

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
JAMES E. ROWSAM
Engineer, Army, Korean War.
Engineer, Army, Vietnam War.

2001

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Rowsam, James E., (1930-2002). Oral History Interview, 2001.

User Copy: 2 sound cassettes (ca. 105 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 2 sound cassettes (ca. 105 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 2 videorecordings (ca. 105 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

James E. Rowsam, a Plainfield, Wisconsin native, discusses his career in the Army, including service in the Korean War with the 64th Engineer Maintenance Company, the Vietnam War with the 826th Ordnance Company, and the Army Reserves. Rowsam tells of enlisting in the Army, basic training at Breckenridge (Kentucky), and struggling to be assigned to the Corps of Engineers. Sent as a replacement to the Headquarters & Service Company, 7th Infantry, 13th Combat Engineer Battalion in Sendai (Japan), he discusses heavy equipment mechanics school, repairing and operating heavy equipment, rebuilding a Japanese school, and assisting with English lessons. Rowsam comments on going through amphibious training and being attached to the Marine Corps. He details what he was doing when the war started, being sent back to his unit in Sapporo, and running across a woman from his hometown who was working for the Department of the Army. He mentions leaving Japan for Inchon (Korea), turning back from the landing to pick up ammunition for a firing battery, being hit in the head by a falling ceiling beam, and being treated at an aide station by a tired corpsman. After catching up with his unit near Seoul, Rowsam touches on working with bridge trucks, repairing roads, catching frostbite, and landing at Iwon. He tells of trying to heat up frozen food, finding an artillery tractor abandoned in a ditch, and constant stress. Rowsam describes fighting up to the Yalu River with A Company of the 17th Regiment, being wounded in the foot by shrapnel, and being evacuated from Hungnam by a British cargo ship. Returned to the Headquarters & Service Company, he refers to work in the "Iron Triangle" region including surviving a truck accident and losing new replacement troops to a mortar. He touches on his rotation home and suffering from malaria. After having his service date extended a year, Rowsam talks about serving as field first sergeant of the 62nd Engineer Maintenance Company at Fort Bragg (North Carolina), practicing heavy equipment airdrops, taking an advanced diesel engine rebuild course at Fort Belvoir (Virginia), and nearly getting court-martialed for teaching a trick of adding diesel to radiators when no antifreeze is available. He recalls an emotional meeting on the street with a soldier whom he'd saved from freezing to death in Korea. Rowsam speaks of getting discharged, marrying a nurse, having problems with the leg that had been frostbitten, and using the GI Bill to attend college and graduate school. He comments on joining the active Army Reserves and being assigned to the 826th Ammunition Ordnance Company in Madison (Wisconsin). Rowsam recalls hearing about his unit's activation in 1968 on the radio, supervising a convoy to Fort Knox (Kentucky), and having jungle training. He describes going overseas aboard the *SS Louise Lykes* as the equipment escort and, after fixing their

hydraulic hatch cover, teaching hydraulics lessons to the sailors every morning. He details his duties with the 3rd Ordnance Company at Long Binh (Vietnam) doing maintenance and loading ammunition onto trucks and helicopter cargo nets. Rowsam reflects on living in tents, sneakily building a brick building for the unit during the night, switching paperwork during an impromptu inspection, nearly getting in trouble when his men were caught playing horseshoes instead of working, and controversy over a “stolen” grader. He highlights the competence and ingenuity of his unit. He speaks about visiting with the crew of the *SS Louise Lykes* and giving them a pallet of beer he’d discovered addressed to the Marines and camouflaged as soap. Rowsam tells of rocket attacks, a Viet Cong attempt to infiltrate the camp, and discovering a spider hole near the motor pool. He describes recurring problems with malaria. After his enlistment was up, Rowsam touches on having trouble finding all his paperwork, doing special projects at Fort McCoy, and recording the history of the 826th Ordnance Company.

Biographical Sketch:

Rowsam (1930-2002) entered the Army in 1949, served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and retired from the Army Reserves in 1990. He earned a Master’s degree in industrial engineering from the Stout Institute (Wisconsin), taught engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for seven years, and worked with expanding engineering programs at the Madison Area Tech College until his retirement in 1990.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2001

Transcribed by Patrick F. Gould, WVM Volunteer, 2010

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2010

Interview Transcript:

James: August, 8th of August, 2001. Talking to Jim Rowsam. Where were you born sir?

Rowsam: Plainfield, Wisconsin.

James: And when was that?

Rowsam: 14 February, 1930.

James: When did you enter military service?

Rowsam: January, 1949.

James: What was the occasion? Were you drafted?

Rowsam: No, I enlisted.

James: You were, they were threatening to draft you and that was why you enlisted?

Rowsam: Well, they were, the draft was still going on and I came home from working in Montana with the Corps of Engineers on the Fort Peck project out there. So, I came home and didn't find a job and looked around and initially enlisted in the Marine Corps. But they told me I'd have to wait six months before I could go to basic training, so I went to the Navy, the next day. And they said, "We'd like to have you, passed everything, ahh you'll have to wait six to eight months." So, I went home again and two days later I went to the Army and that afternoon I was on a train for Breckenridge, Kentucky.

James: They weren't going to waste any time.

Rowsam: No.

James: That afternoon?

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: Incredible. So what part of the Army did you run into? Was that motorized, in Breckenridge?

Rowsam: No, that was actually where they first activated the 101st Airborne as a training division. So that was a basic training operation. And I went

through eight weeks of basic there and got a delay en route and went directly overseas.

James: But you were an infantry? You were assigned to infantry?

Rowsam: Well, I had enlisted and argued that I wanted to be in the Corps of Engineers. And that presented some problems because I had to fight for it all the time. At Breckenridge they found out I had gone through and graduated from Acoin Electric School in Chicago. And they wanted to put me in the Signal Corps. So, I came up on orders a couple of times and had to go and argue. And I did have a document that indicated that I was to be assigned to the Corps of Engineers. So, they turned around then and sent me to Oakland, California and the next thing I was on a troop transport going to Japan.

James: In an engineering outfit?

Rowsam: No, it was a replacement.

James: You didn't have much influence, did you? Every request you made was turned down.

Rowsam: [laughs] Yeah, it got worse. I got to Japan and was sent to a replacement depot finally at Sendai, Japan. And in Sendai, I came up and they would fall us out in the morning and call off various people to do various things. My disadvantage was that I hadn't gone for advanced training. So, the thing that turned up was that every morning that the First Sergeant was trying to make so many people make a quota to go to different units and three times he tried to put me in the artillery. And I kept arguing against it and there were five other people that were also supposed to be for the Corps of Engineers. And we stayed there nearly a week. Finally, one morning an old two and half [ton] truck pulled into the compound area and everybody else was gone and a little Chinese Major, Major Chin got out, talked to the First Sergeant and we were loaded on the two and a half and sent to the 13th Engineer Combat Battalion, Sendai.

James: Finally?

Rowsam: Finally.

James: I didn't write down exactly when you went into the service. Month and year?

Rowsam: January, 1949.

James: One forty-nine?

- Rowsam: Yeah, I did this actually, I started with the Marines in forty-eight.
- James: When you got to Japan, we're about, what, eight months into the year?
- Rowsam: Well, no, I got to Japan. That was in the spring of forty-nine.
- James: So, moved right along.
- Rowsam: Yeah, so January, February, March, and then April and that was in May---
- James: When you got to Japan?
- Rowsam: Yeah.
- James: So now you are finally with the Corps of Engineers.
- Rowsam: Right.
- James: What was their task?
- Rowsam: Well, combat engineers are assigned to an infantry division and there is one company that's assigned to each infantry regiment. And so, I was sent initially to Headquarters & Service Company. And then, that was kind of the pool so we were, I was assigned as a truck driver there while they waited for a school quota for the heavy equipment mechanics school in southern Japan. So I was sent down there and graduated from that---
- James: You have to hold it right there and tell me what specifically what you learned.
- Rowsam: Well, it was heavy equipment mechanic on dozers, cranes---
- James: [Indecipherable] and that stuff?
- Rowsam: That stuff and what the combat engineers used a lot of dozers and for filling in mine craters and shell holes and all that stuff and building roads. We also had graders for doing landing strips and one thing or another. So, I graduated from there at the top of the class and got back to the 13th and so they---
- James: An extra stripe by then.
- Rowsam: Well, it was coming, yeah. So, I got along pretty good with that and then because of the school record that I made, I worked in various capacities around there by that time I was, well I was a regular army corporal by

then, with a little warrant that indicated that in those days, that you were, that was the beginning of the first three grader line.

James: I want to ask you one thing before I forget. Did that teach you how to repair all of this equipment or just drive it?

Rowsam: Yes, no repair. Repair and operate.

James: Got it.

Rowsam: So that was what I worked on, and in most instances in Sendai, Japan, we were involved in a number of work projects which gave training to the operators and the mechanics and we would be sent somewhere to do an operation. One time I was assigned with a dozer and two vehicles and two other men and we spent a number of days building a, a leveling out an area on the side of a hill to build an addition on a school. And it was a very interesting operation because I ultimately spent my entire career as a school teacher. That was the first time I ever taught a class. There was a young lady there teaching English to a group of young children.

James: Japanese?

Rowsam: Yeah, all Japanese.

James: And the lady was English?

Rowsam: No, she was Japanese, but she spoke English. And she came out and asked me to speak to her class. And as a corporal, I was in charge, and I refused the first day. I was busy, I was greasy, dirty, having trouble with the power control unit on one dozer. She, every day came politely and asked me, and these little kids would come behind and stand there and look at me. So, I relented and went in there and I still remember that after all these years. When I went into the class, I, it was in the fall and it was getting pretty cool. But, they all stood up and bowed to me in traditional courtesy. And they had a lesson on George Washington, a little book. And so she wanted me to read that lesson to them. And I did that, very carefully and slowly and one thing or other. Then I, it was time for them to go and so on, and the next day I found out what that involved. Every time I tried to do anything in that class yard out there, or school compound, when they had recess, all those little folks were after me to talk to them [laughs]. They followed me. And it worked out very well.

James: Oh, I'll bet that was fun

Rowsam: And she was so appreciative of that, but as with most things, a few days later we were gone and never got to see any of them.

- James: Oh my, never went back?
- Rowsam: Never got to go back.
- James: Well, that was as delightful experience.
- Rowsam: It was and it had made an impression on me. And I thought about it many times over the years.
- James: Now, that took you through the winter?
- Rowsam: Well, in the, I was sent off again. The Seventh Division was being changed around and there was a change in the location, so from Sendai they were moving to Sapporo, which is on the upper island on Hokkaido. And before we were to move I was pulled out and sent to school again. And, late in the winter, I was sent on a school assignment and attached to the Marine Corps. Finally made it with the Marines again. Always tangled with Marines, all the time I was in the Army. As a, I went through amphibious training and it involved amphibious landings and it involved securing cargo and one thing and another and getting it into landing barges and into landing craft.
- James: Something you weren't trained for at all.
- Rowsam: No. I had no idea what---
- James: And how many soldiers were there TDY?
- Rowsam: I was the only one out of my unit, but there were some other ones there, and I suppose there were maybe---
- James: Each one brought something special for the Marines that they didn't have?
- Rowsam: Well, and the Marines were getting us to the point so that we were qualified to load cargo and equipment and get it ashore in an amphibious invasion. We had no idea we were going to be involved in anything like Inchon.
- James: Did anyone suggest that you were going to be transferred to the Marines?
- Rowsam: No.
- James: You were still paid for or paid by the Army?
- Rowsam: Yep. When they got around to it. They kind of forgot about us.

- James: I was going to say, once you are on TDY, boy, it's hard to get paid.
- Rowsam: Yeah. But during that time in the spring we were finishing up and the Korean War started the twenty-fifth of June. And so, I had a number of friends, in fact, several I had gone through basic training with that were in the 24th and they were just a short distance from Agashu Mizer [??] down there where I was doing the training. So, I went to see them on that Sunday afternoon. I got a ride over there. And they were all concerned about what was going to happen. Well then the next week, they were alerted, loaded, and sent in. They were the first ones there. In fact, one made it and one didn't. One was killed on the Pusan perimeter. A boy named Anderson, was a good friend of mine. But I volunteered to go with them thinking it would be a big lark and it would only last a few days and because of that training, no, would not happen. I was sent back to the Seventh Division.
- James: Back to your basic unit?
- Rowsam: Yep, back to the Thirteenth Engineers and I rode a train clear back up, clear back to Hokkaido and they had moved while I was down south, so when I caught up with them again, they were in Sapporo on Hokkaido.
- James: You were in the Twenty-fourth Division?
- Rowsam: No, no, Seventh.
- James: Seventh Division.
- Rowsam: The other folks were---
- James: Thirteenth Engineers were in the Seventh Division?
- Rowsam: Yep. Thirteenth Engineer Combat Battalion.
- James: Okay, so then what?
- Rowsam: Well, we got back up there and all kinds of things started happening. We were doing some training and there was a due to the war time situation a lot of people were pulled out of those units---
- James: Because they needed them?
- Rowsam: Yes. And they were sent to, as replacement to Korea. But they tried to keep us somewhat together. There were some people that were pulled out of, we had three companies. We were all short and so we had A Company,

B Company, C Company, and Headquarters & Service [Company]. And at that time there were only three regiments. There was the 17th, 31st, and 32nd Regiments, so that worked alright. They started putting together another company of combat engineers which would be D Company. And it was way towards the end of the war before D Company was ever completely put together. They pulled all those people out and sent them to form another combat engineer battalion. But we worked at various things up there readied a training area and one thing or another. And we were way in the northern end so, that was entirely different country. I remember going up there on the train.

