of Missouri, around Joplin, Missouri.

Mike: So then, how long were you in basic training?

Jennik: Usually that was about six weeks; wasn't long.

Mike: Okay. And then you were in for six weeks and did you ship out right away after that?

Jennik: No, I went to the schools, the Signal Corps school. Then after the Signal Corps I was in the Signal Corps school and applied for Army Specialized Training Program, went to the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri, studied engineering. ASTP was the brainchild of General Marshall, who was the Chief of Staff of the Army, and he wanted to take all these kids that were a little brighter than some of the others, and he thought that this college training program would be the future officer corps of the Army. It didn't work, because things were getting real hot in Italy and this was winter and summer of '43 and '44. So in spring of '44 we were all sent into infantry divisions. Then you went through basic training all over again with the infantry. That was at Camp Rucker, Alabama, near Dothan, Alabama. That was very interesting; all disgruntled college kids and Army Air Corps cadets who now found themselves toting a rifle.

Mike: How old were you at the time?

Jennik: Eighteen, and then nineteen in May. So we were there that whole summer of '44. And then after the basic training we went into advanced unit training and I was the first gunner on the 60-mm mortar squad of the weapons platoon in an infantry company.

- Mike: So you shipped out in May of '44?
- Jennik: No. In September of '44—I had applied for OCS [Officer Candidates School] and in September of '44 I went to OCS. That was Medical Administrative Corps OCS at Camp Barkley, Texas, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant December 22nd of 1944; real proud.
- Mike: Okay, so then where did you go after that?
- Jennik: My first assignment was at Nichol General Hospital, Louisville, Kentucky. I was the Assistant Medical Supply Officer. The interesting duty I had there was that every week an officer had to inventory the narcotics. The narcotics are kept in a separate room in the warehouse area of the medical supply department of the hospital. It was a thousand-bed general hospital that had been receiving patients from Europe.
- Mike: So everyone you came in contact with was a soldier from Europe, then?
- Jennik: The patients were from Europe. Some of them were basket cases, and I was very surprised that doctors would give them two ounces of whiskey a day if they wanted it. It was prescribed by the doctors. But these guys had no life, so they gave them whatever they wanted or whatever they were able to. Some of them recovered and were released.
- Mike: And they were all kids your age, basically?
- Jennik: Oh, yeah. Some a little older because the African thing started in '42 while I was still in high school.
- Mike: So how long were you there?
- Jennik: Not long. From January up until April, then I was ordered overseas as a casual. So I went to San Francisco and was sent to the Philippine Islands as a casual.
- Mike: What's a "casual"?
- Jennik: An individual, not a unit; one person, a replacement going over there to replace someone else for whatever reason. We were on a general class troop ship, the *General Mann*, that carried five thousand people, and I didn't sit down once to eat a meal, I was so seasick. Never vomited, but I was sick all day, every day. I remember when we got on the ship we walked up, docked, got on the boat, and oh, smart-aleck big shot second lieutenant, officers ate in the wardroom, and you had arm chairs in the wardroom. I sat down and I was gonna eat dinner. They let go of the lines and the boat started rocking. I got

up. I never ate one meal sitting down. We were on the water for seventeen days. Then when we got into Manila we had to get into landing craft because the boat couldn't approach the dock and the landing craft was like a rowboat, up and down; guys are vomiting all over. I wasn't sick at all. I was sick for seventeen days, but in this I was not sick. In the Philippines then we went to a Repo Depot, replacement depot, and ultimately I was assigned to the 251st Station Hospital.

Mike: So do you remember arriving in the Philippines? What was it like when you got there?

Jennik: Oh, yeah. In Manila, yeah, and then riding like cattle in a big boat from the dock area to the replacement depot at night. Didn't know where you were going. [laughs]

Mike: So what was it like when you first arrived there?

Jennik: Totally strange, totally different. And everybody in this replacement depot were individual casuals and we were waiting assignment to some place. And then they sent me out to the 251st Station Hospital; I was the Utilities Officer and the Motor Pool Officer, and the Assistant Detachment Commander. We had nineteen vehicles in the motor pool, and I was the transportation officer. As the utilities officer, the 251st Station Hospital was a seven hundred-fifty bed hospital so it did not have an engineering officer, and since I had some engineering at Marquette and at the University of Missouri, they called me the utilities officer, and all we did was dig latrines. So I had a couple of guys and they dug latrines daily because the water table was only four feet deep. And when it rained, it rained and it rained, and it rained, and it rained, and these two guys, all they did was dig latrines and close them up. We did not have nurses in the Philippines, which was in Tarlac, about twenty miles north of Clark Field on Luzon. So this was a battle area, and all of the patients had hepatitis, so they all had diarrhea. So you could see the problem we had with the latrines, with all the patients who were sick with gastrointestinal problems.

