

Stan Carlow
Interviewed by Allan Berube
World War II Project
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Transcribed: Loren Basham

ALLAN BERUBE: This is Allan Berube interviewing Stan Carlow in his home in San Francisco on O'Farrell Street on August 24, 1981. This is okay with you, how much time do you have. It may be a couple of hours.

STAN CARLOW: Just take your time.

AB: Let me tell you what this is for, what I'm doing. I told you some of it....

SC: In the letter, yeah.

AB: I am working on a book on the experiences of gay people and gay Americans during the war, mostly GI and I've also put together a slide show showing....

SC: Good.

AB: So what I would like to do is tape, if this is okay with you actually, is to use that to quote from at some point in my book and also, when we get the money to transcribe it and put that in the gay archives. The public archives at some point in the future. So I will ask you to look at and sign a release after.

SC: Surely.

AB: And you can put any restrictions on it you want, like not to use your name or not to use until after awhile....

SC: Fair enough, fair enough.

AB: Or not your friends names or something like that. Also if there are certain people's names that we talk about that you think don't want, you don't want to be public you can either not say their names or

SC: I won't say their names.

AB: Or if you make a mistake we can take them out after. The tape won't be made accessible, only the transcript. If you start a little bit, if you tell me about your background.

SC: You want to know how I got into the service or I went into the service?

AB: Well even a little before that, where you grew up and what part of the country you're from.

SC: Is this thing on?

AB: Yeah.

SC: I was born in Los Angeles and raised in Los Angeles and did all my schooling in Los Angeles. I was working in Hermosa Beach in 1940 managing a small business there for a chain of restaurants and I had read in the paper that they were having a conscription for men who were to be drafted into the Army in 1940. They were to do one year of active duty. I thought about it and I realized that if I were to be called up in the summer of the year that it would ruin 2 summers of my business whereas if I volunteered in the winter I would just miss 1 summer. So I went to the draft board in Hermosa Beach because we all had to register in 1940 and I told them the number that I had received on my draft status and I told them that I would prefer to be called up in the winter time. So they asked me if I would be willing to volunteer to do my one year that way and I said yes I would. So I was given the option of volunteering in February of 1940, no, 1941. That was 10 months before Pearl Harbor. And when I volunteered they told me that by volunteering I would be given the choice of choosing the location of where I would like to do my one year of conscription.

AB: So the conscription was one year?

SC: One year. So I was sent to Ft. McArthur in San Pedro on February 25th of 1941 and two days later I was sent to Ft. Lewis in Tacoma, Washington. They had promised to keep me within the State of California, but apparently they didn't mean it when they told me that. Before I was inducted, when I went to volunteer they had sent me to a doctor in the high school in Hermosa Beach doctor, and he asked me at the time if I had any homosexual tendencies and I had said no, even though I knew I did. I was afraid to tell him for fear that it might get around the beach because it was such a small, at that time there were only 7,000 people living in Hermosa Beach and I didn't want it to get around so I figured I would get my year over with and get out and do it that way. So anyway I was set to Ft. Lewis, Washington. I was put into the 146th Field Artillery which was part of the 41st division. After I had been in boot camp about a month or so I was called up before a captain who assigned me a special duty assignment of auditing the officer's mess accounts which seemed to be in some sort of trouble or disarray. Apparently they had gone through all of my papers that they had rated me in Ft. McArthur when I first was inducted. They had given me what they call an auditor's rating. And these officer's mess accounts were in all kinds of trouble because prior to this time the officer's mess accounts and the officer's mess itself was run by a private personnel, not Army personnel. Outside people to operate it. And now the National Guard was being absorbed into the regular Army and the officer's mess accounts were to be audited by the Army and they weren't balancing so they asked me to go in try to straighten their mess up so I did. And when I got through with that they put me on special duty permanently and so for the rest of the time I was in the Army I was called an officer's mess steward, that was my rating. In December of 1941, the first week in December, I was given papers to sign prior to my being released at the end of my year because it was going to be up in February of '42 would have been the end of my year and I just signed the papers when Pearl Harbor took place, so that was the end of my discharge. Anyone who was about to be released was kept in the service more than the year they had volunteered for.

AB: Do you remember what you were doing when you heard about the bombing?

SC: Yes at the time, it was on a Sunday and I was in Seattle having dinner at a restaurant with some friends when we heard about it and we were told to return to camp immediately and the entire coast of the Pacific Coast was put into a blackout. They thought the Japanese were going to bomb us and everything. So within a couple of months from that time, my entire division was sent overseas to Australia. And we arrived in Australia around March or April of 1942. I was kept in, our outfit was kept in Melbourne, Australia for about 6 months then we were transferred up to Queensland, up to Rockhampton. We were there about, maybe close to a year when we were finally sent up to Ft. Moresby up in New Guinea for 6 months and then we were returned to Rockhampton. It was while I was in Rockhampton that an order had come through the G-2 section, which is an intelligence section of the Army, saying that any serviceman who suspected that he had homosexual tendencies

was to report to his medical officer and he would be sent home for the good of the service as well as himself with no loss of any GI benefits or any dishonor of any kind.

AB: How did you find out about this?

SC: I some friends who worked in the G-2 section and they came and told us. By this time there was like a little group of us who used to meet every night. We were, you know friends and there was no sex or anything, just friends.

AB: You were all gay?

SC: Most of us were, knew we were and used to meet and talk. The group, about half of them were willing to go along with this order, the others just figured it would be better to say nothing and stay in the service.

AB: How many of them were in that service?

SC: About 15 or 20. Not just from my office but from other outfits in the same division. So one of the reasons that I did this was because I had been overseas 24 months by this time, I had been overseas longer than my 18 months and there was supposed to be an 18 month rotation process by which any serviceman who had been overseas 18 months was to be rotated and replaced by someone else. I had gone to the lieutenant colonel in charge of my outfit to ask him if I could be sent home because they were sending other men who had been overseas as long as myself and he refused to let me go. His reason that he told me was that he had no one to replace me as the officer's mess steward. Which was, of course, not true because they could easily replaced me, but he just didn't want me to leave because he liked the way I was running the place. So when I heard about this deal I seized it because I figured that was a way of getting home. So about 6 or 7 of us the next morning went to the, we were told if we were to go on this, to take advantage of this order from G-2 that we were to report to the medics and tell our stories to our medical officer and that he would see that we would be sent to a nearby hospital and then processed and returned to the states within a matter of weeks. So the next morning about 6 or 7 of us reported to our officer. His name was Captain Schwartz, a medical officer. And he was very cooperative, very nice. He even said that he suspected that most of us were gay and that we were doing the right thing. And so we were transferred to the Rockhampton, the 6th Army hospital in Rockhampton. We were there about a day or two and I happened to notice that the end of our beds where they had our charts on each bed, we were put into a ward where they had mostly people who were mentally disabled or nerve cases or something. I happened to look at the foot of our beds and our charts instead of having some kind of medical number or whatever they would use so that they would know what our problem was, they had written the word homosexual on our charts. So that anybody could see and the nurses were reading it and the people were reading it and they were sort of giving us a bad time.

