

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
JEROME STOTSKY
Supply Officer, Army, World War II
2016

OH
2099

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Stotsky, Jerome (b. 1918). Oral History Interview, 2016.

Approximate length: 2 hours, 34 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

In this oral history interview, Jerome L. Stotsky, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, discusses his service in the US Army during World War II, from 1941 to 1946, as a supply officer with the 38th Infantry Division [“Cyclone”], 3rd Battalion, 149th Regiment in the Pacific theatre.

"Jerry" Stotsky was born of Polish immigrant parents and raised in and near Cleveland, Ohio. After high school graduation in 1936 he worked in a local department store and then moved west to Los Angeles, California, where he was employed as a laborer on set construction for Paramount Studios. Drafted by the Army in the fall of 1941, he was sent to Camp Shelby in Louisiana. Following a shortened basic training, Stotsky assisted with training new recruits for three enlistment periods. The Army then sent Stotsky to Officer Candidate School (OCS), Fort Benning, Georgia. He was commissioned and graduated from OCS in August of 1942. With the increased pay, he returned home to Cleveland on leave, proposed to his girlfriend of seven years, and married five days later.

The Army assigned Stotsky to the 38th Infantry Division [“Cyclone”], 3rd Battalion, 149th Regiment. For a year, his unit went on maneuvers in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida, practicing amphibious landings and airdrops of supplies. Although initially trained for the infantry, the Army made Stotsky a supply officer, a job he retained through the ranks of second lieutenant, first lieutenant, and captain. At the end of December 1943 his unit went to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, by ship via the Panama Canal. While in Hawaii, his unit guarded the shores anticipating a possible Japanese submarine attack.

His unit left Hawaii in August 1944, en convoy, for the Philippine Islands. Arriving in New Guinea, where the fighting was over, Stotsky experienced the relative plenty given the quartermaster service, leading to a medal being bestowed upon him. He relates the story of his convoy under attack, strafed by Japanese planes, when approaching the Philippines from the east, with no American planes to counter, perhaps because it was the first [second] day of the Battle of Leyte Gulf [largest naval engagement in history], October 24, 1944. Stotsky weighs in on the controversy regarding Admiral William “Bull” Halsey’s removal to the north of his covering 3rd Fleet in the face of the 7th Fleet’s calls for assistance from Leyte Gulf. Stotsky suggests, on the beaches of Luzon during the Leyte Gulf battle, what it was like that first night, sans foxhole, with his Division; and reports their discovery the next morning of the results of a night of wild gunfire.

While in the Philippines, Stotsky and his unit were in Subic Bay, and Manila. He mentions supplying the Philippine fighters and airdropping rations for them. From the Philippines, Stotsky returned to the States, and was discharged in Indianapolis in early 1946. Returning to Cleveland, he experienced several bouts with malaria. Stotsky speaks of the effects of war: his sensitivity to

noise and the accidents of a nearly two-year old child. Partly with accumulated service pay, he and his wife and some in-laws bought a small house. Stotsky used the GI Bill to earn a degree in accounting from Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Rejecting an Army offer to serve in Greece, and eschewing reunions, Stotsky asserts, “That was part of my life I just wanted to throw away. It was a waste of my time.” Stotsky lived in the Cleveland area and worked in the accounting field until his retirement in the 1980s. He and his wife then moved to Madison, Wisconsin, to live near their two adult daughters.

Biographical Sketch:

Stotsky served in the World War II-era US Army from 1941 to 1946 as a supply officer with the 38th Infantry Division [“Cyclone”], 3rd Battalion, 149th Regiment in the Pacific theatre, particularly the Philippines, and present during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Stotsky furthered his education postwar through the GI Bill, and developed a career in accounting.

Archivist's Note:

Transcriptions are a reflection of the original oral history recording. Due to human and machine fallibility transcripts often contain small errors. Transcripts may not have been transcribed from the original recording medium. It is strongly suggested that researchers engage with the oral history recording as well as the transcript.

Interviewed by Ellen Healey, 2016.
Transcribed by Nicholas Albertson, 2017.
Abstract by Jeff Javid, 2017.

Interview Transcript:

[Beginning of OH2099.Stotsky_user_file1]

Healey: Okay, appears we have it going now. We had a little problem, so I'm going to watch that. Um —to make sure it keeps going.

Healey: Today is December 20th, 2016. This is an interview with Jerome L. Stotsky—

Stotsky: Right.

Healey: Who served with the United States Army, 149th infantry, 38th division, during World War II, from August 21th, 2000—

Healey: Excuse me.

Healey: 1942, to January 26th, 1946.

Stotsky: Right.

Healey: This interview is being conducted—at—in Madison, Wisconsin at Mr. Stotsky's home and the interviewer is myself, Ellen Healey.

Healey: And my last name is H-E-A-L-E-Y. Mr. Stotsky's name, ah—is spelled J-E-R-O-M-E, middle initial L, like Lemma, last name S-T-O-T-S-K-Y.

Healey: [inhales] Now when I came in—you indicated that you're Jerry— you go by Jerry, or by Jerome?

Stotsky: Well, Jerr—ah— Jerome for any legal papers but, ah—every—they—everybody knows me as like Jerry.

Healey: Okay, so you're known as Jerry and would you pronounce your last name, I'm not sure I can.

Stotsky: Stotsky.

Healey: Stotsky, and—your middle initial is L.

Stotsky: L, for—

Healey: Which is L?

Stotsky: Leonard, L-E-O-N-N-A-R-D.

Healey: Okay—and did I get the—dates right? Was your beginning date in the army August 21st, 1942?

Stotsky: That was my—ah— offici—that was my date that I was ah—um—that I earned ah—a commission it doesn't show anything as to my enlisting period and I don't ha— I don't know why—but, I only enlisted from um-uh [thought pause] October 15th, 1941 to that date that you have and uh—I just had my basic training, you know—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: But, then they pulled me out—for some reason—of basic training and I assisted the men who were, ah, helping us, oh I forget, the cadre, and the cadre were the, those soldiers who were, ah, marching us, who were, ah, showing us how to use the gun, how to clean it, you know, and I joined them for some reason at the time I didn't know but, ah, I was with them through about three basic training periods and then they called me in and told me that they had recorded my application wit- at Fort Benning, Georgia, as officer candidate school [OCS], you see, and I didn't know, I was just working with the cadre, they're a bunch of Texans [??], but, ah—and I found out why they took me out, and that's the first benefit I got from- from the army. Instead of my going through basic training and being assigned to some infantry division ready to go to Europe or Africa, I didn't do that. I went through my officer candidate and then I was assigned to the 38th division, 3rd battalion, and ah—

Healey: Okay, let me back up a little bit. [laughter] We got ahead of our self and I'll- I might ask you some more about your, the way you were accessioned here, but um—let's go back to a little bit- background about yourself.

Stotsky: Oh, well I went to school and so on.

Healey: Yeah, well let's start at your birth. Where- what was your birth date?

Stotsky: September 26th, 1918.

Healey: Okay, so as we're sitting here talking today, what's your age?

Stotsky: 98.

Healey: 98, okay.

Stotsky: [laughs]

Healey: And where were you born sir?

Stotsky: Cleveland, Ohio.

Healey: Okay, and ah, tell me a little bit about the family that you grew up in.

Stotsky: Okay, uh, I have brother and sister younger than me. Ah, unfortunately it was a bad marriage for my mother and she and my father divorced when I was fifteen. And uh, truth to the matter is that I hardly had any association with my father as long as he lived. Where my brother, who was a plumber, he ah—used to call my father in, who's a plumber, and help him on some jobs just—but, ah, I—

[00:05:06.17]

Healey: Was that all in Cleveland, did you stay in Cleveland?

Stotsky: Oh yes, all in Cleveland. Until—and then, when I graduated, I didn't go to college right away. I ah, worked for the Bailey Company; it was a large department store, where my mother sold coats in the basement. Not the fur coats upstairs, but cloth coats in the basement, and ah I-I was in different department, in the rug department, and men suits but I ended up ah—in ah in the fur department, in the retail sales there, there was all women but, we also had ah— oh—I don't—In the summer time, we had a place to hang these coats. People brought them in, ah—I forget words every now and then.

Healey: Did they bring them in for storage?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And when they brought them in, they, uh, the manager of the fur department would, uh, make an estimate of any repairs that were necessary, send them a letter, telling them what repairs there were, and they either had it done—the Bailey Company catered to lower income people in Cleveland. There was, there was about four department stores in and ours department store was the lowest in income. But the-

Healey: When did you graduate from high school?

Stotsky: June of 1936.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, ah, I didn't go to college right away, I took a couple of courses, because there was a school on the square, ah, of downtown Cleveland and I took accounting courses there, but wasn't in college—yet. Uh, so I worked for uh, I worked at the Bailey Company for about four years [inaudible]—Yeah, and uh, then I made a mistake, I left them to go to California and seek my fortune.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Well—they, uh, the different furriers I went to weren't interested in hiring me. They were only interested if I had money to invest in their fur shop, you know. So that didn't work out. When I was in Cal- I- yeah, when I was in California—and that was in the latter part of 1940, about September of 1940—and I was in California till October 15th, 1941, when I got my papers to sign up for the army, so I had the papers transferred to Cleveland. So I could see my father- my mother and my family, before I got in the army. So, uh, so I left, let's see, I worked there just as a laborer and the man who ran the ah— garden isn't the right name but, the studio they had all kind of plants, of all sizes and the different pictures would call into him, whoever ran the movi- the pictures and said he like a low—ah, group of plantings, you know, bushes and so on. And some of the plantings, there were trees that were tied up to steel beams, up high and so the man who ran the thing, after working for him one summer, he asked for me after that, and I just worked there, and ah—

Healey: And that was in California?

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: That was Los Angeles and actually that was with Paramount Studios—and I worked for Paramount about the first couple weeks, I was just taking used lumber and driving nails through the wood—get them out—so we had the lumber available to use on the next picture. Do you follow?

Healey: I got to ask; did you see any movie stars?

Stotsky: Oh, yeah, sure! I di- well- I didn't talk to them.

Healey: Uh-mm.

Stotsky: Who was it—this one who I had so much respect for, but he really didn't talk to me very long. He dropped something as we passed by and I picked it up, and gave it to him. And he said thank you and I forgot who it was. But uh, I say I worked on sometimes on the [cough] studio [cough] on the, on the movie site, sometimes they needed labor help while the picture was going on, while they were acting, maybe on the side they needed something brought over. For, ah, maybe ah, an hour's picture away, you know, they uh, did that, um they tried to provide everything in advance for what they needed, so I did that. But, ah, I also applied for the accounting department and they had my name and they were nice enough to send me letters when I was in service, and I actually never worked there. I applied there, I talked to them a couple times, you know, I- I picked accounting

because that's what I was taking in school. And, ah, it wa- it was a small time college on the square of Cleveland, but they're not there anymore.

