

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
JOHN HALL
36th Infantry Division, Army, World War II.

1995

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Hall, John, (1924-). Oral History Interview, 1995.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 52 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 52 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

John Hall, a native of Madison, Wisconsin, discusses his World War II service in the 36th Infantry Division fighting in Italy and France. Hall talks about having a very low paying job as an apprentice carpenter before the war, and after the attack on Pearl Harbor, being hired for very good wages to work seven days a week building barracks at Truax Field (Wisconsin) and Farragut Naval Station (Idaho). He speaks of his decision to enlist, getting fraudulent enlistment papers so he could join during Roosevelt's enlistment freeze, basic training at an Air Force Base at Salina (Kansas), and assignment to I Company, 301st Infantry Regiment. Hall describes the stories of Lindy and Rostrum, two young men he enlisted with; Lindy was deployed a week before Hall and was captured at Anzio, and Rostrum was killed in action. Sent to a replacement depot in Naples (Italy), Hall recalls his first experience with German bombing raids and assignment to the 36th Division, which was a Texas National Guard Division. He touches on combat at the Rapido River and being sent to a hospital for trench foot. He details the difficult weather, fighting conditions in the mountains, and the importance of good physical conditioning to keep from getting too tired to think. Hall describes his part in the amphibious invasion of southern France; after being sick on the Landing Craft Vehicles for five days, he accidentally fell asleep onshore and lost his squad for a day. He tells how a West Point-graduate lieutenant inspired him to earn a Distinguished Service Cross during a night patrol. Hall tells of taking cover in a ditch in Alsace-Lorraine and being hit by a friendly fire sniper. After some time in a Naples hospital, he went through Pisa, Foggia, and Bari (Italy), was made an airplane mechanic even though he no skills in that area, passed out atabrine tablets in Dakar (Senegal), was in Cairo (Egypt) when the war ended, and caught malaria on the airplane home. He talks about the diversity of the troops: the Moroccans in the French army, the Japanese-American regiment that saved a battalion of the 36th Division, an absence of Black combat regiments, Senegalese troops who collected German ears, and the Texan Mexicans in his own unit. He mentions neutral GI attitudes towards Italian troops and civilians, and says one way he would entertain himself was to harass Italian alcoholics at the docks in Naples. Hall touches on other forms of entertainment like sports and gambling. He speaks of meeting a platoon leader he knew in Kenosha (Wisconsin), and he details going to two 36th Division reunions in Texas and thanking the man who bandaged his wounds in Alsace-Lorraine. After getting home, he talks about getting married, living on 52-20 Club money, using the GI Bill for on-the-job training and to pay for a bachelor's degree in accounting at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, building a house in Middleton (Wisconsin), and having a varied career. He

states he would not have gone to college if he hadn't gone to war. Hall explains that he is a supporter of the Red Cross because the VA lost his records, and the Red Cross contacted other combat veterans to recreate them in order for Hall to get some disability compensation. He examines the differences between World War II and Vietnam veterans, mentions he joined the VFW and American Legion but never goes to meetings, and reflects on a veterans' tour of France he attended with his wife.

Interviewed by Mark Van Ells, 1995.

Transcribed by Joanna D. Glen, WDVA Staff, 1998 & Patrick F. Gould, WDVA
Volunteer, 2009.

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2010.

Transcribed Interview:

- Mark: Today's date is March 7, 1995. This is Mark Van Ells, Archivist, Wisconsin Veterans Museum doing an oral history interview with World War II veteran John Hall of Middleton presently, native of Madison. Let's just start from the top. Tell me a little bit about where you were born and your upbringing and what you were doing prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.
- Hall: I was born in Madison, WI on January 3, 1924. Pearl Harbor in December 7, 1941 I was 17 years old, graduated from Madison West High School in June of 1941.
- Mark: After Pearl Harbor?
- Hall: Let's see, no, before Pearl Harbor. I was working, I believe, at J. H. Findorff and Sons in the Fall of 1941, for the big pay of \$10 a week as an apprentice carpenter.
- Mark: Did you consider going to school or were you just going to pursue things--
- Hall: No. I did not consider going to school. I took college preparatory in high school because I didn't like shop courses. It was easier. But 1941 jobs were hard to get so I took a job as an apprentice carpenter. At that time I got a check of \$9.90. Social Security was 1% so they took ten cents off and I went home, my dad took \$5 for room and board. I got \$4.90 for working 40 hours a week. Slave pay today, but it was part of the learning process.
- Mark: Did you grow up on the east side or the west side of town?
- Hall: South Madison. We lived on every street in Madison because it was cheaper to move than to pay the rent during the 30's. Basically, I started in grade school at Franklin and finished in grade school at Franklin. I started West and did not graduate from West. I graduated from South High in Salt Lake City the last year my dad had a job in Utah in a copper mine, so we moved to Utah. After working for Findorff's, I worked there till probably until April of '42 and went to work at Truax Field building the barracks. I worked there for three months, working 7 days a week, 8 hours a day, making big money. Now I go from \$10 a week, I think at the time at Findorff I was probably getting 14 bucks a week or something, I go from there to over \$100. This was '42.
- Mark: Now this was war work. This was something that happened after Pearl Harbor.

- Hall: Yeah, '42.
- Mark: Was this typical do you think? Did a lot of jobs come after the war started?
- Hall: Oh, yah, a lot of jobs. People were tooling up and they were looking for viable bodies. I could have gone to Oscar Mayer; Madison Kipp was a big employer, 'cause of war related--
- Mark: Madison Kipp? I don't know what that is.
- Hall: It's a big manufacturing place out on the east side, Atwood Avenue. It's still there. Run by the Coleman family. Reed Coleman. Are you familiar with that Coleman as the collector for all those charity drives in Madison?
- Mark: Sounds vaguely familiar. I've been in town about seven years now.
- Hall: She's in the paper every other day. They take in take in a fund where they only start with a million bucks and I think they've got about 30 million in that fund, but that's neither here nor there. So I quit working at Truax Field and went and worked at Farragut Naval Reservation in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, as an apprentice carpenter. My dad went out there as a timekeeper and I went out there. So, I'm pounding nails, building out there. Now I'm working ten hours a day, seven days a week. Get up in the morning, go to work, have a box lunch there, drive home, take a bath and go to bed and get up and do the same thing. So, November of '42, I came home from Coeur d'Alene and joined the Army in December of '42.
- Mark: I'm interested in your decision to join the Army. You were making good money. You weren't starving to death by any means. Now what makes a fairly well paid, just after the Depression, what makes you join the Army for about \$10 a week?
- Hall: Yeah, it went from \$10. At Coeur d'Alene I was making, so I'm making \$70 a week. I'm getting 35 hours overtime, So that's a 105 hours times \$1.25 per hour. And guys when I went in service, they didn't believe what I was making. Why did I come home and join? Got tired of working and I guess the spirit, it's time to move on. So we, I came home, three of us guys from South Madison, all went to West, decided to join the Marine Corps. We had passed the first physical for the Marine Corps. In December of '42, Roosevelt froze all enlistments starting in January of '43 they were going to allocate the man power wherever they needed it. So we would have to wait until January of '43. This one friend of mine's brother-in-law was a recruiting sergeant for the Army in Madison, so he fixed up fraudulent enlistment papers so we went to the Army. Now there was