James: In northern Japan? Mountainous?

Rowsam: Yeah, very mountainous. And that was the Ainu country. And while I was there that summer they had the last of the beer festivals that the Ainu people had up there. And I learned about that and I didn't know anything about that. On the train, I was dumbfounded being from Wisconsin, I was riding this train along, looked out the window, saw a heard of Holstein cows, and I thought, what in the world. [laughs]. What's happening to me? But I finally got there. Had an interesting experience on the way up there. I stopped to change trains in Tokyo and while I was there I went off, I had a two hours, and I just wanted to walk around and get some exercise. And it was right next to the Ginza [??] area. And I walked over there and was just walking around in some of the open air shops and I saw a red haired lady there. And for some reason, I turned and looked again and it was a girl that had gone to school in Plainfield, two years ahead of me in school. Name was Eddy Pratt. She was looking at some jewelry in a little tray that a Japanese man had set on the counter. I walked up to her and said, "Hello Eddy." And she let out a scream. The little Japanese man didn't know what had happened. He grabbed everything. Put it underneath the counter. She gave me a big hug. We talked for a bit and she said, "Please come and see me." She said she was a Department of the Army civilian and worked for general headquarters in Tokyo. She said, "I have a jeep. I have a driver." She said, "I can show you all of the sites of Tokyo." And I thought, "Wow." I went the rest of the way with a smile on my face. I could never get a leave. I never got to go back [laughs].

James: That's the last you saw of her?

Rowsam: Until I came home and many years later I saw her.

James: Grand opportunity faded as fast as it---

Rowsam: Faded as they arrived. I managed to do a lot of interesting things and had a lot of good experiences. I had some very bad ones too, but I always got tangled up. I liked people and we did a lot of interesting things. I was

doing some work on, again with the engineer equipment for a building project and I got to meet a lady who was actually, there were two, twin sisters and their father was the editor of the newspaper in Sapporo. And their mother was American and they had gone back to Japan prior to the war and got trapped there and stayed through it. So, I was invited to their home to meet her parents and discuss how things had gone during the war. Got sent TDY and never got to do that. So, after the Korean War got, wound up then, June, July, in August, later part of July, I got very involved---

James: '53?

Rowsam: No, this was in—

James: Oh, you said, “wound up.”

Rowsam: Well, it wasn't the end. It was winding up and we were getting more people over there all the time. I perhaps, confused you. But we had to move all of our equipment from Hokkaido down the coast of Japan to the staging area on the side of Mount Fuji. And I was involved on LSTs [Navy Landing Ship Tank Ship] and LCMs [Landing Craft Medium] and everything else. A lot of sea time.

James: This was when you were moving the Division over to Pusan?

Rowsam: Well, before we went and made the invasion to Pusan. We went to the staging area at the, on the side of Mount Fuji. Got everything down there. Got it gathered up. Went through a typhoon. Had all kinds of experiences. Then loaded a lot of it on a train, sent it over. Then they took, they didn't have the dock facilities to take it all there. We loaded what we could aboard ship there. And then got ready to go and make Inchon.

James: And when was that, about September?

Rowsam: September 1950.

James: I got there in October.

Rowsam: Did you? Well, had some interesting times there. We made it to Inchon. Things were kind of scrambled up. I made a, went down the landing net on the side of a troop transport. Got into a landing craft, started for the beach. And we got in a ways, and all at once, our landing craft, the only one out of these going in, started to make a U turn and it went right back out to sea. And we thought, what in the world is going on?

James: Didn't you ask the coxswain?

- Rowsam: He didn't have any idea either. He knew that we had to find a ship out there.
- James: I mean, what made him turn?
- Rowsam: Because he got communication on a radio. They had a firing battery that got ashore and they were short of ammunition. They sent us out, instead of going down the landing net is difficult enough. Going up one with full combat pack and rifle is worse. We went up. Got onto that old liberty [ship] and had to sling 155 [mm] rounds out of the hold in a cargo net.
- James: Put it all back aboard the ship?
- Rowsam: We had to put it, no we had to take it off the ship and they put, barges came alongside and they were hauling it into those firing batteries. We stayed on there, that was in the morning, and we stayed on there until just about dusk. They took us into shore then and we got into the beach. Of course, it was all secured then, but everybody had moved up.
- James: But you went into the harbor?
- Rowsam: Yeah. Right by that big sign that used to say, "Inchon: Best damned point in the Pacific."
- James: Our hospital ship was parked right near there.
- Rowsam: So, we got there and it took us a day and half to find our unit. In the mean time, I got hit in the head [laughs].
- James: Some piece of equipment?
- Rowsam: No, that night we realized we were going to be in trouble just because there was some, a little bit of resistance in various places, pockets, but most people had moved on through. So we decided to hole up. And we just, we found a couple of old buildings and we stopped there.
- James: In Pusan [sic] or outside?
- Rowsam: This is Inchon.
- James: Oh.
- Rowsam: This is after the invasion of Inchon. Okay. See we were going in there. And so, that's why they needed that artillery on that Wolmi Do battery out there.

- James: I'm sorry. You confused me. Because I thought when you went to Korea, you went to Pusan and then at the perimeter. I didn't realize that you were making this---
- Rowsam: No, I made, once I made the, once they had me though that amphibious training that was my forte all the way through for the rest of it. But then once we got in there, I laid down and fell asleep. We were beat. We hadn't had anything. We had emergency rations with us. But, we didn't know where anybody was or no one could tell us.
- James: So you came in on the ingoing tide?
- Rowsam: Yep.
- James: That was always the problem because---
- Rowsam: Yeah, 30 feet.
- James: We lost some people who were in small boats out in the water later at night and they shouldn't have been out there. And their engine quit and there was nothing you could do, they got swept out to sea. That tide went at eight knots or nine knots or whatever it was and there was no way to save them.
- Rowsam: Well, we were aware of the fact that that wasn't a good place to be coming in there in the dark. But, we did stay there and I got the guys to hole up and I said let's just stay here until daylight till we can figure out what we're doing. But just before daylight, this building that had been hit by shell fire and I got, I was sleeping without my helmet on. I was laying with just my back against a wall, and a big beam came down and just struck me a glancing blow on top of the head.
- James: Lucky it didn't kill you.
- Rowsam: Darn near, but in the morning it was just starting to get light.
- James: You didn't have your helmet on?
- Rowsam: No, I was asleep.
- James: Against regulations.
- Rowsam: Well, I did a lot of things that stretched it a little bit. But they took me down the street and there was a Marine corpsman that was at an aid station down there. And—

- James: That's the Charlie pier. I know where it is.
- Rowsam: Yeah, well anyway, they dragged me over there after this thing had cut my scalp open and everything. I was blood all over a mess. But they grabbed one of those old WWII--
- James: Packs?
- Rowsam: Yeah, bandages. Poured the sulfur powder on, tied the thing under my chin, and took me over there. This corpsman, looked at me and said, "Oh man!" he said, "I don't have anything left." He said, "I don't have any morphine. I don't have anything."
- James: Morphine? You needed a suture.
- Rowsam: Yeah, but anyway he said, "I'm going to have to cut this mess all away." And he took out a little bottle of Santori whisky and he said, "Here." And he unscrewed it and he started to hand it to me and he said, "I haven't had any sleep for a couple of days. I need this worse than you do." And he did that. Drank it right down and he took a scissors and started cutting all of that matted hair off, and I passed out [laughs]. But when he got me put back together, he says, "Where's your rifle?" I still had it. Boy, if you could walk, you went back, you know, so I had a big white bandage around my head.
- James: So, did he sew up your wound?
- Rowsam: Yep, he sewed it up. Did a pretty good job. And for drinking that Santori whisky, that was bad stuff anyway. But, sent up, and so I plugging along, we're going along single file along this road going up.
- James: Looking for what?
- Rowsam: For our unit. We knew that they had gone inland and we had to get up far enough to find somebody to tell us which way they had gone. And everybody was headed toward Yeongdeungpo on the south side of Seoul. But anyway, as we were going along, my head was hurting something terrible. I had my helmet hooked on my pack and I looked down at my rifle and the front sight was missing. And I thought, this may be a long war [laughs].
- James: It wasn't starting out very well.
- Rowsam: It didn't start very well. But anyway, probably on that somewhere, banging around on that ship---

- James: I suppose it just caught and then just flipped off.
- Rowsam: Yeah. But anyway, we finally caught up with them. Then we went up, they were going to try and capture Seoul, of course. And we got up to Yeongdeungpo and I was working on equipment. We had bridge trucks, Bailey bridge trucks and a lot of equipment. And from there, as soon as they had gotten into Seoul, they turned us around and sent us south. And the 7th Division then, or a lot of it, went south instead of going back, the Marines secured Seoul and north of that area.
- James: Well then you had the North Koreans trapped then?
- Rowsam: Yeah, that was what we were trying to do. So, we started south on some roads that were just barely wide enough to drive anything. So, we build roads and worked our, night---
- James: What building?
- Rowsam: To get those trucks on.
- James: That wasn't on your program when you were in Japan.
- Rowsam: Not, all of that. But we worked on that and got all the way down to Pusan and loaded up again and were sent to do the invasion up at, the Marines were to go to Wonsan (North Korea). And we were to go to another little beach farther up. And that was a place called Iwon. And that is where we went again.
- James: Now, when you came down to Pusan, did you have some time off to put into camp or not? And you are still with the 13th Regiment?
- Rowsam: The 13th Engineer.
- James: How many, how big an outfit was that, roughly?
- Rowsam: Well, it wasn't all that big.
- James: Couple hundred?
- Rowsam: Oh, yeah, there would have been, probably in a, if you took the battalion, you had eighty to a hundred people in a company. Like A Company, B Company, C Company, but not all of them were Americans. We had, they had filled us up, in the line companies with conscripts off the streets of Pusan when we were in the staging areas. And they were, they came to us, Koreans, who had been picked up who had nothing but a tin can with a

piece of wire in it for a mess kit. And they put them in our companies to fill up the line companies.

James: With zero understanding of English?

Rowsam: Yep, they couldn't speak English.

James: At all?

Rowsam: No, we, a lot of us who had been in the Army of occupation for awhile, spoke some Japanese. And they hated that when we spoke Japanese to them, but---

James: Well, they hated the Japanese. Naturally of course.

Rowsam: Yep, but that was why, and then we were short all the way through because we lost a lot of those people after the thing got hot. But when we got back down there we loaded right aboard ship. And that was a tough deal because that was in the fall of---

James: Getting cold out?

Rowsam: Yeah, but it wasn't at Pusan yet. It was pretty hot aboard those troop transports out there and cargo ships. And, they couldn't send us north because of the mines up there. So, both Wonsan and the harbor north of there were mined and that is where all the controversy happened. They even put Japanese minesweepers in there with Japanese nationals there. And they lost a couple of them. But, they finally got that squared away and we went back in at Iwon, there was no resistance---

James: Iwon, E, W, O, N (sic.)?

Rowsam: Yeah, and that was north aways. And as soon as we got in there we ran into some problems after that.

James: That was north of Wonsan.

Rowsam: Yep.

James: Okay, I know where that is.

Rowsam: And then we went in, started, on the east side of course.

James: Going up the course?

Rowsam: Yep.

