

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

DAVID F. HOSKING SR.

Aircraft Mechanic and Door Gunner, Army, Vietnam War;
Aircraft Mechanic and Door Gunner, National Guard, Career and Iraq War.

2004

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Hosking, David F., Sr., (1944-). Oral History Interview, 2004.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 55 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 55 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

David F. Hosking, a Clay Hill, Wisconsin native, discusses his service in the Army during the Vietnam War and his career in the National Guard. While working for Oscar Mayer after high school, Hosking talks about his awareness of the war and being drafted. He discusses basic training at Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri), airframe repairman training at Fort Eustis (Virginia), having orders to Germany cancelled, and being assigned to go to Vietnam with the 604th Transportation Company. He touches on the reaction of his family, having ten days of leave, and duty guarding the laundry room on the troop ship during the ride over. Hosking describes his first impressions upon arrival in Qui Nhon, setting up camp in Pleiku, and tricks for making tents resistant to monsoons and shrapnel. He portrays his attitude upon arrival as “we'll just do what we gotta do” and how it changed to frustrated later in the war. Hosking touches on working with aircraft sheet metal and later being promoted to head of the sheet metal shop. He speaks of being encouraged by a friend to be a door gunner and volunteering with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company. Hosking explains he made an agreement with a different friend to extend their overseas service three months, although his friend ended up being wounded and sent home early. Hosking portrays a typical day in the sheet metal shop, the crude equipment, and the types of helicopters they patched up. He talks about duty as a door gunner, watching the troops jump into the drop zone, and dropping brass on the tin roof of a bar as a practical joke. He provides examples of the ingenuity of American troops in improvising with equipment. Hosking addresses being under fire as a door gunner and describes the conflicting emotional reactions he had during combat and close calls. He tells of his first time seeing a minigun, coming under sniper fire while on guard duty, and mortar attacks. Hosking recalls seeing two Montagnard tribesmen turn themselves in for helping mortar the base; the Montagnards explained their families had been held hostage, and the two identified Viet Cong members working construction inside the base. He tells a story of a friend's brother being killed and talks about seeing Bob Hope and Ann-Margaret, who came to perform USO shows. Hosking describes his contact with Vietnamese civilians, including a mama-san, reflects on not trusting any of them to not be Viet Cong, and tells of recognizing them among the dead Viet Cong after attacks. He touches on the procedure for rescuing downed helicopter crews, recalls a funny story about the failure of some Hawaiian troops to cook a pig, and states the aircraft parts supply was inadequate. Hosking talks about food, the quality of his officers, and his awareness of what his missions were. He states the worst day was when he heard that China had entered the war. Hosking comments on R&R in Bangkok, transportation

back to the States, and his homecoming to Wisconsin. He examines his opinions about protestors and about his own experiences. He tells of being tracked down by a friend from service, working for the Madison Vet Center, joining American Legion post 313 in Black Earth (Wisconsin), and retiring from the National Guard. Inspired by the activity of a Madison aviation unit, Hosking talks about joining the National Guard with the intention of flying for a few years and staying in for over twenty years because he enjoyed the camaraderie. He touches on his experiences in Iraq: brutal sandstorms, well-cared for equipment, and door gunner duty on Blackhawk helicopters. Addressing the two wars, he briefly compares the inability to identify the enemy and contrasts the casualty rates. Hosking explains his respect for other veterans and their families, and he highlights the special camaraderie between Vietnam War veterans.

Biographical Sketch:

Hosking (b.1944) served in the Army from 1965 to 1967 and in the National Guard from 1982 to 2004. Born in Madison (Wisconsin), he spent part of his childhood on a dairy farm in Clay Hill before moving to a location between Arena and Mazomanie (Wisconsin). In Vietnam from January of 1966 to April of 1967, he served with the 604th Transportation Company and the 119th Air Assault Company. Hosking eventually returned to Madison, where he was involved with the Madison Vet Center.

Interviewed by Jim Kurtz, 2004

Transcribed by Alis Fox, Wisconsin Court Reporter, 2006

Checked and corrected by Joan Bruggink, 2011

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2011

Interview Transcript:

Jim: It is November 10th, 2004. My name is Jim Kurtz. I'm conducting an interview of David Hosking, Sr. David, could you tell us when and where you were born?

David: Well, I was born in Madison, Wisconsin, on July 13th, 1944.

Jim: July 13th—

David: Uh-huh.

Jim: —1944. And did you grow up in Madison?

David: No. I grew up in a little farming community called Clay Hill, which is about ten miles south of Barneveld; and to get closer yet, there's a little town called Daleyville just a couple miles away.

Jim: Okay. I know where that is. And you lived on a farm?

David: Yeah.

Jim: Was it a dairy farm?

David: It was a dairy farm. I lived there until I was about fourth grade, and then we moved up between Mazomanie and Arena.

Jim: Okay. And is that where you went to high school?

David: I went to high school in Arena.

Jim: Went to high school in Arena. And what year did you graduate?

David: Graduated in 1962. In fact, we were the last class of the Arena High School before it became River Valley. In fact, the consolidation was already in place, they were just building the school when I was a senior.

Jim: Okay. And did you have any relatives that were in the military service?

David: Yes. My brother Bill was Air Force. My brother Ted was Army; he was over in Berlin. My uncle Arnie was a World War II hero, and Arnie's got numerous medals, Arnie Thompson.

Jim: And—

David: Well, excuse me. I'd better not forget my Uncle James and my Uncle Charlie on my dad's side too. They were both World War II vets.

Jim: Okay. So what were those two names?

David: It was James.

Jim: Okay. And the other one?

David: And Charlie.

Jim: Okay.

David: Hosking, yeah.

Jim: Okay. What did you do before you went into the military?

David: Well, I worked at St. Mary's a short time where my dad and my brother-in-law worked until I got to be eighteen, and then I went to the best job in this area, people used to think, was Oscar Mayer, and when I was at Oscar Mayer then I got drafted and went off to the Army.

Jim: What year did you get drafted, or when did you get drafted?

David: July—I'll never forget, July 21st, 1965. I had just turned twenty-one for not more than about a week and I was off to Sam's Army.

Jim: Okay. Before you got—I got to write that draft. What was—

David: July 21st.

Jim: Okay.

David: 1965.

Jim: 1965, an early draftee. Before you were drafted did you have any thoughts about Vietnam or any opinions about the cold war or anything like that?

