

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Milton Leidner
Ground Crew, Army Air Corps, World War II

2005

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Leidner, Milton, (1921-), Oral History Interview, 2005.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 55 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 55 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Milton Leidner, a New York City native, discusses his experiences as an instrument specialist with the 8th Air Force during World War II. Leidner touches on his parents, who immigrated to the United States during World War I, and his brother, who served as a radio operator in the Merchant Marines. Leidner discusses his awareness of politics before World War II broke out and his participation in America First, an anti-war movement. He tells of enlisting in the Army Air Corps, the blackouts in New York City, and being assigned to the military police at a base in North Carolina. Leidner describes the “sweet side of military duty” doing office work, including taking fingerprints and histories of civilian applicants, some of whom were pretty southern women. He speaks of airplane instrument specialist training at Champagne-Urbana (Illinois), joining the 785th Squadron (466th Bomb Group) at Kearns Army Air Base (Utah), and working with B-24s at White Sands Proving Grounds (New Mexico). He portrays being taught to drive by his crew chief. After getting orders to ship overseas, Leidner describes spending a couple overnights in New York City and shipping to Scotland aboard the *Queen Mary*. He recalls getting tea and scones from the British Red Cross and arriving at his air base in Norwich (England). He describes his work maintaining B-24s and the living conditions of the ground crew: coal and food rationing, burning oil salvaged from the planes to heat the barracks, bicycling around the base, and sanding down runways. Leidner details liberty in Norwich, dating an English girl, visiting an English manor, and liberty in London. He portrays the response of Londoners to air raid sirens, hearing buzz bombs go overhead, and sitting in the kitchen with his hosts during a blackout. He tells of hitchhiking north to visit his brother, whose convoy had landed in Howell-on-Umber. Leidner details seeing V-E Day celebrations in England and V-J Day celebrations in New York City. He talks about his activities with Vets for Peace including peaceful protests of the Vietnam War in Madison (Wisconsin), and he recalls one occasion where he ran into barricades and tear gas while running errands.

Biographical Sketch:

Leidner (b.1921) served in a B-24 ground crew based in Norwich, England during World War II. He eventually settled in Madison, Wisconsin.

Interviewed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2005.

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

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2011.

Interview Transcript:

John: Today is April 26, 2005, and this is an oral history interview with Milton Leidner, of Madison. Milton is a veteran of World War II, with the 8th Air Force. Is that correct?

Milton: Yeah.

John: Okay. And Milton, thanks a lot for agreeing to the interview, and for coming down here. I really appreciate it. Why don't we start at the beginning? Where and when were you born?

Milton: I was born in 1921 in New York City. My parents were immigrants from Eastern Europe. They came to this country just at the beginning of World War I. In fact, they had been interned in France as enemy aliens. They were citizens of Hapsburg, Austria, which was on the side of Germany in World War I. But they were released, and they arrived in America quite penniless and homeless. They were typical immigrants. After a while, they did quite well, so I was raised in a middle class family. Some good education. New York was a quiet, well-run city at the time. So my dad came to New York in his old world costume, with the jacket and fur hat of the Orthodox Jew. And two years later was working at Tammany Hall [?], a Democrat and I have carried on the tradition. Card-carrying Democrat. And a Peacenik. But that is a long story. I grew up in New York, went through the school system.

John: Brothers or sisters?

Milton: Yeah. One brother and one sister. I was the one [?] and my brother five years older. He was the family intellectual. He went on to law school, and practiced patent law for a while. I thought he had the most interesting one-time history. He wound up in the merchant marine as a radio operator, and was on convoy duty in the North Atlantic during most of the war. Never saw action, but some of his convoys were hit. And my sister just went through high school and worked in a variety of jobs. So we had a quite placid life. As I grew up, I became radicalized. I became very conscious of the rise of fascism in Europe. We were very Democrat liberal background, and hated the thought of first Spain, and then Italy, and then Germany going over to fascism, and building the drums. And we knew war was on the horizon but, even so, we were pro-active in participating - this may sound familiar - harking back many years to the mid-1930s. We were very active in the anti-war movement at the time. America was sharply divided. Some people were, when the war broke out, very concerned that Europe would be dominated by Hitler and England would be conquered. But we participated in the, what was the name of the group? The anti-war movement, America First.

John: Okay.

Milton: America First was the name at the time. But with Pearl Harbor, the mood of America changed. Overnight. Over the seconds, you know? You had no choice. Well, became very concerned. We registered for the draft. I had a fairly high draft number, but I decided to enlist in the Air Force.

