

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
WILLIAM GRAUMANN
Helicopter Mechanic, U.S. Army, Korea
2001

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Graumann, William (b. 1932) Oral History Interview, 2001

Approximate length: 35 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

William Graumann, a Wisconsin native, served in the U.S. Army as a helicopter mechanic in Korea from January 1953 to May 1954. He enlisted in the Army after a brief stint in the U.S. Naval Reserves, and went to helicopter maintenance training after graduating in the top 10 percent of his fixed wing aircraft training class. He talks about his experience overseas, achieving a unit citation for repair work on a downed helicopter under fire, and his experiences running an NCO club and bartering with the supply staff to ensure his unit was as well-equipped as possible. He also talks about his transition back to the United States and how a clerical error with his discharge sent him mistakenly to Fort Lewis, Washington, where he met his wife.

Biographical Sketch:

William Graumann was born in Kenosha on March 8, 1932. He married and had children after his tour of duty in Korea.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2001
Transcribed by Joshua Goldstein, September 2010
Corrections typed in by Kelsey Burnham, 2013
Abstract by David Hunt, 2015

Interview Transcript:

- McIntosh: We are talking to Bill Graumann. It is the 15th of August 2001. Where were you born Bill?
- Graumann: Born in Kenosha, Wisconsin.
- McIntosh: When was that?
- Graumann: March, 8th 1932
- McIntosh: You entered the military service when?
- Graumann: January 31, 1952.
- McIntosh: Were you drafted?
- Graumann: No, I enlisted. I was in the Naval Reserve prior to that. I had five months, fourteen days in the Naval Reserve and I decided I can walk a lot better than I can swim so I enlisted in the Army.
- McIntosh: Otherwise you would have been drafted in the age group that was eligible?
- Graumann: I received my draft notice about fourteen months after I was in the Army.
- McIntosh: Where'd they send ya?
- Graumann: Initially, I was sent to Aberdeen, Maryland. We did basic training there. From there I went down to San Marcos.
- McIntosh: Infantry training?
- Graumann: No this was co-ordinance based.
- McIntosh: How did you end up not being a grunt runner?
- Graumann: When you take the aptitude test when you come into the Army, in High School I had three years of A & E mechanics. So with three years of A & E mechanics besides that I had done three years of ROTC in High School and I knew I didn't want to be a grunt. So I knew basically what I had to do in order to get where I wanted to go.
- McIntosh: So how much of that were you in Aberdeen?

Graumann: Aberdeen was--.

McIntosh: Six months?

Graumann: No, we did three months basic training then you went off to school.

McIntosh: To learn some specialty. What was yours?

Graumann: Mine, I went down to San Marcos, Texas, where it was fixed wing mechanics school. At Aberdeen they did a testing, you know, and they said what basically is your field of expertise.

McIntosh: Okay and you get down there in Texas getting trained to be a mechanic, airplane mechanic?

Graumann: Airplane mechanic.

McIntosh: All airplanes; or anything specific?

Graumann: No this is the Army airplane which was the L-19 Airplane League[sp] Airplane that we used for artillery spotters and that.

McIntosh: Not related to the Air Force at all.

Graumann: Not at all.

McIntosh: Sister plane that the Army possessed.

Graumann: Right, if you graduated within the top 10 percent of your fixed wing course then you went to copter or helicopter mechanics school.

McIntosh: Did you want it or was it whether wanted or not?

Graumann: Well the Army doesn't much give you a choice. If you are in the top 10 percent you go.

McIntosh: You don't have a choice

Graumann: And I graduated in the top 10 percent so we went to fixed wing or to rotary wing.

McIntosh: How long is that course, that basic course there?

Graumann: It runs—we arrived there in April and we left there in October. April, May, June, July, September, October, six months.

McIntosh: Six months.

Graumann: Six months for the two schools.

McIntosh: Then helicopter maintenance or?

Graumann: Helicopter mechanics.

McIntosh: Okay, now once you were there they were teaching you a lot on one airplane, similar airplanes or specific airplanes?

