HISTORICAL MEMORIAL CENTER

Pennsylvania State Police

Oral History Interview of:

Mr. Grooms

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INTERVIEWER:

All right. This is the Pennsylvania State Police Oral History Project. Today is January 27, 2005. My name is Shelly Becker (phonetic), I'm here with retired Major William Grooms -- Bill Grooms, and we're at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy in Hershey, PA. Mr. Grooms, do I have your permission to record this interview with you here today?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh sure.

INTERVIEWER:

All right, I --

MR. GROOMS:

Sure -- I'm very proud to have been a State Policeman.

INTERVIEWER:

Good. And I'm really glad that you could be here, and be a part of our project. I appreciate that -- thank you.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Before we begin to talk about your career and your life as a State Trooper, can you give me a little bit of background about where

you grew up and your life before you started with the State Police.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Well, yes -- I was the last of six children. My brother was the oldest, and four girls, and then me. And 30 miles -- we lived about 30 miles from Pittsburgh. And I can remember my mom talking to me -- like I say -- my memory was much better back then than it is now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I mean, even things that are happening now I have trouble remembering. But I guess that's because of how busy I've been.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But anyhow, they -- but I can remember her -- the KDKA -- you know, the radio station -- their first radio broadcast was on November the 7th, 1920. Of course we were living there -- and I remember my mom telling me when I was -- oh, two or three years old, she -- they celebrated it every year -- and she said, "William, don't forget that you were a day old when that

happened" -- November the 6th, 1920. And I never have forgotten it -- of course I won't now, but it was just a real experience. And then of course you mentioned here about my -- why I was wanting to be a State Policeman, and so on. And I believe that -- I remember since I was a little boy, I remember seeing them on the road, and I was -- they just impressed me with the uniforms, and everything about them. And then I got to know one that lived -- when I was about -- oh, I was 17, 18. I met one that lived not too far from us, and I talked to him about it, and told him about my interest, and he says, "Well, whenever you're old enough, just send a letter in." And so I thought I was -- I would send in twice -- I sent the first one in -- but I wasn't 21 yet, and I got a note back from the Governor -- he said, "When you become a man, then apply again." So I did and then on April Fool's Day -- April Fool's day -- I think it was '41, '42, I showed up at the Academy -- and I would come into the Academy then -- you of course I'd taken care of the paperwork first.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And I can -- one of -- well, there's several things I can remember about that time. You know at that time, they expected you to be a real man -- you know, I mean they made that very clear to you. And I remember the Sergeant that called us in the first day we were there -- or called us out -- file in outside, and he said, "Now give me your attention here," and he had a little bulldog sitting along side of him there. And he was there for -- till I left the Academy. And he said, "I hope that you've come here because you really want to be, and that you can get the hell beat out of you." And we would all chuckle about that -- he'd say, "Well, if you think it's funny that's good." But anyhow, if I remember correctly, there were 79 of us in that class, and I believe only 39 or 49 of us graduated. They called it the suitcase parade, you see. Everyday you'd see somebody with his suitcase going and walking up the lot on out of the -- leaving the building -- you know. And that was because -- and he said, "If you don't like it here" -- he said, "You can quit right now if you want to." He said, "If you think you can't handle this," because -- "Maybe if you're not man enough," and so -- and to tell you the truth I had thought about it a couple times, because I had a broken ankle and two cracked ribs, and a bashed nose pretty bad. And -- but I thought

if I quit and go home, my brother -- my older brother and my friends would say you couldn't take it, and it'd be true -- you know, so I thought -- but I'm sure glad I stuck it out. And there were -- if I remember right -- and you probably have this someplace in your records -- there were 39 or maybe 40 --39 of us graduated I think in that class, and then they brought another class in right after that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now you mentioned that you were the last of six kids...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And you had told me before that you had a nickname. Can you tell us for the record what that was?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes -- um-hum. Yeah, they called me several things, but -- they called me Tweet (phonetic) sometimes. And -- let's see what was the other one -- isn't that something?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

What did I tell you it was?

INTERVIEWER:

Caboose (phonetic).

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

Caboose.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah that's right. It referred to me being -- that not a real nickname -- my parents when they'd talk to the neighbors and so on, they'd say, "We were going to name Bill, Caboose." "That's the end of the train." That's what that was -- yeah -- um-hum. Yeah, that's really -- some of my family once -- they'll call me Caboose, but not very often.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Mostly -- and if anybody would call me anything other than William, my mother used to get furious with them when I was a

little boy. They'd say, "Bill how are you?" She said, "Call him William." Yeah. My mom was a great person. I remember the kids used to come there to play with us, and she'd always fix them something to eat, or something -- give them something and they'd say, "I wish my mom would do that" -- you know, they would say that -- but they enjoyed that.

INTERVIEWER:

Now you mentioned that you tried to apply for the State Police a little bit earlier than you...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yes, I did.

INTERVIEWER:

...could have. And what was that application process that you went through?

MR. GROOMS:

It was just a letter. I wrote a letter to them, telling them that I was interested. And then they didn't call me in. And then I found out a little while -- I got a letter from the Commissioner's Office that said, "When you become a man, then apply." So I did.

INTERVIEWER:

And how did you apply after you became 21?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I submitted a letter, and then I was called to come in for an interview.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And I had an interview there, and they accepted me.

And then on April Fool's Day, I remember it was -- I'm sure it was '42, it had to be.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

That April of '42 that I showed up here at the Academy and went through it all. I used to...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Do you...

MR. GROOMS:

...I was at the place where -- you know I liked horses before I got on the job, but after I got on there -- they had the hardest darn horses then you ever saw. They'd bite you on the shoulder, or squeeze you against another horse, or raise their foot up and give you a little kick, and they just -- were just kind of awnry (phonetic). I guess they got them out of the -- from -- before

they were broken in -- you know. But I can remember them so well. And I remember Sgt. Husbar (phonetic) -- you know, he was the riding instructor then, and I can still here him -- and the first time he did it to me, I got in a little bit of trouble with him -- but he would take his horse, and -- he was so good he'd take his horse and slam into your horse -- you know, and he'd said, "Ride your horse, don't let your horse ride you." And when he said that to me the first time, I smiled at him and boy -- he said, "Get off your damn horse and go see the old man." I didn't even know who the old man was yet. I'd only been there three for four days. So I went into the back door through the kitchen and asked the cook. He said, "Oh, that's the Major." I said, "Okay." So I went over and knocked on the door, and he said, "Come on in." He said, "Why are you here?" I said, "Sgt. Husbar sent me in here." He said, "Well, what did you do?" I said, "I don't think I did anything." He said, "Well, why are you here?" "What happened?" I said, "Well, he rode his horse into me just like he does, and he was smiling at me," and he said, "Wait a minute, that's what you did." He said, "Husbar doesn't smile." He said, "That's what you did." And that's what it was. But I stuck it out,

and a lot of us did. We complained some about it, but it was worth it in the long run. 35 and a half years I stayed.

INTERVIEWER:

Who was the Major at the Academy at that time -- at the training school?

MR. GROOMS:

Then?

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Who was the Major that you -- if you remember.

MR. GROOMS:

Let's see. Major Martin (phonetic) -- it was -- uh, that's terrible. I can still hear him saying that to me, "That's what you did wrong." I believe it might have been Major Martin.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, it was Major Martin. I think that your records will probably show that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

See -- because they didn't change Majors very often at the Academy -- you know, the same one was there -- Major Martin -- yeah. Yeah, it was Major Martin. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Do you remember who interviewed you when you first -- do you remember who did your interview when you were first applying for the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

No, I don't. I do not remember that. It's funny why I wouldn't remember that, but I don't. But I was interviewed at -- they interviewed me out at Greensburg -- see I lived in -- Greensburg Headquarters, and -- but I was just as -- didn't ever dream that I'd ever go back there as a Troop Commander, but I went there probably about -- but it just happened that way.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But -- yeah, I'm pretty sure that's where it was -- Greensburg.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And did they make you do a physical examination, as well as a written test, and an oral test as well?

MR. GROOMS:

No, I -- they just gave me -- I don’t remember any written test, but I had to take a physical.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And I had quite a lengthy discussion with a couple different people. But I don't remember exactly who they were, but that was the way they approached it then.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And what did you discuss with them? What did you discuss with them?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, they just talked to me -- why I wanted to be a State Policeman, and if I thought I was tough enough to handle it, and what problems I've ever -- what trouble I've ever been in, and so

on -- you know, and of course they -- back in those days, boy, they really checked your background. I remember when I asked permission to get married, they said, "You have to write a letter to ask permission to get married" -- you know, so I did. And I -- that's how I -- then you had to have five years on, too -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I got married -- let's see -- 1946. I just had five years. Now I had an interruption in that -- you know, if you remember in -- Pearl Harbor. And here I was a young guy -- you know, you wanted to go wild -- and I wanted to get in the Air Corps. And I wanted to be a pilot and fly. And so I went in to see the Captain that was out at Greensburg then -- and Captain Hudock (phonetic) was the Troop Commander there then. And I said to him, "I'd like to -- if I could leave to go to the Air Corps" -- he said, "No." He said, "You've enlisted in the State Police." He said, "You have a 2B card." I said to other guys -- to be here when they go, and here when they come back -- and we joked about it. But anyhow, I -- he said you have to have a 1A card. He didn't say that, but he indicated that. So I went back home, and I went up to

Johnstown and took the test for aviation cadets and I passed it. So I went up to -- over back to Masontown, over where my draft board was, and -- I used to go to high school with a girl named Rita Morris (phonetic) -- her dad run the draft board. And I said to her -- I said, "Rita, could you get me a 1A card here." She said, "I sure can." She said, "I can get them for anybody and everybody." So she did. She put it in an envelope, and I took it back to Greensburg, and I can still hear the Captain's -- he had a few choice words for the draft board. Anyhow -- but he said, "I can't do anything about it, it's government property." He said, "But you go downtown and make an affidavit, you'll come back on the job when you get out of the Air Corps." I said, "I don't have to do that -- man I want to be on the State Police." "I just want to be here -- I'll be here." He said -- so I went down and got the affidavit anyhow. And I did it here a few years ago -- when we had one of our moves -- and I found that -- I said I had that old -- that copy of that affidavit. But I don't know where it is right now. So, I did go into the Air Corps, and I went through a whole -- and boy it took so much longer than I thought to -- I was in five different colleges, and I remember the last one was University of Tennessee. And I finally got -- and got a lot of practice -- you

know, and we did a lot of flying too. So I was commissioned as Second Lieutenant, and I just was real happy about that. And then we fell out one morning -- out in the airport in front of the hangers there, and I noticed some big padlocks on the doors of some of the hangers, and I was wondering why they would be on there. And the other Lieutenant come out and he said -- called us over to fall in over here -- about 150, 160 probably -- there was three or four classes there -- you know, for various phases. And he said, "You can go into the Infantry, or the Army, or wherever you want to go, but we don't need you in the Air Corps anymore." Because see we were all wanting to be pilots. But they didn't want any pilots at all. But he said that's what you can do. And -- you know, I'd been through all this training now, and had -- got to Lieutenant, and so on. So we just -- I came home, and I come back into the State Police two days later, just like I told them I would. And I was real glad to be back. And it would happen that I was a -- one of the jobs I never did like on there -- but they gave it to us, especially newer men -- giving driver's tests. You know back in those days, we gave driver's tests out of garages. There weren't examination points and things like there have been the last several years. And I went into the

garage there in Uniontown, and I saw this cute little blonde sitting over there, and guess who that was. That was Irene. We just hit it off right in the beginning, and no question about it, and -- but I didn't have quite enough time in yet to -- so then I wrote my letter for permission to marry her. And by the way I found out later on that they checked her background. And I didn't worry about -- but she -- so then we got married in 1946.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

That's a long -- 58 years we were together, until the last -- until October -- 11th of October -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, getting back to the Air Corps, what year did you enter the Air Corps?

MR. GROOMS:

Let me see, now. Let's see -- I came on there in '42. I -- it was -- when was Pearl Harbor?

INTERVIEWER:

'41.

MR. GROOMS:

1941. Okay, it would -- it would have to have been in '42, or maybe real early '43. Could've been late '42. I just didn't keep much track of things back there then.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

And it took me about a little over two years -- almost two and a half years before I got back out of there. By the way, the State Police gave me credit for that time.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MR. GROOMS:

And they did that if you were in the military -- United States Military.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And there were other -- there were some other fellows that did that too. I don't remember who they were, but some of them did. But somebody dropped the -- but whenever he told us -- why they didn't need us, and we didn't know why they didn't -- he says, "They dropped the bomb on Hiroshima last night." Yeah --

and by the way, we had a crew already lined up for us. I was going to be the navigator and bombardier, and we were going to drop a big bomb -- it wouldn't be an atom bomb then -- it was a bomb on Tokyo. I remember calling my mom on the phone, and told her I would be going on a trip -- we're going to do some bombing, and she cried on the phone -- she was all upset, and I -- of course I couldn't tell her where we were going, or what we were going to do. But then whenever they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima -- well, I called her and told her -- I said, "Mom, I'm not going to go, I'm coming back out -- coming home." She was happy about that -- yeah. See, I can remember some of those things -- I remember how I felt whenever I heard them -- you know, you just -- some things impress you more than others, I guess.

INTERVIEWER:

How did you feel?

MR. GROOMS:

Hum?

INTERVIEWER:

How did you feel?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I just -- you felt that -- if I can get into the Air Corps, and drop a bomb, or do whatever -- fly a plane, or something, I would be helping a lot -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And it just was -- it had gotten that far along -- you know, and I never dreamed it would take me that long to get my training in the aviation cadets. But they did -- of course, they promoted me to Second Lieutenant whenever I graduated from that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And we practiced dropping bombs on the deserts out there -- my gosh, I have some old photographs of those. We dropped bombs -- hundreds of bombs in the deserts on targets -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Which deserts -- where were you?

MR. GROOMS:

Hum? Oh, I was in Childress, TX. We did most of our bombing out in the desert there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

There were a lot of planes flying out there. In fact, I remember one time -- you know, when you're the bombardier -- and whenever you were on the bombsite too -- and I was on the bombsite and -- you know, a big pile of junk they had down on the highway in the desert -- you know, and I looked up -- and it was at night, and I saw a light -- I saw a red light which should've been green. And it was the wing tip of another plane right along side of me. And I whipped the old bonge side over like that, and we rolled over -- and the pilot was sitting up there half asleep, and he jumped up. And this is -- but part of me was that close -- and we'd have been -- yeah. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you enjoy flying?

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Yeah, I did -- yeah. I still do. But you know the funniest thing -- I would love to have gone to Hawaii sometime in my life, because I just -- I think it was a nice place to go. And I tried to get Irene to go, and she would not get on a plane, she'd

never gone on a plane. We almost got on a plane in Pittsburgh one time -- we were living out there then. And she -- I was stationed there -- and she -- we got half way out to the airport -- or out on -- halfway out to the plane, on the airport, and she said, "No -- Bill wouldn't you feel bad if we got killed or something -- when this happened here." She said, "Please, I don't want to go." I said, "Okay." But you know at that time the airport to the airplane gave me back my money? Yes sir, they did. I just -- and I told them -- I said, "She won't go." They could see how upset she was, I guess. But anyhow -- and of course, she would not go on a boat. She said, "When they build a bridge, we'll go." That's a pretty long bridge I told her. Yeah, God bless her.

INTERVIEWER:

Well after all of that flying experience that you had in the Air Corps, did you fly any planes, or pilot any planes after you ...

MR. GROOMS:

Not as a pilot -- as a pilot, no I didn't. I was either on the bomb side, or doing the navigation, telling them what headings to take, and so on.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I never got to fly. And I never became a pilot. I never -- after I got out I just -- I don't know -- I just never pursued it after that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you have a chance to use any of your experience and the things that you learned in the Air Corps when you got back to the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, yeah -- I'll tell you, we had -- I had good -- let me say to you that the physical treatment that I got in the State Police Academy was head and shoulders over what -- the training you got in there, as far as the treatment -- you know, these guys were complaining about if we'd -- having to run too much, and this and that -- I said, "Hey guys, this is a breeze, I can do it backwards." I remember how they used to run us around here, and beat us up in wrestling, and boxing, and -- they called it jujitsu then, now

they call it karate -- and jujitsu was a rough one. No, I don't think I gained much from that, except the experience of being away, and being with some responsible position -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Tell me a little bit more about the training that you underwent at the training school? You just described that you did some jujitsu -- what other types of things did you do...

MR. GROOMS:

You mean at the Academy here?

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I can remember that every week we had to get out on the -- and I was on the third floor -- I gad to get on the -- lean out -- put the bottom window up and put your butt on the sill, and reach up and wash the window on the outside. We had to do that once a week, every week -- or maybe it was twice -- I mean, every two weeks, I don't know. But I know it was pretty often. Those old

windows up there -- that old building's still there by the way. And then of course -- like I say -- he wanted to be sure that there was no -- nobody graduated that couldn't take care of them self if the going got tough -- you know, and they used to have a saying, "We'll take one man for every 20 riders on foot." "And one man on a horse for every 100 rides," that was an expression they had -- you know, whenever you'd go out -- because we used to have a lot of strikes and things back then -- we'd go out on those. But yes, the training, and the discipline, and the physical part of it, I think was a real asset to me in the rest of my life, because I -- and you learn to -- you know, you learn jujitsu, and you learn some of these ways to -- like I said, if you get a guy that's a hundred pounds heavier than you are, he's a little harder to handle. But he said -- "Don't forget he's got the same eyes, and you get your thumb in one of them, and push it in until the eye comes out." He said, "He'll slow up." Yeah, he used to talk about that, and -- then there's other ways that you can hurt them too. But -- well, I didn't never have to use it very much -- oh, a few times on the highway, I had to do -- physically handle people, but not very many. Usually I was able to talk to them -- talk them out of anything further.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

What types of classes did you take at the training Academy?

MR. GROOMS:

At the Academy?

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, we had criminal code, and we had the vehicle code, and we had discipline, and -- oh, let's see there was -- they just tried to make you a good person. I mean, a person who would be acceptable to people -- you know what I mean? And it was that kind of a -- I got that impression from them. And it worked -- it worked -- yeah. I don't know how they are in the Academy -- I guess the training in the Academy now is lot different than what it was then, because there's a different need for it now too.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

How about the other people that you were training with -- the other cadets. Can you describe them and the relationship that you formed with them?

MR. GROOMS:

Were they what?

INTERVIEWER:

What were they like -- the other people that you were training with?

MR. GROOMS:

You mean at the State Police Academy?

INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- well, there were a little different personalities in some cases, but basically we were all -- we were pretty much the same. You know it had to be somewhat, or you wouldn't be able to fit in -- you know, and -- but some of the ones that left though were as far as I was concerned, and some others were concerned -- that's good ridden's. You know, you've -- we all have a right to our opinions, I guess. Most of the time we would keep them to ourselves -- we did most of the time, but

yeah, it was -- but I can remember the Academy and those things just like it was last year. You know certain things just hang right on to you.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you...

MR. GROOMS:

I remember Carlson (phonetic), he was a Lieutenant there, and Martin was the Major -- Major Martin, and we had another Lieutenant -- Griffith (phonetic) -- no, Griffin (phonetic) -- Griffin it was -- yeah. Sgt. Griffin, he was there. And we were -- he was like the first Sergeant -- he's the one that had the bulldog. He's the one that told us, "If you don't want the hell beat out of you, you're in the wrong place." But I'll have to say though, he was perfectly honest with us about it -- you know, he didn't make any bones about it. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

What were the circumstances that so many people decided to drop out of the Academy? Do you...

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I think most of it is for -- they didn't want to take the beatings that we were getting -- you know?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And I think that they wanted to find out if they could take it, and if they couldn't take it, they figured they couldn't take out on the job. That was the -- intent. Then the physical handling of people, which seems to be -- seemed to be more important than learning the exact law, or learning about the vehicle code -- and these things here, because they come with -- but they just wanted to be sure that you were a man when you went out there, and that's the impression I got from them, and I think that's really what they were after. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, how did you come to break your ribs, and your nose, and...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I got the ribs from boxing, and my nose of course was from boxing. But my ankle where I broke it was from jujitsu. Somebody threw me, and I would come down at a bad angle, and -- down on that thing.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But I was only off about seven or eight hours. You didn't take much time out if there was anything wrong with you. You just didn't do quite as rough as -- rougher treatment -- you know. Yeah, I can still remember the old suitcase parade, and see them go. And a lot of them couldn't handle Husbar -- you know. Husbar, you know -- like I say, he'd just ride his horse into you and turn him sideways, and almost knock you off your horse. And almost crush your leg -- you know, against your horse -- you know. And he'd say, "Ride your horse, don't let your horse ride you" -- you know, and then -- you know -- and some of the guys like myself -- I never rode a horse until I got down there. I never had a horse. But I did get a horse after I graduated though. I had one for a long time on a farm down near Pittsburgh. And then I got -- well, I liked to ride -- but then he'd get mad at us, and -- always doing something -- he'd say, "Take your feet out of the stirrups" -- you know, and "Trot, ho" -- you know, boy, trotting was -- such a -- feet in your stirrups -- you know, boy, because -- you know, then your pants were -- whole body in here, from rub -- just rubbed right through -- you know. Yeah -- and some fellows wouldn't take that very long -- you know. I didn't have to worry much about it, because I just found out real early

whenever you were going to ride a horse without the stirrups, and you was going to trot, you just push in tight forward as far as you can. That keeps your legs from getting -- some of the -- big surface there sore -- they get sore -- but not as bad as that.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

But I've watched guys just say, "This -- to hell with this, we're getting out of here," and they were gone -- yeah. I don't remember the exact figures, but I think those are pretty close -- maybe it'd be in there someplace, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

We didn't have computers back then -- did we? No, isn't that something. Had the old mechanical typewriters.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I remember the day I quit smoking. I was a Sergeant at Greensburg. That's a long time ago -- gee, that'd be 60 some years -- about 60 years -- I don't know. I've been retired 28

years, so, that would be like -- pretty far back there. But anyhow, they -- I was -- we had the old mechanical typewriters then -- there was no such thing as electric typewriters then -- and you type -- and some guys do two fingers, but I learned to use three fingers. But anyhow, we'd type them up -- so I was typing away there, and lighting one cigarette after another. I just started -- Kent's just came out then. And I started -- and got them Kent's -- and I bought a carton. And I was coughing, and I thought to myself -- and my mom used to say to me, "William, every time you smoke one of those things, you're putting another coffin in your -- another nail in your coffin" -- you know, and we didn't know it but she was right.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And anyhow, so I thought, "I'm going to quit," and I just stopped typing, took the pack that I had and threw it in the wastebasket -- there were three guys in there typing reports too -- three Troopers, and I said, "Hey guys, I quit smoking, I just bought a carton of Kent's, there in my locker right at the top of the steps -- and it's first on the right, whoever goes up and gets them can have them." They all three took off after them. I don't know who

got them, but I'm just wondering though sometimes if they're still living -- you know, because I know that's what killed my sister's husband -- my brother-in-law. Boy, he smoked two packs a day for years. He got that terrible cough, and he wouldn't quit. I thought just -- well, there's a thing in the paper about it now -- you know, I just saw it a couple of days ago.