John: Let me pause for a second. Do you remember Pearl Harbor Day? What you were doing?

Milton: Good question. I don't really remember that, but I remember hearing it on the radio and being glued to the radio, but I don't know where I was at the time. I remember being in the living room with my family that night when Roosevelt came on the radio and reported to the country, we were at war. A dramatic shock.

John: Yes. Yes.

Milton: I still choke up at that terrible event. But the historians tell us that without Pearl Harbor, America might have remained neutral, and left England and Europe go under, and who knows what sequence of events might have occurred. I can go on to my war time experience.

John: Yeah. Sure.

Milton: I enlisted in the Air Corps and was inducted at an Army base in New York harbor. Governor's Island.

John: Oh, sure.

Milton: An old fortified base. And promptly went by train, the Long Island Railroad, way out to the tip of Long Island, to, what was the name of the base? I think it where Irving Berlin wrote his "Yip Yip Yap Yank." But there we went through the processing, fitted the uniforms, shoes, and shots. And immediately drew K. P. It was an interesting time. It was in the early days the war. We were at war with Germany and America was terrified of any German spies, or activities.

John: Sure. Sure.

Milton: There were reports of German submarines prowling off the East Coast of America. So everything was blacked out. New York City was blacked out. It was incredible. You fumbled your way in the dark. Headlights were out. And the camp was blacked out, dim blue lights. You were lucky to find your tent after you

washed up. Sort of stumbled around in the dark on your way in. Well, we were there for three or four days, as I remember.

John: When was it that you went in? '42?

Milton: I think it was '41. The end of August, in '41. I lose track of my time. I should have reviewed my discharge papers.

John: That's okay.

Milton: And then we went through a series of alignments and being sorted out into different units. And categories. I think we went first to Louisville, Kentucky, for a couple of days, and then to, we were assigned to a squadron. I think that was just a holding unit. So I became an M. P., of all things. And assigned to a base that was just being, I don't want to get ahead of the story. But I wound up on a base in North Carolina that was just being developed. We were the opening squadron and we were patrolling the base, because it was full of warehouses and construction equipment. First, hiring civilians to staff the offices there. And this starts my nearly non-combat military experience. Because I had become a very adept typist in high school. I was on the student newspaper. I was assigned to the office, to take the histories of the civilian applicants. And I was the most envied man on the base, because these sweet little Southern girls would come slinking in, and say, "Oh, is this where I..." So I would get their name, address, and phone number. These were very much in demand. But the sweetest part was, we were required to take their fingerprints. So I was at the fingerprint equipment, would sidle up behind them, you know, and take their pretty little hands.

John: All in the line of duty, of course.

Milton: So that was the sweet side of military duty. We did that for a couple of months, and then did our advanced training. I was classified as a Air Corps airplane instrument specialist. I forget the MOS.

John: Okay.

Milton: And sent off to school at Champagne-Urbana, in Illinois. Southeast of Chicago. And I think that was a one-month course. We did a lot of intense work. Some of it was quite elementary. Just learning to operate tools, and soldering, compresses for air pressure equipment. And then graduating there, we were shipped off to Salt Lake City, where our squadron was finally forming up. It was an air base just outside of Salt Lake City, I think it was called Kearns. Kearns Air Base, or Kearns Air Force Base. It was wintertime by then, and I think it was December, or January of '42. And the barracks were just tar paper shacks which were heated

with the local peat coal, soft coal, of Utah. So it was under a constant smog. We walked around choking in this dense smog. We all developed what we called the Kearns Crunch, this characteristic cough-cough.

But, fortunately, we survived that and we shipped off to New Mexico, oh, about eighty miles north of El Paso where our actual squadron was being organized. We went down in troop trains and after a week or two, the airplanes started to come in. They came flying in in their B-24s. The air crews flew the planes in and landed, and parked the airplanes in individual revetments all around the area, spread out for miles. And it was White Sands Proving Grounds, and the base was near Alamogordo, which became famous as the site of the atomic bomb. And it was winter and the desert was bitterly cold. But we began working on planes. Very elementary stuff, like checking the compass, testing the flight instruments, going for test flights over the desert to make sure everything was operating. The instrument specialists were filling all specialties. So, when we weren't busy with the instruments, we filled in with the other specialties, mostly there was a specialty of taking care of the propeller. The propeller governors were very tricky because they controlled the pitch of the propeller.