[00:11:22.25]

Healey: Um-hum.

Stotsky: But, ah, so I- I had an interest in that, and—So I left uh, I left the studio, the studio with paper for October 15th, 1941 and that was the date that I was supposed to—be in the service. Well, when I got home—I called up—somewhere, I don't know, and they had it extended a little bit—about the time, so then—yeah—I didn't—I didn't marry Elinor then, uh— I didn't have anything and I was just starting in the army and I didn't think that was a good time to get married, at that point. So—uh—

Healey: Okay, and let me just go back, ah, when I walked in, ah, to your home today sir, you indicated that, ah, you're living here alone right now but, ah that you lost your wife. What, just this last year?

Stotsky: Yeah, February 24th.

Healey: Yeah, and—

Stotsky: She was good! All the dolls here, she made, she dressed everyone! And she made a lot more but, the girls that—I got a, granddaughters and I got daughters and they took a lot. But, uh, the other day I told them; why not take them, I- but I- I- reacted and says, just leave it.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Oh, once I go they can take—what they want, you know, but my wife we had a kiln, right in that room here, and Elinor—with the kiln you used for the doll and for the arms and legs and everything. And, ah, she took classes of course, and, ah, but she, her hands were like gold, when we came here we both retired. See, when we came here, that was in January of 1986—we had been here, ahh, before and we bought the house, this house.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: We liked it.

Healey: Now you said, you told me that you met your wife when she was fifteen.

Stotsky: Yes, she was starting work at that department store that I worked for, the fur department. She got the job, she first start-, she was actually, she told them

sixteen but, she was fifteen, and ah—and she was a—oh, if some department needed cash she'd run for the cash, where they kept the money, you know.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: Yeah, and there

Healey: And was she from Cleveland also?

Stotsky: Oh yeah!

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Oh yeah, she- she— I loved her family and they loved me. She had a brother who was the best man I ever knew in my lifetime. He was such a good man, he would go to college like me after the army, he was in the— Army Air Corps. He—he wasn't a flier, he installed the Norden bombsight, this guy, he was a pretty smart fella; when the Norden bombsight [allowing accurate high-altitude daytime bombing] came out—there's a place in Natal, Brazil where he was, and the planes would go there first and they get that bombsight and from there, and from there they either go up to like England, or France, or right across they go for— uh, the desert, Africa, you see, a lot of the planes went there too, because and at that time, [German General] Rommel was really rough, he—he was making our troop commanders look bad. He was a good man, Rommel but, he was German. I had nothing against him [laughs].

[00:15:36.19]

Healey: Now you said; Norden bombsight.

Stotsky: NORDEN, N-O-R-D-E-N— yeah, our brother Bill and uh—

Healey: And where is that located?

Stotsky: I don't know.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, I have no idea.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: But, he installed it into the planes and, uhh—we had a lifetime of unity, Bill and his wife and me and Elinor. We bought a house together, and Elinor had enough money so we could buy the house. It was cheap, it was back—in 19—[long pause] when th- oh, it was after the war, that's right.

Healey: Okay, so you- you indicated that you met your wife, ah, before you, ah—

Stotsky: That's right, when she came to work for the Bailey Company. I saw this lovely young girl, and I talked to her, and we got friendly, and uh—we were friendly for seven years, but that's as far as it went. When we married, we were both virgins, when we married, and we were [laughs]—

Healey: And you were in the army before you married.

Stotsky: I had just gotten my officer—from officer candidate school—I was just commissioned. So I got a lot more money than I would as a GI, you know. And uh, and that's why from- from Fort Benning, Georgia, I went right home to her, and I- and I borrowed my stepfath-, my mother married a second time, I borrowed his car, we went for a ride, and I stopped, overlooking Lake Erie and I said; Elinor, would you like to get married now? She said; sure, I've been waiting long enough.

Healey: [Laughs]

Stotsky: Yeah, and she was disappointed when I went to California, you know. Ah, and she start going with different fellas and there was, uh, one fella I know who use to, he had a big car, he would drive her club, she belonged to a club of girls and they rented a place for the summer, you know. And, ah, but this time when they rented a place, Elinor had my son with her, he was born in January 16th, 1944 and the last I saw of her was when my mother came down to, uh, Louisiana and they both went home together. My- Elinor was in her ninth month, and, ah, she got home, yeah, the middle of Jan- January and she had a—the boy January 16th but, I didn't know it, until my ship got to Hawaii, and they called, the advanced party called me, on the ship and so they, somebody got me and I went over on the pier side and they said; we got a telegram from your wife. I said; what did I have? They said; you had son. I said; thank you a lot! And I wasn't even off the ship yet. But, I didn't have enough sense along the way to get a box of cigars or something but, uh, so she had the son.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, uh, during the summer, she would rent these cottages along the lake, Lake Erie, and, uh, my dad would help her a lot [coughs] he helped her, he would be on the beach with her and— [sneezes] and, uhh, my son would—

Healey: Bless you.

Stotsky: Walk around the beach with a pipe in his mouth, like my father had, he always had a pipe in his mouth, and that's how my son grew up. But, ahh— well I'm glad

my father some pleasure with him, because, uh— he didn't have any pleasure with my daughters.

[00:20:08.19]

But, that's besides, ah, ah, thank you. Ah, [blow nose] so— oh, I got a nose- oh damn it! Excuse me, I gotta—

Healey: Sure, go ahead and, ah, take a break here.

Stotsky: Oh yeah.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: Yeah— oh man.

Healey: I'm going to leave the recorder on here for just a few moments well Mr. Stotsky uhh, takes care of his nose bleed. It's- were about 20 minutes and 40 seconds in.

[background noise]

Healey: We're still on break here.

[background noise]

Healey: Okay, so this break is taking a little longer than I anticipated, where at 23 minutes 49 seconds and I'm going to turn the recorder off. Which will cause us to have a new— set.

[End of OH2099.Stotsky_user_file1]

[Beginning of OH2099.Stotsky_user_file2]

Healey: Okay, we're recording now. I want to let ah, the— folks that are going to be recording this know that this is the second track of an interview, with Jerry Stotsky. We started the interview— on— December 20th and then we took a break after about twenty, twenty-three, minutes and we're back here, December 22nd, at Mr. Stotsky's home. And, when we left off, Mr. Stotsky had just, ah, indicated that in 1944, his first son was born, in January of '44, January 16th, and he didn't know until he got to Hawaii, and then he got a telegram.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay, um— so, we've talked about, ah, your courtship, your married life, a bit about your wife, and that sort of thing. Your background before you came into the service, umm— and what you did before you got into the service. Let's talk about; you're getting into, coming into the service.

Stotsky: Okay.

Healey: Now you had indicated that ah, you had gotten a notification when you were working out in California.

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: And you had them sent that letter back to— ah, your home state of—

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Ohio.

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: And so that you could enlist there. So, umm, you in fact enlisted, is that correct?

Stotsky: What?

Healey: You enlisted in the army, or were you drafted?

Stotsky: I was drafted.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Uh-huh.

Healey: And, ah, when did you eventually go down to the draft board and—

Stotsky: Okay.

Healey: Get inducted.

Stotsky: I came into Cleveland from California where I got my notice of draft and I went to the board and I was drafted from Cleveland on October 15th, 1941. And ah— let's see.

Healey: So, you came in before Pearl Harbor?

Stotsky: That's correct.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: I was a rookie, ah- all of us thought that we were there for one year, you were drafted for one year. But, then we found out that Sunday, that the time we'll be in

the army has to be determined, because we realized that wherever we were, we probably would have to stay there, and uh—

Healey: When you say that Sunday, are you referring to Pearl Harbor day, or not? Yes—

Stotsky: Uh-huh.

Healey: Okay, where were you, actually, when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Stotsky: I was in basic training in—in Louisiana.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, uh— yeah, that's right. First, I was in basic training for about nine weeks, instead of the thirteen weeks, because the company that was training at, the captain wanted me out of there, and, ah, I was part of the, ah, oh, I can't think of the words. It's [laughs] there was about six or eight Texans, and they taught the new guys who came into basic training how to march, how far to march, how to take your rifles apart, how to put 'em back together, and the same thing with pistols. And, ah—so my basic training actually wasn't thirteen weeks. It was about nine or ten weeks and they pulled me out and, uh, when I was with the—and I forget the word for it, the men who are staying in the same plac-, uh, so I was with— with the ones doing the training, I also, they wanted me to give the morning exercise to the whole company, then they, uh, wanted me also, to march in groups, uh, maybe by platoons but, uh, to march and re- I saw how they responded to command, commands, you know. I didn't know why they pulled me out, but I found out—that after being there for two groups of basic training that where I helped the—oh, cadre, c-a-d-r-e, the cadre. Ah, where I helped them as of that time about— in May of 1942 they sent me to officer candidate school. That's why they pulled me out.

[00:05:25.28]

Stotsky: And, I didn't know that they were gonna send me to—I didn't ask for, I mean, you know, I was this little five-foot seven, a hundred-forty pounds, guy— but, maybe it was from my tests or something. I don't know, but anyhow they sent me to officer candidate school and I, uh, we graduated from there on August 21st, 1942, and five days later – we got married. Okay.

Healey: Where did you go to officer candidate school?

Stotsky: Oh, ah, Fort Benning, Georgia.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, ours was OCS—I think ours was class 15, I know our classes all had a number. And at OCS, at officer candidate school, ah, you had like a job, you weren't just a private, like I was a- they made me a company commander, and they made other guys battalion command- , and we had different- they appointed us – different jobs, you know. So that's what we did. Whatever the job was, and like I say; I was, ah, company commander. So we graduated, and uh, five days later—I was married, and we went on a honeymoon—and the boat from Ninth street pier in Cleveland to Detroit, but we didn't go in Detroit, we went about ten mile road. There's, in Detroit there's one mile road, two mile road, it's up to about ten or eleven miles—

Healey: Did you get married right after you, uh-um, did you- right after you proposed? Or had you proposed—

Stotsky: Oh.

Healey: —after that?

Stotsky: Good point, good point. When I got—as soon as I got home, the next morning I borrowed a car from my stepfather; and I told her, let's go for a ride. And we went for a ride, overlooking this beach, Lake Erie, where – I asked her if she would like to get marri-, and after seven years she said yes. [laughs]

Healey: [laughs] Okay.