AB: How did it make you feel?

SC: So I went to the medical officer in the hospital. I told him and he had it changed immediately. Apparently they didn't know what to do with us or how to handle our cases because this was something new. This order that has just come down was something that they didn't know much about I don't think. The next thing we heard that they were going to return us to our outfits because they didn't know how to handle our cases. We weren't going to be sent home at all and they were just going to return us to our units and let them take care of us. So I called this lieutenant colonel, who was our commanding officer from the hospital and told him and he sent someone to the hospital who said that we wouldn't be returned because by this time everybody in our outfit knew why we had gone to the hospital and we couldn't go back. It was impossible. So once we started we couldn't go back to our outfit so they transferred us then to a hospital outside of Brisbane, Australia. By this

time there was I would say there was 20 or 30 because they, men, because they had been coming from different units on this deal and they were all in this hospital. So they must have had 20 or 30 of us under the same order from the General 2 headquarters so they put us in this large hospital outside of Brisbane and no one there seemed to know what to do with us.

AB: When you were in that hospital you were all in the same ward?

SC: No they took part of them and part of them, part of us were put into a ward for nervous cases and mental disorders and the others were put into a unit behind barbed wire and treated just like insane people. They wouldn't let them use razors or they weren't allowed to have even nail files or anything. They took all their toilet articles away and they were kept behind barbed wire with a bunch of very sick mental cases. They weren't allowed to shave themselves or do anything like that. At every meal time we would all be marched in together into the mess hall and segregated in the mess hall. And of course everyone knew what the story was and we were given a very rough time at this hospital.

AB: Did they say things to you?

SC: Oh, yes, yes. They used to jeer at us and taunt us as we walked all together. We would be marched into the mess hall. By this time I would be about 50 men in that hospital in the same thing that I was in there. All waiting to go home. It was while we were there that we heard some of the nurses talking about the colonel in charge of the hospital, his name was Lieutenant Colonel Cole, and he and the nurses had talked over our situation and they had decided that they were going to rehabilitate us and send us back to our units. So we were all kept together, every morning we were all called out together as a little group and given some little work detail to do like raking leaves or picking up cigarette butts or doing little petty jobs and we were all kept together in one group. Away from the other men.

AB: What was the rank of most of you?

SC: Well at the time I was a technical sergeant. I had 5 stripes.

AB: Is that a T5?

SC: T4.

AB: What was the highest rank that you remember?

SC: Well, I don't know but there were many sergeants, a few sergeants. But they were all enlisted men. No officers. So while we were there no one seemed to know what to do with us. We weren't getting any medical treatment and we weren't getting any word about going home. We all had been told we would be home within a week or two and here we were going into the second month and then the third month and then it was like nobody knew what to do and we were being treated very badly so one of the men, he was a corporal, I think, went into Brisbane and contacted a staff sergeant named Moody who was working for the intelligence section in the 6th Army headquarters in Brisbane and told him what was happening to us. And that they were getting ready to send us back to our units that we had come from 2 or 3 months before that. Because the colonel himself in charge of the hospital had been heard to say many things about how he didn't want to have anything to do with us and he was trying to get rid of us and he thought we were all sick people and that we should be returned to our units. He wanted no part of any group like that. Anyway this Sergeant Moody came out and took a statement from each one of us and he said that he would see that we were not returned to our outfit. That he would promise us that we would eventually get home, back to the United States.

AB: What kind of statement did he want?

SC: Well he asked us what we had done and if we'd had any sex, active sex life in the Army and things like that and wanted to know why we wanted to go home and why we thought we were homosexual and all that.

AB: Did you have to have had sex in order to ...?

SC: Well you were supposed to know that you were homosexual. He didn't want to bother with you if he thought you might be faking or something. So he wanted to know all about your sex life and what you were doing and when you knew you should be sent home and why you went through with this order and all of that. So he took a statement from each one of us. He came out in some kind of an Army vehicle and he would have each one of us go in this vehicle with him one at a time and he had a typewriter in his lap and he took these statements. He said we would be contacted within a few days. And we were. I think about 3 to 4 days later we were all sent into Brisbane at night time, it was about 7 or 8 o'clock at night and they took us to a building called the Summerset House. This was the intelligence section of the 6th Army was stationed in this building. We were all marched up to the second floor there and we were, we went before a desk where there was a 1 star general sitting with 2 or 3 other officers. We were given papers one at a time to sign and we were told that these papers were the papers that we must sign before we would be returned to the states. And before I signed mine I asked this general, I said can you tell me what we're signing? And he said yes, you're signing your release from the Army. And I said you mean its my discharge, and he says, yes this will be your discharge. And I said, what kind of a discharge is it. And he said you're just signing a medical release and you will not lose any benefits or any GI rights or anything like that. I said because if I am going to sign something that I'll be sorry for I would rather not sign it. He said no, no you have nothing to worry about. His name was General Funk, F-U-N-K. So we were then taken out of the hospital and sent to what they call a loading station near Brisbane where they hold troops before they send them home.

AB: How many of you are there at this point?

SC: At this point there must have been about 50, 60 of us. This holding station where we sent was called Ascot, it was right outside Brisbane and it was sort of a holding station and a hospital. There were big tents with beds and cots and that's where we stayed. From there we were kept there about a week or two and then one morning we were taken, this whole group of us, about 50 or 60 of us were taken down to the harbor and put onto a ship. It was some kind of a freighter, it wasn't a passenger ship it was a freighter of some sort, American ship. As we were going up the gang plank they called my name out. They told me that they had selected me to be the mess sergeant on this ship. To prepare all the meals and be in charge of the galley on the ship and prepare all the meals and stuff. And besides the 50 or 60 GI's that were in our group there were also about 100 civilian seamen who had either missed ships in Australia or who had been in jail in Australia or gotten in some sort of trouble. I guess they were all undesirable types of seamen or people who had been in trouble. So there must have been all together about 200 passengers, among the passengers on the ship. Anyway. I found out after we got on the ship that this ship, I can't remember the name of it, but this ship had been in the harbor at Brisbane. It was actually a troop ship, it could carry thousands of troops, but the reason that they had only put this little amount, small amount of personnel on was because the ship had been rammed in the harbor at Brisbane. And this ship had been declared unseaworthy. In other words the ship did not have proper steam, it wasn't in good to sail in the ocean but they were sending it back to the states to be repaired in the shipyard. So I guess they figured they could put on there, it wouldn't make any difference. They wouldn't put people, they wouldn't put people on they were worried about. They just wanted to put all the derelicts and debris on the ship. Consequently it took us almost a month to get back because we had to go very slowly because the ship couldn't make very good time and they wouldn't take a chance of sending us on a direct route because we might

run into submarines or something. So they had us slowly go along the coast of South America all the way up to Seattle. It took about 28 days or a month on that ship. On a regular ship it would have taken about maybe 3 weeks, but this ship was slower.