INTERVIEWER:

Johnny Carson...

MR. GROOMS:

That more people are dying from tobacco and stuff, then they are from drugs -- yeah. Well, when you stop to think about it, inhaling any kind of smoke everyday would be not good for you. If you just think about it a little bit -- you know, so I thought about it -- I thought, "I don't have to do this," I never -- well, I did -- I chewed pencils a little bit, and -- you know, just something to do.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But in a couple weeks I got over them -- never went back. Never tried them again. But I often wonder what happened to those three Troopers that went up and got them. Who got them, and if he's still around. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you smoke when you were in the training school -- in the Academy?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Really?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah. Yeah, I did a little bit of smoking -- not heavy. But I didn't get smoking big until later.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I got -- but nobody in my family smoked. Mom didn't, my dad didn't, my brother -- now my brother chewed tobacco, but none of my sisters smoked. I -- you know, you used to watch it on television -- when a television person would come out, and you'd see all these movie stars smoking the cigarettes and things, and then -- probably think this is big stuff -- you know, you're silly that way sometimes -- you know, at certain ages -- he can attest to that right? Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, let's get back to when you were talking about your training on the horses.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

What other types -- what types of training did you do on the horses? Can you describe the things that you learned about how to ride a horse?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, yeah. Yeah, he told you -- you had to have a certain posture. You had to be up the way you should be, and positioned right on the horse, and your feet in the stirrups. And the reason for taking your feet out of the stirrups, is whenever he wanted to discipline you about something you were doing wrong -- you'd have to trot, and then after you'd take your feet out of the stirrups, he'd say, "Trot, ho," and you'd have to make the horse trot, and that bounces you -- you know, but learning to ride the horse was -- in fact it did -- it affected me because I bought a horse shortly -- not long after I graduated.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And -- yeah, I had him for a long time -- had him for a long time, but it was good physical training too. Um-hum. But Husbar was a little rough -- "Ride your horse, don't let your horse ride you." I can still hear him saying that -- but he said that a thousand times.

INTERVIEWER:

How often did you ride the horses?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I believe we rode everyday -- yeah. Yep, we did. Oh, yeah -- and you had to clean the stables. Sometimes, you had to get out 7:00 in the morning, and clean the stables. We took turns cleaning the stables, then you had -- took turns to -- feeding the horses -- and boy, they were an awnry dog gone thing -- a lot of them were young horses. They'd just got them in off -- where ever they get them -- you know, and boy, they'd bite you on your shoulder, they squeeze you, you'd go into feed them and they slam you up against the stall, or up against another horse -- they were just kind of awnry -- you know, but they were lively, young horses -- and that's what they had. No old -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you have to groom the horses as well?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, sure.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

That was part of it.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, when you clean the stables, you'd groom them. Yeah, you had to groom them. Sometimes -- I think there was around 80 horses when I went through, because sometimes you had to do two. But you got to a place where you just accepted that was part of the training -- you know. Yep...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you participate in the State Police Rodeo?

MR. GROOMS:

In the rodeo? Yeah, I rode in the rodeo -- let's see -- I think I rode in the rodeo twice -- two, or maybe three times. But what had happened -- I had an accident, and I hurt my hip, and I just couldn't ride -- you know, that's after we graduated. And I hurt my hip, and I just couldn't ride anymore. So -- and then once you got away from it, well that's it. Yeah -- and some of the

fellows stayed on -- some of the men there, I remember them, they were at the Academy for 12, 15 years. And they were in the rodeos regularly, and they did the horse training and so on. So -- I forget when Husbar left. He left -- because he was pretty old when I was there, and he left there sometime -- and his son used to play professional football with the Steelers -- yeah. Yeah, that was there back in Bradshaw's day -- yep. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

What did you do in the rodeo? What role did you play?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, just regular riding -- you know, you had to learn -- in fact, we used to practice the rodeo -- that was part of our training. We'd practice riding -- what you would do in the rodeo -- you know, you'd bring all the horses around, and bring them together, then you'd bring them apart, bring them in a circle, then you'd alternate them in like this, and you learned how to do all that. But it wasn't too difficult, because the horses were smarter than some of the guys -- smarter than we were I think sometimes. Because you wouldn't make quite the right move, but the horse would.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yeah, we had pretty thorough training.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you mind if I ask you what happened to your hip -- what the accident was that happened?

MR. GROOMS:

I got thrown of a horse.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yeah, I got thrown off and it hurt my hip, and then after that, we were -- we'd always have to do that damn jujitsu I was telling you about, and I got thrown there and I hurt it too.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Hurt my hip again -- it doesn't bother me now.

INTERVIEWER:

Well what kind of medical care did you receive from the State Police when you injured yourself all these times. How did they care for you?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, we had a doctor right there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, what was his name -- isn't that awful? Of course, I knew him for years. Anyhow, he was the doctor there, and then of course, if you had to they'd take you to the hospital, or -- if it was very serious, but we had good medical treatment, no question about that. I guess they still do -- um-hum. You ought to see that place out here reserved for the doctors.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And what were your living quarters like when you were training at the Academy?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, they were livable -- they weren't bad. You made your bed everyday, and you had to have it -- they used to say you'd flick a quarter on it, and they wanted to see it jump -- you know, but you learned -- and we had to do a military style bed -- you know, and of course it didn't take you long to learn that. Well, after the first

week there, boy, you had it down pat, and it was just routine. And you knew what time to get up -- boy, they'd sound the alarm, and you bounced out, and you had so many minutes to do various things, and then to fall in outside -- yeah. Yeah -- but the discipline in the Air Corps was nothing what it was at the State Police Academy. In fact, I never run -- and that place wasn't anything like that -- just that hard discipline -- you know. Now they had some discipline in there, but -- and there were certain things you had to do, but not like you did here at the Academy. I don't know of any place -- imagine any harder training than that -- maybe as Marines, I don't know because I wasn't in there.

INTERVIEWER:

And what types of disciplinary measures were taken when you did something wrong? What would happen?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, in some cases they would dismiss them. You know, they had a right then just to say, "You're finished" -- you know, the Major would call them in and have a talk about it. And then -- you didn't need to worry about days off, because you didn't get very many days off anyhow. But the few you would get -- if you -- they can discipline you that way, by taking some of your time off, which was very little. But I would help -- yep. I never got

disciplined much in there I don't believe. I tried to keep my nose clean -- yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you become especially close friends with any of the other people that you were training with?

MR. GROOMS:

You mean the men?

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep. Yeah, we got -- yeah, there were several fellows that I know we kept in touch by phone for -- oh, maybe three, four years after we got out. But then eventually you just sort of work away from it -- you know, but I remember the people in my class -- Aiken (phonetic), Anthony (phonetic) -- there's Barnes (phonetic), Burke (phonetic), and Booth (phonetic), Buncha (phonetic), Cameron (phonetic), Cassidy (phonetic), Cutler (phonetic), DeVainie (phonetic) -- Gorgus (phonetic), Grooms, Heinz (phonetic) -- because I -- I can remember them all because they called the roll every morning, and it just sort of plants in your head -- you know, and I thought -- boy, I'll tell you a lot of the guys are dead that were in my class.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

It's surprising -- I didn't know how many there were that died that young, because I'm only -- of course, I'm 84 now, and 27 and a half years -- yeah. Yeah -- but yeah, you do -- there are certain you're closer to than others. Now, Merle Shetter (phonetic) for instance, Merle was a year or two ahead of me. He's still living -- he's 91, and he lives out in the Pittsburgh area, and I just talked to him on the phone. I had two good friends out there -- Don Weaver (phonetic) he wasn't a Trooper, but he liked Troopers -- Don Weaver and Merle Shetter -- he was a Trooper, and he was a Major, and he's been retired longer than I have. I just talked to him last week. But, you do have a few -- you know, but as the years go by...

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe the uniform that you were issued when you were at the Academy -- training school?

MR. GROOMS:

The uniform?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Yeah -- what did they give you to wear?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, you had mostly -- there it was khakis -- you know, and work uniform, because you didn't have any reason to have a uniform, because you didn't go out on the road when you first got there -- you know, you just was there for the training and so on. And then whenever you were issued your first uniform, it was always a used uniform -- mine always were, and think everybody else's were. But they were in good shape, but yet, they were used -- and they'd have them cleaned and issue them to you. And even after I got out in the Troops, one of -- a couple of the Troops they did that to you with -- sometimes if you needed something, it would be a used one.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep. Yeah -- you bringing these up I'd forgotten of -- but they come to me -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So did you have -- when you were finishing up after six months -- is that right -- at the training school?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, six months -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. And as you were finishing up, did you have some type of graduation ceremony?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe that?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, it was just a lot like it is now -- you know, you have the Commissioner come down, and they always brought in some outside speaker. Sometimes it'd somebody -- a high ranking officer from some other local -- other out of State Police, or somebody -- but there was always -- had different ones -- you know. But we had a graduation, yeah. That was a happy day -- get out of this -- I never saw anybody kiss Husbar, or Major Martin goodbye. Martin wasn't a bad guy, though. Major Martin was -- he was very fair. Husbar I think he didn't know -- if you

wasn't a horse, he didn't what the hell -- how he should treat you. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Did your family come to the ceremony?

MR. GROOMS:

Hum?

INTERVIEWER:

Did your family come to the graduation?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes. Um-hum -- yeah. Well, my family -- was just my mother. My dad didn't come, but my mother did -- and let's see -- I believe two of my sisters did too, I believe. That's so fast -- it gets over with so quick, you don't remember as much -- but I can remember the -- talking to us about it -- and it was a nice ceremony.

INTERVIEWER:

How did they feel -- how did your family feel about you becoming a State Policeman?

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Well, that's -- well, at first they didn't think it was such a good idea, but after I was on for a while, then they thought it was a great idea -- yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Why? Why do you think they didn't like it?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, they heard a lot about the discipline, and how they were treated down there, and how many quit on the way -- you know, and they just -- now my brother, he always thought it was a good idea -- you know. And my son by the way tried to get in too, but his vision was -- he was wearing glasses, and his vision wasn't that good -- you know, because when I came on you couldn't have glasses. You had to have 20/20 vision, have your own teeth, and your weight had to be within two pounds of your height -- in other words, we'd -- I believe if I remember correctly they took them from 5'8" to 6'2", and your weight had to be within proportion to your height two pounds. By the way, I graduated in -- or I retired in 1977 -- I weighed a 190 pounds, and here it's 27 years later, and I weighed -- I've never been more than two pounds either way in all that time -- 189 to 192. Except when I went in to -- had my heart operation here in March, and boy, I lost 20 pounds there real quick, because you didn't eat anything for so long -- you know, just laying there. In fact, one of the doctors told me they lost me twice in the operating room. I said, "Thank you and God I'm still here." Yeah, but that's the only time

I ever lost my -- you know my mom was that way too. She was always thin. Mom was just about 91 when she passed away, and she was always thin, she never got heavy. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

So is that how much you weighed when you started at the Academy also?

MR. GROOMS:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

No.

MR. GROOMS:

No, not near that much. I weighed about 175 probably -- yeah. But then -- you know, a lot of exercise, boy, you put on some muscle, and muscle weighs too.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

It's not all fat. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Getting back to that graduation ceremony, there was one thing -- in 1929 they issued a mandate, that said that every cadet must memorize and recite the Call of Honor.

MR. GROOMS:

The Call of Honor -- oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. Do you think you could still do that?

MR. GROOMS:

I -- sure -- oh, give me just the first words -- do you know the first words?

INTERVIEWER:

I think, "I am a Pennsylvania State Trooper"...

MR. GROOMS:

Call of Honor -- oh, my goodness, yes I...

INTERVIEWER:

"I'm a Pennsylvania State Trooper"...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- huh?

INTERVIEWER:

"I'm a Pennsylvania State Trooper."

MR. GROOMS:

Oh -- "I'm a Pennsylvania State Policeman, and soldier of the law." "To me is entrusted the honor of the force." "I must serve honestly and faithfully, and if need be, lay down my life as others have done before me, rather than swerve from the path of my duty." "It is my duty to obey the law and to enforce it without any

consideration of class, color, creed or conditions." "It is also my duty to be of service to anyone who may be in danger or distress." How was that?

INTERVIEWER:

Good job -- wow.

MR. GROOMS:

Let me see -- I've been retired 27 years now, and I haven't said that too many times, but boy, when I hear it comes to me -- "I'm a" -- now though they'll have to say it a little differently, because we begin with -- we were Pennsylvania State Policeman. Now they have to say, "I'm a Pennsylvania State Trooper."

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Because we have some girls on the job, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- how about that. I haven't said that for so long. But there's certain things that just hang onto you -- you know, like I say, I can remember a lot of old things way back better than I

can remember something that he and I may be talking about here today -- or you and I may be talking about here -- other than my job. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So graduation happens, your family is kind of happy -- there a little tepid about the job, but you're ready to be a real State Trooper. So what's the next thing that happens? How are you given your assignment for your next -- for your first Troop?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, you just know what you're expected to do.

INTERVIEWER:

Well...

MR. GROOMS:

You know -- you know that. And if your in what -- it doesn't matter what Troop -- there's no difference in the Troops -- what you do and what you don't do.

INTERVIEWER:

So where did you go first?

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

Where did you go first?

MR. GROOMS:

Where did I go first?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

My first -- let's see, my first was Greensburg.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

When I was a Trooper. In my hometown -- not my hometown -- my hometown was 27, 28 miles from there, but I went out there -- for Greensburg, and then from there I transferred around different places, and then when I made Lieutenant -- I made Lieutenant pretty young, and I went out as a -- I was in charge of the patrol -- traffic in headquarters for a while, and then I went to -- I don't remember the series of Troops -- that would be in my record. I believe I was in four or five Troops as a Lieutenant, and then when I was -- when I made Captain I was pretty young, and I went out to as a Troop Commander, and eventually went back to my home Troop Greensburg as a Troop Commander, and that was a real -- you know, I thought about that -- you know, and I

thought so many guys there that were there when I was there, and they're still Troopers, but they all can't get promoted, and -- but we never had a minutes problem with that. And I guess it's because of my -- the way I approached it -- you know, because I just treated them all the same. It's like when we got the first seven women -- I got seven women out of the first class, and I know what I had people saying to me -- we're going to start having trouble now with women and men -- you know, and I thought about that, so I -- and I called the girls in one at a time, and talked to them. And I told them -- I said, "You can talk about whatever you want to talk about now, go ahead and take as much time as you need, but I want to talk to you, so that you understand you and you understand me." And one of the things that I told them all -- I said, "I want you to remember something -- that men will be men, and women will be women, and that's the way it's supposed to be." "But I want you to know right now every Trooper out there -- every man on this job is your brother, and you are his sister" -- you know, and they got the message. In fact, oh, about ten years after I retired, one of them called me, and said, "I remember you saying that to us." Yeah -- but as long as I was on -- I was on 35 and half years -- as long as I was

on there, I gave it all I had. I apologized to my family, I believe I did neglect them some, because I spent more time doing things on the job -- because as a Major -- I was a Major about eight years and the Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation -- and it wouldn't be uncommon for them to call me at midnight for something. Because everything in crime and punishment they reported to me. And I remember I had 13 girls and 12 phones in the office, so I got a lot of phone calls. Maybe some days -- wouldn't be uncommon to get a 100, 125 calls a day -- yep. And you know what, back in those days I never made notes. No, sir, I'd just take care of it then and there -- I'd call the Major in the field, or the Captain in the field, and take it up -- yep. But the years do go by. Of course, I was married 58 years too.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

1946.

INTERVIEWER:

Now just a short question to finish up this...

MR. GROOMS:

What's that?

INTERVIEWER:

Just a short question to finish up this first hour.

MR. GROOMS:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

You mentioned that you would get 125 phone calls into that -- into your office, where you had all these secretaries taking those calls. What was -- what were those calls about? What was the most...

MR. GROOMS:

Well, like I say, everything in crime and punishment comes to the director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Now there are 4,000 people out there -- okay? So when you stop to think about that, that's not too many calls from -- because there's crime going out there all the time, and there's people that are getting out of line all the time, and I don't want to -- okay -- but that's -- I'm not here to criticize it, I'm just saying that it was a busy spot. I retired from there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Because...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, we're back. This is the Pennsylvania State Police Historical -- I'm sorry -- the Pennsylvania State Police Oral History Project.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

My name is Shelly Becker. I'm here with retired Major William Grooms, and this is tape two in our series so far. And today is January 27, 2005. So thanks for being here again.

MR. GROOMS:

Thank you.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. All right, when we left off, we were talking a little bit about where you started out after you graduated from the Academy. In 1942, you went to Greensburg.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now what was the Troop letter at Greensburg at the time?

MR. GROOMS:

It was Troop "A" then.

INTERVIEWER:

Troop "A", okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yep, because -- I know "G" -- I used to know them all. "E" was Erie, "D" was Butler, "H" was -- oh, that's Harrisburg, and Hollidaysburg was -- oh boy, I can't remember that one. I was stationed there too for a while. Yep -- I can say that they haven't really changed too much have they?

INTERVIEWER:

Over the years.

MR. GROOMS:

Have they? Yeah, I've gotten away from them.

INTERVIEWER:

What was your first impression of Troop "A", Greensburg, when you arrived there for the first time?

MR. GROOMS:

You mean when I went back out there as a Troop Commander?

INTERVIEWER:

No, when you went there...

MR. GROOMS:

When I went -- oh, yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

...as a fresh Trooper, right out of the...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah -- um-hum. Well, yeah -- I was very impressed with it. I didn't like the fast that they assigned me to give driver's tests, but there was two other young Troopers and myself, and I don't remember who they were -- but we did it -- you know, and we just get a little -- take a space in the garage there, and have them bring their learner's permits -- back in those days then they had to parallel park, and we gave them a pretty thorough test. Mostly -- we were more concerned with how good they could drive, as to how much they knew about it -- you know, because -- and we had a series of questions we asked them, but -- yeah. In fact, I taught my wife to drive, but I didn't give her the test. I'd kid her about that -- I said -- but she did -- she turned -- to be a good driver. Um-hum -- yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you give them a written test as well?

MR. GROOMS:

The what?

INTERVIEWER:

Did you give them written test and an oral...

MR. GROOMS:

No. No, an oral test.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Just asked them the questions.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Yep -- then you signed their permit if they passed, or if they -- you'd indicate that -- you know, and they could use that until they got their license.

Yep -- and if they failed -- why they couldn't -- they could use it until it expired, but then...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever fail anybody?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes. Yeah -- oh my goodness, yeah. Yeah, I remember one we had -- and she couldn't get the car out of the stall where we were. So I said, "Well, we've been here five minutes, and that's long enough." "You'll have to get some more practice." Yeah -- I never liked giving driver's test though -- at that time. Of course

now we don't give them, the civilians give them now -- have regular courses with lines and everything -- excuse me.

INTERVIEWER:

What were your other duties there, other than giving driver's tests? What else did you do?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, the patrol -- you know, you had to take a patrol car and patrol, and you go out there and then you work shifts -- you know, sometimes -- and somebody had to work all night. That would be common -- wouldn't be uncommon to go to work at 11:00, and work till -- eight hours -- you know, the next morning. And -- but you spent your time out on patrol in the car. And then of course after we got the radios, it made it a lot easier, because you keep in contact with -- when they would call you with something. We stopped using the flags. We had a little red flag for almost every service station, and we made an agreement -- and they -- the people were very faithful about that. They'd put the flag up if they'd call there, and they know you're supposed to be in that area. They'd call there, they'd put the flag up, you'd stop and call the office.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Of course, I can remember though when I was a kid at home, we had a crank telephone for a little bit, then we got a real one. Yep -- bringing back a lot of memories.

INTERVIEWER:

How many miles did you have to patrol, and what was your jurisdiction area?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, they weren't all the same -- they varied.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And you see some areas now -- down in the Uniontown area they -- there was a lot of traffic down there -- there always was a lot of traffic down there, and they patrolled that pretty heavy. Or if you had a particular highway -- and you see, back then when I came on there were no four lanes -- no turnpikes, and -- well, let's see the turnpike was built in '36, I believe it was, and -- the first section of it. And then of course then we put -- assigned men to the turnpike -- just the pike. But interstates were unheard of, and they were mostly just -- in fact, I remember where we lived was at the bottom of a hill, and it was gravel road. And

when I was kid, and -- cars used to stop near our place and turn around and back up the hill, because the gas tanks were up under the windshield, and there were no fuel pumps on cars then, and the gas had to run through -- and they'd back up over the hill. You don't remember that do you? Yep. Yeah -- lot of water going over the bridge -- or over the dam since then.

INTERVIEWER:

What type of patrol car did you drive?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I had a black and white Ford.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

See -- what year was that? And then we had Chevy's. Seems to me we had a couple of Mercury's along the way too. We used them to check speeders.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

You know, we didn't have any radar or anything like that -- and you just take and put somebody in civilian clothes in a Mercury, and somebody another car in uniform to see what happened.