Graumann: Very different. Helicopters are like the bumble bee. They are not supposed to be able to fly. But the mechanics and the things you do with a helicopter and the way you treat a helicopter. Normally a helicopter is very unforgiving. Otherwise, you can get away with some one thing on a fixed wing but you can't get away with on a helicopter. Takes extreme care to keep it going.

McIntosh: Because, it's bold and flat surfaced or take up in the air?

Graumann: It doesn't glide if you are up in the air and quits. You got the rotor up there and if your rotors are out of balance, loose a rotor, you crash. That's it.

McIntosh: So it's more difficult to maintain then the average plane?

Graumann: I believe it is, yes. It requires a little more care, tender loving care to make sure that you got everything right. And everything has to be balanced just so.

McIntosh: Balancing of the rotor or what about the one in the tail?

Graumann: Both of them have to be balanced. If they're out of balance, the main rotor on the top is what keeps you going up in the air and keeps you forward. Your tail rotor is the one that counter acts the torque. Otherwise she'd spin around in a circle.

McIntosh: The mechanic gets your plane ready. Did you get the chance to fly it at all? Check your work that way.

Graumann: Fly with it.

McIntosh: Hey, that's what I meant.

Graumann: We fly with it, yes. In Korea or even in the States before we went over there we went over as a unit. You're a crew, you work on that chopper; you fly with it. Normally you have a crew chief and two crew members.

The crew members don't always go along unless they're going to be staying someplace for a while.

McIntosh: You didn't have to as a crew member?

Graumann: I was a crew member in Korea yes but not for long. They figured I'd run out of things that I could do.

McIntosh: You were even more valuable to them then . You formed your initial group in the States and went over as a unit. Is that correct?

Graumann: That's right. When we finished school they basically said we were going in to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. There is a replacement center over there. From Fort Jackson, South Carolina they sent us to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. There was a unit that we were forming there. We walked in the door there and they said, we were there I think two days, and they said here's 30 days leave. We had been in the Army 11 months; time for you to go home and we went home. We came back, walked into the orderly room said we are here. They said Okay, go. The next morning we got up and they said; guess what boys, we're all going to Korea.

McIntosh: We all? What did they mean? What unit was this?

Graumann: This was the 6th Helicopter, Transportation.

McIntosh: Comprised of approximately how many men did you say?

Graumann: We had 96 enlisted men, 28 warrant officers, and seven commissioned officers.

McIntosh: Warrant officers are true to their rank, and is that common for helicopter units to use warrants?

Graumann: It was at that time. Basically, all the warrant officers that we had there were taken from the ranks of helicopter mechanics that were trained before that. If you were a trained helicopter mechanic, if you weren't on orders to go overseas, you could apply for helicopter pilot school and if you made it, it was there.

McIntosh: That was a natural track.

Graumann: Right.

McIntosh: Okay so you got the unit formed there in North Carolina and then you moved as a group out to Korea.

Graumann: Yes. I believe we left on Dec. 7. We left Fort Bragg.

McIntosh: And what year was this?

Graumann: This was 1952.

McIntosh: 1952.

Graumann: We left the States and we arrived. Took a long train ride across the States; got on the ship at San Francisco; landed at Yokohama on New Year's Eve. And we were there overnight while they loaded up more replacements over there. It took us seven days from there to get over to Korea.

McIntosh: You got there about the time I left. I left in November of '52. Or '51 when I left. Excuse me, I misspoke. I was long gone.

Graumann: Long gone then.

McIntosh: Yeah I got there in '50. For the Inchon Landing. I was based on a hospital ship that was off of Inchon.

Graumann: We did a few carries to there.

McIntosh: You did?

Graumann: The hospital ship, right.

McIntosh: I was on the Healey.

Graumann: I don't remember the name but it didn't much—.

McIntosh: They all look alike.

Graumann: They all look alike, when you got a wounded guy in there then they were pretty serious, we didn't pay much attention to it.

McIntosh: Did you go right to a base or you got--.

