

**John B. Pratt**  
**Veteran**

**Claudio DeMarco**  
**Interviewer**

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**Rome Free Academy HS**  
**Rome, New York**

**Q:** What is your full name?

**JP:** John B. Pratt.

**Q:** Where were you born?

**JP:** I was born in Utica, New York.

**Q:** All right, what kind of education did you have prior to going into the military?

**JP:** Well I finished high school and two years of college at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut . . . And then I went into the service.

**Q:** What were you studying in college?

**JP:** At that point, not very much . . . I actually I ended up majoring in economics but at that time I was just going to college.

**Q:** And, when did you hear about Pearl Harbor?

**JP:** A group of us went to the movies every Sunday afternoon after Sunday dinner at the fraternity house. We walk down the hill to the movies, and we're in the theater on that Sunday afternoon when the lights came on and the manager came out and announced that our Air Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii had been bombed by the Japanese.

**Q:** What were your thoughts and feelings when he told you that?

**JP:** Well we left the theater and went back up to the fraternity house. And the next day five of us drove down to Floyd Bennett Field on Long Island, and enlisted in the Navy . . . In the Naval V-5 Flight Training Program.

**Q:** So, what was your family's thoughts on you going into the military?

**JP:** I was single . . . what was my family status?

**Q:** Your parents [unclear] . . .

**JP:** Oh yeah I was living at home with my parents when I was in college. But, yeah I was living at home with my parents in White Plains.

**Q:** What were their thoughts on you joining the military?

**JP:** Well I don't know, my mother was of course very upset mothers always are. My father just sort of took it. But I didn't go on active duty right away they told me to go back because I needed to finish my second year of college before I would be eligible to go into the V-5 Flight Training, Pilot Training Program, was until later that they changed that . . . So all I did was sign the paper and I went back to school.

**Q:** When did you go back from school to the military?

**JP:** Oh, in June I got called . . . went into the military in June.

**Q:** And into the V-5 Flight Training program?

**JP:** Well into the Naval Pre-Flight School in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Q:** And what did you do there?

**JP:** Pushups by the thousands. Physical training it was and we had some, college level courses; navigation, meteorology, and I can't recall . . . in naval history. But a lot of physical training, I could remember playing football in full football gear in the summertime in Iowa, and it was a [unclear] boy.

**Q:** And, where did you go from your original training in Iowa City?

**JP:** Oh let's see boy, beginning to get a little bit vague we are talking 1942 now. Let's see, after Iowa City I came home on a furlough and my next assignment was the Primary Flight Training at Wold-Chamberlain Field in Minneapolis, Minnesota. So that was where I went . . . and there was where I learned to fly the Stearman, it was the open-cockpit biplane, the Navy called it N2S4. It was a nice little airplane, wonderful plane to fly. They also had another open-cockpit plane which was made by the Naval Aircraft Factory, looked very similar but it was a little different and that was called an N3N. But I flew in and soloed in on September 27th 1942, an N2S4 Stearman, open-cockpit biplane.

**Q:** What was your daily routine like when you were working or training there?

**JP:** Well you're up early, real early in the morning I recall well before the sun came up and physical exercise you did, a lot of PT and then you did your daily flight training. Three hours I think of that, and then three or four hours of book learning that you had to go to. And more PT and then a parade, you always had to have a parade. And, then I guess supper and then went to bed.

