

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
ROGER D. HALLINGSTAD
U.S. Air Force, Cold War
2002

Hallingstad, Roger (b. 1932) Oral History Interview. 2002

User copy: 1 audio cassette (ca. 50 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

User copy: 1 videorecording (ca. 50 min.), sd., col., ½ in.

Master copy: 1 audio cassette (ca. 50 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Abstract:

Roger Hallingstad, a Sparta, Wisconsin, native, discusses his Air Force service as an aviation mechanic in Japan during the Korean War and in French Indochina (now Vietnam) at the end for the First Indochina War. Hallingstad touches upon his 1948 enlistment in the Wisconsin National Guard and his subsequent enlistment in the Air Force in 1951. He outlines his training that included basic at Mac Dill Air Force Base (Florida), aircraft and engine school at Sheppard Air Force Base (Texas), and temporary duty working on engines at Chanute Field (Illinois). He recounts that he volunteered for overseas duty in Japan and ended up in Tachikawa Air Force Base in Japan supervising Japanese aviation mechanics. He tells that they put B-51s, C-47s, and B26s into storage as they flew in from Korea and reconditioned them in a former WWII Zero factory for sale to other countries. In January 1954, he was abruptly relocated, ending up in French Indochina at the Do Son Air Base near Hai Phong. He describes their landing; how he thought they were going to run off the end of the runway and looked out to see anti-aircraft guns, jeeps with machine guns, and men with weapons. "Man, what are we getting into here?" He continues with their jeep trip to the air base; common barracks with French Legionnaires, Senegalese Army troops, the French Air Force, and U.S. volunteers; and the Communist action the night before, in anticipation of their arrival, which resulted in the blowing up of some aircraft and poisoning of the security dogs. Stating they had weapons, but no ammunition, Hallingstad describes their work schedule in instructing French Air Force mechanics to repair C-47s as influenced by the heat so that they worked in the early morning and evening. He was there for three months until the French surrendered to the Communists. He briefly tells of U.S. civilian pilots flying U.S. Air Force planes, repainted in the French tricolor, doing supply drops. He says that they drank canned water and canned food and tells a story of getting a large walk-in cooler from the Philippines that was stocked with fresh meat, only to have the compressor quit and the doctor say that they could not eat it. He describes Hai Phong as a beautiful city with gorgeous homes and wrought iron fences, but that they were not allowed into the city without somebody with them because people would disappear, murdered. He recounts his return to the States, using the GI bill to start college at the University of Wisconsin, quitting college due to marriage and family, and his work for Remington Rand and Baraboo Sysco Foods. The interview continues with discussion of his family life, cancer, volunteer work at the EAA Air Show in Oshkosh, Camp American Legion in Tomahawk, and description of his service time in Japan. He describes a C-124 Globe Master plane crash in a rice paddy with American GIs, the Japanese mechanics he worked with, and climbing Mount Fujiyama. He concludes the

interview with a memory about selling newspapers through the barracks at Fort Snelling in Minnesota as a kid.

Biographical Sketch:

Hallingstad served in the Air Force during the Korean War and Cold War. After his four-year terms was up, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, started a family, and eventually settled in Middleton.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2002
Draft transcript by Katy Marty, 2008
Checked by John Pike, 2010
Corrections typed in by Lauren Kelly, 2012
Abstract written by Danielle H. Taylor, 2012

Interview Transcript:

McIntosh: We're talking with Roger Hallingstad the date is July 1st, 2002. You were born on September 1932, is that correct?

Hallingstad: That's correct.

McIntosh: And where was that?

Hallingstad: Sparta, Wisconsin.

McIntosh: Sparta. And you finished high school when?

Hallingstad: June of 1950.

McIntosh: June of '50 and, ah--

Hallingstad: I enlisted in the National Guard in 1948 in the 32nd Infantry.

McIntosh: When you were in high school?

Hallingstad: Yes, I was in a reconnaissance company. January 4th of 1951, I enlisted in the Air Force and they took my resignation from the Guard and I was in the Air Force.