Graumann: No. In Korea we headed over there as individual units spread all over the place. When we landed over there we had nothing. So they broke the unit up into small contingents of 15, 20 guys and we stayed in a truck company in their dayroom. We had the guys in there. The little interesting thing that happened when we did that; the first night that we were there we had our sleeping bags, we had our rifles and they gave us ammunition while we were over there. We carried ammo and rifles with us. The first night in the truck company was right alongside the MOR, the main supply route. About two o'clock in the morning a battalion or a company of tanks went

by and if you've ever been woken up out of your sleep with a company of tanks going by, we had guys trying to jump out of their sleeping bags. They grabbed their rifles; they were jumping all over the place wondering what's going on. It scared the living daylights out of everybody.

McIntosh: Sure it did. Sure it did.

Graumann: But then from there we had to go. We built up our company area. We had a place designated for our runway to go in there and we went out there and we started building the tents. The wood floors that we had on the wood base structure that we had there. Put the tents on there. We built the tents up. We did the electrical wiring. We built the mess hall. We did all the carpentry work. We did basically everything that was in there.

McIntosh: Did you have enough supplies?

Graumann: What we didn't have, we borrowed.

McIntosh: Borrowed? Tell me about the telephone poles.

Graumann: We needed to put electrical wiring from place to place and we said well we're not stringing them from the top of the tents. We wanted to put telephone poles up there. The MOR, main supply route, or the MSR I think, where that was in the town there was an intersection. There was an MP standing over there, right where they had a whole stack of telephone poles. We took one of our trailers and a couple of six Vics and we went in to town and we loaded up some telephone poles. When the MP asked us what we were doing, we said we had orders to come and get these telephone poles; we have to put something up. He asked for the orders and I said "Oh we left them back at the company." I said, "We are way out here about five miles or ten miles." He said, "Well, go back and get the orders." I said, "Now you call our commanding officer and tell him why we can't get it." He said, "Well, load and get out of here, you're blocking traffic." We put our telephone poles in and we had to get a little wire to put from one to the other. And we borrowed that from an inoperative electrical power line that was put in from the Han River that ran near by. They had these high tension, they had this dam over there with power supply generators in there. That was blown, so we borrowed the wire off those high tension lines. MPs asked us what we were doing there and we said it was a navigational hazard and we had to take them down. And that is the wire we used. We unbraided that and used that.

McIntosh: I was going to say that is pretty heavy wire.

Graumann: Right but we unbraided that and we strung that from pole to pole. So we could just get drops off that with insulated wire.

McIntosh: Well that was the way to do it. Other than you'd still be waiting for all that material if you had to order it.

Graumann: You're right.

McIntosh: How many choppers did you have in your company?

Graumann: We had, I believe, we had 21 choppers that we ran there.

McIntosh: All these were what types?

Graumann: They were the H-19 Cs; they were the Sikorsky Chickasaws as they were called. They were capable of carrying six litters in there or approximately six men inside there. Basically, we did a little bit of, I should say like, ambulance type work. We did that.

McIntosh: Did you?

Graumann: Emergency ones that couldn't go from place to place. When we first got there they had us supplying ammunitions and food toward the front where the lines were impassable because of the spring rains. We used cargo nets underneath that. We would fly to the units up there. When we were there we supplied the Turkish unit, Greek unit, English unit. We supplied a lot of Marine forward units up there with ammunition and food supplies. Basically, we ran a good supply route for them.

McIntosh: Kind of green; so I'll tell you that Sikorsky is the one the Marines used in 'Nam.

Graumann: And the Coast Guard used them, still use them for that.

McIntosh: They uh—so, how long were you—did you stay at this one base the entire experience in Korea?

Graumann: No. We all had gone over as a unit and the Army said that they finally looked at it and they said "Well all these guys all came over together and they are all going to go home together." That was when they were still running on a point system over there and they said, if they are all going to go home together we don't want that. So we had to draw straws to see who was going to stay in the unit and who was going to get shipped out.

McIntosh: You were scheduled to be there a year; I mean when you went over, were you told you have to be here a year or did they give you a time?