about 50 of us from Madison, all went on the same troop train. In fact, my CPA, who graduated from high school, he was on the same troop train. So now we were all going in the Marine Corps, so where are we going to go in service? Wanted to go into tankers, one guy wanted to go to the Air Corps ground crew, and I said, "You guys want to go in the Marine Corps, the infantry is the same as the Marines." So I talked them into joining the infantry. So now we get to Fort Sheridan, some wise ass sergeant says to us, let's see, I'm still, 1942, I'm still 18 years old. He says, "I been here six years and I had three volunteers for the infantry, one, two, three." [laughs]. Then we knew it was not standing in line and reading comic books. Of the three, I'm the only one still living. One got killed exactly the same way I got hit in Germany. The other one got captured in Anzio and wounds and--

Mark: I got to interrupt a second. Okay, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry to interrupt.

Hall Let's see, Fort Sheridan.

Mark: You were one of three guys to ever volunteer for the infantry.

Hall: Yeah, right. One, two, three. So we get our GI haircuts and they shipped us to Salina, Kansas.

Mark: That's Fort Riley?

Hall: Near Fort Riley. It's about 95 miles away from Fort Riley. To keep this in chronological sequence, we get to Fort Riley and we see the big stars on the trucks and we don't know where we are going and this guy says, "Geeze, it looks like we're in the Air Force" cause they got this big Air Force base at Salina too. It was right about the middle of the country and they used it for stopping off and for a B17 base and they ended up with B24's and B26's—that whole base, a big Air Force base. We soon found out we were in the infantry. They put me in I Company, 301st Infantry, the other two guys went into K Company, no L Company of the 301st Infantry which was right across the ditch, some barracks. So we take basic training there from December of '42 through, well, whatever 13 or 14 weeks, and then we go on.

Mark: What sort of training?

Hall: Infantry basic training. Physical conditioning and, was the training good? I thought, Army was excellent.

Mark: What about the equipment? Now this was fairly early yet?

Hall: Yeah, a lot of time we didn't all have M1 rifles, we used old Springfield rifles from World War I. Earlier those guys even used wooden rifles. We were later than that. And I think we had gone in, and our pay when we went in was higher, I think at 30 bucks a month. And then during the first couple of months they raised it to \$50. So we took training and the Army was excellent trainers, through repetition, you know, hard work. They prepared you. Got you in good physical shape, camaraderie, closeness, and you know, whatever you have to do when you get in combat.

Mark: Now, I'm sure in basic training you got the opportunity to mingle with people from a lot of different regions of the country.

Hall: True.

Mark: I got the impression that you had traveled, so perhaps this wasn't new to you for a lot of guys.

Hall: No, I just, our travel was moving from Madison, Wisconsin basically to Jeopche in Utah where my dad had some relatives. So, no we were always on the lower economic elements, so we never did much traveling. If you ever rode a train as a kid, that was a big treat. So, we had, but one thing it did teach me was that I was fortunate that I went to a school system like Madison, Wisconsin, okay. When I looked at all those guys in service, I no longer was in a class like Macintosh. He was on the upper for echelon work, I was in the middle of the road. As I say, I took college preparatory because it was easier than going to school and I had no desire to go to school. Did that after the war. But, you could see the competition that was spread out across the big country. There was a lot of people that are below you. If you get an education in Madison, Wisconsin. You know, doctors, lawyers, state professors. If you throw that all into that mix, it just lifts the boat, you know.

Mark: Were there people who were illiterate and just not as bright?

Hall: See, when we went, we were all the same age bracket, 18 or 19. Most of the draftees were 19 probably and the guys that volunteered, and I was probably one out of 50 volunteered. So, 18-20 in that age bracket and then 39-42. Everybody else was gone. So, they'd have maybe in a company, platoon, two guys and the rest were all in the same age group. And they, some of them would last. One of them was the head chef at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. 39 years old, Cuban. And they wanted him to cook in the Army. And he says, I'm not going to cook. You guys drafted me, so get me in shape. He was husky and they got him in shape. And I don't know what ever happened to him because I left that Division. To keep on moving, we went from infantry basic, we went to Tennessee for

maneuvers. And then by that time, I'm a corporal, one other guy's a corporal and the other guy is a PFC. And, so we take maneuvers. Probably in August, September 43, they asked for volunteers to go overseas. So, the three of us all volunteered. They took two of us. Kid, by the name of Lindy. The other kid's name was Rostrum. Lindy and I went, so we went from there, we ended up going to, I think we went to Fort Meade, Maryland. Lindy-- we both got there the same time, but I somehow talked the Army into giving me a furlough. And so I got a ten day furlough and he didn't get one. So, he went overseas quicker than I did. So, when he got to Italy, he joined the Rangers, got captured in Anzio. And, I've got to be careful about how I'm going to say this next part. This kid, Lindy, was from a staunch German family. His dad was a shoe maker on Monroe Street, believed that we were fighting the wrong enemy. That we should have been fighting England and whatever was related with England. But yet, he was an American, that threw out whatever his whole life was taught. Joined the service. Volunteered for overseas. Volunteered for the Rangers. Got hit at Anzio. Got captured. Came back after the war. Went to the university. Got a-- smart kid. Went to the university, got an English class and a lot of people that he didn't like, he sees them right there were he left his bringing. He told them, his quiz instructor one day, "Hitler had the right idea. He should have killed all of you." So, he quit school. Worked two jobs the rest of his life with shrapnel in his liver. Now he goes down to Wood and they, he gets a doctor, and he says, "You got a drinking problem." He's got, it looks like yellow jaundice. "I can't drink, I maybe have one or two beers, but I don't have a drinking problem." Well the moral of the story, they finally get to Proxmire [US Senator, WI]. And they get all of his pension deal straightened out and he gets to the best experts in Minneapolis to get it operated on. He was probably in his middle 50s. And he gets a staff infection and he dies up in Minneapolis. But, this is, you were wondering what made people do this.