McIntosh: So you got credit for the time and --

Hallingstad: A lot of young men my age were volunteering for the Korean War.

McIntosh: Were they facing the draft?

Hallingstad: Probably, but they were very patriotic. Many of them went into the Navy. I went into the Air Force and I was sent to Lackland Air Force Base. They had so many volunteers, we didn't have any uniforms and we didn't have any barracks, so we lived in tents and civilian clothes for two weeks and then they sent me and a group of others to Tampa, Florida; to MacDill Air Force Base, and that's where we took our basic training.

McIntosh: How long was that?

Hallingstad: About three months. And then they wanted to get us into schools, and they were going to send me to cooks and bakery school in Fort Benning, Georgia, but a friend of mine, who was in the orderly room, he said, "How would you like to go to engine school in Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas?" So I said, "Okay."

McIntosh: Sounds better.

Hallingstad: Sounds better. So I went there and spent a year going to school.

McIntosh: This was aviation mechanics?

Hallingstad: Right, aircraft engine, right. And then--MacDill Air Force Base was a strategic air command base. They had B-47 jets. And then I was sent to Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois to go to 3350 engine school, ninety days temporary duty, and came back, and then volunteered to go overseas--ended up at Tachikawa Air Force Base in Japan, about an hour and a half out of Tokyo. It was a depot; Far East Air Materiel Command.

McIntosh: So what was your duty there?

Hallingstad: Supervising Japanese mechanics.

McIntosh: Just preparing aircrafts or--

Hallingstad: We were putting aircraft in storage as they flew in from Korea; B-51s, C-47s, and B-26s; and then they recondition them. It was just like a factory. You worked eight to five. They'd send 'em in one end of the hanger and out the other end; new engines, new instruments, new hydraulics and then we painted them with the colors of the different air forces that were going to get 'em, and so that was kind of boring duty, didn't have very much to do. And then, one afternoon, we got a call that we were supposed to report to the big base hanger. If we were married, to make arrangements to send our wives home, turn in our bedding, get uniforms and new insignia--khakis, take no money, and then bring whatever tools--hydraulic men they took their equipment--I took my toolbox and told us we were supposed to be at the other side of the field. There were two bases. There was FEAMCOM, which is a command—it was like a depot, and then Tachikawa Air Force Base. They told us to be at our Air Force Base at 4:30 and they said that we were going to leave. They wouldn't tell us where. One hundred and thirty-two of us.

McIntosh: And what date was that? Do you recall? Approximately.

Hallingstad: Middle of January 1954--somewhere around in January. So, we got over there and they gave us a briefing, these young pilots--[laughs] I still remember them. Of course they were just kids. They told us we were going to be flying over the ocean and this is what's going to happen if we have to ditch. [laughs] And there were two C-119 flying boxcars. We'd worked on 'em and they were not very dependable aircraft as far as I was concerned. They didn't tell us where we were going, they just said we

