

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Harry Fischer
U. S. Army, World War II

2006

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Fischer, Harry, (1926-), Oral History Interview, 2006

User copy, 1 sound cassette (ca. 38 min), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master copy, 1 sound cassette (ca. 38 min), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

ABSTRACT

Harry Fischer, a Wauwatosa Wis. native, discusses his World War II service in the U.S. Army. Fischer relates volunteering for the draft immediately following his eighteenth birthday and reporting to Fort Sheridan (Illinois) in Oct. 1944. Fischer did his basic training at Camp Hood (Texas) and was transferred to Fort Ord (California) to await overseas deployment. Fischer discusses traveling to the Philippines aboard the U.S.S. General John J. Pope and having a torpedo nearly hit the ship in crossing. Later, Fischer tells that a radio station was falsely broadcasting that the John J. Pope had sunk. He discusses joining the 43rd Infantry Division as a replacement for the 169th Infantry Regiment, and that one night the soldier he was sharing a fox hole with was killed by friendly fire while on watch duty. Fischer also talks of another close encounter when a Japanese sniper was outside of his foxhole. While in Cabanatuan (Philippines), Fisher describes being hospitalized for several weeks with yellow jaundice and that the war ended while he was hospitalized. Upon his release from the hospital, Fischer tells that he traveled to Japan to find the rest of his division that had been transferred to Japan while he was hospitalized. However, when he discovered the division had been disbanded, Fischer was reassigned to the 97th Infantry Division on primary guard duty. Fischer relates climbing Mt. Fuji, attending radio school, and being transferred to a job with military government as a clerk in the legal section where he assisted in the process of prosecuting war criminals. He describes his work as a disc jockey for the Armed Forces Radio Station in Niagata (Japan) and the relationship between the troops and the Japanese people. Fischer says one of his proudest achievements was receiving the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Fischer details his acquisition of Samurai swords; the historical and financial value of them and their meaning to the Japanese people. He compares in detail the difference between the people of Japan and those of the Philippines.

Biographical Sketch

Harry Fischer, (1926-) served in WWII in the U.S. Army. Upon returning home, he attended UW-Madison and obtained a degree in electrical engineering. He is a lifetime member of the VFW organization and volunteers regularly for the Historical Society Museum. He more recently has resided in Westshire Village in Waunakee, Wisconsin.

Interviewed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2006.

Transcribed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2006.

Transcript edited by Brooke E. Perry Hoesli, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, 2008.

Interview Transcript

John: Okay, this is John Driscoll, and today is June 28, 2006. And this is an oral history interview with Harry Fischer at his home in Westshire Village, Wisconsin, and Harry, thanks a lot for agreeing to the interview, and why don't we start at the very beginning? When and where were you born?

Harry: I was born in Hartford, Wisconsin, on August 31, 1926. And I was there only a year, not even a year, because my father was the principal of the Northside Elementary School, and he changed jobs that fall, and got a job in Milwaukee. So, actually, I was hardly in Hartford for a couple of months. More like a month. Then we moved to West Allis, which I don't recall at all. And I grew up in Wauwatosa. At 8309 Portland Avenue. And went to Wilson Grade School, and Hawthorne Junior High School, which is no longer in existence. And Wauwatosa High School, which is now Wauwatosa East. And I graduated in 1944. And I remember Pearl Harbor, because I was studying on a Sunday evening, I was doing my homework for Monday's classes, and heard on the news that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I remember thinking, I was actually a sophomore in high school at that time, '41. Because I was thinking, well, this won't affect me at all. And it kept going on and on, and by the time I became a senior, in 1944, and in May, I graduated. I wanted to enlist immediately, but they wouldn't take me because I wasn't eighteen yet. One of those weird things, I am not sure why, but some people enlisted when they were sixteen. And for some reason, I was in that age group where I was over seventeen, and not eighteen. And so as soon as I turned eighteen, in August, I volunteered for the draft. And I was drafted on October 21. I reported to Fort Sheridan.

John: That was '44?

