

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Lt. Col. Timothy J. Cronin
Fighter Pilot, Air Force, World War II,
Korean War, Vietnam War

1994

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Cronin, Timothy J. (b. 1921). Oral History Interview, 1994.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 45 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 45 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder)

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder)

Abstract:

Timothy J. Cronin, an Oconomowoc, Wisconsin native, discusses his career as a pilot in the Air Force in World War II, Korea, and the Vietnam War. Cronin touches upon his early life in Oconomowoc during the Great Depression. After graduating college in 1939, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Cronin tells how his father, a U.S. Attorney in Milwaukee, mailed him a postcard stating he had drafted his son. Cronin “didn’t want to be a ground pounder” so he joined the Army Air Corps. Cronin reveals he chose the Air Corps over the Navy because he was afraid of getting stranded at sea. Cronin was called up in February 1942 to San Diego (California) where he passed a written exam to become a pilot. Cronin recalls his basic training in Greenville (Texas) and his first flight at flight school in Bonham (Texas). In 1944, Cronin was assigned to the 8th Air Force, 4th Fight Group in England; however, he mentions he missed the D-Day invasion because he was hospitalized for a month with the mumps. Cronin briefly discusses his voyage across the Atlantic on the *USS New Amsterdam*. Next, he describes his first combat mission in 1944; Cronin was a fighter pilot whose primary mission was to escort bombers. Three squadrons, or forty-eight planes, flew on these missions. Cronin states he shot down two-and-a-half German planes (the “half” was a plane he and another pilot hit at the same time). Cronin briefly describes the German air defense and characterizes the Germans as good pilots and fighters. When not escorting bombers, Cronin would strafe roads, aiming at trains, trucks, and moving vehicles. He explains he was authorized to shoot at “targets of opportunity” and that he occasionally carried bombs and went on “skip bombing” missions. Cronin takes time to describe his psychological mindset during World War II, stating he was sure he would not come back alive. He also discusses military life and recreation: he was stationed at Dundon Air Base (England) and visited nearby Saffron Walden or London where he and other troops drank warm beer and played darts. Cronin states he flew his last mission on New Years Eve 1944. Because he had completed seventy missions, Cronin was allowed to returned to the U.S. on Easter Sunday 1945. He recalls attending Gunnery Instructors School in Texas when he heard the news that the atomic bombs had been dropped on Japan. After World War II, Cronin states he returned to UW-Madison and earned degrees in civil engineering and law. Cronin addresses college life on a campus full of veterans, commenting that he lived in a fraternity house that was taken over by women students until 1946 when the men returned. Cronin jokes that during college he “goofed up along the way... and joined the Wisconsin Air National Guard” in 1947. Cronin enjoyed the weekend exercises— until he was called up to Korea in 1954. Throughout the interview, Cronin discusses the merits of various aircraft including the P-51, F-89, F-94, T-33, and C-130. Cronin compares

flying a T-33 jet with radar in Korea to flying a P-51 propeller plane in World War II. He explains it was important to trust the jet's instruments and radar in Korea because he was flying at night in bad weather. Cronin describes sleeping in huts at the air base in Suwon (South Korea) and contrasts these conditions with the RAF base in Dundon (England). After a year in Korea, Cronin was reassigned to Minneapolis (Minnesota) to fly with the Air Defense Command. He tells the story of meeting his wife, a commercial airline stewardess, on a trip to pick up new aircraft from another city. Cronin explains he was "shuffled around" in the next few years to Kansas City and attended Command and Staff College before he and his family were transferred to Wiesbaden Air Base (Germany). In Germany, Cronin explains he did civil engineering work and flew top officers to various bases in Europe. He reflects on raising a family in the military, mentioning that he and his wife liked Germany and "military life" and that the entire family took trips to Holland and France. Cronin depicts relations with the German people as positive and mentions many Germans he worked with had fought on the Russian Front during World War II. Next, Cronin discusses his service in the Vietnam War. In 1968, he was stationed at Mactan Island (Philippines) and ran frequent missions to Tan Son Nhut Air Base (Vietnam). Cronin explains that he flew back and forth so often because he was on "temporary duty" and "it was a numbers game they [the military] were playing." Cronin describes flying "trash hauler" missions; he would haul anything from ammunition, food, and supplies to troops, Vietnamese prisoners, and dead bodies. Cronin feels this was a good assignment and notes positive experiences like delivering fresh vegetables and ice cream to American troops on the frontlines. Cronin tells a vivid story of how his aircraft was hit and he had to land and evacuate his crew. Several members of his crew were injured, and his loadmaster lost an arm. The loadmaster and navigator were evacuated back to the hospital, but rather than wait for another helicopter, Cronin flew his original plane back to base with an illegal skeleton crew. Cronin reflects upon the differences between the Vietnam War and World War II. He comments that as a 21-year-old in the Second World War, he was ironically more afraid of dying than he was in Vietnam, with a family and four children to return to. Cronin reflects: "I was probably better off mentally in Vietnam than I was in World War II." He discusses the difficulty of being away from his family during his year in Vietnam and tells how he had telephone dates every Saturday night with his wife in Oconomowoc. He recalls how his wife "was scared stiff" when Cronin missed one of their dates because he was on a mission at a special forces camp. After Vietnam, Cronin returned to McClellan Air Force Base (California). Now a lieutenant colonel, Cronin heard from a friend who was a chief master sergeant that he was in line to go back to Vietnam. Cronin states he "would have been in civil engineering in Vietnam" and that he disliked the idea of "sitting in the back of a helicopter" while a second lieutenant was piloting. Cronin retired in 1971 before he could be sent back to Vietnam. Lastly, Cronin discusses his participation in veterans' organizations. He joined the American Legion shortly after World War II but later left because they weren't providing the support he wanted. He now belongs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans.

Biographical Sketch:

Cronin (b. 1921) was born and raised in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. In 1942, he joined the Army Air Corps to avoid being drafted by his father, a U.S. Attorney. In World War II, Cronin flew with the 4th Fighter Group, 8th Air Force, escorting bombers over Germany. He shot down 2.5 planes and flew 70 missions, which qualified him to return to the United States in Spring 1945. After World War II, Cronin graduated from the University of Wisconsin with degrees in civil engineering and law. He joined the Wisconsin Air National Guard in 1947 and was called up to Korea in 1954. In the 1950s and '60s, Cronin served with the Air Defense Command in Minneapolis (Minnesota) and at Wiesbaden Air Base (Germany). In 1968, he was deployed to Vietnam, where he hauled supplies, prisoners, troops, and casualties between Mactan Island (Philippines) and Tan Son Nhut Air Base (Vietnam). Cronin retired from the Air Force in 1971 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He lives in his family home in Oconomowoc and is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans.