Mark: Yeah.

Hall: It was either win or lose. Even though he was, felt we should have been fighting England from his background, he was there to volunteer, there to volunteer. And it cost him, because he was a lot more capable guy than being a post office employee, okay. But, that's little ironies of the war. The other guy got hit exactly the way I got hit, in Europe, and got killed with the Division. But, so, I went from there, we both went to Italy. And he got there about 10 days before I did. Joined the Rangers in the invasion of Anzio. He got captured at Anzio and was a prisoner for, that was January '43, no '44. January '44 and the war was over in May, so he was a prisoner for 15-16 months and came home.

Mark: I'll bet you missed that experience.

Hall: Yeah.

Mark: You were just a week later?

Hall: Yeah, I'm a week later so I go to Naples and go through, they had, Mussolini build a big racetrack in Naples. And the Army used it as a replacement depot. And my first introduction to bombardments, aerial raids, and so forth when we were down there as replacements. We were having a colored swing band on the stage, and all of the sudden some Luftwaffe went over. All the lights went down and everybody's thinking for themselves, and all you could see was them white teeth taking off the stage [laughs]. Nobody got hurt or anything else, but you don't remember--

Mark: It's frightening

Hall: Yeah, yeah, it's frightening. So we work out, out of there, and I go for a replacement Division. Now I get to the 36th Division, which was a Texas National Guard Division. Similar---

Mark: Is that the longhorn one? I meant to look up the patch.

Hall: No, I got it here. Yeah, here's the one I was with in the states in '94. Here's the Texas, oh, arrow.

Mark: I see.

Hall: Okay. So, I get, I join this thing. I'm a Corporal coming in there and there's guys in combat who are only PFC. And the first introduction, a guy says to me, a private, he says, "Here's another dumb Yankee, you can tell by the voice, you can tell by the dialect." And I says, I was a big hit, I says, "I'm not as dumb as you are, because you were here before I was [laughs]." Give him a little shot, and so we get there and now I see some combat. And we're sitting at, and artillery starts digging in there.

Mark: And this is how far from Naples?

Hall: Oh, maybe forty miles. We are on the way to Cassino. And I think the village was San Pietro Infinite or something like that. And, sitting there with a couple of other replacements and some other guys and we were attached close to a French Regiment. And the French Regiment had recruited a lot of Moroccans. And here's the difference in the war. These Moroccans were used to this. The shelling was all, they're sitting behind a rock reading an old Moroccan newspaper. And the GIs are over there

digging. And I gotta be careful how I say this too. While they're digging, two guys get hit. One guy gets hit reading the bible, and I thought was a 19 year old kid at the time was a "that doesn't help here." Okay [laughs], praying that you're not going to get hit, you know, doesn't help here, you know. So, we go to the Rapido River which was a real bloody battle in WWII. Our Regiment was in reserve. We were in the mountains. I end up freezing my feet and I come back. We get a rest area off from the front. We go to the hospital. Get out of the hospital and join them after the breakout from Anzio. And fought a few days there and then came back. Piciatta and Salerno which is south of Naples for amphibious training for the invasion of southern France. So we make the invasion of southern France. A little story of the war, I'll throw this in here. Why it's good to have allies. People that know, that there are people in these platoons and infantry companies that you can depend on in case of stress and fire. So, I had a good working relationship with a lieutenant from Battle Creek, Michigan. In fact, I talked to him yesterday afternoon, trying to fill out some stuff on this interview. I could never ride those boats. I always got sick. So now we're making up this invasion force. It takes five or six days to put all the stuff together. We get off the boat. We're on some LCV---Ps I think, they were called. Landing Craft Vehicle/Personnel boats. To make the invasion. The shells are dropping all around us and the guy that goes to kick off the smoke pot. The Navy, and this was Coast Guard driving these things, not the Navy. And, I thought we got hit, boom. And I got my pack off, gun off and I'm ready to jump overboard. Cause I'm not going down with my pack on, I'm going to be able to get to shore, you know. But we didn't get hit. So we get in and make the invasion, now we sit on this, puts, assigns my squad to a patrol. We take a ten minute break. Being sick five days, I just lay down ten minutes and wake up the next day surrounded by tanks. No troops.

Mark: Whose tanks were they? Ours?

Hall: Our tanks, yeah. And a big sign that says, "Actung Minen" which means "attention minefield," German, but they were phony signs. They put them in there and so forth. That's basically, that's desertion under combat conditions. So I catch up with my platoon the next day and so he sent me out on some sniper patrol. So we just let that thing go from there. Let's see, this was on August 15th 1944, we made that invasion.

Mark: Operation Anvil? As I recall.

Hall: No, operation what?

Mark: Anvil?

Hall: No, it was, well we landed in Frejus, what was the name of the towns? It was about seventy miles east of Marseille, okay near Monaco. So now we're going up the Rhone River, I think that's it, if I remember right. And, we get assigned, I get assigned another patrol. A night patrol and we're out behind a German lines and sniper fires going all over. And a West Point graduate, lieutenant colonel that had flew over from the Pentagon came up to me and he says, "That's just," and at this time I'm a sergeant, "what's wrong staff sergeant?" I says, "Take a look. Those are live bullets they're shooting at us." [laughs] You know, tracers going over your head, you know, and he says, "Come on let's go." And says, "If you can go, then I can go." So we went and we ending up catching the Germans after it was a route column march. And we got caught, but it was a real success with troops hitting them from the back and we got about a battalion of troops behind them. That's, I ended up getting the Distinguished Service Cross for that, so that's in this. If you want to read that, it's in this literature. And I ended up, last thing, war out until September 17th and I, we were sitting on a patrol, another patrol and we were up in Alsace-Lorraine. Up in Switzerland, German, French border up there. It reminded me of Yellowstone. It's a lot like Yellowstone Park. And, we're out on this patrol and we're supposed to meet another Division at this road block. Raining, bad day. And, six of us guys are standing there, plus the guy I talked to yesterday who was a lieutenant, standing there and he says, "We better get in this ditch." We don't know if those are Germans or Americans over there. Supposed to be Americans. We get in the ditch and I raise my arm to go like this, goes boom, and a sniper picks me off. Well we found out, it wasn't Germans. But fortunately, I had moved enough, it went across my heart and went out. So some kid comes up, and gives a bandage me up a little bit and then crawls over and gives me a shot of morphine, so I was able to get out of there. Then that was the end of the war for me.