John: Oh, okay. Sure

Milton: They controlled the take-off and landing attitude. And if an engine went dead, it was all hydraulics to pull the propeller back to a neutral position so it wouldn't windmill. So we did a lot of that. My one outstanding experience in Alamogordo was I finally learning to drive. I grew up in New York City, we lived on the subway or the streetcar. Very few people had cars.

John: Yeah. Sure.

Milton: I never drove until I was twenty-one. But my crew chief, very amiable, took me out on the Jeep. I was very uncoordinated. Even today. And I found it hard to steer and brake and gears, and shift at the same time. So we drove down these long runways, and I would steer until he would go to the next gear. And occasionally I would forget to depress the clutch. We had clutch and hand shift in those days. But eventually mastered that technology. And we were there for about three months, if I remember. Couldn't have been that long, because, maybe we got there a little earlier, because it was still winter time when we finished our basic training, and the squadron was alerted to ship overseas.

John: Did the squadron have a number or designation?

Milton: Well, we had our designation, which we carried through the war. We were the 466th, we were assigned to the 466th Bomb Group, in England, and we were the

785th Squadron. The famous 785th. And the point of debarkation, believe it or not, was New York. We were shipped to a base, a debarkation point, oh, about twenty miles up the Hudson. I forget the name, but it was a very busy place, where you got your final papers, your overseas clothing. We already had our firearms. We took, we had carbines, and side arms, but light weapons. We never fired machine guns or bivouacked or did field training, that the grunts had. And, miraculously, I got to have several overnights to New York City where I stayed with my family.

John: Oh, tremendous. Oh.

Milton: Just going down the Hudson River on a bus, visiting New York, going to a couple of shows. The New York USO scene was very active. We went to the famous State Door Canteen. Which was, all the GIs were out on Time Square picking up girls, and that. And eventually we loaded, we were ferried down the Hudson on the famous Hudson River Day Line Cruise Boat. An old fashioned side-wheeler that was meant for sight-seeing up the Hudson to West Point and Albany. And we shipped down the Hudson and one of the most gripping moments of my life - I get a lump in my throat - going down the Hudson to the piers in the 40s where the great steam liners used to berth, I could see my home, my apartment fronting the Hudson, and I could see the flowers on my windowsill. I point it out to my buddies, and waved. And that was the last time for a number of years. But we docked at a berth in the 40s in Manhattan, and the ship waiting for us was none other than the *Queen Mary*.

John: Oh, wow.

Milton: Which was converted to a troop carrier. And we stood on the dock with our duffle bags laying at our feet, and our rifles on our back "Let's go home. You know, I want to go home." Cold winter wind whipping around the Hudson on those black nights. Still blacked out. And a sinking feeling in your tummy. This is it.

John: Yeah, sure.

Milton: So we boarded ship and found our cubicles. All the staterooms were converted to little cubicles with bunk beds three high, and I think there were probably twelve in a stateroom. There were three tiers of bunk beds. So you found your spot, and were given a card identifying you. And it was great for a while, to explore the ship. And I think we left the next morning. But we were very lucky. Apparently, by that time, the anti-submarine and the Navy had cleared the shipping lanes pretty well. So we went unescorted. There was this *Queen Mary* with probably fifty thousand troops on board - well, how knows? - steaming furiously across the Atlantic. It was a zig-zag course, I remember the ship would turn from time to

time. But there was no escort in sight. No planes, kind of scary. One of my assignments on ship was to work in the forward hold, stacking boxes and carrying them down into the mess area. It must have been rations. And I can hear the water swishing on the other side of the hull, through the steel plate, and I could just feel what to do. But we landed safely in the port of debarkation, in Scotland. A place called Gurrock. In Scotland. And we caught the English train down to southern Scotland and across northern England and the Midlands. And had our first taste of English tea. Because the train would stop at, I thought there was a twelve-hour trip. We didn't sleep on the train, but we stopped at stations a couple of times along the way where these wonderful English women were there, in their Red Cross cap and arm bands, and pour tea into our mess cups, and give us treats. Crumpets and scones.

John: Okay.