AB: What was that like, that journey?

SC: It was alright. There was nothing wrong.

AB: Did they keep you separate from the others?

SC: Yes, we all stayed together.

AB: So you got to know each other?

SC: Oh, yes, all of us.

AB: What was that like socially? Did you make friends?

SC: Oh, we made a lot of nice friends. We had a nice time. I worked very hard because it was a lot of work. They didn't ask me if I wanted to do this work, they just told me that was what I was going to do.

AB: Was there any talk of any of you being angry about what happening?

SC: Oh, yes. The men who had been kept in that hospital for about 2 months behind barbed wire they weren't very happy. Because they felt like they were actually with a bunch of insane people for a couple of months and they said it was terrible. Luckily, I wasn't in that ward or whatever they called it. It must have been very rough for those men. Anyway, so we went to Ft. Lawton in Seattle. That's where they took us when we reached the states. It seemed like nobody really knew what to do with us there either. We would question these officers about how long would we be here and what were they going to do with us and when we were going to get out and nobody seemed to know. We were there for about 10 days. The day before we were let out they took us into Seattle by 2 truck loads. It must have been 50 people. They took us to a clothing store there someplace, a small clothing store in Seattle and told us we were to be given \$35.00 worth of clothes. We could choose our own clothes but they couldn't be over \$35.00 for the whole thing. They took all of our Army clothes away. They wouldn't let us leave the next day. We were told we were going to be discharged the next day but that we would have to leave in civilian clothing. So they took all of our uniforms away, even the uniforms that I bought myself. I had them tailor made in Australia. They wouldn't let us leave with any of our Army uniforms. We were given any pay that was due us and so much for traveling depending on how far you had to travel. And we were told that we were to report to our draft boards in the different cities where we were being returned to. And we were given our discharge which were blue discharges. And in the discharge we had all been stripped of any rank that we had and where it said character they had written "poor." It said on our discharge that if we ever tried to reenlist in the Army that we would be put in federal prison and all that business. So it was a blue discharge and it said "Section 8" on it. And so when I got back to the draft board in Hermosa Beach....

AB: You had to report back?

SC: I had to get back there, why this little old lady in the draft board, when I came in, I guess she had never seen a blue discharge. She really didn't know what it was and so she took it and went back in the office where some other people were. She came out and she said, I guess you've been a bad boy, haven't you. And I said

why. She said that's what I was told this discharge was. With that I went home and that was the end of the Army.

AB: You moved back to your parents?

SC: No, my mother lived in Los Angeles. But I had supported her before I went in the service and all the four years I was in the service I had an allotment made out to her every month. She had been ill when I went in the service, that's one of the reasons I wanted to get my year over with too and be kept in California was so I could be near her because she lived alone, just by herself. So when I came back why I took care of her from then on until she died. It really didn't bother me too much except that my family in Los Angeles and several other people they used to say to me, why don't you get a GI loan, why don't you do this and why don't you.... And I couldn't tell them that I couldn't get anything like that because of this type of discharge. I wasn't allowed to get a GI loan. Regularly discharged soldiers were getting \$20.00 a week unemployment. But weren't entitled to that. We couldn't get any GI training if we wanted or go to school or do anything like that. They'd never given us our mustering out pay or anything like that. They just gave us enough for our train ticket and whatever pay was due us for the time we had been in the service.

AB: That was in Seattle that you found out you were getting ...?

SC: Blue discharges.

AB: Up to that point you thought you were getting...?

SC: They had always told us that we would get a honorable discharge with no loss of any benefits, GI benefits. We were entitled to everything, they told us. Because that was a question I had asked this General Funk before I even signed my papers, I wouldn't sign them until he reassured me that I was going to get an honorable discharge with all my benefits and things.

AB: Did you ever go to the VFW or American Legion?

SC: Yes. When I came out of the service when I went back to Hermosa, one of my friends there was the secretary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW, in Santa Monica. They didn't have a branch in Hermosa Beach, but he was one of the officers of the VFW in Santa Monica.

[End of tape 1, side 1]

[Tape 1, side 2, Stan Carlow, 8-24-81]

SC: When I told him what happened why he was outraged about the whole thing. He was one of the few people I thought I could trust and talk to about this whole thing. He said that he was going to see that we were given what we were promised and so he asked me if I could locate some of the people who had been discharged with me, any that might be around Southern California. When we had been discharged we sort of, some of us decided we'd keep in touch with each other so I knew how to contact 4 or 5 of the fellows who had been through this whole deal. He went to each one and took a deposition from them and had a secretary of the VFW prepare a deposition of each of these men and he sent it to Washington. It was returned that the Army would not make any changes. In other words, whatever he wanted to do to help us, he was refused.

AB: Do you think he is still alive?

SC: I don't know, I never, this is so long ago I have no idea where he is. Two of the men who got out with me and who could tell about most of this live in Burlingame and they wouldn't want to get in on this at all. They're living there and they're in business and they don't want to come forward. Because I called them when I'd gone to Swords to Plowshares. They'd asked me if I could get somebody who would substantiate what I was saying so I called these men and they said they wanted no part of it. They felt it was better just to leave it lie the way it was. One of them is that, one of the boys who was kept behind the barbed wire for the two months and I thought he might be willing to say something but he didn't want to come forward at all. They're both in their 60's and one is very sick and so I guess they don't want to be bothered. Let me see what else can I say.

AB: Did you approach the American Legion?