David: No, not really. To tell you the truth, I thought about going military. I thought about going Marines, I thought about going small Army infantry. You know, I talked to some recruiters and they had me all built up and ready to go, but—and the Cold War I guess was an ongoing thing. You know, in high school we talked

about it, and you know, you talked about it elsewhere. My family was open to discussing things like that in our household, but I never really thought that much about Vietnam, I was wrapped up with having a job, and I had bought a Corvette and I was enjoying life, and all of a sudden—in fact, I never really thought about Vietnam until I got to a place called Qui Nhon and we come up onto the beach.

Jim: Okay. You were drafted on July 21st, '65. When and where did you report for active duty?

David: That's—I'm trying to think. I don't know, really shortly thereafter. I mean I got the word and—and, in fact, I'm sorry, I think '65 is when I reported for duty.

Jim: Okay.

David: Yeah. I got the notice a couple-three weeks before, whatever. But '65 I'm sure is the date that I reported to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, for active duty.

Jim: Okay. And you were at Fort Leonard Wood for—

David: Basic training.

Jim: Okay. And then is there anything that sticks out in your memory about the basic training?

David: Oh, yes. I mean we called Fort Leonard Wood "Little Korea," and they called it "Little Korea" for a reason. You know, it would rain in the morning, and it would be hot by the afternoon, and the sand and dust would be blowing, and it was really quite a training base. I'm kind of glad I went there really. My uncle had been there, and you know how it is.

Jim: Where did you go to your advanced training?

David: I went to Fort Eustis, Virginia. I went to become an airframe repairman.

Jim: How do you spell "Eustis" again?

David: E-u-s-t-i-s I believe it is.

Jim: Okay. Virginia.

David: Virginia.

Jim: To be an aircraft repairman?

David: Yeah, airframe repairman it was called.

Jim: Airframe repairman. For what kind of airframes?

David: Any airframe, patching bullet holes and fixing 'em up.

Jim: Okay.

David: Really a sheet metal specialist kind of like nowadays it would be called, I guess.

Jim: Okay. Did you have any other special training before you went to Vietnam?

David: Not really, nope.

Jim: Okay. Then how long was this training, the sheet metal training?

David: I'm trying to think. About eight weeks, normal AIT [advanced infantry training] in those days.

Jim: Okay. What did you do after that?

David: Well, then, to tell you the truth, I had orders for Germany and all kinds of good stuff like that and a thirty-day leave, and all of a sudden they canceled it all and within forty-eight hours I had orders for Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to join the 604th to go to Vietnam.

Jim: Okay. And so that was probably in the early winter of '65?

David: Yes, it was.

Jim: And what did you do when you got to Fort Campbell?

David: Well, when I got to Fort Campbell it was just a matter of doing a little more training as a company and getting things organized and ready to ship out to Vietnam. That was about—just a gathering of the troops and the planning stage of when we were going to leave and how.

Jim: Did you know any of the people that were in the 604th?

David: Yes. Some of my buddies that were with me in basic and in AIT were still with me when I got to Fort Campbell.

- Jim: Were there any combat veterans in this unit or Vietnam veterans in this unit?
- David: Not to my knowledge, no.
- Jim: Were there any reservists?
- David: Nope, all regular Army.
- Jim: Okay. And that was at a time when there was a lot of people who had been drafted and then stayed in and like that, so—
- David: Yes—
- Jim: —it was not like later in the Vietnam period.
- David: No. Nope.
- Jim: So did you have any leave before you went to Vietnam?
- David: Yes. I'm trying to think; I think it was around ten days I had, and I remember— there is not much snowstorms or things down in Fort Campbell, though we got hit with a snowstorm just when I was to come home, and my fiancée brought— I had this Corvette. She brought my new Corvette down there to pick me up and we drove all night at about twenty-five miles an hour to get to Chicago to get home because I only had ten days and I was going to get there one way or another.
- Jim: Okay. When you left for Vietnam how did you leave? Did you go back to Fort Campbell?
- David: I went back to Fort Campbell, and Clark Air Force Base is right connected to Fort Campbell there, and they flew in a DC whatever it was and loaded the 604th Trans. Company onto it and flew us to San Diego to board a ship.
- Jim: Okay. Do you remember the ship's name?
- David: I think it was the *U.S.S. Nelson Walker*.
- Jim: *Nelson Walker*.
- David: Yup. I think it was a Merchant Marine ship, but really that ship will always stick with me forever.

- Jim: How long was the trip across?
- David: I think it was around fourteen days.
- Jim: And what duty assignments did you have?
- David: Well, I had the prestigious job of guarding the laundry with a club, [Jim laughs] like somebody'd want to go in and steal some clean sheets. It was just something to do, and it had to be about a hundred and twenty degrees down there. It was just an awful time trying to stay awake. And then the officers that were on duty, they were very understanding of what we had to put up with, so—
- Jim: When you found out you were—I got my questions kind of out of order here. When you found out you were going to Vietnam, what was your reaction?
- David: Well, my reaction was this. Friends have gone before me and, you know, I guess it was my turn to go. My, my—like I say, my uncles had gone to World War II and my brothers had served before me, and I just—I guess it was my turn.
- Jim: What was the reaction of your family?
- David: Well, it was—you know, if you ever see lions in a cage, the morning I left my brothers looked like lions in a cage. They would get up and they would walk back and forth across the living room, and they'd go to the kitchen, they'd sit down and they'd get up, and my poor mom, you know, after having her brother go and now her youngest was going, it was very, very difficult for her. It was a very tough time for her and my dad. I saw Dad and he had to turn away, you know, he couldn't—it was tough for him. So—and I think it is different when you are the youngest one, too. They still look at you as being kind of like the baby of the family, and it's kind of hard for all of the big brothers because they'd like to take your place.
- Jim: Uh-huh. Where did you arrive in Vietnam?
- David: We came into a place called Qui Nhon.
- Jim: Okay.
- David: It was just probably somewhere in about the middle of Vietnam, and if I remember correctly in those days they were trying to split Vietnam in half. We came into Qui Nhon and then we went up to Pleiku.