Milton: And I think we finally arrived at the main city of our area, which was Norwich. We were based in Norwich, England, which was the east coast of England fronting on the North Sea. And across the North Sea, of course, was Germany. The raids were still going on. We were blacked out. We wore our helmets all the time. Our base was never hit. I think we had some alarms a number of times, planes going over. I don't know if they were the British bombers, or what. But we were assigned to Quonsets. It had been a base in the past, early in the war, for a Polish air squadron. They moved on. I think they were a fighter squadron. Our planes were B-24s, the famous Flying Boxcars. And our job was to keep them flying. And we did it every way we could. The maintenance crews, innocently, got to work scrounging around the base. It was full of packing cases, and boxes, and each of the ground crew - the air crew lived in a separate part of the base. We didn't fraternize with them. They are in their own mess halls, and we ate in our section. It was very comfortable. There were one outside water outlet at each, cold water, and there was an outhouse within each complex which had sinks but never any hot water. Of course, coal was in short supply. Coal was kept in a locked enclosure and I think it was rationed just to the central area where they actually had showers, where you could have a shower occasionally. If you could find the hot water running. I remember one time taking a shower with a drip of warm water coming out of the overhead shower head and a bare spot on the floor where the water hit, and a ring of ice around the rest of the floor. So you had to dance your way to where your clothes were. But it was quite livable. My wartime experience was nothing to be proud of. I was behind the lines. I slept in a bed with a pillow and blankets every day. The barracks were heated occasionally when we could salvage some of the oil when we changed the airplane engines. We ran them through a little stove.

[End of Side A of Tape 1.]

Milton: One drawback was that you had a cool plate - don't take more than you can eat. Don't waste. Everything was precious. I remember one time there was spinach on the menu with a little dab of bacon stuck in for a teaser. And it was all fat, and quite unappetising. So I tried to scrape my tray and the officer on duty said, "You got to finish it." Transportation was by bike. Everyone soon acquired a bike. I had found a friend in town who sold me a bike, and the group game was stealing each other's bike, because someone always needed a bike. The base was quite large, and to get from the mess hall to where your plane was parked was about three-quarters of a mile, or more. And time was always short. There was a bus circling the area, but to get back to our ground crews, they scrounged crates and packing boxes, and quickly had built themselves little shelters at the revetments. Each ground crew was assigned to a plane, and if you remember, each plane had an air crew and a raucous name of some sort. I don't remember the name. It was painted. After they had been on bombing runs for a couple of times, they would decorate it with little bombs indicating how many missions they had been on. They managed their hundred missions, or so. I don't remember how many planes we lost. That information just didn't filter down. But we kept them flying. And in bad weather, we worked hard. We had big trucks loaded with sand and soil, and in groups of five, we walked behind these trucks, trudging down these mile-long runways, with shovels scooping up sand and sweeping the runway, and stepping back, letting the next man. Sanding down the runway so planes could take off.

John: I never heard of that.

Milton: The North Sea just a mile or two away, and the wind from the North Sea blew blind and salt air onto the base, and at times, England was a magic kingdom. You never saw anything so beautiful. You would wake up in the morning, the sun rose, even in the spring, the sun rose very early. And everything was coated with brine, what do you call that? It was so beautiful. It looked like faux-Christmas trees. I never saw anything like it, before or since. And when the sun came up in the morning and warmed them, it melted and dripped. And we started out with these heavy leather, fur-lined outfits, and we were down to our shirt sleeves by the middle of the day.

John: Wow.

Milton: And back to those heavy fur pants and jackets which we scrounged from the air crews. That was their. So we kept them flying. We had a pleasant time. We had three square meals a day, slept in beds. There was some entertainment. But the source of entertainment was the nearby ancient market town of Norwich, which I think was the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell. The English go back a long ways. That was the ancient Viking country. But there was a liberty run every night and

you, if you had no commitments, no duty roster, you could dress up in your dress uniform, get a pass, and catch the liberty run at about six o'clock, right after supper, right into Norwich, which was about a half hour drive. Go to the USO, or hit the pubs, or go to some of the dances. They were very friendly, very sociable, the English girls were lovely and charming. So I went quite a bit. And there was a dance, the traditional English dance, which has stuck with me all these years, called the Hokey-Pokey.

John: Okay.

Milton: I can remember that - "you do the hokey-pokey and you turn yourself around. Put your hind end in, and you shake it all about." And I dated a very nice girl. She taught school. Norwich had a strong Catholic population even though it was the scene of Protestant combat in the Middle Ages. And she introduced me to the bishop of Norwich, which was really a great experience. One pleasant outing, we were invited to visit an English home, and somehow, I hitch-hiked, or bussed, down to a real English country estate. Dropped off by my ride at a gate on the expansive highway in the open farm country, walked down a half a mile lane. And there was this glorious trace of this manor house. It's something out of PBS. Must have been a monastery. Had a charming evening and visited and one of our perks, and one of my exclusive perks, at the air base, was having access to the canteen.