**Q:** So you did and you qualified solo flying?

**JP:** Yeah.

**Q:** And where did they send you from there? Did you continue training?

**JP:** Well let's see what happened. Somewhere along the line everything came apart and I'm trying to figure where it was. It was out there I guess in Minneapolis, and I didn't know it but my eyesight, my depth perception went and that was rather important in the Navy because you were taught to make what they call a full stall landing and you had. On the first 20 percent of the carrier deck, if this is the day the wind is blowing this way, carrier is going that way, you're coming in and you got to land right on the very back. You won't go way up in there [unclear] end, you got to land way back here. And you brought it down and you started stalled it, let it level off and stall it and then when it lost flying speed just pull the stick back and your gut drop 10 feet. They were always a little bumpy but they're always good landing and you did it that way so that hook would catch that wire. On an aircraft carrier you got a wire for the hook on the plane to catch to keep it from going into the ones that are packed in the front, And this particular time I thought I was 10 feet off the ground and I was somewhere about 30 feet off instead and when I came down I came down a little bit too hard for the airplane and it's spoiled their airplane and it gave them a different attitude towards me and they thought it would be better for the war effort if I tried another line of work.

**Q:** So, why did they send you from Minneapolis then?

**JP:** Home . . . yeah that was it. I was done with the Navy.

**Q:** Oh alright, then . . .

**JP:** It was amazing you know anybody that wanted to get out couldn't get out to save his butt and I got out and didn't want to. I was out, boom civilian. So I came home went down to talk to an Army Recruiting guy and what the hell to do what I went to a recruiting Army recruiter in Minneapolis they let me stay on the base but other than that I had no place to go or nothing to do saw this guy in the Army said go home and wait to get drafted and then when I get drafted apply for the Air Corp. So [unclear] . . . wait back to square one when I was little I had polio and I could do it all right but I knew that I would be no good as of one of these 10th Mountain division guys even an infantry guy it's just I couldn't do it but I was all right as long as I could be in an airplane stand and not have to hike so that was what I wanted to stay with the airplanes. So, one day in our barracks in I was in Miami then taking basic training. And now I'm in the Army Air Corps down in Miami, Florida taking basic all over again, same thing. [Unclear] . . . And only this time I was doing it because I was one of the squad leaders because I had done it all before so anyway incomes disco Pro one day and he says boy do I got a deal for you he says you're going to go to navigator School and become a navigator and you'll get to be a second lieutenant but better than that will going to send you to college so you can

learn to be a gentleman I said I've been to college and I am a gentleman and I do not want to spend the whole or going to school and she was a gasp but I said I choose not to go because I just don't want to keep going to college and going to school so he left and the next day they sent me off to Las Vegas to Gunnery School area code now that was a 6 weeks course six weeks I became an aerial Gunner and then right after that they sent me to Sioux Falls, South Dakota to Radio School, eighteen weeks there and learned to be a radio operator and then assigned to a Bomber Crew. We flew for three months down [unclear] Texas, West Texas Monday Wednesday Fridays Texas blows into Oklahoma and on Tuesday Thursday Saturday Oklahoma comes back to Texas down in that part of the world. and that was where I spent three months in between the Gospels flying has training as a radio operator on B-17 and they put together our cruise and then we were shipped from then to [unclear] Nebraska what they gave us a brand new airplane and we got on our brand new airplane and flew it to Portland, Maine and then we flew it to Reykjavik, Iceland. The next day, when the weather was bad we had to stay there for a couple of days and then we flew from Reykjavik, Iceland to Stornoway, Scotland on the Isle of Lewis, off Northern Scotland and then we went from there to I can't recall and a place actually on the British Isle, and then they took our airplane away and we went by train, to what was eventually to become our base in [unclear] England. And I don't know whatever became of the plane we had, they did something else with that but they will have to be modified. They had to have certain radio equipment added and some stuff removed. For example they took the deicer boots, rubber deicer boots they took them off and replaced them with metal because the rubber enter great chunks of it right off and spoil the earphone and caused the plane to go out of control so they took all those rubber you know you know what they are it was a rubber inflatable rubber leaning Edge the wink in the pilot would activate this thing and it would make the rubber go like this if the plane I stopped see in the pumping of that rubber with a break the ice up because building up ice I'm the airfoil destroys the shape of the airport and makes the plane on flyable so the idea these rubber boots is to break that ice up if you got into weather conditions that caused it break it up and get it off the wing so it wouldn't spoil the air phone but we didn't have that kind of a situation where we were flying at 25000 feet and up you didn't have that kind of a problem it was just cold but it was dry so they took the rubber out and replaced it with sheet metal, so that a whole section of the front of the wing wouldn't become torn out of a guy who [unclear] fly . . . [unclear] they had to learn these things the hard they lost airplanes and they found out why. That rubber was being torn out and the whole wing would come apart.