Stotsky: And ah, so – it took five days for the two families to arrange – for a rabbi, uh, in one of the rooms of the temple, and I don't even remember who was in this room. I remember Elinor was there, I remember the rabbi, I don't know who was behind. I never did, never did remember.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: It was just; Elinor, the rabbi, and me.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: But, we accomplished what we were supposed to. And uh– oh, then – I had a week, uh I had a week, a stay there. Ah, because I was assigned to this 38th Division, and I was assigned to the 3rd Battalion – and so I called them up from Detroit and told them I got married and asked if I could have a little more time, and they did, because – they started to get these lieutenants in, from the north. I was the first – lieutenant – in this company and the battalion, outside of what officers they had. They had a – company commander for each company –now there's [??] 3rd Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 1st Battalion, and uh, I was the first lieutenant that came in. They were outfitting this whole outfit; according to the

tables of personnel [cough] they needed a lieutenant from each, for each platoon, of each company, and there was four platoons.

[00:10:18.25]

Stotsky: So we, they, each company got, after I was there, ah, a lieutenant for each platoon. So- ah, – well, I was already, the word came that they were going on maneuvers. So, I was the only one there then.

Healey: And where was the 38th division, 3rd Battalion? Where were you when you came in?

Stotsky: Ah, in, ah, Louisiana.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: So after you got married, did you go back to Louisiana?

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Did Elinor go with you?

Stotsky: Not then.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: She came later, uh – and that was a good battalion. Our battalion commander was this gray haired man, who owned – Glenmore Distilleries.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: Yeah, Glenmore Distilleries. It was, yeah, Taylor his name was and he- he was a older person but, he was the commander of the battalion and that was his- he did good, when we were overseas, he did good. Now—

Healey: Now, was this, ah, a infantry battalion?

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: An infantry division, right.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And an infantry battalion. It had about 800 people in it, and, uh – yeah, that's right. And so, they – there was ah, ah, ah, a state representative, I forget his name, and he used his pressure to keep – the – battalions – in the States an extra year, instead of going overseas, in 1942, we stayed in, uh, Louisiana, we were in Texas, we went to Florida for, ah, unloading ships onto beaches. And – he kept us in the States for one whole year, and we all knew about it, but, well of course we didn't mind, 'cause – we knew when a – when he was through with us we would all get ready to go somewhere, and that's what happened. Uh, yeah, this happened before we went to Hawaii. We had maneuvers in Texas and Louisiana, and uh, my wife came down in 1943, and she was so lucky to find a real nice room and a nice house, owned by a woman who was a widow; an attached bath—it was so nice, and the owner was so nice, you know. So, she did come down for a long time, dur- she had her best girlfriend come down – and – at the- I wa- during the week I was with the battalion, wherever they were, I was with the battalion; but then on weekends I joined Elinor and this girl; the lady gave us like a couch for this girl to sleep on, you know. And so she stayed there the whol-, she was there a few weeks.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: And uh, so Elinor had company, and uh – yeah – yeah, that was after basic training when they assigned me to the 3rd Battalion, 38th Division, when we spent the time – in the United States—

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: Like I said, in Texas, ah, in Louisiana, and then we went over to Florida and we're making, ah – like attacks, for land—land—oh, we would get in these small boats, where the front just [thud] came right down, like that.

[00:15:14.03]

Stotsky: —boats, they were used all over the world, at that time, which took you from the big boat, that carried you there, to these small boats, and I forget that— my memory is gone. Not *all* gone but, it's – weak, and so we were there, and, uh, at one time—

Healey: Were you on the east side of Florida or the west side of Florida? Where were you practicing the amphibious—

Stotsky: Ah, this was on the west side of Florida.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And we landed right – on the – we- we- yeah, on the pla-

Healey: You landed on the beach, or not?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: We landed—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: —on beaches.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Uh-huh, and then after that, uh, we, they came in trucks and we came back, this was all in 1943 and on maneuvers; on maneuvers, ah, I had a week that I was assigned to drop supplies from air planes, and uh, I took three guys with me from the battalion, and we get in the plane, and at first I'd reconciled where the pilot was going, after that I didn't bother that because he had his instructions, and we use to stack up the 10-in-1 rations [2 5-in-1s packed in one unit; consisting of B rations], ten-stack, ten to a stack, 10-in-1 was like this. It was a big—it could serve one meal to ten people.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, so- we – at that time they were getting us trained for 10-in-1, because when we got overseas that's what we had, 10-in-1 rations. So, uh, oh, on the plane, that's right, I spent the whole week and it was dry and hot and dusty, with about three guys, and we go on the plane and, uh, I didn't have enough sense to have the three men tied to the air plane, nor myself, you see. Now my brother-in-law, Bill, worked on air planes in Natal, Brazil, and when he got in the plane, he tied himself in. But all we did, we stacked up the, ah, the 10-in-1 rations [cough] and we would go to the destination. It was a company somewhere—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, uh—

Healey: Where you flying out of Louisiana or Florida?

Stotsky: Huh?

Healey: When you were doing the air plane drops—

Stotsky: Oh, air plane drops were in Louisiana.

Healey: Louisiana.

Stotsky: Some—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: —in Texas

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Mostly in Louisiana.

Healey: And, in addition to practicing, where you actual dropping rations—

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: —to people that would use them?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: The front of that plane was loaded with rations, somebody else did that.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Our men took ten, stacked them up, and then there is two lights [cough] right by the open door, there's a yellow, and a green, and when we're almost ready to drop 'em, the yellow light will be on, when we got the green light, we pushed them out, and—

Healey: Did they, ah, did they have parachutes on them, or not?

Stotsky: – No.

Healey: No, you just dropped them.

Stotsky: The food didn't—

Healey: Were you—

Stotsky: Other stuff did have it.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: But, uh, food, we just dropped the box down, and, uhh, they quickly—down on the ground—the company who was receiving them, they quickly got them all out of the way because we would come around once more, it took 20, and so we come around again with the stack 10-in-1 rations, and we put them out again.

Healey: Oh? Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: And, was the pilot flying pretty low to the ground, or not?

Stotsky: Oh yeah, he—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: I don't know if he was even a hundred feet. He came down pretty low, and unfortunately, when we got to the Philippines – when we got to the Philippines they gave me about twenty Filipinos—these poor skinny fellow peop- and they carried a box on their back and went up the mountain and dropped them off at the headquarters, up the mountain.

[00:20:17.21]

Stotsky: And uhh, but that just lasted a few days and they start dropping the ration to my own battalion. I never saw it, `cause I wasn't up there, I was, I had a supply dump half way up the mountain and I was there and the company uh-uh-uh switch board operator, we had a switch board there, and uh, they- so there was two of us, the switch board operator and me. Whenever I had, I had given out to somebody, I had ahh, M1's, the old M1's, and I had carbines, carbines was a much lighter weight rifle, you know. Wasn't nearly as deadly as a regular M1 rifle but uhh, they would, they would come to me and wanna trade their M1 for a carbine. In other words; they wanted to use this light weight gun.

Healey: Who was that? That wanted to take—

Stotsky: Our men.

Healey: Your men did.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And our four fo-

Healey: All right.

Stotsky: Four companies, they come over to me, you know. And they said; Lieutenant Stotsky, do you have a, a carbine that I could use? I'd say; yeah, I got- I had gathered up –

Healey: Where you supply officer then?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Oh, okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, I was supply officer.

Healey: How did you become a supply officer?

Stotsky: I became—

Healey: Because you had infantry training.

Stotsky: Oh, okay. Uh, they assigned me to this third battalion, of the 38th Division and, uh, the first company I was with was company I, and Company I just had a company commander; I was the first officer sent to this battalion, to the regiment, I was the first officer. And then, they start sending them down, they were uh – let see what the question was, oh, they—I was there with this I company, as the first Lieutenant

Healey: Okay, and when you say you were there, where were you at the time?

Stotsky: In Louisiana.

Healey: Louisiana, okay.

Stotsky: And ah, I was- I was assigned by local, by the battalion to company I.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Then word came that we were going on maneuvers and that we need a battalion supply officer. I was the only one there – so I was battalion supply officer for the next two years. I had the same job, I didn't have to lead men or anything like that. I had good training at officer candidate school but, I was lucky, I was made the 3rd Battalion supply officer. Not long after me— and the 2nd Battalion, they got a guy and he became supply officer for 2nd Battalion, but I was the supply officer.

Healey: Did you have, ah, some enlisted men working for you or NCO's or—

Stotsky: Actually—

Healey: Or not?

Stotsky: —according to the tables of organization, I didn't have anybody, I always picked out somebody for one of the companies but I- it showed me, battalion supply but, it didn't show who would help me do things, you know. So, at battalion supply I got the opportunity, well – I, let's see – yeah, well we were in Texas and Louisiana, there was one time that I took a few trucks as a company supply sergeants and they had a list of the – clothing, size of the clothing, and size of shoes, and I'd take them up by the quartermaster maybe for their jeans, you know. And uh, I know that was once in the States, the next time, when we got to Hawaii, I took them up there more often. Got them new shoes, got them another suit, oh- what do they call- blue jeans or, something they called it, but—

Healey: When did you leave for Hawaii? When did you leave Louisiana?

Stotsky: We left December 31st of 1943. On December 15th my mother came down and took Elinor back to Cleveland.

[00:25:44.07]

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, she went back because the trains were loaded, you know, and so was she— she went out, they were starting the 9th month.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And so my mother came down and they both left. Two weeks later our battalion left and we went down through—

Healey: How did you get from Louisiana – to the West—

Stotsky: Trucks.

Healey: —Coast? trucks.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Trucks – yeah, that's right. They get this big trucks, to get a bunch of guys in it, and uh—

Healey: They were in the back of trucks all the way to the West Coast?

Stotsky: Oh –

Healey: Or did yo-

Stotsky: No.

Healey: When you- when your unit left Louisiana, how did you get to Hawaii?

Stotsky: Oh, we got to Hawaii – after we got on a boat, December 31st, at New Orleans.

Healey: Oh, at New Orleans.

Stotsky: New Orleans, and ah, and the whole, the whole battalion was in our boat, and ah, we went through the Panama Canal, we were there for a day or two, some of the guys got off but, then we finished the trip and got to- ah, Hawaii on February 18th, 1944, and ah, that's when the advance party had a telegram from my wife, about, we had a son! [Laugh]

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: That's when I found out, we had a son, and so—

Healey: How much time did you spend in Hawaii?

Stotsky: We were there about eight months; we had, uh, little groups, small groups, all around the island to watch for subs, or anything, any kind of foreign, you know, ships, or boats, or anything. There was [cough]—

Healey: Were you, were you in O'ahu?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: And—a

Stotsky: O'ahu—

Healey: Did you stay in a barracks, or what?

Stotsky: Uh?

Healey: Did you stay in a barracks, what was your housing like, or did you—

Stotsky: Oh yeah.

Healey: Do tents.