SC: Yes, when I went to New York in 1951, I contacted the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I mean the Veterans Administration in New York City and I went there and they told me that I had 15 years from the time that I was discharged, that the time limit expired in 15 from my date of discharge. So twice when I was in New York I tried to get someone to listen to my complaints with the idea of maybe getting an honorable discharge but each time I applied, why they would turn me down. And they said I would have to supply new evidence. Once I wrote myself to St. Louis and they sent me a card back saying that I had no more, unless I had some new evidence they could not reopen my case. I think it was about 1960 when it was almost the end of the 15 year period. I wrote to Washington myself and told them I would be willing to come and pay my own traveling expenses and all if I could talk to someone about getting my discharge changed. And they told me that there was no way that I could do it. And when I got to New York, even in 1972, the Veterans Administration in New York City had an office on 43rd Street right off 8th Avenue and they were advertising on the television news and networks that there was some new kind of review board being set up to upgrade discharges for veterans of World War II. So I went down there one day and spoke to some captain there. And before I even got started he opened the Army AR's, you know the regulations, and he let me read it. He said, you see there, the Army still doesn't condone homosexuality and it is still considered a dishonorable discharge or undesirable. So you would just be wasting your time to try anything. So that was the end of that until I heard about this thing in 1979 when I was told about the Freedom of Information Act, whatever it is. And that's when I went to the Swords to Plowshares and started this whole thing.

AB: Did they get your file?

SC: Well they took all the information, they were very nice. It's a CETA organization, I think. They sent to St. Louis but records were in a, all of my records were burned in a fire. They had little pieces, just little pieces I think of the thing I gave you. They could see where I was sent to the hospital, when I was sent to the first hospital in Rockhampton. They had part of the records from the hospital where I was in Brisbane for those two months. That's about all I think. They found, they all looked like they were burned, you could see where they were burned and stuff. So I guess that's all they had to work on.

AB: Back to this group of men who were on the ship, were all the men on the ship white? Or all the men that were in the gay ...?

SC: Yeah. There were no black ones at all. But they were from all different parts of the country, of course. And I kept in touch with some of them. I even visited a few of them after I got out of business and while I'd take a trip back east or something I'd stop in Columbus, Ohio where two of the fellows lived. And then I saw one of them in Kansas City and one lived in Buffalo, New York. We kept in touch for awhile. But the only two I keep in touch with now are these two down in Burlingame. We visit quite often.

AB: Do you have, have you saved any of the letters from that time?

SC: No.

AB: Do you have any snapshots of yourself?

SC: No but they have down in Burlingame. They have a picture of our whole group, the whole 146th Field Artillery. One of those boys in Burlingame was in my outfit. They have pictures of the mess hall that I had in Rockhampton and all that. As a matter of fact, the two that are living in Burlingame, I introduced them to each other.

AB: Really?

SC: And they have been together ever since.

AB: Was that around that time?

SC: In 1942, I introduced them to each other and they are still together.

AB: And they were in your unit?

SC: One was in my unit. Gee, this officers mess that I had in Rockhampton, I had 6 waiters and a bartender and 4 cooks and all that. This fella whose in Burlingame now, one of the boys was my bartender. So we used to go into the city once in a while in Rockhampton, to the Red Cross. And that's where he met this fellow that he is still with. Because I had known him before. And I introduced them and they are still together. Which is something.

AB: Yeah.

SC: Its almost 40 years. Their neighbors thing they're brothers. They have a barber shop in Burlingame. Its strange because when they got out of the service they knew they weren't entitled to GI training, but they went to the barber college down here on 6th Street in San Francisco. San Francisco Barber College. They applied for GI schooling and they accepted them without knowing the details I guess and by the time they were in their 5th month they were called into the office and told that they shouldn't have been given any of this training but the whole course was just 6 months so they let them finish. And thanks to that training they both became barbers and they live very well.

AB: Wow.

SC: So I guess the school figured it was too late to throw them out after 5 months.

AB: When you were in Washington, did you know of any gay bars? Had you ever gone to a gay bar?

SC: In Washington? Yes there was a club in Seattle that we used to go to once in a while, it was called the Spinning Wheel. They had sort of a drag show there I think. It was quite good. But I'm never in the bar scene. I don't think if ever been in a gay bar here in San Francisco because I don't drink or anything. The strange thing about it was that when I turned myself in to this Captain Schwartz in my outfit, I had never been an active member of any homosexual thing at all. But I knew I had the tendencies, but I had never performed an act at all. But I was always friendly with the gay people, because I guess they sensed that I was one of them whether I was active or not.

AB: How did you meet each other, I mean how did you get to know each other?

SC: In the Army?

AB: Yeah.

SC: Just by being together in the Army. It seems like when you're in the Army if there are gay people in the Army you sort of sense each other and you all end up with each other.

AB: Did you do with eye contact?

SC: I don't really know but you just tell. I guess we shared the same mutual interests like we used to go out to nice restaurants and go to the theaters. The rest of the outfit was all going out looking for action or something with these bars and the bar girls and the whores and everything. And I guess we just weren't interested in that so we all seemed to end up together. I don't know if there were any gay bars in Tacoma, I really don't know. Ft. Lewis where we were stationed for over a year is in Tacoma. I don't know if there were any, I guess there must have been some but I didn't know them. When I went into the Army I really went in thinking that I just had to get my year over with and do it quickly and let it go. I was very happy that I had signed my release papers that December and I was practically on my way home and then the Pearl Harbor thing happened. I never had any problems in the Army. I mean it, I never, because I was always on special duty running the officers mess. I was always away from most of the outfit anyway because I was always in the mess hall or running the officers club. In Rockhampton where we were stationed for about of year, the officers had rented a private house where they used go every weekend for their parties and dances. They rented a very nice house there and they used to send me in on Friday nights and I would get everything ready for the weekend. So I would set up the bar and they'd have a dance and a party and they would have all these local women in to dance with them. R. Russ, colonel, by the way, this lieutenant colonel was that was in charge of our outfit was gay and he had a boy friend in the outfit that we all knew about. And then we had two or three officers that we knew were gay, but everybody seemed to get along.

AB: Did other people know they were gay too?

SC: Oh yes. As a matter of fact one of our officers, all the other officers used to tease him all the time because he was so swishy.

AB: Really?

SC: His name was Charles and they all called him Nellie. That was his nickname. Whenever he came into the dining room.

AB: And he didn't get caught up in this?

SC: No, he didn't turn himself in and I guess he finished his days as a respected officer. He was a first lieutenant.

AB: So, down in Australia, it was only whoever turned themselves that were brought in?

SC: That's all I ever heard about. I never heard of any officers who came in on this.

AB: But I mean, people weren't accused, there wasn't like a witch hunt?

SC: No, no.

AB: The first event was that you saw this directive that came down?

SC: Yes. I think a lot of the men in my outfit who were gay used to go into town and there were certain places in Australia, because it was all during the blackout, you know, and there were certain corners or bridges or where they'd go and cruise each other I guess and pick up friends and meet each other. But I don't know, I never went there so I don't know. Even when I was in the....

AB: That was in Brisbane?