And then he'd stop them, and he say, "Well, that one there followed you and clocked you," and so on. Yeah. They do it a little easier now. Yeah -- in fact, the State Police came into being -- be a hundred year in May. Yeah -- well see, they weren't too old when I came in. No they weren't -- 1941, '42 -- I think it's '42 -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

That black and white car that you mentioned, was that the ghost car?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, they called them a ghost car -- yeah. Yeah, they call them the ghost car -- yeah. There weren't nearly so many of them then, as there were -- as there eventually was -- you know, because they started out with them -- and they used several unmarked cars too.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

For -- yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And -- you know, something that I just thought of that I didn't really ask you about before, was your weapons training at the Academy. Can you describe that quickly?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah. Yeah -- we went to -- I believe we -- everyday we were on the target range, and you had to qualify. And if you didn't qualify, you didn't graduate -- you know, it was that important. And we had .38 Specials, and they -- that's about the only thing we used then. And then we had Thompson submachine guns -- you had to learn to use them. And then we had the .30-06 -- the regular rifle, and you had to learn more about them then you did the machine guns, and you had to be able to qualify with them too. But I used to think about how much lead there must be in the banks up there now, after we all went shooting all that in there. It'd probably be worth something if they dug it out -- a lot of it in there. Yeah -- in the Academy we went down -- down where the Academy was then -- you know, was down over the hill there...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Yeah -- yeah, boy, that's bringing back a lot of memories.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you enjoy that...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh yeah, I enjoyed the shooting. Um-hum -- yeah, I always enjoyed that. Yeah, I did -- I just -- we had schedules for everything -- you know, and you really kept them too -- you know, there was no -- say, "Well, we can't do this -- and today," or that -- very rarely you didn't keep one -- you had a schedule. But I liked whenever they scheduled the shooting, I enjoyed that always. Um-hum -- yep.

INTERVIEWER:

And you needed to clean the weapons as well? Is that...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh yeah, well that's automatic. Yeah, you had a little metal thing and the little white things you'd put on there, and run them through -- then you had -- would have this little brush on too sometimes.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And you had -- then you'd go out for inspection -- you know, we had inspection. I guess it was once a week, and you had to bring your pistol out, and hold it up like this, and then he would grab it -- the Captain would grab it, take it, open it, look at it -- and it better be open, no bullets in it -- look through it, see it was clean -- it was all right, and then he'd put it back up to you, and then you'd take it like that. Yeah -- same thing with the rifles. Bring the rifle up in front of you, and he'd take it, then he'd give it back to you -- parade rest and attention -- yeah. All of it was part of the training to discipline you -- you know, and that's what it amounted to -- and it worked. Um-hum -- it still is, I guess. I don't know. I'm sure they still have inspection of their side arms.

INTERVIEWER:

So when you went to Greensburg originally, what were you issued?

MR. GROOMS:

I was what?

INTERVIEWER:

What were you issued -- what...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh -- well, I had a whole uniform, even though it was a used uniform.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And I was issued a .38 Special revolver, and that's all. And -- you know, the Sam Brown belt, and all -- had a Blackjack -- then we had the Blackjack's they're a little, short thing, about that long...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...and they're leather, and they have a piece of heavy lead in the end of them -- and you'd only have to whack them once with that, boy, I remember that we had those -- and the guys used them more than they would -- rather then to be shooting them -- you know, and just -- but you had to be careful though, because if you hit them in the temple with that real hard, it would kill them -- you know, so you'd hit them a little bit off -- off of that -- you know, but I'll tell you though, back in those days, the public recognized the State Police, and they -- we didn't have any trouble getting their attention -- let me put it that way. You'd

even drive along the -- drive and pull along side of a car somebody's driving -- you'd tell them -- you'd say, "Pull over right now," and they pulled over. Very rarely one would ever try to go -- and when they'd try to go, we'd just shoot the tires off the damn car. I remember one time somebody shot one, and it was -- a report out on it and -- but they shot it from the back, and the bullet went in the tire, and came up through the seat, and hit somebody in the backseat. It didn't hurt them bad, but it did hurt them, so you had to be careful how you handled that. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever have to do that? Did you ever shoot someone's tires?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Really?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, sure. Best way -- you know, is to get up along side close to them and shoot them -- because if they won't stop -- you know, and that's why I say you watch these people on the television out in California, they chase a -- follow a car for 140 miles trying to

stop it. Think of the people they -- place in jeopardy doing that -- you know, and well back in our old days, they said it's a better idea to shoot the tires off it, and miss and fix him instead of somebody else. That'll slow them down.

INTERVIEWER:

Well what then -- after you get them pulled over, do you arrest them...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, sure.

INTERVIEWER:

...or just give them a ticket?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I'd just arrest them -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And leave the car on the side of the road?

MR. GROOMS:

Well yes, if -- and tell them we give them so much time or we'll tow it, and then you pay for it. Yeah, that's the way you'd handle it.

INTERVIEWER:

Well...

MR. GROOMS:

Yep. You didn’t have to shoot too many of them off, but that's -- rather than follow them for 30, 40, or 50 miles we'd stop them that way. I don't know what they do about that today -- I don't know how they handle that, but it worked back then. Of course, cars weren't like they are now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I remember that -- more than anybody -- if you caught somebody going 60 miles an hour it was fierce -- oh, that was terrible -- you know. Of course there's a lot -- a lot of the old cars, they wouldn't go any faster than that.

INTERVIEWER:

How fast could the ghost car go?

MR. GROOMS:

What?

INTERVIEWER:

How fast could the ghost car...

MR. GROOMS:

Well, they were pretty good -- you could 70 to 80 out of them -- yeah. But you had to be careful about driving that fast too -- you

know, back then. The brakes weren't like they are now -- excuse me.

INTERVIEWER:

So when you would put someone -- say you would arrest someone like you just described, you'd put them in the backseat handcuffed, right?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah. Yeah, we used to have a -- if they were real bad, we used to have leg irons too. They were like handcuffs in the floor of the car, and you'd put their ankles in there, and then you know very well they're not going to run away -- you know. And then the -- another thing is they were -- they seemed to have more respect for State Police then -- then they did later on, and like I say, I remember one time when I arrested three fellows at one time, and I put the handcuffs -- handcuffed two of them together, and then the -- or no I didn't -- I put the handcuffs on -- I only had one set of handcuffs, so I handcuffed the one, and then I put the other two in the back there, and took their belts off and -- put their wrists, and I told them -- I said, "Now, we're going to go, now if any of you want to run you go ahead, but the one who runs the fastest I'll kill first" -- you know, and that seemed to work. I didn't have to do that very often, but I remember just that

one particular time I did that. But I got them all into the barracks, and my buddies helped me take care of them. Like I say, things are a lot different now though, but it worked back then.

INTERVIEWER:

So inside the car, was there any separation between...

MR. GROOMS:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

...up front and the backseat?

MR. GROOMS:

Not with ours -- no. Not with -- just regular cars. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did anyone ever try to reach up and hit you, or anything like that?

MR. GROOMS:

Never did -- of course, I usually would handcuff them -- if there were just two of them, I'd put them -- put two handcuffs and cuff them together -- you know. But this one time I had the three, and I thought I needed to handcuff two of them and let one loose, and so I just -- I didn't try to handcuff them together, I just told them that. I'll tell you what, they must've believed me. Especially the fastest -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever go on patrol with anyone else?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, sure -- yeah, lots of times. But when we first got on though, they said that you can drive by yourself all night. And -- you know, and there wasn't no problems about it. But then we started to place -- where we always tried to put -- have two, especially at night, and they started that -- you know, that'd been a good while back in the -- in practicing that. But in an emergency one can go. Yeah, because you're -- you know, if there's two of you, you have a better chance of -- if it's a bad situation. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel that you ever got yourself into a bad situation?

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, I've been in several bad situations over the years, but they've always worked out all right. I remember one time I was -- I had a guy that was wanted for a felony, and when I went to his house to serve a warrant on him -- and he went out the back door. And I -- so I started to chase him, and he's going through a field, and he hesitated, and stopped, and turned around and fired two shots at me with some kind of a pistol. So I

didn't shoot at him at that time, and -- but I kept chasing him, and then finally he fell, and when he fell he fired another shot at me, and then I shot at him, and I hit him. It didn't kill him, but it did hit him, and I took him in, and took him to the hospital, and we put a guard on him and kept him there, but he lived all right. But he was sentenced -- he got a good sentence. I don't remember if he got 12 or 14 years -- I had him for a felony. But -- and then you have -- you really have a lot of situations where when you go to a home to arrest somebody or something -- you know, especially if it's upstairs -- you know. And you see them looking out the window with a gun in their hand -- you know, make you be a bit careful -- had a lot of those. It used to happen way back -- they're still having them, I guess. I see them on television.

INTERVIEWER:

He must not have been a very good shot then.

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

He shot at you three times and didn't hit you, that's pretty lucky.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, he was just -- still running see -- he was running like that -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And no, he didn't hit me, but I -- I could've shot him then, but I thought, "No, I'm not going to, because he knows he didn't hit me." And then -- but whenever he fell, and he rolled up and he fired one at me, and then I gave him one.

INTERVIEWER:

Where did you hit him at?

MR. GROOMS:

In the chest. Yeah, it didn't hit his heart though. Somewhere on the other side -- just -- -- you know, it hit the rib, and cracked the rib, and went in through there. But he was in the hospital for quite a while.

INTERVIEWER:

A couple of questions concerning that -- when you were trained to -- you know, chase down a suspect, and when you draw your weapon, are you trained to shoot to kill, or...

MR. GROOMS:

That's right.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

That's -- I remember the old Major at the Academy, and the old Captains used to tell you, if you -- "Don't take that weapon out, unless you have the mind of killing somebody." That's what they used to tell you -- you know. But I didn't always listen to that. Sometimes I'd think, maybe I'll have it out and ready just in case -- you know, but I never remember of killing anybody. Now I can remember there would be three or four of us and there'd be shooting in a situation and somebody got it, but you don't know who hit them -- you know, that can happen occasionally -- very rarely, but it does. But now I don't know how they approach it, tell you the truth.

INTERVIEWER:

And then the other question pertaining to that situation -- in that kind of a situation, is that where you had shot at and -- you know, somewhat critically injured that guy, is that something that would make the papers? Is that something that the media would cover at that time?

MR. GROOMS:

Well the media wasn't so bad about it back then -- covering an event as they are today. Today the media seems to be -- they like to -- well the media is just about a hundred percent different

of what it was in my days. It's just they had -- they did put some stuff in the papers -- you know, that wasn't favorable to us, but they didn't go out of their way to do it -- it seemed like as much as they are today.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Today, boy, if they can put a -- seems they put State Police in there -- the name for some reason, they just do it for whatever reason. And I -- all the papers seem to be doing it, because I still read them and when I see State Police, well I'm still interested in it -- I still look at it.

INTERVIEWER:

Were there ever any other situations where you needed to use your weapon on someone?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, there were others, but I just can't recall them right now, but you -- but I can always remember the old man saying, "If you take that pistol out, your of mind to kill somebody, or otherwise don't pull it out" -- you know, and I see what he was concerned with there -- that he didn't think he'd want to kill them, so he --

but if you have it out, you might use it. Yeah, I think that's what his thinking was, but he was probably right, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

And the other weapons that you carried, like the Blackjack, did you ever use that?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- oh yes. Yeah, I used that pretty often. Used it anyway you want, because it was -- this is a short thing, and you put in on your wrist -- an arm band on it -- you know, you put it around your wrist, and that way if they grab it, they couldn't take it off of you. And then if you wanted to hit them, then you could hit them on the shoulder, the leg, anyplace. But you have to be careful hitting them in the temple with it, because if you hit them hard enough it would kill them. You could break their jaw -- or you can hit them anyplace with them. And it was easy to use -- you know. And they knew that you would use it. And they knew you carried them -- you know, and they had a lot of the guys that just didn't want to fool around with that. Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe a situation -- like what would someone need to do in order to receive that response from you?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, resist. For instance, if you wanted to take him into custody.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

At most you wanted it for -- if he would resist and be trying to get away from you, and when you told him why you have him, and why he's supposed to be there -- by trying to get away from you -- that'll slow them down.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

You know. And with old Blackjack -- with anything -- but then they got -- I think -- I believe they've outlawed them now, I'm not sure. Because there was some people who complained about somebody -- overused them -- you know. But they were handy, and they worked fast. Yeah -- I never abused anybody with it. I never wanted to abuse anybody -- and even for a crime. The only time I would really lose my cool real quick is where it was molesting a child. I just -- and I'm still that way. If I saw somebody molesting a child when I was leaving here today, I'd take hold of him -- I'd go after him. Because I just -- I can't -- I just never have been able to go with that. And I remember one

time we had a -- shortly after I came on the job -- I won't mention the other Trooper that was assigned with me, but anyhow, we were driving patrol in the evening -- it was after dark, and there was an old car parked there in the -- off the road in like the brush and, we could -- I was driving, and as I pulled in I just rolled -- put the window down listening and I heard a child crying -- screaming. So we got out and we went over and I jerked the car door open and there was an old man -- he was 63 years old -- we didn't know then there was going to be anything -- was there -- he was raping this little girl. She was about three or four years old. And I grabbed him by the hair and the throat, and jerked him off of there, and my buddy jumped up on top of his and broke his arm off right back there, and he -- and then I thought he was reaching for his revolver, I said, "Don't shoot him, he's not armed." And I picked the child up and brought her in and she just bled all over my uniform, and she was crying her little head off. And I took her to a -- to the hospital of course. And that old guy -- that old guy 63 years old, we locked him up and put him in jail, and the judge found him guilty. And he didn't have much use of that arm -- but he was still in jail. And I can still see his old mother coming up there and getting down on her

knees and praying to him to confess. He died in jail and never confessed. Yes he did. That was an unusual case, but like I say, when it comes to people abusing children -- if I'd see them today, I don't care, I'd go after them. And -- it's just -- I just can't buy that thing if -- and I see where a school bus driver here, with a 15 year old girl -- did you see that in the paper? School bus driver -- local here. He'd been having sex with this 15 year old for three or four months, and he parks the bus in a parking lot someplace in the afternoon on the way back two or three times a week, and that's where it happens -- and people see the bus there. If it was my daughter, or my little granddaughter, I'll tell you they'd have a big problem. I just -- you know, I've always been that way, and I'll never be any different.

INTERVIEWER:

That kind of brings up a good point. There are situations that would happen in your job, things that you would witness, like the situation you just described...

MR. GROOMS:

The what?

INTERVIEWER:

...things that you would witness like that.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Was it sometimes hard to carry on -- to sleep at night -- to -- did you carry these things with you -- the memories?

MR. GROOMS:

Some of them you do. If you're human, you can't help it.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. Yeah -- of course.

MR. GROOMS:

You know. But I always felt though -- if what I did was right. Because I'd think about it before I would do it -- you know. The only exception might be that -- if it was bothering or molesting a child, or -- you know, kidnapped a child, or something -- you know, they -- I didn't think about that too long. But other situations, I'd give them some thought. And naturally, if you're human, you don't get them out of your mind that fast -- you know, they stay with you for a while. But you don't let it take over. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever know of any Troopers -- any other Troopers who would actually even leave the job because of experiencing that type of situation -- like they just couldn't handle it?

MR. GROOMS:

No, I don't. I don't know of any. I'm not saying there hadn't been some maybe along the way, but I don't know of any. Um-mmm.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, well I guess basically getting back to your first station in Greensburg...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...now you would patrol, and do driver's tests, and at what point...

MR. GROOMS:

I didn't give driver's tests too long...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

...I did it for a while though.

INTERVIEWER:

At what point were you ready to move on? Did you place the transfer yourself, or how did that happen?

MR. GROOMS:

Ready to be what?

INTERVIEWER:

Ready to transfer and move on from...

MR. GROOMS:

You had no choice of that.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MR. GROOMS:

The Troop Commander and there -- or else the Commissioner, or somebody at headquarters -- in other words, if they wanted somebody to move you into headquarters, they'd call a Troop Commander and they'd say, "Oh, that's a good man, I don't want to lose him." But they'd just talk and they -- headquarters had the answer. They made the final decision. Otherwise a Troop Commander -- and I can remember another situation -- we could take sick leave on the job. And I can remember one area where I was -- a Troop -- I won't name it right now, but I'd been there for about -- oh, five or six months, maybe a little longer. And there were a certain couple of guys that always got sick on Friday -- you know. And I knew precisely what was happening -- you know, so I called them in separately -- in fact about three days apart -- in fact -- talked to the one first, and we talked about other

things, too and then that came up -- you know. And I said to him -- I said, "You know" -- I said, "I see your -- I've been checking your sick leave here, and I believe there may be something in the air here that's not good for you -- there's some situation here" -- I said, "Do you think it would help maybe if you were up there near Lake Erie?" You know -- and no laugh, just -- very serious about it. I said, "Now -- you know, because I'm concerned with everybody's health here, and yours too." I called the other on in three days later -- and you know what, they never took a Friday off after that. I'll bet they still remember me and dislike me for it, but what do you -- hey, I thought it was a good way to handle it, and it worked. Sure -- and then I used it a couple of other times, too -- but I remember those two particular ones there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- that was in Greensburg by the way. Yeah -- yes, sir. I think there's a -- you have to recognize that there's going to be discipline, but I think that you have to be -- apply it right -- you know, and just think about it -- you know, how it's going to affect them, and if it's going to work. And I always tried that, and -- just

like when I talked to the girls when they came out at first to the Troop. I know it affected one of them, because she called me and she said, "I can still remember you telling me this and that," and she said, "That was a good move." Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Speaking of things like sick leave and that type of thing, what types of benefits did you receive?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, you -- if you were sick, you could take -- let's see, back then -- I forget how many -- I never knew of anybody that got sick -- that was seriously ill, that they ever took them off of the payroll. I know that you had 30 days I think all together -- could take sick leave in a period, and then something was done, but -- I never had anybody to go that long -- you know, because I think if you have a better understanding about it, it helps. Yeah -- but you could take sick leave. Yeah -- I don't remember ever taking a day of sick leave on the job -- no I don't -- I might have a time or two, but I don't remember of any. Yeah -- of course I was never sick -- wait a minute, I did have an operation there someplace. I had to take some sick leave for that. An operation they took a different approach to -- you know. Yeah. Yeah, I've been retired

so long, I'm -- it's hard to keep me thinking about what happened before I retired -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

What types of insurance benefits did you receive from the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, well we're covered full with insurance.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

And they still are. I'm still covered -- I'm still under it.

INTERVIEWER:

Really?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh yeah. See, when we first come on the job, we paid so much into it. And then after a period of time, it got built up, so they -- we didn't pay anything into it. So now that -- I've got it for life. And it covered Irene too.

INTERVIEWER:

Hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- 35 and a half years there. Um-hum. Very fortunate.

INTERVIEWER:

And would you say that you received -- should I say, perks -- well, did you receive any kind of perks from the community, or anything along those lines -- like, did the community treat you in a way that was above and beyond what they would obviously treat a normal civilian? For instance...

MR. GROOMS:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

...a free meal at the local diner?

MR. GROOMS:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

No?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, now you could get -- you could get a cup of coffee and a donut, or something like that, but I never did that -- you know, because that was a saying -- they'd say, "Well, here's a donut eater" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MR. GROOMS:

I mean -- so I never would take one for free, I would take it and pay them for it, or I wouldn't take it. But I didn't stop into diners much, very rarely. Yeah -- but I don't know of -- you know, you were talking about perks and -- I don't know of any community where they're doing that, and if they are, they shouldn't be, because they know it's wrong. I know a lot of people would like the State Police to be around pretty often for security purposes -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And I've had them talking to me about that, and I'd say, "Hey that's fine" -- but I said, "Don't forget we're getting a salary, you don't have to pay us for that." Because if they -- in whatever way they wanted to pay -- you know, but if the fellows wanted to stop in and get a donut and a cup of coffee, I never told them they couldn't, but I just didn't. I never did.

INTERVIEWER:

What was your starting salary?

MR. GROOMS:

If I remember correctly, it was $2,400. But then -- like I say though, they bought all my meals, furnished all my uniforms, furnished me a place to sleep, and a kitchen to eat in -- you know, three meals a day, and -- so that would be considered part of my salary -- they'd put that in there, and of course you weren't allowed to get married for five years, so you had to live at the barracks.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. I think that's probably about right. Then we got raises along the way too, at times. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Were your living quarters at the Greensburg Barracks very similar to the Academy?

MR. GROOMS:

No, they weren't -- they were just more like a house -- a home.

INTERVIEWER:

Hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Maybe two, three bedrooms and -- because most of our barracks then were in homes -- you know, back in those days they had them -- homes. I think Uniontown I believe was one of the early barracks -- it seems in my mind it was, but I was never stationed there. I was in Greensburg -- is the closest I ever got to there. Now Greensburg -- our headquarters were all buildings, like -- you know, big, old, brick buildings and so on, but they weren't -- see the Academy is so different, it has -- it's for an all together different purpose, and what we're -- what Troop headquarters is for. You finish with that -- and we were starting out on something different. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So since you're in a house setting, were you -- do you cook for yourselves then, or did someone cook for you?

MR. GROOMS:

If you're what?

INTERVIEWER:

In this house that you lived in did you cook for yourself?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, no -- no, no they had cooks. We had cooks that cooked the meals at these places -- oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

That's nice.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Oh, sure. Yeah, I can remember half a dozen of them or more. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

What types of meals did you eat?

MR. GROOMS:

Just regular meals.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Sometimes the pork chops, sometimes beef, sometimes chicken, and just a regular meal -- mash potatoes and gravy and that kind of stuff -- you know. Yeah. And then the other guys -- we had a system too, where you could eat on the road if you did, then somebody would put in a slip for a certain amount.

INTERVIEWER:

Hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But this one individual did too much of that -- since it was furnished for him at the office -- why we began maybe think he ought to be working over at this station where they don't

do that. Yeah -- but now I don't know how they handle it. I think they can eat out any place they want, I don't know. I don't think -- they probably have us put in a -- put a voucher in for it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you share a room with anyone there?

MR. GROOMS:

No -- well, wait a minute -- yeah, I think some of the bedrooms might have had two beds in it -- in them. I'm pretty sure they did -- yeah. Yeah -- but there'd be no reason they wouldn't -- you know, because if there's -- because back then -- maybe a substation would only have eight or nine men -- you know, and it's an eight room house there -- why they'd put the bunks up -- you know. Yeah -- that’s a long time back.

INTERVIEWER:

How long did you stay at Troop "A", Greensburg?

MR. GROOMS:

Greensburg?

INTERVIEWER:

How many years?

