

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an  
Oral History Interview with  
ROBERT W. MAURICE, IV  
Sonarman, Navy, Cold War.

1997

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**Maurice, Robert W., IV**, (1937- ). Oral History Interview, 1997.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 45 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

**Abstract:**

Robert W. Maurice IV, a Bremen, Indiana native, discusses his Navy service as a sonar technician during the Cold War. Maurice talks about his father's service in World War II and his awareness of the war as a child. He mentions being in the Indiana Army National Guard during his senior year of high school, enlisting in the Navy upon graduation in 1955, and boot camp at Great Lakes (Illinois). He addresses going from an all-white town to the integrated service and learning to judge people as individuals. Maurice speaks of being granted his first choice of training, to become a sonarman, and having to work hard and attend night school to keep his grades up during a six-month intensive course in electronics and sonar. He explains he wanted to work on a submarine but was assigned to the USS Vammen (DE-644), a destroyer escort. Maurice describes his ship's role in protecting convoys from submarines and relates his first cruise to the Caroline and Mariana Islands. He mentions taking mail to New Zealand during Operation Deep Freeze, the Antarctica expedition, and doing an emergency run to Singapore. Maurice details a typical day: being on watch as a sonarman, working even when off duty, and locating and attempting to communicate with unidentified submarines by voice and Morse code. In 1958, he touches on training as an anti-submarine air crewman, training others, and being in charge of the sonar maintenance shop of the helicopter squadron. Maurice comments on his activities during some Cold War crises, including putting to sea during the Berlin Crisis of 1961-62 and trying to catch up to his assigned ship, the USS Hornet (CVS-12), during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He talks about being unable to catch the Hornet, which was at sea, for three months and becoming worried about his family's finances because the Navy would not pay him until he boarded his ship. Maurice speaks of his awareness of the war brewing in Vietnam, feeling frustrated that it would be fought with limited rules of engagement like the Korean War, and deciding to leave the service to be with his wife and three children. As a civilian, he talks about getting a job with General Motors in Muncie (Indiana), attending Ball State University with the GI Bill, and moving to Lake Mills (Wisconsin). Maurice discusses joining the American Legion after moving to Wisconsin. He touches on having "pangs of conscience" for leaving service before fighting in the war. In 1976, Maurice speaks about joining the Wisconsin Army National Guard and transferring to the infantry in Whitewater after discovering the band in Madison was staffed by unmotivated people who had enlisted to avoid the Vietnam War.

**Biographical Sketch:**

Maurice (b.1937) served in the Navy from 1955 to 1965, as well as six years in the Wisconsin National Guard and six years in the Army Reserves. He eventually settled in Verona (Wisconsin).

Interviewed by Mark Van Ells, 1997  
Transcribed by Hannah Goodno, 2011  
Edited by Joan Bruggink, 2012  
Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2012

**Interview Transcript:**

Mark: Today's date is April the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1997. This is Mark Van Ells, Archivist, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, doing an oral history interview this morning with Mr. Robert Maurice the fourth, a veteran of the US Navy from the 1950s up through the Vietnam period. Good morning, and thanks for taking some time out of your day.

Maurice: Oh, you're welcome.

Mark: Why don't we start by having you tell me a little bit about where you were born and raised and what you were doing prior to your entry into the military?

Maurice: Okay, I was born in Mishawaka, Indiana and I was raised in Bremen, Indiana, that's fifteen miles south of Mishawaka in the northern part of the state. And I graduated from Bremen High School in 1955 in May, and I went into the Navy in June of 1955.

Mark: How come you decided to enter the military, and why the Navy in particular?

Maurice: I had a strong desire to serve in the military service.

Mark: Do you have parents or relatives who went through?

Maurice: Yeah, my father served in World War II in the Navy as a Radioman Third Class and he fought in the Pacific, in the battle of Okinawa and other ones.

Mark: Do you recall World War II? You were pretty young at the time.

Maurice: Yes, yes I do. I was born in 1937 and things were pretty intense in that period of time between—well, prior to the war and then after the war started; it was Depression time, you know, before the war—and then after the war started everybody was talking about the war, so you just couldn't help but be caught up in it.

Mark: Yeah. But your father was gone?

Maurice: Yeah, he was gone most of the time.

Mark: Did he send letters home and that type of thing? I mean, how did you stay in touch and how did you know about what was going on?

Maurice: Oh well, I listened to the radio and read the news—well, mostly listened to the radio. And then we talked about it in school also. And I guess when

you know your dad's serving in the military, you're extra sensitive to that period of time and concerned about him and all.