**Q:** So you're stationed in the British Isle . . .

**JP:** Right, [unclear] Underwood that was 90 miles north of London.

**Q:** What was your daily routine?

**JP:** Well, if we had our mission be let anywhere from 1:30 to 3:30 in the morning they

come and get you. Tell you breakfast and happening on briefing in an hour. We had to drag out, get dressed, go down to the mess hall get some breakfast, they always gave us a good breakfast. And then go to briefing which was a big room where all of the aircrews were assembled, MPs were guarding the gates and they wouldn't let anyone in that wasn't part of the aircrew that was actually flying that day and everybody sat down and they got a big board blackboard up and who showed the maps and drew pictures and showed aerial photos of the targets and explained why we were going to this particular target. Made synthetic rubber, did this, did that, whatever I remember the day we went to [unclear] in Poland which is the longest mission I ever had it was 11 hours and 50 minutes of solid flying time. And from England to [unclear] Poland and back and they made there were two targets and the bomber stream one group would go this way in the other group as we approach to target from boom boom boom boom every other one. what is the what's the would go to one target which was wings and fuselage assembly factories in the other Target Foursquare they made the tail assemblies and the landing gears and so one group would go to this Factory and the next one will go to this Factory and all of them groups would go to different sides of town then as we turned around and came back. But I remember going to all the wings, I think we went to the wings and tails [unclear], not that it made a whole lot of difference.

**Q:** What was your daily routine on days that you didn't have a mission?

**JP:** We got to sleep a little bit, and then we get up [unclear] . . . Not every time but occasionally you would have to do laundry, the offices add a laundry facility the enlisted men what expected to take care of themselves. so we built fires little fireplaces, little rings of stone all around the building about two guys to a fire spot get a bucket of water shave off a cake of GI that yellow soap you know, scrub soap, save it up with a knife in that bucket and eat it and then put your clothes in the washer and then the real dumb thing was in between you brought buckets of gasoline you drew off the airplanes and brought it up by hanging them over the handlebars of your bike to put your wool blouse to instant and stuff in to clean them you know. You didn't throw them in the [unclear] water, and here we are fires all over the place and buckets of gasoline in between. You wonder somebody didn't get confused and pour a bucket of gasoline in the fire . . . I recall that was really a wild scene, I would be one of the things that we did. And every once in a while you got a three-day pass and I would go to London but, and you know you would have free in evening if you want to but usually we were so tired, we didn't even bother going to places we went to bed.

**Q:** What was your crew like, who was in your crew . . . ?

**JP:** Oh they were great guys, had a pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, navigator they were the four officers. Then there was a top turret gunner he was the engineer, then there was me I was the radioman, and there were two waist gunners and a ball turret gunner in down in the ball below, and a tail gunner in the rear. And, 10 guys but later we went back to 9

and I used to come out of the radio room and take over one of the waist gunners, but it was a group of guys . . .

**Q:** So you had, your officers were good too?

**JP:** Yeah, yeah we all got along real well.

**Q:** You have quite an impressive list of decorations, medals, and accommodations here. What did you get the Distinguished Flying Cross for?

**JP:** Somebody asked me that the other day that Colonel. And I was going to tell him I didn't get it for being on time for meals but essentially I did. Because if we got back we made it to a meal and I got it from coming back on a complete tour . . . But they gave it to us for it was still being alive after flying what they thought was a sufficient number of missions to call it quits and go home.