Harry: 1944. Yes. And then there for probably a week. And then we went down to Camp Hood, Texas, where I took my basic training. And we were there thirteen weeks. And I remember getting my first leave. My grandfather died while I was there, but I couldn't get home. And then I went down, had a leave in January, and then I went over to Fort Ord. And we were at Fort Ord for about two weeks, and then got shipped overseas. And that was at the end of February. And at the beginning of March, we actually, interesting thing that happened was we actually saw a torpedo go by on the way over. It was on the U. S. S. *General John J. Pope*. And we actually saw the torpedo and he missed, fortunately. And then we stopped at Guadalcanal on the way. We didn't get off at all. But we stopped there on the way to the Philippines, and when we got to the Philippines, I remember coming in to Manila Harbor, and all the sunken ships and everything. Because they had already basically conquered the Philippines. And we heard on Tokyo Rose, on the news, talking about sinking the *General John J. Pope*. And so we were fortunate that she

was wrong.

John: Did you go over as part of a division? Or did you go over as a replacement?

Harry: No, I ended up as a replacement. And I joined the division right after they had, the 43rd was one of the better divisions, I think, in the Army. They had been through Guadalcanal, actually with the Marines. And came up through different islands, and then they actually took Clark Field right before I joined them. And I joined them right after that. Then we were dug in on a sort of a semi-front line, after I joined the division, in early March. And we were there for about three, four weeks, and then we started moving up towards Ipo Dam. And it is one of the dams that supplied water for Manila. And I was in A Company, of the 169th Regiment. And we were actually, we went up and, while we were down below, I didn't even see a Japanese at that time. And then we started up, and we were going up a hill to the top of the hill, to protect the dam. And on the way up we stopped overnight. And that was the night I spent in my dug-out foxhole with a fellow, one of the fellows who was in A Company. And he was telling me that, of the full company, after they took Clark Field, there was only five of them that were left.

John: Oh, God. Oh.

Harry: That hadn't either been killed or wounded. And so that was a pretty bloody encounter. Fortunately, I wasn't there at the time. Unfortunately, that night, he got killed. And so after going through all that. And the unfortunate part of that was that it was by friendly fire. One of these young snot-nosed kids, basically in our company, had just joined it, and trigger-happy. And when you are in a foxhole at night, what you do is you take two hour shifts sleeping. And he reached down to wake me up to let me know it was my time to go on my shift, and when he stuck his head up again to look out, he got shot.

John: Oh, that's tragic.

Harry: Right through the heart, basically. In the chest. And there was nothing you could do about it. And so they spent the rest of the night scaring the hell out of you. Because at that point you don't know who is doing it. Because I thought it was a Japanese sniper. Well, anyhow, they sent the guy back, from the front to the rear echelon immediately the next day. Unfortunately, John, I forget his last name offhand, it doesn't matter, anyhow, he went back in a body bag. Then we continued on, and went up to the top of the hill. And were dug in. Where they had bombed it, we were right on the edge of the hill. And so we had one place there was no possibility of anybody coming up. And as I remember, the second or third morning, we were up there. And I was getting breakfast and cleaning out my mess kit, and a guy hollered, "Jap!" And I heard a shot, and I looked up, and right

outside my foxhole was a Japanese, with a bayonet attached, a rifle with a bullet in the chamber. So except for the warning, I wouldn't be here.

John: Yes. Oh, heavens. That was close.

Harry: So that was pretty, and the same thing, if I would have gone out first on that other one, I would have been gone. But so I took the rifle, and rolled the Japanese down the hill. And then about two or three days later, I got a call, or a notice, that I wasn't supposed to be up on the front because I didn't have enough training.

John: Now they tell you.