- Jim: Do you remember what day that was or what month?
- David: That was in January.
- Jim: So it would be January, '66?
- David: January, '66, correct.
- Jim: And what kind of facilities did you arrive at in Pleiku?
- David: Well, we arrived in Pleiku and there was really no place for us. There was an area of ground set up down there that we were going to move to, but there was nothing down there. In fact, the area security in our part of the base was rather thin, and we commenced to put up tents and go to get all the sandbags we could to make machine gun bunkers and dig our foxholes and get ready to live in Pleiku for a while.
- Jim: Did you have any harassment from the VC while you were building the base?
- David: Well, I gotta tell you, the first time we took a truck and went to get sandbags, you know, we were pretty loose and laughing and everything, and then a deuce and a half somewhere along there backfired, and if you want to see eight guys try to dig into a pile of sand on the back of a deuce and a half to get out of harm's way. But, yeah, there was always—around Pleiku there was always—you know, there would be some sniper fire here and there and—
- Jim: What about mortars and rockets?
- David: Well, that happened eventually but not right away. I can't say right when we first set up. Maybe they were surprised that somebody new was movin' into town, but eventually we'd get hit for mortar fire night after night after night. And I can't tell how long I was there before this stuff happened but—
- Jim: Yeah. What was your first impression of Vietnam as a country?
- David: Well, when we first came into Qui Nhon I'm thinking about the heat right away, first of all, and I'm thinking, "Wow." You know, coming from small towns in beautiful Wisconsin I'm looking at this place going, you know, this is quite a change in my life. But, you know, again, being young and stuff it was kind of like, hey, today is another day and this is what's happening and, you know, hey, what do we do next? Where do we go next? It was kind of—
- Jim: Did you have any impressions about smell or—

David: Oh, yes. I mean, let's face it, umm, not only war but Vietnam itself had a different smell to it. And some of it was from—I don't care, from napalm, from gun powder, from whatever. There is also the garbage along the streets, and there was also the burning of this and the burning of that, no matter what they were cooking or doing or whatever. Yeah, it's got definitely a smell of its own.

Jim: What was your first duty assignment, or what were your duty assignments?

David: Well, when we first got there it was a matter of, you know, guard duty, guard duty, umm, digging trenches because the monsoons will come, and shortly after we were there in fact the monsoons hit and they leveled a couple-three of our tents that weren't staked down. We staked them down like in Wisconsin or Fort Leonard Wood, but over there you better have them staked really well when the monsoons hit and you better have trenches around or that rain will come down through and it will wash you right out of that tent, so we spent most of our long, long days filling sandbags. And again, too, you had to have sandbags around every tent and you had to have it about four feet high so when you got mortared there was something to absorb the shrapnel.

Jim: You came over with a unit, so did you get treated as a new guy by anybody—I mean, obviously everybody in your unit had the same—

David: Yeah. See, and that's the fortunate part. When we came over as a unit, now we just moved in as a unit—no, we just moved in as a unit, and the 604th Trans. was such a good-sized transportation company because we did aircraft maintenance, you know, that we were big enough when we moved in to Pleiku we had almost as many people in my company as the rest of the base. But I do understand how the new guy feels when he comes in and everybody knows everybody and now he's trying to fit in.

Jim: What was your attitude about Vietnam about arriving there?

David: My attitude was, you know, where there's—my government has decided that we needed to be here and that I'm gonna do whatever I have to do and that's going to be it; but, you know, like every other war and every other soldier, my main concern was that—my buddies.

Jim: Uh-huh.

David: Yep, that was it. You take care of your buddies and we'll go from there, and I gotta be here a year, though I ended up there fifteen months. I gotta be here a

year and we'll just do what we gotta do for that year and then I'll go about my way again.

Jim: Did your attitude change at all during the war?

David: Yes.

Jim: How did it change?

David: Well, I got frustrated. After a while it got to be what *are* we doing here, and it got to be, are we accomplishing anything? In fact, see, that's when I was doing sheet metal and I was fixing bullet holes in aircraft and fixing frames. Finally I said to my friend, I'll never forget, his name was Roydon Orton Farrencamp from Arizona. I said, "Roydon Orton, it seems like I'm not getting anything accomplished for this war effort fixin' helicopters," and he said, "Well, the 119th needs door gunners." He said, "What do you say we go up and talk to them?" And I said, "Well, Roydon Orton, I've been drinking a little bomb d'bubble," we called that beer over there, and I said, "I don't make decisions like that; I don't care if I've had one sip of it. Let's wait until tomorrow morning." So the next morning I went and joined the 119th as a volunteer door gunner and Roydon Orton decided not to, so he stayed in the 604th. [both laugh]

Jim: So he followed your advice, but you didn't follow your own?

David: No. No.

Jim: What was the nickname of the 119th?

David: The 119th, I'm trying to think. Was it the Gators or the Crocodiles? I still got pictures of something like that.

Jim: What does it mean to be a volunteer door gunner?

David: Well, they were short of door gunners up there, so we went up and talked to the First Sergeant and said, "Hey, I hear you need some door gunners," and he said, "Yeah, we do." And I said, "Well, I'll help you out as a door gunner, but let me tell you something, once I get a year in country I don't want to fly anymore," because I already decided to be there fifteen months with my friend Hannah from California. And so then when they'd need door gunners, I would go up and fly with the door gunner, as door gunner, and so I ended up getting my Air Medal with the 119th.

Jim: So how many hours did you fly?

David: I have no idea.

Jim: Or on missions or—

David: Yeah, I got no idea. I've got to be truthful with you. You know, we never kept track of stuff like that, you know. Your flight hours you'd get if you're on flight status, which is like a crew chief, but being a door gunner, they didn't keep track of your orders—or they kept track of missions and stuff because you had to have so many missions and so many flight hours before you could get an Air Medal.

Jim: Okay. Yeah. It was twenty-five hours, I believe.

David: Yeah, I believe it was too.

Jim: You said you decided to stay for fifteen months. What's the story on that?

David: Well, I had a friend named Don Hannah out of California, and we called him "the Deacon," and the Deacon and I sat down and had a heavy conversation one time about "What do you say we stay here another three months"—now this was early, before a lot of things happened over there—"and then we'll take this out ninety days? After ninety days we'll get out and we'll go up to the San Joaquin when they have the Spring Planting Festival and, "Gee, Dave, that's a great place to go and we'll have a great time." Now, remember, I am twenty-one years old and I don't think like more mature people. So we decided to extend another three months and, well, my friend Don got messed up on a bunker one night a couple months before we even got our year in country and he ended up in the Philippines in the hospital and he ended up home. So when it came to extension there was just me by myself and he was gone again. You know, him and Farrencamp I do owe a lot to. [laughs] Both of them had ideas and neither one followed up on it.

Jim: But did you get your early out?

David: I did.

Jim: Okay.

David: I did, yep.

Jim: Okay.