**Q:** How many missions did you fly?

**JP:** I flew 32.

**Q:** What did you get your Air Medals for?

**JP:** Well, they gave you an Air Medal for every 4, 5 missions. You flew 5 and you got an Air Medal. It was basically the, the citation said for extraordinary achievement, if being alive is an achievement I guess it is. Oh yeah how many planes . . . yeah I was flying in my fifth assigned B-17 when I flew on my last mission . . . The previous four had all been shot down with other crews, [unclear] . . . the odds were pretty much against your making.

**Q:** And you were given New York State Conspicuous Service Cross.

**JP:** Yeah, lots of same stuff . . . yeah [unclear], Senator [unclear] gave me that, Senator [unclear].

**Q:** Can you tell us about some of your other missions you did?

**JP:** Well, they pretty much 7 months, pretty much alike we got early in the morning we went down to Chow and we were lucky because I know some guys later that were in other outfits that got a real bad deal when it came to breakfast before they took off. And some of these guys got shot down and they didn't get another breakfast for two or three years. And we always got a good meal so I was glad about that, we had a good breakfast. Oh, speaking of meals flyers had to have special food. We couldn't eat what the regular ground personnel ate, because of gas when you go to high altitudes any gas that's in your body expands and if you ate something like baked beans, in the Army and the Army made baked beans they were really good, but you couldn't eat them because it would kill you, terrible. You get to high altitude and the gas from those beans expand at the enormous range and boy I'm telling you. I got caught once we were going someplace and

we weren't supposed to go next day. Oh I know that was the night we went to Reykjavik, Iceland. And we were supposed to stay there and came and they told us after we had already gone to bed to get up and get out because they was another group coming in and they didn't have any room for them. And we had to leave that night and we had to have beans, and that was all right because we were only going to go 12,000 feet. But we got out there and we got into an awful mess of weather, and we got screwed up and we had to go to [unclear] to get above the weather so that the navigator could find the stars to navigate and we didn't break out of it until we got to 26,000 feet and I'm sitting back there in the radio room wondering why I'm so damn cold quote and having such a hard time breathing and nobody bothered to contact us from the cockpit, they just climbed. And the rest of us the two waist gunners were asleep in the waist, you know this is the middle of the night we are flying across the ocean on to Scotland. And nobody came back and said we're climbing you better get your oxygen mask out, and finally the co-pilot came back to see what was happening and we were all stupefied. So he got us cranked up a little bit and got our oxygen going. But geez I mean that was really stupid, they forgot. They just you know put their masks on, the cockpit, the pilots put their masks on and went up and didn't bother to tell the rest of us that they were doing it, and I couldn't figure out why I was getting so damn cold because of the altitude it gets cold. And well it finally did get straightened out, but that was not a good experience. Matter of fact that was the time when I got really pissed off at my officers.

**Q:** Did you like the B-17?

**JP:** Did I like it? You bet, brought me home every time. I'm very much in favor of it.

**Q:** [Unclear] . . . what other kinds of missions did you do? What kind of places did you go . . . ?

**JP:** Well we flew, we flew a lot of missions into France. Boy, it goes right out of my head. What was the targets, well we had coastal stuff I recall that. We bombed harbors and shipping, we had oh yeah [unclear] on D-Day the coast of France they keep talking about going to Omaha Beach on June 6th. I was on Omaha Beach June 5th.

**Q:** What were you doing there, what was your assignment?

**JP:** Bombing gun emplacements, German. The Germans had gun emplacement they were dual purpose. Anti-aircraft and regular artillery cause the 88 mm cannons were probably the best artillery piece in World War 2. We didn't have anything that was as good as they were. And, we didn't spend a lot of our missions in France were to hit emplacements of German 88 mm cannons. That's what we were doing on Omaha Beach that day, the day before. Bombing those gun emplacements.