Mark: I'd like to come back to that, but I want to backtrack a little bit if that's okay?

Hall: Sure.

Mark: I'm interested in the Italian campaign. It's one of those areas that's often ignored because Northern Europe and Germany gets so much interest. Fighting in that terrain was difficult as I understand.

Hall: True.

Mark: And the mountains and those sorts of things.

Hall: Weather was really bad. You see I ended up with trench feet. We had cold, probably like it is today, you know up in the mountains, you know, 35 go down to 20 and you only had one pair of socks and you didn't have enough blankets or anything else. And you're up there bounding away and you know, you sit there for twenty-five or thirty days, patrols and wandering around. Your feet freeze. And, so it was difficult conditions, high altitude. The Germans were well fortified.

Mark: Now you trained in Kansas. But you were basically fighting some mountain warfare.

Hall: Yeah.

Mark: Being a replacement, perhaps those in your unit had some experience in sort of mountain fighting. Did you---

Hall: Well, a little, but not much. Because, see, the 36th Division made the invasion at Salerno on September 9th, 1943. I joined them on January 9th of '44. By the time I got to the front, so there's some mountains all the way, background from Salerno all the way up through Naples and around up to Cassino and then they had to get across, can't remember what range of mountains once they---, that was the idea, Cassino and Anzio, they'd make this invasion from Anzio and we would get through Cassino up through the mountains and then it was all valley. And we would coordinate there. The problem was, they got all this, and they never had enough troops. They got them sitting at Anzio and we never got through at Cassino. So, now they're hung out there to dry. So, little things about the war. That's why the Germans would never beat us. A ragtag army. You always had individuals who could think for themselves. That could rise to the top in a difficult situation. I could remember a Texan telling us one night, we were going to, it's about 20 degrees out, sleet, rains, snow. We all want to go to sleep. You know, if we go to sleep, we are going to freeze to death. And this guy is from Texas says, "The first son-of-a-bitch who falls asleep, I'm going to shoot." None of us fell asleep.

Mark: He was serious.

Hall: Yeah, he was serious. He knew what the answers were. He was a lot smarter than I was and I was raised in this climate. Okay. Because I was prepared to do that too [laughs]. You know, pretty soon you get dumb. And one of the problems of the war, and that's why conditioning, physical conditioning is important for survival. And you can see what happened in Korea, when those guys were out of shape. Because after the fourth day of fighting with no sleep and not enough food, and all the difficult conditions, it's easy to say, 'Aw, to hell with it.' And the stronger you are

and the better physical condition you are, the longer you last because it's directly related to your mental ability to fight the war. And that was important. The Army whipped you into good physical condition, forced marches, whatever it took, you know.

Mark: It is my understanding that the Italian theater was kind of a mix of different armies and different peoples, even among the American soldiers. There were [indecipherable] units that were there, black units that were there, not to mention Italians, for and against.

Hall: Yeah, the first day I mentioned, here are Moroccan troops, part of the French Army. I can remember the first time I saw a Japanese-American. They were, at that time called the 100th battalion, which was part of the 34th Division, which was Iowa-Oklahoma National Guard Division. And later they changed it into an Infantry Regiment and they called the 442nd Infantry Regiment. And I'm sure you understand it was the most highly decorated regiment of WWII. They saved a battalion of the 36th Division, the lost battalion, after I got wounded and was gone, they got surrounded. Yeah, it was kind of unusual to see these small Japanese running around the mountains in Italy. Ahhh, colored troops, you didn't see them in combat per se. They were quartermaster, drove trucks, and so forth, but there was no combat infantry regiments there. They may have got into France later on after Normandy and across that battle. But, yeah, there was a lot of that---, we had Senegalese troops there. And their claim to fame was they like German ears. You know, kill em, take their ears, and put it on a necklace [laughs], and so they were very good with their knives.

Mark: Sounds like a very colorful bunch.

Hall: Yeah. So, difficult weather conditions. Difficult black out conditions. One little off-beat story: I'm at another replacement depot going from Naples to the front lines. There was one more in between. I don't remember what town it was. And the guy comes over there, speaking English, and says to me, "Where you from?" And I says, "I'm from Madison, Wisconsin." Um, he says, "I went to Ag school, University of Wisconsin. Get a couple of your buddies and come on over there and I fix you some chicken and one of the memorable meals that you remember in your life." So we go over there. He wanted to talk about Madison, Wisconsin. Here he was five thousand miles away from where he was, you know [laughs]. He must have had pleasant memories here.

Mark: Did the US troops get along well with the Italians? Because, you know, it was a fascist country and then as we liberated parts of it, they became allied. It sounds like an iffy, sticky kind of situation. I wonder how the GIs---

- Hall: Ahhh, as far as I'm concerned, we ignored them. Okay, we tried to help the kids with food and whatever was left over. All beggars and willing to sell their sisters for food. They were pretty good that way. I don't---the average GI, we didn't get into major policy discussions about why are we here.
- Mark: Oh, I'm sure.
- Hall: You know, about the Italians and the good and bad. We just thought they were, you know, we thought they were losers, even though I'm married to one that's half Italian. But, in fact, when I got in a rest area, I learned a little Italian and I'd go down to the Naples dock and typical 19 year old kid, you'd have a 100 lire and you could get two quarts of wine for a lire and you'd find one of these alcoholics and you'd buy him a couple of quarts of wine. And I used to tell him, "Multa mulderadi, ninti mangi [?]" which means "a lot of work and no food." And then he'd say, "Americano soldot, no fuckin bona." They knew how to say that [laughs]. And you'd get them stirred up a little bit, to create a diversion. A little tuned up on vino, you know. So, that was a form of entertainment, you know, as cruel as it was.
- Mark: This does bring up the question, what do you do for fun, if and when you have time for it? A lot of vets talk about drinking.
- Hall: Yeah, yeah, I never was much for that. I probably got drunk maybe three times. I've probably been drunk 10 times in my life, because I've never been that way. And you go down there, you know. And I never smoked, I'd smoked a little bit, but I always gave my cigarettes away. And, you would have card games and crap games, you know. Gambling was a portion of diversion. Sports were a lot too. You always had access to basketballs and baseballs and bats. Some reading, writing a few letters.
- Mark: I was going to ask. Did you have much trouble staying in contact with people back home? Did you write---
- Hall: I just wrote to my mother and the girlfriend. And so I didn't write to anybody else because everybody else was in the same boat as I was. Everybody else was drafted unless they couldn't pass the physical. And I've never been a great communicator, all my life, writing letters.
- Mark: I've never been a letter writer myself.
- Hall: No, I'd rather pick up the telephone and call this guy. This guy, my lieutenant company commander, he was a great soldier. He lives the war.