Mike: So that was your first assignment?

Jennik: Yes. Then they dropped the atom bomb in August and we were blacklisted, which means that our unit was set to go into Japan. If they hadn't dropped the atom bomb we were still set to go. That invasion was going to take place. So instead of going in as combatants or troops that were gonna defeat Japan, we went in as occupation forces. We went down from Tarlac to a place which was southeast of Manila called the Batangas Bay. We had the hospital all packed up on our trucks. We had three 6 x 6 trucks, three weapons carriers, four Jeeps, three ambulances. And the crew did a fantastic job. The guys made a standard-sized crate and then anything that didn't sit in the standard sized crate, the head of the department, the General Department, Surgery,

whatever, had to tell 'em what size crate they needed for maybe X-ray equipment or a certain piece of dental equipment or cooking materials. If it didn't fit in the standard-sized crate they made a special crate just for that equipment. And we went on an LST; in other words, you drive right through the sand, right up the ramp, and all our vehicles—they had already packed in that LST all the food and supplies that we would need for thirty days. The LST was loaded that way before we ever got on. And we had no nurses, because this was relatively hazardous. I remember the last vehicle to get on there was our motor pool Jeep which was loaded with all the motor pool tools. And they kept coming with tractors, the tide was coming in, to push the sand in so we could get up there, and this Jeep started sinking and I remember taking the winch off of that particular vehicle and putting it on the LST and we winched that truck up into it and that was the last vehicle that we got on.

I don't remember when we left, but we got into Japan September 12th. And I did not get sick on the LST like I did on the troop ship. It was startling because you were used to the troop ship and the LST, it was totally dark at night, totally. And when they signed the agreement at the end of the war on the battleship Missouri, which was September 4th, that night all the ships that were on their way to Japan had their lights on. Now we knew the war was over. The Japanese had surrendered.

Mike: Then when you arrived in Japan was there any combat at all, or was everything peaceful at that point?

Jennik: No. No, there was many—several infantry divisions that had already gone in there before September 4th, and we got in there on the 12th. I remember we went into a dock at Yokohama, and we went to some school in Yokohama, and someone got injured on the dock and our surgeons had to set up an operating room right away to take care of this guy. We were there just a couple of hours and they were doing some work on some—some brain surgery on some kid that got injured on the dock. Oh, I also remember we—this was '45—we all got flu shots. This was the first time anybody ever heard of a flu shot. And it was not a refined product, and I saw guys get so sick from the flu shot, I couldn't believe it. Of course we all had shots, you got a lot of shots, but these guys really got sick.

Then from Yokohama we moved up to Tokyo into the Japanese Naval Medical Hospital, which was called Tsukiji, and Tsukiji is still an area in the Tokyo, it's a fish market area in Tokyo, and we moved into this hospital. That was interesting. The hospital was surrounded by a moat on three sides, so if you'd see it from the air it was clearly defined, that you could say, "Oh, that's where the hospital is." Of all the bombs that dropped in Tokyo and Yokohama there was only one that hit this hospital. They definitely tried not to hit it, and all around was just bombs, bombs, bombs. But I remember when we drove from Yokohama up to Tokyo, you would drive down the street and



all you would see was chimneys and lathes, metal lathes; they had their industry in the homes, that's where they were doing the manufacturing. The houses were all burnt down, they were all wooden, but you saw the chimney and the lathe and sometimes you would see a sink. Otherwise it was all level. And when we went in there on the 12th, and then there was nobody there, they were so afraid that we were gonna kill everybody that the civilian population all took off for the mountains, there was nobody around, and then slowly they started coming back into the city.

Mike: So luckily there weren't many casualties [unintelligible], is that correct?

Jennik: The hospital, before I joined them, was—had gone through New Guinea and New Britain, so they were in the thick of it in New Guinea and New Britain. But this was a hospital. So no, no one had ever been injured while they were working with that hospital in New Guinea or New Britain or when we were in Tokyo.