**Q:** When was the first time you were under fire?

**JP:** First time, the first day I flew May 12, 1944.

**Q:** What was that like?

**JP:** Well, scary. It was target was the Leuna Oil Refinery in Merseburg, Germany which is right in central Germany. You had to go a long ways into Germany to get there. And they really didn't want us messing with their oil, and they had a lot of Flak guns there. And I could recall we swung onto that target, the sky was just black with this black [unclear]. And you got no choice you have to fly in with it. Nobody has ever in the whole of World War 2, nobody ever was turned back. No matter how bad the Flak or the fighters got they kept on going.

**Q:** Did you receive any injuries?

**JP:** Did I? No, no we were fortunate in our group, got through. But you never forget something . . .

**Q:** Your piece of metal . . . who get. Did you get in your nose, what did you get . . .?

**JP:** Oh yeah, I got hit in the nose a little teeny piece of shrapnel I don't know. I've had it for years and I don't know where it is, I finally lost it.

**Q:** Your plane took damage on occasion?

**JP:** Oh yeah.

**Q:** Any close calls?

**JP:** That was one, you know what that was I think it was a rivet. I know I got hit in the arm once with a rivet, where a piece of Flak apparently glazed the side of the airplane and sheared the rivets and drove one all the way across the radio room and hit me in the arm. But it wasn't anything like hurt or anything, but I remember I could feel the thing hit me.

**Q:** What were some of the more interesting things, or inspiring events that happened while you were in the service?

**JP:** Well a very inspiring event was when I got my discharge.

**Q:** What kind of a code, what do you do as a radioman?

**JP:** Oh well, my function was to maintain communication with the base in England and headquarters in England. Our pilot radios were short range, they could talk to other planes in the group, they could talk to the Commanding Officer flying the group, they could talk to the fighter escort planes, but they couldn't talk to the base back in England, or to headquarters in England. Those radios that you talked on were short range and the pilots didn't have all the training that we did in communication. So they gave us the high powered sets, and we talked using Morse code. And we could communicate with the base back in England, or with the headquarters back in England with our long range CW



carrier wave sets, which was done using the key and sending Morse code. And that was the main reason they had us there, and technically we were supposed to be radio mechanics so we could fix any radios in flight but that was sort of a wishful thinking type of situation because if a radio got hit with a machine gun bullet or a 20 mm shell you're not going to stand there at 30 or 40 below zero and take your gloves off and fix a ball of wrecked metal.

**Q:** Where was your gun in relation to the radio? How could you get back and forth between this?

**JP:** Well, the radio room was right [unclear] of the bomb bay. And it was a small room, long from here to the length of that table. There's a door on each end, and up overhead was a hatch and there was a gun in that hatch. And in the forward end, if this was the front of the plane right in this part of the room was a desk where the radio equipment was and you sat there facing this way right up over your head was the handles for a handheld gun. But it was not a very useful gun because it was you know, location that you had virtually no place that anybody would attack you from that position and if you weren't careful you would shoot your own tail. And so basically it was a useless gun, and eventually they took them right out and never even bothered with them. And what we did was I could set my equipment so that I could pick up any messages that I needed to from a waist position and get all my radio set and I would go back there and take over the waist gun, and bring a pencil and a pad with me and any messages that came in I could get them through the intercom, I could hear the code in the background. You had to learn to read the code backwards because code would be [unclear] . . . But if you read it in the background with people talking what you hear is when it hits the talking stops so you read blanks instead of buzzes. That is weird it's hard to explain but if people are talking on the intercom and they sent a code over, when the code button comes down and goes [unclear] you don't hear the talking you hear silence. So you hear background noise interspersed with dots and dashes of silence but you have to read it backwards in order to get it . . . you learn how to do it.

**Q:** And you would use that intercom to tell the pilot whoever needed to know what [unclear] of messages they are coming from?

**JP:** That's right yeah, yeah. Like, one particular time I remember getting a message it said, it reports a many enemy aircraft over the target and we were being alerted to watch for it you know. So I immediately called the pilot and said that's what the message was.