Graumann: Well, we had to gather, it's been almost 50 years the way you start looking at it. I know we had to get points and I figured we had about 12 or 14 months we had to be there. And Uncle Sam decided after a while that if everyone is going home together we have to break the unit up. The unit was broken up at that time by drawing straws, who stays and who goes, and I was the one who drew the short straw and I had to go. From there I was sent down to Wonju. There was a maintenance unit down there and that is where I spent the remainder of the time in Korea.

McIntosh: Servicing the similar aircraft or something else?

Graumann: Down there it was no longer the Sikorskys. Down there we did the Bell helicopter much like what they had for the H-13s that they use for the MASH units. That's what we did down there.

McIntosh: Where they easy to maintain?

Graumann: Easy but just as complicated as any other one.

McIntosh: I flew in one of those.

Graumann: Right

McIntosh: It was interesting.

Graumann: My time over there if you want me to relate some of the things I did over there was—.

McIntosh: Whatever you did I am interested in.

Graumann: I worked in a rigging shop for a while. As it turned out it was down there that my recruiting Sergeant from Kenosha happened to be the maintenance area Sergeant.

McIntosh: Small world.

Graumann: And the guys told him. They said, "You enlisted this guy? You lied to him when you got him in here. He is going to shoot you." Well his name was Peterson. Pete was a good guy, I had no problems with him. And we got along very well together. Anyway, there was an opening in the engine change shop and the guys I was working with down in the rigging shop, we had differences of opinion as to who should do what. Anyway, I went to Pete and I said "Pete you have an opening in the engine change shop?" I said, "That's where I want to be." "No problem, you got it." So I went there, I changed one engine and I played cribbage for two months.

McIntosh: Oh my.

Graumann: We had an NCO club and there was an opening. Each unit had its own club. So the manager of the club was going to rotate home. So they said, "Who knows anything about running an NCO club?" Well, up in the Sixth, the guys in our tent, we had the NCO club manager. We had the supply tech in there. We had the motor pool sergeant in ours. We had all the guys in there that did that. We all talked about that so I said, "Well that is the kind of duty I like." So I said, "I know how to run an NCO club." So that is what I did for the last months I was over there. I was NCO Club Manager.

McIntosh: You worked in [unintelligible].

Graumann: And that is where a lot of fun came in.

McIntosh: Girls [unintelligible]?

Graumann: Well, when you want something in Korea you don't always get it through the main supply route.

McIntosh: I know about that.

Graumann: You have to do a little scrounging and a little trading. Well, whiskey bought us a lot of things over there. One of the things that we wanted that we couldn't get because we were in a two point zone instead of a three or a four point zone, was Mickey Mouse boots.

McIntosh: What's that mean?

Graumann: Mickey Mouse boots—.

McIntosh: Zone.

Graumann: Zone?

McIntosh: What do you mean?

Graumann: Well if you were in the front line you were in a four point zone. You had to get so many points to rotate home. In Chuncheon we were in a three point zone. When I moved down to Wonju it was a two point zone. So we had to accumulate the points to go home.

McIntosh: Okay.

Graumann: And a two point zone even though the temperatures would go down to minus 40 degrees below, and then some, our guys are out there walking guard duty without Mickey Mouse boots. Their feet get just as cold. They couldn't issue them down there. All we had were our combat boots, no rubber boots to go over 'em. So I went to supply and I said, "I want some Mickey Mouse boots for our guys to walk guard." And they said, "Well, we can't give them to you. Two point zone they're not allowed." I said, "Well, what kind of bottle would it take to get that?" So I said, "About two of Canadian Club?" And they said, "What size do they wear?" So as I said, those trading material things bought you whatever you wanted. We had the parkas over there but we did not have the fiber glass linings for 'em. We needed fiber glass linings for all our parkas. We had our over coats, we had our field jackets and sweaters. We didn't even have long underwear. And with that stuff that we had they said, well these fiber glass liners for the parkas, we needed some of them. They said, "Well, they're not available down here." I said, "Again, one or two bottles?" And everybody had fiber glass liners for their parkas. It was supply and demand really.

McIntosh: Right. So meals were never a problem? Always had warm food?