were flying over the ocean. So we took off. The first plane got out over the ocean had to come back because he had engine trouble and then we flew on and we refueled in Okinawa sometime during the night and ended up in the Philippines. And stayed in the barracks and there was just a whole slew of people; Air Force personnel. And they asked us what kind of aircraft we wanted to work on and, you know, I said well I'd like to work on B-29s. "Well, we don't have B-29s. We have C-47s or C-119s." I said, "C-47s," so they gave us each a helmet. We took one duffel bag and just--no insignia, no rank--and they loaded us on a C-124 Globemaster. It was huge at that time; one of the large aircraft, and we were on the upper deck and they had all the jeeps and everything on the lower deck and we took off. They didn't tell us where we were going. And we got over the ocean and we were flying and one of the men said, "Oh I know where we're going. We're going to Indochina." "How do you know that?" He says, "Well, we flew airplanes up here before and I just got a feeling that's where we're going." Sure enough, we ended up late that afternoon--we saw a runway--it was just metal planking—and, ah, this huge-- they never landed no C-124 at this base. It was at Hai Phong, Indochina right on the Gulf of Tonkin. And he made one pass and then there's a seawall there where the water is, and as soon as he got down on that seawall, he sat that thing down and threw it in reverse and I thought we were going to run off the end the runway. And I looked out and here's anti-aircraft guns, here's jeeps with machine guns, guys walking around with weapons--I thought, "Man, what are we getting into here?" So we got out of the plane. They loaded us on these trucks and they took us out to this little air base called Do Son, D-o S-o-n, right on the Gulf of Tonkin. We were surrounded on three sides by water and they put us up in these huts, I guess, with mosquito netting; common barracks and then we had French Foreign Legionnaires. We had Senegalese Army troops, French Air Force, and the United States volunteers, and--I think there was one other group. And the night before we got there, the Communists knew we were coming and came in on the air base and blew up a couple of aircraft and put poison on the security dogs-- killed them. And we had no weapons. Well, yes we did, we had weapons, but no ammunition, that was it. And our job was to instruct the French Air Force mechanics on how to repair these C-47s that were dropping supplies to the French out of Dien Bien Phu. And it was so hot there that you could not work in the afternoon. You could fry an egg on the--so we worked on 'em early in the morning and worked probably until 11:30 or 12:00 and then took the afternoon off and went down to a little place and swam and some of the guys drank beer and wine. We came back at six and worked until it got dark; outside on the runway. And up at Hai Phong, the big base, they were flying the supplies. We got the airplanes ready and they took 'em up there and loaded 'em. And, ah, so we were there for three months until, I think, the French surrendered in sometime in June or May. And then we were there ninety days, and then they flew us back, and then the other people went up, but I think they only

stayed there a short time. But there were a lot of United States Air Force aircraft there painted in the French tricolor that they gave the French. And they made two round trips a day. They go out in the morning and drop supplies and they'd come back. And these were civilian pilots; United States civilian pilots. And they'd go out in the morning, and come back, and go out in the afternoon. And one of the interesting people that were there--I have his name someplace--but they called him "Earthquake Magoon." He was a civilian pilot. He must have weighed 300 pounds. They had a special seat made for him in the C-119 flight boxcar. And I remember seeing him, cuz when they came back, well we'd go up there for supplies and water, he'd be in the bar and there is a book out on Dien Bien Phu and one of the stories in there is that he crashed with a full load of ammunition; he and his pilot, co-pilot. So, we were told we were going to get special medals from the French government. We were going to get this, that, and the other thing and we didn't get anything, except for the experience.

McIntosh: Nothing from the French. Maybe it will come later I just,ah--these guys were over in France in World War I, ya know. Got their regional honor medals two years ago.

Hallingstad: Huh.

McIntosh: That was from World War I. So I don't think the French are very rapid in their--

Hallingstad: Huh. We drank canned water and a lot of canned food. One of the experiences was, ah, one day, they flew in a great big walk-in cooler left over from World War II--they found in the Philippines. And they set it up, and they got it running, and they flew in all this fresh meat and we were just waiting for that fresh meat. Well, during the night, the compressor quit and the doctor had said, "There's no way I'm going to let you men eat this meat." Well, I mean, it's perfectly good meat. So they took it outside and the French just go in there and just took all that meat and ate it and the civilians--The civilians used to go in our garbage cans and fight the rats for the leftovers. The only entertainment we had, ah, was we played volleyball and we had outdoor movies, full movies, and then they had a wine cellar there; beer, wine, brandy, and --it was a lot of drinking. I can remember some nights we'd be in there like at nine--ten at night and these French Foreign Legion guys would be in there with their parachutes on and all their battle gear and weapons and ammunition, and they'd be drinking and then somebody would set the alarm or something and you'd hear 'em, they'd run out and jump on these planes and go out for a night drop. They, ah, never used their last names, it was just Joe, Fred, or Bill. They never asked for anything, but--

McIntosh: How many Americans were you with?