Stotsky: There, let's see, where did we stay? Oh, this was nice, we stayed in Kaneohe. That was in the back of the island, we went over the mountain, by truck, they took the whole battalion over to the other side, and they had beautiful tents, but with wooden floors, you know. So they were nice, real nice. And that's in Kaneohe, that was on the other side of the island from Honolulu, and we were there, and that was our, like, headquarters.

Healey: Did you get some time in Honolulu? Were you able to spend some time there?

Stotsky: Ah, yeah I think, there was another lieutenant, like me, uh, and we- we like, stuck together—

Healey: Uh-huh.

Stotsky: When we left the base. Uh, we- we were, let's see, before- before we even went over, we were in Texas and we were in Louisiana, before we left there to go to Hawaii, and in Texas, uh, the base there, we were about ten miles from Mineral Wells, Texas, that's a town, and, uh, they had – days off, that's where go. Only we didn't call it Mineral Wells, we called it Venereal Wells. And that's, so these guys would, when they had a day off, they, that's where they would go but; but, this other guy and I we'd visit other towns around there. Mineral Wells, Texas. It wasn't too far, it was pretty close. We were there, well we were still in the States, we were in Louisiana, and that's—

[00:30:24.20]

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: —where I had the training for dropping supplies in a plane. And then, we would go over to Texas, different places, like now, when I look at the map, different towns ring a bell, an that's, I knew that's where we were, around there, otherwise I wouldn't know.

Healey: Well what I wanted to ask you; when you got to, um Hawaii, did you get an opportunity to go to Pearl Harbor or not? Or did you spend all your time over at Kaneohe Bay?

Stotsky: I don't think I went to Honolulu.

Healey: Okay.

Healey: You may not have.

Stotsky: I did drop suppl- ah food off at these different places where we had eight, ten men on the outskirts of the island, all around, ah, they were alerted for any Jap submarines, out of—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: There were no Jap planes around there, but uh, they were alerted for that, but uh, let's see, where was that? Oh, that was in Hawaii, that's right, I- that's right. After we had maneuvers in Texas and in Louisiana and Florida for getting off a boat and going on land. After that training, uh, we left December 31st of 1943 and, uh, we went through Panama Canal and we went to Hawaii.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, and when we were there—yeah, I think if they had passes, they would go to Honolulu. Yeah—where were we? We were stationed on the other side.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: There are real nice accommodations in Kaneohe. When I was in—Elinor and I were in the Philippines, oh, I don't know, maybe eight, ten years later, maybe more, 1990s – uh, we took a car and we went up – to this , ah, site where all these Japanese were with their cameras. You know this was already way after the war and there, it was a paved highway over to Kaneohe. When we first got there, we went over rotten, rough territory. You know, went over like the mountain and ah it was rough, rough ride.

Healey: Um.

Stotsky: But then, years and years later, we went up there and beautiful pavement, it was so nice and, um, so many Japanese with their cameras. So we, we were there a while, then we left. I rented a car and Eileen's husband, uh, Steve—he's her second husband—she at first was married to a fellow from Cleveland, a young guy, he was a very nice guy, and a nice family, but he just didn't have anyumph to him, you know, and when she got married, Elinor was back with her, in back but, she didn't go down the aisle yet. She says; if you don't want to go ahead, just tell me and I'll stop the whole thing.

Healey: Hm.

Stotsky: Eileen says; no, I'll go ahead. But, she didn't really love this guy, and he was nice. Ah, we could never say a word against him but, ah, when she went, when she came here, she came with her first husband and, uh, he was a teacher at East High while she was getting her master's at the university and, uh, we we didn't live here yet, we didn't live here. But, that's when, what was it—

[00:35:24.02]

Healey: All right, well let me take you back to Hawaii again.

Stotsky: Oh, okay.

Healey: And you a were supply officer there. You said you stayed, you and your unit stayed in Hawaii about eight months.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, uh—

Healey: Did you think during your stay there you would ever get orders overseas?

Stotsky: Did I get what?

Healey: Did you- your unit think you're where going to be sent overseas?

Stotsky: Oh yeah! We had ano- we didn't know when it would happen, you know. We didn't know wou- but, it happened.

Healey: And was, what was your unit's primary mission in Hawaii? To look out for Japanese submarines or what?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Or did you-

Stotsky: It was like a stop off point.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: There was no Japanese on the island and there was groups of men all around the island, keeping an eye on it.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And I'd get them their food, or their drinks, or anything but, uh, we were- I don't know, we were just there, tell you the truth, it was a break, it was a real nice place to stop.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: You know—s

Healey: What did you do on liberty?

Stotsky: Huh?

Healey: When you had free time, or liberty, what did you do? Did you go into the ocean?

Stotsky: I don't think I did.

Healey: Or see movies, or fish, or play cards?

Stotsky: Good question.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: No, I didn't. This guy, Bobby Lee, he and I would go together and we probably went to Honolulu. Although, we were, we have to go in a truck or something, or a jeep.

Healey: Um-hum.

Stotsky: Because we were stationed on the other side, you know. Yeah [cough], we're stationed in Kaneohe and it was over the mountain.

Healey: Um-hum.

Stotsky: From the, Honolulu; and I guess—I don't have too many memories, it was all pleasant then, you know. We did marching and stuff like that but, I—as far as I can remember, we had no really purpose, we didn't go on maneuvers there. I don't remember what we did.

Healey: When did you get, when did you and your unit get, uh, orders for overseas? To go, leave Hawaii.

Stotsky: Oh, to leave Hawaii?

Healey: Yes.

Stotsky: We left there – I think it was about August. Yeah, it was probably about August of, ahh, well, 1943 and we went to—

Healey: Wondering that's-

Stotsky: New Guinea [island in South West Pacific].

Healey: Okay, was that '43 or '44?

Stotsky: Uh.

Healey: I don't, I don't know.

Stotsky: Not '44 yet.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: 'Cause in 44 we went to, ah, the Philippines. But, this was, we got there February 18th in 19 – 44?—No, we got to Hawaii; oh we went from New Orleans, through the Panama Canal, to Hawaii.

Healey: Huh.

Stotsky: And we got there February 18th, 1944, your right! It was, 'cause we left the States December of '43, your right! It was '44.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And uh –

Healey: And did you ever get—while you were in Hawaii—did you get news on, concerning the war in Europe, and Germany?

Stotsky: Oh yeah.

Healey: As to what—

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: Sure, that was available on radio, newspapers, you know, television.

Healey: How bout getting mail? Did you get—

Stotsky: Mail?

Healey: Mail.

Stotsky: Oh yeah, Eleanor was real good, sending me mail.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And uh, I thought I was pretty good too. I lost a duffle bag – I think somebody knew I was supply officer and when it came time to go home, they must have seen my name on a bag. I thought I had everything, pistols, binocul—all that stuff, because I was bringing that stuff back to California; and there was binoculars – binoculars, pistols, and,uh-- binoculars, pistols, oh, and – binoculars, pistols, um something, binoculars, pistols—

[00:40:47.19]

Healey: Well that's okay. Now you mentioned you, um, wrote to your wife Elinor. Did she save your letters?

Stotsky: Yes, she did. We got letters, everything I wrote.

Healey: You still have those?

Stotsky: Sure.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And we go over them, you know. Yeah, she has that all together. But—

Healey: How often did you write her?

Stotsky: What?

Healey: How frequently did you write her?

Stotsky: Well, in Hawaii I wrote her frequently. I mean, probably at least, like every other day, you know.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: I would get her mail, on a—no problem; when we got to—

Healey: Who was she living with? Was she living by—she had your son—who did she live with?

Stotsky: Her mother and grandmother.

Healey: Oh, okay.

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: That's right and uh—

Healey: So, did she work or did she take care of your son?

Stotsky: She left work.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: When she had the child. After she left me, in uh, where was it, Louisiana—

Healey: Um-hum.

Stotsky: Ah, and when I was ready, our whole outfit was ready, to get on our boats to take off for Hawaii, she left in the middle of the month, with my mother and she'd, they went home on a train, and,uh, and my son was born January 16th, 1944.

Healey: Um-hum.

Stotsky: And she left December 15th, 1943, so it was pretty close, you know.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: And uh—

Healey: Now you said, from Hawaii you went to New Guinea.

Stotsky: That's correct.

Healey: And how—

Stotsky: That's corre-

Healey: What did you do in New Guinea?

Stotsky: In New Guinea we had a place set up, we didn't do anything. That was a stop off point because, somebody up there, some big shot, was forming a convoy to go into – the Philippines, that was the destination, the Philippines, and, uh—So down in New Guinea—oh, the only thing that was different, next to where we were, next to where our regiment was, was a New York outfit and their chaplain was a Jewish fellow, and the- when I- when- we were down during that time, there were two important Jewish holi- holidays and I went around with a truck picking up

any fellows from my battalion who wanted to go to the services, and we went there, there was only about ten of us, but it was great services. This outfit was all from New York, you know, and uh, they had services there just like we would in a temple here.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: It was marvelous, and uh—

Healey: I didn't ask you, you mentioned you, uh, grew up in Cleveland,--where did your mom and dad come from? Were they born in Cleveland, or not?

Stotsky: Oooh, good- good point. No, they were born in Poland.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: [cough] Yeah, my mother, she came from, like, the border of Poland—I forgot what the next county was—anyway—

Healey: I don't know if it's Lithuania, Latvia—

Stotsky: Oh, ah, yeah—

Healey: Or- or is it—

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: The other side.

Stotsky: That's right, uh. Yeah, they both came, ah, and I think that they both came separate, they didn't know each other.

Healey: Okay.

[00:45:01.28]

Stotsky: Uh, around 1890, my mother was born 1890, and I think she came—in the boat, she—in 1892, it was her and her older sister and I think a brother; there was eleven kids in my mother's family. And, ah, she was one [cough] who got out and got a job at the department store. She liked to work—she would always work—good sales person, and ahh, so she—

Healey: And your dad was from Poland too?

Stotsky: My dad?

Healey: Yes, he was from Poland?

Stotsky: He came about the same time.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, uh, now my mother's family, my mother's father brother, they were orthodox, you know, they were, they played by the rules, of Jews, you know, and ah, he- he was like a good businessman, my grandfather, when he came over to Cleveland he first pulled a wagon behind him, you know. It had four wheels and he would go like, you know, like these guys yelling out for junk or stuff like that. So first he'd pulled it, then the next time, he had a horse that pulled the wagon. And then, after a few years, he got a truck and he hired a colored boy and that colored boy worked for him – must have been about 15 years—he drove the truck, you know. And, ah, and my grandfather had regular customers, ah, customers who'd, ah, steel—they mixed different metals for their forge, you know.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: To make steel, or to make something else, but he'd knew what metals they need to do their work, and he would get it and deliver [inaudible]; he did all right; he bought a car, it was amazing.

Healey: Okay, now I got it off, we were back in ah, you were talking about in New Guinea I think, and getting a truck and picking up other members of the Jewish faith to take them to the temple.