Interviewed by Mark Van Ells, 1994

Transcribed by WDVA staff, 1998

Transcription edited and abstract written by Darcy I. Gervasio, 2010

Interview Transcript:

Mark: Good morning Mr. Cronin.

Tim: My name is Tim.

Mark: Tim. Now on the data sheet I had you fill out it says that you were born in 1921 in Oconomowoc.

Tim: That's right. I was born in Milwaukee but we lived in Oconomowoc. The hospital was in Milwaukee.

Mark: You were a child of the Depression you would say, I suppose.

Tim: Yeah, I lived through it.

Mark: Did it strike your family difficult? I mean, some people suffered more than others.

Tim: Others suffered more than we did, I'm sure. My father was a lawyer. There were tough times. He used to get paid with pegs and chickens and things like that sometimes, sure. But, we lived through it.

Mark: I see. And, when did you finish high school?

Tim: '39. 1939. We just had our 55th class reunion.

Mark: Is that right?

Tim: Uh huh.

Mark: And then, I assume you had to go to college.

Tim: I did.

Mark: Where did you go?

Tim: University of Wisconsin, in Madison.

Mark: What did you major in?

Tim: When I first came here, before the war, I was probably general. After the war I came back again and graduated Civil Engineering and then I went on into Law

School. However, things happened in between there and I was pulled back into service.

Mark: Well come back to that. I'm interested in how you got into the military. It says on the sheet here that you volunteered. What prompted you to join the Army originally?

Tim: I got a postcard in the mail and it said, "You are now 1A in the draft" and it was signed Timothy T. Cronin, my father. He was president of the draft board in Oconomowoc. And, I said, "You ain't going to get me, pop." So, I didn't want to go in and be a ground pounder so I went in and took the exam and passed it and I was sworn in Aviation Cadet. And, that's how I got into the service. That's how I volunteered, because my father was going to draft me.

Mark: To get into the Army Air Corps, was it Army Force?

Tim: It was Army Air Corps.

Mark: Those are quite an accomplishment. A lot of people wanted to do that.

Tim: A lot of people wanted to do it and didn't make it.

Mark: Was it more than just not wanting to get ground pounded that attracted you to the Army Air Corps?

Tim: Well, I thought flying would be great. The reason I went into the Army Air Corps though is a little bit different. I kind of thought that the Navy uniform was really sharp, a lot sharper than the Army. But, then I began thinking, I didn't know anything about it, and I thought well gee, if you got lost out at sea that's an awful long swim and if something happens over land well then at least you would get back. That's really why I chose the Army Air Corps instead of the Navy.

Mark: So you passed the test. Where did you take the test by the way?

Tim: In Milwaukee.

Mark: In Milwaukee?

Tim: Uh huh.

Mark: Describe the steps then from taking the test and getting accepted to going to your first training base. I assume you had to report to some depot or something.

Tim: Sure. I, well, I took the exam and I passed it and I was sworn in. That was in August of '42. They said: "Go home and we'll call you when we are ready for

you” because there was kind of a back log in getting into the classes. So, I did not receive a notice until ‘43. I think it was February of ‘43, but early ‘43. And, then I reported. I had to go to San Antonio. Went through a classification center down there, they check you out and see if they should put you into pilot, navigator, a bombardier, a runner.

Mark: Is this like a physical exam, or questions?

Tim: Physical and written exam and somewhere I was selected. I could have gotten in to, I forgot what it was, but I chose pilot because I wanted to be a pilot and I was sent off to Bonham, Texas for a primary where I learned how to fly. They washed out an awful lot of kids, they washed them out in classifications and everything. Washed a lot of them out in primary and of course I was scared, I figured boy, going down. I finally came and got the idea, maybe I had it made with my instructor after we did acrobatics, this, that and the other thing. But, he had me do a loop. And you got on top of the loop and you unsnap it. You do a snap roll on top of the loop and stop it and then come nicely back through and finish out. And, he liked the way I did that. I know that impressed him and from then on I felt a lot safer. After that I went to Greenville, Texas for basic, flew the BT13. And, really didn’t have any trouble there, I mean, I was never put up for a check ride. I had check rides, but never for, to see if they were going to wash me out. And, then I went to Alo, Alo, but they call it Alo now, Army Air Force Base, where I went through advanced.

Mark: Was that in Texas?

Tim: Single engine advanced. That’s in Texas. It was all in Texas. I graduated in December of 43. I was allowed to go home and see the family for a couple of days and then I went down to Florida, where I learned how to fly the P51. And, from there I was sent over to England and I went through an overseas base P51 and then I was assigned to the 4th Fighter Group. However, before I got to the 4th Fighter Group, I came down with the mumps. And, it was very serious and I was in the hospital for a good month and they probably wanted to keep me a little longer, but they said if they kept me over a month I would be reassigned to somewhere, they didn’t know where. And, I thought no, my buddies were down at this base, I wanted to go with them. So, they let me out. So, I missed D-Day because I was sitting in the hospital.

Mark: I have a couple more questions about your training. I’m interested in the first time you flew an airplane. Now, at the first base in Bonham, Texas. Was the first time you flew?

Tim: That was the first time I ever flew an airplane.

Mark: I’m interested in your ...

Tim: The first time we took off, and I imagine I was in the front seat, usually in those days the instructor was in the back seat and of course he flew it. And, we took off and he turned, made a turn after take off and I thought then and there that maybe I shouldn't have done this. You know, he whipped it over and I thought: "Ay ay ay! I don't know if I'm good for this or not." But, you know, as things go on you finally learn how to do it. I was never sick in an airplane, never had any trouble, didn't affect my stomach at all. But, that's the way I got started, right from scratch.

Mark: I suppose this was the day before the flight simulator. You just had to get into a plane with the instructor.

Tim: Oh yeah, sure, sure.

Mark: I'm also interested in some of the men you were training with.

Tim: Who?

Mark: The men you were training with. They came from all different parts.

Tim: From all around.

Mark: Did you notice any certain personality types among the fighters? Were there differences between those who went into the fighter planes and the bombers?

Tim: Yeah, there was a difference. Usually, I imagine those that were better in acrobatics probably ended up more in fighters. The more stable, they put them into the bombers, the heavy, where they were going to have a crew. Fighter, you were all by yourself, they didn't care. You know, you didn't have to worry about somebody else in the airplane. But, you had to worry about your crew.

Mark: Did you notice any sort of regional differences? Because among the pilots you are all fairly well educated and that sort of thing, but I can imagine, like the southern guys might have been a little different.

Tim: I don't think so. I don't think so. No, I think we were all about the same as far as I recall. It didn't make any difference where you came from.

Mark: I'm interested in your transportation overseas. You had to take a boat, I assume.

Tim: Oh yes. Went over on a boat. Went over on the New Amsterdam. It's no longer new, I think they, it was in those days, they called it the New Amsterdam. And, we were by ourselves, it was not in a convoy. So, we had just a nice trip going over there.