SC: No, in Rockhampton. When we were in the, in this Ascot, getting ready to be sent home, why there must have been maybe a thousand soldiers that were waiting to be sent home. And of course a lot of them found out about us, this little group of ours. Many of them used to come into where we were and try to get us to go out with them, go for walks. They wanted a little action I'm sure, I guess some of the fellows maybe accommodated them, I don't know but I know I didn't.

AB: They were straight?

SC: Yes. They wanted some. Yes.

AB: When you were in that, the 1000 that were there, were you separated off?

SC: Well we were in different little tents. It was like a tent city actually. Some of the tents were large like hospital tents. I actually lived in a tent with about I guess 20 men. And I would say maybe 5 or 6 were gay and the rest were straight.

AB: That was where?

SC: That was in Ascot, just before we boarded the ship.

AB: That was just for a week or so?

SC: About 10 days, I would say. Ten days to 2 weeks.

AB: What was some of the slang that was used? Did you use the word "gay" then with each other?

SC: I really don't know. I don't think they were that delicate, I don't think.

AB: Like "queer?"

SC: Yeah. I used to have men they used to come in to see me. They'd sit on my bed and we would play cards or something. Some of them were Marines and sailors, everything in this place not just soldiers. And they used to ask me, why don't you come out and take a walk and do all this stuff. And I knew what they were after. But I always thought that you shouldn't do anything like that in the service. Afraid it might be something that they were trying to bait you into something. You know.

AB: Sure.

SC: This Sergeant Moody that took these depositions from us at this hospital in Brisbane told us that the G, the intelligence section, had many officers and Army personnel who were going out try to trap gay people, gay personnel. Because the intelligence section of the 6th Army had received some sort of an order that they were to try to get all of the homosexuals out of the service. So they used sent these decoys out and try to have the gay people cruise them at night and I guess many of them were actually caught in action. Some of the men who were sent home with us. The strange thing about it, when you were in the Army, we were often stationed – like when were up in New Guinea, especially – we were stationed near some Australian outfits and they always had several gay people in their outfits. Their officers and everybody thought it was wonderful. They told us that their superior officers thought it was a good idea to have a few gay people in the outfit to take care of everyone. Because they knew they were miles and miles from where there were any women so I guess they figured it was a good way of getting the boys relieved.

AB: They really said that?

SC: Yeah. I think Australian Army was much more open. I guess they don't have to keep up their macho thing as much as the Americans. Being gung ho men. You know. They seemed, they'd tell us that the Australian Army thought is was good deal to have a few gay people scattered through to sort of take care of everybody.

AB: In your unit were there any notorious gay men?

SC: There were a few, a few that people used to talk about. I think that many times, especially in New Guinea when we were up there because we were so far from anything, why they used to have about every weekend or every other weekend, they'd get a keg of beer and all the personnel would all get drunk. I used to hear all kinds of stories about even these so called straight people carrying on with each other. I guess they got a little high and forgot how masculine they were. But, of course, that wasn't thought of as being queer, that was just something they didn't talk about. But I'm sure at one of the officers' parties when the officers had their house one night in the middle of one of the parties they found these two first lieutenants someplace in the bushes having an affair. And nothing was ever said about it.

AB: They didn't?

SC: Yeah. Well, they were officers, you know. The fellow that our lieutenant colonel liked, who was his boy, I guess, was a second lieutenant when he came in and within a matter of months he was a captain. And every Sunday morning the colonel would come into the mess hall that I ran and had me prepare a basket lunch for him, a big hamper of food and he and his boy would take off in a Jeep and go off in the woods somewhere, I don't know where they went.

AB: Wow. The wait staff, the waiters particularly, were they...?

SC: Mostly gay people, yes. Because they seem to do that kind of work.

AB: Seems to be true everywhere.

SC: And the cooks too.

AB: So was there a lot of joking in the kitchen.

SC: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact one of the pictures that this boy has down in Burlingame, that I might be able to get the pictures from him, has a picture of my mess hall in Rockhampton because it was out doors. It was very primitive, we didn't have mess halls. One of the friends of ours they had taken a big empty bomb, you know these big long bomb crates about that long and he hung it in front of my mess hall. And it said "Mother Carlow's 69er Diner."

AB: Oh, no. They do that?

SC: Yeah. I guess it kept up the morale of the troops to have people kidding around, you know. I guess it was maybe wishful thinking, I don't know.

AB: Was there any, did you get special services?

SC: Yes, we had shows. Sometimes we had shows that we could go to and the Australian shows seemed to be the best. When Australian troops put on a show they even had drag shows and everything.

AB: Did the Americans have drag shows?

SC: I think they might but I don't remember any of them. But the Australian ones were great.

AB: What were they like?

SC: They were always held out doors of course. And they had singers and choruses and everything, dancers. And some were in drag and some weren't. It was very good.

AB: It was all men?

SC: All men, yes. There was never a woman. And I think that actually most of the action as far as I think, went on at the road crossings in the Salvation Army's. Like in Rockhampton there was a Red Cross and a Salvation Army. You could go in there and the Australians and the Americans and all would mix there. I sure there was a lot of picking up there. But I don't know anything about it because.... The Salvation Army had a place outside of Rockhampton at the beach. They had a big like building there with barracks and dormitories and you go there and spend the weekend if you were free on a weekend and they would let you stay there. And they were very nice. Run by the volunteer women, Australian women. They had real nice weekends and meals and we had movies and stuff and dances. And I am sure that a lot of Americans and Australians mixed at those places, and they ended up together, I don't know where. Because everything was blackouts I guess you could do anything.

AB: Was there, I have heard of people used the word latrines there and that there was gay, men who had sex in the latrines.

SC: They never did in my latrine because we had outdoor latrines. We just had holes in the ground. One of the, the other fellow, not the one that was in my outfit but the other one in Burlingame, he was in an outfit that was right next to our and he used to be, he was a corporal. He drove an officer. He was a driver so he had access to this Jeep. Whenever he would drive his officer into town and leave him somewhere then he'd have the Jeep for a few hours and I am sure he used to make out very well. Because he could pick up these fellows and Australians and all that. That's why he was very active I think. I can't think of anything more within our outfit. I don't remember anything ever happening. I mean nobody ever caught anybody in bed with anyone or

nothing like that. I think it was a little too dangerous. Because after all you have to live with these people 24 hours a day so you don't want to be caught in anything like that. Just like the day we went to the, when we turned ourselves in and went to this first hospital, they said, I was told later, that we hadn't been gone an hour and the whole outfit knew what our story was. It was all supposed to be kept secret. But everything got out. That's why it was just impossible for us to go back again to our own outfit. The idea of returning us after this Colonel Cole wanted to rehabilitate us and send us back to our outfit. I don't know what he thought he was going to do to us, how he was going to rehabilitate us.