David: I came back after the year in country. I didn't fly anymore. One of my cohorts decided to put a knife to the throat of the person in charge of the sheet metal shop, didn't, didn't—just drew a little bit of blood, but that took care of—they moved the both of them out of there, and First Sergeant came over to me and said, "Well, you're the ranking E-4," and I said to him, "First Sergeant, I'm probably the worst sheet metal man you've got here"; and he said, "Yep, but you're the man in charge." So I became head of the sheet metal shop for the last three months I was there, and I had really great guys to work with, so it was not hard for me to—

Jim: What was a typical duty day like in the sheet metal shop?

David: Well, we'd get there at anytime in the morning. In fact, they ran two shifts, one days and one nights, so we could get there at 7:00 in the morning and we may be there until 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00 at night depending on how many aircraft were shot up. And it didn't make any difference, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, it made no difference. It just went on.

Jim: Okay. And what kind of equipment—did you have state of the art equipment and stuff like that?

David: No. It's funny because when we first went to school, you know, everything was done with a straight bucking bar and, you know, formed like this and this, and we got over there, we didn't have much more than that. It was pretty, pretty crude equipment really, and even in those days they had civilians. They'd bring civilian contractors in, and we were just jealous because they had all these crooked—what are they called, bucking bars for rivets and stuff and, you know, we'd borrow their stuff, which made our job somewhat easier.

Jim: Did you mainly fix helicopters?

David: Yeah. Yeah.

Jim: Was there any kind of inspection of them?

David: Oh, yeah. We had TIs. We had TIs, and I'll tell ya—

Jim: What is a TI?

David: Tech inspector.

Jim: Okay.

David: And, you know, back in those days we usually had the Spec 5, Spec 6, Spec 7, which they don't anymore. Well, those guys were normally tech inspectors and stuff like that, and they knew their job and, yeah, our aircraft, when they went out of there they were inspected. I felt very confident if anybody got in one of those aircraft. And we had all Hueys, some Chinooks, they only fixed—and we had some Otters and some Beavers, and oh, some Bird Dogs.

Jim: Did you make an effort to make them look like they weren't patched? Were they painted over?

David: Yeah. Yeah. They were. I'm trying to think of the type of the spray you put on between the metals to make sure there is no fusion there. Yeah, I'd say they looked good. I'd say they did pretty nice work.

Jim: Is there any one damaged aircraft that sticks out in your mind?

David: Well, I remember a Beaver one time and—

Jim: Explain what a Beaver is too, please.

David: A Beaver is a fixed-wing aircraft, a big fixed-wing aircraft. Sometimes you'll see 'em nowadays like in Alaska and stuff where they fly people back in hunting and things like that, and Beavers and Otters were big, slower, fixed-wing aircraft. But we got mortared one time around seven days in a row, and I remember one of those Beavers looked like a screen door. I mean, it had so many holes in it there was just no way to start fixing it unless you wanted to peel it down and reskin it.

Jim: Is that what you had to do?

David: No. They sent it out to a higher echelon. They sling-loaded it out with a Hook and—which is a Chinook, by the way, and—

Jim: Okay. Have you got any experiences as a door gunner that you could relate to us?

David: Well, the big thing when I was a door gunner is every time that we took a load—I remember running out to a place called Dak To and we had like twenty-six aircraft, looked like a big string going out of Pleiku, and I'm pretty sure it was the 4th Division we flew. And I remember always looking at the faces of everybody who climbed on board to see if I recognized them, and we were coming in there and we were probably hovering at six to eight feet and they're jumping over the side because they napalmed the area, but they burned the

stumps off and we couldn't get to the ground. And I remember I watched a couple of Hispanic soldiers and I'll tell you, I thought to myself, buddy, you ought to be jumping, they should be sitting back here, because they were not very big and they had M-60s with bandoleers around them and they were jumping; and they never hesitated, not a hesitation, off over the side. The one funny thing I remember is we came back to Pleiku and the pilot—and I think it was Mr. Cook, I'm not sure—said, "Hand over the brass catcher from the crew chief," to me. And then he told me to pick out a bar, and then he slowed down over the roof and we dumped the brass on the roof. Well, have you ever heard brass hit a tin roof? Well, everybody inside that building was coming out through doors and windows, [Jim laughs] and so that got to be a good thing. If we had a successful mission, we'd kind of pick one and go from there.

Jim: Go from there. It was one of these bars that had Americans as customers?

David: Sure. Oh, yes. Sure.

Jim: Did you receive any particular training as a door gunner?

David: No, comes right out of the basic. You know, if you fired a 60 in basic, gets on there, it's just—no. Different mount is all. And, you know, when you get up there the crew chief shows you, hey, this is how, you know, we string it up through with the ammo, you know, and the guides. And, tell you what, the American soldier has more ingenuity in his little finger than most people have in their whole body. I mean, if there is a way to adjust or build something to make it work better or just make it work period, they'll find that way.

Jim: Okay. And do you have any examples of this ingenuity that stick out, or just everything?

David: It is just I've seen so many aircraft. I've seen aircraft with bomb racks mounted on them. I've seen aircraft with, you know, different configurations to sling a machine gun out the side, you know, and not all those guys had mounts like I had in mine. You see, I was a Slick. We hauled troops, so we had a regular metal mount to hold them up. Some of those guys, they had them strung from the roof, the sides, wherever they could.

Jim: Did you take any fire when you were a door gunner?

David: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we did. The funny thing I always remember is it always seemed that if a tracer round was coming, it always seemed like it was coming right at you. I don't know why, but it always seemed like it was big and it was coming towards you.

Jim: So did your ship ever get hit?

David: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Jim: What was your reaction when that happened?

David: Well, you know, I'll tell you, it kind of goes with another story I'll tell you right now, and that's the first time I saw a minigun, and we were going in north of Pleiku, I think it was up around Dak To, somewhere up there. Anyway, we're coming in and we're firing into the hedge line, you know, and the sweat's running and the radios are going wild because somebody's taking fire and da da da da, everybody is talking to everybody, and I'm up on my gun, I'm firing into the hedge line, and all of—I hear this ungodly roar and I think to myself it's over, we're done, they got some weapon we didn't know about, and I've got the chills and I'm sweating all at the same time. And, I don't know, you can't understand it I think unless it happens to you. But this Hog rolled off over the top of us, and a Hog is a Huey gun ship, and he cut loose with that minigun and he was blowin' stuff apart, and I'm just so relieved to see him. But, boy, you talk about—and I think it's the same thing. You have that—those mixed emotions. I was on guard duty one night and a sniper missed me by a short ways, a foot, and I had the same—you know, I wanted to get out of there, he scared the heck out of me, but I wanted to kill him, and it was both things happened at the same time. I wanted so badly to get him but I was just—had that thing like, my God, he almost got me. It's kind of emotions, you know. The human emotions can run pretty wild, I find.