John: Okay.

Milton: And smoking was quite common in those days. We were allowed a carton of cigarettes a month, or every couple of weeks. So I drew my carton of cigarettes and, since I was a non-smoker, I was very much in demand.

John: A real popular guy.

Milton: My buddies in the Quonset pounced on me, and such. The air crews, when they flew, were issued - they were up there for six hours or more - flying to and from the mission, and they were issued rations including a box of candy. With the high calorie. And very often they would leave it on the plane. So I carried a box of this Air Force candy to my hosts at the manor, and the two daughters just devoured. They hadn't seen candy in some time. Another perk was to get to London. I think we got an overnight, or a forty-eight, maybe every two months. And I had a friend who was in the intelligence somewhere along the Channel coasts, who had an uncle in London, and he gave me his name. So they would put me up. And in family, in London. And my gift to them, and I hear it brought tears to their eyes when I presented it, I bought a box of cigars at the canteen, and gave my host in London a box of cigars. And he wept. He hadn't had a cigar in four years. Something simple. The elements.

John: Yeah, great.

Milton: I loved London. It was a metropolis, even then. It was after the Blitz, so we saw remnants of bombed-out buildings. I went to theaters. I went to the Old Vic, and saw Lawrence Olivier in one of Shakespeare's plays.

John: Oh, wow.

Milton: We saw another famous English actor. I forget his name. I should have thought of that. Doing Ibsen.

John: Okay.

Milton: And London was great. But we were still at war. And it was past the time of the bomb raids, the great Blitz raids. The RAF and the Spitfires and the American Thunderbolts had subdued them. We had to put up with the Buzz Bombs.

John: Okay.

Milton: The bombs were coming in. And the sirens would go off, and people would duck into the subway shelters, or just shrug their shoulders and keep going. I remember one time I was at a theater at a performance and you could hear the sirens going off outside, and a number of people got up and walked out of the theater. I guess there were bomb shelters nearby. But, of course, we were brave soldiers so we stayed. And after a while you heard a harrid crump off in the distance. Just a crump. And some dust would come sifting down from the ceiling. Poor, ancient London. My most vivid memory of London was going back to my host, who lived in a little working-class suburb of London. The black-out. And they would be sitting in their blacked-out kitchen. Couldn't be more homey. Teapot simmering.

John: That's all right.

Milton: And the sirens would go off, and you would hear that God-damned put-put-put-put-put. And you would sit there. And the put-put would stop. And that was the time. You would just sit there and, off somewhere, you would hear a crump. And that raid was over. But for me, the howling idiocy of war was right there. This sweet old couple, sitting in their little kitchen, and these bastards would be sending over unguided missiles to drop on an open city. And somebody died, got hit. Some other old couple, sitting in their kitchen. Later on, there were the V-2s, which were the rockets.

John: Yes.

Milton: You didn't hear the put-put or the sirens. They just hit. But I never experienced that. One of my great memories of the war was being called down to our little unit office and them saying, "Look, you got a phone call." And the Red Cross had called from northern England, a busy seaport on the Umler River. Howell, Howell-on-Umler. My brother's convoy had landed there. He contacted the Red Cross and they called my unit, and they gave me a forty hour pass.

John: Oh, great.

Milton: And I hitch-hiked through beautiful English countryside to the old town, and all those beautiful old historic towns. Lincoln was where Robin Hood went out. Lincoln Forest. And I met my brother at the dockside, on the ship. I hadn't seen him in three years. And in his merchant marine uniform. He was very happy. And we toured the ship. He had his own cabin up near the bridge, and lived there, for twenty-four hours a day. But the radio was on. It was all short-wave, Morse Code. Dit-dit-dit. Absolutely nothing to me, but his job was to keep in touch with the convoy and get the time of day so they had the latitude, and the weather. And we spent a lovely night visiting. A memory that sticks with me is, as we walked across the docks, we can see this convoy of ships unloading, and these great derricks would unload great nets, cargo nets, full of bombs. This ship was just a walking bomb depot. Five hundred pound aerial bombs being unloaded on the docks, and I looked at that, and I looked at my brother, and he sort of smiled. He said, "You know, on this ship, they don't issue you life preservers. They issue you parachutes."

John: Yeah. I can see.