**Q:** Did you ever needed to fire your gun?

**JP:** Did I? Oh yeah, yes every time somebody pointed one of those yellow noses at me I fired at it.

**Q:** Not quite as useless as you hinted?

**JP:** Oh the waist gun? No, I never did get to use the one in the radio room.

**Q:** So . . .

**JP:** No, I've had plenty of opportunities to use the one on the waist.

**Q:** Did the bombers count the number of planes they shot down like the fighters? Or did they ...

**JP:** Well, guys used to but we really didn't bother too much. I don't know, I think the fighters they were a different breed of cat those pilots. They were, they were basically a bunch of hotshots and they wanted the world to know that they were. And most of us were guys who were already washed out of the hotshot department and ended up as gunners.

**Q:** So, you were [unclear]. . . what was the normal resistance you would encounter on a mission?

**JP:** Well you always got Flak, that's anti-aircraft fire. You not, you didn't always get fighter attacks, but you always counted.

**Q:** And in the event of a fighter attack you would . . .

**JP:** Fought it was every ounce of your strength, because if you didn't fight them off they would shoot you down.

**Q:** Where did you go from your base in the British Isles? Did you go anywhere after that?

**JP:** Go home, they didn't get to Paris I don't think the American troops didn't get to Paris till three weeks after I was finished at home. So there was no air bases on the continent at that time.

**Q:** And as of kind of an afterthought, what unit were you assigned to at this time?

**JP:** Well it was the 8th Air Force, 384th Bomb Group, and 547th Bomb Squadron. See the 384th Bomb Group had four squadrons 544, 45, 46, 47. But, but . . .

**Q:** The Air Force is still part of the Army?

**JP:** Oh yeah Army oh yes that's right it was Army Air Force. Yeah, that's what we called the Bronson Air Force.

**Q:** What did you think when later the Air Force became its own entity?

**JP:** I didn't think too much, I didn't care much. One way or another I was long out. I was back in school and I remember thinking well okay, that's what you want so it's okay by me. I was unimpressed one way or another.

**Q:** Fair enough. What was, what was your last mission like after [unclear] . . . What were you thinking? What were your thoughts when you were done?

**JP:** Well it was pretty exciting time [unclear] . . . My pilot had finished, my co-pilot had finished, and I had gotten a blistered heel by being stupid and wearing a new pair of shoes when I went on furlough to Edinburgh, Scotland for a week and I took that one pair of shoes. So by the time I got back to the base my blister got infected, so I lost three or four missions while the rest of the guys went on and I am in the hospital for an infected foot. So I ended up flying my last mission, I cannot remember his name I think it was [unclear] but I don't recall. I only flew with that one mission, and I flew as a waist gunner and just to get it over with. And I recall flying my next to last mission I went to the Sergeant who assigned you to flying, and said that I would just assume I'd appreciate it if you put me on for tomorrow so I could get it done with. And he did and I went with this fellow named [unclear] I think his name was and that's all I recall except I was very glad when I was done and he let me come up in the cockpit, when we came in over the field when he buzzed the field and I fired green and yellow flares out through the hole in the roof of the airplane which guys did when they finished their tour. A bunch of flares firing up out of the aircraft to celebrate, oh well no I didn't get discharged for a year, after I got home.

**Q:** How does that work?

**JP:** You stayed in until they told you can go.

**Q:** So what were you doing from the time you went home to the time you were discharged?

**JP:** Well just farting around really it was ridiculous. We had to, what the heck they sent me to . . . I got married that was one thing, and then was sent to Miami Beach was supposed to go to Atlantic City, New Jersey for what they called rehabilitation which was a kind of vacation on the beach and they had a hurricane. Atlantic City got [unclear], so they shipped us to Miami and they said don't bring your wives I'm just married I'm not going to bring her [unclear], so I brought her, and we get down there and it was a pretty good deal. They said they got, don't bring them because there's no place for them, well they had a place. We got a nice room in a hotel right on the beach, I remember going on the beach and throwing a ball over there, god she could throw a ball. She kept waving me back till I got to where I couldn't throw the damn ball back to her and she still even down. God I remember that, and we spent several days there I got a real bad sunburn I remember that, then we went to someplace in the middle of the Midwest, to [unclear] . . . places I had to go back to radio school. I cannot breathe it [unclear] . . . they sent us to ridiculous places, you know. After being, the whole tour of operations they could had made me fly in combat again I already done that, so they sent me to gunnery school again. And then they sent us to Yuma, Arizona to another gunnery school for radio