Jim: When you said guard duty, was this perimeter guard?

David: Yeah. Yeah. We had bunkers and we had foxholes down there.

Jim: How often did you have to draw on guard duty?

David: Well, when we got mortared there on a regular basis we could be out there every night or—probably every three nights was the norm, somewhere in there.

Jim: Did you ever have to go out on ambush patrol?

David: No. No.

Jim: Did they have some infantry units do that?

David: Yeah. As far as I know. I don't know.

- Jim: Did your perimeter ever get probed when—
- David: Yes.
- Jim: —you were on guard?
- David: Yeah.
- Jim: What was that like?
- David: Well, I remember one night the VC, they tried to come up the runway, and then come to find out the next morning when they peeled some of the VCs and stuff off the barb wire, I mean it was the barber from the main post, it was the shoe salesman from downtown, it was the—you know, people like that.
- Jim: That is the most common thing, common thread, in these interviews, is the local villagers that—
- David: Yeah, yeah. When we got mortared, I think it was six or seven nights in a row and finally they rolled some tanks in and put ‘em out around the perimeter to kind of give us a break, and a few days later in came—two Montagnard tribesmen came to the main gate and they turned themselves in for carrying the mortars. But more than that, what they told them was that the VC had held their families captive and made the men carry the mortars for them, and after that they proceeded to tell us, you know, when we blow an air horn on a five ton if there was an attack, you know, warn everybody of the attack, and they blew the horn in the middle of the day, and we all ran out to the foxholes and the bunkers, and when the officer of the day came around he told us to turn the guns inward. So we swung all the guns in toward the center of our camp, and then they came down through with these two Montagnard tribesmen, and the construction workers that had built, worked on the runway and things like that, they started pointing out the VC that were full-time construction guys working inside, and that's how come they were so accurate with their mortars, because they had it all stepped off.
- Jim: Uh-huh. What happened with those people that were identified as VCs?
- David: The last I saw they were dragging them out of culverts and, you know, tying them up, throwing them on trucks and—
- Jim: Give them to the ARVN?

David: I don't know. And the worst part of all is we just—the new XO [executive officer], who had did some wheeling and dealing in Qui Nhon somewhere and traded something and he got us a Quonset hut so we finally had a decent bathroom—you know, we still had to slide the barrels underneath and drag them out and burn them, but we had this neat Quonset hut. The first three rounds hit that Quonset hut, and the big joke with us guys was why couldn't they hit the chow hall? [both laugh] You know, why couldn't—if they want to wreck our morale, hit our brand-new outhouse, and there stood the chow hall, though our cooks did not think much humor in it, but we did.

Jim: I would think the cooks wouldn't like it.

David: Oh, man.

Jim: Do you have any other memorable experiences?—[**End of Tape 1, Side 1**]—I asked you if you had any other interesting experiences that we haven't talked about.

David: Well, you know, there are so many. I'll tell you one of the saddest ones I had was we had a young guy from the Dakotas and he was going to go home and he only had a short time before he was leaving, and he always talked about his little brother, and his little brother was about a foot taller than him and was with the infantry, and he was so proud of him. And I'm on guard duty one night, and the little brother had only been in country a couple months, and there's a big commotion up around the tents, and this is like I say maybe a few days before he's supposed to go home, and his brother got killed, and they came to tell him and ask him to escort the body home. And that was one of those things that, you know, will never go away, you'll never forget it. It's just like how can that happen to a guy that was that good a guy? But other things was, you know, having Christmas when it's a hundred and some degrees and the sand is blowing and you're looking around going, you know, how can this be Christmas when it's such an ungodly place to be in and conditions—

Jim: Did they have any show for you at Christmas?

David: Well, they had two shows. When I first got there Bob Hope came up into the Pleiku air base, and they decided that the young guys—the new guys went last time so they'll let the older guys go this time, okay. So then when I hit my extension Bob Hope came again, and since the older guys went last time they let the young guys go this time. So you know how that works?

Jim: [laughs] Yes.

- David: Ann-Margaret came over to the base and I think because they were flying her somewhere in a helicopter, and I was five feet from the side of the Jeep as she drove down through, and I remember that very clearly, surrounded by—
- Jim: Did she look pretty good?
- David: To tell you the truth, no, she did not. She looked like a very tired person who had traveled a long ways and spent a lot of hours in pretty difficult conditions, but to come over there I guess is, says something about her right there. But she was surrounded by MPs and dogs with great big heads on them, and I wasn't getting any closer than that.
- Jim: [laughs] Okay. Did you have any contact with civilians when you were there?
- David: Oh, yeah. I mean, naturally we had a lot of them working on the base, and I went up to negotiate with the mama sans to come down and wash our clothes and stuff, and I sat there for an hour with my hands trying to talk to them about, you know, a wage and things like this, and I felt very frustrated. We finally got some hired, and then what I come to find out, these ladies were a lot smarter and they knew a lot more English than I realized. And, yeah, they were—We had a mama san Thon[?] for fifteen months, took care of my—our clothes and our hootch and everything, and she had a baby in the middle, and she took not more than two days off. And every time it came a holiday or something, when we got goodies and stuff, we always loaded up mama san Thon to haul stuff home to her family, and yeah, she was a pretty loyal little servant. And, you know, people always—you know, they were friendly and everything, but those same friendly people that smiled to us and talked to us, a lot of them got picked off the concertina wire after an attack. So, you know, the same old thing, who are they? Who are they?
- Jim: So it would be fair to say you didn't trust them, then?
- David: Definitely not. I joked with my buddy Hannah 'cuz he got a shave on the main post from the one barber. He nicked him and his face swelled up immensely, and then they made sure the medics came in, and then they got some disinfectant and stuff. And I always joked before because when they cut your hair with those hand clippers, I said he has got to be a VC because he's pulling half my hair out. Well, come to find out he was, he was one of them.
- Jim: Did you have any contact with the VC?
- David: No, I mean other than the ones I just talked about who were working there. Umm, well, you know, if we went on a mission, sure.