- James: Now what the, you had an infantry division there that you were assigned to?
- Rowsam: Well the Seventh was actually, they kept there, they kept there headquarters back. The Seventeenth Regiment was, had not been engaged as heavily at Seoul, and so the 32nd was involved there more. And so the Seventeenth went up, started and that was---
- James: You were attached to?
- Rowsam: Yeah, I was attached to the Seventeenth A Company.
- James: So, it was a regimental?
- Rowsam: Yep.
- James: And they fought their way up the coast?
- Rowsam: Yep. They were inland a ways. There was also a ROK Division out there doing something. But we got up there and the Seventeenth was actually, we got all the way up there, finally--
- James: To where?
- Rowsam: To the Yalu River. In the end of November---
- James: Right on it?
- Rowsam: Right on the Yalu River.
- James: By what, now we're talking what, November, December?
- Rowsam: November. That was the later part of November. And the only thing that, you know, the Chinese had already infiltrated, and the 32nd Regiment was on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir with the Marines and that was Task Force Faith, and all the rest of the people that were caught up in that thing. They lost virtually that whole unit. And the Marines had gone up and they were on the other side of the Reservoir. And the Army was on the east side. So, the Seventeenth Regiment that was way up on the Yalu was such a small group of people that they effectively ran around us, but we still ran into combat time.
- James: I was going to say, you were almost isolated.
- Rowsam: We were. We were completely surrounded.

- James: Did you know it?
- Rowsam: Yep. They told us, finally. They said, the only way we were going to get out of here is fight our way. Because the thing was, the only way you looked there were Chinese.
- James: So, fighting your way back, was ahhh, difficult?
- Rowsam: It was. In a number of instances it got pretty hairy a number of times.
- James: Sure.
- Rowsam: But, I was being assigned with A Company of the Seventeenth from H&S, wound up on the retreat coming back down, blowing up equipment or one thing or another that was abandoned that couldn't be taken back. And, that was, they didn't bother us much. We traveled sometimes, in places where we thought we were going to get into trouble, and sometimes they wouldn't bother.
- James: So, you moved back down the coast fairly rapidly?
- Rowsam: Well, we didn't get down there until we got down caught up with some of the other units coming in and then we were evacuated off of there just before Christmas.
- James: Where?
- Rowsam: From Hungnam.
- James: From Hungnam, so you did get back to Hungnam without. Then, did you lose a lot of people or what?
- Rowsam: Yeah, we lost all the water sections. The water points were they would go out and have pumps set up and have water pumping out of the river running purification set ups and one thing or another. And we lost other people also. And, I don't know the numbers. They would, the weather got so bad and there were some people that were flown out because of frost bite and one thing or another and some people that were wounded. One of the things, if you got hit, I got, a piece of shrapnel in my left foot and that was the thing about it, there wasn't any aid people with us.
- James: I was going to say, you had no hospital unit along?
- Rowsam: No, no.

James: You had one when you went north didn't you?

Rowsam: No.

James: Oh, you didn't.

Rowsam: We were strung out pretty thin.

James: I am surprised they would send you up north without an aid---

Rowsam: There must have been one somewhere, but I never got to it.

James: So, what did you do, make some type of a walking stick, to be capable of walking on it?

Rowsam: Couple of guys with me, by that time we had some rubber boots. Mickey Mouse or not Mickey Mouse; but the boot, shoe packs.

James: I know those.

Rowsam: Yep, so the cut that off and pulled this out. It went right through my foot and was sticking out the top and they couldn't get my boot off so then they jerked out this long sharp piece of steel.

James: Long, that long?

Rowsam: Yeah. Crazy.

James: That was going through the air? Jesus. That would have speared you if it hit you in the chest.

Rowsam: Yeah. It would have done you in. So anyway--

James: They just pulled it out.

Rowsam: Pulled it out, but it was so cold, it didn't hardly bleed. But then I froze my foot so then I had to wait--

James: Oh, because they had to cut out--

Rowsam: Cut the boot off, so I had to get a boot from a fella that didn't need one anymore, so, but I kept, kept going and walked on that and kept going for--

James: Never needed any sub, any treatment at all?

Rowsam: No.

James: So that [indecipherable] food? How did you deal with food?

Rowsam: Well, it was--

James: You get pretty short or not?

Rowsam: Yeah--

James: You get a lot of K-Rations?

Rowsam: Well, C-Rations we had--

James: C's? Oh that is a little more to eat.

Rowsam: Yeah, but C's that are frozen are kind of hard. We used to, when we tried to keep going and we did fairly well with various kinds of things we had equipment trucks of one kind or another, we could keep those running.

James: Keep the food low? Ahhh, put on the hood?

Rowsam: On the manifold. But a lot of times, you got sick if you ate it frozen all of the time. You would get, your stomach would get screwed up.

James: Oh really?

Rowsam: Yeah, and it's awfully difficult to get frozen beans out a tin can when they're really frozen hard. So we would try to do something. But in the engineers we were more, well we could usually scrounge a little bit of fuel. We had--

James: Oh, you had more [indecipherable] available?

Rowsam: Yeah, we had, plastic explosives, we had--

James: Yeah, no sterno though?

Rowsam: No, so could, we'd heat some up and keep going. But, we didn't get regular meal very often. We got awfully short of food. I remember one day we found a bag of rice and we had an old mess sergeant named O'Mally who cooked up a big pan of rice and he had one can of beef and gravy. So, we got a ball of rice and we got just enough beef and gravy so that it kind of turned the top of it a little brown [laughs]. But it tasted good. It was warm.

James: Under the circumstances--

Rowsam: So, most of us were getting in, we were in fairly bad shape. But there were things that were--

James: In what regard? Other than--

Rowsam: Tired, tired, cold, fighting, the stress all the time was tough. We had, we stayed behind and a lot of times there were some engineers up there that had gone up to build, it was part of a construction battalion, they had just got up there and they abandoned a bunch of dozers. And rather than blow them up, we brought them back. And we kept those clear on into the following spring. They never took em away from us. But we had to walk them down the road. We couldn't haul them all. But there was one dozer that was with the old A Company, D7 dozer that we brought down that road. We were supposed to blow it up, but we didn't want to. We kept coming. We had a ¾ ton truck and I don't know, there were about 4 or 5 of us and we would, we blew up some things. Some we tried to salvage. I found one morning an M5 artillery tractor that was nose down in a ditch. And looked at it to see if it had been hit and damaged and it seemed to be intact. And so, decided to try it and the darn thing started up and I backed it out of the ditch. So, I am riding along in style with my gear thrown in the seat in the artillery truck. We got back a little farther and here comes a Lieutenant Colonel and he was in a jeep, just screaming. Where did I get his artillery tractor? He didn't have enough to pull his guns out. They had a defensive line along this river. I told him--

James: You found it up the road.

Rowsam: I found it in the ditch. And he said, "I need that." And I grabbed my gear, jumped out, left the engine running, and I said, "Take it away" [laughs]. But, those were kind of fun things, but there were a lot of tough things. We got, a couple of times, we got into places where we didn't know if we were going to get out or not.

James: Mortars?

Rowsam: Mortars were bad.

James: That was your biggest problem?

Rowsam: Yeah, Chinese were very good with mortars.

James: I can't tell you the number of guys I've talked to who said the very same thing. And they say, they weren't very big, but they were very accurate.

- Rowsam: Yeah. One over and one short and the next one--
- James: The next one was yours.
- Rowsam: Yep, and they'd bracket you every time. Boy, you had to--
- James: You could predict that.
- Rowsam: Yep, you knew that. You got to tell when they were coming. But, a lot of the things that we ran into was small arms fire of one thing or another. You know, they'd be on those ridges and so on. And, but we kept coming down and got--
- James: Did you, did the riflemen, try to keep rifle fire on those ridges? Is that the only way they could defend against that?
- Rowsam: Yeah, get up there. But some of the times, see the Marines had, had a whole onslaught of people. The 32nd ran into that on the east side of the reservoir and so on, and we were strung out so far along up in there, they didn't bother with us sometimes. And we kept going, we never knew why. It was a terrible stress. You didn't know how long it was going to last, but and we did get into it.
- James: Yeah, because you would think you would be more vulnerable than the bigger units and they could just take you out any time they wanted.
- Rowsam: Yeah, but they were after the big ones. They wanted to stop them from getting back.
- James: So, meanwhile, you slipped around the end [laughs].
- Rowsam: We just played--
- James: Boy, I'll bet that Hungnam looked like home to you.
- Rowsam: Boy, that was something to come into that. And then we got into Hungnam and we had some of those dozers that we, we had enough fuel, we could keep them going. And we would dig gun emplacements in that frozen ground. Haul back on steering clutch, put that in high gear and those old eights would chew right down through the ground and we'd back dozer out and they'd roll in a gun.
- James: A piece of artillery?
- Rowsam: Yeah.

- James: I know they had a huge number of guns surrounding that perimeter. I mean, almost wheel to wheel.
- Rowsam: Yeah, and boy that was a, and then we, we didn't even find the unit. It was just, they were loading as they could get people. I went out on a British cargo ship. And I never even saw the rest of the unit. There were about eight or nine of us that I caught up with.
- James: You mean from the 13th?
- Rowsam: Yeah, that I knew. We loaded all of this stuff on there and there was nothing aboard that ship to eat because they had been serviced by the Navy tenders and they put fuel aboard and they send them back and forth up and down the coast. And there was an old Scottish cook on there and he came up to us and we were a pretty sorry looking lot with ragged and dirty and everything else and he told us that, he said, "We have no food." And so, we went over, we went off the ship and went down, three of us, and there was a warehouse.
- James: Still in Hungnam?
- Rowsam: Yep. We got back off of the ship and went down and before they pulled her out and they told us we had to hurry. And this warehouse was all messed up. I mean it was all, you know, scattered all over. We got cans of bone chicken. Number ten cans and number ten cans of fruit cocktail. And that's what we lived on all the way down.
- James: You just grabbed us an armfulls of this? How many guys are we talking about?
- Rowsam: There were, I don't know, eight or a dozen.
- James: Each of you had a couple of--
- Rowsam: Yeah, but not all of them—[End of Tape 1, Side A]
- Rowsam: Yeah, but no all of them went ashore. They were to stay on there to make sure they wouldn't start flinging lines off. We weren't staying in Hungnam if we could help it. And we got, that's what we lived on. I still don't care much for, I never eat fruit cocktail and [laughs] I don't care much for boned chicken either. But we made it down there and that old Scotsman came out and he had a little loaf of bread. And he came out and he had tears in his eyes. And he said, "Boys, I had no more ta ge ya." And that was it, but he gave us that little--
- James: Probably gave you some chicken salad.

Rowsam: Yeah, and he was tickled to give--

James: How many days did it take? Two days to get down to Pusan?

Rowsam: Oh, it was longer than that.

James: Really?

Rowsam: Yeah. They had to fuel--

James: It's not that far is it?

Rowsam: No, but it was--

James: Guess you were on a bucket though.

Rowsam: Yeah, and they were--

James: Eight knots is about as fast as they can go.

Rowsam: They weren't doing very good. They were, and it was getting a little rough then, so, and we, then we didn't have very much. We didn't have sleeping bags. Some of the guys had lost those and they didn't have anyplace to put us. We were in the forward hold. So there were straw cargo mats. We covered up with those. We'd take turns in the sleeping bag and that's how we'd--

James: How's your foot now? How is your foot with all of this by this time?

Rowsam: It was pretty well healed up. I was walking on it.

James: And your frostbite wasn't a problem?

Rowsam: Not, well it did later on. And it still bothers me now in real cold weather. But, heavens I was so happy--

James: But you didn't lose a toe or anything?

Rowsam: No, no.

James: So, ahh, by this time the 13th is in tatters? You got back to Pusan. Where did you go to reform?

Rowsam: They put out in the middle of a big field and they were just gathering up people and trying to identify [break in the tape] terrific rainstorm while we

were there. And it flooded everything. We had, they gave us some shelter halves and one thing or another to try to get tents and we didn't have all of our gear and one thing or another, so and then we were in mud and soaking wet.

James: This is now, what? February?

Rowsam: This is, we left there just before Christmas and they blew up the last of the stores in Hungnam just on Christmas Eve. So, that was just before---

James: So this is just the first part of January.

Rowsam: Yeah, right, the tail end of December. And on New Years Eve they already had us going back up.

James: Back up?

Rowsam: We were going up toward Taegu [a.k.a. Daegu].

James: Oh, that's in the middle.

Rowsam: Yep. But they were going--

James: Not back on the coast.

Rowsam: No, no. We were going overland. Because they were afraid that, with that, people coming down.

James: Sure, people were going to keep on a coming, the Chinese.

Rowsam: Yeah, and so, that's where I spent New Year.

James: Oh, in Taegu?

Rowsam: South of there.

James: Yeah, so by this time, what type of an outfit was, were they still calling it the 13th?

Rowsam: We were still the 13th Engineers. We always maintained that designation all the way through. And pretty short of people and even those, we didn't start getting replacements till later on and then we did get some and of course, the 17th Regiment got pounded some more in the spring of '51. They got hit a number of times. B Company--

James: Were you with them?