Graumann: Always had warm food, of course, we were back net. When we first came over from the States in our mess hall, this was at the Sixth Helicopter. We started off everyday. It was either steak or turkey, steak or turkey. We begged them to make something different other than steak or turkey. Make hash, make turkey soup, make anything. Grind up the steak and make hamburger out of it; anything but steak or turkey. We never had a problem with food. The only time we had a problem with food was when we were on some kind of maneuvers where we were supplying and we had to eat with other units. Our diets are very different, probably if you are working with the Greeks or the Turks or the English. Very different.

McIntosh: We had them aboard our hospital ship; from every country that was over there and that was a real problem for the cooks working on our ship. How about disease? Anyone get malaria or anything?

Graumann: No. I didn't know if there was any malaria over there by us. In fact, a very good buddy of mine and we still see each other quite often. He is in Minnesota. He transferred to a unit above Seoul. I think it was called S-Com city up there. He got hemorrhagic fever; that normally comes from a rat bite. He got hemorrhagic fever and almost died from that.

McIntosh: I'm sure. We had some of those aboard.

Graumann: We didn't have other things other outside the normal colds and things like that.

McIntosh: Smallpox?

Graumann: None of that.

McIntosh: Saw a few cases of those. Typhoid?

Graumann: None of that.

McIntosh: No diarrhea problems? I mean on a serious basis.

Graumann: Not really.

McIntosh: Did you have a dispensary by your air field?

Graumann: Let me think. It was six miles (??) by ride away from there.

McIntosh: (??) that was riding the truck.

Graumann: About a half hour, 20 minutes.

McIntosh: Good. But you say the more serious cases you flew out?

Graumann: If need be, we'd fly out the very serious wounded. Normally the helicopters were engaged or the Chickasaws or H-19s from the Sixth Helicopter.

McIntosh: Where would you take them?

Graumann: Normally to the hospital ship either in Inchon or once in a while one would go down towards Pusan.

McIntosh: We would have taken some aboard but I wasn't there at that time.

Graumann: We had picked up one—we were called to pick up these two casualties. They had stepped on a mine. One guy had lost a leg and an arm and part of his head was blown away and he was still alive. We put him on the litter; we put him on the chopper. And the medic said, "Here. When this bottle runs out stick another one in there." And I said, "You got the wrong guy. I'm not a medic. One of you guys goes along with this. You're going to put the needle back in him." And, anyway, we went back there – the guys went back a couple of weeks later and he was still alive. I mean his arm and his shoulder was gone, the leg fell off at the hip. He was still alive, they had him alive yet.

McIntosh: When you were in a four point zone, were mortar attacks near buy? Did they reach you?

Graumann: Well, normally, they wouldn't let us get that close to the front lines stepped up there. The closest I ever got to front line stuff was when I was transferred down to Wonju. When I was down there we had a Bell helicopter that broke a fan belt. I mean it, basically, went down. We had one go down at Pork Chop Hill not Pork Chop Hill, at Old Balding. It went down at Old Balding. And we went up there to repair it. And you go up there to put the belt on there, its not too far away that guys are shooting at one another over there. As it was, the chopper was relatively visible, but it was down just over the top of the hill. It wasn't mortar; it was all small arms fire that was going on there. We repaired the thing, cranked her up and she was fine. And all "hell" broke loose when that thing got up in the air a little bit where they could get a sight at it.

McIntosh: A target.

Graumann: Then they were shooting at it. Basically when it first went down it was kind of like in the line of fire. We tied a rope on the skid with a jeep and we pulled it back over the crest of the hill to work on it. That was about as close as we got to it.

McIntosh: That's close enough.

Graumann: That's as close as I want to get.

McIntosh: Right, exactly, exactly. Okay and uh your unit must have won some medals, some unit citations I'm sure.

Graumann: We received the unit citation for that. That was issued while in Korea. And basically when the unit was over there because the helicopter service at that time was the type of unit that was not tried and proven. We had gone through a series of demonstrations that we put on for the Army. At one time we had more brass on the field than I think they had in the Pentagon. We had them flown in there with all their private planes. They had the Generals and the brass come in and they had their own planes. We hardly had room on there for our choppers.