Mike: So while you were away, how did you stay in touch with your family?

Jennik: The V-mail. It was a little piece of paper, and you would write on it and fold it up. You didn't stamp it, you just sent it out. Well, that was rather interesting. When I was a replacement casual waiting assignment in the replacement depot we all had to take—all of the officers had to take two hours censoring mail every day, so you had to censor all this mail before it would go home. And you had to delete anything that had any reference to a location or a unit. They didn't want anybody to tell anybody they were in Tokyo, or the Philippines, rather, or what outfit they were in or where they were going or anything.

Mike: What was the food like?

Jennik: Powdered eggs, powdered milk, some meat, and we were always jealous of the Navy because they always had good food and ice cream. Navy ships all had ice cream makers. The Navy ate much better.

Mike: How come?

Jennik: Well, they didn't move around, they stayed on that ship, it was all more or less permanent. But Army organizations had to keep jumping, so it was more a mobile situation. It was field rations. We lived in tents in the Philippines and then in Tokyo we lived in the hospital. Everything was in tents in the Philippines.

Mike: So did you have plenty of supplies?

Jennik: The American Army was very, very well supplied. I remember when we got the order to pack up and leave the Philippines and they started making these crates. We needed what was called a Skilsaw, which was just a hand saw, motorized hand saw, but at that time that was the name of it, Skilsaw. And we had a requisition and we went up to our base of supply, which was the Lingayen Gulf, and I went in and had the requisition, I wanted to get the Skilsaw, and they said, "Well, that's not on your TOE", which is our Table of Organization. They told me, "You aren't entitled to a Skilsaw, you can't have it." And I had a sergeant with me and he said, "Baloney, give it to me." He took the requisition and he left, and he knew how to get the Skilsaw, where I didn't know how to get it. He was smarter than I was. It was amazing. And then they had crews in our hospital cutting up this lumber to make these crates. All day and all night that's all you heard, "r-r-r-raow." That saw was going. You weren't in a building, you were in a tent, so you were right there, you heard it day and night. It took three days to cut the lumber up and make the crates and pack up the hospital.

Mike: So did you feel any pressure or stress?

Jennik: Only being young, yeah. I remember one time in Tokyo we had a patient die of smallpox. So we put him down in the morgue, in the basement, and then we had to put a guard there because we had a dead body in the morgue, and naturally, every few days I would be officer of the day. Officer of the day was that you were running the hospital from 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon until 6:00 or 7:00 o'clock in the morning, you were in charge. So you had these different guard posts that you had to go to, and I remember walking downstairs, making a lot of noise 'cause I knew that guard was there and I wanted him to know I was coming, and that poor kid was standing there scared stiff, just guarding the stiff in the morgue. That was interesting. And our doctors made a joke of it. We were a station hospital. Several miles away was the 42nd General Hospital. That was a big outfit and they got all the major surgery stuff and everything, and our doctors used to kid one another and laugh, they said, "We just get the odds and ends, hemorrhoids and circumcisions." They laughed. But they would get some appendectomies, too. And we had in our hospital a lot of the VD [venereal disease] cases. They were starting to use penicillin at the time, but we had a lot of VD cases coming in. They would treat 'em and the guys would go out and then in a few weeks they'd come back in; they'd be re-infected.

Mike: Was there something special that you did for good luck?

Jennik: No.

Mike: Were there guys around you that did anything like that?

Jennik: No, I didn't see that.

Mike: So how did you entertain yourselves if you had any down time?

Jennik: Drank, caroused, went sightseeing. We had a command car in the Philippines and we drove around and looked for cemeteries and stuff like that, battle areas, and there was a lot to see in Tokyo. Oh, let's go see the emperor's palace. Let's go see the Dai-Ichi Building; that's where MacArthur was. You couldn't get anywhere near the place, but you could see it. "Oh, yeah, that's where he is." But you did a lot of sightseeing.

Mike: Was there any entertainment, like USO-type things?

Jennik: The only time I saw a show was in the Philippines at the replacement depot, and that was startling to lay on the grass and wait for the show to start, and it got dark, and instead of the Big Dipper like we see in North America, there you would see the Southern Cross. And it's something to see. The Big Dipper is something to see; so is the Southern Cross. It's very interesting. You get a sense of what's happening.