Harry: Now. And so they asked if I wanted to go back to the rear echelon. I don't think that I had a choice. And so I went back, and took the rifle with me. And was back in with the company. And that was on Cabanatuan, which is quite interesting. You may have heard of that. Where the POWs were in the Philippines. And actually the Rangers that had saved them, and I remember coming into Cabanatuan, and all the dead flesh. And it is something you don't forget. And anyhow, after I was there, I got yellow jaundice. And so I ended up going into the hospital on Leyte. And at that point, there was nothing they could do. They couldn't do anything except bed rest, and feed you. So I was basically in bed for three or four weeks, which is frustrating. And I had nothing but what I had taken with me, my uniforms and I didn't have a knapsack, or anything. Or a duffel bag, or anything. So the war ended while I was in the hospital.

John: Oh, you were fortunate.

Harry: And before I got back, up to, on the way to the hospital, we were in a sort of a typhoon in the China Sea, on a little destroyer escort. That was interesting, too, watching it go up and down. And I being rather stupid, I was sitting in the front of the boat, rather enjoying it, and the captain on the top, said, "That idiot sitting up there, get off of there and get onto where you belong!" But I never got seasick.

John: Oh, you were fortunate.

Harry: Because there were people yukking all over the place. And so anyhow, while I was in the hospital and ready to come back to the division in Manila, and I worked with the Red Cross, making donuts, just for something to do. And when I finally got back, the division had already left for Japan. And when I finally got a boat to Japan, the division had actually been de-whatever you call it, and went home. The ones that could. And the ones that didn't have enough points, were reassigned. And I was reassigned to the 97th Division. And so I ended up for maybe a month doing guard duty at different various places. Ammo dumps, and one was a cavalry

camp right on the base of Mount Fuji. So another two guys and I climbed Mount Fuji on the side that is not climbable. We didn't know that at the time. But we were lucky that we didn't get killed, right? By an avalanche, or something. We almost made it to the top, and then we came back and I was supposed to be on guard duty at six. We got back at about eight. And they were a little upset with me.

John: I can imagine.

Harry: Nothing really happened. And then we were at a mountain where they had a weapons cache there. And we were guarding that for a while. And that is where I picked up three Samurai swords.

John: Oh, wow. Oh.

Harry: And I actually ended up getting a couple of others and sent them home, and all that stuff. I did get another, unfortunately, while I was in the hospital, whoever was in the division stole my duffel bag and the rifle, and I didn't have anything, including the records. And so it was kind of interesting. I finally got paid after six months in Japan. I got a stack of yen about eight inches high. But in the meantime I had to go to the Red Cross to get a loan so I had something. And then after I did go while I was there, I had an opportunity to go to a radio school, in Fukushima, Japan.

John: Okay.

Harry: And I was there for maybe six weeks, then went back to the division. And the 97th ended up going home, and I got transferred to Eighth Army Headquarters. And I ended up, I was just a rifleman up to then. And I never got, I got a Pfc. rating for good conduct. And then I actually became a company clerk for a while. I think it was E Company, or whatever it was. And in the 97th. And I don't even know what regiment it was. Then I made a copy of my own records. I finally got them from Washington. And then I got my own copy, which I kept, too. And while I was there I had the opportunity to transfer to Military Government, at Niagata, Japan. Which is the northwest corner of the island. And while I was there, that was quite interesting because in the legal section, when I joined it, there was a captain, a first lieutenant, a staff sergeant, a corporal, and me. I did all the typing and stuff. Because it was one of the things I took in high school that paid off, more than once.

John: Oh, yea.

Harry: And so we were prosecuting war crimes from that area. And there was a general