Rowsam: No, I wasn't with A anymore. I went back to H&S and then--

James: H&S?

Rowsam: Headquarters and Service

James: Of the?

Rowsam: 13th.

James: Okay.

Rowsam: And see H&S Company was kind of a Headquarters Company and then if they needed additional help in a line company then we were, some of us were sent out. And so, that was kind of a tough one. B Company lost a lot of people in the spring of '51 in an ambush, on a road ambush.

James: Oh really?

Rowsam: And so, that was, I lost a number of friends in that. So it was, we got back up there and then I was, we fought our way back up and when I finally left I was in charge of the heavy equipment section in Headquarters and Service Company.

James: How far north did you get back there?

Rowsam: We went back up and we were up--

James: Across the Han River?

Rowsam: Yeah, we were up, we didn't go up on that side. We stayed on the east side, but you know where the Kumhwa "Iron Triangle" is up in there? [approximately 100 miles north east of Seoul, South Korea].

James: I know about where it is.

Rowsam: Okay, that's where, that was in the fall of 1951 and I was supposed to be able to rotate home.

James: You must have had enough time there. You had about three stripes by this time.

Rowsam: Well I, yeah, yep and was due for another one. If I made it, if I lived. And they couldn't get a replacement for me. And so we were doing a lot of construction at that time and we had a lot of problems with a piece of

heavy equipment and I went with a fellow in a contact truck or a maintenance truck. And went up on the side of this mountain and we were working on a scrapper. And they had tipped it over and we were getting it turned back and right side up and one thing or another. And in the process up there a fellow was working and working with a big heavy wrench and he slipped on the scrapper in the dark and he fell down and broke his leg. And we knew it was broke. We couldn't get back. We couldn't do anything. We didn't have a radio that we could get in touch with anybody, but that didn't work.

James: Did you have a jeep?

Rowsam: We had a ¾ ton truck and that was it. We had our tools and stuff in that. And this wasn't a real hospitable place where we were so we hated to send him out with that. So we made him as comfortable as we could. Covered him up on the ground and we got the rest of this thing fixed so we could move it. And then we loaded it in the back of that truck and took him back. But, after we unloaded him and one thing or another, the next day I was in that truck and the driver was, we were all so tired out, I was asleep. And he slid off of the road when he hit a shell hole, a mortar hole, and we hit a shear rock outcropping and it curled the right fender of that ¾ ton truck right on top of me and jammed me right down in the seat. And they thought I was dead, so they just left me in there, you know the other guy---

James: [laughs] Gave up?

Rowsam: Yeah. And then finally--

James: Were you unconscious?

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: I was going to say, you must have been hollering otherwise.

Rowsam: Otherwise, I'd have been yelling like a Comanche, to get me loose. But they did. They had to cut me out of there. And I had been wacked up a number of times in several kinds of things. And I went back and, I was battered up from that one pretty bad. But anyway, I kept on and later on we were getting replacements in then pretty regularly, but a lot of them were, it was sad. We had mortar rounds come in one night and we had some of them that were killed in a tent where they were sleeping and we never even got to hardly know their names. The First Sergeant knew who they were and we never. And by then, I got out of there in the fall of, in the later part of August.

James: '52?

- Rowsam: That was '51 yet. They sent me home.
- James: Oh, August.
- Rowsam: Yes, so that was after that line was pretty well stabilized up there in that Iron Triangle. And that's were Pork Chop and the rest of those were up there and that's were all that stalemate came up afterwards. And the 13th [unit] was still there involved in that clear on through till the end of the war.
- James: So you went by truck to the airfield, where? They flew you out, I assume.
- Rowsam: You, know, that's one thing I have a little trouble remembering. I was so elated to get out of there, I think, I think I went back to Pusan. And that, part of that was in a truck. And then--
- James: On board a ship to Pusan.
- Rowsam: No, I got, yeah, I did that, got on a ship.
- James: There is not a major airfield there.
- Rowsam: No, and anyway, I got started on that--
- James: Did they took you to Japan or?
- Rowsam: They did take me to Japan. Checked me over on that. So I came out of Sasebo [Japan] on a troop transport going home.
- James: Otherwise, were you pretty healthy? GI tract was okay?
- Rowsam: I had malaria real bad by then.
- James: You picked up malaria? You had been taking your chloroquine?
- Rowsam: Didn't have it half the time. So when I got back, we landed on the west coast at, Ft. Lewis. So we got in there. That was kind of a sad time. They loaded us on trucks and started out for Ft. Lewis. Weather was bad and one of the trucks went off the road, rolled over, and killed two-thirds of the guys in it. They made it all that way and died in that mess. So, but I was sick when I got to Lewis.
- James: With the malaria?

- Rowsam: Yep. And so, I didn't want to turn in with it. I wanted to get back home if I could, so I wouldn't turn in, and the guys would bring me a little food and after a few days I got so I could walk around again and do some things.
- James: The fever was gone by then.
- Rowsam: Yeah, it would break periodically. So then I got assigned to ahh--they told us all those nice things you know as long as you've been over here, you can get assignment close to home and you'll get leave--
- James: Oh, I'll tell you, what they are trying to talk you into, re-uppin [reenlisting].
- Rowsam: [laughs] Yeah. So, anyway by that time I'd been given an extra year by Harry Truman anyway. We were doing such a good job that my enlistment was about to come up so they just automatically extended all of us a year.
- James: Without discussing it?
- Rowsam: Never said a word about, the first sergeant called us off one day and said, you--
- James: Oh, by the way.
- Rowsam: Yeah. And it had RA on your serial number, that was it.
- James: So, you re-upped?
- Rowsam: No, not there.
- James: Oh, not there.
- Rowsam: No, I went on to, they sent me to Fort Sheridan, Illinois. And I did some more processing there.
- James: Did someone bother to take a blood sample? Check about your malaria?
- Rowsam: Only after I went home and I got leave and went home and I was, I was supposed to have thirty days and I got so sick and I had to go back. After all that. And it was a sorry time. But anyway, I thought I was going to stay at Fort Sheridan, I'd be, I could make it back and forth so I didn't feel so bad about going home.
- James: Cushy job.

- Rowsam: Yeah. That didn't last. The second morning I was called out and I was assigned to the 62nd Engineer Maintenance Company at Fort Bragg, NC. So, that next morning I left. Went to Fort Bragg---
- James: Were you single?
- Rowsam: Yep. And when I got down there I wound up as the, I was single and living on base and wound up as the field first sergeant as a tech sergeant I was SFC. So I was a field first sergeant of the 62nd. 62nd Engineer Maintenance Company.
- James: Engineer Maintenance. Is that the correct term?
- Rowsam: Yep.
- James: 62nd?
- Rowsam: Yep. And that was of course the home of the 82nd Airborne and we wound up doing all kinds of work down there with equipment that was being prepared for airdrops. And we had to--
- James: New equipment?
- Rowsam: Yep, learn how to drop graders. We dropped field pieces. We dropped everything.
- James: Boy, those must have been some big parachutes?
- Rowsam: There were and we'd put multiple parachutes on a great big pallet, but the problem was getting the parachutes to open right otherwise they'd oscillate.
- James: Slide off?
- Rowsam: Yep, dump them off. We pick one of those 212 graders after it came down and we'd take it back and put on another air cleaner and all the parts that broke off when it hit and then we'd do it two days later and away it went again.
- James: They didn't tolerate being dropped from a plane very well at all then?
- Rowsam: No. That was the old C19s [cargo aircraft] that they were pushing out of the--What's, of course, they knew that that airdrop was so critical was because of Korea. That's the only thing that kept us going. We could get air dropped stuff. They dropped food and ammunition and that was what

we got all the time. But anyway, the only problem there, it was now into the winter.

James: Now this is the winter of '52?

Rowsam: '51 now.

James: Well I'm saying '51-52. Okay.

Rowsam: Yeah. So, the unit gets alerted that they have to send a detachment to Camp Drum, New York for winter training. In the snow and ice way up in northern New York. And who comes out on the roster but yours truly. And I went to the first soldier and said, "Look top, I've had all the winter training I know of, that I need." And he looked at me and he said, "I see your point." And they sent me to, they got an allocation for the advanced diesel engine rebuild course at the Engineer School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and that afternoon he called me down at the shop and he said, "Get your gear together, you're going to Fort Belvoir." So they sent me to Belvoir to go to school. And I didn't screw off. I did a good job. And again, I graduated at the top of the class.

James: Great. Did you enjoy that training, by the way?

Rowsam: I did, and I did some things where, that was where I started to make up my mind, I did some teaching there. And they were very interested in what we had done over there and one thing or another.

James: You had something to offer there.

Rowsam: Yeah, and I came up with a, we put diesel fuel in our radiators over there because we didn't have any antifreeze and we never lost any tractors freezing them up.

James: Did somebody tell you, you couldn't do that?

Rowsam: Oh, they were going to court martial me. A major took me to advance 7th Division Headquarters and took me in there--

James: We have a saboteur on our hands. Right?

Rowsam: And there was an old colonel there. And he sat me down and talked to me and he made the major leave. And he said, "Now I understand you put diesel fuel in there?" "Yes, sir." "Now, were did you learn to do that?" And I said, "I grew up in Northern Wisconsin, in the middle of Wisconsin, and," I said, "we had a model T and we didn't have antifreeze then either, and we put kerosene in it and it didn't freeze up." And he said, "But

wouldn't it rot the hoses off?" And I said, it won't rot them off until spring and I said, "We can get hoses and replace those better than we can replace tractors." So they gave me a medal instead.

James: [laughs] They gave you a medal for figuring this out? You're kidding.

Rowsam: Yeah, gave me a, what is it? Oh, a commendation medal with a big fancy--

James: For figuring this out?

Rowsam: And doing that. And a lot of other people did it after we did it. So, but anyway, I went to Belvoir. Had a strange experience there. One night I went to, I wanted to go to the museum there, and so I was in Washington D.C. and I was coming down the street to the bus stop, and I saw a fellow that looked familiar standing on the side of the sidewalk. And here was a fellow named of Roger Vanstratten that had been in my section in Korea. And I beat him with a rifle one night when he laid down under a truck and went to sleep. And we was freezing to death. And I beat him half way down a mountain with a rifle and he tried to kill me and everything else and knock him down, and drag him up and I kept him going. And he saw me, and he had been wounded afterwards and I never knew what happened to him. And he ran up and threw his arms around me and what an emotional thing that was.

James: I'll bet.

Rowsam: But, I didn't let him freeze to death anyway. I thought, you know, keep walking if you're mad, your blood's circulating. But I got through that. I went back and the detachment came back before I did. And I went back to the company again, and I was still in my same assignment so. And then there was a requirement that somebody with the same MOS [military occupational specialty] that I now had, a secondary MOS, go to Panama because they were having some troubles with some generator sets down there and I was supposed to go down there. So, I was single, okay. I was supposed to leave on Monday morning. They had another sergeant in the company with the same MOS. He had a girlfriend. So he went to see the girlfriend. Went AWOL [absent without leave] and when I got my gear all packed and I'm ready to go and the first sergeant came and got me and said, "You're not going to Panama." And they sent him. So otherwise, I'd have been right back in the--

James: Heat.

Rowsam: Yeah, in the heat and that wouldn't have been good. I got along fairly well. I did turn in with the malaria and did something.

James: [indecipherable]

Rowsam: Yeah. And I had trouble with that.

James: When you were in Virginia?

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: The second episode.

Rowsam: Yeah, I had a number of them after that. And even after I got, they finally came out with a, Congress and Truman were getting a lot of flak that a lot of us were extended on that thing. I never wrote to anybody or said anything. I thought I could do another year. But anyway, in the end of June in 1952 they told me I was eligible for discharge. So, I didn't serve the entire--

James: Six years you signed up for?

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: So, you got out.

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: When you were hospitalized with these malaria attacks, did they keep you for two or three days, or was it for longer?

Rowsam: Yeah, sometimes they would just give you medication.

James: What could they do?

Rowsam: They couldn't do much.

James: Give you some fluids to compensate for the fluid loss when you were sweating.

Rowsam: Yeah. And afterwards the only thing that happened to me there, I met a, I had a fellow in my section who was a mechanic and his wife was a nurse. And they worked in the hospital there in Fayetteville, NC. So he set me up with a blind date. I met a little gal who was a nurse from Massachusetts. And so when I got ready to leave, she was on her way to Florida to work in a hospital down there, but she decided since her friend was not going on to Florida, she didn't have anywhere to go, so I offered her a ride home to Massachusetts. And then I was coming back to Wisconsin.