MR. GROOMS:

Something -- let me think now -- I think I was probably there for just about two years.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Probably pretty close to two years I believe -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Where did they send you afterwards?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- and I remember I used to stop home sometimes at night -- you know, and -- we lived in McClellandtown, that's a little place -- oh, that's about 30 miles to Greensburg I guess -- 18 or 30 -- 20 or 30 -- but anyhow, to show you the difference in how things are, when I'd go home -- you know, and my mom -- they never locked the doors on your house then -- had an old glass door in the front in there, and I'd come in -- it maybe 2:30, 3:00 in the morning, and I'd just take the knob and turn it and it'd open, and right away I'd hear mom say, "Is that you, William?" I'd say, "Yes, mom." She'd say, "Is everything all right?" I said, "Yep." She said, "Well, okay I'll see you for breakfast" -- you know, and

she -- and there I was a Trooper on the job. Now then if -- these people that let their kids out that for -- that way -- nine and ten year old kid and don't even know where they are. Isn't no wonder they have -- the trouble they have with -- my mother -- with six of us kids, and mom knew where they were, boy, until they got to be on their own -- yes, sir. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

How often would you see your family?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, at least once a week when I was that closed -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Now when I'd get further away, sometimes it was a lot longer -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Yeah -- I remember you had a car then -- I remember when I came on the job, I had a 1936 Ford. I think I told you this -- and we were down to -- I was working down at the Academy then -- I was at the Academy there, and in fact I was still going

through training, and Mr. Hershey's -- they used to bring a wagon out and pick up the horse manure -- you know, to put in on the fields, and we parked our cars in back of the stables out there -- the cadets did. And mine was right on the end, and somebody spooked their horses, and they ran off, and that wagon hooked into my '36 Ford, and turned it over about four or five times and wrecked it bad. And so I went in and told the Major what happened, and he said, "Well, let's call Mr. Hershey and see" -- so he called Mr. Hershey, and he talked to him, and put him on the phone with me -- he said, "You get your car replaced with another one just like it, or whatever the price of it is, and just let me know." He -- yeah -- so I got another '36 Ford and he paid for it -- yes, sir, that's the kind of a guy he was. Of course, he used to come down and talk to our classes too -- yeah. Yes, sir.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you feel that Milton Hershey had a great deal of involvement with the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, he wanted us there -- you know, he wanted us there. I know that -- because I understand now -- whenever we bought the building there from him -- you know, that building down there,

he charged us $1 -- yeah. Now then, we're paying for that ground up there at the back of the barracks, and -- you know, we had gotten that from Hershey. I don't remember what it was -- it seems to me at like $25,000 an acre we're paying for it -- something -- that might not be right, but you'd have it someplace -- because I've been attending some of our meetings we were having on this thing -- you know -- still trying to raise more money. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, sir.

INTERVIEWER:

Now that '36 Ford that you had when you first started the Academy, did they let you keep it just at the Academy, and then on your day off, you could take your car and do whatever you wanted to do?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yeah -- but you didn't get much time off while you were in training.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yeah -- oh, yeah -- that's why we parked them back of the stables, see, because some of their cars they parked in the parking lot -- you know, up there, but they didn't have room for all of the cadets, so that's where the cadet's parked their cars -- it's out of the way. And mine was in the way of a horse and a wagon -- yeah. Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

And you had mentioned before that you paid $69 for that car, or something...

MR. GROOMS:

No, I paid $69 for the '31 Plymouth...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MR. GROOMS:

...I had a '31 Plymouth for my first car.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MR. GROOMS:

This was a '36 Ford -- had the big -- moved up. I probably paid a hundred -- hundred and a half for that, I don't know. That sounds about right.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember what the new car that Milton Hershey bought you was and how much that cost?

MR. GROOMS:

No -- I think it was $150, I believe -- something like that, because that sort of sticks in my mind, but I don't remember exactly -- but I can remember hearing him say, "You just go ahead and get another one, or tell me how much it is." So I got another '36 Ford.

INTERVIEWER:

Same car?

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum -- yeah. Yeah, he was a great guy.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. After you left Greensburg, where did you go? Where were you transferred to?

MR. GROOMS:

I knew you were going to ask me that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Let's see -- I don't know. I can't remember.

INTERVIEWER:

That's fine.

MR. GROOMS:

I can't remember.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember what you did though at the next Troop? Was it more patrol?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I was -- I was a Trooper there -- the same thing.

INTERVIEWER:

Same thing...

MR. GROOMS:

I did the same thing at every Troop. See, I transferred two or three times there, then when I started getting the promotions -- because, I know I was at Troop "H" whenever I was a Sergeant, because I remember I was in there -- told you about -- I stopped smoking.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

So, I was the Sergeant there, so I know -- but I've -- boy, I've -- I was probably in two-thirds of the Troops at some time or other, as a Trooper. I was a Lieutenant in five Troops I believe. And I was a Captain -- as a Troop Commander in four or five. And then I was Major the last -- about eight years, and I was a Troop Commander at headquarters as Director of Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Now, what did it take for you to get all of these promotions? How did you go about getting a promotion?

MR. GROOMS:

They just called in an told me -- that's all. I never asked anybody for anything.

INTERVIEWER:

Really?

MR. GROOMS:

No -- no, they'd just decide. Just like whenever I promoted people -- you know, I promoted people in my Troop -- you know, I'd call them in and tell them.

INTERVIEWER:

Huh.

MR. GROOMS:

I said, "I like the job you're doing here, and if you keep it up" -- "And I'm going to recommend you for promotion." And then when you recommended him for a promotion, well he -- they'd get it. Troop Commanders could do -- and then they bureau directors and the Commissioner decides on them -- promoting them from Lieutenant up -- you know. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So there was no test of any kind involved?

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

No tests of any kind involved?

MR. GROOMS:

No. No -- see you were supposed to be able to do the job, and whoever recommended you should know that. And that's where I was -- and I know there was times -- and some people caught a little -- got a little bit of calling down from me in recommending somebody for a promotion.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, yeah -- I mean don't you think that there would be cases where it would turn into somewhat of popularity contest, and

someone would be promoted just because they were a buddy of someone else?

MR. GROOMS:

No -- but see we'd try to stay away from that. And I always judged them on -- because you see, you keep a record on everybody, and I always went over their record. Just like these two here that were getting sick every Friday. Now you know if I wasn't watching after them, I wouldn't know that they were doing that. And it's the same thing -- so when I have one that's showing -- go out here -- and for instance, the number of arrests they make out there. We don't charge them with any number, but if I have a guy that makes 60 or 70 arrests a month, and he gives 12 or 15 of them to somebody else, well he's a pretty good man -- he's working. He's not out there just to do it for himself, and -- I can remember when I was Trooper, I would often -- when I was out there -- in fact, they -- when I first went out they called me swinging doors. Because every time you'd see me I'd be out of the car writing somebody up -- you know. But when I was out there, they knew I was there -- you know, and I never made any shady arrests -- I mean, they were -- had to be what they were or they weren't. And -- but then I'd -- if I'd -- I mean, sometimes I'd have 70 or 80 for a month, and a couple of the guys wouldn't

have -- maybe four or five, I'd give them a half a dozen, or a dozen -- yeah. Sure. Have I confused you enough now?

INTERVIEWER:

No. Now...

MR. GROOMS:

It's 11:30.

INTERVIEWER:

...at the time -- when you first got to the State Police, Lynn Adams was the Commissioner.

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, he was.

INTERVIEWER:

And had mentioned that he came to your graduation ceremony. Did you ever have a chance to meet him personally in that first couple of years that you were a Trooper?

MR. GROOMS:

Yes. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

And what did you think about him?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I thought he did a good job -- you know, I think he -- Lynn G. Adams was a good Commissioner -- yeah. Yes, he was. He was in there a good while.

INTERVIEWER:

A few years.

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

A few years -- it was '39 to '43.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

What did he impress on you as a person?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, if you had any reason to -- well, I just could never -- heard anything or saw anything that made me -- show other than he was a good Commissioner.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Let me put it that way.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

See, I wasn't close to -- and what year was he Commissioner?

INTERVIEWER:

1939 to 1943.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, see he was Commissioner when I came on.

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- exactly.

MR. GROOMS:

And I wouldn't have a close relationship with him.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

But I -- you'd hear about him -- you know, because the guys do talk about them. And I never heard anybody say anything about Lynn G. Adams, except that he was a good Commissioner.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Were there ever any Commissioners that you felt you did have a close relationship with?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I'd rather not make any comment about that.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Sure, that's fine.

MR. GROOMS:

Okay. I didn't -- say anything seriously against anybody, but there's -- I know some that I thought were much better than others whenever -- well, I'm looking at the results -- when we were asking for something, or if something is coming through the organization, and he makes the decision. But I will not mention any names in that respect.

INTERVIEWER:

Sure. That's fine. Um-hum. In respect to that, the Commissioners would basically -- depending on who the Governor was, that would somewhat determine who the Commissioner of the State Police...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, there's no doubt about it.

INTERVIEWER:

...of course. So, therefore there was some political influence over what would happen within the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

You're exactly right.

INTERVIEWER:

And...

MR. GROOMS:

And we didn't like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. And I don't think that many people like that -- even the public, I think that they realize that somewhat.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And there was a quote here that said, "In various counties across the State, there are complaints that the PSP is too often used as an arm of the party in power -- the political party in power, intimidating men and women in the liquor business."

Now, can you enlighten...

MR. GROOMS:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

...me on that quote at all?

MR. GROOMS:

I can't enlighten you on that at all.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. This was from the -- I think from the '50's....

MR. GROOMS:

The what?

INTERVIEWER:

...so I was wondering about -- from the '50's.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh. I'm not saying it didn't happen.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But -- it was some reason for it probably, but I'm not -- I couldn't comment on it. But I know that politicians will affect the State Police, and influence it -- State Police, for whatever they want if they can.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

I know that. And...

INTERVIEWER:

All right. Welcome.

MR. GROOMS:

Thank you.

INTERVIEWER:

My name is Shelly Becker, and I'm here with retired Major William Grooms. We're here at the State Police Academy, in Hershey, PA, with the Oral History Project, and this is tape three

in our series. Do I have your permission, Mr. Grooms, to tape this interview session with you today?

MR. GROOMS:

Sure.

INTERVIEWER:

All right, wonderful. Thank you for...

MR. GROOMS:

Anything for the State Police.

INTERVIEWER:

All right -- good.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, I think we're going to sort of pick up where we left off last time. We were talking about your first years as a Trooper with the State Police. You started out in Greensburg, and you continued through the ranks fairly quickly, and you moved to several different Troops. And you talk a little bit about the first few Troops that you worked at in those first years on the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I know I went out to -- when I left the Academy, I went to Greensburg, that's my -- we called them a home Troop -- because I lived out near Greensburg -- only 35 miles from there my home was. And I can remember being there and working the highways, and every so often, running into somebody that you knew -- you know, in your hometown so to speak. But it was very interesting -- it took a while to get used to the fact that you were out there to -- you know, to keep an eye on people, and see if they're violating the law, and to do something about it -- you know, but I got over that pretty quick. Then I -- I was in -- Greensburg was the headquarters -- and then I worked in the Ebensburg Station, and Indiana, and I was up in Erie for a little while. Let's see there's -- I worked about four or five substations in that Troop, and then when they moved me from there to another Troop I worked in a lot of different substations. I just can't remember which all of them they were, but it was quite a few of them. Of course, with that many -- somebody -- period of time -- you know, would be. Then eventually I came back to Troop Commander at five of those Troops. I was Troop Commander at my home Troop, Greensburg, and that was very interesting I thought -- you know, that it was -- a lot of the men

were still there -- and were there whenever I came on the job, and -- but, it just all worked out real well. I really enjoyed myself there in the Greensburg Troop. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you see any changes from the time you were first at the Greensburg Troop, to the time that you second at the Greensburg Troop as the Commander there?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh yeah, there's changes -- there's always changes. I mean, there's just so many things had changed -- the equipment changed, and the -- you know, the -- of course even the cars -- we didn't even have radios in the cars when we first came on. We had flag stops -- they'd put a little red flag on top of the gas pump -- you know, and of course now by the time I went to Greensburg as a Troop Commander though, that had changed. And it was -- we had radios, and they weren't the best radios, but they worked most of the time -- you could get headquarters on them. But, it does change -- the highways change -- four lanes became poplar -- you know, when I first came on four lanes were rare. There were no interstates, turnpike -- in 1936 they started building the turnpike, and they built from Irwin to New Stanton I believe it was -- just a short distance there, and then they kept

adding on to it, until finally it came to Harrisburg, and then they started to go north on it to -- and so it's what it is today. But -- and of course the amount of cars -- that's the one thing I notice so much. When I first went out there, I can remember that we lived at the bottom of a hill in McClellandtown, and I -- the cars would turn around sometimes and back up the hill, and I found the reasoning for that was they didn't have fuel pumps on them, and they had the gas tanks that were up under the windshield. And they had to back up so that the gas tank would be above the motor -- and then they would back up there, and they'd have to get up there and turn around and go on their way -- yeah. And then of course they were all men -- I mean, girls didn't come on until -- oh my, later -- much later there. I've -- in fact, I was Troop Commander at Troop "H" when I got -- I believe I got seven girls out of the first class. Um-hum -- and I was glad to see them bring them on, because they were a big asset -- they would help us an awful lot in investigating, because I did criminal work most of my time, and -- you'd use that -- and they -- I was very pleased to see that. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Let's talk about that a little bit more. The first woman to apply to become a State Trooper, applied in 1971...

MR. GROOMS:

Was that when it was -- '71? Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. And her name was Romaine Engle (phonetic).

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Now I have a photograph here...

MR. GROOMS:

I know her.

INTERVIEWER:

...that I clipped from the Berwick Newspaper.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

In Berwick, PA, and it's of you trying a hat -- giving a hat to Ms. Engle. Here's that clip if you want to take a look at that.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Tell me about that experience for you.

MR. GROOMS:

Say what?

INTERVIEWER:

Tell me about that.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yes -- that's true. I remember her all right. In fact, after I retired -- after that -- and I'd agreed to do the security work for the Lady Keystone Open -- you know, they did it in Hershey, and I lived there and I agreed to do it one year -- in fact, I did it ten years. Anyhow -- but they wanted -- and this young lady here -- I wanted a Trooper to help out at the golf course, because there was a lot of money -- you know, there was a lot of money out there on the golf course. And she worked with me about three years on that. But I remember her getting -- trying on her hat, and she was real proud of that hat, and -- oh boy, I forgot about that -- yes, sir. Um-hum. I don't know what all this is around here -- Romaine Engle -- she's 26. She was a registered nurse from Hummelstown -- 5'7", and weighed 125 pounds. I can remember when I -- to show you the difference when I first came on, you could be -- you had to be five feet, eight -- not less then -- or not more than six, two, and your weight had to be within two pounds of your -- proportion to your height, or you were rejected -- two pounds either way. Yeah. But, oh yeah, that's very

interesting. I remember the girls. In fact, it was seven -- I believe there were seven -- I got seven out of that class there. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

What did you think of the media and the attention surrounding the event of women becoming Pennsylvania State Police Troopers?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, the newspapers generated -- most of them were favorable -- most of the comments and so on, but there are -- there were some people - and there were -- I know some of the men that were on the job objected to women coming on. But I think -- in fact, I was at Troops before that as a Troop, and I used to tell the fellows, I want you to look -- if you know any young women out there that are 21 years old or more, that we'd like to have some, and that we're going to be taking them one of these days. And I knew that we -- because the Commissioner talked about it -- I knew that it was going to be happening. I did the same thing whenever we started to decide we were going to take minorities -- you know, I told them -- I said, "We're going to have minorities, and they'll be a big asset to us -- they'd be -- they'll help us out." Because especially in criminal work -- you know, you can use all

kind of people. And it -- they did that, and we got a lot of good people right in the beginning there in both cases. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Speaking of the Commissioner, it was Commissioner Urella at the time, right -- correct?

MR. GROOMS:

Who was that?

INTERVIEWER:

Commissioner Urella?

MR. GROOMS:

What time -- what time?

INTERVIEWER:

When they were bringing women onto the job.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I believe he was Commissioner then. Um-hum -- yeah. Um-hum -- Urella -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

I'd like to read you a statement from him, and see what you think about that statement, and see if you have any comments...

MR. GROOMS:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

...pertaining to it. He said, "Pennsylvania was the fourth State in the United States to adopt women."

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So it was fairly new to the Country...

MR. GROOMS:

Sure was.

INTERVIEWER:

...to have women be State Policemen.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

"Women have long since proven that they are capable of doing nearly every job that a man can do." "In police work, there are several areas in which women can perform even better than men."

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

"Therefore, we have decided to utilize this talent within the organization." Now that first statement, "That women are

capable of doing nearly every job," and then the second statement, "That in some instances they can perform even better," can you comment on that?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Well, if you have a rowdy and rough crowd, for instance like a strike or something like that, we would prefer to take the men, because -- especially when the women were new on the job, and we didn't like to take real young Troopers on the -- to a situation like that, and I would say that -- but overall, women have been very beneficial to the State Police. I mean -- and like I said, in investigative work they're great -- I mean, because -- you'd fit right in, and there was -- there were a certain class of people that didn't realize that women -- a woman might be a State Police woman -- you know, and -- yeah. Oh, I agree with him 100 percent that -- I agreed we should have them. Um-hum. And what else did you mention?

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, just -- I'm wondering further about some instances that you know of -- perhaps some specific examples where a woman went undercover and was successful. Can you remember...

MR. GROOMS:

I can't recall any particular situation you understand. But I do know that they did -- not only just in the Troops that I was in, but at the other Troops -- because Troop Commanders always exchanged ideas about things -- you know, investigations, and things that happened. And they were -- they turned out to be very beneficial in a lot of the situations -- for instance, if -- I'd send them in as an undercover person, or have them take a room in a motel or something and -- just to get to -- to see who's going to be the next door neighbor, or see something -- you know, that kind of thing. Because it was for a long time -- it was very much easier for a woman to do this, and to get the information for us, then it was for a man. That's just one example of it, but there's so many situations you could use them. Um-hum. Okay...

INTERVIEWER:

So those seven women that you had under you...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...when you were at Troop "H", correct?

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

What specifically did they do when you worked there?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, when they came there, I talked with them -- in fact, I talked with them individually for quite some time, by themselves -- they'd stare at me in this -- "Now you talk -- what you want to talk about, and I'll tell you what I want to talk about," and I can tell you that I told them in there, I said, "Now you've taken on what has always been a man's job, and there'll be times when you'll be expected to do a man's work" -- you know, "And if you ever feel that you can't handle it, you just let us know and we'll do something about it for you." I'd probably recommend a leave, because we didn't favor anybody as far as getting certain jobs done. And I also mentioned to them as individuals -- I think I mentioned it to all of them, that we never had women on the job before -- not as Troopers, and that I want you to look at all those Troopers out there as your brothers, and I'll have them to look at you as you're their sister. I think they knew what I was getting at, and that it was an honorable job, and of course I had them repeat the Call of Honor. I had them do that -- oh, I think about every two weeks. And not only the girls, but the new Troopers --

I had them repeat that to make sure they understood what we're expecting of them, and how it should be done. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And was there ever a time when a woman came to you and said that she was having difficulties? Whether it be with the job, or with another Trooper?

MR. GROOMS:

I know that come to my attention some way or other, but I don't remember of a particular Trooper -- girl Trooper telling me that. But I remember I discussed it with that Troop Commander and told him how I would've handled it. I remember -- I think somebody got dismissed -- somebody lost their job over that -- that one there. Because especially after we'd talk to them, and told them about this -- you know, and then -- but, I don't know, they -- there were so many things that came along over the years, I just can't place them all.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But whenever you mentioned something like that, I can remember an incident where another Troop Commander approached me about this, and said, "What do think -- how do

you think we should handle this" -- he was a young, new Troop Commander, and -- but somebody got dismissed, or they left -- they were going to court marshal him, and they left.

INTERVIEWER:

So it was a case of a male Trooper...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...interacting in an inappropriate way with a woman?

MR. GROOMS:

He was pushing himself on her.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

You know, and she felt that -- and she was right, he had no right to do this, and -- but yeah, I can -- but I just can't put that all together -- how that was, but I remember him calling me about it, and we met on it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. But that'd be the only way to handle it. Now, you want to be sure that everybody's telling you the truth -- you

know, you don't want somebody to be making up a story, and I -- when I'd get those various kinds of complaints and so on, I'd usually question them for a while to find out if what they're saying is really the facts. You're never entirely sure, but you can come up with a pretty good thought of it. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So you would do your own internal investigation, so to speak?

MR. GROOMS:

Pardon?

INTERVIEWER:

You would do your own in...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

...those situations?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes -- sure. Um-hum. Yeah -- if you're a Troop -- if it's in your Troop, sure you do that. That's the first think you do -- you know, you work it out. Um-hum. Fortunately, I didn't have very much of that -- of that particular thing there in my Troop. I don't remember of any particular one in any Troop that I was -- especially in "A" Troop -- "H" Troop, when I had the seven girls

there. I can't remember of anyone in my group that was involved there -- the only one I can recall is where this young Captain -- from another Troop called me about a situation. And I said that's precisely what we -- tell we're not going to have. And I remember he would -- he quit. They were either going to court marshal him -- then I eventually ended up having to do all the court marshals as Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation that was my job. I remember -- I won't talk about that, but it was -- had several court marshals that you didn't think you'd ever have. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Well let's stay on the topic of women for a few more minutes.

MR. GROOMS:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

There were 15 women that applied to go into the Academy, that were starting the Academy, and 14 that eventually graduated.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now seven of those women -- that's half of the women that graduated from the first class went to your Troop -- Troop "H". Why do you think the State Police sent half of the women that graduated from that class together to one Troop?

MR. GROOMS:

I don't know -- because it was -- I think they all lived around Harrisburg for one thing. We used -- I know they used to try to send you to your home Troop whenever you graduated from the Academy if you wanted to go there.

INTERVIEWER:

Hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I'd like -- you know they said, "Would you like to go to Greensburg." I said, "Yeah, I live 30 miles from there, my family's there, my mom and dad are there." And -- but I don't know why I got that many, but I -- as I remember that's what I got, seven -- I'm sure it was. I thought that there was more than that in that class -- 15, huh?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, you have record of...

INTERVIEWER:

It was 14 women that graduated...

MR. GROOMS:

Does the record show that I got seven of them there?

INTERVIEWER:

That I'm not actually sure of.

MR. GROOMS:

Okay. I remember when they all came there, because I talked to them individually.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And that girl there -- were I'm trying her hat on, she definitely was one of them. In fact, I called her Troop Commander, and asked him if I could have her to help me at the LKO. And she did -- she walked through there. And we never lost any money -- because there was a lot of money in there -- you know, in that Ladies Keystone Open, and -- along the way. Um-hum. Yeah -- I don't know why I got that many, or -- I'm sure that's how many I got though.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, do you think that it might have had something to do with giving the women a stronger sense of security by keeping them together?