- Jim: Did you see any NVA, North Vietnam Army, people too or didn't you?
- David: Tell you the truth, once you do an air assault I didn't look to see who they were. I had so much on my mind and so many things to do.
- Jim: What went through your mind when you were doing an air assault?
- David: [pause] I have to stop and think about it, you know. When I came in I was just locked onto that hedge line and just getting' ready to fire off that first burst and just lay down suppressive fire, hit the ground, make sure everybody is off, you know, and up and out of there. I mean it was just like "bang, bang, bang," and everything kind of went like clockwork.
- Jim: Were any helicopters ever shot down—
- David: Oh, sure.
- Jim: —on these assaults?
- David: Yeah.
- Jim: Do you have any reaction about that?
- David: Oh, the same thing, you know. So-and-so went down, where is he, you know, who is going back in, is somebody going back in to get the crew, you know, things like that. But, you know, like everything in the military, that was pretty well laid out. Once we come out of there, yeah, we banked it whatever direction we were normally going to and then depending what the plan was, you know, the last chock out would maybe loop back and make the run in for the crew or whatever depending if they could get in or out.
- Jim: What's a chock?
- David: Well, a chock is your aircraft lined up like one, two, three, and four, chock 1, chock 2, chock 3. It's just your position on flights. So when you say, "This is chock 6," you are back on the right-hand side a ways probably.
- Jim: Did you have any good-luck charms or superstitions when you were in Vietnam?
- David: You know what? I really didn't. I really didn't. I never—you know, I always had my chain/cross, same as I—but not like I did in Iraq. [laughs] I had plenty of them over there.

- Jim: Okay. We've talked now a little bit about your Vietnam experience. We talked about climate, smell, and terrain. Do you have anything else that you would like to add to that?
- David: Well, it's funny because, you know, really up in the highlands—the highlands got some beautiful country, they really do, you know, because it's a lot greener up there. It's a lot—the temperatures—I mean we hit up over a hundred a lot of times but it's a lot more vegetation. But the other thing is, there's a lot of clay up there, so when the rains hit they run off, it runs off something fierce. We did have two Hawaiians in our group, and we did get a pig, and they were going to cook it for us. And they dug this big trench, we all dug and worked, and we put the leaves on, we put the pig in, and then they burned it to a crisp because it is clay. It's not sand like in Hawaii. So then we used to tell them we didn't think they were really Hawaiians, they lied to us.
- Jim: [laughs] Were you adequately supplied when you were in Vietnam?
- David: No. Nope. I mean—
- Jim: What were the deficiencies?
- David: Aircraft parts. The one thing that bugged me one time is when I went to the Air Force base in Pleiku and there was no parts coming in but they unloaded two ice cream machines. I'll never forget it. It made me so infuriated when I went back home. I'm thinking, man, our guys need parts for their aircraft and where is our priorities or what's going on here? But—
- Jim: Any other things that stand out on the subject of supply?
- David: No, but I think that's something that's an ongoing thing with the military. Trying to get supplies is difficult. But I don't think we were, you know, shorted a terrible amount. I mean, it is just the fact there is a big war going on, there is so many aircraft over there, so many rotor wing aircraft it's hard to keep up. But the Huey was a tough old bird. I'll tell you that thing—we all know that.
- Jim: Do you have any impressions on the weapons, food, and equipment that you were provided?
- David: Well, I ate—what's it called—Hormel makes that stuff. [both talking at once] Spam.

David: I ate Spam seven days in a row. I had it hot. I had it cold. I had it with mustard. I had it with ketchup. I had it with dehydrated potatoes. I mean, we ate some stuff over there I'm thinking to myself, you wouldn't eat that stuff. Well, I'll tell you, yes, you will. When you can take your cornflakes and bend them back and forth and they don't break, yeah. But you know what? If you're hungry, they're good. You know, nowadays they got MREs [meals ready to eat]. I kind of like the old K-rations and stuff. I kind of like that beef with natural juices, you could heat it up. That was not bad.

Jim: Everybody had their favorites.

David: Oh, that's right. And, you know, with what our cooks had to operate with they did okay too. They did the best they could with what they had, but I can't say that I—I had food. I had food. I had uniforms. You know, they'd get wet and they'd stink because with the monsoons they didn't have enough time to dry out, but no, I thought I was fine.

Jim: What was your impression of the leadership that you had?

David: Well, the first one we had, the first Major we had, was terrible. He was really poor. He wanted to get back to France. He was not really concerned about his troops, in my opinion. In fact, there was talk of maybe something should be done with him, and the word got somewhere because they moved him out of there. And then the next two that came in were West Pointers. In fact, the XO I remember best of all because he was on the same team as—remember Carpenter, the lonesome end?

Jim: Yeah.

David: Well, he was a guard on that same football team. I believe his name was Stevenson. And these guys were good leaders. He was a big, tough guy, but I'll tell you what, he was one of those guys that wouldn't mind doing a little trading or things like this to get some other good bennies for his guys, like that Quonset hut for example. So—and as far as my Sergeant, stuff like that, my gruff, old First Sergeant I had there for a while—I'm trying to think of his name; he looked just like Henry Potter on "M.A.S.H." Great First Sergeant, tough old bird that took care of his guys and—so, no, I think overall I had some pretty good guys.

Jim: Was your mission explained to you, why you were there and all of that?

David: I think we pretty well knew our mission when we got there. When I first got there our mission was to fix those aircraft and get them back out there, and we all knew that. And when I got with flying missions with the 119th, I think we

knew what our mission was. Our mission was to lift troops into LZs [landing zones] and pick them out of LZs and do whatever we had to do, and it was pretty clear to me. I gotta say, not like nowadays. When I was a crew chief we'd sit down and we'd know everything about everything, call signs down, everything, but enough.

Jim: Did your view of the war change while you were there?

David: Yeah.

Jim: What was—

David: Yeah.

Jim: How was that?

David: It went downhill. It went downhill. I went over there with like, yeah, okay, we got a war to do. Then it was like, what are we doing? And then it was like, where are we going? And, yeah, I was kind of looking for the light at the end of the tunnel here and I wasn't kind of seeing it. It's kind of like, what's going on next? I tell you the worst day of my life over there was I think—I was on my extension. My buddies had all gone home, the original group I went with, and my commander came out and jumped in his Jeep with the First Sergeant and they took off like my dad used to say, a bat out of hell, went up to the main post, and the word came that Red China had entered the war. Tell you what, it was the lowest day in my life. I was just—I was ready to cry. Man, I thought I'll never see my—and that's how it'd get over there. You know, the rumors fly in those days just like they do in the modern-day Army.

Jim: Okay. Well, did you go R and R?

David: Yeah, went on R and R. My buddy Hannah and I went to Thailand, went to Bangkok, saw kick boxing and cock fighting. And, you know, I was just amazed how you could go back thirty years in time by driving one mile out of Bangkok.