would come up once a month and hold sessions, hold courts in Niagata. And we would prepare all the cases that were ready for him. And he would take care of them. And we ended up, we put the chief of police in jail for not reporting a cache of weapons that they had. And then I'd go visit him once a month, just to see how he was doing. And we had our own interpreter. Here I am, a Pfc., and I have my own Jeep and interpreter, and doing the job of four people. And they gradually went home, and I was the only one left. And at that time, the ratings were frozen, so I never did get my sergeant's rate. Which is irrelevant. Anyhow, while I was up there, there was not much to do in the evening. So a friend of mine was working at the Armed Forces Radio station in Niagata, and so I worked there as a disk jockey in the evening. And it was kind of fun, you ran the, turned the station on and turned everything on, and played the records and had to throw a little garbage in between, you know what they do. It was actually a lot of fun, in that respect. And I almost got in trouble one night. I did something and it didn't go the way it should, and I said, "Aw, shit!" Right on the air. I never heard back from that but I thought I was going to be hearing from the top. And we had a couple of chances to go into Tokyo, and the Ernie Pyle theater there, which is one of the biggest department stores, became a, they used that for R & R for U. S. troops. And got pictures of the Imperial Palace, and all that stuff while I was there. I finally got a camera. I didn't get a camera until I was in Japan. That is something you don't tote around. And while I was there, actually, back in Manila, it was interesting after the war. I had an opportunity then to visit some of the sights, like where the nurses were kept prisoner. And Santo Thomas, and different areas in Manila. And they had a very nice USO there. So then, basically, in September, this was not going into '46. '45. And, actually, '46 really. Yea, '46, because, well, I am getting all screwed up here.

John: The war ended in '45.

Harry: So it was '46 when I was in Japan. Right. And so, basically, around September, they came and said that you have got enough points to go home now. If you want to wait another month, they've unfrozen the ratings. If you want to wait a month, we'll get your staff sergeant rating. I said, forget it. I'm going home. You know, after eighteen months overseas, I was ready to go home. And that's not a lot of time compared to what a lot of them did over there.

John: Long enough.

Harry: But I was ready to go home. And then I came home and went to the UW.

John: What did you take there?

Harry: Electrical engineering. And I couldn't start until February, though. I was just a

little too late to get into the September one, so I got sick of laying around home so I went to work at Safeway Steel Scaffolding in Wauwatosa. It's on State Street. I don't know if it's still there, or not. And I worked there until I went back to school. And then, I lived out at Truax Field for the first semester. I started in February of '47, and we had to take the bus in to school every day. And it was kind of interesting, in its own way. But then I went there, got my degree in '51, and in the summer I worked at various summer jobs, Allis-Chalmers, and Corps of Engineers for a couple of summers. Working in the harbor of Milwaukee Harbor.

John: Oh, that would be interesting.

Harry: Running jack-hammers and pouring cement. And that was an interesting time.

John: You went to school on the GI Bill?

Harry: Yea.

John: Did you use the bill for anything else?

Harry: No. That is the only thing I used the GI Bill for.

John: Go back to being in Japan. You got there very shortly after the war ended. What was it like, with the Japanese people?

Harry: Well, the people, basically, I thought, were very friendly. I mean, as much as they could be under the circumstances. We lived in Niagata, after there we lived in a hotel. And the gals that did the work for us and the cooking and everything, but one of those girls, her brother had been killed in the Philippines. And she was cool, but not rude. And I think the Japanese themselves are a kind of a people that are polite, in general. I think. I mean, they can be sneaky, too. They are always bowing, and stuff. I actually, when I was working in the legal section, my interpreter there invited me to a Kiwanis Club meeting. And that was quite interesting.

John: Oh. Wow.

Harry: Quite interesting. And, of course, there was a lot of drinking. But I was about the only one because most of the guys in Japan, the only thing they were looking for was some broad. If they could find a prostitute somewhere. And I never did. I thank the Lord that I was even alive. Because of those two circumstances.

John: That was so close.

Harry: I could have easily been the one who went. And we did a lot of shopping, and trading cigarettes for money. Stuff like that. I did smoke at the time. But we got more cigarettes than we could smoke. Other than that, it was quite a while ago, actually, and I still am a member of the 43rd Infantry Division.

John: Oh, yea? Any get-togethers, or reunions?

Harry: I went to the first one, in '49. And I haven't been to one since. But I get their newsletter. And I just paid my life membership to them. To find out what is going on, and see if you know anybody who died.

John: Sure.

Harry: And, there again, the 43rd was also over in Germany for a while, I discovered.

John: Oh, I didn't know that.