He lives down in Columbia, SC, retired from Fort Jackson. Sold life insurance all his life. But he writes to all his people. He still writes to me about four times a year. And I usually send his letter back and put a couple of PSs down there [laughs]. I run it off a copy machine. I take it home and let my wife read it and that's how I answer it. Running a business, I guess, so. So if I got a question and I want to talk to him, I can just get on the telephone and talk to him.

Mark: I've got some military type questions. You were in the Texas National Guard unit, what was a national guard unit. I am a little more familiar with what is a Wisconsin National Guard unit, and over the course of the war, those guard units got more nationalized, I guess you would say.

Hall: Yeah, we got decimated.

Mark: Yeah, was that your experience as well? You were one of the---

Hall: Let me, here's another theory that I have. When I joined this outfit, I was a corporal. In this squad we have seven Texan Mexicans. Ahhh, probably above average Mexicans, but illiterate and it's a classic class that people that have the least to fight for, are doing most of the fighting. And it was brought out in Viet Nam where I think 30% of the forces were black, ahhh, 12% of this country is black and 30-35% of the casualties were black, okay. But, that's the price of war. And the intellectual white is not usually there. And that way it was important, it was a spur of the moment decision when that lieutenant colonel came up there who was a paid leader. West Point graduate, they flew him from the Pentagon to Italy, made him a battalion commander. In the space of six months he was hit twice, because he believed in what he was doing and that's why you need West Point, Annapolis. You need dedicated leaders in case of stress. But, that's another story. And so now I go from corporal to staff sergeant after get done with Casino because we probably lost 20% or 30 % of our platoon. Because I was capable of reading and the ability to write and talk, you know, yet we had one guy in there who won the, I think he won the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was a staff sergeant, a Mexican, could not read or write, but he was a good combat soldier. He told them what to do. Ended up, I think, getting killed by his wife. Come home in a drunken stupor one time after the war in Europe. She ended up killing him, but that's, that's, I always use that analogy that people that have got the least to fight for usually are doing most of the grunt work. The people that the most to fight for are usually doing the less actual combat. That doesn't always hold true, but that's pretty much true. Okay, any other questions?

Mark: I assume your unit, the Texas character changed as time went on. There were more guys like you.

Hall: Oh sure. My platoon leader was from Kalamazoo. Give you another quick story. After the war, my brother and I owned a wholesale lumber company and we're down in Kenosha, collecting some money from a slow-paying lumber yard. And so we collect and I say, "Jim, let's stop and see the mayor." So I walk in and says to the girl, his secretary, I says, "I only want to see this guy if he's a member of Company K, 142nd Infantry. He will know what I'm talking about." She looking at me like, "What's this goofball want?" So she writes it down, there's a guy out there wants to see if you were a member of Company K, 142nd Infantry. Send him in. He was another platoon leader and his name was Gene Hammond, was a former Mayor of Kenosha. So, I sat down and talked to him for a half hour or forty-five minutes. And these two guys are really good friends, here's a guy from Kenosha. A Polish lieutenant from Chicago who was a dedicated combat soldier, probably won three or four medals, couple of silver stars, wounded. But he liked combat. Okay. He was like this lieutenant colonel. He liked the challenge of living under those conditions. And he still lives the war, but this is probably the most I talked about the war in 40 years [laughs]. So, any other questions, these were just little sidelights of the war. Texas, I've gone to two reunions. And the first reunion, they always have them in Texas. They always have them over Labor Day and I think they have had them since the end of World War I. This was a World War I Division. And the first time I went, my wife and I went, I got to see the guy that I hadn't seen in 45 years, that came up and bandaged me up. Kind of, how should I say it? Free thinker. The guy was from Ashland, Kentucky. He was in six weeks, he could speak the Italian language. The romance language. And just a gift. And he was kind of an "eight ball." He went from sergeant down to private. And he was kind of a free thinker, but a great combat soldier. So I'm telling him the guy, when I meet him at this reunion, he lives down in Florida. I says, "This is worth the price of coming down here. Getting to say thank you to the guy that bandaged me up so that I could get the hell out of there," you know. So I'm talking to another guy that got hit and he says, "That guy did the same thing for me." So, there was two of them. I think he got discharged as a PFC or something like that. Probably court-martialed a couple of times because he wouldn't conform. But under combat conditions, which is what you needed in service, but still run by, now we've got these guys all across the country, that Texas thing is still dominated by Texans. Lot of Yankees come and it's still a nice deal to see all these things. And I've been, I went back once with this lieutenant and his wife. **[End of Tape 1 Side A]** What you needed in service. But still run by, now we got these guys all across the country. That Texas thing is still dominated by Texans down there. No, a lot of Yankees come and it's still a nice deal to see all these things. And I've went back once with this lieutenant and his wife and my

wife. It's just a nice couple of days to sit down and talk about the war. The things that changed this country [laughs], that will never be the same.

Mark: No, I think the Wisconsin one is dominated by the Wisconsin-Michigan people. They come from all over the country.

Hall: Oh sure.

Mark: I've got some questions. The Germans. Want to talk about some post-war experiences and then those will pretty much be all of my questions.

Hall: Okay.

Mark: The Germans. Were they formidable enemies? Did they fight well? And did their resistance change? Did they get weaker or something like that as the war went on and as you got closer to Germany? Did they continue to fight hard? Or did losses take their toll?

Hall: The thing is, in combat, most combat, you may run into real close situations, I probably had three or four of them. Okay, so I'm a staff sergeant of an infantry platoon. Squad is twelve men if you are fully [staffed??] and how close you can actually get. Mine would be strictly guesses. I think they were formidable. They were well trained. I've read the books and everything else. I don't think they had the ability in people that we had. We had a diverse group of people that made up, I remember one, a master sergeant telling me, we're taking the boat over on the *Empress of Scotland* which at that time was the fifth largest luxury liner in the world. We had 15,000 troops and we go across unescorted and we land in Casa Blanca. This guy was a regular army sergeant, twenty years. And he used to call us, not the army; "here comes the mob." But we always had out of that mob some guys that could rise to the occasion and become leaders. And once you decimated the German leaders, the lieutenants and everything else, those sergeants were not trained to analyze the situation and think for themselves. And that's why I'll always be convinced we could always beat the Germans or the Russians. As long as we didn't destroy our economic system. Just a personal observation. Anything I would say about it if we got worse or weaker would be guess work. I know they got younger.