McIntosh: What were you demonstrating? What was the point of all this?

Graumann: The demonstration was to show that we could carry troops, wounded and supplies. In flying supplies we used cargo net underneath. We gave them the demonstration on how we'd pick up a cargo net, drop it to a point and set it down and then they'd unload that. And that's what I referred to

before about supplying the Turks, the Greeks and the Marines with the Army units up front with supplies, it was done with cargo net.

McIntosh: Cargo net.

Graumann: We'd fly it in there. The demonstration was to show that we were capable of doing that. It was also probably the front runner for what they did in Vietnam with the Hueys that brought the troops in there. We would show them that we could take six guys at a time. We'd fly it in there, drop the guys off, and take right off in relatively small areas. And that was the demonstration that we put on for them.

McIntosh: Again, everything seemed to go okay? The demonstration went off the way every one hoped?

Graumann: It appeared to go very well, everybody was pleased. Obviously, it must have had some merit to it because that's, basically, the kind of tactics they used in Vietnam later on.

McIntosh: Getting the insertions correct [?].

Graumann: Right.

McIntosh: Insertion, a very mild word for a very dangerous duty.

Graumann: Yes.

McIntosh: Right, Okay, so you were there a total of 13, 14 months?

Graumann: Arrived there in January of '53 and left there in May of '54.

McIntosh: You mentioned something about Panmunjom. How did you get involved with that, with the trade off – the trading back of prisoners?

Graumann: Right, the repatriation at Panmunjom. The Sixth Helicopter was the unit that was going to repatriate some of those who were incapable of walking or riding in ambulances.

McIntosh: They were still pretty weak.

Graumann: Weak or, whatever. The medics determined that they couldn't ride.

McIntosh: You could bring in six at a time?

Graumann: Six at a time. We had one helicopter go down for whatever reason. We had six South Koreans in there, on litters. When the chopper went down, it

went down in the middle of a minefield. Fortunately, they didn't hit any mines but the six South Koreans that were in there bailed out of the escape hatch window on the left hand side of the chopper. And they flew across that minefield but they must have been two feet off the top of the ground when they went through there. And our pilot and co-pilot they told to stay there until they go in.

McIntosh: And get you out.

Graumann: And get them out of there because of the mines.

McIntosh: [?] good one for that.

Graumann: That was actually the only casualty that we had with a helicopter while the unit was there that I know of.

McIntosh: Did weather bother the helicopters?

Graumann: Extreme winds yeah they would bother you. Cold never really seemed to bother anything. Once that engine, that radial engine that they had in there went--

McIntosh: You started those by connecting them to an electrical source?

Graumann: No. We had a starter.

McIntosh: There was a battery.

Graumann: Right.

McIntosh: That cold weather may have interfered with that battery.

Graumann: Uh no, we didn't – Well, I have to be honest with you; when we arrived there in January we did not get our ships until May. They sent—we had helicopters in the States but they left them here, they formed another unit, it was the Thirteenth Helicopter. They got our old ships. We got all new ones. They were in Japan. I forget what airfield it was but where ever it was used to be the main headquarters for the Kamikazes. That's where our choppers came in. They were assembled over there and then they flew them over to Korea.

McIntosh: They flew those over from Japan?

Graumann: Right.

McIntosh: That's a pretty good stretch.

Graumann: Uh, the helicopters had a range of about 600 miles I think it was.

McIntosh: Sure, never thought of them as that long distance carrier. That's all.

Graumann: Somewhere between 450 and 600 miles.

McIntosh: After you got back home, did you rotate at home from straight from Korea and out or did you stay?

Graumann: When I came back to the States I had six months to go. And there was a snafu in the Army, when I came back; they normally send you back to a base close to home. Somehow or another, the guy in front of me, they got our addresses mixed up. He was from the state of Washington, and he ended up at Fort Sheridan and I ended up at Fort Lewis, Washington.

McIntosh: They switched you. How long where you there?

Graumann: Which was fine because that is where I met my wife.