AB: He probably would have.

SC: Imagine they would send you back to your outfit after everybody knew why you left. And here you've gone along with this order in good faith and believing what the Army promised you. I'll never forget the order said right on it that you would be returned the states as quickly as possible with no embarrassment and no loss of benefits and you would be doing a good deed for yourself as well as for the armed services. In other words, you were helping the armed services also by turning yourself in, to help them get you out.

AB: Sounds like a trap.

SC: Well really, that's what it turned out to be. Imagine putting people behind barbed wire and treating them like insane people. They weren't even allowed to have a knife in the mess hall. Where they were going to stab each other or kill themselves or something.

AB: What was the criteria they used for deciding who was going to be behind the barbed wire and who wasn't?

SC: I don't know how they chose them, just at random. I guess they stuck us wherever they had empty beds.

AB: Do you remember any stories of what that was like behind the barbed wire?

SC: Oh, it was terrible from what they said. I imagine they were with a bunch of nuts and screaming and yelling and all that stuff. They were mental cases you know. Everybody I guess in the hospital thought we were mental cases. They'd probably tried to treat us like.

AB: Was your unit ever in combat?

SC: Oh, yes. I had many medals and they took those all away.

AB: Oh they did?

SC: I had a, of course I wasn't in combat because I was in the kitchen always. But over half of my outfit, 146th Field Artillery, was either died or was killed. We had the, coming over from the states before we ever got there, we were in the Coral Sea battle, when they had that battle. So we got that medal for being in the Coral Sea battle. Then we had two or three other things. We were chased by torpedoes and everything else coming to Australia.

AB: Did any of your gay friends die?

SC: Yes. As a matter of fact, our colonel, this Anderson, died of jungle rot. I had that once too. Its sort of thing you get out of, they say it comes out of the weeds or the bushes or something that starts your skin rotting and you get like these sores on your legs and if it hits the bone why then its supposed to be fatal. And that's

what he got and died. He died from that. His name was Virgil Anderson, Lt. Colonel Virgil Anderson. He was a very pompous officer. He was like a Prima Donna, very.... He was the one who had this boy that he like and made a big captain out of him. Needless to tell you he was very nice looking too. I think he was from Washington I think. See the 41st Division was a national guard outfit before I went in it. It was from Washington and Montana and Idaho. That's where it was.

AB: And how did you happen to get ...?

SC: Well they sent us up there, I don't know. They didn't ask us where we wanted to go. That's what happened right from the very first when they promised me they'd keep me in California and in two days I was in Washington. So that shows you how they, once you've signed your papers, you're at their mercy.

AB: Were there any WAC units stationed there?

SC: No I never saw any of the WACS, no.

AB: Did they have a reputation of being...?

SC: I don't know. I imagine some of the nurses were carrying on with some of the enlisted men, I think. But not that I ever knew. But the whole thing was, it seemed like from the very day we started, from the very day we turned ourselves in it seemed like it was just ignorance all the time. Nobody knew what to do with us and nobody wanted to have anything to do with us. And each new place where we landed, they were trying to get rid of us as quickly as possible. It was just like something they didn't want to acknowledge existed.

AB: But yet this order came down.

SC: And we certainly thought we were doing the right thing to go along with it; yet the whole thing backfired on us.

AB: Did that ever, during the 50s, did your discharge ever come up when you working or anything?

SC: No because when I got out of the service, I went in business for myself. I opened a little restaurant in Hermosa Beach and I sold that then I opened one in Santa Monica. Of course I never could explain to my family why I couldn't get a GI loan for my business. My sister and my father used to say, well why don't you get a GI loan and do this and do that, get this for your business and all that. I couldn't explain to them because they didn't know anything about what I.... I don't think they ever saw my discharge. As a matter of fact, I threw it away.

AB: You did?

SC: Because I felt that I had been betrayed, you know. So I didn't want any part of that. I could never understand why they wouldn't even let me reopen this case. They definitely didn't want to hear about it and they didn't want to.... I really don't think they knew what to do about it.

AB: Did that effect the things like, did that effect your views of the government after that?

SC: Well surely. I mean even when I went into the Sword to Plowshares I certainly wasn't interested in getting anything out of there. I mean I just felt that somebody should hear about something like this because it wasn't right what they did to me. I don't see why I should have gone into the service voluntarily, and I really worked

hard while I was in the service because it was no joke running this officer's mess. Because I had like 70 or 80 officers that I used to have to feed and take care of. And I took care of their barracks and all their laundry and their cleaning and did all that for them. I had to send it out of course. It was really a tough job. I had many chances to....

[End of tape 1, side 2]

[Tape 2, side 1, Stan Carlow – 8-24-81]

AB: ...There were 70 or 80 officers.

SC: Yeah, 70 or 80 officers to feed and I don't know if you know how an officer's mess operates but an officer's mess is not part of the Army itself, its run as a separate unit. And the officers themselves are responsible for their officer's mess and for all the bills it incurs and for the other bills like cleaning and laundry and all that. The Army gives them so much per day for food, rations. They supplement it with extra things because they don't want to eat the way enlisted men eat. So I used to have to do all this buying for all these fancy things that they liked. I used to have to go into Tacoma at least twice a week and order things and I had salesmen calling upon me all the time and they used to make all kinds of offers if I wanted to pad this bill or pad that bill. I could have really ripped the officers off but I always felt that was not the thing to do when you were working for the federal government. I didn't want any trouble with them. And then, of course, even when I was overseas we used to have to go into these little towns in Australia trying to get little things that were very hard to get during the war. Certain things that you just couldn't find and the Army didn't issue them. So I used to have to try to get all these special little things and I used to work every weekend at their house in the city. It really is a lot of work. And that's probably why this colonel didn't want me to leave. I probably did it too well. I even told him once I said my God all these different sergeants had gone home, this one's gone home. And I'd name them. And I'd say I have 22 months and 23 months overseas. The Army A&R said that after 18 months any man who was overseas after you'd completed 18 months of overseas time you were supposed to be rotated. But he would say, who's going to take your place. And I'd say, well my God you can get somebody. No there's nobody here that can do it like you do it. And I guess he thought that was enough.

AB: Is this the same gay colonel?

SC: Yes. I mean I 'm sure he knew I knew his story and I think he knew mine. So we used to, you know, we could speak very easily to each other. But he was, he, none of the officers would have eaten like the enlisted men. They didn't go for that at all. They wanted their own bar always set up and they all wanted their special food. So you had to give them that kind of a mess hall. So it was a lot of work. And to think that you, I put up with all this for almost 4 years and then you get thrown out like that, you can't even leave with your uniform on. That had I done, nothing. I had just gone along with an Army order. Not that I have never lost an hour of, I was never on KP or any kind of bad conduct duty or anything. There never was any kind of court martial, nothing.