Mark: That's interesting.

Hall: Yeah, they got younger.

Mark: And did you run into the teenage boys that you sometimes see?

- Hall: Yeah, a little bit. And they were not adequately trained too. You hand them a rifle, so---
- Mark: So, you were hit in early '45. Is that right?
- Hall: September 17th of '44.
- Mark: And this was what they called in Vietnam "the million dollar wound?"
- Hall: Yeah, because it got me back to a general hospital in Naples, Italy and I ended up in a port battalion in Naples. And I didn't get along too good with a lieutenant so he "shanghaied" me out of the battalion and went back to a replacement depot up near Pisa. And I told them guys; the guy says to me; he says, "You're having a hard time getting along sergeant." I says, "No, not really." I said, "If I'm not good enough to fight, I should go home. I don't want to be screwed around here, okay. Send me home." But I don't want to leave this place until it says Air Force. They send me to Foggia and Bari, Italy which is on the Adriatic side. South east of Naples, maybe, due east of Naples, and made me a propeller mechanic. I sat there about two months and then they sent me to ATC and I ended up in Dakar, Africa. Then I went from there to Cairo and from there and when the war was over with Japan, I was in Cairo, Egypt.
- Mark: You got around.
- Hall: Yeah, I made the tour with those airplanes.
- Mark: What was this duty like for you having been a combat soldier and now you're fixing airplanes and policing the parking lot. Was that a problem for you?
- Hall: No, first, I had a good job there. First off, those guys recognized I didn't have any skills. I don't have any mechanical skills anyhow. As I said at the start of this thing, I didn't like shop to begin with. That's why when in high school I took college preparatory [laughs]. So they just kind of closed their eyes. And then when I got to Dakar, all I had to do was, every night, pass out Atabrine pills [for malaria]. Make sure I put two Atabrine pills, one or two on their tray. And who didn't take them, I didn't take them and I got malaria coming home on the airplane [laughs]. But, they kind of left me alone. [indecipherable] waiting it out and see what happened. Probably figured, maybe I'd have to go fight in Japan somewhere.
- Mark: But you didn't. You got to come home. When did you get back to the states?

Hall: I got, well then they started the points program you know, and I had a lot of points. Combat experience and battle stars, so I think it was August 13th or 14th of 45. So I was in Cairo, so I was up high in points so I got home in early September. Got discharged in Madison.

Mark: How long did it take you to get back to Wisconsin?

Hall: Didn't take me very long because I flew. I flew to Charleston, South Carolina. And in the air, I get malaria. So, I'm sick as hell and I land and stay in the hospital for ten or eleven days in Charleston. And then a troop train or, I can't remember if I took a troop train to Madison or if I flew to Truax. All I know, you're talking about a hero's welcome. I got on the Nakoma bus. Which means, at that time, was Truax, going out there on North Street. Which was North Street, out there by Oscar Meyers, okay? And you transferred it to the square and I took the Nakoma bus and I lived on a street called Terry Place, which is off of Monroe. I lived at 854 Terry Place when I went in the service. So, with an overcoat that is down to my ankles, gave me my discharge and I was done.

Mark: So here you are, must be all of twenty one years old by now, twenty two?

Hall: Let's see, nineteen, '45, yeah, twenty one.

Mark: As a young guy who just got out of the service, what were your priorities now for getting back? To getting back into life, I guess you would say? Did you have plans to go to school? Did you want to go into business?

Hall: No, I didn't have any. I just, I guess I'm a product of the two people that made me. And my mother was a great one for, do what you have to do. Yesterday is yesterday is yesterday and worry about tomorrow. So, I never gave any thought to any of that. I came back and I was ready to take some time off. In fact, I was probably really lazy because we had what at that time what was called "the 52-20 Club." [indcipherable] lots of weeks I didn't even go up there because I was too lazy to go get the twenty bucks. So then I get married in July of '46. So then I go to vocational school which is MATC. Which was Central High School over on Carroll Street.

Mark: Now, did you use the GI Bill?

Hall: Yeah, I used the GI Bill. And I get, I'm taking some bookkeeping courses in accounting and commercial law. And I got a sharp woman lawyer teacher there and an excellent accounting teacher that used the same books that the guy that ran the commerce school was a disciple. So this one teacher says to me, "You're wasting you time here. You should be going to the university." Well, I got a kid at the time, no, I don't have a kid at the

time. I'll take that back. So, I finish up in a year, maybe a year and a half. I take a job at Commonwealth Telephone Company. After I get there. And Commonwealth Telephone Company was right across from where Valley Bank is on West Washington Ave. And the bus building, it was called the bus building right across there. They were had us fix floors up there. So now they got me [indecipherable] counting telephone polls. I'm making about 40 bucks a week under the GI training program. I says, I went home and I said to my wife and I says, "This is a bunch of lies." I said, "I'm going to school in September." I can make more under Public Law 16 than I can make under the job program here, so I'm going to school. So, I decided to go to school.

Mark: So you went to Madison here?

Hall: Yeah, I went to Madison. And had troubles with English. I was always in the top quartile in math and sciences and that stuff, but in English I was always in the top 40%. Boy that was a struggle. Writing those themes [laughs]. I got through and graduated with honors in the three year program and I majored in accounting.

Mark: And again, did you use the GI Bill to finance it?

Hall: Yeah. And I went under Public Law 16 for [indecipherable]. Yeah, and you got a \$105 a month instead of \$65.

Mark: So you could use both GI Bill and Public Law 16?

Hall: Well, I think they were all together, but you could use four years of school. And so they gave you a semester for being a veteran and so I finished in three years, by going to summer school.

Mark: Now, as someone who works for the Department of Veterans Affairs, I'm interested in these programs and how useful they were. Did you think you would have gotten through school had it not been for these programs and how did you find out how to use them?

Hall: I never would have gone to school if it wouldn't have been for the war. The war was a great deal for me. It taught me a lot of things. It taught me one, something about discipline. It taught me about people you could count on in different conditions. I had a couple of guys that I would never use on a patrol, because they would always put their own individual safety above the group. And you can't have that. Now, you're learning these lessons as a nineteen year old kid. Shot at, and you know, you gotta get up and do things when you don't feel like saying "Oh, go to hell." [break in tape]---brother finished. He went in the Navy a couple of years after I did.