Mike: Did you ever go on leave at all? What did you do when you were on leave?

Jennik: No, we didn't take any leave overseas. It was all accrued. When I came home I had over thirty days accrued.

Mike: Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual event?

Jennik: In the hospital in the Philippines—well, there are two things. We did not have western-style commodes in Japan. They had porcelain fixtures and it was below the floor level, so you had to squat down to do your duty, and they had a regular flush system. And the nurses came in and the chief nurse called me, she said, "Jennik, we can't use these commodes. We need western-style commodes." I said, "Well, we can't get any." She said, "If I get them, can you install them?" I asked the sergeant, I said, "Can we do that?" And he said, "Yeah, we can do that." So a few days went by, she said, "Jennik, come over here." So I go in the nurses' quarters and there in the front lobby are three big crates from the engineering, three commodes. She says "Okay, put 'em in." She got 'em; we couldn't get 'em.

Another funny thing, I was a fire marshal and they had these hoses in the wall, and after I wrote up the fire rules and regulations I said, "Well, we'd better have a fire drill." So I said we're gonna have a fire drill on such-and-such a day. Okay, everybody had a fire drill, and we went up to the third floor, I pulled one of those hoses out of the wall and held it out the window, and I said, "Okay, turn her on," and this was a canvas fire hose, and the guy turned it on, water all over the floor. That canvas hose was all rotted from being in that compartment in the wall. Good thing we did that; we found out that it

wasn't worth a darn thing. So—laugh like hell, water all over the place. That was crazy.

Mike: Did you or anybody that you were with pull any pranks?

Jennik: Not in the hospital, no. It was a professional organization. I remember the special service officer would come in, he would say, "Well, how much whiskey do you want?" And the officers could buy twelve-year-old Suntory whiskey. Well, I wasn't much of a whiskey drinker and I said, "Well, do the guys get some?" He said, "No." And here I had the motor pool with the drivers and everything and all they could do was drink whatever beer that they could get. So I asked the motor pool sergeant, I said, "We can get Suntory whiskey. Do you want some?" So I remember I got a case and I gave it to him, and I don't know if he paid me for it, but you could have been court-martialed for that, selling booze to the enlisted men. [laughs] That was out. No fraternization and don't give 'em the stuff or don't sell it to 'em.

Mike: So what did you think of the other officers, your fellow soldiers?

Jennik: Well, you admired the doctors. And the chief nurse was a pain in the neck. You got along pretty well with everybody because everybody was there for a reason. They wanted to do their job, and they did. I remember one kid was court-martialed in the Philippines. He had gone to town and he had taken some sugar from the mess hall and he sold the sugar in town. So they court-martialed him and they appointed me TJA, that's Trial Judge Advocate, that's like the district attorney, and my tent-mate was appointed the defense attorney for this kid. And we went to the trial and I had depositions from people in town where he had sold it and so forth, and the defense attorney just sat there and didn't do a damn thing for this kid that he was supposedly defending, and here I was trying to crucify him, and the kid got six-and-six. That means six months in prison or the disciplinary barracks, wherever they would send them, and six months pay forfeited. The psychiatrist evidently was there and he came up to me after the trial a couple days later, he said, "Jennik, I could sense that you were very upset at that trial," and he said, "I just want you to know that that kid didn't fulfill that sentence. He was sent back to the States." So there was something wrong with the kid, a psychiatric problem or whatever. But the psychiatrist could sense that I was mad at the defense attorney for not fighting for the kid he was supposed to defend. That was interesting.

Mike: Do you remember when your Service ended?

Jennik: Yeah. It was a point system and if you had so many points then you could go home. And then I was sent from the hospital to some other camp in Japan, and then on the ship and home again on a troop ship. Went home through Seattle and then was discharged, or—I was not discharged, but released from Fort

McCoy, Wisconsin, and I stayed in the Reserves and served in the Reserves after the war.

Mike: When you say it was a point system, you—[End of Tape 1, Side A]—got points, how did you get points?

Jennik: You got one point for every month you were in Service. So if you were in forty-eight months that was forty-eight points. If you were overseas you got one point for every month you were overseas, and then you had a break point after you got seventy points or eighty-five points, whatever it was, you were eligible for rotation to be sent home. In Vietnam, if you recall, it was just time; twelve months in Vietnam and you could be sent home if you were still living. But to be released during World War II it was a point system based on your length of service and how much overseas time you had.