MR. GROOMS:

Well that could be. I never talked to the Commissioner -- why they were distributing them -- I didn't know how they distributed them -- where all they were. But I know there were some at other Troops, because that younger -- other Troop Commander -- had been a Troop Commander much less time -- called me about this situation here and...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...I advised him, and told he could be court marshaled if he didn't leave, and he quit -- he left. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, you mentioned that this other Troop Commander called you for advise. What would prompt him to call you over some other Troop Commander?

MR. GROOMS:

Well I don't know. I was in Harrisburg here -- of course, and he knew that -- I just -- see that wasn't my first Troop. I'd been in

about -- I think I was in five or six -- six Troops as a Troop Commander, and that was probably about my third or fourth one there. I was at Harrisburg, and then I was at Lancaster, and local here, and -- let's see, Greensburg, Hollidaysburg -- yeah, I've got all those written down someplace, but he probably figured I had been a Troop Commander for a good while, and that's why he called me -- and I knew him too. I remember him when he was going through school. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

You mentioned to me earlier that you felt like you knew a lot of the people that were on the job, because you had been so many places.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, out of all of those people that you felt like you came in contact with, how many would you say that you came actually close with, or became friends with?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, you didn't get too close to the people that were working for you, like you would a Troop Commander. You'd get -- might get a little bit closer to him -- you know, because I never believe in

showing any partiality -- you know, I wanted every Trooper to take and hold his load -- or her load, and do their share -- I wanted everybody to do their share. And it made it much easier for me if they did that. And that was my approach to them.

INTERVIEWER:

So do you feel like you kept your friends among the ranks?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Oh yes, I kept friends -- I made a lot of friends during that period of time -- you know, but I just -- I tried to treat everybody the same -- you know, and if I ever disciplined anybody -- or anything, they knew why they were being disciplined, and they should've been disciplined. I think they felt that way too. But of course I didn't have too many of those. But if it was necessary, I did it.

INTERVIEWER:

So out of all of these different stations, and substations, and headquarters, and all these places that you worked, do you think that you could pick out one or two that were your favorite? Or your least favorite for that matter?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I think I'd have to say Greensburg was my favorite, because that was my home Troop. And it just made me feel real

good that there were men there that were still Troopers that were -- had 10, 12 years on me, and that never -- seem to show any resentment toward me for becoming their -- and I of course treated them just like everybody else, and it just -- I think maybe that was probably my favorite Troop. And I won't say which one was my least favorite, but I don't think there was one -- maybe. Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

I spoke to one of your colleagues who we're also doing -- taking and oral history with, Mr. Thomas Hannus (phonetic).

MR. GROOMS:

Who?

INTERVIEWER:

Tom Hannus.

MR. GROOMS:

Tom Hanna (phonetic)?

INTERVIEWER:

Hannus -- um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I should remember him.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, when I spoke with him, he said that you two lived together in Greensburg when you came there as a Captain -- as Troop Commander. You lived in the same house together, and he...

MR. GROOMS:

What's his name?

INTERVIEWER:

His name is Tom Hannus.

MR. GROOMS:

Hanna?

INTERVIEWER:

Hannus -- um-hum. But in any case, he asked me to ask you to tell a story about someone named Stieny -- Stienier (phonetic).

MR. GROOMS:

Stienier.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember him?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh yeah, that name Stienmier -- I remember him -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you tell me about that person?

MR. GROOMS:

He was -- I don't know -- I can't recall what he's talking about there. But I remember Stienmier all right. I tell you -- I remember a lot, but -- I told you I just can't remember everything.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Stienmier -- oh, when you mentioned that name that come to me immediately.

INTERVIEWER:

He said that he was a stocky weight lifter. That was how he described him.

MR. GROOMS:

He what?

INTERVIEWER:

He described him as a stocky weight lifter.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Does that...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, he was a husky guy.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you have any particular story about him?

MR. GROOMS:

No, I don’t recall.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I think that -- I think of that -- but I don't recall anything. But the name Stienmier sure registers with me.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

There's something there, but I can't remember what it was.

INTERVIEWER:

Well that's okay -- if it comes to you later...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I will.

INTERVIEWER:

...just...

MR. GROOMS:

I'll tell you.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Okay. There was also something that came up in the conversation that I had with Mr. Hannus.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

We were talking a little bit about how -- when you're promoted, that almost always means a transfer, correct?

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, you mentioned earlier that you had lived in 16 different homes over your career.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, we owned 16 homes, and over the career...

INTERVIEWER:

Right. And that's a lot of moving, and changing of places, and changing of lifestyle.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I always took my family with me when I moved.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

I never left them behind, and I never rented.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I bought -- in fact, I bought, sold, and bought another house in 90 days one time over in Butler.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep, I went to Butler as a Troop Commander. Yeah -- I used to drive by -- if I'd see a house -- I went by curb appeal. If it looked good -- it looked good to me, I thought, well I wouldn't have any trouble -- because I figured I'd have to be selling it, because I figured I'd get another transfer. And I never objected to the Commissioner whenever he decided he was going to transfer me. If they wanted to transfer me, they could transfer me -- I'd go. Yeah. That's like the guys used to -- every once in a while, you'd have a Trooper -- of men who'd always get sick on Friday -- you know, and I solved that easy enough, I just called them in one at a time, and told them -- I said, "I'd like to know how you

feel," and I said, "There's something that's making you sick here, you're taking an awful lot of sick leave here," and I said, "Maybe it's the air here, you probably should be maybe up around Lake Erie, or someplace like that" -- you know, and they got the message, and they weren't sick Friday anymore. But, I think -- that's another thing too -- many times before I'd jump into discipline somebody, I'd think about how would be the best way to approach this -- you know, because you have to think a little bit about it. And it usually worked out pretty good for me -- these fellows did -- and I don't think they were mad at me, but they didn't take off on Friday anymore. And I could've told them if you take off another Friday I'm going to have you transferred -- you know, that' okay, but if there's a better way to do it -- as long as it works, huh?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

It's an honorable way I think. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

It's funny that you bring up that story, because in that instance, a transfer is seen as a negative, disciplinary action.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But you yourself seem to enjoy being transferred, and enjoy moving to all of these different places, and meeting all these different people.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, that's an interesting dynamic, in that you very much enjoyed to move and transfer at that time.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- well I was assigned -- I was transferred to the Academy here, as a Lieutenant for a while -- I guess maybe about six months -- maybe two classes. And I taught criminal code here at the Academy.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

So -- but I figure if the Commissioner called me in, and told me this is where he wanted me to go, I'm not going to argue with him. I'm going to go -- and I went. And the only thing is, I feel that I probably did neglect my children some, and -- Billy and

Janet (phonetic), but I tried to do my job, and it sort of come first. And my wife went along with me to -- of course we were married 58 years, so -- it worked out. Um-hum. Boy, I can sit here and I can think about -- reminisce about things -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Tell me a little bit more about how all of the moving and transfers affected your family life?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I should've probably spent more time with the kids -- you know, help them with their homework and so on -- but their mother did, she -- Irene -- she was really a stickler over everything -- you know, and -- but when I had the time though -- when I could I would spend as much time as I could with them. And we made trips -- we went to California, and we went to Alaska, and we went to the shore -- we used to go down to the shore, and we went to Florida -- oh my, probably 20, 30 times, and we'd always go as a family -- well, I'd take my vacation -- you know, we always got two weeks vacation, and -- yeah. But there were -- sometimes you worked late at night -- you know, but I -- but it wouldn't be uncommon to get a call, especially when I was in my last years, when I was the Director of the

Bureau of Criminal Investigation, they'd call me about something that happened -- if somebody got hurt, or somebody got shot, or if there was crime. Anything in crime and punishment they called my office, and -- but I devoted my time to those things, and I would go immediately on them, and work them, and -- I think I could've spent some more time with my kids, but my kids both turned out to be pretty good.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And my son, he's been a big help to me since Irene passed away. And my daughter -- even though she has a big job up in New York, and -- but she came home every weekend. In fact, she came down and cooked a turkey for me for Christmas. Yeah -- let's see -- and Bill's 50, and she -- and Janet is 45, and they both have -- isn't it funny, I had two children, and they both have two children.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I'll tell you we to -- see, we were married eight years before Billy was born -- the first one. But, my wife had trouble -- she could not deliver, and they did cesareans back then, but -- they're different than what they do now -- and he said to me -- he said, "Bill, I don't recommend that you and your wife have any more children." "I don't know if she could handle it again" -- you know, and so we talked it over, and we decided we wouldn't, so we didn't. But it's a coincidence, Bill only has two, and Janet only has two. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

How about just logistically, with moving so many times, did the State Police aid you in any way in all of this moving -- either with costs, or helping you to get settled in a new community?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I -- there's something I learned from moving like that -- you know, you hear people say, "Boy that's a terrible, rotten neighborhood over there" -- you know, but I have found out that if it's a rotten neighborhood, you're making it a rotten neighborhood. Because if you just treat your neighbors right -- like they should -- I never -- now I ran into some people that I

didn't care to be around anymore occasionally -- one here or there, but overall in all those moves that we did -- and boy, where we are now is great. Man, I'll tell you these people bring in food in there for me -- I can't begin to eat it all. And if -- they call me, and they've just -- it's really a nice neighborhood there in Cocoa Towns (phonetic). Of course, I sold all those to them too, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...i knew them, but -- they're just nice people.

INTERVIEWER:

How about as far as the State Police though, how did the State Police help you in making all of these moves? Or did they?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I don't know -- it probably didn't hurt me any, because things turned out real good -- like my daughter and my son, they -- their both -- we didn't have no trouble with either of them -- we never did have any. And however my -- my daughter's gotten a divorce here, but that happens sometimes. But Bill has been married a long time now. He and Cathy get along fine -- in fact, she was at my house when I left today, because the girls were

coming into clean. I have four women to come in and clean the house every -- once a month. So -- I can do it, but I don't want to show off.

INTERVIEWER:

Well how about with moving expenses? Did the State Police give you anything for moving expenses?

MR. GROOMS:

Early on they didn't, but in later years they did.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay -- all right.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Yeah -- I'd say in the first three or four moves I moved myself. I just borrowed a truck someplace and move myself. But then later on the State moved me.

INTERVIEWER:

Was it a substantial amount?

MR. GROOMS:

Hum?

INTERVIEWER:

Was it a substantial amount of money that they gave you?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, it wasn't very much, it -- back then it didn't cost too much to move your furniture -- you know. And we didn't have quite as much as we have now -- different kinds of furniture. But in the early years, I remember I moved myself, and the later years, they made -- paid for my moving. I guess the Commissioner's attitude was if I'm transferring him to go someplace to do a job for me, we can pay for his moving. That was and easy approach to it -- I believe that was it. And they did that. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

I'd like to have you take a look at a couple of other pictures that I've brought with me -- that I actually borrowed from you, but I'd like you to describe them if you could, and tell me what's going on in this photograph here.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, that's a cadet class.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yeah, that's -- I believe that's the Captain -- Rona (phonetic) -- Rona and myself.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, that was a cadet class -- did I mark on the back what year it was?

INTERVIEWER:

Mm-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I should have -- I may have let -- but that would be -- let's see here, I believe I was a Lieutenant then and Rona was a Captain. He's deceased now. Yep, that's what it was. That's a pretty big class.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But I should've put the year on there, but I didn't.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, what was your role at the Academy...

MR. GROOMS:

I'd -- shows that I have 20 years there -- I've got two stars, so I had 20 years on the job at least. What'd you say?

INTERVIEWER:

I'm sorry to interrupt you, but -- what was your role as the Lieutenant at the Academy? What did you do?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I taught the criminal law class.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- and then I helped with the handling of the cadets -- you know, the men too. But my job there at that time was -- they moved me there to teach criminal law and procedure -- and since I'm there -- why, I'd help with the class.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Cadets. Um-hum. We had a lot of horses back then too. I think we had 82, or something like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. I remember I had my old -- I had a 1936 Ford whenever I came to the Academy, when I came in as a cadet. And I don't know if I told you or not, but Mr. Hershey used to come down, and the horses ran off and the wagon -- that upset my old car. Mr. Hershey -- the Major called him on the phone, he got on the

phone with me -- he said, "You get a new one, or you have it -- replace it, and the price -- you tell me how much it is," and he replaced it. Yeah -- that's just the type of a guy he was. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

When you were teaching at the Academy, did you feel like you noticed much of a difference between the cadets when you were in the training school, and the cadets that you were teaching at the training school?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, yeah there was some difference there. They had bigger class then -- yeah, that was a pretty big class there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

They had bigger classes then, and they weren't as rough on them as far as the physical training -- you know, the jujitsu -- I don't -- thought they were even using jujitsu then. Now they call it karate, but back then it was a little rougher on us -- jujitsu. And -- but one of the biggest differences I was saw was the fact that the classes were so much bigger. And the guys seemed to be

pretty sharp too -- you know. What I should've done -- make notes on the way through -- but, you don't think of that till you're half way -- or more than half way through your life, and then you think about all the things -- um-hum. But boy, I'll tell you they sure changed this building. It's nice now, you got -- it was nice before -- but when I came in, where that old building -- three floor building down there, and they -- and I remember hanging out those windows, and washing those windows on the third floor. Yeah. Yeah -- when I came up here to the Academy, this Academy wasn't very old then.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

I remember when they built it.

INTERVIEWER:

1960.

MR. GROOMS:

Hum?

INTERVIEWER:

1960.

MR. GROOMS:

'60?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, see I came in -- in '41, so it was 19 years -- yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, from the '40's to the '70's, you saw the State Police grow in number, because as you said, when you were teaching there, the number of cadets was just much larger than when you graduated, right?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel that the number of State Policemen on the job kept up with the growing population in Pennsylvania?

MR. GROOMS:

Hum, I don't know. The population kept growing I know -- boy, it's growing now too.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

My goodness, they're building 800 new homes in Hershey right now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And then -- there was a traffic -- you know, when I came there -- when I came into Hershey -- if you saw 20, 30 cars a day that would be a lot. Now you might see 40 backed up waiting to come through. It was just a two lane highway when I came to Hershey, now it's that four lane -- but there's some -- well, and see they've built that dog gone giant stadium there, and there's just so many more people moving in the suburbs, and there's just more traffic that's all. And I think that that's probably -- but I don't think the State Police grew as fast as the population did ever. Still isn't I don't think. But, I don't -- I can't absolutely prove that, but I've -- that's my feelings about it. Um-hum. I

don't know what the population is of Pennsylvania now, but it's increasing.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

It's growing.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. I'd like to talk a little bit about these central years, where you were very active on the job -- '50's, '50's, early '70's, and there were a lot of changes that were going on, not only with the State Police, but in society in general. There was a lot of civil rights movements happening, civil unrest, minorities, women -- a lot of things going on. Can you maybe describe for me your experience as a State Policeman during these tumultuous times?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, there's no doubt there was a period of time there whenever -- it just seemed like the -- that nothing is like it was -- you know, and I'm not saying that that is -- was all bad...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...but there were some things happening that you didn't feel right about then, but then maybe later on you did, because it worked out all right. But I don't think the State Police organization ever was able to keep up in the number -- you know, compared to the increase in the State. And -- but, they seem to be getting the job done pretty much. It -- a lot of their drastic changes have happened since I've -- see, I've been retired -- this is my 28th year, and a lot of the -- many, many of the changes have taken place since then, and -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

How about instances where there were protests, and riots -- perhaps against war, or strikes, and that type of thing, that were going on during the time. How did you, either as a Troop Commander, or a Major -- how did you deal with those types of situations? Or did you have to?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, usually whether it was a strike -- you know, and if we had to go out and there were pickets -- picketing and so on, the Troop there in that area -- and the Troop Commander there -- and if he needed help, he'd call the Commissioner's office and then they would send somebody from the next Troop to go there to help them there. That's the way it was handled then, we

always -- we always handled it that way. But there was very few times when you -- as a Troop Commander you had to call for help from another Troop. And the -- you just -- there were riots -- you know, and picketing, and strikes, that's what -- the thing we had to deal with back then. Um-hum. But you could always get help from the neighboring Troop, or some other Troop. Um-hum. Except the turnpike -- we never bothered the turnpike -- we didn't take people off of there for that kind of work, because they needed what they had there. I don't know how they are on the pike now, I don't see near as many patrol -- I see them, but I don't see as many as there used to be. Of course, the turnpike -- when I had come on, the turnpike was just a little thing. It went from Irwin to New Stanton I think it was -- something like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, getting back to this issue of responding to riots, and strikes, and that type of thing -- I'm not sure if you have heard the story of the One Statie, One Riot...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...that was a riot a long time ago.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- One Statie, One Riot -- and that's the -- five men on foot, or one man on a horse -- for a riot of I think it was -- what 600, or something like that -- five men on foot, and one man on a horse.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, that's a little bit exaggerated, but it did have some affect I think -- you know. But I can tell you right now that the public respected the State Police back there -- when I was a young Trooper. I mean -- you know, because I can remember one situation where I came on the scene of an accident that happened -- you know, and I had just came on to it -- you know, and when I got out, I heard people saying, "It's okay now, the State Police are here" -- you know, I mean that was the attitude they had about us then. But I don't think there's as much of that as there used to be. But you see, when you approach things -- back then when you -- like I say, we used to have a Blackjack -- you know, it was a little thing -- it was rather dangerous, because it was a lead thing in the end there. And if you hit him -- but you wanted to be sure to never hit anybody in the temple with it, because it would probably do them in, but you -- they carried those, and when they knew you had those, you could whack

them on the leg, or in the buttocks, or shoulder, or anyplace, and these -- they really hurt. But I think that that was part of the reasons way back then that you got more respect from people -- because they didn't push you as far. And like I say -- and then they had a respect for you because you'd come on to the scene of something or other, just -- like that time there, and they'd said, "It's okay, here's the State Police -- it's okay now" -- you know, that makes you feel good -- that they took that attitude. I don't know if there's much of that going on now or not -- I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

Well in direct correlation to that, you mentioned that because you had the Blackjack, and they knew that you could use it against them, they had...

MR. GROOMS:

It -- they knew that you would take action if they didn't -- if you didn't...

INTERVIEWER:

...a lot of respect.

MR. GROOMS:

...comply -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Right?

MR. GROOMS:

That's right.

INTERVIEWER:

So then, over time did your ability to use that weapon -- did that decrease, and with that decrease, the respect also went down?

MR. GROOMS:

I don't remember when we stopped using -- but they made us turn them in.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Because they were considered dangerous -- you know, because like I say, if you hit somebody in the temple with it hard, you'd kill them.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And because then we -- of course, we moved to the big, long nightsticks -- the big, old, hickory clubs. And they were especially good when you were on a horse, because you could just break a collar bone with that -- you know, and you break

somebody's collar bone and they don't -- you know, don’t give you any trouble. And they would be -- but the difference of the -- there were different things -- but it's different now. Well, they used to have them -- and you have the radios, and you have the computers, and you everything, and you have -- immediately you can call for somebody, or call for some help, and -- in the early days -- you know, you handled it. If you got into something, it was yours to handle. And the guys usually handled it too. It's like the fellow at the Academy told us, "If you don't want to talk a hell of a beating, you can leave now" -- you know, because your -- we want men -- we don't want any boys, we want men, and -- yeah. But they don't say that to them now, I'm sure. The whole world changed -- and it'll keep changing. Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. And in respect to that -- like we were talking about with this One Statie, One Riot, it took very few Troopers to quell the riot, because...

MR. GROOMS:

That's right.

INTERVIEWER:

...they were so respected, right?

MR. GROOMS:

That's exactly right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And in later years, I've read that -- for instance, there was one riot -- or strike actually, where there was an estimated 30,000 people that came out to strike, and the State Police sent 1,800 to the scene to take care of the strike. Now, do you feel that that difference in one Statie for a riot, versus 1,800 Staties for a riot -- what does that say about the difference in respect for the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Well -- yeah, I think they still have the respect, but it's in a different -- they have a little different attitude about what's happening now. Of course, if you -- it's foolish to think that one State Trooper would handle the riot of a crowd like that -- I mean, it just wouldn't be. But I remember that old saying, "One Trooper" -- and they did that to impress to you -- because you're going to be out there, and they want you -- what's expected of you as a Trooper. That was what that was all about. And they used to say, "Five men on foot, and one man on a horse," and -- "Could take care of a thousand."

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

You know. But, I suppose there was a time maybe when you did -- but it used to be that when you told somebody something as a Trooper, and you told them that you were going to do something, you weren't kidding them. If you didn't follow through -- you did it. And we didn't seem to have any trouble back then. And as -- as far as the courts are concerned and so on. But now then they -- I see more and more there's -- they're accusing Troopers, and various policeman, and sheriff's, and so on, of brutality and so on. And they had one on television there -- it did show them -- three deputies beating a guy -- all of them are beating him, and he's down on the ground, and he's being -- I don't know what they were beating him for, but they had it on television. And the only reason they'd show that on television is to -- you know, that's not good. And -- but way back, you did get more respect than you did in later years. Um-hum. They knew that you meant business.

INTERVIEWER:

And you mentioned that instance of the "police brutality" on television. Do you feel that the media
has had a role in the declining respect...

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, I believe they have. I believe they have. Um-hum. Because they publicize something -- and they figure if it sells papers, it doesn't matter how bad it is, or how honest it is, or what impression it gives the public. If it sells papers, put it in. That seems to be their attitude now about -- most of our papers. I don't see that all 100 percent of them are that way, but most of them are. And they put a lot of stuff in the papers that shouldn't be in the papers. Sometimes it give the people ideas, and it makes a bad -- gives the police a bad name. Or is worse -- involved police brutality as they call it, and so on.

INTERVIEWER:

And did that happen in the '40's and '50's? Would the media publish something like that?

MR. GROOMS:

I don't remember that back in the '40's and '50's -- not like that. Of course, there were a lot of things that weren't in the papers then that are in now...

INTERVIEWER:

I'm Shelly Becker. I'm here with retired Major William Grooms. This is -- I didn't mention on the last tape, but it's February 3, 2005. We here at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy in

Hershey, PA, with the Oral History Project. And this is tape four in our series. All right, when we left for the break, we were talking a little bit about riots, and unrest that was going on...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...you know, right around '50's, '60's, early '70's, and I kind of wondered a little bit about the gear, and the things that the State Police used when they would respond to these situations.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you tell me a little bit about the different types of gear and uniforms that were used for these special duty assignments?

MR. GROOMS:

The gear you say?