James: Right.

Rowsam: So we got married in Massachusetts.

James: [laughs] That was quick.

Rowsam: And we're going to celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary next June.

James: Fantastic [laughs].

Rowsam: Yep. But, we had some great adventures. Started out with everything we own in the back end of an old Plymouth car and came to Wisconsin.

James: Did she adjust to the state of Wisconsin fairly well?

Rowsam: She did, but I had teased her about snow snakes and other various and sundry of things. She adapted and we had a great time.

James: [laughs] So, then what did you do?

Rowsam: Well, I came back and all I knew really was heavy equipment and one thing or another. So I went to work for a contractor.

James: What kind, a road contractor?

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: Up near Plainfield?

Rowsam: Yep. For Pagel, P. J. Pagel Construction. Out of--

James: [spells] P A G E L?

Rowsam: Yeah. And I worked for them and in the fall of 1952, way on into November, we were building a stretch of road over north of Wisconsin Rapids. And I was, I must have been fairly responsible because they would send me off to work alone most of the time.

James: Were you road grading?

Rowsam: I was cleaning up a borrow pit where they'd taken dirt out of a big hole. And I was finishing that off. Finishing and leveling it up and one thing or another. And it got very cold the end of November and we were trying to finish that up before Christmas, before the ground froze up. And I got off that dozer, I was so---my leg would get numb, where it was frozen. And I couldn't stand on it. I'd get up. I'd get off the dozer and the only way I

could operate the dozer was to push both brake pedals with one foot. I couldn't use right and left. I had to just use the right. And I got off of that thing and I fell down, right on the ground and I laid there and I had a heck of a time. I pulled myself up on the track beside that thing, dragged myself along and I hammered on that leg and I hammered on that ankle. And I tried to get the circulation going again. And I thought to myself, boy, this is a hard way to make a living. So, I decided, I finished up. I worked the season out and got done. And then there was, Stevens Point had a college there. And I knew about the GI Bill and one thing or another. And so I went to the college and I had to be interviewed because I was one of those veterans that was coming back. And I ran into a psychologist, gave me a series of tests. And I didn't think they were that difficult, one thing or another. I don't know whether he mixed up my records with somebody else, but I received a notice a few days later that I should come back for a personal interview. And he brought me in and told me that there was no point in my going to college because I wouldn't be successful and it would take their time and--

James: I can't believe this.

Rowsam: I was amazed.

James: I can't believe he would say that.

Rowsam: Well, I thought, what kind of thing is that?

James: There is no test in the world that could have given that type of judgment.

Rowsam: No, and anyway, so, there was no point. I thought it was ridiculous so I just thought there was no point in even spending time. I didn't get argumentative or anything else. I just went ahead and enrolled. And after I had been there, I went that second semester, and then the next semester, I worked through the summer again. And then the next semester, I applied and was accepted at Stout [renamed University of Wisconsin-Stout in 1971]. Stout Institute.

James: What year now are we talking about?

Rowsam: That would have been, it was still Stout Institute, so that would have been the fall of 1953. And I graduated from Stout with honors and I thought many times about that guy telling me that I couldn't even get through school. So, and I did a masters afterward and then I--

James: In what specifically?

Rowsam: Industrial engineering.

James: Industrial engineering?

Rowsam: Industrial education and engineering. It was a dual--

James: Got it.

Rowsam: And then I came to Madison, initially, and I taught in the engineering department at the University. And stayed there for seven years and then went with the various, well there were a lot of tech schools getting started then and I set up programs in metallurgy and machine tool work. So, ultimately, I did that in several schools. We had a son who was partially crippled when he was born. He had, his head worked great, but his muscular control was, he actually had trouble when he was born and so we wanted to come back to Madison because of the therapy available at the University hospital. I came back, took a job with the Madison Area Tech College and expanded those programs and when I retired in 1990 I was running all of those programs. In 1953, in that summer, when there was a lot going on in Korea, when the 7th Division was involved up in that, with Pork Chop and those considerations, I knew a lot, something about those things. And I've got a real bad feeling about that and I went back and my wife didn't say anything, she knew that if I was going to do something, I would probably do it. So I enlisted in the active reserve. And I stayed in the active reserve. And I stayed in the active reserve and I retired in 1990 after being involved with a lot of additional things as a chief warrant officer.

James: You got to be chief warrant? Was your unit ever activated?

Rowsam: Yes. I went to Vietnam in '68 and '69.

James: Okay, tell me about that experience.

Rowsam: Well, it was quite an experience.

James: You weren't planning on that.

Rowsam: No, I was sitting--

James: What was the name of your unit by this time?

Rowsam: The 826 Ordinance Company.

James: 8 2 6 Ordinance.

Rowsam: Right. And it was an ammunition company.

James: Ammunition?

Rowsam: Um haa [yes]. And it was here in Madison. And I was working two blocks over here in this school on a Saturday doing some bookwork and the fellow who ran the bookstore was listening to the radio and I was working in the lab. And he came running across the hall and he said, "Jim, he said, are you still in the Reserve?" And I said, "Yes" and I was busy doing something. And he said, "What unit are you in?" And I said, "826 Ordinance Company." And he said, "Oh my God, you're going." And I turned around and I said, "What are you talking about?" And that was the first we knew of it. Proxmire [US Senator from Wisconsin] announced it to the press and we didn't even know. And so, we got ready. We had all of the NCOs in that unit, that were, even some of them were combat time from WWII. So, we got ready and I left in May and went on active duty. And we convoyed--

James: [indecipherable]

Rowsam: Of '68. And we went out to the armory. Got all of our gear together. Packed everything up. Put it on trucks and we convoyed that to Fort Knox, Kentucky and we got to Fort Knox with all of our vehicles an hour ahead of schedule. Pulled into Fort Knox after we got directions from a guy in a car and no one met us or anything else. They never expected us to even get there with those vehicles.

James: That sounds normal.

Rowsam: And what a time that was. We had, and we were lining vehicles up and some going to the buildings and getting lined up and squared away. A colonel came down then. I used to have a great rapport with colonels. Full birds were better. But anyway, he came thundering in there and he was really upset. And he said, "Did anyone meet you and lead you in?" "No." Well, he had some people assigned to do that and they had goofed up, but he wanted to know, "How many vehicles did you have to abandon on the way?" All the rest of these questions. "None, none, none." And he was incredulous. And he stormed back in the vehicle and away he went. And we got stuff secured enough so we were tired and one thing or another. And we went and got secured and got squared away. And a lot of the convoy got in there late, or got in there, but the advanced party had, they'd flown them down so they had a mess hall.

James: What are we talking here? How many trucks and how many men?

Rowsam: Oh, the entire motor pool section plus--

James: 826 Company?

Rowsam: Yeah, and it was just a company sized unit, but it was, we even had a dozer and a lowboy, and everything.

James: Brought that along too?

Rowsam: Yeah, took it right down through there. We had a the old five ton wrecker so we mounted a great big board on the front of that, on the bumper, and when they came to a steep hill and the five ton couldn't pull it, the wrecker went in and pushed it up the hill. And we did all kinds of things. But, we got--

James: So, how many trucks did you have?

Rowsam: I'm trying to remember exactly. Oh, we had nearly fifty.

James: Fifty? That's really strung out. And so how many people?

Rowsam: Well, there were two people to a truck. A driver and an assistant driver.

James: A lot of folks. Okay, so how long did you sit in Kentucky then?

Rowsam: Well, we had to go through some training, so then they took us and we had to go through jungle training. One thing or another.

James: You mentioned earlier that you had already gotten malaria, that you knew about that and that you didn't need in training.

Rowsam: [laughs] Yes, but it didn't make any difference. So, we did the things and got her, they gave us an update on equipment and one thing or another. And then we did get ready to go. And we got there in the first part of June and--

James: In Saigon?

Rowsam: No, no, this was in Kentucky now.

James: Oh, I misunderstood.

Rowsam: Now we got to Kentucky and then in June and July and in August we put this equipment on railroad cars and shipped it to Mobile, Alabama. And I went to Mobile, Alabama as the equipment escort and went aboard ship--

James: So that they would load it properly?

- Rowsam: Yep, and made sure that no one stole it, because that was a big problem. They were losing it.
- James: To who?
- Rowsam: Well, in many instances, to people working right around the docks.
- James: They thought, if it was just sitting there and they wanted--
- Rowsam: Yeah, and it would have to be parked and you had to have somebody that kept an eye on it.
- James: Jesus Christ.
- Rowsam: So, that was in, we got that loaded and it was an interesting experience, because I got it aboard ship and I knew they were going to be short of PLL, primary load lift, the air filters, air cleaners, and things like that. You never could get them in Korea, so I made up a deal and we had a double load of PLL. I had two extra connexs that I had dummied up and put on that ship. And I didn't want to lose those so I requested that I go. I didn't get to go home, but I went on the, ahh, as equipment escort. And I was thirty three days floundering around in the Pacific out past Poro Point in the Philippines and everything else. Had to go to north and unload. There were three units aboard that ship. So, we had to unload the other two. So, I knew enough having been through some of the things I'd been through that it was going to be kind of iffy. And I knew that batteries all had to be disconnected aboard that ship so I ran in a store the day before I went aboard ship--
- James: In Mobile, Alabama?
- Rowsam: In Mobile, Alabama and bought a pair of pliers and a little eight inch crescent wrench. And I put them in my pocket and that was the only tools we could get to, to put the batteries, cables on all of those vehicles. And those are all, they were all put on with those two tools.
- James: Fifty vehicles?
- Rowsam: Yeah. And anyway, we got everything. The rest of the group flew over. And they went to the great northern route through Alaska and went across that way. Then we got there and after being up there we--
- James: Where did you dock?
- Rowsam: We went up the Saigon river and got up as far as we could and then we had to put some on barges to go on up because we went to, that was in,

that was real early in October, first part of October, the last part of September. We went to Long Binh which was the biggest ammunition--

James: Vietnamese.

Rowsam: Yeah. So we were at Long Binh and Third Ord Battalion. And while we were there we had complete company. We had, so our TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment) was up to strength. We had all of our equipment and the companies that were already over there had an awful time because they didn't have full compliments. So when we got there we went to work and we worked twenty four hours a day. We split the unit.

James: Putting these things ready to use.

Rowsam: Yeah. And we worked twenty four hours a day all the time we were there. We'd split.

James: Just repairing the equipment?

Rowsam: No, no. We would have half of the crew would be off and a every two weeks we would change. In other words, you would work nights for two weeks and then you would work days for two weeks. Nights for two--

James: Doing what?

Rowsam: Doing the maintenance and one thing or another. You loaded ammunition at night. You positioned ammunition.

James: Oh, I forgot you were doing ammunition.

Rowsam: Yeah, because we sent a convoy out of there every morning at 2:30.

James: What kind of ammunition? All kinds?

Rowsam: Everything.

James: Everything. Rockets, small arms, all that?

Rowsam: Lots of small arms, artillery.

James: But most carried by six byes (6 x military truck)?

Rowsam: They were primarily carried by cargo trucks pulled by five tons.

James: Cargo trucks? What's a cargo truck?

Rowsam: It's like a semi with sides on it. And we got to the point later on in '69 where we loaded ammunition in choppers in slings. While they hovered overhead, we'd throw it in and they'd take it out and they'd fire it right, and they'd be back in a few minutes and load it. That was going on up in the highlands.

James: That's were they were busy.

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: Busy time.

Rowsam: And we got, the only problem we had in there, we had people that were out that got shot at periodically, but we did have rockets coming in there. We had, I don't know, it was something like thirteen or fourteen rocket attacks. In a period of--

James: [Indecipherable] Where you in a hooch there?

Rowsam: In tents.

James: In tents.

Rowsam: Yeah. We built some bunkers.

James: I was going to say, you had some protections for some-- That's what you dove into?

Rowsam: Yeah, the first time we got a rocket attack we had a company commander who was a West Pointer. And he was, he ultimately came to respect and appreciate us, but he got in a lot of trouble because he went against his own regular army people in telling them that we knew what we were doing and one thing or another. But, they tried to account for everybody and there was another old sergeant and myself who didn't run into the bunker where we were supposed to go. We went through all of the tents. He started on one end and I started on the other to make sure everybody was out of there because I--

James: You were a sergeant?

Rowsam: I went, I was a sergeant at that time. In fact, I took a break from a master sergeant to an E7 to go there. To stay in that unit.

James: An E7 is?

Rowsam: Tech sergeant.