Mark: How were your accommodations?

Tim: Oh, not great, but they weren't as bad as some people got. And, we were, we weren't shoved way down in the bottom hole where it was, I guess, pretty smelly down there.

Mark: That's what I've heard. Some of the enlisted guys weren't happy down there.

Tim: But, ours wasn't too bad really. And, we really didn't have any duties, I think they put us on officer of the day, or something like that, one time. I forgot how many days it took us to go across. I don't know. It was a pretty good ship. They figured it could go faster than the submarines.

Mark: And you obviously didn't get hit.

Tim: No no. We weren't hit. We got over there all in one piece.

Mark: So, what's, start with the actual World War II experiences and, do you remember your first combat mission?

Tim: I do.

Mark: Perhaps you could you describe like, waking up from the briefing and how you felt as you were flying off the runway.

Tim: Sure, I was scared. You know, I was barely 21 at the time and it was quite an experience, you go into the war and you know all of these people had been getting shot down and all that and the other thing. But, I was in the 8th Air Force and we were, our primary mission was to escort the bombers. So, we had a group and we had a group, 3 squadrons and I was in one of the squadrons. So, you flew with about 48 planes if everybody got off all right and got together. So, we were in a big formation of 48 planes.

Mark: And that's the fighters and bombers?

Tim: Flying over the bombers, escorting to, the idea was to keep the fighters off, the enemy fighters off of the bombers.

Mark: So, there were 48 fighters?

Tim: That was the group. 48 in our group. There were other groups that flew too, you know, but our group had 48 flying at one time.

Mark: And where was this first mission?

Tim: Where was the mission?

Mark: Yeah.

Tim: I have no idea. I have no idea. I have no recollection at all. I, like I say, I was, I flew on the wing, they usually did this, I flew on the wing of the group commander and he was leading the whole group and I flew on his wing. And, I remember, but as far as where we went, it wasn't, we didn't do anything, we weren't involved in any air fight. And, we didn't go down and strike, which sometimes we did, but this mission was kind of a...

Mark: Milk run as they call it?

Tim: I suppose a milk run, yeah.

Mark: But, I assume at some point there was, you did have combat with the German fighters.

Tim: Sure, sure.

Mark: Perhaps you could describe one or two of those instances.

Tim: Well, I was credited with two-and-a-half destroyed, enemy destroyed. Now, the half comes when you share it with somebody else. I had two of them by myself and then a half came in because there were two of us shooting at the same airplane and knocked them down. It all goes pretty fast. You don't have much chance for error. You have to do it right the first time. You don't get too many second chances there. So, it's a whole lot of G's, when you're in the dog fight, you know. I was never shot down, I was never injured in combat. I got holes in my airplane, but they never got me.

Mark: Well, that's good.

Tim: You bet it's good.

Mark: Do you have any comments on the effectiveness of the German fighters and the German air defenses? Were they worthy opponents you think?

Tim: They were good. They were good. Yeah, they had, they came out with a MA163, which is a twin engine jet. I'll tell you that could wipe out anybody. I mean, they were good, but by the time they got it out, they were hurting for gasoline, Petrol over there, so they weren't able to fly it too much and it was a new airplane, they didn't have many of them. They also had a MA163, which is a rocket ship and

that thing would just blast off and, you know, would beat anything, I mean, it was a fast airplane. But, they didn't get a chance to use it too often.

Mark: Do you have any recollections of the German air defenses say over a city or over flack or something like that.

Tim: You mean the flack?

Mark: Yeah, the flack.

Tim: Oh yeah. Well, when we were escorting, like I say, usually you would be alongside or over the top of the bombers going in, but when you got near the target that flack was always very heavy, so we would kind of get off on the side and let them, because the fighters weren't going to go into that flack either, so we got off and we really didn't go through those black clouds like the bombers used to have to do, which I was very thankful we didn't have to go through that. That was kind of mind shattering.

Mark: I'm sure. Now, did you do strafing as you were coming back?

Tim: Oh yeah, sure. Yeah, sometimes when we would come back, why we would get on target of opportunity they would call it.

Mark: And, what sort of?

Tim: Trains, pretty much anything that was on the road, well you figured if they were driving, they were even in a car and if he was able to have gasoline to drive, he was probably a high official there, so just about anything that moved, not people, we wouldn't get on straight people. But, trucks, you bet. Trucks and trains.

Mark: What were your instructions? Was it pretty much your discretion to shoot at whatever.

Tim: Like I say, target of opportunity. Now, there were times that we carried bombs and we would run over to do a bombing mission. Not too often, but we did.

Mark: That was a bomber type thing.

Tim: Yeah. And, we would go in and bomb low, kind of skip bomb. So, but our primary mission was escort. But, like I say, sometimes you come back and after the bombers, you got them back to a safe, you know going across the channel, we still had time left, go back in targets of opportunity.

Mark: So, when you were flying, you started flying in combat about mid '44ish.

Tim: Yeah, about mid '44.

Mark: So, by this time you had reserve tanks on your plane.

Tim: Oh yeah.

Mark: So, you could penetrate pretty deeply into Germany.

Tim: That's right.

Mark: Do you have any recollection of how far you went in?

Tim: Oh, I went over Berlin.

Mark: That's pretty deep.

Tim: Yeah, that was deep. I think one mission we were up five-and-a-half hours. But, of course, we weren't in combat there, otherwise you would never fly that long. You would be burning. You would drop your tanks if you got into trouble.

Mark: You, fortunately, survived.

Tim: Yes I did.

Mark: But I assume that a lot of your fellow fliers didn't.

Tim: I lost a lot of good friends, you bet. And, I was very thankful when I finished my last mission that I was able to go home because I was scared. I really didn't think that I was going to live through it. I really thought, you know, I'm never going to make it. But I did.

Mark: I suppose it's a sad, you know, when you go back to the barracks or whatever, it is pretty sad when somebody's bunk is empty.

Tim: Yeah, it made you think a lot. It really did.

Mark: Perhaps we could move on to some more Army type things. I imagine it is difficult to discipline fighter pilots. Like I mentioned, I was in the Air Force and I was at an attack base for a while and the fighter pilots were kind of a group unto themselves. They had a certain swaggering type personality. Perhaps you could describe some of the discipline you encountered in the Army Air Forces? Was there a lot of screaming and yelling? How did the generals assert their authority over you guys?

Tim: There was no screaming or hollering. You just did your job. They would lay it out and sometimes you would take it and you would do as you were told.

Mark: Period?

Tim: Period, you bet.

Mark: Okay. Where in England were you stationed?

Tim: Dundon.

Mark: I'm not sure where that is.

Tim: Well, the town, that was the name of the base, the town was Saffron Walden and it was north of London, 30 miles, something like that.

Mark: Did you get off the base much? Between missions did you get into the town?