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I can remember in the old days, they usually -- you figured on taking a horse or two -- or three or four with you. And of course, when you were on the horse you always carry that big,

long nightstick. And then -- we got so we didn't use the Blackjacks, while -- we had -- we carried a nightstick, and of course you always had handcuffs, and -- if you needed them. And -- but that was the most important thing. And then -- back then too -- you know, we didn't have long pants -- we were the puts (phonetic) and breeches. And then I had a couple pairs of boots -- you wore -- they'd come up almost to my knees. And if you were going out on something like that -- that's a good idea, because they're a little bit more protection for you. And then we had some bullet proof vests too -- you know, on certain situations, we would -- going on something, we'd wear them, because -- and I'm sure they saved some lives along the way, but yeah, we try to be prepared -- say, "Are you well and dully prepared?" Yeah -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

How about any kind of head gear, or a helmet?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I don't remember much head gear -- not for a situation like that. We wore -- always wore the campaign hat.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And -- but for a situation like that, that was a part of the standard uniform, and the -- of course, the boot -- and all. But the boots -- the leggings were a very important back then -- the puttees, and -- because they were leather -- you know, and they would help you -- and like I say, some of us had boots -- I bought two pair of boots and I wore those sometimes in place of those, because they fit right up tight against the leg. And that was about all you'd need.

INTERVIEWER:

And the Department didn't object to you wearing boots rather than puttees?

MR. GROOMS:

No, not -- if they knew what they were. Now -- you know, they -- in fact, I believe maybe I bought them through the Department -- I think that was. Yeah. I still have pair of those to. I believe I bought them through the Department. But now for going to inspections, and so on you always wore the puttees.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And then eventually, we got to a place where we started to wear some long pants, and then we didn't wear much boots and puttees then, just the shoes. And for whatever you went out on, you went out -- but in the old days, there was more need for the puttees and the breeches, and then -- of course it's good for when you're riding a horse too. Yeah -- everybody had to ride. I can remember Husbar, he was our drill Sergeant, and he used to say, "Ride your horse, don't let your horse ride you." Yeah, that was one of the things that caused a lot of the guys to leave too -- because the horses were awnry. They'd bite you, and snip you on the shoulders, and step -- hit you with their feet, or shove you into another horse, and -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. So you were speaking of puttees, and boots, and the change in the uniform -- I think you had mentioned earlier that the puttees actually helped protect your leg when a horse might be running up against you?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. So when they switched to the trouser, then that

protection was gone...

MR. GROOMS:

Well, we didn't ride the horses -- didn't spend as much time on horses then -- used to -- boy, when you first came on -- I mean, the horse was just like a big part of you then. Because you rode everyday, whether you wanted to ride or not, your rode everyday. Of course, then -- and we didn't even have long pants then -- there was nothing but breeches, and puttees, and the high shoes. But it is much easier to ride with the puttees and the breeches on, then it is in long pants, because I've ridden that way too, and it just makes a big difference. Husbar he used to -- if you weren't doing something quite right, he'd bring his horse up and he'd slam into you with his horse -- you know, and -- with the puttees and the breeches on it didn't hurt very much. But it would if you didn't have them on -- you know, that leather's going up against you. Yeah -- "Ride your horse, don't let your horse ride you," I can still hear him saying that. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And how about the change in the image, between the image of the older uniform with the tight breeches, going down into a boot or puttee, versus the long pant that just covered that area completely...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...how do you think that change in image affected the State Police? Or did it?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, in the beginning -- in the beginning -- I mean, it seemed to make a big difference, because everybody visualized a State Trooper with puttees and breeches on -- or breeches and boots -- you know, because several fellows did get boots too -- they wore, and -- but they were a special boot, and I think -- I believe we got them through the State too. But, then after a period of time there they started going with the long pants, and they just like -- it eventually just took over virtually everything, and -- but I think it did something to the image of the State Police. I don't think there's any question about it. I noticed it -- I noticed it. I didn't like it. I'd rather have kept the puttees and breeches, but I wore what they issued.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you attempt to pinpoint that affect, that the -- I mean, you do admit that you think that it changed the image of the State Police, and it affected it, but in what way and how? I mean, after all they're just pants, right?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, that's true -- but you visualize a State Trooper -- when you talk about a State Policeman, and then there are -- and they just -- it was always State Policemen. And you visualized him in his puttees and breeches, and there was something impressive about that -- you know, the way they all dressed alike. And if -- you've seen in the pictures where they're all dressed like that, and whenever you're walking away from people they -- well, I think it would give them a -- just give a different impression to them. The puttees and the breeches were part of the uniform -- part of the State Police. Anyhow -- but then we started moving away from it, and eventually got to the place where they were the exception. I -- that's the way I felt about it. I felt it did make a change in the -- in our standing in this society.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think perhaps it's because just about anyone can wear trousers...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...but not everyone -- or anyone for that matter wears puttees and breeches?

MR. GROOMS:

That's right, only State Police -- about 200 people you ever saw them on.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. If you saw somebody with those on, you figured hey, there's a State Trooper.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep -- State Policeman. Yeah -- and then they used to be -- they referred to you only as a State Policeman, then they started using the name Trooper, and so on -- then of course, whenever the women came in, we had to make -- change it to Trooper,

because -- you know, in the Call of Honor -- you know, "I'm a Pennsylvania State Trooper," but when I took it -- "I'm a Pennsylvania State Policeman, a soldier of the law," and so on. But, I -- that doesn't bother me, I mean, that doesn't -- nothing wrong with that. Like I say, I'm very pleased that we have women on the job, and that -- they've done a lot of good -- they helped a lot.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And getting back to this kind of change in image of the State Police, by moving towards the trouser, it was almost like the State Police blended in more, right? Do you feel like -- that they didn't stand out, or weren't as noticeable anymore?

MR. GROOMS:

You're exactly right.

INTERVIEWER:

And what advantage would that have for the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, if you remember I said to you -- I can remember when I was a young Trooper, and I'd come on the scene of something -- and in one particular place, I came on to an accident that had just happened -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And there were a lot of people out there trying to do things, and of course I jumped in and started to -- helping them myself with the -- to take care of couple bodies -- or people that were hurt, and -- but I can remember when I was getting out my car and they say, "It's okay, here's the State Trooper, it's okay now." That was just their attitude -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I could hear here say that. So -- and of course, I had puttees and breeches on then. But you're right, it did -- it does distinguish you from the average dress. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

However, in looking at the transition of the uniform, from puttees and breeches, to trousers, to the women come on and they wear a skirt, and then the women go to trousers as well, do you think that the men wearing trousers helped make that transition to women coming on and being able to wear the same uniform?

MR. GROOMS:

Well women wear -- they wear the trousers now, don't they?

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- right.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. I don't know how long they been wearing them. They wore -- I know they wore skirts early -- there...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...and that was one of the things that they were pushing for -- you know, they were -- having to wear the same trousers -- same uniform the men are wearing.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And I think that was a good way to go, because after all, if we're talking about a uniform organization, it should be uniform.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And so that's what they're wearing now, I believe. They're still all -- they're not wearing skirts anymore are they? I didn't -- they haven't for some time. Boy, I have to keep checking those things, because they change on me here. Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But could you imagine a woman wearing puttees and breeches?

MR. GROOMS:

I -- not some women -- I couldn't. I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER:

Some...

MR. GROOMS:

I suppose they could, but -- have you ever seen a woman in puttees and breeches?

INTERVIEWER:

No.

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

No, I haven't.

MR. GROOMS:

Women don't even wear boots do they -- those high boots. I don't think -- if I've ever saw a woman in puttees and breeches, or anything like that. But then the long pants -- they're wearing them.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So in that respect, wouldn't that make the trousers a positive thing, because it allowed for that transition for women, in a way?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Well, it -- the trousers didn't distract from the State Police uniform, I don't think.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

But I can tell you that the puttees and breeches were affective and they were -- there was just -- nobody else was wearing them then but us. And they -- you know, but -- I remember when we went to the long pants, and I'll tell you they're much more comfortable. Because, boy, in the summertime it's hot. I remember when we had to wear the old wool blouse all summer long, and my shirts would be so wet when I'd get home at night, they'd go -- well, I'd hang them up in the window and let them dry overnight for the next day, and then my wife would wash them after -- about a couple days, and -- yeah. Boy, I'll tell you, brings back a lot of memories.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you comment anymore about how comfortable, or how uncomfortable the uniform was for you?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, especially in warm weather -- especially in warm weather the long trousers were much more comfortable -- you know. Now, if you were out, and it was real cold, and the wind blowing, and the snow blowing -- you know, the puttees and the breeches worked pretty well. But if it was 90 in the shade, and there was no shade, and then they were hot. They were hot. In fact, when we first started with the, I believe they called them summer pants -- you know, they were lighter. And then they come out with them for everything. Yep. But I don't remember when that was. Did you say that you read someplace, in the '60's?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, probably -- yeah. Well -- yeah. See, I left in '77, so -- I remember when they changed though and we started wearing them -- but they were nice in the summertime.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. You know, they didn't -- we had the summer uniform and winter uniform, and the winter pants were heavy though -- they were warm, but they just -- you just kind of missed -- if you were used to wearing puttees and breeches in the snow -- years now down the road -- and then you didn't have them, it seemed to make a difference. But, you got used to it. They were warm enough -- the breeches -- you were high shoes -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

And I suppose that it was less equipment to take care of, because then you didn't have to shine your puttees and all, right?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I know. You'd have to shine your puttees and the breeches -- you'd have to shine the puttees and the shoes. Of course, you always kept your shoes shined -- I did, and most of our fellows did. Yeah -- it didn't take much to polish the puttees, because if you didn't have any trouble -- now I remember, one of our fellows when he was out, and he was a -- a dog attacked him, and it grabbed his -- his teeth into his puttees, in the back -- you know, and it tore a hole in them. And of course they had to get him a new pair. He shot the dog by the way. Yeah, he said,

"I didn't want him to tear up the puttee." Yeah, he was -- it was -- oh, he was after a guy with a -- he'd run over and hid in a garbage dump -- this guy did, and he -- the Trooper saw him go, and he went around the other side, and came over, and he came up -- from above him -- you know, and this damn big dog came up and grabbed and him - boy, and just tore that thing, and he just shot him at the top of the head, and that was that. Yeah, I don't blame him. I would've done the same thing -- you know, I mean if that was his leg that he got a hold of -- if he'd had a pair of pants on, then the difference it would make, because he just tore -- he tore a whole in that puttee -- that leather, bruised his leg, and -- but he went to the doctor with it, and it didn't bleed, but it bruised him pretty bad. Yeah -- those puttees and breeches were a big -- were an asset to your efficiency in whatever you were dealing with out there -- you know, because -- like a dog, or people -- somebody's grabbing by the leg and so on -- you know, it just -- I know I enjoyed wearing them, but not when it was 90 degrees. They were hot. I noticed commissioned officers don't wear them at all anymore. I don't think anybody wears them anymore, do they? No, I don't think -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

How often did your uniform get inspected by commissioned officers, or...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, well we had inspection once a week -- yeah. And I used to inspect my people once a week when I was out there. And -- because -- you know, your appearance -- well, we always felt as a State Policeman, your appearance was 90 percent of the thing, and one looked -- but most men would take care of their uniforms, and they'd have them clean and -- it was easier to keep their breeches in shape, then it would be a pair of long pants -- the breeches and puttees -- you know, because they would -- easier to keep them in shape than long pants, because you'd have to have a crease in the pants...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...breeches wouldn't. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Speaking of appearances being important, what if for instance, a Trooper started to not take care of himself -- say, getting a little bit overweight, or something like that.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh.

INTERVIEWER:

Would you ever say anything to them about that?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh -- yes, sir, we did. In fact, there were no fat State Policeman, I'll tell you that. Not back in my day. But -- and I used to tell them -- you know, there's something here that -- wrong here, we're feeding you too much, or you're eating too much, or you aren't' exercising enough, and maybe if you were up in -- or down in Philadelphia, or up in Erie, or someplace, you would have a different -- look at it differently -- you know, and they got the message real easy. Just like the guys that always got sick on Friday -- you know, they got the message and never had a minutes problem with them. And -- but, I used to them -- I said, "It isn't so much what you eat, it's how much you eat, is what makes you get so heavy." And there's nothing -- I used to feel there was nothing that looked worse than a policeman with a big belly on them. I just -- I thought, "Hell, he's no policeman, what the hell would he do if he got into trouble" -- you know, because if you get big and heavy like that, you couldn't handle yourself. We never had much trouble with the guys, tell you the truth. Of

course, we made it real clear to them that you keep in shape, and you don't have to be leaving your uniform in and out -- you keep wearing it. Of course, I was fortunate, I never had any problem -- and I've used -- like I just said, I've been -- I weighed 190 when I retired in '77, and I haven't gone two pounds in either direction since then. And I should -- but I do what I think is -- there is no doubt there's a relationship -- but I'm fortunate my mom was that way. But, there's a relationship though with how much you eat, just as much as what you eat -- you know. Boy, I've see people sit and just eat like hogs, and I don't understand that.

INTERVIEWER:

So, I would assume that you wore the same size uniform throughout your whole career? Go ahead and correct me...

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, I did. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And how often did you need to replace your uniform?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, after I was a commissioned officer, I didn't have to do it too often. But I had two, and kept them clean -- I'd take them to the cleaners -- you know, to keep them clean. But when I first come

on, you got used uniforms, you didn't get a new uniform, in case you didn't stay very long, they didn't bother buying you a uniform -- I guess that's what they had in mind. Anyhow, but -- and after a while then you got a new uniform. Went to Quartermaster, and he'd have it there for you -- because he knew everybody's size. Um-hum. I can remember whenever we went to -- went away from the -- left the breeches and the -- puttees and breeches, I thought to myself, "Boy, I don't know if I'm going to like this or not." But, you get used to it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, a lot of memories of those days. Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, in somewhat of a relationship to your uniform -- it would depend a lot of times on the weather, or the season as to what you'd wear.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And then in that regard with the weather, did you feel that maybe an adverse weather -- or any kind of weather that it affected your position in any way, or did it affect any Trooper's position?

MR. GROOMS:

I don't think so. It -- maybe a little bit someplace along the line under certain circumstances. But, we did the change, and it kind of -- it just wasn't overnight, so you wore no pair of breeches anymore -- or puttees and breeches -- they bought the long pants -- you know, and I think they did that in the summertime, whenever they made that change, because they were so much cooler, and it's a lot easier to accept a change -- you know, if it's more comfortable. And then they finally just got to the place where they did away with the puttees and breeches. My goodness, I had puttees and breeches -- I had puttees sitting there in headquarters -- a couple of places where I was that I'd just take them with me -- you know, I didn't wear them, but I just kept them, because it was part of the uniform. Matter of fact, I still have a pair of them at home. I have my whole uniform there -- yep.

INTERVIEWER:

How about with the way that you would do your job -- say, in adverse weather conditions. You would patrol in the same manner that you would if the conditions were excellent?

MR. GROOMS:

Is it what?

INTERVIEWER:

Do you know what I mean -- like, if the weather is especially horrible that day...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...would you patrol in the same exact way that you would if it was nice weather?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah -- well...

INTERVIEWER:

You wouldn't change...

MR. GROOMS:

...let me say to you that we don't -- if it's really, really bad, they may not -- might not go into certain areas.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Only if we'd get a call -- you know, if something happens out there. And that's what happened so many times -- that's why we used to tell them that, "Listen, if it's bad out there, I want you to be seen out there, even if you have to park someplace and watch it for a while." But -- you know, I think the presence of a State Policeman there was -- prevented a lot of accidents in -- when there was adverse conditions -- you know. By the way, I just heard coming up here this morning that three tractors and trailers crashed -- big ones, someplace here in Pennsylvania -- oh, where did they say it was -- not far from here.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

On the interstate.

INTERVIEWER:

On the turnpike.

MR. GROOMS:

Three of them -- 18 wheelers. Boy, I'll tell you -- and they're just driving like crazy, and that's -- that's what I've talked to some of our fellows about -- I think maybe they'd better take a better look at them, and see if they're driving like hell -- I mean, I -- when I'd go to -- used to go to Florida three, four times a year, and those

18 wheelers pass me like I'm sitting still, and I'm doing 65, 70 miles an hour. They just -- but when they wreck one of those -- but they said it was three of them wrecked here, and I didn't know if anybody was killed or not. And then there was a fellow that made a bad pass, and he hit a school bus head on this morning, and he was killed. But you thank -- none of those school kids were -- they were injured a little bit, but none of them serious.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But -- and you don't see as many Troopers on the road as you used to, but I know they have other jobs too, but I think they should have more out on the road -- you know, because there's so much traffic.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And the average driver now drives 70, 75 miles an hour on the road -- you know, you go out there -- I see them. I remember when I first came on the job, and I was a young Trooper, they called me swinging doors. I'd make 70, 80, maybe 90 arrests a

month, and I'd give four, or five, or a half a dozen to somebody that didn't have any or -- because you really didn't have -- not hardly enough -- but I figured I'm out there -- that's what I'm out there for, to enforce the law, and I tell you what, it helps. You take a road where it's patrolled heavy, and there's a lot of arrests, you don't find much violation out there now.

INTERVIEWER:

When you say -- excuse me, when you say that you would give your arrests, or your tickets, or -- to someone else, what exactly does that mean?

MR. GROOMS:

What'd you say?

INTERVIEWER:

What does it mean when you say that you would give your arrests to someone else?

MR. GROOMS:

Another one of the Troopers.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, how is that?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I don't know I just felt -- you know, he wouldn't have many, or for some reason he didn't have, but if he just habitually would

go out there and didn't do anything, I would never give him anymore -- you know, but maybe he was -- maybe he was working out there, and he didn't -- just didn't -- wasn't in an area where -- they're weren't very many -- you know, not as much traffic, and -- you know, it used to be there was certain roads there was hardly any traffic on, and other roads there was a lot of traffic. And then -- when it was old -- the condition of the roads then, if there was a few extra cars it made a problem, because the roads weren't that good then back then. But -- you know, whenever they get the interstates going here, and people driving 65 -- the speed limit's 65, it'll make a big difference.

INTERVIEWER:

But when you say that you would give him those -- do you mean that you would give him credit -- that he would be allowed to take the credit for...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I'd just give him the ticket out of my -- made a little ticket -- you know, I'd just give him the ticket, and say, "Here" -- you know, "You're down this month, I'll help you out a little bit."

INTERVIEWER:

Huh, okay. All right.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And the Department didn't have a problem with that?

MR. GROOMS:

They didn't even know I did it, I don't think.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay. So your ticket slip -- it didn't have your badge number, or your name on it at all, it was just

blank?

MR. GROOMS:

I don't remember, but there wasn't much on it. In fact, I didn't use a ticket slip most of the time when I wrote them up. I just -- you know, didn't give them anything, I'd just tell them, "You're going to get it in the mail." And then I would mail it to them. Unless I was going to take them forthwith. Now, if it was a real flagrant violation, I'd take them right into the Justice of the Peace. And if they couldn't pay it, he'd lock them up for two or three days -- sure. Yep. Or if you have a -- happen that somebody gives you a hard time -- you know, you'd say, "Well, we'll go in and see the Justice of the Peace now," and you go in and see them, and if they wouldn't be in the position to pay, well he'd lock them up for three or four days. That impresses them I'll

tell you. I don't know if they do that now much or not -- I don't know. I think most of it's mailed -- mailed out to them. And of course, the Department does take their licenses in some situations, after so many.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Do you remember the policy the State Police had for people that were driving drunk, or driving after drinking? How did you -- did you have a way to gauge how much they had been drinking?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, well there were different ways to do it -- you know, and you could give them -- and we had a thing later in the years -- they had a way you could give them a test right there...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...to see what percentage of alcohol they had. And if it was up to a certain percentage -- well, you'd charge them with operating while under the influence, and in that case, you'd take them forthwith and put them in jail. Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

How about in the earlier years, though. How did you tell?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, we did that then.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, you had the breathalyzer tests even...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, but I don’t know what we used to -- we used to make them walk -- you know, and then bring his foot, and put their fingers -- you know, and that sort of -- and then if you would testify to that, you'd just make a little note -- he couldn’t touch his fingers together, or if he couldn't put one foot in front of the other and walk -- you know, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...that kind of thing. And we never had any trouble with those -- like in the courts with -- but they would -- they would work.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Now then they have their breathalyzer tests, and all that. And I don't think I ever used a breathalyzer. I'd always just

give them the tests. I don't even think they had them then -- I don't know. I don't remember.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But I never could sympathize with anybody who was operating under the influence. Because boy, they're a real hazard. And the thing is -- and they don't know when they're out there, so it -- I made it very clear to them if they did it again, they'd be in jail again. Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, I think it's safe to say that patrolling and being on patrol, is a fairly dangerous part of being a Trooper.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh sure, you have to be careful out there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

And I think that looking through the records, there's probably -- most cases of Troopers who were killed in the line of duty, were often times killed either while on patrol...

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

...or in some way related to a road...

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

...or a car injury.

MR. GROOMS:

That's exactly right -- yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, if you don't mind me asking, how did you feel during your years on the job, when there was a Trooper killed in the line of duty?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh my goodness, that's -- you know, that's just like one of your own. It's a bad situation -- and if it was a place where they were getting some complaints about what the behavior of drivers were

out there -- especially if he was killed by a car, we'd bolster that up, and we'd put some extra patrols out there. But, I only remember I think maybe about three times that Troopers were killed that were working for me in my Troop. I think it was only about three -- now we've had some injuries.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But to be killed by an accident and -- somebody went to jail for those -- all of them. It's -- but now -- but one of the biggest things I see out there now is the big, heavy trucks -- because if they ever hit a car, the guy -- the people in the car don't have a chance -- whether it's a woman, or her children, or a man and his family -- and then one of those big, old 18 wheelers -- see the one that caught the other and -- the one stopped on the road -- the car didn't get stopped, and the next one coming down just squashed them -- just didn't have a chance. And those things don't just happen -- you know, somebody has to cause them. And if the roads are slippery and icy, then they shouldn't be moving those big vehicles out there, till there -- before there -- are fixed. But now there's so many more of them. In my day, you very -- ever -- seldom ever saw -- in fact there were no 18

wheelers, they were 14's or 16's -- then they got to coming out with the big ones. And I just know some of them now -- and boy, I don't know how long they are, but it used to be they were illegal. You couldn't have a trailer that long -- a semi-trailer. But they've increased the size of them now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, when there was a Trooper killed in the line of duty, and even in particular in your own Troop, how did you react in that situation in regards to the other Troopers in your Troop? Did you get together and talk about the situation with everyone, or was it ever -- was it discussed among you, how you felt about it?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes. Sure was. Just like -- you know, I felt that the State Police was my second family. And that was just the way we approached it. And if it's -- if something happened there to any of our -- even if they were just injured some way or other, I mean -- but we handled it. Like I say, if it was some of our -- that was

State Police family -- you know, that's -- and I think they still do that. Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And how did it make you feel about your own risks that you were taking on the job?