Mike: So when you got back, when you got to Seattle, when was that?

Jennik: That would be February, March of '46.

Mike: What did you do immediately afterwards? Did you work? Did you go to school?

Jennik: Went to Milwaukee, worked at my dad's hardware store, goofed around all summer long, and then in fall went back to Marquette University under the G.I. Bill. They paid your tuition and books, and you got fifty bucks a month for going to school, and if you were married you got seventy-five dollars a month. So I was in pretty good shape; I got money for going to school and I got money for working at my dad's hardware store. And I had fifteen hundred bucks which I had saved in war bonds. So I was in good shape for a young kid.

Mike: Did you make any close friends while you were in the Service?

Jennik: No, because I was moved out. It was interesting, when I got out of the 66th Infantry Division I knew that they were going to go overseas, and while I was in OCS I wrote to the kid who slept next to me and it came back "Killed In Action." Well, I knew that he was going overseas so that didn't bother me at all. But in 1963 I found out that the 66th Division, most of it, was on a boat going across the English Channel, Christmas Eve of 1944, and my whole company was on that boat. The ship, it was a Belgian ship called the Leopoldville that sunk in the English Channel, and I didn't know that 'til 1963. Eight hundred guys drowned, Christmas Eve of 1944. I was supposed to be on that ship, but I went to OCS. I got out of it. I don't know why, but I did. That was scary finding that out years later. The 66th was scheduled to go over at that time to relieve the Battle of Bastogne, which was hot and heavy, but since they had so many casualties inflicted on them they didn't go there,

they went to St. Nazaire submarine pens in France where there was a pocket of Germans, and they just stayed there and kept the Germans confined in that pocket until the war was over in Europe. They wouldn't have been a good fighting force, having lost so many people.

Mike: So the 66th was where you started your basic training and then you went to OCS?

Jennik: Yes. The second time I took basic, yeah. The first time was with the Air Corps in Atlantic City.

Mike: And then the OCS was—

Jennik: After that.

Mike: And was OCS voluntary or did somebody say "Okay,"—

Jennik: You had to apply for it, oh, yes. I went before a field board in the infantry, and I don't know how many people applied for OCS, but two of us were accepted. So it was a selection process.

Mike: Did you join a veterans' organization?

Jennik: I belong to the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I didn't join right away. I didn't join until 1960.

Mike: Then what did you do as a career after the war?

Jennik: Well, I served in the Army Reserve as an instructor with the U.S.A.R. schools and I was a appliance salesman for six years, a pharmaceutical salesman for twelve years, a real estate salesperson, and retired as a real estate assessor, real estate appraiser with the city of Milwaukee.

Mike: Did your military experience influence your thinking about the war or about the military in general?

Jennik: Being in the Reserve I was always what would be considered by other people a hard nose and a definite militant. Not a war hawk, but certainly pro-government and pro-USA. In the Reserve you had to sign a statement every four years, you had to have a physical every four years, and the statement was if you did not belong to any organization—there was a whole list of organizations that they said you had to tell them whether or not you were ever a member of any of these organizations. You know, I didn't even think that I might be. It wouldn't even cross my mind.

Mike: How long were you in the Reserves?