Tim: Every once in a while, after a period of time, they would give you a few days off and we would go down to London, you know, and do what you want to do. And, then there was a period after about halfway through, they called it, they sent us to the flack shack they called it. You know, the idea to recog, get rid of the bugs in your head from worrying about that and just kind of get back. Well, we were out of the, on an estate out in, almost in Wales. Very peaceful.

Mark: Did it help?

Tim: I don't think so. The intent was there, but I don't think it changed my life at all. It was a different way. I enjoyed it.

Mark: Did you have much contact with any of the British people. There are a lot of stories about a lot of GIs married the British. I'm sure you are familiar with the phrase "Over paid, Over sexed, Over here." And, I assume this was your first trip overseas?

Tim: Oh yes. No, I didn't get involved. Some of them did, you know, like they would go into town, Saffron Walden, the small town there, but I very seldom did that. I pretty much stayed right on the base, except for the days when you got a couple days off, then I would take the train and go down to London.

Mark: What were some of things you would do when you were in London? I mean, what does a young 21-year-old find or do when he goes to...

Tim: Oh, he would probably go to a bar. I used to spend a little time in the bars throwing darts that you didn't know how to do.

Mark: Drinking warm beer?

Tim: Yes. Drinking warm beer, or warm scotch, you bet.

Mark: So, your last mission during the war, during World War II, do you remember that mission at all?

Tim: Sure.

Mark: I mean, was there a certain limit of missions that you were allowed to fly like the bomber pilots or did V-E Day happen and that was it for you?

Tim: No. The war was still on, but at the time, they changed periods of time as to how many missions you would have to fly for a tour. And, at the time that I finished, there was 70. When you finished 70 missions, [unintelligible] you finished the tour. They tried to bribe me into staying over, they said we'll promote you to captain and give you some more medals and things like that. I said "No thank you." I said "I'll go home." I was glad that I had, like I say, I was glad I had lived through the war. It was quite an experience.

Mark: So, as you are on the tarmac taking off, you realize that this is your last mission?

Tim: Oh yeah, sure. It could be. It wasn't, but you realize it. Sure. But, of course, you realize that any time you take off in any kind of an airplane that something could happen, but you don't worry about it.

Mark: Then so, your combat experience in World War II then finished, was Fall of '45, I mean Spring of '45?

Tim: New Years Eve I flew my last mission in '45. '45 yeah.

Mark: Boy, you must have packed in a lot of missions between the late '44.

Tim: You bet. You bet.

Mark: So, perhaps you could explain the steps, you know, from your last combat mission to coming back to the US?

Tim: After the last mission, like I say, they wanted me to stay over there and I said "No thank you, I'll go home." Well, they said well, we're going to keep you over for a couple of months anyway and they called it clobber college, you teach the new kids coming in, take them out and show them how to buzz, because in the States you weren't allowed to fly low, but if you wanted to live over in Germany, you either flew high or you flew low. And, when you fly low, you pick up to go over

the tree or the fence, so that if you fly a little too high, you are going to get hit. So, we just took the new recruits-- they weren't recruits they were the new pilots-- you would show them how to do it before they get over enemy territory. So, I was there and I finally finished and I came home on a ship again. It was a Navy transport and I know we were around the middle of the ocean when, on Easter Sunday of '45 and I came home.

Mark: Did you land in New York?

Tim: Landed in New York.

Mark: So, the war isn't officially over yet?

Tim: Oh no. It was still going on.

Mark: So there wasn't a parade. I mean, maybe you could describe...

Tim: There wasn't a parade, but at that time people loved their warriors. You know, I had a good feeling anyway that you came home and everybody was patting you on the back and things like that.

Mark: So, when did you come back to Wisconsin finally?

Tim: Well, I was given leave and saw the folks for a little while, I forgot how long it was and then I reported down to Texas and I was put into a Gunnery Instructors School. We flew out over the gulf. And, while I was there, they started dropping those atomic bombs over in Japan. So, they thought well, this isn't going to last too much longer, we've got a lot of troops and we've got a lot of pilots and so they said, they gave points. They came up with points on your record and you got points for combat missions, you got points for, you know, time and service, points for this, points for that and so anyway, I had the points to get out if I wanted to. You know, they asked you if you wanted to get out and I said you bet. So, I was out in a hurry. Came out up to Chicago at Fort Sheridan, went through the, I forget what they call it, anyway...

Mark: Out processing?

Tim: Processing, yeah. And, so, I came back and at the time my father was the United States Attorney in Milwaukee. The United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin. So, I came up to see my dad on the train. I figure what the heck, I'll see him and go home with my dad.

Mark: To Milwaukee?

Tim: To Milwaukee, yeah. But, my dad was out, he was not in there, so some newsman was around and here's a young kid still dressed in uniform, so they kind of asked, they talked to me and they wrote it up in the paper "Father on mission while son comes home."

Mark: The *Milwaukee Journal*?

Tim: The *Milwaukee Journal*, yeah. But, it hit some other kind of, I know we heard from people in California that they even published it out there.

Mark: That's interesting.

Tim: I don't have it anymore.

Mark: I'm sure it's on microfilm somewhere.

Tim: Oh, it's on microfilm someplace.

Mark: So you did go back to Oconomowoc finally?

Tim: I went back to Oconomowoc.

Mark: I'm interested in your thoughts, maybe sitting in the living room or something like that. You experienced not only World War II, but Korea and Vietnam. And, having come back from three wars, I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about readjustment problems veterans have. The Vietnam veterans problems have been in the media and those sorts of things.

Tim: Yeah. Sure. From World War II, the readjustment was great, wonderful, no problem at all and I came back to school, the University, graduated from Civil Engineering and went on to Law School, but I had goofed up along the way and I had joined the National Guard, the Air National Guard because while I was in school there, you know, I saw the P-51's and heard them flying around and I thought, boy I better get back into that, so I joined The Wisconsin Air National Guard.

Mark: While you were in college?

Tim: While I was in school. Yeah. Which was fine until the Korean War. They said "hey"— They activated the Wisconsin Air National Guard, so I was back in the service.

Mark: If you don't mind, we will come back to that in a second.

Tim: Sure.

Mark: I'm interested in the UW Campus after World War II. It was filled with veterans.

Tim: Yes it was.

Mark: It was like half of all the students were veterans.

Tim: Yeah, I imagine close to half.

Mark: Did you finance your education with a GI bill or some sort of other kinds of [unintelligible] or were you able to do it by yourself?

Tim: I had the GI bill, I had a meal job, actually it was a fraternity house.

Mark: Do you remember which one?

Tim: Yeah, Phi Gamma Delta. And, there were girls living in the dorm because there weren't any men around. When I went back, this was in the Fall of '45, there weren't too many GIs there and a lot of the girls, anyway the girls, this Phi Gamma Delta House, which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, beautiful place, but I got a job as a meal job, so I got my meals taken care of and after the next year, why, the fraternity took over again. The men were back in and I joined that fraternity and still had a meal job there, so I was able, with the GI bill and the meal job and also the flying pay, you know The National Guard, we got a little bit from being in the National Guard I was able to support myself or put myself through school.