Harry: I didn't, either. Until I got the newsletter. And they were also in other, they were recalled to service, I think they might have been in Korea in some way. They might have been in Europe during the Korean strife, or something. But I know there are veterans that came out of it. I think it has been disbanded, now. I don't think it is still in existence. But it was one of the earliest divisions that were in combat in World War II. It was a New England division. I don't know if you knew that.

John: Okay.

Harry: Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, and that stuff.

John: Okay.

Harry: And they went down to New Zealand, actually. They were, what do you call it, when they are called to active duty?

John: Mobilized?

Harry: Yea, mobilized. Senior moments come frequently.

John: Yes, I know. Tell me.

Harry: And they went to New Zealand, and they were there, and they were training with the Aussies and the New Zealand people. And that is when they, after they got

going again, they came into, I forget the islands. They were in a group of islands before they got to Guadalcanal, actually. And they were in Guadalcanal, and then they came in for the invasion of the Philippines, and Clark Field, and that. And right after that was when I joined them. But they were, they lost a lot of people. Not a lot of the originals were around.

John: Well, they were in some awfully, awfully hard fighting.

Harry: Yea, they did. I was fortunate to join them when I did. But one of the things I am probably the proudest of is having the CIB, the Combat Infantrymen's Badge.

John: Yes, absolutely.

Harry: That is something that you are happy you came through it. Although I, what I came through was a lot less than a lot of the others.

John: Still, you were there, though.

Harry: But I think anybody that spent one night there in a foxhole is worth having it.

John: Let me ask you a question. You were a young guy, just out of high school. The war was on, but then, suddenly, boom. They pulled you out and you went in harm's way. You darned near got killed a couple of times.

Harry: Yea.

John: What do you feel about that, looking back on it?

Harry: Well, I think, actually, by the time I came back to the rear echelon, I was actually probably happy to be out of harm's way. One thing. I wasn't too happy about the yellow jaundice.

John: I can imagine.

Harry: And, you know, all my life, I have learned you do what you have to, whatever is necessary. And rather than sit and dwell on it, and fret on it, you just go ahead and do it. And I ended up with some interesting experiences. I think, especially in military government. That was very interesting. To see the different people being prosecuted. We didn't have any high level prosecutions up there, because they were mostly done in Tokyo. And the big shots were in Tokyo pretty much.

John: I interviewed a fellow a few months ago who was guarding the big shots.

- Harry: In Tokyo?
- John: And they hanged thirty-some one day. And he got almost all of their autographs the day before.
- Harry: They hanged them?
- John: Yea. There were two or three, and I didn't know who these people were, he didn't get. And he said he couldn't go back the next day and get those because they were gone. And he wasn't a special-trained, he was just a GI they grabbed and said, "You are on guard duty," you know.
- Harry: Well, that is the way things happened. Because if you were still living, you were lucky to get anywhere. And especially at the beginning of the thing.
- John: What about the disc jockey job? That is interesting. It makes me think of the movie, "Good Morning, Vietnam."
- Harry: Well, actually, it was, we were just on in the evening, from eight to ten, or something like that. And it was just something to do to fill in the time. And everything once and a while at the station would go kaput. And you would have to get somebody to get it going again. But, you know, you are a jack of all trades sort of a thing. Like you are the only one in the station. And it isn't running yet. And if anything happens, you got to figure out what to do about it.
- John: It was a former Japanese station?
- Harry: I guess it would have been, because I don't think, we just used our own frequency, of course. With the AFRS. The call letters are on the tip of my tongue, but I can't recall them. It's irrelevant, anyway. But I tried to mix as much with the Japanese people as I could and I found that they were, you know, if you were good to them, they were good to you, too. And so, it was right after the war, they weren't happy that they lost, but I think they were glad that the war was over, too.
- John: Yea, I am sure.
- Harry: And no matter which side you are on, I mean, war is hell, as old Sherman said. It's not a fun-fun and games kind of thing, which some of our, unfortunately, I shouldn't mention, but some of our Democratic congress people seem to think that it's a fun kind of thing, and don't realize the severity of it. You can cut that.
- John: No. No. The part of Japan you were in was up north. Was there much bombing up there, much damage?