Hallingstad: One hundred and thirty.

McIntosh: All aircraft maintenance people?

Hallingstad: We had sheet metal, hydraulics, instrument, and engine mechanics.

McIntosh: What was the name of that?

Hallingstad: It was Do Son Air Force base. It was D-o S-o-n.

McIntosh: That's the name of the base?

Hallingstad: Ah huh. We were not allowed off the base unless--

McIntosh: What was your outfit?

Hallingstad: We didn't have a name.

McIntosh: No name?

Hallingstad: Uh uh. We were just volunteers, we were--

McIntosh: But you wore a uniform.

Hallingstad: Khakis. No insignias, no patches, nothing.

McIntosh: Okay, that was 1954 you say, you were in there?

Hallingstad: We were there three months; January, February, March, April, part of May--flew out of Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

McIntosh: Right. Assisting the French withdrawal.

Hallingstad: Well, we were actively fighting in Dien Bien Phu. I mean, they, you know, they were—the Communists had 'em under siege, and we were working on the airplanes just--

McIntosh: You got out of Vietnam in '54.

Hallingstad: Yeah, it was Indochina.

McIntosh: Yeah, it was Indochina then.

Hallingstad: Ah huh. Yeah, they surrendered to the Communists.

McIntosh: The guys in that Dien Bien Phu.

Hallingstad: Hai Phong was a beautiful city, I mean the French influence. They had gorgeous homes—

McIntosh: They were there a long time.

Hallingstad: Wrought iron fences. We were not allowed to go into parts of the city without somebody with us, because people would go there and they'd disappear. You'd never hear from them again.

McIntosh: They were robbed.

Hallingstad: Murdered.

McIntosh: Murdered, oh yeah.

Hallingstad: We used to go up there once a week. Ah, they'd take us up on an R&R I guess they'd called it and, ah, so that's, ah, basically that's what happened.

McIntosh: Then after that--you were there three months?

Hallingstad: Yes.

McIntosh: Then what?

Hallingstad: Then they flew us back to Japan.

McIntosh: Your specific duty was to repair engines for those aircraft.

Hallingstad: We repaired 'em, right.

McIntosh: So then you went back to Japan?

Hallingstad: To the depot, yeah, at FEAMCOM.

McIntosh: The depot at Tachikawa.

Hallingstad: And then I came back to the States in August.

McIntosh: You were in Japan, ah, when did you go to Japan?

Hallingstad: October of 1952. I came back August of '54. I was discharged, ah, in California the 9th of August '54, Airman second class.

McIntosh: You were in Japan until--you stayed there until you were sent home.

Hallingstad: From May to August, right.

McIntosh: I'm sorry?

Hallingstad: From May until August, yeah.

McIntosh: All this was '54?

Hallingstad: Right.

McIntosh: And then sent home--your tour was up, your tour of duty was up--

Hallingstad: Four years.

McIntosh: Your four year enlistment's up.

Hallingstad: I went back by ship. I was in the Air Force. We went by ship. The Army guys, they flew 'em over. [laughs] We went over on the--

McIntosh: That's a good deal. I was in the Navy and they flew me from Madison, Wisconsin to Inchon, Korea.

Hallingstad: I went over on the General Nelson W. Walker, that was a crew ship. Came back on the General Breckenridge.

McIntosh: Okay, did you use the abilities you had, your mechanical abilities?

Hallingstad: No.

McIntosh; Never.

Hallingstad: No. Came to Madison in August or September of '54; went to the University. [UW-Madison]

McIntosh: Did you use the GI bill?

Hallingstad: Yes.

McIntosh: What did you take in the University?

Hallingstad: Well, I was studying European history.

McIntosh; You had the UW history major, right?

Hallingstad: I lacked twenty-one credits of getting a degree. I got married and we had a family, both of us going to school and I dropped out.

McIntosh: What'd you do to bring home some money to eat with?