Mark: When did you join the guard? Do you remember where in your education it was? Was it like right after the war or did you wait a couple of years?

Tim: Well, it wasn't right away, it was like I say, it was probably maybe two years, year and a half, two years.

Mark: '47 or so?

Tim: Yeah, someplace in there.

Mark: You were a member of a fraternity. I'm interested to know if you joined any sort of veterans organizations. I know there were several active on the campus at the time.

Tim: Not at Madison. No. I don't even recall any veterans organizations in Madison when I was there. I don't recall them. I belonged to the—I don't anymore, but I did belong to the American Legion. I belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and I belong to the Disable American Veterans, but that was when I got out of service.

Mark: Later on.

Tim: Yeah.

Mark: I see. Okay. There was something else I wanted to ask you. Well, let's go on, maybe I'll think of it later. So, Korea happens. You're in the National Guard, in school in the National Guard, I suppose you had to go to Truax once a month or something, how often?

Tim: Well, we flew, we'd go out there every weekend, I believe, I forget. It changed as we went on, at one time I think it was weekends and then it went, you went out for kind of more of a whole weekend and then you did that once a month or twice a month. In the summer we went to summer camp, two weeks.

Mark: Up at Oak Field or something?

Tim: We went to a field over in Michigan. I forget what the name of that was where we went, but it was north of, it was kind of on the east coast of Michigan, it was north of Detroit.

Mark: South Ridge?

Tim: I forget where South Ridge was.

Mark: So, did you all of the sudden get a telegram in the mail saying: "You're going to Korea"? Or maybe describe how you found out you were being activated for the Korea war.

Tim: Well, I found out in the newspaper and I found out, you know, we received official notice, of course, that we were activated. There was probably a lead time there, I forget how, you know, they said it will be effective as of so and so.

Mark: And you actually went over to Korea?

Tim: Yeah, but not right away. I mean, I was still at Truax, I didn't go over to Korea until '58, I think it was '58.

Mark: 1958?

Tim: No, it was probably '54. '54 that I went over there.

Mark: So the shooting had pretty much been over by that time.

Tim: Pretty much. Yeah. I was flying F94s over there.

Mark: I see that ...

Tim: Yeah, we were night fighters, you know, we flew at night when the weather was bad.

Mark: Now, I'm not familiar with the F94, it's a jet?

Tim: It's a jet. If you're familiar with a T33, it looks very similar to a T33 only it has a longer nose and it has radar. And, the back seat, instead of being able to fly from the back seat, it had a radar observer was back there working his radar.

Mark: I see. Was that the first jet you ever flew?

Tim: No. I flew the P40. Excuse me, I flew the P40, but that wasn't a jet. I flew the T33, probably the first time and then I flew the F80, which was a jet, but a lot of time in the T33. That's where I started out in jets anyway.

Mark: I'm interested in your thoughts about the difference between the P-51's, which in World War II was top of the line high technology and then the jets came along just a couple of years after. I mean, was it a major difference to fly a jet. I mean, was it that much more powerful? What sort of things were different from flying?

Tim: Well, it was different. At first I couldn't really believe that an airplane would fly without a propeller on it, but after seeing them do it, why I was convinced that it does it. The early jets that you flew, you had to be pretty careful with the throttle. If you shoved the throttle fast, too fast, it would overload and it would burn out because you had too much fuel, the fuel air mixture. By the same token, if you chopped back the throttle too fast the same way, you could flame out. As time went on, why they protected those things so that even though you shoved the throttle forward fast, there was a little governor in there that wouldn't let it creep up too fast so that it kept the engine going. So, they changed as time went on.

Mark: Some of the technology in the plane changed as well. For instance, the radars. Now, you didn't have radars in the P51 did you?

Tim: No.

Mark: No, I didn't think so. So, from a combat pilot point of view, I'm sure having the radars was a great leap in technology?

Tim: It was, yeah. As a day fighter you kind of stayed away from the bad weather so you didn't fly instruments too much and you know, you had to do it a little bit for practice, but when the weather was bad you stayed on the ground. However, you get into the all-weather fighter, that's when you flew. You flew at night and you

flew when the weather was bad. So, you learned how to fly instruments if you wanted to survive and I wanted to survive so I learned how to fly instruments. And I got so that I was good, I enjoyed night flying, you know, up there by yourself and you just felt like this is good.

Mark: So, you went to Korea and in Korea I assume you didn't have the dog fights and things like that.

Tim: No, never did, never did. Again, we were flying at night and bad weather and Charlie didn't come up. He used to fly over in a little putt putt airplane down low to the ground, but we couldn't see him down there so we never did entangle anyone over there.

Mark: So, what were your missions in Korea? I mean, what were you, when you went up was it just training or...

Tim: No, it was to go up and patrol and you would be on patrol sort of. Sometimes you, well you'd be on the ground, you'd sit in different statuses of alert. There were sometimes, why you could be in the barracks or on a certain thing, other times, why you'd have to be in the squadron, sometimes you'd sit in the airplane and ride in the airplane with the power unit running so you started right up. So, there were different stages of alert and they'd scramble you and you never knew where you were going to go, if it was up, you were controlled by the ground radar. They told you where to go and what, you know, this, that and the other thing.

Mark: You were at which base in Korea?

Tim: I was at K13 at Suwon, they used to call it "Suwon by the Sea." It really wasn't too close to the sea, but we called it that.

Mark: Now, I suppose that being at World War II you were in Europe and in England?

Tim: England.

Mark: Which is very similar to the United States culturally. And then you went over to Asia just a couple years later.

Tim: Dirty, filthy place. Mud all over the place. It isn't that way today, but at that time it had been overrun and the war had been going on. Yeah, it was very dirty, muddy place. We lived in the Quonset huts. In England, why we lived, I was on a former RAF base. R-A-F base and we had good living quarters like in a hotel sort of and we had a bat man that used to take care of shine our shoes and make the beds and this, that and the other thing. We didn't have that in Korea.

Mark: No such thing, huh?

Tim: No. We lived in Quonset huts, and you made your own beds.

Mark: Did you get off the base much there?

Tim: Not too much, no.

Mark: Nothing to do?

Tim: Well, there wasn't much to do around Suwon and even so, I was up to Seoul, I mean there were times that I did go to Seoul. It wasn't a place to go out and have fun, no. We did get time off though. We would, the airplanes at a certain intervals as you know, they have to go through kind of a retro fitting and they have to get major repairs done and after so many hours they got to perform heavier maintenance, they didn't do that on the base there where we were, so we'd fly it over, we would fly an airplane over to Fukowaka—

Mark: In Japan.