McIntosh: Can't beat it. How long where you there? Six months something like that?

Graumann: Got there in May and I was discharged at the end of January.

McIntosh: Eight months.

Graumann: Good, June—six, seven months.

McIntosh: Okay, seven months. And what you do there?

Graumann: I was supposed to be a crew chief for repairing the H-13 Bell Helicopters. And, as it was, we were a small detachment of 25 men. The Korean War was over and they had all these guys who had finished school and they didn't know what to do with them. So one day 50 guys came in. Our unit was now 70 guys. And they gave me a crew of 25 guys to work on helicopters. The crew chief working on that was supposed to fly with the test pilot after the chopper is repaired. I said, "Not for me guys." I said, "I can't control 25 guys." And I said, "I don't particularly want to go up in the chopper. I only have six months to go." I said, "I want to walk home." In a helicopter when you crash you either walk away or you're dead. And I said, "I am not about"—.

McIntosh: To take that chance.

Graumann: To take that chance. I said, "Anything else." In civilian life I had worked at Jockey underwear and I was an apprenticed sewing machine mechanic.

They had a sewing machine in there that was part of the old fabric covered aircraft because we repaired aircraft there too—Fabric, or that [unintelligible] fabric 18 liaison [?]. So I said, “They have a sewing machine there. I’m going to fix the sewing machine up.” So I ended that, fixed that up and I made a little money on the side sewing patches on uniforms and getting guys all up to snuff. And in the State of Washington they get a lot of frost in the morning. When the rotor blades are covered with frost; it gets them out of balance. So we had some shoulder halves in the corner and the guys were saying they like to fly those things. So I started cutting up shoulder halves and I made blade covers.

McIntosh: Individual covers?

Graumann: Individual covers to go over and cover the main rotor blade, and the tail rotor blade. I, then, made another cover to cover the bubble so we didn’t get any frost on the bubble. In the morning you just uncover them and you can go. And we used that for our maintenance area there. Well, all the artillery spottings that were there that had that these choppers wanted the same thing. I think I had five or six guys for the crew, and we wound up cutting them up and making bubble covers and blade covers.

McIntosh: Okay, then you were discharged from there.

Graumann: I was discharged from there, yes.

McIntosh: And back to civilian life. What did you do?

Graumann: When I came back to civilian life, I went back to my job which was at Cooper’s at the time, which is Jockey underwear.

McIntosh: Where?

Graumann: In Kenosha. And I was married—got out in ah, ah—January of 1955. I was married in November of 1955 and, in about January of 1956, I started supervision at Jockey as a supervisor.

McIntosh: In Kenosha?

Graumann: In Kenosha.

McIntosh: Great, and you were there for how long?

Graumann: Total time at Jockey was ten years. When I left there I went to work in a gas station for nine months. Fort Long Base was going to be built in the Kenosha area. Long Base went down and so did I.

McIntosh: Gave it up?

Graumann: Well, I couldn't live on it. Then I went to work at Mac White Wire Rope as a cost accountant and I worked there for ten years. I, then, went to Frank Welds Company, which is a machinery builder, and started as a purchasing agent and cost accountant and worked up to Vice President and Controller of Corporation.

McIntosh: Where did you get all this accounting? I don't see anywhere, where we talked, where you ever said anything about accounting. How'd you acquire this?

Graumann: Night School. Fourteen years of night school.

McIntosh: No kidding.

Graumann: Went to school for fourteen years.

McIntosh: You started this after you got home, out of the service.

Graumann: Right.

McIntosh: You just kept on going until you--.

Graumann: Kept on going and kept on working at it. I've got.

McIntosh: Become a CPA?

Graumann: No. I could have done that at the time but that requires a bachelor's degree. I've got enough credits to have a bachelor's degree but credits at too many schools.

McIntosh: Right.

Graumann: You need more credits at one school in your major in order to do it. I have an associate's degree; that I've got. I went to Parkside University, Carthage College, Gateway, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Marquette and, uh, the old University of Wisconsin-Kenosha extension. So then Gateway Tech.