AB: And this says "poor character and conduct?"

SC: Yes. I had some silver stars for so much service overseas. I had the good conduct medal and I had about 5 or 6 medals. And they took them all away. So I felt like they shouldn't be allowed to get away with things like that. I am sure they couldn't do it now. In those days I think thinking was so closed that, you know....

AB: Well Jill, its really good that you pushed it when you fought it through the years.

SC: The only thing that could possibly help me at this point is if I should ever need to go to a GA hospital. Under that blue discharge I don't think they'd accept you in a GA hospital. But I am just hoping I never need it, that's all.

AB: What is your ethnic background? What is the nationality of your family?

SC: My father is a Russian Jewish and my mother is Irish. Both my parents were born in America. My father was born in Boston and my mother was born in Kansas. And they were both in the theater. My father played the Palace in New York and so did my mother.

AB: Really? What did they do?

SC: My father was an actor, you know, a serious actor and my mother was a, she and her sister did like a sister act in vaudeville. Dancing and singing and all that. The cakewalk and all that kind of junk, you know. That's where they met, I guess, on the stage. When I was 1, my mother and father divorced. I have never been told the real story and they are both dead now so I'll never hear it I guess. But apparently my mother left my father and left him with my sister and myself. I was 1 and my sister was 3. She just took off, so my father was awarded the custody of the two children which was quite unusual in California, to give the children to the father. They usually give the children to the mother, but I guess she wasn't around so they gave us to my father and then he put us in a home where he stayed with us. Into a boarding house. And he was with us and he really took very good care of us and really worked hard to take care of us. He could of easily just put us into an orphanage or a home or something but he really knocked himself to take care of us. He really did the right thing. But to the day they both died I don't even know what happened, why they were divorced. He would never say a bad word about my mother and she never mentioned it, so I don't know.

AB: Had you gotten back in touch with her?

SC: Yes. My mother as I got older she'd appear every once in awhile. And then as she got older my father always said that someday when she's was old and hasn't any way of getting around or supporting herself, she would come back and let you take care of her. That's exactly what happened. She came back and I took care of her until she died. She used to come into my restaurant in Santa Monica and I got her a little apartment near my restaurant and she'd come in sometimes and help me a little bit. I had 14 waitresses and she'd come in and sometimes she'd help. She was very happy just to think I had this business there. But in the years when you needed her she wasn't there. My sister never forgave her. To the day my mother died my sister wouldn't have anything to do with me. But I guess she was 3 and I was 1 so I never remember living with my mother. I guess my sister had some kind of memories, but I have none.

AB: How much education did you have?

SC: I had, I graduated from high school and I had 2 years of junior collage. Actually, I wanted to be a dentist. I had several dentists in my family in Southern California. I still have some down there but I knew I didn't like it so I just dropped it. The first job I ever had was in a small restaurant that was owned by one of my uncles in Hermosa Beach. I went to work for this big company in Hermosa Beach and I was with them for 5 or 6 years until I went into the Army.

AB: That was a restaurant?

SC: It was like an ice cream store.

AB: A chain?

SC: It was a big chain. They had over 70 places. I used to go from one beach to the other. I had one in Balboa, one in Redondo and one in Newport Beach.

AB: What was the name of that?

SC: It was called Curries Ice Cream Company. It was a very, it was like Baskin Robbins is, that kind of a place. When I got out of the Army, I'd saved a little money in the service and I decided to open my own, my sister had loaned me some money, and what I had saved I opened this first one in Hermosa Beach. And then I sold that and opened a larger one in Santa Monica. This company I worked for was very nice. They were very good. The business I bought in Santa Monica was one of their old restaurants that they had closed and so they sold it to me and gave me a very good deal because I had been an employee of theirs for so many years. When I got out of the service it was still when things were rationed and at the time any serviceman was given a high quota of red points and blue points. You probably don't remember that. Everything during World War Two was on red points and blue points. Everything that you bought in the stores like canned fruit and butter and milk, every thing was, meat even was all with ration coupons. The amount of coupons you got was judged by how many was in your family or something. But any serviceman who had been overseas was given a larger quota of points so that's how I had enough of these points to buy stuff for my restaurant. It was while I was in, when I opened my restaurant in Hermosa Beach this girl who had been a very good friend of mine. She started to work with me and we were married in 1945 in Mexico and then we, it didn't work out at all so we were divorced about 2 years later, in Mexico. We were always good friends though, but it really meant nothing, you know. It was just a marriage to cover up, I guess, down at the beach in this little town. So that was that. I'm trying to think of anything else that I can tell you.

AB: Do you remember hearing about the Mattachine Society down there?

SC: Oh yes.

AB: In Hermosa Beach?

SC: I remember that. As a matter of fact, once when I was in New York City I went to a big gay.... On Thanksgiving Day in New York they have this big drag ball up in Harlem. It's called Phil Black's. I think he's dead now. Anyway, one year a friend of mine was in New York passing out these Mattachine booklets and all that. So I helped him pass them out at this thing.

AB: At the drag ball?

SC: Yeah.

AB: Do you remember when, about, that was?

SC: It was after 1952.

AB: Really?

SC: Yeah.

AB: And how did people respond to it?

SC: Oh, it was all a drag ball so everybody was very.... The publication was called *One* if I remember right.

AB: That's interesting. He was involved with *One*?

SC: Yes. He was involved with Mattachine. He was very active.

AB: In New York?

SC: In New York. And he asked me if I would come and until he was with me that night. We all went sort of in couples. And the fellow that went with me was this Ed Burns, known as Kookie Burns, the movie star.

AB: Really?

SC: His name was Eddie Burnburger then he changed his name to Ed Burns when he went into *77 Sunset Strip*, whatever it is.

AB: So what was the meeting like?

SC: It wasn't a meeting we just went to this big ball together.

AB: Oh, to the ball?

SC: Everybody was supposed to go in couples so I invited him and he came with me. At that time he was working somewhere in a grocery store or something and he was posing for these body magazines. This friend of mine lived in my building in New York was a photographer and he used to take pictures and he was one of his models.

AB: Did you wear a costume?

SC: No. But they had prizes for drags and all that stuff. This Phil Black was very famous in New York and he used to have this big ball up in Harlem every Thanksgiving night. And the police were there and it was all protected and very, sort of a social event in New York City. But he's dead now, I think. But a lot of celebrities used to go and everything. They were the judges and all that. It was almost like ___?___ parade in Philadelphia, it was that famous.