Milton: They'd be blown so damned high, they's parachute down. Actually, the merchant marine lost a very high proportion in the war.

John: Very high.

Milton: There were some bad feelings, but nothing came of it, between the Navy crews, actually enlisted Navy crews manning the guns, anti-aircraft and the submarine guns on each ship. Which were under Navy orders and Navy pay. About sixty bucks a month, I think, and the merchant marine had a nice dining room, and lived well. I guess the Navy crew ate with them. But the merchant marine drew big wages.

John: Of course, they earned it.

Milton: And my brother stayed in the merchant marine for many years.

John: Ok, did he?

Milton: He shipped all over the world. He went everywhere. South America, Africa, Asia, Panama Canal. And retired with a very fat pension and benefits, because his crew, his skill, was very select, in demand, and they could set it straight. By contrast. He is in a retirement community now in Florida, doing quite well. I'll go down to see him later this spring. But, that was the gist of my wartime experience. I had a very interesting coincidence. I had been to college for a couple of years, and it never did me any good. But I was one of those average guys who barely finished high school. So I was meeting the professor, I read books and put on a production. So I was singled out to go to a school in southern England, because there was a possibility that we would remain in Europe, on occupation duty. I have to leave in about fifteen minutes.

John: Okay. Whatever your schedule is. Yep.

Milton: I was sent to set up a base library at this Detached Service School when D-Day arrived. The end of the war. It was magnificent. It was an old officer's training school, quite beautiful. I'll think of the name. It was near the valley of the White Horse. And Suffolk. I would step out of the doors and we could see the bonfires blazing all across England. Jubilee. Fireworks! What a gorgeous giving that was. And I went back through London a day or two later and they were still celebrating. Piccadilly Circus was our headquarters. Everybody was celebrating. I will wind up the story in a hurry, because it had some funny parts. The unit with what we called, the war was still going on full scale with Japan. We were gearing up for the invasion of Japan, so we got the word. We were supposed to have a thirty day leave in the States, and then report back to a unit to be further deployed. Redeployed to the Pacific. So I wound up in New York at Fort Dix. We took the train from, and I went back into civilian life. I was in uniform, but wasn't completely relaxed, in New York. Went to plays, I remember. We had some great times. I saw Martha Graham baled on that historic occasion. And I went to another play, and stepped out into Times Square on V-J Day.

John: Oh, wow.

Milton: Can you imagine that? There were absolute crazy mobs and mobs of soldiers and sailors and civilians just dancing in the streets. Hysterical joy. Damn! The war was over! That was, and I was there, and I remember

John: After you got back, we just have a couple minutes, you mentioned that you were active in Vets for Peace?

- Milton: Yes. I went into that. Didn't actively. It was just an excuse for the war with Johnson with that Gulf.
- John: Yes, that attack that never happened.
- Milton: Very suspicious of the whole thing. Why we were there it was just a long drawn out war of vast opposition. So I bought a cap and wore the Vets for Peace, and marched in all the demonstrations down State Street, and candle-light vigils on the capital lawn. For what it was worth. One thing, we lived in the Heights, and we had a lot of very liberal and academic friends, and our part of the demonstration was to march down to - I can't remember the name of the bank - it's changed its name several times - but it was located at Park Street and University Avenue, and cash in our War Bonds.
- John: Okay.
- Milton: As a protest to the war.
- John: Alright.
- Milton: Big deal. But we were very much opposed to the militant elements which went around smashing traffic lights and burning waste baskets in the streets. There was quite a turmoil in Madison. I remember going downtown one day on some errands. We had dogs all our stay in Madison, I had two of our Shelties, and my folks, and we ran into a barricade which had been erected on West Washington near the Lorraine Hotel by these fire brands, and it was smoking, choking dust, and suddenly the air was just full of tear gas.
- John: Tear gas.
- Milton: And I was frantic because I was with my two little dogs. And I held my dog, and, what can I do? And a couple of students rushed over and "Here, let us help you." And they carried the dogs away to the cooler air. And that was the days of wrath.
- John: What was your ZIP Code?
- Milton: 53704.
- John: What a remarkable story.
- Milton: Really? I thought I had nothing to tell.
- John: It was a major effort. And Stephen Ambrose, a good friend of mine, he just passed

away, and he wrote about the guys who fought World War II. The guys and gals who fought World War II. He said, "You guys were giants! You went out and you saved the world. You did."

Milton: Yeah.

John: What a remarkable story.

[End of Interview]