Hallingstad: After that?

McIntosh: You just dropped out.

Hallingstad: After that I went to work for Remington Rand as a salesman. I sold office equipment mostly and that type of thing; out of New York.

McIntosh: Where did you live in Madison? I mean, in Madison.

Hallingstad: 201 East Washington Avenue. There was a Washington building. We lived right across the street.

McIntosh: Now I know where it was.

Hallingstad: Right on the corner. I didn't quite finish. My older brother was an early member of the experimental aircraft association. He built homebuilts. He could not get in the service, World War II, because of a physical disability. He offered to teach me to fly, but I never had any interest in it. He said if you buy the gasoline I'll give you free lessons, but I had no interest.

McIntosh: How long did you work for Remington Rand?

Hallingstad: Four years.

McIntosh: Four years, then what?

Hallingstad: Well, then I went to Watertown, had my own dealership for a while, then I came back to Madison and--

McIntosh: You were selling office equipment.

Hallingstad: Selling office equipment. When I came back to Madison, I got into the equipment leasing business. Out of Milwaukee there was a company, First National Leasing, and we would buy equipment and turn it around. One of our customers was Methodist Hospital and would rent x-ray equipment, and Madison Dairy Produce, hospital. Then the last seven years of my life, active life, I worked for Baraboo Sysco Foods in Baraboo. Worked in the warehouse and drove a little truck.

McIntosh: The last seven years and where?

Hallingstad: Yeah, for seven years.

McIntosh: Where?

Hallingstad: Baraboo Sysco Foods. And then in 1995 I had a stroke and I retired.

McIntosh: Stroke, you don't have any residual. Good now?

Hallingstad: Thank god.

McIntosh: You're lucky.

Hallingstad: And then in 2000, I was diagnosed with colon cancer and I had two operations and had a big tumor taken out.

McIntosh: What year?

Hallingstad: Two years ago, 2000.

McIntosh: Good. It looks like you did well.

Hallingstad: I'm cancer free, thank god. I went through chemotherapy and so I've been volunteering for many, many, many different organizations and one of my favorites is Habitat for Humanity. I've been living in a trailer and I didn't have electricity. I never worked with him, but I met him. So I'm going to do that full time starting today. I'm going to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to build houses.

McIntosh: You are no longer married?

Hallingstad: Married, divorced twice. I have four children from my first marriage and no children from my second marriage. I was married the first time for twenty-one years, the second for seventeen.

McIntosh: Ah ha. Well then you're free to do these kinds of things.

Hallingstad: And no help, I mean, I got my health.

McIntosh: Right, that's wonderful. Do you keep in contact with any of the guys that were in the Air Force with you?

Hallingstad: No, I haven't. One of them was from Eau Claire. The other one in the article, I forget where he was from. I think he was from Minnesota, but I never--Two years ago there was an article in the VFW magazine about a reunion of people from my squadron in Japan. It was down at Myrtle

Beach, South Carolina, but I didn't go. But I volunteer up at Oshkosh, the Air Show.

McIntosh: Do you really. What do you do up there for them?

Hallingstad: Well, I'm involved with parking planes, and then I was involved with security, and I worked in the RV parking lot. And I contacted them this year. I was going to work in the carpenter's shop, but I didn't hear from anybody. But I like the old--you know the World War II aircraft; B-24, and B-17s, B-29s, B-25s, 26s, P-51s, P-41s, the old piston engine. The ironic thing is I went to school for a year to work on a specific aircraft and engine and never did get to work on it and when I was in Japan, when I was at this depot I went over to Johnson Air Force base which was a B-29 base and I asked if I could get transferred and they wouldn't transfer me. So all that training, never got to use it, except, you know, basic engine work, spark plugs and all that. You never fixed anything in the service. You just removed and replaced it. You never actually took it apart and fixed it, you just replaced the ___ totally and threw it away.

McIntosh: I can defer. There is a retired anesthesiologist who lives in Montrose, Colorado and he and about five other guys have their own print shop. Eleven German bombers.