AB: Yeah, I've heard about that.

SC: Strangely enough, this Eddie Burns when he got to be famous he was very unhappy about those pictures he used to pose for.

AB: Really?

SC: This photographer friend of mine was using them even after he went into, after he sort of became famous and Ed Burns had his agent or someone call this photographer once and threaten him if he used them anymore, so he didn't. Actually, he had been paid for all of them and had a release on all of them he could have used them if he wanted. I guess he didn't want any trouble, so.... He used to have several models who became famous. There was this John Saxon. And then there was this Vince Edwards. John Saxon's name was Carmen

Reecho (sp?) or something like that. An Italian from Brooklyn and changed his name to John Saxon. Then Vince Edwards, I forget his real name, some Polish name. He was Polish.

AB: And these were for body building magazines?

SC: Yeah. And of course this photographer used to send them out on little dates too, you know. They were supposed to be going for posing sessions, but they weren't posing sessions.

AB: Sort of a

SC: Sort of a call house for boys. But when they all got famous they didn't want to be reminded of that.

AB: What kind of...?

SC: Tennessee Williams used to come there quite often and I used to see him. He would be in our building.

AB: Really?

SC: What was it Cecil B. DeMille, they used to all come to this photographer's.

AB: When was this?

SC: On 57th Street in New York where I lived.

AB: Fifty-Seventh and ...?

SC: And 9th Avenue. A lot of people used to patronize these models. He would send them out "modeling dates," so called. What transpired was their business. And he used to get 20 percent of the "modeling fee." Herminie Gingold was one of his good customers too.

AB: Really?

SC: Shelly Winters.

AB: So it was men and women, some were gay and some were not?

SC: Well most of them weren't especially gay but they were available. They were male hustlers, that's all.

AB: Do you remember seeing any gay porn, some pictures and such in the 40s?

SC: Maybe in Tijuana or somewhere.

AB: But that was rare thing?

SC: I've never been into that. I've never understood why people go to these porno movies and get excited, some of them. I didn't tell you that I used to, when I was about 15, I guess or 16, I got my first job on a ship. And I worked for Matson here in San Francisco and I was I guess about 16. I made a couple of trips in freighters for Matson while I was still school. I hadn't been on a ship for years and years then when I came to San Francisco in 1961, I went back to work for the American President Lines here in San Francisco and I

worked for them for about 3 or 4 years on the President Polk which used to go around the world. We used to make 3 trips a year around the world. And then in 1965, I had had a couple of heart attacks on the ship, so the union, the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union, which I belonged to, wouldn't let me sail any longer. So I moved to Italy in 1965 and I stayed there until 1972. I was in Italy 8 years. I taught English in the Berlitz school in Genoa. I lived in Genoa for 8 years. When the school closed in '72, and the American Counsel there, a woman, told me that I should come and file for my Social Security disability. I think I was about 57 at the time. She said it would be simple to get it because I had all my papers from the union saying that they would no longer hire me and that they had taken my shipping papers away. So I came here. She said it would be very simple. And I had my house in Genoa, I left it planning to be back in 3 months and I even bought a round-trip ticket for 90 days. When I came here I made my application and they sent me to their doctor here, Social Security, and he concurred and said that I was disabled and went along with everything. But when I went before the hearing, the referee at Social Security, they turned me down. And I had to have another hearing and pretty soon it was going on to a year so I had to cash in my ticket. And I never, I haven't been back to Italy at all. So I had to wait until I was 62 to get my regular Social Security. And the reason they turned me down, I had 3 hearings before the referees. And the reason they turned me down because of the technicality in Social Security that from the day you are declared disabled by your employer, you're only allowed 5 years in which to apply for this disability. And I had been classified as disabled in '65 and I waited until '72 to ask for it. So that was the little small print on that. So that's how I'm going to come out on the finish.

AB: When were you born?

SC: In 1914. In Los Angeles. You don't see too many natives here.

AB: I know, but there are some. Did San Francisco during the war have a reputation for being a gay city?

SC: Well for some reason this is the only city even New York during the war, drag shows weren't allowed. But Finocchio's never was closed. They wouldn't let them operate in Los Angeles.

AB: Even Los Angeles?

SC: During the war.

AB: Why was that?

SC: Because they didn't want servicemen hanging out in those places I guess or something. But this Joe Finocchio must have known the right people. Which I suppose he did, they're very good.

AB: ___?___

SC: ___?___

AB: I think that's about all. If there is anything that you want to add. Anything that you can think of?

SC: No, its just that I think how I heard about this Swards to Plowshares. A friend of mine worked for SIR, this group that was here. And when I came here in 19, I guess in the 1960s, I met him while I was working on ships here, I met this fellow. His name was Elmer Wilhelm, maybe you know who he is. He used to be the manager of the Roundup and the Endup and all those places. So I met him in '61 then when I came back in 1972, why he was at the SIR offices on 6th Street and he asked me if I would be willing to come up there and help him, volunteer a few hours 2 or 3 times a week to answer the phones. And so I used to go there. And

that's how I know him. And he is no longer with SIR. I think SIR is gone. It doesn't exist. So he is the one that called me. He has always been very active. He worked at 300 is it, 330 Grove, I've never been there but that's where he was. And then he's been all around. He works for Assemblyman Foran, is that his name John Foran. He was working with him. I see his name in the gay papers every once in awhile. He is the one who called me and told me about this Swords to Plowshares, I had never heard of it. So I went up there and thinks to him, I got this discharge changed. And I was taking him to dinner for his efforts. We talk quite often. He lives down on south of Market on Shipley Street if you know where that is. I guess he has had several people that he has told about this because I know another fellow that went through it too and he was sent by Elmer. And they were very nice at this Swords to Plowshares You can see that they are really trying. And I think they are working on a very limited budget. And it's a shame that they're going to be phased out, I think they are. And this girl was very nice, this Pat Trainer, the one that.... First I had one person and then another and went from one to the other, I guess as they come and go some of those. She told me she'd taken her bar exam 2 or 3 times and she never seems to pass it. So she is hoping to pass it now.

AB: Would you suggest that being a good place for me to go down and talk to the people there? To get in touch with other gay GI's.

SC: She called me last week and I told her, she happened to call me just the day after I received your letter. And I read it to her, she was very enthused and said I said I should go ahead with it and she encouraged me to call you.

AB: I'm really glad you wrote that letter to the BAR.

SC: They made a couple of mistakes in it but I guess you noticed.

AB: I'll turn this off.

SC: Sure.

[End of tape 2, side 1]

[End of recording]