Jim: So I mean it was pretty primitive just like it was—

David: Well, you'd go in and you'd stay at a really nice hotel with a restaurant and elevators, and you'd drive five miles outside of Bangkok and, man, no electricity and the ox are working in the rice paddies and—yeah, I just marvel how you could go so far back in time in such a short space.

Jim: Did you have any in-country R and Rs?

David: No.

Jim: Okay.

David: I had one R and R, and I took that after I'd been there just about a year.

Jim: Okay. How did you get home then? I mean, did you take a boat back or—

David: No. Since I was an individual and, you know, everybody else had rotated out, I came back on an aircraft. They sent me down to Cam Ranh Bay. First I went to Na Trang where I got my Air Medal and things like that, and then they had me scheduled to go out of Cam Ranh Bay. I went down to Cam Ranh Bay in the transit area and was scheduled to get on an aircraft and fly home.

Jim: Did you fly commercial?

David: Flew commercial.

Jim: Where did you land?

David: We landed in Fort Lewis, Washington. I remember flying in over Alaska. I think we refueled in Japan. Yeah, refueled Japan, and I remember coming over Alaska and then down into Fort Lewis, and I got discharged out of Fort Lewis. I lucked out. My buddy Denny Hadine [?] was down in Trang, a kid I went to school with, and so he and I ended up coming back together.

Jim: So then did you return to Wisconsin after you were discharged?

David: Yep.

Jim: Did you come back in uniform?

David: I came back in uniform. I did the usual. I walked through the airports and they looked at me like I had the plague. Nobody spoke to me. Yeah, it was no joyous return, that's for sure.

Jim: How were you received by your friends and family?

David: Just like all my friends and family, you know. They were just the same as they always were and, you know, the tears of joy, the hugs, the, you know, "I was afraid you weren't going to come back," and when I got around my friends most of them or a lot of them apologized because they didn't go and I went. I

remember going to my class reunion. I don't know how many different guys—I think two of us from out of my high school and Duane Olson got killed and I got back.

Jim: Two from Arena High School?

David: Yeah, in the four-year sector that I was in school. Now I know some went afterward, but then it was River Valley.

Jim: What was your reaction to what was going on in Wisconsin when you got back?

David: Well, you know, and I've always felt this way though, we have a right to protest. We have a right to say what we feel and how we feel about it. You know, when it comes to the loss of human lives and stuff and those things, that upsets me, because that same person that gets killed, like what happened at the university, they have a right to their opinion and their life too. But the right to demonstrate and the right to do those things, that's our rights and I don't—I never begrudged them that, I never—

Jim: Okay. What do you think about your Vietnam experience now?

David: Felt like—I don't know. I have mixed emotions. It felt like they took a year out of my life and I'm not sure what for. But you know what? For the experience of being with those people that I served with—and you know what? I had one of them look for me for fifteen years. Heran Jaso looked for me for fifteen years. He called Mazomanie every—

Jim: How do you spell?

David: J-a-s-o.

Jim: J-a-s-o?

David: Yeah. Jaso. Heran.

Jim: H—

David: H-e-r-a-n, Heran.

Jim: Okay.

David: Anyway, he looked for me for fifteen years. He always used to call the operator and say, you know, "I want Dave Hosking in Mazomanie." They'd say, "He's not

there". So finally after fifteen years he said, "Ma'am, you'd better find him because I ain't hanging up this phone until you do." [Jim laughs] So she checked the towns around and she said, "I got one in Black Earth," and he said, "You ain't put him on yet?" I got on the phone and he said to me, "Do you remember Freddy Fender?" because he helped manage Freddy Fender, and he said to me—and we used to say, yeah, in Madison we got a singer, his name is Eddie Windshield and then we got Joe Hood, or we'd make fun of it. Well, Freddy Fender hit it big, and that's the first thing he said, and he said, "I've been looking for you for fifteen years." Every year since then, every Christmas Eve he calls me.

Jim: Is that right?

David: When the phone rings my kids even know. They say, "Dad, that's Jaso." So for those type things they're priceless, and those type things have changed my life, and, you know what, Vietnam changed my life. Vietnam—

Jim: Okay. That was the next question. You must have seen it. [both laughing]

David: No, I didn't. Because it changed my priorities. It changed my priorities. You know, if my wife got upset cooking supper and something burned and she's all upset I'd go, "Wait, wait, wait a minute. That's just—you just burned something, that's all. Let's go get a burger. Don't worry. It's not worth it." If my house burned down, as long as my kids and wife didn't get hurt, it's a house, we can rebuild it. And I watch people get upset over those things and I go, wow, it is not worth going through that.

Jim: Did the Vietnam experience change your attitude towards government, politics, and all of that?

David: No, I can't say it really did. You know, before that I was kind of naive to politics and government, you know, right out of high school. And, you know, the '60s I always thought was a great time in my life. And, you know, when Kennedy came in and stuff I was a big Kennedy guy. I thought there was the new, young guy. I thought we needed some young, fresh person who wanted to do stuff, and he was kind of my hero with these things. But, you know, nowadays is when I am more suspicious of everything. The older I get the more distrusting I get. The older I get the more I'm going why doesn't somebody wake up and get rid of all this pork barrel stuff and get down to taking care of our troops and—

Jim: But you attribute that more to old age, age?

- David: Well, I think it is. Experience is probably the biggest educator in our lives; isn't it?
- Jim: Right. Are you active in any veterans' organizations?
- David: Well, I work for the Vet Center and, you know, it's the perfect job. I mean, I had to get out of the National Guard because I turned sixty, and I didn't miss the National Guard until the next morning. I'm a crew chief. I fly with them, and I love it; the young guys there treat me awesome. So I get a chance to go and work for the Vet Center. I get a chance to be in touch with veterans. I can help veterans. And, I'll tell you what, it's so gratifying. I can't believe I was so lucky to get the job. So, yeah, and I'm in a Legion.
- Jim: What Legion?
- David: The Legion is 313 out of Black Earth.
- Jim: Okay. So you belong to the Vietnam Veterans?
- David: No, I do not.
- Jim: Okay.
- David: No, I do not.
- Jim: Have you gone to any reunions since you've been back?
- David: I have not.
- Jim: Okay. Now I've got to deviate into unplowed territory because you mentioned that you were—
- David: Can I tell you one quick thing?
- Jim: Oh, absolutely.
- David: You know, after Jaso got a hold of me, within ten days I sat on my bed one night from 8:00 at night until 2:00 in the morning and I called the western part of the United States, every state I could try, looking for the guys who I was with over there, and I found about six or seven of them. And I found out that when you tell an operator that you're looking for a Vietnam buddy they will bend over backwards for you. I mean, they would call police stations and say, "Hey, is so-and-so still living in this area?" So it was really pretty remarkable. I mean,

this is a few years ago I did it, but it's pretty remarkable how those people would bend over backwards to help you. But I just had to put that in there. It was so, so neat of them.