- James: Tech sergeant. So you lost money?
- Rowsam: Yep and I had a wife and three kids at home. But we did it. But anyway, in that rocket attack the captain was really upset. We came in and he started, he was really upset and he--
- James: For what?
- Rowsam: The fact that we were missing. That we were goofing off.
- James: Oh.
- Rowsam: And, Old Baldy Repace said to him, "Sir, we were checking the tents to make sure everyone was out." And he stopped right in the mid sentence and he realized he [the captain] hadn't done that.
- James: Oh, that was really his [the captain's] responsibility.
- Rowsam: His responsibility. And he realized he'd made a mistake. And he never said another word.
- James: Tell me about living in the jungle now. You went from to froze to death, now you being sweating constantly. What was your feeling about that?
- Rowsam: It was tough.
- James: Worse, better, just the same?
- Rowsam: Oh, Korea was awfully hot too in the southern part. But, it was, that was, we got along alright. We had some, we kind of liberated a few things when we left Fort Knox.
- James: Spam?
- Rowsam: Oh yeah. And a big coke machine and one thing or another. But we had, we cut, we had lumber enough that in the bottom of two of those 5 ton trucks, those cargos, we pre-fabbed a complete dispatch building for our motor pool. Put it in the bottom, put the cargo on top of it. Strapped it all down and loaded it aboard ship. And when we got to Long Binh, they sent us way down in the end of this area and trees were all gone in one thing or another. It was just boiling hot out there in that sun. But, there was a directive that no buildings could be constructed. You could not put up a shelter. And I don't know what they thought, we were going to put up a tent I suppose. So anyway, by working at night, the rest of them were off at night, so in the middle of one night we cranked up a dozer. We leveled

off a spot. And we started building that building. And we got all the rest of the guys that we could and we had it all figured out. Had the pieces marked. And we put that whole brick building together. And it had a place in there for our--

James: [indecipherable]

Rowsam: Well, not a brick building, but I'd had a place for our dispatchers, our records, our office, and our PLL [Primary Load List] people. And so--

James: PLL?

Rowsam: That's, Primary Load List is the equipment, the supplies that you have to keep your vehicles running. An extra air cleaner, fan belt, spare tire, oil, all the rest of that. Next morning, a second lieutenant arrived. And the second lieutenant was very perplexed and he was very--

James: How this building suddenly appeared?

Rowsam: Yeah. Who gave us permission to put that building up? We didn't know anything about that. Well gosh, we just got, well lieutenant, you couldn't have just put that up overnight. It had to be-- He said, it wasn't here yesterday when I was here. So, anyway, he got very perplexed. He went away. He was supposed to be our advisor and he never came back [laughs]. But we did another little thing that was interesting. We had these two extra Conexes [6'x 8' shipping boxes]. Conex box, the big steel container that you ship for security.

James: What do you put in them?

Rowsam: You put any kinds of tools, supplies, clothing, anything.

James: Oh.

Rowam: So, we dug a hole with a dozer, another night. We welded **[End of Tape 1, side B]**

Rowsam: We had an inspection one time.

James: You had an inspection? At Long Binh in your area?

Rowsam: Yeah. And they were concerned because they knew that we had supplies and they didn't really know--everything was right. The paperwork came out right, but when the fellow--This was an impromptu inspection that came up all of the sudden and there was a captain that came in and he grabbed the wrong PREY [??] and he had the surplus PLL. So suddenly he

realized it. And I was there, several other people, and so we created a diversion with an extra radio that was sitting around the corner behind the door and we purposely slid it out so that he saw the radio. And while he was looking at the radio and wondered why we had that there, Barry switched the--

James: Back to the ones that you wanted him to look at.

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: How did you get his attention to the radio? I missed that.

Rowsam: We, the door, we opened the door and then tipped the radio over so that it fell on the floor.

James: Caught his attention.

Rowsam: Obvious. Yeah, caught his attention that way. And we weren't supposed to have that backpack radio.

James: Oh I see. It was another item that suddenly you had found.

Rowsam: Yeah, well that was one we found in the motor pool; it had been in a truck and they threw it out. So we had it in the PLL.

James: I don't understand why anyone would object to having that radio.

Rowsam: Well, we weren't authorized that.

James: It wasn't on the list.

Rowsam: Yeah, we weren't authorized that. See that was--yeah.

James: Okay. So you escaped that?

Rowsam: And we escaped a number of those kinds of things. We had things that went along--

James: Someone knew that you guys had more equipment than you stated, but they couldn't figure out how to find out. Is that--?

Rowsam: They never did figure it out. And as long as we were supplying--We weren't doing anything with this. We didn't sell any of it. We didn't trade any of it. We put it on trucks.

James: No, but it saved you time though.

- Rowsam: Yeah and it saved--our vehicles were all set--They came down--I set up a horseshoe court down there. And we had people playing horseshoes and a major came by and just went in the--ballistic again. He went to headquarters and we had at 3rd ORD and he said the 826th was down there playing horseshoes and they were not working. And so, right away they called up. I had to go up there and I took the dispatcher along and I had to go to headquarters. And we went in there and already they'd called the Company Commander up there and they called the First Sergeant. And they were just going to eat us up. And he said, "I understand that your men are playing horseshoes."
- James: Who are you talking to now?
- Rowam: This is the Colonel, Commander, 3rd ORD Battalion. I said, "Yes sir, they are."
- James: They had time off or something?
- Rowsam: Yeah, and I said, no. I said, "I have them there so that if I need them I know exactly where they are." He said, "How many vehicles have you got dead lined?" And I nudged--
- James: What's that mean?
- Rowsam: Deadline means that they were waiting parts or they were being worked on and they were not operable and could not be used in loading ammunition. I said, "None."
- James: Right.
- Rowsam: And he said, "None." And I got the dispatcher and there was all the records and everything else.
- James: That's the reason there were none.
- Rowsam: Yep, and he shook his head and said, "Well, I guess if you have everything ready to roll, your men can play horseshoes anytime they want." And that was the--they dismissed us and that was it. But we worked--you know--We had older people that they knew what they were doing, you know. But, that unit set a record for loading ammunition in a 24 hour period that's never been equaled since.
- James: Is that right?
- Rowsam: And they still teach that as part of the doctrine.

- James: Was that a matter of the organization, loading the ammo?
- Rowsam: Yeah. Organization also people who had skills. Good operators.
- James: Properly trained.
- Rowsam: And properly trained.
- James: Good to you.
- Rowsam: Well, and others, there were some others. The paperwork was always right. Everything was done right. And it was done on time. And so, the thing is, it wasn't a matter of the other ones couldn't do it. But, when we first went over there they had a lot of young people in some of those other ordinance units. The one who was assigned to tell me how to set up the motor pool was a young lad who came and sat down with me and ultimately looked at me and said, "You've been in the Army a long time, haven't you?" And when I said, "Yes," I didn't tell him anything. I'd been in the army since before he was born. And he said, "I can't tell you anything." And I said, "Well, you can tell me the things you are doing and so on." But I said, "I appreciate you coming here and," I said "I appreciate you being here." But I said, "I've been around motor pools quite awhile, but perhaps I can help you with things from time to time." And he didn't have, we had all of the publications that were required for ordinance/ammunition company, our library; we had built special cabinets, so when battalion found out we had all those we had to turn them in to battalion because they didn't have them. Said, "No way. You can come down here and use them—"
- James: Come to our lending library.
- Rowsam: "But you don't take them away. We brought them." And it was interesting. But we ahh--
- James: Tell me about food now. Did you have that pretty well arranged?
- Rowsam: Yep, we had a good kitchen. The only problem. We wanted a milk machine and we struggled and tried. And you could get that powdered milk you know. And you could get some liquid milk if you had a cooler to put it in. We finally horse traded from the--
- James: I was going to say [indecipherable] find them.

- Rowsam: We did. And we had it two days and a rocket attack came in and shrapnel came through the wall of the mess hall and right through the milk machine.
- James: Of all the places.
- Rowsam: All the places it could have blown up most anything else.
- James: You could have replaced it.
- Rowsam: Yep, and there went our milk machine. We never got another one.
- James: Right after you got it?
- Rowsam: Yep, two days later.
- James: Well, damn.
- Rowsam: [laughs] But anyway, there's one other thing to tell you that in that whole consideration those people worked together really well and really did a lot of things. I was always glad I went as an equipment escort because when we went in up north and unloaded the first unit, the two "Connexs" [large metal container carried on tractor trailer flatbed] that I kept track of very carefully and watched over like a mother hen, were on the top deck. And when we were unloading there were a bunch of Korean stevedores that were unloading. And I kept, I didn't sleep for two nights. I kept watching those Connexs and sure enough about two thirty, quarter to three one morning they took those two off. And I downed that gang plank. Went down there.
- James: This was were?
- Rowsam: This was not at Long Binh. This was not at Saigon. This was north and I can't tell you right now. I'll think of it in a minute. So I went down there. I still remembered a little Japanese and I gave them a little Japanese and I told them that they had to put those back. And I got them to understand that and they did.
- James: Who were they working for?
- Rowsam: They were working for the port authority, but at three o'clock in the morning--
- James: There was something else going on.
- Rowsam: There was nobody else around. Their supervisor wasn't even around.

James: They were going to sell those.

Rowsam: Sure.

James: These were Koreans?

Rowsam: Koreans. See, they did a lot of that over there. A lot of that Connex stuff. You even see it in this country now in those--

James: Sure, they were going to sell them.

Rowsam: Yep.

James: How big were those Connex things again?

Rowsam: Oh, you could stand right up and work right in them.

James: About eight feet by eight feet?

Rowsam: Yeah, eight feet by a little bit more. About 12 feet by 12 feet.

James: And they were made of?

Rowsam: Metal.

James: Stainless steel?

Rowsam: No, they were made of steel panels. And they had big hooks on the corners so sling swivels could go in there and pick them right up. Or you could pick them up with a big, a big forklift could also--

James: But they had multiple uses.

Rowsam: Oh yeah, because you could store things outside in them or one thing or another. We had several of them that we had, that we picked up after we got to Vietnam and we set them up and we put our maintenance tent on top of them so we had storage in them.

James: So you could protect anything from the weather.

Rowsam: Yeah, and we had all that extra PLL and some extra tools and we didn't want to lose them. But when I'm down there giving them "whoopie" on the ground--

James: Whoopie?

Rowsam: Yeah, well whatever. I go along and here is a great big pallet and I looked at that it's wrapped and it says, LUX soap. And I thought, who in the world would use that much LUX soap? And I looked at it and it was consigned to the Marine Corps. And so, they had a big area right out there where they were working out there in the northern part of Vietnam. And low and behold, that got my curiosity. I walked away and I walked back. I got down on my knees. And I got down and I got down and I had a little flashlight with me and I got down and I pulled a little paper back and I saw a corner and it said, "Budweiser" [beer] on it. So I went back to the Koreans again and they were still a little leery about me--

James: Because you were yelling at them.

Rowsam: Yeah, and I told them this had to go aboard ship too. And they did it. And I went aboard--

James: Beer?

Rowsam: A whole pallet of beer. Budweiser beer so I went aboard. I had a good time on that ship because when we were coming out of Mobile, Alabama, there was a new crew on that and they did not understand they had hydraulic hatch closure. And the hatch closures were set up with an electric motor. A hydraulic system and they were supposed to turn them off after they opened them or closed them. Well in this instance, something went wrong and number 2 hatch forward was stuck open and the 2nd Mate and two crew members were up them and I'm coming along.

James: You fell in?

Rowsam: Nope. The 2nd Mate was pretty, it was getting a little rough out there and we were starting to roll a little bit, you know. And he said, to these guys, "We gotta get this thing," and this guy was jerking this lever and nothing was happening. And I went over and I just stood next to the hydraulic reservoir on the side and it was hot as could be. And so, I went over to the mate and I had been eating with the ship's officers while I was cargoing. I said, "I can show you how to get that hatch covered closed." And he turned around and looked at me and said, "What do I have to do?" I said, "Give me a sea hose" and there was one right over there and I said, "Let me have some water and," I said, "I'll cool it off and you can close it." And he said, "Damn, we gotta do something quick." And they were getting bars--

James: Taking water in [??]

Rowsam: Yeah, and they were getting bars gonna try to bar it over and it was so heavy that would have been--so anyway, I took the, I opened the sea hose and I put a little water, not just drowning the thing, that would have caused all kinds of trouble. And I put a little on it and I turned it off and just cooled down.

James: Cooled the motor down?

Rowsam: Cooled the motor and cooled the tank down. And he was after, he said, "How much longer?" Well, I said, "Just a few minutes." And I cooled it some more and I got so I could put my had on the side of that tank I started it up and I said, "Try it now." And that hatch cover, both sections started coming together and it closed right up.

James: That would have put a whole lot of water in that hold.