- Jennik: Well, that was from '46 until '77, and then I was placed in the Retired Reserve and then in 1984 started drawing retirement pay.
- Mike: And then you retired as a colonel?
- Jennik: Yes, in the U.S.A.R. School I taught officer courses, the medical—officer basic course, the medical advanced course, and then the command and general staff college course, and retired as a command and general staff instructor. That was high level stuff: logistics, administration, tactics.
- Mike: So when Korea rolled around and Vietnam rolled around, what was your role at that point?
- Jennik: Serve in the Reserves and continue with the instructing. We instructed National Guard, the students were National Guard and Reserve officers in the Wisconsin area, and you would take two weeks' summer camp and they would come to class there, in addition to going to classes during the Reserve duty training at home.
- Mike: So during both of those conflicts were you in the position of running basic training, kind of?
- Jennik: No, active, active through the newspaper. We knew what was going on, yeah. In 1967 I was in the last year of the command and general staff college course which in the Reserve is a five-year program, and I was at Fort Leavenworth in 1967 at that time, and then got access to the secret information on the combat units that were in Vietnam and that sort of thing, so we knew what was going on. And that was very interesting. We learned that McNamara and his cohorts—he was the Secretary of Defense—were the people in Washington who were doing target selection for the Air Force in Vietnam. So the Air Force commander, the Army commander in Vietnam, did not pick the targets. That was done in Washington by satellite. They'd tell 'em where they should bomb. Not a good way to run a war. The guys doing the fighting there did not have the opportunity or did not have the authority to pick the targets. That was one of the sins of the Vietnam war. These brain people in Washington knew how to do it.
- Mike: So now in the veterans' organizations that you're in, the VFW and the Legion, what kind of activities does your post do?
- Jennik: Oh, they would have firing squads for burial purposes, would have parties, Halloween, Christmas parties. We would have the poppy distribution, or we would collect money, and all that money—people don't know that either—all the money that was contributed for the poppies all went to veterans. None of

it was used for any administration. All that money, and here in Milwaukee, went right into the VA Hospital.

Mike: What are poppies?

Jennik: Those little paper poppies that you see on Memorial Day, they're out soliciting your money. And you don't sell poppies, you distribute poppies. No sales tax. That was interesting, too. The guys in the VA Hospital here in Milwaukee made those poppies for the American Legion and they were paid two cents apiece, which was below the minimum wage. So Congress passed special legislation so that these guys could continue to make those poppies below minimum wage. [laughs]

Mike: And you're still active in both of those?

Jennik: Very little, very little. I don't go to all the meetings. Rose and I do help out at American Legion bingo on Tuesday mornings and we go to some of the affairs, but that's about all.

Mike: So you go to the reunions they have there?

Jennik: The 251st Station Hospital does have reunions and we've been to several of them in different parts of the country. But I didn't know the guys in the hospital all that well because they were together for a couple years before I joined them, and I was with them for less than a year, and as soon as I got there—or when we got into Japan, then the war was over, those old-timers started going home because they had enough points.

Mike: So how would you say your Service experiences have affected your life?

Jennik: Gave me an education, with the G.I. Bill. That's how I got my degree. Being in the military has always been good for my health, my posture, and my outlook on life. I remember being in the infantry and I would watch the platoon sergeant and I would watch the platoon leader; the platoon leader is an officer. And I would look and say, "I can do better than that." I was very glad that I was able to become an officer so that I could use what abilities I had. I didn't know that I had the gift of gab, that I could get up in front of a group of people and teach and talk for a couple hours. You would study, you had notes, and you would make your presentation. But in the Reserve schools you had a captive audience. These are all Reserve officers who needed this education to get promoted. It was fun; everybody was motivated. And that's the difference between the war as we know it and the Vietnam war where the whole nation wasn't involved in the Vietnam war. They didn't have butter during World War II, they didn't have meat at home, they didn't have cigarettes. There was gas rationing. When you came home for a two-week leave or a furlough, you went to the gas ration place and you got stamps. You



gave gas stamps to your pa so he could buy gasoline, and then you'd borrow the car. And you got stamps for food to give to your ma so she could buy more food while you were home; rationing, food rationing, gas rationing. The whole country was involved in World War II. In Vietnam and Korea the whole country wasn't involved, it was just those people who were there and those people who were in the military. And being in the military, we felt more closely connected to it than the general population.

Mike: And you think that the country was involved more because there was an event like Pearl Harbor?

Jennik: Because of Pearl Harbor, absolutely. There was a lot going on in the Atlantic Ocean. We were helping Russia and Japan. The Merchant Marine were taking a beating; there was a lot of sinking in the Atlantic Ocean. But we were here and that was out there. But after Pearl Harbor it was much, much different, much different.

Mike: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Jennik: Home. It was on a Sunday, 1:00 o'clock. We were home.

Mike: Okay, is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't covered in this interview?

Jennik: No, I think that pretty well does it.

Mike: Okay.

Jennik: I think the most shocking part was thinking that you should have been on that ship that went down in the Channel and you weren't. Well now you've got a family and kids and everything else and you say to yourself, "Why me?" Well, a lot of us say that in our lives; a lot of times, either good or bad, "Why me?" Okay?

Mike: All right, thanks a lot.

**[End of Interview]**