

[OH2179.Konz-Krzyminski_file1_access_clip1.mp3]
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Halaska: Okay. And can you tell me about military service in your family?

Konz-Krzyminski: Sure. Oh, absolutely. So it was 1954. The—there wasn't much talk when I was a kid. My oldest brother was 19 years older than me. So when I first was at that age where you start getting conscious and you can remember, so, five, six, seven, he was off in the Army. So I really don't remember much of him. It was peacetime. He was in Germany. There was some talk of him visiting German relatives, cousins and stuff. And so I s—I think I started, from that point, getting the connection about the military. My dad was a policeman and he was already on the force many years, so by the time I was a little kid, he was a detective, although I really remember some great stories of when he was a beat cop. That's how he met my mother. She worked downtown. And so I would just kind of hear these stories of service, protection, military. I wasn't too crazy about military movies. I wasn't into—we weren't allowed to play with guns because my dad was a cop and he had a gun in the house all the time, off duty, as well. So we didn't—we couldn't play with guns. It was—I think we had squirt guns, maybe, later on. But—so that whole, you know, GI Joe stuff was not part of my growing up, whereas a story about an uncle who was killed in Tarawa—that was my dad's brother Michael, who was killed in the Battle of Tarawa in 1945. I think it was '45—'43, '45, something around there. And there was a really tragic story about how the family found out on Christmas Eve. And it was just a very, very sad story.

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But also, there was a photograph of my grandparents with five, six, seven of my twelve German relatives who were all in the service at the same time. My mom's family, she had three brothers who—three brothers? Eugene, Edmond [??]—no, two brothers because there were four girls. Four girls and two br—they were—one was injured in the—in—at D-Day, and the other was in the Army. Plus my grandfather was in the Czar's army in Russia. He was Polish, but when Poland—Russia took over Poland, he had to be in the Army, so he took care of the Czar's horses, so there was this, like, fabulous portrait of my grandfather in this wonderful Russian uniform on a horse or around—you know, so there was all of that kind of stuff. Plus there was a time of—you know, there were still those old movies on—about patriotic films. And then my brother went off and he joined the Army Reserves. And then my sister started dating these guys. And it was the '60s, so these were Vietnam vets who, you know, were a little into things. And it was the '60s and early '70s, and so my experience with—that was pretty much my experience with the military. We were hugely patriotic. Every holiday, the flags would go up. And we lived very near the VA medical center in Milwaukee, and the federal cemetery, and we were just always very patriotic and, you know, flag waving and, you know, learned how to treat the flag with respect, and all of that

stuff. Plus, you know, growing up in the—you know, being a teenager in the '60s when, you know, people were being drafted, and wondering what that was going to be like for me when I turned eighteen, you know, what was that about? And so it was just—it was—we were hugely patriotic. It was all about respect for the flag and the country. And, you know, that was [inaudible]. It was just part of my life.