operations. And all this didn't make sense, but that's what they did do they didn't know what the hell else to do. Actually it was a job program for a lot of non-flying Air Corp officers. The only Air Corp officers that really had to work were the ones that flew, the rest of them they had to keep finding jobs for and these are the kinds of jobs they found for them, running us around. And put in a lot of time doing that, useless waste of time. Then when I went for my discharge, the doctor was giving me an examination and he said you had polio didn't you? Because he could tell by looking at my legs. And I said yes and he says what the hell are you doing in the Army you didn't even have to be in it, but I said you wouldn't believe I had I worked to get in it. And you're telling me that I didn't have to, I said I'm not ashamed of what I did are you?

**Q:** What people do you remember from your time of service?

**JP:** There were three of us on the crew that are still alive. Except I'm not sure about Steve the pilot, he is in real bad shape with Parkinson's disease, he was a farm boy from Nebraska. Not very tall, just a little bit shorter than I am, stocky and had a pair of hands that were like [unclear], boy had big powerful arms. Boy could he fly that airplane, and the last I knew of him he was in real bad shape, cannot even talk now. And he and I, and the only other one that I know is [unclear], who was our top turret gunner from New Bern, South Carolina, he's last I heard was still in good health and all the rest of the guys are dead.

**Q:** And this talks about you're, the experiences that left the greatest impression on you, and you mentioned seeing the odds of Flak. And the other one is being in the middle of a dogfight? Could you tell us about them?

**JP:** Well, it's really its like being in a big beehive. It just seemed that everywhere you looked there were airplanes going in every direction, and you wonder how there could be so many of them doing so much in much a small space and not [unclear] . . . together. You know just wild with the you know fighter planes, American fighter planes and British fighter planes, and German fighter planes, and American bombers all mixed up together. And the bombers still in some [unclear] were in their formation, cause our primary job was not to fight fighters it was to bomb targets. And so we were, we had to stay in formation and keep plowing ahead no matter what, and the fighters were left to do all those crazy stuff, but it was just wild. I have to laugh now because they talk about near miss, aviation near collision, they came within a half a mile of each other, they came within that far of each other. That I've been hundreds of those, they came within a half a mile for Christ safe, you land that close to get there.

**Q:** What did you do after you were discharged?

**JP:** Took a nap, let's see. Well I went back to school, I got out I forgotten when but it was in November. They were still on what they call the trimester three semesters at Wesleyan, so the man who was the President of Wesleyan had been a professor who was

also a fraternity brother of mines and a very good friend. So I called him and he said to that there was a you know, semester starting in November, recommended that I come right back and get going. So that's what we did, went back to Wesleyan and started out my junior year.

**Q:** And what did you major in this time?

**JP:** Economics.

**Q:** [Unclear], oh alright, and . . .

**JP:** And I graduated in June of 1947, with distinction in economics. Which [unclear] . . . 50 cents is worth a cup of coffee.

**Q:** What a, what kinds of things have you done since then?

**JP:** Not much, just resting out my [unclear].

**Q:** Job? What's your job?

**JP:** Yeah?

**Q:** What?

**JP:** I had a job.

**Q:** What?

**JP:** What?

**Q:** Selling?

**JP:** I was an ad retailer, advertising salesman for the Observer-Dispatch for 32 years.

**Q:** Alright, any closing comments, lessons to impart, such not?

**JP:** It's hard to think about lessons to impart, avoid wars if possible.

**Q:** Sounds good.

**JP:** And avoid work if possible.