Tim: In Japan. And, then you'd wait around there till you got an airplane to fly back. One had been finished and then you'd fly that back. Then you'd get that duty every so often, I mean, they gave it around to the different crews, you know to give them a little time off, get away from it, loosen up a little bit.

Mark: I see. When did you leave Asia for the first time?

Tim: To leave?

Mark: Yeah. I mean, when did you come back to the United States after Korea?

Tim: Well...

Mark: How long were you in Korea and when did you come back?

Tim: I was there, like I say, it was '54 I believe. And, I came back on ship, aboard ship and I'm sure we had time off. And, after that I was sent to Minneapolis. Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport and there was a fighting squadron there. Air defense, we were in the air defense. And then again it was a radar type ship, we had the F89— F94— which is a twin engine Northrop, afterburners, it was a going machine. We called it the lead sled because it was pretty heavy. But, it did a job. It had a very stable platform and I flew the different models, ended up with the D model which had 104 rockets and that put a lot of fire power out there in the air in front of ya.

Mark: I'm sure.

Tim: And, you had different selections, you could shoot off so many at a time or fire them all at once. I did, we used to fire for practice you know. It's quite a, you got a little jolt there when you fired all 104.

Mark: And so you were based in Minneapolis.

Tim: Minneapolis.

Mark: This was Air National Guard right?

Tim: Well, they also had an Air National Guard but I was...

Mark: You were active duty?

Tim: I was active duty, yeah. We were in Air Defense command. That's where I met my wife and married her, naturally. She was an airline stewardess. Met her up in the sky. She was, well there were a couple of crew, I believe three, three crews of pilots and radar observers and we were on our way out to pick up some new F89s from the factory. We were sitting in the back seat of the airplane, there was a table back there and we were playing penny poker and drinking champagne, you know, they gave us champagne and one of the fellas said "Do you mind if I bring, get this gal to come back and play with us?" And, "Hell no, bring her back," you know. It turned out she was my wife, ended up. She was a good looking gal, but she had a terrible, she couldn't play poker worth a darn and she had a terrible cold, she was blowing her nose all the time, but she excused herself, she had to go to the bathroom and she got up and walked up that aisle, and that nice little swing there, I said "Hey I'm gonna get to know you, girl." And, as time went on, why we did. We hit it off good.

Mark: Well, good. When did you go to Vietnam?

Tim: I went to Vietnam, let's see—

Mark: Was it really early, or was it kind of late? Because that was a long— it dragged on for so long.

Tim: In '68, in '68.

Mark: Well, that's right in the high point of that.

Tim: You bet.

Mark: So, between Korea and Vietnam, I assume you weren't in Minneapolis the whole time.

Tim: Well, I was there, I went to. Between Korea and Vietnam, oh no no no.

Mark: Because when I was in the Air Force, I was only in for four years, and I got shuffled around, so I assume you would have been stationed other places.

Tim: I'm mixing something up here I think. I went to Minneapolis after, yeah it was after Korea. And, then I was sent to Germany. Okay. Minneapolis and then they closed the base in Minneapolis while I was there and then there was kind of a slow down and then after I was transferred when the base really ended up closed, why I was transferred down to headquarters at Richards-Gebaur, which is outside of Kansas City. And I was in the headquarters there, and it was from there I was sent to Command and Staff College and came out of there, and I was sent to Germany.

Mark: Where in Germany?

Tim: Wiesbaden.

Mark: That's where I was.

Tim: Is that right?

Mark: That's right. Which air station?

Tim: Well, I was on the air base.

Mark: That's Army now, you know.

Tim: I was in civil engineering there. And, but I also flew. But, we were there to support Lindsey [Air Station] and support the hospital, the Air Force Hospital there and headquarters.

Mark: That was still USAF headquarters?

Tim: Yeah, it was still USAFE headquarters.

Mark: A lot of brass flying around?

Tim: Oh yeah. Used to fly them all over the place. Wonderful airplane the T30. It dropped the door down, climbed up the ladder and take your hat off and stick it in the hanger space, take off your blouse, hang it up and loosen your tie and crawl into a nice leather seat, boy that was living then. The airplane flew just like a fighter too. We used to take the Generals around and the Colonels. They have to visit various bases all over Europe, so it was good flying.

Mark: So, you had once flew the combat missions over Germany and then you ended up being stationed there. For how long?

Tim: For four years.

Mark: Was that a --

Tim: It was a three-year tour and I extended for a year, I liked it so much. My wife liked it and we had the kids over there. I had a son born in Germany.

Mark: I was going to ask, now you were a career military person. So, you perhaps have some perspectives on family life in the military, the military brat, your kids had to be military brats.

Tim: Well, I tried to keep them from being too much of a brat. They grew up pretty good actually. We had our trouble like everybody does and with four boys and they were all pretty close in age and we had our problems, but they turned out fine. They're all good solid citizens now.

Mark: There were various, there were different housing complexes. Do you remember...

Tim: I was in Hamburg.

Mark: Do they still call it Little Chicago, or something like that?

Tim: Yeah, I suppose.

Mark: Was it a nice place to raise kids?

Tim: Oh yeah, I think so. I liked it, my wife liked it, which was very important. My wife loved the military life really.

Mark: Well, that's good.

Tim: Yeah it was good because sometimes they don't. I know some, they say "oh get out," but when I married I think I let her know that "hey, I'm going to stay in." By then I had made, determined that I wasn't going to get back out and then maybe get recalled again, that was terrible. So, I decided to stay in by then. She liked it.

Mark: That's good.

Tim: You bet. And, the kids all had a good time. We had four wonderful years in Germany, and I was able to travel, you know, even with my wife, we were able to travel around. We had a babysitter over there. I think we paid her \$30 a month or

something like that. Every weekend she was there, every weekend and sometimes even more. So, it was great. We could do whatever we wanted to.

Mark: She was German?

Tim: She was German.

Mark: Did you get to do much tourism around? Take the kids to...

Tim: Yeah we did. Sure, you bet. Up into Holland to see all the [unintelligible] up there and the various things. You bet. We got 'em around Paris and almost lost one kid on the Champs Élysées. Walked out right in the middle of traffic. But, like I say, somehow we got through it. Yeah, we took them all over.

Mark: I'm interested, was it strange for you having fought a war in Europe to then have this family like, you know, the wife and kids, especially in Germany, that was the enemy at one time?

Tim: I was in civil engineering, like I say, and we had a lot of Germans working for us and it just seemed strange that those that were in service, they were always on the, they flew on the other front. They were on the eastern front instead, they were never against us.

Mark: Do you think that was true, you seem a little suspicious?

Tim: I imagine sometimes it was not true, but I think it was, you know, the idea they didn't want to say that they were.

Mark: Was there any sort of lingering bitterness, or did you put all of that behind you?