Hallingstad: Wow.

McIntosh: That they fly, repair and they also have a B-17.

Hallingstad: They must have money.

McIntosh: Yeah, that's an expensive hobby.

Hallingstad: Gasoline, fuel costs.

McIntosh: I know it but they've all learned how to fly it; both of those aircraft, and repair it and take care of it. They make money so they can support their habit by flying these aircraft around to various shows. I'm sure they've been to the EAA and places like that.

Hallingstad: Sure.

McIntosh: And they make money because when they get there, you know, they charge five, six, or seven dollars a pop to go inside the aircraft. That's the way they make their money to support these. They've all learned how to become mechanics and they said, "We know the inside and outside of both those airplanes." They have a lot of fun flying them all over hell.

Hallingstad: One of the things I remember about my duty in Japan, I think it was August of 1953, a C-124 Globe Master that was a big cargo plane took off about 4:30 in the afternoon going back to Korea with these guys and it crashed in a rice paddy and that at that time, I think was the largest casualty loss on an airplane; 156 men died.

McIntosh: Wow, that's a bunch.

Hallingstad: I saw the plane take off late in the afternoon, and they lost contact, and it just started gaining altitude, and the engines quit, and it went over on the wing in a rice paddy. The guys went out there and they just couldn't believe the sight they saw.

McIntosh: Too bad.

Hallingstad: This base that we were on was a former Japanese zero fighter [unintelligible] factory; [unintelligible] feet underground and they ran the steam and smoke stack out to the mountains. So the bombers, when they came over, the Allies, they bombed them out there, but the factory was underground and they had the largest warehouse in the world there. In fact, this was in 1953 and '54, I think it was. They found a 1946 Chevrolet Army staff car [laughs] that somebody had forgotten at the warehouse.

McIntosh: I was out there. Our ships came back there for R and R several days, I think. We used to travel along the SS--

Hallingstad: I climbed Mount Fujiyama in August of '50. You can climb on it two months, July or August, because of the wind and the snow. I think it was '53.

McIntosh: They say that's not a tough climb.

Hallingstad: No; little kids, grandmas. The ideal time is you start at 5:00 or 5:30 in the afternoon.

McIntosh: Oh, really.

Hallingstad: And you climb all night and the goal is to get to the summit for sunrise. And there you buy these hiking sticks, I still have mine, and they have these huts and they have a wood burner like a iron. They're called stations and then they have little huts there where you can stay and sleep and they sell beer and sandwiches.

McIntosh: [unintelligible]

Hallingstad: Mm hmm. Yeah, people climbing all night. They have flashlights, candles and lanterns.

McIntosh: But most people climb at night.

Hallingstad: Climb at night.

McIntosh: Just so they can see the sunrise from the top?

Hallingstad: It's a pilgrimage, it's a religious--

McIntosh: I know it is for the Japanese.

Hallingstad: Yeah, I have a piece of lava I brought back and you can go down in the crater, I think, as I recall. But the morning we got up there, it was overcast. On a clear day you can see Tokyo Bay and Tokyo and Yokohama. I have a friend, [unintelligible], she's Japanese and they've been there. She says they've never been there where they can see it without cloud cover. It's always cloudy. They had a Marine Corps base at the foot of Mt. Fuji, United States Marine Corps. You climb all night. Easy climbing, you know, it's not--

McIntosh: Just putting in the time.

Hallingstad: Yeah.

McIntosh: It takes what, about six hours?

Hallingstad: Well, we started at five at night. It's just a little more than that. It's 12,500 feet and then when you come down you come down this lava slide, so I think it took us three hours to come down. You really wear out a pair of shoes. Four of us climbed to the top. I wish I'd had--we didn't have colored film back then; I had some black and white film. And so I'm glad that I climbed that. That was the highlight of my trip. Then I went up to the shrines at Niiko.

McIntosh: That's what my highlight has been.

Hallingstad: Yeah.