But, I never would have went to school if it hadn't of been for the war. So, the GI Bill made it possible. I've paid for it, many, many, many times over [laughs] through the taxation system.

Mark: Now, to use these programs, how did you find out they were in existence? Were they on campus?

Hall: Everybody-- we all come home, okay. Most of the guys are taking a 52/20 and one of the questions they always ask you at the 52/20 club, are you seeking work?

Mark: And your answer was?

Hall: Yes, I am. Here's what job interviews and here's where I went and everything else. But, a good excuse was, I'm going to college in September. So, you know, you talk back and forth and pretty soon you learn all the shortcuts. That's why government handout programs never work. Because after about the third week you learn how to defuse the situation and use it to your advantage. And ahhh, yeah, there was nobody telling you, so you went down there and say, well this is a good deal. You can go to school and get you to laying route. You can figure out what you want to do. You look around and say, well, I'm as smart as those guys. I just didn't work as hard in school. But I think I'm as, you know. Well and so it varied with a different deal. I studied harder. I made it a job. When I went to school I took early classes [indecipherable], every day. And I would study on campus and I'd come home and I wouldn't do nothing at night.

Mark: And do you think that was because you were a little older?

Hall: Yeah, a little older. We were twenty one. When I got out [college] it was 1950, so I got to be twenty six. I started when I was twenty three.

Mark: I'm interested about in this GI training for the Commonwealth Telephone Company. I'm sure you, you probably don't remember many details about it, but I'm going to ask you about it.

Hall: Okay.

Mark: This was a program that was run by the company?

Hall: No, run by the-- it was similar to the GI Bill, but it was GI Bill for on the job training.

Mark: Was it federal?

- Hall: Yeah, federal. What they did is, I think they probably supplemented the payroll. And so at the end of two years, I think I'd be making forty bucks [dollars] a week or something like that. And up to that time, Commonwealth Telephone got some money from Uncle Sam to supplement the payrolls, just like tax credit programs today that was, the biggest program run by the federal government. But I knew I wasn't, I didn't want to count telephone polls.
- Mark: Yeah. Now, being, having been wounded in the war and then getting malaria, I would imagine you would have had some contact with the VA medical system in some ways after the war.
- Hall: Yeah.
- Mark: What sort of contact did you have with them and did you find their work effective? I find that some vets are split on the VA and the medical system.
- Hall: Well first place, I had a bad experience because they lost all of my records. Okay, so, the guy says, I'm tell them about gun shot wounds and every thing else, "We don't have no records." So, I had a real good experience with the Red Cross. To this day I am a major contributor to the Red Cross. They recreated my records by getting people who were in combat with me and everything else. So we went down to the VA so I could get a physical. So they gave me a 10% compensation. I still get 30%. Then I got some compensation later for trench feet, cyanosis and that sort of thing.
- Mark: Was this soon after the war? And did some of these problems like the trench foot---
- Hall: Well, it was during the war. I got dis[abled??] in Italy and I was in the hospital for 70 days.
- Mark: When it came to affecting you, ability to going to work in the morning or whatever, when did you seek assistance?
- Hall: Well, fortunately, I only got malaria once after the war. And I got real sick for three or four days. I'm convinced it was an attack of malaria and I never got [indecipherable]. There are some bad days that I have with my ankle, trench feet, but never really incapacitated. So that 30% for me, if I were ever allowed to say it; for me, it was a gift.
- Mark: It is not something, in your experience, you needed to readjust yourself back to society. Did your wounds keep you off the job market?

Hall: No, no, no. It didn't change my standard of living or didn't change my-- It was a bump along the road [indecipherable].

Mark: Some of the other problems veterans experienced after the war involved finding employment and then finding housing. Did you have any trouble with these sorts of things at all?

Hall: No, I was fortunate being born and raised in Madison. A friend of mine was, ahh went in the service, he was a merchant marine. They had a house on Olin Ave. A seven, an old house they remodeled into a seven flat. So, when I got married there was one that opened up and he got me in there right away. So, I never had a housing problem. I lived there until I bought my first house. After I got out of school I bought a house.

Mark: And for that, did you use veterans loans for that?

Hall: Never did. Never did use a veterans loan. First when I bought in conjunction with my father-in-law. I didn't like the arrangement, so we lived there about a year and we sold it and I built a house in Middleton. We got an insurance loan. I just didn't want to be beholden to the father-in-law.

Mark: Now, finding work, did you have trouble with that? Or having gone into business, perhaps, did the post war period present opportunities?

Hall: Well I went to school. I majored in accounting. I got out. I took a job with the IRS, the fraud division. I'd go home and I said to my wife. This time I've got, one kid, about two and a half years old. And I says, "Why did I go to school?" I didn't go to school for security. If I had wanted security, I could have stayed in the army. So, I quit before I started. So I took a job with a lumber wholesaler, by the name of Fitzpatrick's. In 1950, I was a junior bookkeeper or something like that. And they were right where Taco's is on University Ave. Right over the bridge there, you know? Right before Erdmans's.

Mark: At Midvale?

Hall: Yeah, no, no, no. A little bit up the road.

Mark: Mixed up.

Hall: Next stop. Okay, right over the tracks on the left hand side. All those warehouses, down there, that guy remodeled. Tacos, Irish Waters in the back, might be where Erdmans built the state office building. I went to work for them when they were back on University Ave. They were right in

Shorewood Shopping Center. They were the building just before the Shorewood Shopping Center on that corner. And so I worked there eight years and I had done every job. So, another decision. Now I got two kids and one on the way. And I didn't like the way I saw the company going. So I said to my wife, I says, and I was also building houses on the side. Working twenty, twenty five hours a week working on the side, cause I was basically hungry. And, I told my wife, I says, "I'm going to quit." I don't know what I'm going to do, but she says, "That's okay. You can quit and we'll do something." And I had a good job too. In 1958 I was making \$10,000/year which was big pay then. So, I quit and I formed a wholesale company in 1958, and was extremely successful. Couldn't do it today because I didn't ever have enough capital. And, so that is the history of my post war life.