Stotsky: Yeah, the regiment right next to us, they had everything there.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: They had everything, they even had the books, you know. And they had food.

Healey: Uh-huh.

Stotsky: It was real- it was nice. It was real nice. And so we went there, we had that and came back and that was the, that was a good trip but, we weren't in New Guinea too long. You know, it was like a separate war down south like that; I've had books – about – the air bombing, in those islands near Australia, you know. And, uh, the Solomon Islands, uh, there was different islands and there was a lot of bombing there and, uh, of course the Navy was there with – what's his name? Herstal [Admiral William “Bull” Halsey, Jr.?] – I can't think of it, but uh, we weren't there too long and what we did, when we took off from there, we were going to join a big convoy, our whole division was in boats there, and this convoy. And the Ohio, the 30th division—we were 38th—the 30th, their whole

division was there. And, uh, well one thing though, our battalion commander told me that I should stop up, there was a quartermaster depot, this quartermaster had food, some quartermasters have clothing, this had food. They wanted me to stock the boat, for a holiday of thanksgiving maybe, they wanted me to stock it, for the whole battalion, and the Navy guys, who were, I don't know, there must have been about close to a thousand of us. So I said okay. So I took three or four guys again, and a Navy guy drove the boat; just about where the ship stopped, we got on land and we went up a hill and there was this quartermaster depot—food! A lot of food! And, uh, the head of the whole depot was this young captain. He was younger than I was!

[00:50:40.18]

Stotsky: And uh, he was nice, so I went up to him, and I said; Sir, we would like to get enough food for our whole ship, I wonder if you can have your guys take my guys and load up, you know, a turkey and brea- uh filling, what do you call a

Healey: Stuffing?

Stotsky: Yeah! He said sure. He said, sit down over here and I'll have my guys get everything. He did. He brought turkey, stuffing, ah, oh what else, it was like a whole turkey dinner, potatoes – and uh—

Healey: How did they keep the turkeys – um—

Stotsky: In freezers.

Healey: In freezers.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Oh yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Healey: Were you on some type of military base or what? I mean—

Stotsky: All there was, was there was the quartermaster, that's all, there was no other soldiers there, there was just the quartermaster.

Healey: Did he have a warehouse or what?

Stotsky: Oh, a lot of them! All food, they had dessert, we had. What they have? Like– they had pears, and juice or stuff like, we got desserts and turkey and stuffing.

Healey: And this was in the Philippines?

Statsky: No, this was in New Guinea.

Healey: New Guinea.

Statsky: Before we—

Healey: Okay.

Statsky: —left it to join the convoy. So ah, so- this young captain, he did a great job. We had this big cart on four wheels and they just stacked it up and took it back to the boat, then our little boat that we was there and we just filled up the boat and we took it back to ah, to the kitchen, the kitchen had its own like access to the water, you know. So we'd, our boat went by this access, they opened the doors, and of course there was guys in the kitchen, plenty of help to unload it, you know. That was plenty. Now the outcome of this was—when we got to the Philippines—there was a time when metals were given out and we- we didn't even have contact yet with the Japanese but, there was lot of metals. I got a, a metal and it was a – brown, I could show it to ya, I got, I got this metal because I supplied the ship with food, would you believe it! I knew I had the metal; oh, the division general was up there, shaking our hand, you know, we were saluting him. The different guys, I don't know what they did, but I was with them and I got a metal for getting food. I was ashamed to tell people what I got a metal for [laugh] but, [laugh] I got it, good shape.

Healey: Well, other than on this occasion, what did you and everybody eat on a daily basis? What were your rations like, or your food?

Statsky: On the boat? Well, outside of this, uh – we would like, have cereal for breakfast, yeah. Either hot cereal or cold cereal and we would have sandwiches for lunch, and for dinner we'd have what they—I don't remember on this ship, what the heck they made for din- dinner. I remember the big dinner they had, of stuff that I got—

[00:55:12.21]

Healey: Uh-huh.

Statsky: —but, I don't remember – and when we left this quartermaster, and delivered it to the mess, shortly thereafter we joined this convoy that was going to the Philippines. This was our destination, and there was a convoy shaped like this, and we ended up the second boat over here, there was another boat in the corner, and the first day out, all we saw was Jap planes, Jap planes and they were strafing us. They targeted this last ship and it caught fire and it just stayed behind, it

couldn't keep up, so we were the last ship then, and the whole convoy was moving, and Japanese planes, we wonder where the hell were the American planes! American planes, they should have been – ah, this was about – approaching when there was the biggest naval battle of the war. The battle of – Leyte – Leyte Gulf [October 23-26, 1944]? Yeah, Leyte—

Healey: Ley-

Stotsky: Gulf, and I got about three books on it. And, uh, I gotta think, yeah, ok. So when we were coming, that first day, must of been the 24th of – of October, the battle of Leyte Gulf was the 24th, 25th, and 26th. Okay, so on the 24th we were approaching the Philippines, from the east, you know. The Philippines I could show you, I got a big map on the, down here on the hallway. Uh – let's see, was a—yeah, okay then. That's right, after hika [??] then we- we had a plane attack us—but that plane wasn't shooting torpedoes, it was with the machine guns, and I think there was two machine guns aboard our ship, that was taking us. And that was manned and they were shooting the hell out of it. Well, they hit this – plane, I don't know if they killed them then but, that plane landed on the bow of our ship. It just landed right on the bow and it caught fire and – I think when it landed, it like, there was a little explosion and I think it blew the pilot off off the- off the plane, you know, blew him off. But then, let's see we – yeah, that's right. Uh, yeah this plane, uh, it caught fire, and our first hold was L Company was in that first hold, underneath the deck, you know.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: And from the plane, the Jap plane, the fire went inside the hold and uh, the first officer, who was there, who came down the steps with the hose, was not a Navy guy, but was this lieutenant from New York city; he was a big fella, like about 6'2" or 3", it was a big fella and uh. At first they didn't like him, he was too much New York, you know. But he was down there first, on this fire with his hose and shortly thereafter two Navy guys came down with separate hoses to, because there was several fellows who got burnt—

[01:00:14.21]

Healey: Ah.

Stotsky: —from the fire, they couldn't, the hoses didn't come quick enough I guess. So there was a fire down, and of course, then we fell behind the convoy- convoy, we didn't fall too much behind like the other ship was, that was torpedoed, but we were behind, and then, once the fire was out, and they pushed the plane off in the ocean. Oh when we picked up—it didn't affect the speed of our boat, they picked up speed then, you know. It didn't affect the speed of, that we were traveling, so we- we joined the- the convoy, we were a little behi- hind the convoy, but not much. Now this, I use to think that we'd see the purpose of the Japanese fleet

when they came up, they came up—there's different water ways in the Philippines for all these different islands; Philippines is made up of all these different islands—

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: Luzon being the most northerly, and it was the biggest. In the south was Mindanao, that was the biggest one south. But Leyte had an odd shape and there was a big gulf there. And, uh, the first night they landed us—now I was never sure about this, which day it was that we landed, because one of the books we got mentioned the 24th Corps, a Corps, C-O-R-P-S was made up of several divisions, and it said the 24th Corps got into, ah, released all of their men which, that was ah several divisions, and they released them ah, I think they said on the, about the 15th or 16th, and before I read this in my book I thought we landed during the battle of Leyte Gulf because – up, see, from the China Sea you can get up by Leyte going through the islands. It was a uh, oh I forgot the name of the, but, uh-hm. I know the first night we landed, we didn't dig a fox hole, there was no place to go, we were right on the beach, and they we're all just circled around this beach, and that night, man we heard this gunfire, terrible gunfire, from the land inside. We thought Japs were approaching us. The next morning we saw—what we found was a whole bunch of cows and pigs!—they made all this noise and the soldiers that were nervous anyway, they just shot the hell out of 'em and, you know, so all these animals were laying there, in front of us—

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: —that we thought were Japs. Oh man!, but uhh—so we were there on Leyte Gulf not too long, because our destination, oh that's right. Halsey, Hals- you heard of Halsey?

Healey: Yes.

[01:04:50.23]

Stotsky: And his position, when he came up, he had the biggest – fleet that the Navy had. He had, I think four battleships, they must have had three or four flat-top carriers of air planes, plus cruisers and the, oh yeah well everything. And he was blocking up this waterway that ended up by Leyte, L-E-Y-T-E, you know, Leyte. And uh, but what happened, one of his air planes found that up north, pretty far up north of Luzon, there was a carrier all by itself, an air plane carrier, it was a flat top with planes on [cough]. Well, he took his whole fleet, he didn't leave his executive officer with anything. He could have left him with a couple of battleships, you know, and other planes. He took his whole damn fleet and went up north and he left an opening for the Japanese convoy to get through. The only ships that were left, there were just, they were like thirty-foot cruisers, like thirty-foot destroyers, small ones, a bunch of them. But what they did, they didn't go and hide, they

were- when those battleships came up, they were shooting at the battleships and they were small. They were shorter than the width of this house, but those guys kept given the Japs a hard time. They didn't, they didn't destroy too much. They did some damage, you know, on the deck but then, the Japanese battleships zeroed in on these little ships and they blew the hell out of 'em. I think there was, all these little ships – there was something left and the- the- Americans would hand on to them. And uh, there was a strong current that brought them, all these damaged ships, that took them south west of the Philippines, that's pretty; they took them pretty- pretty far. But I think the loss they had approached three thousand men. And uh, the admirals that were left they were trying to get it to all they did, finally get in touch with Halsey. He didn't tell the next admiral that he's gonna leave, he only told Nimitz. He contacted Nimitz and told him he was leaving, he heard about a flat top up north and he was gonna get it. Well, Nimitz didn't know what the situation was there. So he pulled his whole damn fleet and went up north and the admirals that were left—oh, shortly after he did, there was another convoy coming up who had a flat top, with a lot of American planes on it and—

Healey: Let me interrupt and ask you, you talked about your first night on the beach, hearing a lot of shooting and then in the morning you found out that th-

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: —that you've been shooting at cattle on pigs. Uh, what you do the next day? Were you still in the same place?

Stotsky: We were, in the same place.

Healey: How long did you stay on that beach?

Stotsky: It wasn't long, I think it was a matter of a few days, and they got us another ship, a landing ship to go up to Luzon.

Healey: What happened to the ship that brought you to the beach?

Stotsky: Well they left.

Healey: They left. Okay.

Stotsky: They left, under fire probably.

Healey: So, wha- what did you, your unit, uh, do on the beach, for a couple of days.

Stotsky: We just dug in.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: We'd. we- we just dug – fox holes in—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: We didn't do, had no, we didn't do anything.

[01:10:02.03]

Healey: All right.