McIntosh: For also a weekend.

Hallingstad: I got a menu from there. Two dollars for dinner.

McIntosh: Yeah. It's the most unusual product. I've got tons and tons of colored pictures.

Hallingstad: Have ya? Niiko-Konaya Hotel is where we stayed. Very famous hotel.

McIntosh: We walked up to the Kegon Falls (?). You overlook that. It's a pretty sight.

Hallingstad: Mm hmm.

McIntosh: Very interesting place. Enjoyed that a lot.

Hallingstad: I like Japan. Many of the men that worked under me, that I supervised, were former Japanese Air Force pilots. A lot of 'em flew zeros and all that and they knew more about our aircraft, I mean, they were very, very talented people. They'd come to work in a business suit and they'd change into their work clothes. They all carried briefcases. They got--

McIntosh: Umbrellas.

Hallingstad: Umbrellas. I think they worked eleven months and got the one month off. I think that's how it went.

McIntosh: One of the images of Japan was they were going down the streets of Tokyo and it was raining. They must of--because I was taller--like all Americans you're looking over a sea of tops of umbrellas. There everybody has an umbrella. It was all you could see. You couldn't see any people. All you could see was the tops of umbrellas wherever you looked.

Hallingstad: I also went to school there; I think it was one night a week, at Sophia University. It's a Jesuit school and I studied European history.

McIntosh: Oh, really.

Hallingstad: They took us up on a bus. A group of Americans. They had a lot of civilians living there and they worked for the government in the warehouses all that stuff. We rode up on a bus and I got three credits for that.

McIntosh: Did the Army run that?

Hallingstad: It was a private school. It was run by the Jesuits. Sophia University. I think it's still there.

McIntosh: I'll be darned.

Hallingstad: Wonderful, wonderful people.

McIntosh: Hmm. Well, that's--

Hallingstad: We were just an hour out of Tokyo, I think back now and I have a friend here in Madison who's a draftsman. His company just sent him over last year to Johnson Air Force base to do some work. He made two trips and he was telling me the base is still there, runways are still there. I mean it's changed somewhat but--and then a friend of mine said he read just within the last five years that they uncovered a hidden cache of ammunition and weapons left over from World War II, that were buried in this--

McIntosh: Waiting for us to make a landing in Japan.

Hallingstad: Yeah.

McIntosh: Right. Did you join any veterans organizations?

Hallingstad: No. I shouldn't say. I signed up for American Legion, but I never did anything. I do plan on joining the VFW because I'm going to be traveling--

McIntosh: That's the only organization that stood the test of time, the VFW. Although I didn't join I certainly contributed enough, ten dollars a month. I thought I gave a little--

Hallingstad: I've done a lot of volunteer work here at the local VA hospital as an escort, pushing wheelchairs twice a week for five years. Really enjoy it with the veterans and that's where I get my medical care.

McIntosh: Total?

Hallingstad: Yeah, as of a year ago.

McIntosh: I signed up, I am about to be examined there because of partial so I can buy my medicine there, but I--

Hallingstad: Co-pay.

McIntosh: I feel I can buy my medicine so long because my people I see as a patient. They want to put me on medication that costs a hell of a lot.

Hallingstad: The co-pay was two dollars but now it's been raised to seven.

McIntosh: Yeah, well as far as Zocor, to keep my cholesterol down is 140 dollars for a month's prescription. That inspired me to contact the VA.

Hallingstad: Something else that most veterans don't know about is that you can go up to the American Legion Camp, Lake Tomahawk free. **[End of Tape 1, Side A]** All you need to bring is your clothing and your towels.

McIntosh: What's up there?

Hallingstad: It's a camp for veterans, Wisconsin veterans.

McIntosh: Is it a Boy Scout camp?

Hallingstad: Well, it's--

McIntosh: Something like that?

Hallingstad: Well, they've got a main lodge and a dining room. You get four meals a day and you stay in cabins.