Rowsam: Yeah, so they had to do something real fast. And I just happened to be there and I knew enough hydraulics and engineering to do that. But that led to a very interesting thing. I taught school all the way across the Pacific. They had a lot of people on there that didn't understand anything about hydraulics. So, the next day here comes the 2nd Mate, he said, "Would you come and talk to the chief engineer." I said, "Sure." And so they took me way down the ship, here's the chief engineer's quarters. Pretty nice now.

James: No kidding?

Rowsam: They had food there. They had a refrigerator and one thing or another and so he said, "How did you know what to do with that hatch door?" They had been talking about that and having a big time. And I told him. I taught hydraulics as part of some of the engineering that worked on. He said, "Would you be willing to help us teach some of these folks what to do with it?" So I became a hydraulics instructor. I said, "Well, I don't have any manuals or anything" and he said, "We've got the prints and we've got some of the manuals from the ship." And I said, "Fine." I said, "I'll need a chalkboard." Didn't have a chalkboard. And he said, "We'll fix something." He said, "You come back tomorrow morning." And he said, and so every morning after they changed watch, I'd have breakfast, I'd go down to the chief engineers and those guys would come in and we'd had a good time. And they found a piece of plywood and they painted it so that I had a chalkboard and I could draw diagrams and go through this and I went through the basic principles of hydraulics and one thing and we had a good time. The only thing I was on call all the rest of the time. One night they called me, they had a problem with the fuel tanks and they thought they were running out of fuel. Well, they had a person do a sounding and

it was a little rough and they got a false reading. So, anyway [Indecipherable], I went down there.

James: How is it they didn't put in to transfer you to the Navy?

Rowsam: Hey, I could have stayed aboard that ship and really--ahh, it was real neat when they came back and the next time they came back and they called the unit and I went down to visit with them.

James: Oh, how nice.

Rowsam: And it really was nice because I have become very friendly with them, but they had taken some hits coming up the Saigon River when they were blowing those ash cans.

James: Oh really.

Rowsam: And they wanted there for a reason because I took pictures there going up the Saigon River and they said, "Boy Sarge, you shouldn't be out on that deck." He said, "We get a lot of fire along here once in awhile." But they lost one man and they had three wounded.

James: Standing on deck?

Rowsam: No, that was into, right up next to the bridge. Those "ash cans," they'd launch them and they'd blow up. We called them "ash cans"--

James: They weren't ash cans?

Rowsam: No, they were, they detonated a metal container that had quite a lot of explosives. So they had plywood over holes and everything else when I went back that time.

James: These were launched from the shore?

Rowsam: Yep

James: Along the river?

Rowsam: Yeah, on the Saigon River going up and when you got into Saigon--

James: [Indecipherable]

Rowsam: Yep. There was some of that that happened. But anyway, afterwards why then I got busy. And then that was the *SS Louise Lykes* and then they put that on a different run and I don't know who--

James: That was your ship?

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: That you went over on?

Rowsam: Yep.

James: That was a commercial vessel?

Rowsam: Yeah, leased to the Army.

James: Run by the merchant marines.

Rowsam: Yep, but I had a lot of fun doing that so---

James: Do you ever keep in contact with those people?

Rowsam: Ahh, with the, I did for awhile with the radio operator. A real nice fellow, but he passed away a number of years ago and I don't any of the rest of them. I did run across a picture of the ship one day in the newspaper in the Atlantic, yeah, *SS Louise Lykes*. And so I've always thought about that, but it made the days go better for me.

James: Oh I expect, so when did you come here to the end of your tour?

Rowsam: Well, when I got back down, I got into Saigon I had this case of beer and set it aboard and I gave it to the crew. And the captain called me and talked to me about that, but since I'd done all these things, I said it was just a going away present and he said afterwards when I was leaving, he said, "I don't know about you guys," he said, "I don't know how you got that aboard this ship." And I said, "Wasn't that hard at all Captain." [laughs]. But when we came back, when we were unloading, it took us awhile because part of it had to go on barges and [indecipherable]. So the crew came down, a lot in my section and they hadn't had any showers living in the tents up there in the heat and so the crew aboard the *SS Louise Lykes* said, "Hey you guys, come aboard." And they fed them. Let them have showers and everything else. They went back to the First Sergeant and said, "We don't know what the hell Rowsam did, but he's sure a big wheel on board that ship" [laughs].

James: The beer was worth that?

Rowsam: It was. It was.

- James: Well, that's a wonderful story.
- Rowsam: And it worked out very, very well. And it was a good time. And the Marines didn't miss that one pallet I'm sure. But I got, we got in, it got a little hot along in '69 there. Because we got there right after Tet. And then, we did get rocket fire and one thing or another. We had some convoys that were shot up and one thing or another. But we didn't have a lot of trouble right along then, but we built a lot of things and made ourselves halfway comfortable. And then we had a water tanker so we hauled our own water. We never ran out of water and that sort of thing. We took a big tank and mounted it and built a shower so we could take showers and other people came and took showers. So we lived pretty well. We had a good mess sergeant, an old navy cook. Boy, and we ate and got along pretty good. We took care of our people and didn't lose any.
- James: You didn't have to send people out into the boonies to repair things?
- Rowsam: Only once in awhile if a truck was disabled.
- James: Mostly they came to you?
- Rowsam: Yeah.
- James: But if there was a truck stalled out in the jungle--
- Rowsam: We had to retrieve it.
- James: You had to retrieve it and bring it back and fix it?
- Rowsam: Yeah.
- James: Did that put your boys at risk?
- Rowsam: Yeah, and those rocket attacks, I don't know, about thirteen times in less than three months there they'd bring a 120 [mm] rocket down on a bicycle, set it up two crossed sticks, fire it over there and go back and get another one.
- James: Unbelievable.
- Rowsam: Yeah, but that did a little damage, not so much to our stuff, but my young friend in the next motor pool told me once that the lieutenant told him to disburse his trucks not in the motor pool, but up on the side of this ridge. And I told him not to put them up there. I said, "They'll be too obvious." And he puts them up there and--

James: Attracts attention.

Rowsam: Yeah, and then they got four of them, but they didn't get any of ours. But, we had a young lieutenant that came to us and we raised a number of lieutenants over there. We had a lieutenant Lajoy who went to another company that was in bad shape. And he was due for first lieutenant, but he was still second and he had to send a convoy, and it wasn't ready and he wasn't going to get it ready because he didn't have enough help. So we were working that night and he had been assigned to us for a long time and then been transferred. So I took three people over there and myself and we went to see him. And he was sitting in his office and he looked up to see us and we asked him, what he needed to get that out? And it was going to go at 2 o'clock and this was about 7:30 at night. And we sent our guys over there and I said you get your people so they'd come and work with us. And he did and they got out on time. But he knew that if we hadn't come they wouldn't.

James: Sure.

Rowsam: So, people pretty well left us alone over there. We got along alright. We got, they couldn't understand, we came up with some big timbers and we made ourselves a rack to run our vehicles to grease them and do all of the-

James: [Indecipherable]

Rowsam: So, that wasn't any big problem. We had cross cut saws and one thing or another. We finally got permission and built some buildings. We'd take a truck and go down to "Bearcat" where they would offload ships and there would be "dunnage." And they'd take the dunnage and throw it off on the shore. Which is timbers, 2 by 4s, stuff that had held cargo in place aboard ship. So we would bring that back and we made some shelters that were better than the tents and we had part of our TO&E or Table of Organization and Equipment authorized us the gasoline engine driven circular saw, big radial arm saw. We ripped those to different sides. We had people that were professional carpenters, so they saw us with these great big timbers we got from the Special Forces, they didn't want them. They got them some how, so I don't know, we traded them for something.

James: [Indecipherable]

Rowsam: Yeah, but those we made a great big oil wreck so we could drive these five ton trucks and everything up on there. And here comes the people from battalion again. Where did you get the timber for that? Who authorized that? How did you get that built? What engineers helped you? No engineers helped us, we did it. And so anyway, he wouldn't believe me.

- James: And they had to go back to the colonel again?
- Rowsam: Well this was the colonel's representative. And the second time the colonel came. So, Jones--
- James: I thought you had everything squared away by then?
- Rowsam: He was, but he was a little bit skittish on this because somebody had fed him a real tale. We'd done something really wrong. We weren't authorized to have that big--
- James: You're talking about the horseshoes with the soda thing?
- Rowsam: I thought it would have too, but it didn't. But anyway, here was a guy named Jones who was a guy from up near by Baraboo and he was a carpenter. And ahh, framing carpenter, worked on a lot of stuff. And Jones was out there doing something else with the generator set. They didn't like it because we supplied our own power down at the end of that thing. We had a sign said "Wisconsin Power and Light Company" where we had our generators running [laughs]. But anyway, I said, "Jonesee, come over here and talk to the colonel." And the colonel came over and asked Jones how that got built. And Jones explained very. And he [colonel] said, "What did you use to cut these timbers with?" Jones said, "Crosscut saw." Where did you get that? He [Jones] said, "It is part of our TO&E [table of organization & equipment]." And the colonel didn't know it. And so he went away and the directive came down that the rest of the motor sections were supposed to build one of them.
- James: [laughs] So they had to borrow your saw?
- Rowsam: We wouldn't have cared. We would have helped them. There was only one other company that ever did it. But we let them use ours if we weren't using it.
- James: Sure.
- Rowsam: And I thought, why make a big issue of it. But it--
- James: Now how about your malaria?
- Rowsam: It was bad while I was there. There was another sergeant--
- James: Mean, you had three or four more occurrences?
- Rowsam: Yeah.

James: That many?

Rowsam: Yeah, about three of them. And I, see we were supposed to take of those big Atabrine [anti-malarial] tablets.

James: One a day or one a week?

Rowsam: Yeah, but I couldn't take that much. It made me sick. So see they wouldn't let eat unless we took one of those. So Foxee had malaria too. He'd been in Korea. And he died now a few years ago from Agent Orange. Died out here in University Hospital. But, at least that was on his death certificate. We didn't know what was wrong with him when we took him out there. But, I couldn't take a whole one, but I could take a half of one and that worked on that. And then I got sick when I got home after that, but now in the last few years I haven't been too--

James: [indecipherable]

Rowsam: But a Navy doctor told me something that I never understood about that. He said, "That there was more than one kind of malaria." And so he said my malaria was "black malaria." And he said, "Ultimately, that will give you troubles and probably your kidneys and your liver will get, you know, not good on that." And I have a problem now health wise in that I can't metabolize alcohol at all. And I can't eat a lot of sugar. I can't metabolize that.

James: Your body rejects that?

Rowsam: And the doctor said, that's good. They aren't good for you anyway. So I've had a lot of other things happen to me. My health is pretty good. I had--

James: You are looking good.

Rowsam: Yeah. I had cancer twice.

James: What kind?

Rowsam: Prostate. Came back--

James: [indecipherable] I had.

Rowsam: Oh yeah. Oh great. Dr. Richards fixed me. It--

James: [indecipherable]

- Rowsam: And he got after me. It came back because there was a little bit in the seminal vessicle [??] in this one little place. And I gambled and said, well let's not do the radiation right away. Let's just see what happens.
- James: So what'd you do?
- Rowsam: I waited three years and then the PSA started up just a little bit and I said, well let's see what it does. I said, a lot of other things, in the meantime I'd had six heart bypasses. So, but he talked to me and he got another resident to talk to me and he set me down one day and said, "You know," he said, "I really wish you'd consider that radiation." He said, "You've got a good window right now. It's a good time to do it." And so I did it and it zeroed out. He said, "If you were my very favorite uncle, I'd advise you the same way" [laughs]. But, I've survived. I've kept on doing things with the 826 Ordinance Company, came back to Madison.
- James: You are going to have to tell me about getting out of 'Nam. We don't want to get too far ahead right now.
- Rowsam: Well, my enlistment was up. And so I extended and they would only let me extend three months at a time. So, I extended and I extended until, umm, that was the June of 1969.
- James: June '69. Your wife hadn't left you by then after you extended?
- Rowsam: No.
- James: She was very tolerant [laughs].
- Rowsam: She is. Fabulous lady, never put a tight string on me.
- James: Well that was awful nice of her [laughs]. Most wives would have screamed bloody murder when you talked about extending.
- Rowsam: But the warrant officer that was our personnel officer said, "Man" he said, "you shouldn't do that." So **[End of Side A, Tape 2]**.
- Rowsam: So he put a block on it and when I went to extend a second time, they wouldn't let me.
- James: Because?
- Rowsam: Because they indicated that I had a family and everything at home and one thing or another. And I don't know what all they put in it. I never got to see that. But, the, when I went to extend, they wouldn't let me do it. And I

had to go to the regular Army to do that. But anyway, they decided at that time that they were going to break up the unit and they were going to use people as replacements. And we fought that very hard and all of the reserve units that were in Vietnam fought that and they ultimately decided against it. And they kept the unit integrity.