McIntosh: So how'd you get up here?

Graumann: Retired.

McIntosh: Just picked this place when it was time to retire?

Graumann: Actually, we went to a Sporting Show at Milwaukee. The big annual event there and our fifth boy—our fifth child, said, “Dad, you have to come and talk to these guys. They have all the things we like to have. Such as hunting, fishing and boating and everything that is available.” And he said, “You have to come and talk to these guys.” So we went and talked to them and they said, “Come up and take a look,” and we did. Ironically, the weekend after we came here, we were supposed to go down to Arkansas and look at some property down there. We never got to Arkansas, this was in 1982. And I was planning ahead for retirement and we said this is it. When I retire this is where we are going to live.

McIntosh: Had her all planned out.

Graumann: All planned. And, basically—when I was working I was the Community Relations person also. I got involved in community affairs. I served on committees at Carthage, Parkside, Gateway and even my school district. I served on committees with them as well as the manufacturers’ group in Kenosha. So, when I came up here with my past job experiences with that, I felt kind of lost. We have a property owner’s association here at Lake Arrowhead. So, after I retired, even before I retired, I chaired the finance and audit committee for about eight years and then I went into public politics.

McIntosh: Oh a [?]

Graumann: I became, or I was elected, to the Town Supervisor and at the same time elected to be County Supervisor. Well, before I was elected to that, I served on the economic, not economic but the Comprehensive Land Use Committee, for about eight years. Running that together and then trying to put the zone ordinances to match that.

McIntosh: Good background for the job.

Graumann: And then I was also appointed—or we have a drainage district, which is normally an agricultural drainage district, which is like the taxing end unit that’s out there. I chaired that for six years, in Adams County.

McIntosh: Busy guy.

Graumann: So, I keep involved in—.

McIntosh: No kidding.

Graumann: —local politics and local affairs.

McIntosh: You don't have enough time for that hunting and fishing that brought you here.

Graumann: Oh no I still do that but it is too dangerous to hunt here.

McIntosh: Too many people? Huh? Huh?

Graumann: Too many people. In winter time there's an orange suit behind every tree.

McIntosh: I know guys who complain about that.

Graumann: We have –.

McIntosh: Do that once here and that would make me nervous.

Graumann: About 30 years ago we brought property above Spooner, in Washburn County. I have seven kids. I have five boys.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

Graumann: Plus the son-in-laws. And we own 93 acres up in Washburn County. That is a group-owned family entity up there that we have.

McIntosh: Got a fence around it?

Graumann: No you don't need it up there. There is no place to stay unless you have your own property.

McIntosh: Oh so you don't have to worry about trespassers.

Graumann: No. Last year we hunted in there I saw two people that weren't in our group. We have a little cabin up there; it is a hunting shack. You rarely see people up there, and that's one of the major problems up there.

McIntosh: I'm sure you see a lot of people around here.

Graumann: I wasn't kidding when I said there is an orange suit behind every tree.

McIntosh: Ever have any that plinked through your window?

Graumann: We're in a residential area here and you can't hunt in here.

McIntosh: I know but that doesn't bother some hunters; chasing through.

Graumann: Oh I know. No we haven't had that yet because there's so many trees, we are pretty well wooded here, so it keeps it away.

McIntosh: So what veteran's organizations did you join or did you?

Graumann: I belong to the VFW; actually I still belong to the 1865 in Kenosha. I never really transferred away from that yet.

McIntosh: It is a dying organization.

Graumann: Most of your veteran's organizations—.

McIntosh: Are fading—.

Graumann: Are fading, of course the guys are dying off too.

McIntosh: That's another reason. People are distracted. They have less [?] then they used to have at that time.

Graumann: The Vietnam one is the only one that is left out there. And a lot of these – they are too busy doing one thing or the other too. The reason I haven't transferred membership up in here is because they have their meetings on a night when I'm either at a county board meeting or a town board meeting.

McIntosh: So you got to go down to Kenosha anyway.

Graumann: No, but I still belong down there. If I transferred up in here—.

[Tape ends abruptly]

[End of Interview]