McIntosh: You can just walk in and say, "Hi, I'm here."

Hallingstad: You have to apply.

McIntosh: Yes, sure.

Hallingstad: They give you a form and you have to have your doctor say you could use some rest and recreation. Most doctors will do that. It's right on the shore. They got pontoon boats. It's like a week's vacation in the north woods. A lot of veterans don't know about this.

McIntosh: It's on Lake Tomahawk.

Hallingstad: Mm hmm.

McIntosh: How far out of Tomahawk is that? Is it right at Tomahawk?

Hallingstad: It's just south of Woodruff. I forget the highway it's on. You know where McNaughton is?

McIntosh: I don't.

Hallingstad: There's a minimum security prison camp at McNaughton. Some of the guys come over there and work in the kitchen. Like I said, you should go up there.

McIntosh: What is the name of the place?

Hallingstad: Camp American Legion.

McIntosh: Camp American Legion. I'll be darned. I never heard of it.

Hallingstad: If you go to the veterans hospital here and go to the DAV office, Larry-- what's Larry's last name? He's got brochures on it. It's just a formality, your doctor says you can use the rest. I mean, a lot of World War II veterans there are dying. Now if a man is disabled and can't help himself, then his wife is allowed to go with him.

McIntosh: That office is with the veterans DAV, did you say?

Hallingstad: Mm hmm. Just go to Dane County Veterans Service Bureau right in the building here.

McIntosh: Oh, yeah.

Hallingstad: Just go up there and get the--

McIntosh: I'll think about it.

Hallingstad: You just have to go. I was up there two years ago. They bring patients from Tomah, from the VA and there's a large group of veterans comes up from Milwaukee. Some men come up there and all they do is, for the whole week, play cards, they play poker. They get a cottage each. I don't know about each, but a lot of counties have a cottage building there. Dane County you can't apply for them, but--they got a chapel they built. You get free massages. They got a library, they got a weight room, they got pool tables, and VCRs. Got a big family room.

McIntosh: Is this run by the state or the American Legion?

Hallingstad: By the American Legion, as far as I know, it's an American Legion camp.

McIntosh: Private organization really is it?

Hallingstad: Mm hmm. It was a girls' camp They bought it back in the 40's.

McIntosh: That's interesting to me.

Hallingstad: Camp American Legion.

McIntosh: You've got it.

Hallingstad: Breakfast, lunch and dinner, all home cooked meals. At nightou have a snack before you go to bed.

McIntosh: What about wives?

Hallingstad: You can't, you got to go just by yourself.

McIntosh: Mm hmm. Alright, nice to know, too. Very good. What else was I going to ask you? I guess I can't think of it. You seemed to cover everything so well, I guess

Hallingstad: One of the experiences of my life from being born in Sparta is my father worked for the Milwaukee Railroad in World War II and they built a new Fort McCoy. The old camp was a cavalry post and he used to take me out there and I remember they'd ride on horseback from Fort Sheridan. They had boxing matches and you know, they had a tent city and then I guess they go from there to--what's the one up in Minneapolis-St. Paul?

McIntosh: Fort Snelling?

Hallingstad: Fort Snelling. But, anyway, when they built the new camp, he was in charge of all the lumber. He had to go through and inventory every carload of lumber and it was just--he was working twenty-four hours a day and we had an uncle who lived in Coon Valley. He came up to Sparta as a carpenter. He camped out in our during the week and went home weekends. They made pretty good money. My dad and I used to sell newspapers out there when I was a kid. Well, I was born in '32 so I was about ten, eleven years old when they came there. They went overseas and when they came back they were discharged from there. That was quite an experience, going through the barracks selling Minneapolis Tribunes and Milwaukee Journals. It was a nice part-time job. I remember they had a real wonderful baseball field. Of course, a lot of major league players were in the service so they used to have games, ya know. That was real good competition. Changed a lot.

McIntosh: Right. Okay, sir, thank you.

Hallingstad: Thank you.

[End of interview]