Harry: Not in the, there wasn't that much damage in Niagata. The damage was more, when we got into Tokyo, it was just leveled. I mean, the interesting thing, too, this comes to mind, when we got there. The difference in the people between Japan and the Philippines.

John: Let me flip this tape, Harry.

[End of Side A of Tape 1.]

John: You were talking about comparing the Filipino people to the Japanese people.

Harry: Do we have time now?

John: Yea.

Harry: Yea, I remember in the Philippines, in Manila, in particular, we would go into a little store, and they had been ravished, bombed out. Everything. Well, they would push all the junk to the rear, and put a curtain up, and they would have a store. I mean, it was sort of like an open air market in the trash. Well, and when we got to Japan, it was totally cleaned up, and all the garbage had been taken out, and it was ready to be rebuilt. I mean, they're much more industrious, and I think the difference between the third world and I consider Japan more of a modern country than third world. And the Philippines are still pretty much as they were.

John: You know, that is interesting.

Harry: And you read about them today, and the different things that are happening. It is just like in all the third world nations, the rich have everything and the poor are in poverty. And the only difference during the Japanese occupation was the rich weren't doing too well, either. But, in Japan, they are just much more industrious. And they had actually, I got a Japanese rifle and a Japanese pistol that I brought back. I actually sold the sword and in fact I sold three of them for two thousand dollars, or something. And now one of them is worth two thousand.

John: I had a friend in Detroit brought back one. And I don't know how, but later on, the family, he made contact with them, and the family came and wanted that sword back.

Harry: I tried that.

John: They wouldn't buy it from him. And finally he gave it to them, and then they gave him thousands of dollars. But it was important to them not to buy it.

- Harry: Not to buy it. That sounds like the Japanese, yea.
- John: I don't know how he got in and they made contact with him, and they found out he had it. But, apparently, you could identify one sword to the next.
- Harry: You can, because there is, on the sword, writing and the name and the history of the people on it. What I did is I took a, what do you call it? A rubbing of it. And I sent it to the Japanese embassy. To find out if I could. I really felt that I would like to get these swords back to the people who they belonged to. Because they are keepsakes. And very important to them. So I did the rubbing on all of them, and sent them in, but they sent back and they couldn't, nobody could identify who it was. And everything. But they were sorry that nobody could identify that they belonged to them. So I ended up, finally, selling them. They were beautiful. I had one that was beautiful. And so, then I still got the rifle and the pistol.
- John: How did you get hold of the swords?
- Harry: Well, when we were on guard duty, there was a cache of them where they had them stored. They had to turn in all their armaments, all their swords, to a center. And I was in a position where I was at the center. And I just took them. Which was, I guess, stealing, when you get right down to it. What do you call it? The spoils of war. But, yea, that was interesting. I have a ton of, well, not a ton, but I have silk and wickerware and all kinds of stuff I brought back. At this point, what do you do with it? I only have one daughter, and she lives here in Middleton. And three little granddaughters. And I don't know if they are going to be interested in any of that.
- John: Any of the records that you've got, documents, photos of that you have, the Vets Museum would love to get ahold of those.
- Harry: Well, I've got all the letters I wrote. That I wrote to my folks.
- John: If your family isn't that interested.
- Harry: I've got them in a notebook, actually, and all the pictures I took in Japan.
- John: And they would keep them safe, and in air conditioned and humidity controlled storage. And all that. And they would be available to the family. Think about that.
- Harry: Would they be interested in that kind of stuff?
- John: Absolutely. See, that is the real stuff that, you can write books about this stuff,

but...Go ahead.

Harry: [Now referring to his father.] Family history. He actually went to Terre Haute, Indiana, Normal School, and got his teaching degree there. He was the one that was the principal. And he went to the University of Chicago and got a masters in philosophy, or something.

John: Oh.