Mark: I just have one other area that involved some, some of the more intangible readjustment problems. The Vietnam vets came home and in the news media, you heard a lot of talk about psychological problems so, getting along with civilians and those sorts of things. I am interested in your experiences in that regard. Did you, some of the vets that I have spoken to, nightmares and those kinds of things. You mentioned some psychological things before, it's not something you associate with World War II veterans, I imagine--

Hall: Well, we were all, basically, a little different to deal with than Vietnam. I mean, Vietnam was a travesty as far as I was concerned. It was either win or lose situation here. You either are going to control or be controlled. Vietnam they never went with a purpose. And, we were all in the same boat when we came back. We were all a product of the depression. Limited expectations. You know, married the girl next door and you went down and you got a job. You'd get a job and were able to feed and everybody else. The advent change in society with television and all the desires and the wants and everything else. People's horizons got broadened. So, a lot of things fell there. And so the Vietnam War, they figured that everyone there was a veteran. Got a hero's welcome. Here, I won the highest award in Dane County. I took the bus home. I didn't have any hero's welcome. I did what I had to do, you know. For me, personally, it was like a classic lecture my Mother gave me when I was going on a troop train. "Save some money." Eighteen year old kid, they ran a restaurant after the war, my Mother and Dad. And she says, "I can remember veterans from WWI and those khaki pants on until 1922." Then a depression came. So I always saved some money. I took a war bond out every month. And I listened to what my mother had to say, you know. A lot of kids didn't do that. And I got into a program where I got to get a dependency allowance I had out, so I had some money when I came back home from service. Then I just got into the work program. Yeah, there was

times I woke up and thought about it. Everybody was in the same boat. Vietnam, the people that did the fighting, they didn't, there was 85% of the people who weren't involved, okay. Yeah, they had to pay a little bit more in taxes, but their life wasn't interrupted. When you go drive down the street and you see a star in the window or something like that, you knew their life was interrupted. And everybody was involved in the effort. And so the Vietnam and those guys, a lot of people thought we didn't belong there in the first place. So, they did go out, you know, people looking for recognition. I can remember one time we were in a Distinguished Service Cross ribbon going on a pass and a guy buys me a drink, because some guy recognized it. I don't wear, I never wear any of that stuff. In fact I belong to the VFW in Middleton, but I never belonged to it. A friend of mine was telling a guy who worked for the university, "You know you've got a guy who won the DSC in Middleton." Ahh, he says, "You're full of bullshit." I never told anybody. That wasn't my way. I was a victim of circumstances and I did what I had to do. Vietnam and those guys, like I say, the tragedy was less of the population did most of the fighting. They get thrown back into that same environment again. And they'll never solve that problem. I know you don't solve it by giving it more money. That's a bigger problem than I'm capable of solving. Families, structures, and kid structures. And we all had good family structure. Divorce was unheard of. And we were all trying to move on. Nothing else better than having a real good economy. Where everybody can grow. You took a liquid economy. The banks were flush with money. The government was flush with money. All of them were holding. They bailed out all that depression. Now these guys have all this money and they can spend it. And lasted until, guns and butter, you know, the Lyndon Johnson deal in the early 60s. That whole period was a premiere period of growth. Peoples standard of living got raised and you know, and everybody's thought was, I want to have my kids to have it better than I have. And we're the real culprits in this debacle we are facing now.

Mark: Your generation?

Hall: Yeah, cause we didn't pay attention. We all got chasing our own dreams. And we didn't pay attention to who we elected. Classic is right here in Madison, Wisconsin. I don't know what the affiliation is; Kastenmeier [Wisconsin 2nd District (Democrat)] never in his life saw a spending bill in his life that he didn't like. We kept sending him back to Washington [laughs]. Doesn't work that way. It doesn't work that way. You've got to balance your checkbook and I've got to balance my checkbook. And you don't balance it on taking it from you and giving it to me. And I was big recipient of taking it and giving it to me. You know, did I earn it? Maybe. But that was the price of living here. Go ahead.

Mark: I just have one last area and we have already pretty much touched on it, but I will ask the question directly. It involves veteran's organizations, reunions, and that sort of thing. You mentioned that you were a member of the VFW. When did you join that organization?

Hall: Well, first I joined the American Legion probably 20 years ago in Verona. I'm selling a lumber yard, he was looking at. He says, "You belong to anything?" I says, "No, I never have. I never belonged." He said, "Well, I need members." So I said, "Sign me up." So I sent him fifteen bucks a month for ten years. Never went to a meeting.

Mark: Well, this was well after the war?

Hall: Oh yeah, this was twenty years ago. So then one day I walked by the VFW in Middleton. I get up every morning about a quarter after five and I usually walk three miles a day, five days a week. So I'm by the VFW. So, I'm walking by there on a Sunday morning and I know the guy, the commander. And I says, "Chuck, sign me up for a lifetime member." "Because this give you one more vote in Washington to help the veterans," he says. "How much is that going to be?" "I don't know, \$85." So I said, "Okay," so I wrote him a check for \$85 bucks. And I've never been in that place either, only for wedding receptions [laughs]. So I use the VFW occasionally on Lakeside Street, cause that's the area where I grew up in, once in awhile some friends will go down there and so.

Mark: But you have attended reunion? When did you start doing that?

Hall: Well the first time I went was probably 1986 or 7 or something like that. The first reunion I went.

Mark: And how did you find out about these things?

Hall: Publications and, I don't know how I found out, but I knew they had one over Labor Day every year. And then I went around maybe, four or five years later. Then I went back to France one time. There was a, run by a company platoon leader. He had a travel agency out of Michigan. He took about 40 guys and their wives. So we went down basically to the whole invasion of southern France down there to Germany. It was a nice trip.

Mark: I was going to ask, was it an interesting trip for you?

Hall: Oh yeah. And it was really a nice trip for the wives because every guy that was on that thing made the invasion. All wounded, most of them still with the same women. I think maybe one guy, two guys were divorced. So they just kind of feel, and the guy running the tour was part of the division. So

you got a lot of expertise. He had been hit twice. In fact, his last day of the war, my last day of the war were both September 17th. He was in another regiment. It was the same day in another part of upper Alsace-Lorraine. He runs a travel agency in Michigan. And puts on these tours over there. Well run deal, so a little nostalgia. And I always wanted to go back. I think people always want to go back and see, where did you leave a part of your body [laughs].

Mark: I would imagine they would want to. Were you exhausted by my line of questioning? Is there anything you would like to add?

Hall: Let's see. Yeah, basically, I think you have covered it pretty well. I gave it my shot on the people who got the least to fight for do the most fighting. Let's see, you can turn that off and I will—

[End of Interview]