MR. GROOMS:

Your own what?

INTERVIEWER:

The risks that you were taking on the job -- how did that -- when a Trooper was killed in the line of duty, how did that make you reflect on your own position? Did you ever question your duties, or the risks that you were taking, and what might be involved then?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, sure you always questioned the risks you might be taking whenever you'd go out on anything, because you never know for sure what it's going to be like. And you always should have that in mind -- you know, and in fact if it happened -- if you were out on a situation, and it was shortly after that had happened -- boy, it was real -- you were really -- it was really fresh in your mind you would just be cautious.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And we'd talk to the men about it, and be sure that they understood what happened, and how they must be careful when they go. If you can't always accomplish what you want to go out there for -- but you do your best to do it, but don't get yourself killed, or maimed, or crippled. Um-hum. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Now I know with the military, when someone in the military is killed in the line of duty, the family members receive compensation. Do you know if the State Police while you were on the job compensated the family of the Trooper that was killed?

MR. GROOMS:

You know, I don't know. Let me think for a minute. I think the State did compensate the somewhat, but it wouldn't be -- I don't know. I'm just not sure -- I'm not sure about that, because -- see if that would be done, that would have to be done out of headquarters, from the Commissioner's office -- it'd have to come from there, or some legislators -- you know, but I don't know. Frankly, I don't -- I should, but I don't remember it.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And did you ever attend a ceremony that was held for a Trooper that was killed in the line of duty?

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, there've been a couple of them.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And can you describe that ceremony, and what types of special things they did during the ceremony?

MR. GROOMS:

Well -- you know, it was kind of like a military thing.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

And they would -- it wasn't a long, lengthy thing. It was just a short -- as I remember. And they'd have the family there, and other Troopers. But they never -- I remember a couple of them -- there was not a big crowd there. Just about the people that were close to them -- you know. And it was somewhat of a formal

thing, but it was short and brief. But sometimes -- they didn't always have it. Sometimes if they wanted -- you know, if the family wanted it, or if the individual would want it, or didn't want it -- you know. Um-hum. But the important thing was that you -- we talked to the people that he worked with, his State Police family. And we'd tell them -- always spent time with them, and especially if they were close friends. Yeah. Of course, they didn't have very many of those. I don't know how the Commissioner handles them now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Did you have say horses -- like a ceremonial type unit, that horses would come out, you would fire guns, or anything like that?

MR. GROOMS:

We never did -- we never did -- not any of the ones that I was ever involved as the Troop Commander.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

No. I don't know what all their doing now -- the State Police. In the last 28 years I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Okay, you mentioned that for -- I believe -- was it the last eight years that you were on the State Police, you were a Major...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and you were heading the Bureau of Criminal Investigations...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I was the Director of the Bureau of Criminal Investigations.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

That's quite a job -- I mean, that's quite an accomplishment.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, it really was -- like I said, it would not be uncommon to get 125 calls in one day, because if there's almost 4,000 people out there, and there -- everything in crime and punishment was

called into my office. There were 13 girls in the office and 12 phones.

INTERVIEWER:

So what was the reporting system like for these types of criminal investigations that you were doing? Can you describe the procedure for -- that you would go through for a criminal investigation?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, they didn't -- some of the criminal investigations out there they just took care of right there -- you know, but some things were -- very important ones, or -- especially if it involved one of our people. But they would call in, and they would -- one of the girls would take the call, and then they would come to me and tell me what the call was about, and if it was a serious situation, I would call them back -- you know, and they'd try to get an idea as to what -- how we're going to approach this, and then -- and the other one is punishment -- you know, and sometimes -- whenever the fellows commit things that they shouldn't have done, and it was brought to -- it'd come to my attention, and then I'd get a hold of his Commander, and tell him what could the approach to it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. But -- you know, you're busy every day though. Some much more so than others -- yeah. If it was crime and punishment they would call it in there -- crime or punishment. And then of course, I'd pass it all up to the Commissioner to -- you know, where there was going to be a punishment, because he has the final say on that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I was just really collecting the information.

INTERVIEWER:

And the Commissioner at that time...

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

...the Commissioner at that time was Barger, is that correct?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, Barger was there -- yep.

INTERVIEWER:

And what was your relationship with him?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, Barger -- I knew him -- Barger and I -- we worked in the Greensburg Troop together.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, we were both out there. Because Barger had -- let's see he had about two or three years on me, and he would be -- yeah, he was there, and I knew him very well. And I could pick up the phone and call him anytime -- you know, and talk about situations, but he was -- and he did -- he was like me, he did mostly criminal work too while he was on the job. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Before you were appointed to that position, did you aspire to work in that position?

MR. GROOMS:

Did I what?

INTERVIEWER:

Did you aspire to work there? Was that a goal that you had that you reached, or was it just something that happened?

MR. GROOMS:

Not really -- not really. It wasn't -- no, I didn't, because I know that -- at one time I was approached about an interview for Commissioner, and I turned it down. I didn't want to be Commissioner at that time in my life. I had 35 -- you know what I mean -- I was about 35 -- about 20 some years there, and I was just -- I didn't want to take the job, because politics were getting involved then -- you know, there were -- now, I better be careful what I'm saying here, because I don't want to get any politicians down on us here -- more than they are. But, I took the job there when they asked me to do it, and I did it the best I could do while I was there, and then I decided to retire while I was there. And I could've gone for another -- just about a year, because you had to retire then when you were 60, and I was just about 59 whenever I went, so -- but I have never regretted on moment -- anything that I did when I was in the State Police. And I've never regretted that I -- I did it to -- stuck it out at the Academy. That was the tough part, and -- but it's been a great -- it was a great life, and I think it was good to me. And I have my pension now, and -- it was a real, real experience, and I'm glad that it came out the way it did.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. So when you were heading the Bureau of Criminal Investigations...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...were there any ever instances that you needed to go out into the field and work on an investigation, or was everything done from the office at that point?

MR. GROOMS:

No. No, I didn't have to go -- no, I didn't. I assigned a lot of those to Captains and Majors that were in the field, but I didn't have to go out and do them by myself. And I was always satisfied with what -- how they handled them, because then -- you know, of course then I've got to report to the Commissioner all this stuff. Because that was one of the reasons -- the Commissioner's got a tough job. How about Bush -- how would you like to have Bush's job today -- how about you, buddy? How would you like to have Bush's job -- my goodness. Just imagine the decisions he has to make, and to live with it all the time. I wouldn't want that -- but I guess maybe when I was younger I might have considered it, but not now. Yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you feel that some of the decisions that you made in those last years, being I such a high position, did you feel that those decisions were difficult to make?

MR. GROOMS:

No, they weren't that difficult, because I made up my mind early, that if I'm going to accept this job, I'm going to have to assume the responsibility that goes with it, and I'd use my better judgment. That was always the way I looked at it -- you know, what is your better judgment on something. And it worked out pretty well for me I think. Um-hum. Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

Kind of back tracking a little bit, I'm interested to know more about the criminal investigations that you did while you were in the field. And for example, I have a photograph here of you with...

MR. GROOMS:

The Secret Service.

INTERVIEWER:

Exactly.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe the photograph, and tell us about that situation?

MR. GROOMS:

We -- I don't remember exactly who we prosecuted here, but we helped the -- the Secret Service helped us rather. And you can see all those weapons laying there -- we confiscated a pile of them, and I think we accomplished a lot on that one, because imagine what could have been done with all those weapons in the wrong hands -- and they were in the wrong hands. I can't remember all the details, of it, but it was a lengthy investigation. And I liked working with this fellow here, he was a pretty -- in other words, he worked with you -- you know, if we did, we did it together, and -- yeah. I don't remember all the details of it, but as you can see, there's the maps, and all those weapons there that we -- we confiscated them all.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember what year that was by chance?

MR. GROOMS:

No, I don't. I think I was probably a Captain then.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Because when I had become Major I commanded the -- well, no -- let's see, I was a Major for a while, and I went up to the interstate -- no, I think I was probably a Captain at that time. Um-hum. But I don't remember the year.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So here's an example with you working closely with the Secret Service...

MR. GROOMS:

What?

INTERVIEWER:

This is an example of you working closely with the Secret Service.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And I'm sure that you've also worked closely with perhaps the FBI...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER:

...the municipal police, right?

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Tell me a little bit about the relationships that you had with other police organizations.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, we had a good relationship -- I did. And most of our people did -- a real good relationship. And we were always interested in -- I never looked to the idea that I'd have to get some credit for this -- you know, some people do that. I just wanted to help them, or they could help me, to solve what we were working on. That was my approach to every -- whatever it was, that was my approach to it always. And it turned out pretty good for me. Um-hum. When we worked with the local police -- borough police, township, sheriff's office, county detectives, out of state police, Secret Service, FBI, whatever it is. Yeah. I won't say anything more about -- as far as working with other departments, but it worked pretty good for me. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

You mentioned in there though that you weren't personally interested in getting credit, or getting your name in the paper...

MR. GROOMS:

Right.

INTERVIEWER:

...or anything like that, but were there people that you worked with that that was their aim?

MR. GROOMS:

A couple of the other organizations we worked with -- that they would come in and -- even though you're working with them, and -- they'll go around you, and get the publicity out of that thing. And I won't say anything more about that. There was very little of that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

It wasn't the Secret Service, since we was talking about that one particularly, and have the picture there. I wish I'd have marked that picture, and put some information on the thing, dog gone it.

It's too late now. Like I tell my wife, I think your brain gets so full of stuff, you can just handle so much. Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, I think perhaps we have time for maybe one more example today of an investigation that you've worked on. I'm just kind of interested in hearing another story about some criminal investigation that you had a part in that you perhaps solved, or didn't solve.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Well, I know we didn't solve all of them -- maybe completely.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But most of them we -- most of them we solved, and I can -- it's hard for me to pick out any particular one. I'm trying to think -- and the type of a one too, because there was so many of them. I just can't name any particular one that would be -- of course, we didn't solve them all, but most of them we did.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

And some of them we solved partly -- or not all the way, but...

INTERVIEWER:

Well, in this instance, you've seized several weapons from...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yes. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...someone. So what about in cases of organized crime, or gambling circles, or anything like that. Did you get involved with anything like that?

MR. GROOMS:

We didn't get involved too much with gambling circles. And drugs were not -- there were hardly any -- drugs were hardly -- out of the picture there in my day. It was just very -- it was unusual to find somebody that was on drugs. But today there's -- it's commonplace, it's everywhere. And there's such a different approach that they have to take to so many investigations now too, that we didn't back then. But I can remember burglaries, and armed robberies, and thefts -- just out and out theft, assaulting women -- I remember there was a lot of those along the way that we had them, and in some cases -- that we could -- I turned them over to somebody else -- you know, if -- before we

turned them there, the Commissioner would assign them to somebody else, and when I was a Major, I didn't go out in the field to do these things. So that's why I say -- and that's why it sort of -- I just can't -- I just can't pick out a particular one, but if I just had my report on it, boy, I could go over it with you real good.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Because -- you know, it's been a long, long time since I did those. Because in the last eight years I was assigning them to somebody, or giving them to the Commissioner, and he'd say give it to so and so, and -- depending how serious it was, and to what level it should go on to. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Would you say that you were able to notice a market increase in crime over the years that you were working with the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I think there might be an increase in it now -- has been maybe even some since I left the job -- there might be some increase in it. But it's -- probably isn't too much different than it

was then. Because crime is something that's -- it's around all of the time...

INTERVIEWER:

Last time, we were kind of rapping up with your career -- basically.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But as I reviewed those tapes, I found that there were some loose ends -- things that I hadn't asked you that I wanted -- to tie those loose ends up. And then also, I'd like to talk to you a little bit about your retirement days, and that kind of thing. Okay?

MR. GROOMS:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

So, the first thing I'd like to start with is getting back to this topic of women coming onto the State Police.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And I know that we talked at length about this, but I still had a couple of questions. One thing that you mentioned in your past

interview was that some Troopers -- now I emphasize some Troopers -- objected to women coming on to the State Police.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now why do you think that they objected? Can you give us an idea of why some would object to that?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, you see the State Police was a rough outfit -- you know, it was physically rough. And -- wrestling, boxing and jujitsu -- they called it jujitsu then, now they call it karate -- it's more mild -- but anyhow -- and I think that some of the men came on because it was strictly a man's organization, and they like it that way. Now that isn't true of all of them, but some of them did. And some of them expressed their thoughts about not bringing women on -- you know, but -- and whenever I heard of anybody in the Troop where I was at the time, when that was -- either one of them -- that that was happening, why I would call them in and I'd have a chat with them. And I think if -- and in most cases -- with a rare exception perhaps -- that I was pretty much convince them that it was going to be a good thing, because -- and I'd tell them about

how helpful they would be in undercover investigations -- you know, when you need to send somebody out -- they don't suspect to be a police -- a State Policeman -- and now their the State Troopers now. But that was the only thing I could find about it -- and I could say some of the fellows said, "Hey, this is a man's job, and it should be left to the men" -- that was their attitude, some of them.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. I could understand why some of them would feel that way, but I never did. I thought there was a place for all of us.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And you kind of touched upon my next question already -- but you also mentioned in your last interview that you felt it was easier for women to do undercover work.

MR. GROOMS:

It was what?

INTERVIEWER:

Easier for women to do undercover work.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, if a woman went out just dressed in street clothes, and was to get information, or to observe something, and so on, for a long time nobody ever suspected that was a State Trooper.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I mean -- and they still -- it still is effective I'm sure -- that the women undercover -- I mean -- can be used for those purposes -- it worked very well. And then of course their smart too, they knew what they were doing -- what they were going about -- and it just worked. Um-hum. Just like I thought it would.

INTERVIEWER:

So because they were able to blend in, they could be...

MR. GROOMS:

Yep, that's exactly right.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Sure, if there was a woman in street clothes out there -- I mean how many people would guess that that was a State Trooper?

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MR. GROOMS:

Even today?

INTERVIEWER:

That's true.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

That's true. Now if you can remember, before women came onto the State Police, how did the State Police go about advertising so to speak, for women to come on? How did the State Police solicit for women to join, do you remember?

MR. GROOMS:

No, I don't remember much about the advertising. I know they did have it in there -- and I know when I first saw it in advertising, I surely brought it to the attention of the men -- tell them -- it's going to work here for us now, and -- but we had a good response to -- we had plenty of women to -- I think -- to the Academy here to take on the job, and be part of the organization. And I just want to say they were all -- they were just as proud as the men were. And of course, they like their uniforms too. In

think that's whenever we -- about the time we started wearing long pants -- you know, it used to be -- of course I can remember when I was a Trooper way back there, we wore those dog gone wool shirts, and puttees, and britches all summer -- and boy, they were hot. But they kept them on. But then we started wearing the long pants, and it didn't make that much difference in the job really.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

It's the type of a person that you had, and how they could handle the situation, that was the most important part of it.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember at all how the media responded?

MR. GROOMS:

The media?

INTERVIEWER:

Right. To bringing women on to the job?

MR. GROOMS:

No. They put it in the paper -- I mean, they advertised that we had them -- you know, they were here. But I don't remember of anything that was not in favor of them.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

I don't know if -- necessarily they were posting it, but I don't remember any criticism. That isn't to say there wasn't some in some other paper, or some paper someplace, but where I saw I didn't see it. In fact, I never gave it a thought. I was concerned in -- how were they doing, and I wanted them to do a good job, and I wanted to do my best to help them do that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

That was my concern.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Not to dwell on anything negative at all, but we've kind of discussed men being opposed -- or Troopers being opposed to women coming on, but do you think that there women who were opposed to women coming on to the job?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I don't thing there's any question about it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, there were. Yeah, there were. I can remember of hearing one lady saying about it -- she said, "They might be a big help to you for your different kinds of plain clothes work and so on." But -- she said, "I don’t think it's a place for a woman to be."

INTERVIEWER:

Now who said that?

MR. GROOMS:

She was an older lady -- I won't mention her name. But she -- that was the only one I had heard, but there probably were others too, that felt that -- that they wouldn't -- but...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Kind of running along those same lines, but not dealing with women -- dealing now with minorities, namely African American people -- perhaps even Native American people, Chinese, or Japanese American people...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...can you recall when they started to join the State Police, and your response to that, or -- you didn't -- the State Police's response?

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, I can recall -- I can't tell you exactly what the dates were there, but I can remember it was obvious back there that we were going to have to hire all types of people -- all minorities, and everything. And race, color, creed, or condition didn't matter. And they were just to be investigated like anybody else, for their backgrounds and so on. And -- so I used to -- well, I did -- and all of my substations and the Troops -- I would tell the men -- and we would meet once a week -- you know, we'd had a meeting with their people, particularly the non-com's (phonetic). And I'd tell them for four or five months before we got minorities -- or maybe even longer -- I'd said, "Now whether some of you may not think that this is the right thing, but you have a right to your opinion." "But I can tell you that it's going to happen, and we're going to have them, and I think -- and there's a lot of good minorities out there, and I would appreciate it if you'd look around to anyone's that you know and try to encourage them" -- I said, "Can't you see the advantage to us in encouraging the better ones that we know, and -- just taking whatever happens to

come along" -- and I think that -- I think they all believed me and they went along with it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But I know I started using them right away, and they worked out real well. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So do you remember which Troop you were at when you first had someone who was a minority working for you?

MR. GROOMS:

No, I can't. I can't recall what Troop that was. I know I was at Troop "H" when we let the women -- I was mistaken there -- I eventually got seven women, but that was from two or three different classes. I think I only got two, or maybe three out of the first class. And the last time I talked to you about that, but I remember -- I keep in my mind about seven women, but that was from two or three different classes. Three I think is the most we ever got at one time...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MR. GROOMS:

...and that was in the first class -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Because I thought about that after we'd discussed it...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum -- good.

MR. GROOMS:

...and I got it rolling around in my mind a little bit -- see, sometimes you have to roll your mind around a little bit to get -- just to wake it up. He wouldn't know about that.

INTERVIEWER:

Well -- I guess the next thing that this would kind of lead into would be -- you recall something that was called the Consent Decree?

MR. GROOMS:

Called what?

INTERVIEWER:

The Consent Decree?

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Could you give us some words about the Consent Decree, and how that affected you or your position?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I didn't -- Consent Decree, yeah. That didn't mean that much to me, I mean I was there to do the job, and I'm going to do it, regardless of what there is, and -- but I'm just -- the Consent Decree I just never gave it much thought.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So -- but in that regard, you may have had people working for you that were promoted through the ranks because of the Consent Decree, so you never...

MR. GROOMS:

No, I don't recall. Because the Consent Decree was -- it was never really clear what it really, really meant.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

What does it amount to -- and mine was -- my concern was that whoever was there with me, and helping me with the job, that they do their job, and do it right. And that was my concern. Technicalities and so on were pretty much out.

INTERVIEWER:

Well my final question on this subject -- and then I promise I'll let it rest...

MR. GROOMS:

All right. I'm in favor of that.

INTERVIEWER:

I knew you would be.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

It's basically how you perceived the public's response to women and minorities in uniform? Did you ever feel that the public responded differently to a woman a uniform, or to a minority in uniform, then they would respond to a white male in uniform?

MR. GROOMS:

I would say that there's been at least a few situations where that is -- that happened. And in fact, I know that --there's some

comments you get sometimes -- you know, over the years under all kinds of circumstances -- maybe you're some night to something or other, and you -- but overall I think they accepted it very well, and now I think it's pretty well accepted mostly every place. I don't think we have any problem with it. It was unfortunate -- we had a nasty piece in the paper here the other -- sometime back -- about 80 of our men that have been in trouble, and I don't even like to talk about that.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. So we'll change the subject.

MR. GROOMS:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

However, to another not so pleasant subject, but it's still something that I think we should talk about. You mentioned that as the Director of BCI, or the Bureau of Criminal Investigations...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...you were responsible for doing court marshals...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...within the State Police. Now, I don't need you to go into any specifics about who you court marshaled, because I'm sure that you wouldn't want to mention that.

MR. GROOMS:

No, I don't.

INTERVIEWER:

But I am interested in knowing about the process that you went through to court marshal someone. How did that occur?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, what it amounted to is that if somebody did something out there that somebody felt they should be court marshaled, it came to me, and it came to the Commissioner too, and we in some cases had an investigation to a certain extent made, to see if it does -- if it is that bad. But if it was something that was obviously way out of line -- way off of what it should be, we notified that individual through his Troop Commander that he was going to be court marshaled, and we gave him a date to be there. I can always remember -- because I was President of the Court Marshal Board, and I was up on the stage there, and we had an attorney there -- was always there to assist, and we had

some highly technical legal matter that he'd to with -- and I can still see -- sometimes when their coming -- walking down the aisle -- you know, coming up to there, to be -- to swear them in. I remember -- I was just thinking, "I wonder what they're thinking about, and if they're going to take the Fifth Amendment" -- you know, which is the -- sometimes the best way out, and I can remember a couple that did take the Fifth Amendment. But then we made an investigation to determine how serious it was, and -- or we can get proof of whatever the accusations were -- we dug that up, and -- it was -- well, we just made an investigation, that's it. A criminal investigation is what it amounted to. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you give a general example -- not necessarily a specific example, but a general example of what someone would have to do to be considered for court marshal?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, if they -- you know, involved in a violation of the law, and they violated the law -- the criminal law, and they did it knowingly -- did that, that would be court marshal grounds. And if somebody -- like a man who beat his wife -- assaulted his wife, he would be court marshaled. And anything that was contrary to his -- you know, I went over the creed with you -- you know,

anything that he did that was contrary to that could be grounds for court marshal. And I can remember one officer that came up there before me when I was -- well, this one particular -- and court marshaled him because he was involved with -- well there was some gambling going on and he was part of it. So, we court marshaled him, and the Governor fired him. But that was a situation where he took the Fifth Amendment, and that's okay, he can do that. But we had sufficient evidence anyhow, so he left. There were all different kinds -- other approaches to take to it. Then I had men in the office there that were good investigators -- you know, put somebody on it, or have somebody in the Troop do it. That's bringing back a lot of memories -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So we're not necessarily talking about a Trooper who runs a red light -- I mean, that's against the law, but...