Stotsky: But then, that was like, just, ah, an off-site, because our destination was Luzon.

Healey: Okay, and on that beach, ah, was there a whole division there or how many people where on the beach with you?

Stotsky: Well, a whole division took a lot of room.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And there was a lot of beach but the whole division was on the beach of Leyte.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah,

Healey: And what beach were you on? Do you know?

Stotsky: I don't know, I was out by the Gulf. But then the gu- the Gulf was like a deep – gulf, you know. But there was, all up and down, there was nobody dug in, it was terrible, and—

Healey: So yah, they picked you up, another ship came and got you, and then what happened?

Stotsky: About, I don't know, it wasn't many days – I don't even know if it was a week, to tell you the truth. Another ship came and picked all of us up and took our 38th, the whole damn division up to Subic Bay [west coast, island of Luzon] – and I can show you a map of where it was.

Healey: So you got to, you went to Subic?

Stotsky: Yeah, all of us.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Went to Subic Bay and, uh, one regiment, who proceeded us, they were on the march past Corregidor. You heard of Corregidor [island at mouth of Manila Bay, southwestern Luzon], that island?

Healey: Hm-um.

Stotsky: When there was a lot of troops. That's the one where uh, [General Douglas] MacArthur left in the middle of the night; he took his wife and his,uh, his executive officer, he left there but, then he took a few more, I don't know, captains, majors, and they got on a boat, and they [cough] this boat took them through the Japanese Navy, right down to Australia, where he took over command for all of the armies on the Pacific, he even had his own navy. He had about ten ships and he commanded them. Not Nimitz or Halsey, none of them but—

Healey: Okay, so you went toward Corregidor, did you get to Corregid-, from Subic? Or did you stay at Subic?

Stotsky: Ah, Subic Bay. No, we- we crossed, uh, the Japs were dug in, not only in Corregidor, well the Japs took all the – soldiers, that were in Corregidor, up on a death march, about sixty-five miles north to a prison, BAD, BAD!

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: I don't know where the nurses went, 'cuz there were nurses and doctors there. But there was a soldier there and, uh, the Japanese took everybody off Corregidor and marched all the solders up there. It was a bad march, bad march! And uh—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, I know.

Healey: Let me focus you back on Subic Bay. What did you do when yo- you and your unit do when you got to Subic Bay?

Stotsky: Oh, well being, I- I had a- a jeep and a guy, from one of the companies who was driving, and that's what we had all the time. Jeep and [inaudible] we get some more. And, ah, we were stationed [cough] down there at Subic Bay. [thump thump thump thump thump] Here was the water where Corregidor was, and there was a road that came like this, on the way to Manila. Manila was over here and was on a bay of water. Well there's little towns, and that took them over too Manila.

Healey: Hm-huh.

Stotsky: But, yeah. The 150th, we were the 149th infantry.

[01:14:59.13]

Stotsky: The 150th infantry preceded us off on the landing, and they had a fight to get through this road. There were Japs across the road on both sides and they were dug in. So, 150th did a good- *good* job. They had actually fired guns, you know, and they fired, uh, mortars – and of course they had their own machine guns. But they just bombed the hell out of the Japs and they took ‘em as captives or killed them along that road. Now the battalion that I was supply officer, we went inland, and we came out on the other side of the road, and we were going to come back on that road, and help the 150th, you know, we were gonna shoot up the Japanese from behind, you know. But I don't—I think the 150th cleared the way. Now they had a fight, there was Japanese in Corregidor yet. I don't know who went after them, we didn't. Our- our 149th infantry division, we ended up going behind – that big city, [laughs].

Healey: Is it Manila that you're talking about?

Stotsky: Manila, yeah!

Healey: Manila.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Behind there, there was a, uh, a waterway.

Healey: Now, did you go with the infantry?

Stotsky: Yeah, I went up just so far.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: About half way up.

Healey: Did you march?

Stotsky: And made it by dump [??]

Healey: Did you march there, or did you go by vehicle, or how you get?

Stotsky: Oh, we all marched.

Healey: You all marched, okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, we all marched from that camp site we were at, we all marched up to Manila.

Healey: How long did the march take?

Stotsky: It didn't take too long for us to get to Manila. Maybe a morning, maybe a couple hours.

Healey: Oh, okay.

Stotsky: But then we went up, they had a waterway, it was a reservoir that they had up behind Manila, and we marched up the mountain next to that waterway, about half-way, then we turned right, and we went up, the whole- the whole outfit went up the hill, to the top. I stayed half-way and I had a- my supply dump, I didn't have much supply, I had these guns. I had, carbines, M1 rifle, that's mostly what I had; I had a little food there. So it's at the- when the troops walked by me, sometimes they would want to trade in an M1 for a carbine, so I gave 'em a carbine and I had the M1, and they were going up. Well it didn't take long, all the guns I had somebody wanted. So I used up whatever guns I had, somebody wanted them, and it went. And uh, then I was sitting there, myself and—The first day, let's see, they reached the top. Oh, that's right. I had the batt- the battalion? The battalion, uh, communication sergeant had his – what it was like the telephone, you know, when he could reach the commanding officer, could meet anyone of the officers and you could, he could reach anything outside. So if outside calls come in to one, whoever came in, wanted to talk to the commanding officer, he would just connect it.

[01:20:00.17]

Stotsky: Well that worked all right. But, one day, I don't remember which day it was. Yeah, I was th- the- the regiment would send me like about twenty Filipinos and I would load them up with 10-in -1- rations that I got from a plane drop and uh—So they would take it up that damn hill, each one would carry like a box of 10-in-1 rations and they were heavy. So they go up, well this lasted about 3-4 days and it stopped, because somebody else was dropping food up there, by plane. They would drop it by each company.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: I guess. I wasn't part of that. Let's see, where was I?

Healey: Did the Filipinos speak English at all, or not?

Stotsky: Some would.

Healey: Some.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: But most of them talked like a Spanish—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And it didn't do me no good. If they talked French, I could talk a little French, I took that in school but, this was all Filipino.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And these guys are skinny you know. Just a shame. But so what happen-, that's right. So I was left at my dump and the only one that was with me was the battalion communications sergeant, you know. He would take calls coming in and calls going out. But then about the third or fourth day American planes came up the way we di-, American plane got off and start shooting at *us* – so we got behind rocks or stones, the kid and me, you know, and uh—as soon as—it didn't take the plane long to get by us and go up the top but, it shot the hell out of us, and the kid caught a .50 caliber in his wrist. So ah then—

Healey: Now—

Stotsky: The plane left and uh—

Healey: When you refer to the kid, that's who?

Stotsky: Oh that, that's the communication—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: —sergeant, yeah. Ah—

Healey: Was a- you said he caught a .50 cal in his, uh, wrist. Did it take off his wrist or not?

Stotsky: No, I mean, he got shot but, it didn't take—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Take it off. He was lucky. He, he used a telephone that the- ah- switch board to call up and have them send down someone to take his place and a couple guys to walk him down to the road, see. To go to hos- hospital, yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Ah. And that, that was all caused because of Halsey, he left his spot. And these— there was a rear admiral at the head of all these small boats. They wrote a book about him and the men. They were such heroes! They were like these little boats and they were going by the Ja- battleships and started to shoot them up. They were down here, and the battleship was up there. So they couldn't do much damage to them. But then, the battleships zeroed in on them and it just broke up all these little boats. Some th- the soldiers stayed on the boat and some, guys where hanging on to it. To make a long story short, they were- they, the current carried 'em back down beyond, uh, the Philippines and when the ships came they couldn't see where these [cough] battered little ships were, they were down further. On some of these, ah, there was a higher officer on the boat, and he would let part of the men sit on the boat and part would be on the outside of the boat, hanging on. Then after a while he make them change, you know. Those in the water would get up. And these officers, they did that, they di—

[01:25:29.02]

Stotsky: But one of the damn boats was two lowly officers and they couldn't take command of their boat. And the guys who were sitting in the boat wouldn't get off. He yelled at 'em, they didn't care. These other guys where hanging on the whole time, because the guys aboard, on that boat, they wouldn't get off, so. Well it took a couple days before our fleet really got an idea, 'cause they flew but, they flow, the airplanes didn't fly south enough to find where all these boats were. All these battered boats.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: Were close together.

Healey: How long were you in the Philippines?

Stotsky: In the Philippines, in Luz-? Oh, hell I wou—We were there, we were there till after the war was, after the battle was over. After the Japs signed the peace treaty.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And uh, in Tokyo Harbor or somewhere.

Healey: So I can't remember exactly when you got to the Philippines. When did you get to the Philippines?

Stotsky: Okay, ah, oh that's right. – First we went to Leyte. That's part of the Philippines.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: And then we weren't there but a few days, and the boat came for us, to get back on the boat, our whole outfit, and took us to the south west corner of Luzon. That was our destination, Luzon. There was a lot of Japanese there. So—

Healey: Did you ever see Japanese?

Stotsky: A few.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Not many, not many.

Healey: All right.

Stotsky: Uh, let's see.

Healey: My question to you was, ah, well I'm not sure when you got to Luzon and Subic.

Stotsky: AH.

Healey: Ah.

Stotsky: Subic Bay, on the south west corner—

Healey: Right.

Stotsky: —of Luzon.

Healey: Right.

Stotsky: And that's where our ship unloaded, and we came inland from there. Ah [sound of papers shuffling] Oh, that's right. That's when—

Healey: Looks like you got there sometime around October of 1944, for the battle of Leyte Gulf.

Stotsky: That's right, because the battle for Leyte was October 24th, 25th, and 26th.

Healey: So you stayed in the Philippines until the, ah—

Stotsky: Oh yeah.

Healey: —treaty was signed.

Stotsky: Until—

Healey: So you were there, what, eight months or more? Ten months?

Stotsky: Yeah, then the—

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: Then the—

Healey: What you do all that time?

Stotsky: Uh.

Healey: Now I know you a supply officer.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: But were you around—

Stotsky: Well, I had, we had stopped before, by quartermaster depots and we got clothing and shoes for them. But, when we were on Luzon—I don't think we stopped fo— no we didn't.

Healey: Did you stay on Luzon for eight to ten months? Or did you go somewhere else?

Stotsky: No, Luzon was our destination.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, by that time, what was I doing? I was suppling somebody. Huh-huh. Because the food was being dropped, the 10- in-1 rations—

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: —being dropped by plane. And I did some of that on Luzon.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: In fact, the last thing I did, the captain came over to me one Sunday. Said, “Stotsky, we got one more drop, It's on the coast, right by the ocean, but they're not Americans, they're all Filipinos; we would like you to make an air drop.” Oh man! Here the war was over, you know. It was about, like October or November. I said, Okay.