Tim: Not a bit. I got along fine with them and they seemed to get along fine with me. Good working people, industrious, worked hard, knew what they were doing, you bet.

Mark: Good.

Tim: Sure.

Mark: Let's move on to your Vietnam experiences then. You went over about '68 I think you said.

Tim: Yeah.

Mark: You flew a C130, a transport plane?

Tim: Uh huh.

Mark: Where were you based at? Tan Son Nhut or something like that?

Tim: No. My base actually was Mactan Island, which is a little island across from the city of Saipan (?), which is on Saipan (?) Island.

Mark: Oh, in the Philippines.

Tim: In the Philippines. And, we would-- that's where I was based. We would fly over to Tan Son Nhut and stay there about a month. And, then we would come back for about five days. Again, they didn't do the maintenance over there, the heavy maintenance. And, we would fly there and fly an airplane back to Mactan to get the repairs done and we would have a few days off and then fly back to Tan Son Nhut again and stay over there for, maybe it was 28 days, I forget. They were playing a little game there. We were not actually in Vietnam you see. We were temporary duty over there. We were TDY and so we weren't counted as really being there numbers wise. It was a numbers game that they were playing. So, anyway, we would fly 28 days there and then come back to Mactan, our home base and you know, fill out the papers, get your [unintelligible], get clean shaven and things like that and then go back.

Mark: Did your family come along with you?

Tim: No. No, no, not there. No, they stayed in Oconomowoc, the old family house. My sister was still there. My sister was disabled and, but she stayed down there after my mother and dad died. She stayed in the house and we were able to keep the house. I'm back there, back in the old house that I was raised in.

Mark: Is that right?

Tim: Yeah.

Mark: That's quite unusual.

Tim: It is unusual.

Mark: So when you were actually "in-country" then, as they called it at the time in Vietnam, you were flying supplies?

Tim: We called it the "trash hauler." You hauled anything. You hauled troops, you hauled, we even hauled captured, you know, Vietnamese, a lot of supplies, food, ammunition, gasoline, blatterball, we picked up a lot of the dead and we just did whatever had to be done that's all. Whatever they did, we were on, I forget how long we were on but we were on for quite a while on duty and then they would,

we'd start off you would have your mission kind of laid out where you were going, but that, you were always in control with the ground, so you would be diverted a lot of times to some other place where they had more important, you know, something happened, picked you up.

Mark: So, you must have flown to all different parts of South Vietnam.

Tim: All over. South Vietnam.

Mark: To the remote highlands or sent to the delta areas...

Tim: You bet, you bet.

Mark: So, even though you weren't stationed in Vietnam, you must have had some sense of how the war was going and...

Tim: You bet.

Mark: World War II and Vietnam are often seen as opposite conflicts and you were in both. So, I'm wondering if you could describe your personal experience, how World War II was different in terms of you know, maybe the troops, or the morale, or those sorts of things?

Tim: Well, I think the morale was high of the troops that were there. We had a good mission. We felt we were doing what was right, that it was a good mission that we were on. We flew to a lot of these special forces camps. They were just little pockets all around South Vietnam and then between of course was jungle and the Viet Cong was in there so we would fly over there into these little patches. They were pretty small little fields sometimes, but the C130 was a good work it was four inch in turbo prop and so you were able to get off in a short distance and you'd land, boy you'd throw those 4 props into reverse full force and that was a tremendous break, so you could stop in a small field, you could land and take off in small fields and they'd carry, well sometimes it would be a crate full of ice cream for the troops or you know, fresh vegetables, you name it. We threw all kinds of things in.

Mark: Let's see.

Tim: So, it was pretty much of a workhorse job. Like I say, it's not a fighter, but it did a job and we would go in and drop supplies, sometimes from the air in parachutes, sometimes they called it the lakes, you come in low altitude parachute and then come over the area you were going to go and kind of dropped out parachute or throw out whatever cargo there was **[Tape Stopped]**

Mark: OK, I'll repeat that question. Did you get shot at? Did you get shots in the jungle?

Tim: Oh yes.

Mark: Was that a quick one?

Tim: Well, a lot of the time you didn't know you were being shot at, but yeah I picked up holes. But, like I say, I was never hurt myself. We landed one time in a, we brought in some troops to a special forces camp that had been kind of, excuse me, kind of overrun. So, we brought troops in and while we were off loading, why then we came under a big heavy rocket attack, mortar attack. And so, instead of, we were still trying to get out of the airplane, the troops they weren't out yet, so we thought well, we'd better get out so we shut down. We got out and we crawled into a drainage ditch. We figured maybe that would be the best, you know, so that's what we did anyway and one went off in the ditch. It got my load master, he lost an arm, it got my mechanic and he was hit in the belly, but not too bad, it was just kind of a little skinnery, my navigator was clobbered all over his face, he looked terrible but actually they were more superficial. They were evacked [evacuated] out of there by helicopter, but not my engineer, he wouldn't go. I wasn't hurt a bit. I was in the same trench with them and I wasn't hurt.

Mark: I think you were the only one that didn't get it.

Tim: Well, my co-pilot was not hit either, so the two pilots, but the navigator, they had to area vacuum out of there and my load master, he lost an arm, so they got him out of there, so we came back with an illegal crew, but we, when they finally slowed down on the

Mark: What do you mean by an illegal crew?

Tim: Well, you weren't supposed to fly the airplane without a navigator or without a load master, but I wasn't going to wait around there until they flew somebody in so we just went ahead and took off anyway, because I wasn't going to worry about navigating, I was going to get out of there.

Mark: Get the hell out of there.

Tim: You bet, and we got the hell out.

Mark: So, when you were in World War II you were a 21-year-old pilot and you don't think about mortality and those sorts of things. When you were in Vietnam...

- Tim: Oh, I did. I thought I was not going to live through it, but when I was in Vietnam, I was going to live through it, you bet. Even though we lost some crews over there, I mean they were shot down and hit. Go ahead.
- Mark: I was wondering, when you were in Vietnam you had a wife and you had four kids at home, and I'm wondering if you felt differently from World War II than Vietnam when you got into a combat situation? Was it different did you think?
- Tim: Well, it was different of course, but as far as mental, I was probably better off mentally in Vietnam than I was in World War II. Sure. Even though I had a wife and kids at home, why I used to call them, like I say, we were in Vietnam and then we would come back and I'd be there and of course my wife knew when I was going to be there and after I'd go to church Sunday morning and after church I would call the family back in Oconomowoc and talk to them and it was Saturday night and so they would get dressed up and my wife would have a martini and we'd be talking on the telephone to each other. And, one time why she was waiting for me to call and I didn't call and she got scared and she was scared stiff. She called people around to see was I all right, because I was supposed to have been back there and I didn't call and she was worried. And, she got a hold of some friends and they said, "Well, don't worry. If something happened to him you would know about it. They would tell you." Which was true. What had happened was, when I was over there, I was assigned as a mission commander. Every once in a while when something would happen they would get a crew and at least they would take the pilot anyway and put him in as a mission commander to kind of watch how things were going at the special forces camp. Well, I was in one and we were on the heavy seas all the time we were there. It was quite and experience. But, so I was not brought back until maybe 10 days or something like that. I was there an extra 10 days or something before I was relieved and sent back. So all that time, my wife was scared stiff.
- Mark: I can imagine.
- Tim: It was quite and experience for me, I mean this was being on the ground and being shot at. There was really not much you could hide and it was kind of hard to hide over there, but I got through, I didn't get a scratch.
- Mark: Someone was looking out for you.
- Tim: Someone was looking out, I agree.
- Mark: So, this instance you described was different from the first one you described from when your co-pilot got hit, is that right?
- Tim: No. The co-pilot was not hit.