MR. GROOMS:

Well, that's a summary offense. I'm talking about felonies.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. All right.

MR. GROOMS:

At least felonies -- yeah. But -- you know -- you remember I quoted to you, "I'm a Pennsylvania State Trooper, soldier of the

law." "To me is entrusted the honor of the" -- that is something that if they violated that seriously, they could be court marshaled, because that covers an awful lot. And in different situations to, had different approaches to them. So that was something that you had to do, but I'm sure I -- I believe while was there anyhow -- I don't think we ever court marshaled anybody that shouldn't have been court marshaled. I feel very sincere about that. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And what did -- what was this creed that you spoke of?

MR. GROOMS:

The what?

INTERVIEWER:

You mentioned a creed earlier -- you would read them the creed, or go over a creed with them -- did any...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, "I'm a Pennsylvania State Trooper, soldier of the law"...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay the Call of Honor.

MR. GROOMS:

..."To me is entrusted the honor of the force" -- yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, and I used to go over that with them -- and especially the newer men, just to remind them -- and the girls too. The only difference was you'd say then -- after the women come out, we'd say, "I'm a Pennsylvania State Trooper" -- used to be -- I'd say, "I'm a State Policemen." Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

How long would the investigations last generally?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, they would vary. Some of them are pretty quick -- just like that, and others you'd take some time. And it depends -- you know, where it was too. And maybe there'd be three or four areas involved, or three or four situations involved...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

...sometimes. There'd be no set time on us to how long it would take to investigate it -- get it done. Of course, if you didn't get these things going, and the boss was -- he'd be looking for some action -- you know, and of course we all understood that. And I wanted to do it to as soon as possible. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did these Troopers, or whoever was getting court marshaled, did they ever have a legal team on their side that was defending them, and fighting for them, and contesting the court marshal?

MR. GROOMS:

Well yeah, they could have an attorney if they wanted to, to talk for them there. But it wasn't a long, drawn out thing though like it would be in the court. But, if they wanted to do that, then they would appeal it, and then they could go into the court. We decided there, on our court marshal what we were going to do, and I had an attorney there with me, and whoever -- and whoever was handling the court marshals before I was, and after I was -- they'd have an attorney there with them always, because some legal matters come up. But they do it -- we didn't have a trial like you would in a court -- you know, but if they wanted to appeal it, they had the right to do that. Anybody has -- can appeal anything.

INTERVIEWER:

Did that ever happen?

MR. GROOMS:

I don't think I had any. In fact, I'm sure I didn't. No, I don't believe I did. Of course, there were a lot before I went in there, and a lot after I'd come out of it. Yep -- 28 years -- yep.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever court marshal a woman?

MR. GROOMS:

No. Mm-hum -- I don't remember one. Nope -- no I never did. Of course, I was only in there about eight years, for that -- I guess just about eight years -- yeah -- because the Court Marshal Board's always been there -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Has the court marshal procedure changed over the years, or has it basically been the same since...

MR. GROOMS:

To tell you truth, I don't know what it is now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But I'm sure there's been some changes in it.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. You'd have to get a hold of somebody that's in there now. After 28 years -- you know, I'm sure there's been a lot of different approaches to things, and changes in them. But as long as I knew it though, it hadn't changed that much -- because I was familiar with it even before I became a Major because I -- as a Troop Commander, and you had occasions to recommend something, or maybe even make an investigation -- and not only give the court marshal, but it -- I don't know if it has now or not.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Now, these investigations, were they conducted by people who knew that person personally -- who had worked with that person, or a completely independent outside...

MR. GROOMS:

It could be either way.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh yeah, there were no restrictions on it -- there were no restrictions on it. Now if depending -- it would depend on what the violation was -- what did the person do or didn't do, that's what -- would make that decision. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And over these eight years that you were handling court marshals, and you were in the courts quite often, from what I understand...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...do you feel like you got a very strong grasp on the legalities on those types of issues -- like even more so than before you started?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, you get -- by experiencing so many of them -- you know, that you learn something off every one, let me put it that way. You learn something different, or there's something you change, or a different approach to something, and there's an advantage to being there and having to do it -- you know, but how much difference there was now, and how much difference there was before, I couldn't say that.

INTERVIEWER:

So you mentioned that you would make a date for the court marshal to occur -- now can you kind of give me an idea what

the scene was like within -- I mean, where were these held first of all?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, it was held at a building there -- there was like a stage there -- you know, and it would probably hold quite a few people, but there weren't a lot of people that came to the court marshal. They could use it for other purposes, and we just -- have the individual in there, and then you'd call them up, and tell them that they're being court marshaled, and let them -- give them a chance to say their peace, and we'd just -- just did it that way. And then in some cases, we would go out to the Troop, and talk to them out there -- you know. As long as they knew what was going on, and what could happen if they -- and then of course -- then I guess -- I'm not sure, but I believe the Commissioner always notified them that they had been court marshaled, and that they were being dismissed. We didn't have to do that.

INTERVIEWER:

Was the Commissioner the one that made the final decision?

MR. GROOMS:

No, he took our word for it. If we -- if the Board -- the Court Marshal Board -- you know, you had other people in there. And he'd to -- if we decided they should be court marshaled -- he

always checked into them though, but I never knew of him refusing one -- now, I'm not saying that they never did, but I don't -- not during my period of time they didn't. Um-hum. I'm just surprised that there haven't been more court marshals here with what the police -- that was in the paper about those 80 Troopers being involved there -- but I don't know -- I was going to call in, but I didn't. I'm retired now, and I don't get my nose into it, but I -- it just seems to me that seems like a lot to be happening there for that period of time. And if the paper was right, and I imagine they were probably pretty right or they wouldn't published it -- you know, because they'd be subject to a law suit.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever need to court marshal more than one person at the same time -- like, these two people, or more people...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...were like in cahoots with each other?

MR. GROOMS:

Yep, they could be court marshaled, and then one -- and then the other one was there -- they were court marshaled together.

Um-hum -- each of them was part of it. Um-hum. Yep -- and you have that once in a while, too.

INTERVIEWER:

And how many people were on this Board that you were a part of?

MR. GROOMS:

How's that?

INTERVIEWER:

How many people were on the Board that made the decision?

MR. GROOMS:

Let's see -- there were probably 12 -- 10 or 12 of us altogether -- maybe not that many. Maybe eight or nine -- I don't we just -- but the most important thing is, we wanted them to hear the testimony about what was happening -- you know. And of course, that was -- we needed their vote too -- and the way for them -- to get an honest vote from them, is for them to hear what it is.

INTERVIEWER:

Would you vote right away, or would you wait and meet later, and then vote? How did that work?

MR. GROOMS:

No, we usually made up our minds that day at that time, after they were finished their -- um-hum. Yeah -- then we'd recommend to the Commissioner then -- if they'd be court marshaled. Yeah -- it wasn't a very pleasant job, tell you the truth.

INTERVIEWER:

Was the person being court marshaled allowed to continue with their normal work duties during this process?

MR. GROOMS:

In some of the cases they did -- yeah. Um-hum -- some cases they did. They did do -- because we hadn't decided yet whether they were going to -- we were going to find them guilty of the court marshal -- you know. And in some cases they would go ahead and work, but not all of them. Some of them that are pretty severe -- boy, we stopped them right there, and suspend them without pay, or with pay, or some way or other. Yeah -- some of them is not the most pleasant memories of my job.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. Of course, not.

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

No -- no. Mm-hum. Just a couple more questions concerning it, and then we'll move on.

MR. GROOMS:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

I'm just kind of wondering about what would happen to that Trooper after they were dismissed? Do you know the process they would go through after they were dismissed? They would just need to turn in their uniform, and then go on their way, or is there a further process?

MR. GROOMS:

No, they would turn in their uniforms and everything-- you know, and then they could go on their way. Unless, they maybe committed some kind of a crime that they would go to jail for, and then they would -- they would do that. See, you just can't take a blanket statement about all of them, because their all different, and there's different grades of them, and some of them are very serious situations, and they would go -- in fact, they'd go to jail -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

And do you know if after someone is court marshaled from the State Police, do you know if they're ever able to find another job, or how that turnover rate is, or do...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah. They might find another job someplace, but they never come back into the State Police if they were court marshaled and fired -- I mean, they'd never come back there. Now I'm not saying some of them didn't get a job at a police department some place -- some other state or some other area, but if they wanted -- and if they called -- if that department would call us and ask us, we'd tell him that yeah, he was court marshaled, and likely for what reason -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. I guess I'm just trying to get a grasp on the seriousness of a court marshal from the Pennsylvania State Police -- if that's regarded...

MR. GROOMS:

Well it's -- it is pretty serious -- yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Many times people would move away from the area, and don't tell anybody anything about it -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

And it's like somebody's been in jail sometimes. When they get out they move, and now then -- they're trying to pass it -- a law about child molesters, that you have to -- even when they get out they have to notify the people in the community where they're moving into, which I think is a good idea. Yep, I'm in favor of that.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, because potentially these police officers who were court marshaled could still -- from what I understand from what you're saying, could still work in law enforcement elsewhere.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep, they could.

INTERVIEWER:

So, they're not barred for doing that...

MR. GROOMS:

If as long -- as long as their -- that department accepts them, sure they can do it. Um-hum. Yeah, we -- they didn't really crucify them, they just -- but, yeah -- stopped them from working with us -- that behavior -- of what their behavior was of such, that it wouldn't be part of our organization -- we wouldn't want it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. The very last question then, just an overall view of your eight years -- if we could just take a look at those eight years, how many overall people did you court marshal, if you could give us just a general number.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, boy. It be I guess...

INTERVIEWER:

A hundred?

MR. GROOMS:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

Less?

MR. GROOMS:

No, not that many. No -- no. I just don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

I never made it -- kept any record of them, because -- we'd deal with this one -- dealt with it, got rid of it, and it's gone, and go to the next one. We didn't have one every day -- you know, I mean -- thank God. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MR. GROOMS:

Okay?

INTERVIEWER:

All right.

MR. GROOMS:

Okie-doke (phonetic). Time -- it's 20 till 11 already.

INTERVIEWER:

Yep -- we're almost there. I'd just like to talk to you about -- a little bit about how you worked in so many different places, which I think it just fascinating...

MR. GROOMS:

You what?

INTERVIEWER:

You worked in so many different places all over the State of Pennsylvania...

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, as a Lieutenant at some places, and as a Captain, and a Troop Commander in five or six stations I believe -- or seven -- I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

And I find that even within one state, there are still pockets of culture wherever you go, differences in communities. For example, you lived in Lancaster...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...you were in Lancaster for a while. Now Lancaster is known as being basically the Amish capital of the world.

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, a lot of Amish there too...

INTERVIEWER:

Right, so can you give me an idea of how being a Trooper there, and dealing with Amish culture was different than being a Trooper elsewhere, where Amish culture didn't exist?

MR. GROOMS:

Well, yeah it would be -- especially if the Trooper was Amish -- you know, but we never gave -- made a thought to that when it'd come to assigning people -- at least I never did. I mean, if they

needed a Trooper someplace, and there was a Trooper who was eligible for a promotion, or to be moved, he moved. And it was -- I can tell you that the people in Lancaster I believe don't have nearly the problems that they have in some places, like near the big cities. And I know my home Troop back in Greensburg, when I went out there as Troop Commander -- and we had a little bit of crime there -- yeah, that's near Pittsburgh. And -- but a place like Lancaster, and Somerset -- Somerset, boy, was a quiet, little place. I know I was Troop Commander over there -- and Greensburg you'd -- I remember that Somerset station, it was quiet. It was nice. Yep. But there is a difference in the -- in what the population -- like you say in Lancaster -- there are a lot of Amish people there, and they are -- generally are people that are quiet -- you know. If you don't bug their horse and their buggies, well they're okay. Yeah -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever have the need, or did your Troopers that were under your command, did they ever have the need to arrest or reprimand an Amish person?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I'm sure they did, but I don't recall any particular case.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

But I'm sure they did, because their human and they violate the law once in a while. But their biggest problem is trying not to get killed with a car running over the buggy with the kids in it -- oh, there for a while those were bad. But no, I never -- I just don't think that we were involved that much with the Amish, but I'm sure we have arrested a few of them for -- maybe even minor violations. I don't know of any murders, or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER:

I guess what I'm referring to is that from what I understand, the Amish people are fairly autonomous...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...meaning they kind of have their own world, or country, and community that they live in...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and our laws and their laws are somewhat different.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So that they don't necessarily follow -- or not follow for that matter, the laws that we have in place.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, if -- it might be a minor law if -- they are required to have a driver's license if they drive a car. And if we'd catch one driving without a license, we'd arrest them. And it'd just be that simple. And driving -- drinking while you drive -- you know, we'd arrest them for that. I'm sure there have been a couple of those who have done it, but -- and their just like arresting anybody else, there's no exception for them. But as a rule, their people are much more quiet than the average American I'd say. There maybe some others like that too, but I've never been near them to know. Um-hum. Okay?

INTERVIEWER:

And you had -- you just said that Somerset was very quiet...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...Lancaster was fairly quiet -- did you enjoy a quiet atmosphere, or did you enjoy an atmosphere that was exciting and full of adventure, and that kind of...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, well it was -- I enjoyed when -- I enjoyed my home Troop, Greensburg, that was -- that's a busy Troop -- you know, and I enjoyed that too. And of course I knew some of the people who were being arrested for various things, and so on. But, I liked -- preferred some action. That's what I enjoyed, was the action. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, I'm kind of interested then in talking a little bit about your retirement.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

You decided to retire in 1977...

MR. GROOMS:

Seven -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. So tell me about that decision, and what that process was like for you.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, you know -- you at that time you had to leave when you were 60, and I didn't want to stay till I was 60. So I decided that I was going to think about retiring someplace along the line here, and -- let me think for a minute now -- it's been 20 -- '77, that's 28 years, isn't it? Sure -- boy -- oh, boy, I had 35 and a half on there -- gee, I'm past 40 aren't I? 44 past 40. But I decided that I would -- I'd been a Major for eight years, and I didn't care to go any further anyhow -- I -- for a year or two, because -- you know, and so I just decided that I was going to retire, and I picked a date. And my wife was real happy of that, because we did a lot of things -- we went to Florida, we went to California, and we moved around a lot. And I just decided to go. I thought I'd given -- and I should have that little clipping out of the paper, by the way -- yeah. Because I would have had to have gone in about -- a little over a year, so -- so I had 35 and a half in, and I had done a little bit of everything -- you know, I'd been a Lieutenant, and all the Troops, and the Troop Commander in six or seven Troops, and a Major, and I just -- I didn't want to get -- moving

again and going to someplace else, so I just decided to do it. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now, what did you need to do in order to officially retire? Just submit paperwork stating that?

MR. GROOMS:

That's right. You just submit your resignation to the -- and you just tell them that you're going to retire, and you submit the resignation. That's all there is to it. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did anyone try to talk you out of it?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah. Yeah, they did -- a couple of them did. Like -- one of them talked to me about being a Lieutenant Colonel, and one even -- well, I won't talk about that -- yes, I do -- one of them talk to be about being Deputy Commissioner for the next year -- you know, and -- but I didn't have any desire to do that. It would be just a year's time and then I got to go -- you know, and so I just decided I was going to retire. And I had enough time in -- got pretty well a full pension. And then I went and got a real estate license, and I did pretty good there. I had some good -- boy, I'll

tell you in the 1990 -- I did five and three-quarter million in sales of houses.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MR. GROOMS:

Yes, I did.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MR. GROOMS:

Yep -- and by the way, I had to pay into Social Security too then -- you know. You know back then you had to pay -- in the real estate business, you pay quarterly into Social Security. Of course I didn't pay into Social Security on the job. And I was only -- I was 21 when I'd come on, so I just worked a little bit for Social Security -- oh, maybe three or four quarters -- you know, because it'd come out 1936, and I was 16 then, so I signed up for Social Security. But then my -- doing the real estate there, and I didn't -- I do get a sizeable check from the real estate -- from Social Security, which is all right. After all -- we young people, we're deserving of it, aren't we? Okay?

INTERVIEWER:

Did anyone throw you a party?

MR. GROOMS:

When I left?

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah. They had a nice party for me -- yeah. In fact, I've still got some gifts there from them -- a cap, and a -- some fishing outfit, and -- oh, I don't know. See that's all -- I've got it all in the cupboard there at home. But yeah, they had a party for me, and it was really nice. I really enjoyed it. Yeah. They had it in Harrisburg.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Boy, it doesn't -- gee, it doesn't seem that long ago though -- it's coming back to me right now. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

What has your involvement been with the State Police since you retired? How have you been involved with

other State Police organizations?

MR. GROOMS:

Not very much. Not very much -- I see the guys -- a lot of the guys, and I talk to them on the phone, and we talk about things, and once in a while, we'll talk about something -- maybe a case or something, but really not to amount to anything. It's just, I -- well, I got -- I was just going to get into real estate a little bit -- you know, whenever I told them I was going to -- got my real estate license. And -- but that's the type of business you don't get in a little bit. If you're going to do -- either do it, or you don't do it. Like I say, in 1990 I had a terrific year, I did five and three-quarter million in sales. But then when I come to pay my income tax, well, I thought I was paying quarterly, but gee whiz, whenever it come to pay my income tax, I think I owed them 7,000 or $6,000, or something like that, because of -- it come up there so fast -- you know. So I thought, "Hey, it doesn't pay me to work," so I quit then.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Well, I slacked off, and it's been about three years now since I quit completely. But I still have people calling me -- that I sold them homes 10, 12 year ago, and I tell them -- I turn them over to Bob Harner (phonetic), my old buddy up there. In fact, I sold

him a house up -- right above me in -- now in -- we live over in Cocoa Towns.

INTERVIEWER:

How about with organizations with the State Police Historical Center, or the Retiree's Association...

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

What involvement have you had with them?

MR. GROOMS:

Yeah, I've had some involvement with them. In fact, I was on their committee there for -- oh, I guess about -- a couple years -- or three years, and then it got to the place where I was involved with other things too. And then -- and what they were really interested in is raising money. Last time I talked -- in think it was 113 million -- or something like that. So, they got in some people that -- money people -- you know. I won't name them, but there's a lot of people like that in there now, so I'm not involved with it too much now. Of course this is part of the 100 years. Um-hum -- yeah. But I can -- anything I can do for them to help them I will, and they know that. Yeah. Yeah -- I was real active with it there for a while. In fact, it was four days a week -- oh,

yeah -- and it was just going, and going, and going, and I thought -- I didn't -- I just didn't want that much, so I sort of backed out. Yeah, Bill Riggin (phonetic), he's still there. I remember Bill when he came on the job. Well he's a lot younger than I am.

INTERVIEWER:

How about with the retiree's, have you ever gone to any of their reunions?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum. Oh, yes, I've gone to them -- yeah. Yep -- and they meet various places. Out here at the -- oh, what's the name of that place -- the restaurant there -- and they meet once a month -- from Troop "H". And the various Troops meet all over the State in the different places, usually about once a month. And so I've gone to a half a dozen of those. It's nice to get there and see the guys, and -- you've almost forgotten them.

INTERVIEWER:

How many of them meet usually?

MR. GROOMS:

Huh?

INTERVIEWER:

How many of them go out there and meet?

MR. GROOMS:

You mean how many -- oh...

INTERVIEWER:

Retirees -- yeah.

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, there's quite a few. Maybe there's 50 for 60 that goes to the one -- sometimes, and -- depending on where it is. But -- and they're all invited, they can all go. Yeah -- that's why it's so hard to believe sometimes it's been 28 years since I retired, because I -- it just seems like it -- that was a big part of my life -- very big.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, I'd be interested to see what you think about the future of the State Police, especially considering the future of technology in our society, and how technology not only might help the State Police in crime prevention, or crime response...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...but how technology also makes crime even easier to commit...

MR. GROOMS:

Um-hum -- yep.

INTERVIEWER:

...in society. So how do you feel about where the State Police is going, as -- concerning technology in society?

MR. GROOMS:

I don't know. They've got a young Commissioner there now, and I don't know him that well. I've met him, and I know him to speak to him -- talk to him, but there's -- I think that whoever's running the organization has to take a different look at things the way they are today. In fact, that was probably true all along the line, because they did change. I'm sure when all Colonel Grooms was a -- he was the Commissioner, he didn't think like we did. But, I think that the -- and then that's why I feel it's so important that they be selective as to the people they get, and they type of people they get, and if they have something to contribute -- you know what I mean? Not -- we just don't need bodies, and -- I don't know how much of an investigation they make anymore. I know whenever I got -- wrote a letter for permission to get married, they investigated Irene's background -- my wife's background. Well, she was only 19, then and I was 26, so there

was nothing to worry about, but -- just the difference in the way things are now. Now that doesn't seem to matter. But that's probably with -- the whole world is changing, so. And then -- I change with it slowly.

INTERVIEWER:

So with those words of wisdom, do you have any closing comments that you'd like to say, or any final stories, or things that you'd like to share about your career and the State Police?

MR. GROOMS:

Oh, I'm -- I'll tell you that I was -- I will never regret that I'd came back into the State Police when I was in the Air Corps. I like the Air Corps, but I wanted to be a State Trooper for -- since I was a little boy. I used to see the cars going by, and I decided I wanted to do that. And when I got in and I -- if I had to do it over again, I'd do it exactly the same -- same as I have. And that's -- and I had a good -- good, experience with the State Police, and they were good to me. And I tried to do good for them. Um-hum. And I'd recommend it -- I've recommended several young men to come in and check into it, that they might like it. But, it was -- because I know when I left for that little, short period of time, when I went into the Air Corps, and I told them -- I'd even took an affidavit that I'd be back -- you know, because without even an

affidavit, I'm coming back, I want to be here. So he made sure -- old Captain Rudoph (phonetic) made sure that he did. So when I'd come back -- three days I was back on the job. Um-hum. And then next day I met my wife. Isn't that something? I didn't have enough time on the job, you had -- to get married, so I needed -- oh, I guess I had about -- oh, four and three-quarter years, or something like that, so -- because they gave me credit for the time I was in the Air Corps too. I didn't know that, but they did, and it went in my pension. Um-hum. Yeah -- it was great. I'd recommend it to anybody.

INTERVIEWER:

Well we really, really appreciate you being a part of this project. I think that you've -- I mean, obviously over the years that you were with the State Police, you contributed to the legacy and heritage that is the State Police. And by you sharing your stories with us for the last few days, you've really contributed even further to making sure that that heritage and legacy continues. We really appreciate that.