[01:30:25.15]

Stotsky: I was writing an letter to Elinor, and I stopped and—oh that's right—the jeep took me to what we called the airport. It was just a patch of dirt where there were a few planes. But I got taken there and, ah, the plane was already loaded with 10-in-1 rations and I got on, I took three men with me again, and, uh, that's right. So he took off and he knew and I knew where we were going. Was on the other side of the mountain, right by a beach, right by the water, you know. And, uh, so we got over there and- and the Filipinos had marked where they were. They put equipment or some- all around a big circle. So the plane came in, right along the beach. And we dropped 10-in-1 rations, ten of them. And he came right around, we did the same thing again, 10-in-1 rations, ten of them, and that was enough for this group. I don't know if they were a company or a battalion but, that- we were finished then, when we had that. And the guy took us back and I said; well, that wasn't so bad. I [laughs] I had bad feelings about it. You know, dropping after the war was over, and they weren't even Americans. But everything went fine.

Healey: Good.

Stotsky: So.

Healey: So when did you finally leave the Philippines?

Stotsky: I pre- they were leaving the Philippines by points. You follow me?

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: Points were the rank you had, ah. Oh, your job and—

Healey: Length of service?

Stotsky: Huh?

Healey: Length of service?

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: Very good, that's right. Claim of service. Well I had [cough] ninety-six points, which was pretty good, but the captain of our service company, of which I was a member, this supply officer spent most of his time with the infantry, but he was really a member of the service company.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: So, yeah. The company commander left by a boat 'cause he had more points than I did, but I had as many points as any officer did. So, on the group that I was,

there was four infantry officers and me. And I think I had ninety-six or ninety-eight points, yeah, and that group, they had you by rank. Well there was a top ranked officers, like majors and a colonel, captain, there was about, I don't know, maybe about eight or ten of those and lieutenants. I was, by that time I was a first lieutenant. There was, I think three or four other lieutenants who were platoon leaders, who were, ah, but they had the points, so. We were next on the list. There was a whole, like a shopping list of rank—

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: —you know. And, uh, so first the high ranking officers, then our lieutenants, and then master sergeants, then staff sergeants. Master sergeants had three below and three above. Staff had two below, three above. And that's how we were ranked. And we had a whole list for the ship that we were gonna be on.

[01:35:18.25]

Stotsky: And when we start loading the ship they would call off the names, right by that list, and they check you off, right on down to the bottom where there was some, ah, privates, surprising enough there were a few privates going. So that we landed on the ship. I was made—on January 26th—I was made a captain, 'cause at that time, well I was service company commander, because the commander of it – he had gone back before me. So I was service company commander. And I just had some equipment that I had to turn in to the man in California.

Healey: How did you get from the Philippines to California?

Stotsky: In a boat.

Healey: In a boat.

Stotsky: In a big boat.

Healey: Did you go directly there or did you make any stops?

Stotsky: We didn't make any.

Healey: Didn't stop in Hawaii

Stotsky: We came all the way to California

Healey: Cali—

Stotsky: We went through a storm and us guys were scared stiff. [laughter] But—

Healey: What was the ship like? In terms of sleeping quarters ,and food and—

Stotsky: Uh, they had enough food on—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: —for all of us. And I go—my records got the date that I left Luzon and the date I arrived back in the United States. I arrived back—I left I think it was October. I arrived back it was November. And, of course, they all of us grab trains, for which everyone would take us, you know, up ho- to go home. And I lost a damn duffle bag, with all of Elinor's letters and other stuff. And I wrote to a transportation company—the train— and they wrote back and said they got, their records show it was delivered to a house in Cleveland. I never got it.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: Never got it. I lost all her letters. She got all, all of mine.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: But all the letters.

Healey: Now, what did you do when you got to California?

Stotsky: We got back to California and most of 'em – were—were left out, they were released from service, you know.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: But I had to stop and give the company papers to this guy, he had to check me out, and I had uh a duffle bag, three things in it. [pound] I had pistols, binoculars— I can't think— what they may have been, was the, um, like when you go night-hiking. Uh, what do you call, they give you the azimuth, how you can follow—

Healey: Compass?

Stotsky: Huh?

Healey: Compass.

Stotsky: Compass! That's- that's what it w—It was compass, pistol, and binoculars. And I didn't come home with any one of them.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: How long did you have to stay in California before you got discharged?

Stotsky: Oh, we- maybe a day or two

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: That's all.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: Then we left, I don't know, went to, oh, Indiana. And they checked me out there. That's right, in Indiana. They checked me out.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And I got—

Healey: Did you go directly home then, from Indiana?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: How you get home?

Stotsky: Train.

Healey: Train.

Stotsky: To Cleveland.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: From Indiana.

Healey: Did your wife know you were coming?

[01:40:02.09]

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: There was a discussion, because my mother wanted her to bring my son with her. She didn't want to because I didn't get in till about eleven o'clock.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: And that was a bad thing. You know, this conflict there, where they wanted Elinor to bring my son with her. Somebody come?

Healey: Mailman I think.

Stotsky: Mailman. Yeah.

Healey: Mailman.

Stotsky: Yeah, yeah so yeah they were there meet me.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, and of course Elinor had found this little apartment, it was on the second floor, there was a full first floor and steep steps up to the second floor. And that's what we had. A kitchen, a living room, and a bedroom. And my son was almost two years old, he was born in January. This was in November you know. Pretty cl- pretty close. And I, I wasn't good with him for a while. I ah, I was upset when he made noise or when he broke things. You know, he'd reach in the table an—

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: —and I couldn't take that. Um, it took me a while – to have sa—[cough]

Healey: Okay, yeah, ah, that's an adjustment. So you got home and you were discharged. What did you do after that?

Stotsky: Uh.

Healey: Did you go to school right way or not?

Stotsky: Not right away, but, uh—See, my brother-in-law, Bill, and his wife, got home before I did.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: So the three of them—Elinor, and Bill, and Natalie, his wife, they were talking about what we would do, you know. Then they decided maybe we can buy a small house that we could all live in, and go to school. And, uh, so they had it pretty much settled when Elinor told me, you know. She was wondering how I'd take it. I said, Well that's great! [inaudible] Couldn't be better than that! We'll get a house, and Elinor had the money. Because from my pay, of second lieutenant, and first lieutenant, and even a couple months of captain, she had a nice—I forgot how much she had. She must a had saved up, and I was overseas from December '43 to November '45, you know. So she got a lot of checks and she put 'em all

bank. So we bought a house; with her money, we bought a home. It was a small house, but it had – it had bedrooms on the second floor. On the first floor—living room, dining room, kitchen.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: And, uh, yeah. It even had, uh, on the third floor, it had room for a person to sleep. [cough] So, we bought this house and we bought it—

Healey: In Cleveland?

Stotsky: Huh?

Healey: Where was it?

Stotsky: In Cleveland off East 105th street.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, and we bought it from this colored fella who I knew when I was younger and I worked for the department store, at Bailey's Department Store, I knew him then.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And it just so happened he owned this house. And so we bought it – so Elinor and my bedroom was on the second floor; Bill and Natalie. And then, the other fella, there was two more fellas in our group. What Bill met when he was, like eighteen, nineteen years. One of them, George, he was valedictorian of his class. He couldn't get in the Army because of his sight.

[01:45:15.05]

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: So he wasn't in it. He was an engineer, very good man. And, uh, the third one was a pilot. And he flew materials or personnel over the mountains, from China to India. That- that was his route he flew; so, first thing he did was go to Cleveland Airport, and see if a company had, ah, an instructor, if they would like to have an instructor, for somebody to fly a plane, you know. 'Cause he flew for about two years.

Healey: Did these two other guys live with you too?

Stotsky: Ah, only one.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: The guy that flew planes had.

Healey: All right.

Stotsky: His wife, they stayed for a while. He, he was with, he helped teach a couple people, didn't last long. He got a job with a pie company.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And he would, had all these pies in the car and he'd deliver them to these different stores.

Healey: So when you settled in this little house, did you then go back to school or did you start working?

Stotsky: No, we went back to school.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: We did.

Healey: Did you use—

Stotsky: We signed up right away.

Healey: Oh, okay.

Stotsky: Bill went to his engineering school and I went to [Case] Western Reserve [University]. I don't know if you ever heard of, but it was a pretty good school.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: In Cleveland. And I took, ah, mostly in economics, accounting, but you had to take other stuff. Oh that's right, I took French, and I took two years of French, so that I was quite capable of talking French! I don't know what good that did me, but, I learned it pretty good.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And, ah, other stuff, I wasn't good at chemistry or physics. I would get not to many D's; I'd get C in those. But in history, and in accounting— and english, history—I'd get B's and A's in those.

Healey: So did you go to school for four years?

Stotsky: We did it in three.

Healey: Three years?

Stotsky: We went, both Bill and I.

Healey: And you used the GI Bill?

Stotsky: Oh yes

Healey: Yes.

Stotsky: Oh yes.

Healey: Do you remember how much that paid you at that time?

Stotsky: Huh?

Healey: Did that pay your tuition, or what did the GI Bill cover?

Stotsky: The tuition.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And it gave me a little extra because I had malaria. I had malaria as soon as I got home; and Elinor took me to the doctor that our family always used. He didn't even recognize malaria! So we come home and I was still sick.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: So Elinor called up – the Veterans Hospital. They sent an ambulance and these guys took me down on a stretcher. And those stairs were steep, you know. They took me down in a stretcher and uh, they took me to the hospital on the west side and it didn't take them two minutes to know I had malaria, and I was with the department, we all had malaria.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: One guy had malaria on the brain, I'd never heard of that. But the rest of us had regular malaria. You know, we'd get chills, we'd get fever – we'd sit around a cart we'd be playing cards and a nurse would come around and give us iron shots, you know. All four of—

Healey: Oh, you stayed in the hospital for a while.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: How long were you in the hospital?

Stotsky: Well, my dad brought Elinor up every night and that's a long trip, from the eastside of— oh, yeah, from the east side of Cleveland, way over to the west side, but my dad brought her every day. And I think, gee I don't know, I think I was in the hospital about a week. And somehow they—I was in pretty good shape—they got me when I was supposed to have and the Army over in the Philippines we had those pills, ah –

Healey: Quinine pills?

Stotsky: HUH?

Healey: Quinine.

[01:50:39.10]

Stotsky: Yeah, but there was—

Healey: But, don't know—

Stotsky: Maybe it was quinine. Some of these guys, they wouldn't take it, I had to throw it in their mouth, but—

Healey: There's ah—

Stotsky: I- it was quinine, but—

Healey: Oh, maybe it was something different. I don't know.

Stotsky: Something though.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: That sounds—

Healey: To try and keep you from getting malaria? Is that what? Okay.

Stotsky: I may have quit taken 'em to- too early.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, I may have quit like a day or two before I left.