Mark: I'm sorry.

Tim: That was a different mission yes.

Mark: Did this happen frequently, you would land at a base that would be under fire? I mean,

Tim: Usually if it was under fire and you were going in there on a mission, they would wave you off. They'd say don't come in because it's under fire. This one here, we were bringing troops in, it was not under fire until we landed and off loading the troops and then they started rocket attack again.

Mark: Was that a frequent occurrence? I'm wondering how dangerous it was to be flying these big planes.

Tim: It was dangerous, yeah. That's why if you were under attack you wouldn't go in. They didn't want you in. I was a big ol' bird you know. It's kind of easy to hit.

Mark: So, for a career pilot, did you spend the traditional one year in Vietnam like the combat soldiers?

Tim: That's right.

Mark: That was your tour of duty as well?

Tim: That's right, one year.

Mark: I see. And you came back '68, '69 something like that?

Tim: That's right. I was stationed in McClellan Air Force base in California.

Mark: California.

Tim: Back in civil engineering again and I finished my career there. I retired on purpose. There were a lot of things calling me there to get out and go home and my sister, she probably wasn't going to be able to stay in the house anymore, and I figured, gee, you know, she needed help. I'd been supporting her anyway. I was paying the taxes for everything and giving her money to live on, but it was time, add up that balance sheet and it was just time for me to get out. And, other reasons too, but the thing that really kicked it off was a very good friend of mine, a Chief Master Sergeant, he was at the higher headquarters and he came out on an inspection, I think the only reason he came out on the inspection was to see me, I mean, he was in kind of a swing mission there, he was a good good man, Chief Master. While he was over, he got me aside and he said, "Did you know you are #1 Lieutenant Colonel to go back to Korea in that command?" And, I said "No."

He said, “Well you are. Your name is on there, you’re #1 to go back to, for a Lieutenant Colonel, to go back to Vietnam.” And, if I went back to Vietnam, I would have been in civil engineering in Vietnam and I would have been going around in the back seat of a helicopter with some, nothing the matter with a Second Lieutenant, I was one too, but you’re flying around and someone else had the control and you’re just sitting in there and going around to these special forces camps, which sometimes were under heavy siege and I thought, I don’t need that anymore. And, so I just flat out said that I’m getting out, because I had other reasons to get out, I had the points, you know, the time in service to get out and I just thought, I’m not going to go back to Vietnam again under that, because to me it would have been, I just wasn’t going to do it and I had the chance to get out and I..

Mark: That was the final straw.

Tim: I almost kissed the Chief Masters, he’s a great guy, Sergeant Meek, boy what a guy.

Mark: That brings up an interesting point actually. As a career Air Force officer, I’m wondering if you could comment on some of those officer/enlisted person relations. Did you have much contact with the enlisted men?

Tim: Oh sure.

Mark: And, some of the discipline in the Air Force. Around here at the museum we have a lot of Veterans work-study and a lot of the Army guys will complain, “oh you Air Force guys had it easy.” So, I’m wondering if perhaps you could comment on some of this.

Tim: Well, we probably did have it easier than the ground pounders, yes, I imagine we did. But, as far as the enlisted troops, we got along fine with them, the guys that worked on the airplanes you know and did that and the other thing. Yeah, like I say, this Chief Master Sergeant, he was a real good, we worked together, you know, we really did, he was great. And, we got things done and he liked me too, obviously, he gave me that thing, do you really want to go back to Vietnam? And, I didn’t.

Mark: I have one other last military thing, of my own personal curiosity—I was in the Air Force. I was a medical technician. I was in the hospital in Wiesbaden. Do you remember that hospital at the time?

Tim: Sure I do.

Mark: Did you get there much?

Tim: As far as being the only hospital itself?

Mark: Like bringing a sick kid to the hospital?

Tim: Oh yeah, sure, sure. I had a kid that was hit, the oldest son was hit by a car and yeah, banged up and he was taken to the hospital, Our next door neighbor across where we lived, right across the hall, he was a surgeon, and Tim ended up in the hospital and he was in intensive care and he had a private nurse for two or three days and I never heard of such a thing, even for a general, to give him a private nurse. Well, Tim had this private nurse while he was there, and I'm sure it was because of our next door neighbor.

Mark: The surgeon?

Tim: Yeah.

Mark: It is true if you know someone...

Tim: It does help.

Mark: I just have one last area I want to cover. You mentioned before that you had joined some veterans organizations.

Tim: Yes.

Mark: Did you join these after you got out of the service in '71? Or, did you do it while you were in active duty in the Air Force.

Tim: No, I think it was all after, I joined the American Legion after World War II, but I had a bad experience with them, it soured me, so I quit.

Mark: Would you mind?

Tim: No, I'd rather not. It was just kind of sour, I thought, gee, to me they weren't doing what they should have been doing. This is not the people in Oconomowoc; this was higher up. And, then when I got out after Korea, after Vietnam and came back home and retired, I joined the National Guard again, not the National Guard the American Legion. And, I joined the VFW and I joined the Disabled American Veterans.

Mark: What prompted you to do that? I'm interested in why you wanted to join the organization.

Tim: I just thought it was a good thing. You know, they do good things for you and they can help you and you can help, you know, support them. I just think it's a

good idea. But again, I dropped the American Legion and this time I can tell you, the reason this time here is they didn't help me with the VA and I thought by golly, the heck with ya and I went to the Disabled American Veterans and they did help me out. And, I still belong to them, but I dropped the American Legion again because they just weren't puttin' out, for me anyway, but for others maybe they do great.

Mark: Are you or were you, did you attend the meetings and get involved?

Tim: Oh yeah. I don't now.

Mark: But you used to?

Tim: I still pay my dues. In fact, I think I'm a life member now. I used to go to them, sure.

Mark: That's all the questions I really had. We covered all the topics I wanted to. Is there anything you wanted to add?

Tim: I don't think so.

Mark: Good. Excellent. Thanks for stopping in.

Tim: You bet.

Mark: I appreciate it.

Tim: Sure.

[End of Interview]