Harry: Anyhow, he was a legitimate teacher in various places that way. But he was still single, and he was a German professor at Michigan Agricultural College, which is now MSU. Michigan State, in East Lansing. And while he was there. It was 1911 to 1917, or something like that. And the First World War had started while he was there. But this was a little later. But he actually got a Carnegie Foundation teacher's exchange with Germany, and he went to Germany for a year. And he was over there in Berlin, teaching conversational English. In a German high school, while he was going to one of the University of Berlin colleges. And he went skiing in the Alps, and all kinds of things over there. But it was quite interesting. I have all the letters he wrote to his folks, in German, and then he translated all of them. And I have them in a notebook in there. And then also, he took the chairman of the English department over there, he wanted his son to go to Germany. Because at that time the German educational system was probably one of the best in the world. And so his son, I forget his name, he went with my dad. And he was only sixteen years old. And he went to high school in Berlin. Well, the son, the lady that he roomed with, was named Mrs. Leonard. And my dad knew her, and exchanged letters with her from 1912, when he came home, well, actually, 1913, whatever, anyhow, he exchanged letters with her until 1952, when she died.

John: Oh, wow. That's remarkable.

Harry: And I have all those letters. And half of them, most of them, they are all in German. And a lot of them have been interpreted, and translated. But a lot of them haven't. But I have all those, too.

John: Again, not the Vets Museum, but the State Historical Society would just love to have that in their archives.

Harry: Yea, I've got to call. I have a name. I volunteer at the Museum, the Historical Society Museum. A guy named Helmut somebody in one of the archivists there, and I am supposed to call him some day. I keep forgetting. But that would be interesting, I would think.

John: Absolutely. That is history.

Harry: See, when my grandfather, he was in Germany, and he actually came over to America as a missionary to America. He was ordained over there, but he went to the seminary in Basel, Switzerland. Well, while he was in the seminary, he'd write letters to his folks. And I have got all those letters that he wrote home to his folks, and this is in the middle 1800s. And they are all translated, so I know what they say. But, again, what do you do with all this stuff? And so. Do you have any other questions?

John: Yea. How about vets organizations, Harry? VFW? The Legion?

Harry: I belong to the VFW, although I've never gone to a meeting. I just, I have got so involved in everything else, and I feel I should support them. I am a life member. And I've never joined the Legion, and I've never really joined any others. I got involved in so many things.

John: I know exactly what you mean.

Harry: Since I am retired. And as I mentioned earlier, I volunteer at the Historical Society Museum, on the first, and third, and fifth Friday of every month.

John: Is that the one downtown?

Harry: Yes. Right across from you.

John: Right across State Street.

Harry: And I enjoy that. And I do a lot of volunteer work at the church. In fact, tomorrow morning, I will be going over at 8:30 to do the local monthly newsletter. And things like that. I count money every Monday morning.

John: My dad counted money for years and years at our church. Okay, look, I am going to wrap this up. This is a remarkable story. You know, I had a very good friend, Stephen Ambrose, the writer, and he just passed away a few years ago. And he was from here. And he was up talking to a whole bunch of World War II vets one evening. And most of them were saying, you know, I didn't do an awful lot, I just did my job, and so on. And, of course, Ambrose was a big BSer, but he said, "Wait a minute! Would you stand up?" And these fellows stood up, and they were kind of self-conscious. And he said, "You were giants!" And they looked at each other. And he said, "You went out and saved the world!"

Harry: That's true.

John: That is true. I don't care if you issued ping pong balls at a supply depot at Salt Lake City, you were there and you did your thing. You were right up, you were in harm's way. And you were very fortunate to come out as well as you did.

Harry: Well, my own feeling is, if it wasn't for the war, I wouldn't be here.

John: Very much so. I can understand that.

Harry: You always hear the expression that there are no atheists in a foxhole. And that is true. I don't care what anybody says. And somebody says, they were never afraid, they're a big liar. I don't know what situations you were in, in the Marines, but they were a pretty rough bunch, too.

John: Rougher on liberty, in ports, than they were in the field. Okay, I am going to wrap this up. This is just fantastic.

[End of Interview.]