Healey: Did the malaria ever come back?

Stotsky: It came back the second year, but I think just once.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: I know they, the VA paid me for the first year, when I got it a few times.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: But the second year I just had it once and that was, that was it. Yeah.

Healey: So when you got back from the army was your mom still living?

Stotsky: When I got back?

Healey: Yes, was your mother still living?

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: My mother was still living and she was married to her second husband.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: My parents got divorced when I was fifteen.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: [cough] Well now I was twenty-four. She married a very nice man.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Very nice.

Healey: So, what- briefly, what did you do when you got out of college?

Stotsky: First thing I did was look for a job, and the job I wanted to get- accounting.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: I went downtown, I went to go up to building, and I'd go in and out of 'em, for accounting, or attorneys. I'd go in either one, 'cause I figured every company that was any good had an attorney, you know. Well, as it turned out, I went to this one attorney and he was the attorney for this lumber company. He was also the uncle

of the two young guys, a father who opened a business at first, his name was Sam Gerson, my dad and him knew each other. Years, years before this; I didn't know him, and his two sons, Howard and Jerry, were the ones running the business. And they had a lumber yard, and then a couple streets away they had a wrecking yard because they had two companies. One was a new lumber yard; the other was wrecking guys, they would wreck, houses, buildings, anything. And they would send this, the plumbing, into the wrecking yard. Because they would be selling used sinks, toilets, and, ah, there was a stock of them. And, so the wrecking company was the second company. Ah, as accounting for the comp- I use to make pay checks for both the lumber yard where they'd sell lumber retail, you know. Or the wrecking yard. The fellow over there, he would sell all this stuff they got from wrecking jobs, you know.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: I was—

Healey: How long did you work there?

Stotsky: I worked there – for about four years.

Healey: Okay, and then you said you got a job at a bank after that?

Stotsky: Yeah, not quite.

Healey: Not quite.

Stotsky: There was one thing. This guy, he started to build garages and I would do his books. I mean it was nothing; he'd built garages. Then he start building shells of homes, you see.

[01:55:15.14]

Stotsky: And somebody could buy a shell, on the outside. I I don't think it was, I don't remember if it was even plaster. Maybe the owners would plaster it. But, uh, he made a good business of that, and he opened up a place in Elyria, which was about thirty miles away, another office. And I'd go there and audit their records. The records were all kept the same way, you know. Ah, first, before a job was finished- it was work in process, you know. And then when the whole job that *we* do was done, then I transfer it from work in process to sales. That- that's when he get the sale, when ah, the job, that we had, was a contract to build a shell of a house. They put a foundation in, build up the siding- the siding, the roofing, you know. Ah, let's see. Ah, we build a shell, yeah, everything. The living room was simple.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: And the bathroom – was simple but, we'd- we did most of it, most. But the people were able to finish it. That's when the contract—that once they paid us off it was up to them to finish it.

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: To finish the final thing was pain.

Healey: [laughs]

Stotsky: That was the final thing. And uh—

Healey: Now when you got back to Cleveland did you keep in contact with any other service members?

Stotsky: I'll tell you what. There was, ah, a reunion every year and one of my supply sergeants used to handle that. He'd send a letter out. *I* never went to a reunion. I- I never again, oh, once, maybe I told you. Uh, when we were in this little house- one day- knock on a door, and who was it? But Captain Garrison, who was in the 2nd Battalion, he was G Company commander; now he was a major. What did he want? United States was sending an advisor—that's the name—group to Greece. They wanted a supply man. So Garrison came- he found out where I lived and he came to me and offered me a job to come back and join this group to Greece. I Said, I was still going to college then, I said, “Major I wouldn't go back and do anything for an army, nothing, I'm not going to join any army anymore. You can make me a major and I wouldn't come back,” you know.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: That was the one connection I had, because I never went to Kentucky on their reunions. I never had any communication with 'em.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: That was part of my life I just wanted to throw away. It was a waste of my time. I was living like a person then- I just- I didn't have anything to do with the army. With none of the personnel or anything. And, ah, once I gave the papers and those three items, out in California, and I got a release, that was it. I never had anything more to do with the army. Well, so then—

Healey: All right.

[02:00:01.22]

Healey: And so then, ah-hm, you had a few more children I take it?

Stotsky: Yeah, every two, oh. The next one, was nine months and a day after – I came home and joined Elinor.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Yeah, that's for my older girl. See, my anniversary was August 6th of 1942, and ever since August—well my oneth- my older daughter, her birthday was August 19th, you know. So, once I got out of the hospital for malaria, we conceived my oldest girl.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: And then – well two years later I had my younger girl, uh, her, that's Eileen – and Eileen- they're, both these girls, like right now, they're either with me or call me every day. If I want to go somewhere, to a doctor, they're right there, you know? They're just— they're wonderful.

Healey: Great. And they both live here in Madison, Wisconsin?

Stotsky: Uh-huh.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: They we ah—

Healey: An-

Stotsky: They all came.

Healey: You told me that you moved here about thirty years ago, from Cleveland?

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Were you retired already?

Stotsky: And came September of 1986. That's right, I was retired.

Healey: You were retired.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: And my wife was retired.

Healey: All right.

Stotsky: She got retired in '85. I got retired in '84. And we both—and by that time – the two daughters were here, and my son. Now, in the meantime, my son and his wife got divorced. My son got sick—he had a mental illness, and uh—he had Parkinson's disease.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: And he was sick- he'd, he was- he was mentally sick. They both - they bought a house in Ottawa with another couple. And,uh, the other couple didn't want it anymore, so they bought his interest out. And Karen- that's his wife- very industrious, wonderful; she was in the- what do you call it when the girls- a sorority with my older girl. And then this- my second girl came up, and this Karen was a wonderful girl. She just couldn't take it with David- he was- well I helped him, he'd stopped up the porch, the front porch, and went to the sidewalk and he built a separate entrance in this side somehow. I helped him pour concrete too, but, he wasn't working—

[End of OH2099.Stotsky_user_file2]

[Beginning of OH2099.Stotsky_user_file3]

Stotsky: He- he's—I

Healey: And does he live out in California now?

Stotsky: Yeah, he lived—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Here—

Healey: All right.

Stotsky: —for a number of years. I bought him a nice home on Merlham, which is right off the end of Midvale. And uh, it was a nice home; it had the two bedrooms, two baths.

Healey: Hm-hm.

Stotsky: And he wasn't working steady. He was working part-time for an insurance company, a good one, it's on the Beltline. But, he didn't work anywhere—

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: —for any length of time.

Healey: Now, you mentioned that you and your wife have lived in this house for about thirty years.

Stotsky: This house?

Healey: Yes.

Stotsky: That's right.

Healey: Yep.

Stotsky: That's right

Healey: And married for seventy-

Stotsky: Three years.

Healey: -three years before she passed away this year.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Yeah.

Healey: It's a wonderful long life.

Stotsky: [laughs] She was a wonderful woman.

Healey: Hmm.

Stotsky: She had so many good qu- [cries]

Healey: Yeah, it's a, I can tell, It's a, she. You—

Stotsky: [pounds table]

Healey: --spent a lot of good years.

Stotsky: OH!

Healey: Well, I wonder if this will be—we've been talking for over two hours. I wonder if this will be, ahh, a good time to stop. You've told me—

Stotsky: Oh, maybe—

Healey: —all about your—

Stotsky: —I guess you could doctor it up so it's acceptable.

Healey: Oh no, what you recorded is what we got. And I appreciate you telling us about your services—

Stotsky: Oh.

Healey: —although you kind of left the army behind.

Stotsky: [laughs]

Healey: And I understand that, ah, the war was tough, and being away from family—

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: —but certainly do appreciate your- your, ah, service to the country.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: I went- I, well I served at lot of time, you know. My record shows that January 26 of two thousand – forty-four? January, must of been forty, oh, forty-five. That's right. Oh, I came home November, of forty-five.

Healey: Now I just want to get this straight. Ahh, you said you- down in the form that you filled out here- it says you joined in 1942 but, is it correct you were in the service- ah—

Stotsky: I was in the service—

Healey: —prior to-

Stotsky: —in 1941.

Healey: 1.

Stotsky: When, ahh, they dropped the bomb at Pearl Harbor, I was in the service, and ahh—

Healey: And you most of been one of the older people, ah-um—

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: —in boot camp. Which you were already in—

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: —your twenties.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: I think you were the old guy—

Stotsky: [laughs] Well, well at that time—I didn't become old till later years. [laughs]

Healey: [laughs]

Stotsky: But—

Healey: But, I mean a lot of 18, 17, 19-year olds.

Stotsky: That's true.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: Yeah, I was already in the 20s.

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: Yeah, but ah, yeah. Let's see -- when I got home. Oh, when- did I talk in consecutive time about where I was? In other words, does this show that I was, when I got in the-when I was basic training and they took me out to be a—

Healey: Yep.

Stotsky: Part of the cadre—

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: And ahh—

Healey: No, we kept in- we tried to keep you on-

Stotsky: Good.

Healey: Chronological order.

Stotsky: Good.

Healey: So that worked out well. Yeah.

Stotsky: That's good.

Healey: Yeah, so you spent a little bit of enlisted time and then, ahh—

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: —they pulled you out to officer candidate school.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Yeah.

Healey: Okay.

Stotsky: Then from officer candidate school—Yeah, once I got commissioned I was getting a better pay than as an enlisted man and [laughs]. That's right.

Healey: Sure enough.

Stotsky: Then I finally asked Elinor to get married. [cough] After seven years, isn't that crazy?

Healey: [laughs]

Stotsky: Boy.

Healey: And again your 98, you just turned 98.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: Yeah, in September of this year. 1918.

Stotsky: Yeah.

Healey: You've seen a lot of changes.

Stotsky: [laugh] Oh yeah! All these things. Like my kids got – some of these – like cell phones—

Healey: Sure.

Stotsky: —but it would—

Healey: Yeah.

Stotsky: —do everything, you know. Elinor had a phone but it just talked, you know. And these kids, my daughters- it- they can take pictures from theirs.

Healey: I think we're going to do that right now.

Stotsky: Huh?

Healey: So I'm, I- I I'm going to take your picture now

Stotsky: You are!

Healey: If that's okay.

Stotsky: Oh [laughs]

Healey: We'll turn off this recorder okay. And again, thank you so much, Jerry.

Stotsky: Okay.

Healey: I appreciate it. And ah—

Stotsky: Thank you.

Healey: —for the recorder here, ah, today, I think I've recorded about two hours and six minutes or more and about twenty-three minutes before that.

Stotsky: Boy!

Healey: Again, thanks so much.

Stotsky: Thank you for taking so much time.

Healey: You're welcome, you're welcome.

[End of OH2099.Stotsky_user_file3][End of Interview]