Jim: Do you think this is because people would now kind of respect Vietnam Veterans?

David: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I think it is. And I think, you know—I think there was an awful lot of people even back then that respected us. They did not like the war and they did not like what was happening, but I find out no matter what the war is that people may oppose the policy but I think people always support the soldier. Ninety-nine percent do even to this day.

Jim: Yep. Okay. Now, into this new ground, you mentioned National Guard. So when did you go into the National Guard after you left Vietnam?

David: Well, after I left Vietnam I had my fill of war and things like that; and then around 1982, you know, Madison had this aviation unit move in here and started flying over my house and stuff, and finally they landed and they were doing—what's it called—Friend in the Sky, where on the weekends, the holidays, they would help with flying car wreck injuries to the hospital. And I got to meet some of them there, and they left that day and my wife looked at me and she said, "You're going to go back in, aren't you?" And I said, "Yeah, I think I am." So I had a chance to be an Arrow Scout and fly a OH-58 in the Cobra attack mission. And the terrible thing, I was only going back for three or four years just to fly some, but you find out when you get in the National Guard and you get around these young guys that make you feel a lot younger than you are maybe, but they also get that camaraderie. Gosh, I got about six guys out there that are like my inner circle of friends right now that we'd do anything for each other. So when it comes time and you're going to ETS [estimated time of separation] out, it's awful hard to leave. So you end up, the guys go, "Come on guys, let's stick together, you know, we're"—so we did. And I stayed out there for twenty some years, I think it was about twenty-five or twenty-six years, and when I left it was tough to leave because a lot of those guys are still there, though a couple-three left after we got back.

Jim: So you still see some of these people socially?

David: Oh, yeah, I mean we're on the phone. We had a kid out in—Scott Lancaster is a forester out in Spring Green, so naturally we called him "Tree Hugger," and Hugger, he calls me every so often, "Hoskell, what are you up to?" Or Mike Murray, a young pilot works for Vogel Construction, he's their HR guy, he calls me, "Hosking, what are we doing? Hey, you want to grab lunch?" or da da,

"Yeah." Ziegler from Waunakee, Nieguard from Stoughton, these guys are my inner circle. These are the guys that, yeah, they'll always be there if I need them.

Jim: You did go to Iraq, right?

David: Yeah, I did.

Jim: Okay. Could you just touch on that briefly? I'm not going to ask you any questions because I don't—

David: Brutal.

Jim: Brutal?

David: Brutal. The temperature, the sand, sandstorms. It's brutal.

Jim: What about the equipment? How did the equipment stand up?

David: Well, our equipment's good. I'll tell you what, I'll put my National Guard unit against any unit around. We have technicians full time there. But you got to notice, the Guard guys is a mixture of guys in their twenties, thirties, forties. I was fifty-nine and a half when I came home, and those guys are—they're mature. They take care of the equipment. My aircraft would not leave the ground if it wasn't ready to fly. The people in charge, the tech inspectors that inspected those aircraft, would not let that aircraft fly unless it was capable of flying.

Jim: What kind of plane were you on?

David: Blackhawks.

Jim: Blackhawk.

David: U-860 Blackhawks. But again too, if we don't stop wasting our money on more dress uniforms like I hear they're going to come out with and stuff like that and don't put it into radios and good equipment—our Hawks need better radios, we know it. They malfunction. We're in a flight of three and we have trouble getting a hold of another aircraft and we're only, you know, a quarter mile away, it's terrible.

Jim: As a crew chief did they function as a door gunner in a Blackhawk—

David: Yeah.

Jim: —like they did in a Huey?

David: Yep, same thing.

Jim: Was there any comparable experiences functioning as a door gunner in these two wars?

David: Umm, I think with the speed of the Hawk it's a lot more difficult because it is so hard to hold a gun straight. I mean it just is. I mean, we're cruising along at a hundred and forty knots. You stick your arm out the window of your car at sixty miles an hour and see if you can hold it straight. Well, then you double that and more and see if you can hold a broomstick out the window; you'll find it's really—it's hard, it's difficult. But they're a good bird. They're a good aircraft. They're twin engine, and if you take care of them they're pretty tough.

Jim: How would you compare your experiences between Vietnam and Iraq?

David: I can't. This is not Vietnam. This is not. The amount of deaths in Vietnam and stuff, it's different. The only way it's similar is you can't tell who the enemy is. That's the similarity. And, you know, I don't want to down-play the loss of any human life because these young men over there that are losing their lives, it just turns my stomach every day, because I know somebody's family is going to get just torn apart tonight, but you can't compare the two because what they lose in Iraq in a week you'd lose in the morning in Vietnam, maybe in an hour.

Jim: Have we covered everything that we should cover?

David: I think so. We covered an awful lot of stuff. I just—you know, just probably the last thing, if not least, is you know, the camaraderie and the closeness of the Vietnam veteran to this day, even though they're home. And if one Vietnam vet sees another one, he will jump in to help him. I see that there at the Vet Center. I watch one walk in and say, hey, we got to find so-and-so, I can't find him, and you know, it's really—it's special. And I don't know if the Iraqi war veteran will be that way or not. In my Guard unit they are. There are certain guys that, yeah. But I don't think—

Jim: You said you've just started at the Vet Center. So will you be doing some work with Vietnam veterans?

David: We always do. Yeah. I mean, we're a Vet Center, and veterans we're about. When I go out—yeah, we still. World War II veterans, Korean veterans. Korean veterans are my big heroes. They really are, because I think the ugly Vietnam War made us forget about the Korean veterans, and when you look at the

conditions they fought in and what they went through, my gosh, never forget a veteran, period. The thing I'm saying, I love the Vietnam Memorial but we should have built a World War II memorial first and then the Korean memorial. Honor them as they serve; I've always felt that way. And I'll tell you the truth, my biggest heroes are the people who stay behind, the moms, the dads, the wives, the husbands, that never know if you're safe or not, and even if you're safe for that night or that week, they still sit at home and worry. That's probably the toughest spot of all. So—

Jim: Well, I think that's it then, Dave. Thank you ever so much, and thank you for your service.

[End of Interview]