James: Brought them back the same way?

Rowsam: Brought them back the same way they took them out. But I made it home before they did because I came back in the summer and they came back in October.

James: And then you were out of the service?

Rowsam: Yep.

James: When the Gulf War started did anyone call you and say--?

Rowsam: I was, I had been retired in 1990. And that was--

James: Pretty close?

Rowsam: I was right on the edge. So a number of my friends were called up because as a warrant officer I was subject to recall until I was sixty-two. And that would have been '92. And so several of them, two from Madison went to Anniston, AL and worked in ordinance down there. And I would have probably wound up the same way. And I was prepared to go. I wasn't very upset about it. But, I wouldn't have gone overseas. I went to see the guys that I trained and one thing or another and when they were at McCoy before they left. I had one experience you might like to know about in Vietnam. When they used to try to come in the perimeter, and I heard--

James: [indecipherable]

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: Did you have dogs?

Rowsam: No, we didn't have dogs at that time. But we did have and we had as part of our company assignment, we had to supply guards periodically for perimeter defense. Well, one night, they blew a hole in the perimeter fence and they were coming in and the barber that cut our hair was found impaled [sp] on the wire in the morning.

James: Impaled on the wire?

- Rowsam: Yeah, he was the one--
- James: He was on guard duty?
- Rowsam: Well, the barber was a Vietnamese. And he was working with the North Vietnamese instead of the South Vietnamese and he found, and he was the one that was hanging in the wire. And he was leading in the "Charlies."
- James: How did he enter the wire?
- Rowsam: Because he was with them and he was cut down with the crossfire from the machinegun.
- James: Right under you noses, an infiltrator.
- Rowsam: Yep, well we had in one night in section 3, there was a, where we were, there were spider holes that went down in ground and there was some of these guys that were there inside. But they didn't really give us a lot of trouble, but the fellas from the section, the records section, over in section 3, and that was not too far from our motor pool, called up one night and said, "Watch out, there's a 'Charlie' walking down the path and he's coming right towards the back of the motor pool." Well, we went down there and just kind of set tight and waited and he disappeared into a hole. But we fixed the hole.
- James: I was going to say, you didn't know that there was these spider holes there?
- Rowsam: We didn't know that one was there.
- James: They were that well camouflaged?
- Rowsam: Yeah. One night we were working on a piece of machinery, a forklift, down in the loading, and we had lights on so that we could see to load and we made some special generators with lights. And we looked up on the ridge and there was three guys watching, Charlie. So, but anyway--
- James: Did somebody put a gun on them?
- Rowsam: Well, we went up there and they disappeared before we even got up there. We did a flanking coming around--
- James: [indecipherable]
- Rowsam: They were just on the berm watching all of the activities. They were getting their ammunition supplies out of there too probably. I don't know.

So that was a crazy deal. We had some interesting times. We did get, we got into trouble when one of our old warrants [warrant officer] went down. We got a rocket in and set a bunch of Willy Peter afire. White phosphorus, and that stuff is very bad and the only thing to do is put it out with--

James: I know all about that stuff.

Rowsam: Yeah, burns.

James: I took care of a lot of burns in Korea.

Rowsam: But the guys went down there. Half a dozen of them grabbed shovels and covered it up and put it out. Then they were admonished for going down there. Oh, you could have blown up. Well, what the--you know. Some of the rationale over there wasn't very good.

James: The judgment seems to disappear the further away from the action. You ever notice that?

Rowsam: It really does, the farther you go--

James: The further away, the less understanding.

Rowsam: Yeah, they really are. But we, we had one fellow who was transferred out of the unit that was a part of the unit here in Madison when we were activated. And he had not been through ammunition training so he was transferred to the First Infantry Division and he was killed over there. So that was the only one we lost. We had a few people wounded.

James: Were there any left in Madison?

Rowsam: Yeah, we came back and there were seven of us. And we built that unit back to full strength again.

James: It's still around?

Rowsam: It's still here and it went to the Gulf [Persian Gulf War, 1990-1]. And it went to Saudi. Yeah.

James: [indecipherable] what about you?

Rowsam: I didn't go and I--

James: That's alright.

Rowsam: I thought my luck was getting--

- James: I was going to say, [indecipherable].
- Rowsam: Too tight. And so, a lot of things--There was one other thing in Vietnam that was, that always impressed me a great deal. When that, they blew that wire several times on us. I had some extra rolls of wire. I had some posts and I had some stuff that was down in the end of the motor pool. Several of the guys asked me, "What was I keeping that stuff for?" I said, "An emergency." Well, the night they blew that and came through, we went down there and loaded that in a five ton truck and we went back out there, try to get that, patch that up enough so they couldn't come through there. It was colored and we maybe wouldn't have been able to do it until daylight anyway. But at least we had the stuff. And I jumped in the truck and the fella that was my second was a sergeant there named Jacobson. And Jake and another guy jerked me out of the truck and wouldn't let me go. He said, "We need what's in your head, old man. You stay here. We know how to put this wire."
- James: [laughs] Enough said.
- Rowsam: Yeah, it was in a sense. But that made me feel good that they thought enough about me and what I knew what to do.
- James: When these guys were going through the wire and all, what were they after?
- Rowsam: They were trying to get in there and I think they were trying to blow up.
- James: Blow something up?
- Rowsam: Yeah. If they could have set off some charges in there and detonated---
- James: They were looking for your ammo then?
- Rowsam: Yeah, they were coming right into the ammo. Yeah, not into where we were.
- James: But didn't you have that [indecipherable] side too?
- Rowsam: Yeah, but we didn't have that much. We had to supply the perimeter guards on that also. There was some infantry assigned, but they were very, very thin. So, and you never knew where they do that. It was, that was a tremendous big area. That was thousands of acres.
- James: Yeah, it was just hard to really protect it, adequately.

- Rowsam: Yeah, and the other thing we got into trouble there was such road net in there and we could never keep the roads maintained. Well, I was an old engineer--
- James: [indecipherable]
- Rowsam: We didn't have any equipment to maintain the roads other than we could fill in holes with a dozer. We didn't have any graders.
- James: They were from rain?
- Rowsam: Rain, all that truck traffic, heavy loads, washed out--
- James: Ruined the roads?
- Rowsam: Yeah. And they were not gravel. They were just lad [??] right anyway.
- James: They didn't have any gravel or grader to--
- Rowsam: --do that. We'd haul a little bit of gravel once in awhile to fill it in. But, I found a grader that the Vietnamese didn't use anymore, so I brought the grader back. And I got permission from an engineer advisor to bring it back and we put the grader behind one of those trucks and we graded roads. And it improved the hauling in there tremendously. And then we got in trouble because we'd stolen the grader. And they would not believe the grader was--
- James: [indecipherable]
- Rowsam: Yeah, and we had authorization for it. And the company commander didn't believe us, but he let us keep grading the roads. And after I left it again became a subject of controversy and the guys cut the grader up and took it to the salvage yard.
- James: [laughs] And so--
- Rowsam: It was crazy. But--
- James: [indecipherable] says, "Where's my grader, and somebody says, I don't know.
- Rowsam: And it was ridiculous because there was so much controversy over that and it was not a, it was a tug grader. One of the early ones that you had to pull with a, you know, we didn't come up with any. And there was engineer equipment, but the engineers never had enough time to--

James: [indecipherable] to pull.

Rowsam: No, it was really just a grader where an operator stood on the back of it and operated the blade and one thing or another. And the truck provided the motive power to pull it ahead. And it was probably something from World War II that had been left there.

James: So how did you get out of 'Nam? Tell me that.

Rowsam: Well, one day they told me that I was going home. And that the First Sergeant came and told me and I had the about a day and a half and I had to be at Tonsenu [??]. And so it went, I went--

James: About 35 miles from you?

Rowsam: Yeah, something a little, like that. So I got, they sent me down there in a vehicle and I processed in there and got aboard that freedom bird and I wound up back in California and had to process out there. And I was discharged and when I got, they took all of my clothes and everything away from so that I didn't, you know, gave me a uniform and one thing or another and processed me out. And I got home and a few days later I got a call from one of the advisors in another unit here in town and he knew that I had come home and he said, "Jim, did they discharge you in California?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Why don't you come out and see me." He said, "We want to make sure all of your stuff is up." He said, "You have twenty years in." And I said, "Yes, better than that." "But", he said, "Well we've got to make sure that it's good time." Well, the problem was, I didn't have every one of my records, but I had most of them. So we redid that and recaptured it. And the way that showed up, there was time initially, when I had first reenlisted in 1953 that was not good time. And they couldn't find the records on it. So I reenlisted, here in Madison. And when I came, I was, I drilled with another unit and when the company come back, because I said there was seven of us that set up. And we went into another building out at the old Truax complex and we set that up and we started recruiting people and getting equipment. I stayed in the training consideration. Then I was, I finally, I couldn't have stayed with them any longer. I wanted to stay up until I retired, but that was, they needed another warrant in there and I said, "Well, I'll just go on inactive list." And then I found out that I could drill for points by going to McCoy and I did that and did some special projects up at McCoy. And I stayed active--

James: So, about 1990?

Rowsam: Yep.

James: And you got your twenty years in.

- Rowsam: Oh yeah, just short of thirty.
- James: Just short of thirty when it was all over? So, you retired at three quarters pay?
- Rowsam: Well, not quite. I had enough active duty time so--
- James: [indecipherable]. 50% of a warrants pay. That's pretty good.
- Rowsam: I do pretty well. And you know, my wife did something very interesting. She said, "I had other things and other retirements." She said, "You know, she said, "you earned that the hard way all those years." She said, "Your retirement money from the Reserve, from the Army, goes in a separate account and that's your mad money." So, I can do whatever I want with it.
- James: [laughs] That's terrific.
- Rowsam: So, pretty, it's a good thing I brought her along when I left Fort Bragg.
- James: Yeah. Nice to marry a smart one.
- Rowsam: Yeah.
- James: Did you join any veterans' organizations?
- Rowsam: I belong to the VFW. I became a life member of that, but I don't do a lot with them. I--
- James: I think they are a dying organization.
- Rowsam: Well, the thing is, all they do, the people you meet out there and one thing and another, most of them never heard a shot fired in anger and one thing or another--
- James: Really?
- Rowsam: Lot of them didn't. And I can't drink and I don't--
- James: Doesn't have much meaning for you?
- Rowsam: No. I do some things with the Veterans Museum here and I have been doing some research. I come from a long line of soldiers, so I guess that's how I wound up in the Army.
- James: Sure. And you keep in contact with the 826th.

Rowsam: Yeah. We are trying to redo the history consideration. And we redid the history of that entire unit out there and I went out and talked to a lieutenant a little while ago. And there's very little been done with it, even the Saudi stuff hasn't been updated. There's another old warrant and myself who are now making plans to go out there--

James: [indecipherable] project.

Rowsam: Oh, we're going to update that. And if nothing else, make copies of that and one thing and another--

James: Sure. I think that's nice.

Rowsam: And maybe even transfer the thing to the Veterans Museum.

James: That would be nice. They would like to have a record of that.

Rowsam: Yeah.

James: That would be very good. So, when you got back home, did you go back to--

Rowsam: MATC.

James: MATC?

Rowsam: Yeah. Went back to my old job, did the same thing. Yeah.

James: You taught there, how many years?

Rowsam: Oh, golly, that, I had been there since--

James: What you did in two parts.

Rowsam: Yeah. And then I came back. I finished out, I retired out of there in '90 also.

James: Totally retired since?

Rowsam: '90. I always told everybody that I was going to retire with my military retirement and my school retirement, I could do that when I was 90, and I walked out a little early.

James: Yeah.

Rowsam: And I worked hard for them. I did their night school considerations and everything else. And they said, "Oh, you've been a part of this for so long, you can't stay away." And I said, "Yes I can."

James: You said you got out of the army at 90.

Rowam: Yeah.

James: But didn't you work back at MATC after that?

Rowsam: No, I retired from MATC at the same time. And since then, I've traveled to England and I like antique farm machinery and one thing or another and I've gone to shows all over and met people all over the country and had a ball.

James: [Indecipherable]

Rowsam: And I would do more with some of the things I do indirectly some things that help some of the veterans organizations. They had a problem in Black Earth. They didn't have enough ammunition to, blank ammunition, to do their---

James: Honors?

Rowsam: Honors guard doings. [Tape ends abruptly]

[End of Interview]