- Mark: Yeah. So you joined the Navy. What I'd like you to do is just sort of walk me through your induction process: where did you go to sign up, who did you talk to, what did they tell you, and then sort of walk me through the basic training experience.
- Maurice: I went to the recruiting office in South Bend, Indiana; that's about twenty miles from Bremen. And well, actually I wanted to join the Navy before I finished high school and the recruiter talked me out of quitting school to join the Navy. So I joined the Army National Guard in Indiana for about a year while I was a senior in high school and then I went into the Navy after I graduated. And I was inducted in Chicago on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, and then we got on the North Shore—a whole group of us got on the North Shore train and went to the Great Lakes.
- Mark: And that's where you did your basic training?
- Maurice: Basic training for ten weeks at Great Lakes.
- Mark: And what sort of training was that? I mean, how much of it was classroom, how much of it was marching?
- Maurice: Quite a bit of it was classroom, and then we had a lot of marching in the PT.
- Mark: Did you have a particular job that you wanted?
- Maurice: Yes, I definitely knew I wanted to—I was interested in submarines, and I wanted to get in the submarine service, so I figured the best way to do that would be to try to be a sonarman because I knew every sub had a sonarman and they were the eyes and ears of the submarine. It was a very important job.
- Mark: And so when you enlisted, did you get that job guaranteed? Because you can do that today.
- Maurice: I took a test at the recruiting office and I qualified for the electronics field, so I had my choice. I put down my first, second, and third choice in the electronics field. My first choice was sonar, second choice was radar, third choice was radio. And I got sonar. I was very, very happy about that.
- Mark: Uh-huh. So after your training in Great Lakes, then—I want to talk a little bit more about your training, actually.

- Maurice: It was very, very intensive, very difficult.
- Mark: In what way?
- Maurice: Well, it was a lot of high-pressure tactics by the—what would we call him?—the company commander, the same as a drill instructor.
- Mark: Yeah, you mean screaming and yelling?
- Maurice: A lot of mental pressure.
- Mark: I see.
- Maurice: And some of the companies around there had drill instructors that were very physical. I mean, they beat up their people. Ours was more mental. We lost ten sailors out of fifty out of our company because they couldn't handle the mental strain.
- Mark: Yeah. Now basic training often brings together people from different parts of the country and that type of thing. Was that your experience as well?
- Maurice: Yes. I lived in an all-white town in Bremen, Indiana, never been around any black people, so that was the first I was with black people. And some of them I liked, and some of them I didn't like. I found out that you judge a person by the—as an individual, not by the color of their skin.
- Mark: Yeah. Now integration of the military was relatively new to say 1955 or so.
- Maurice: Well, actually, that happened in '47.
- Mark: Yeah. In historical terms, that's still within ten years.
- Maurice: Yeah, that's right.
- Mark: A lot of guys, I'm sure, hadn't gotten used to it.
- Maurice: Yeah. I found out that once I got in sonar school and we had one black person at sonar school in my class and the rest of us were white, and I got aboard ship and there weren't many black people that had technical jobs. Most of them were like stewards and cooks and boatswain's mates and that was it. But later on then they got more technical training.

- Mark: Yeah. So after Great Lakes then, you had to go to some technical school of some kind, I'd imagine?
- Maurice: Right, I went to the fleet sonar school in San Diego. It was a six month intensive course. Three months were electronics, like basic electricity and basic electronics, and then three months was sonar operations.
- Mark: Did you get out on a ship at all, or was this all in a classroom and in a laboratory?
- Maurice: I'm talking intensive training; I mean, we're talkin' eight hours a day in classroom for three months straight plus a lot of after-hours study. And then when we went into the operations aspect of it, then we went out on training ships and they had submarines go with us and then we would practice making runs on 'em, or detecting 'em and making depth charge runs on 'em.
- Mark: Uh-huh. I just had a question, but I just lost it. Oh, you described basic training as being pretty rigorous in terms of the mental strain and that type of thing, but did things loosen up in tech school at all? Or was it still pretty G.I., as they say?
- Maurice: Yeah, they loosened up quite a bit, but a lot of pressure to keep up your grades. I struggled a lot to get through there, like electronics and electricity. And I spent a lot of time at night school, voluntary night school, to try and keep my grades up. If you fell down below a certain score during the weekly tests they would send you to the fleet as a— probably as a boatswain's mate striker. You know, chipping paint. That was the threat they held over you, and I sure as heck didn't want to chip paint the rest of my Navy career, plus the embarrassment of not making it, because my dad went to radio school and he was in the Navy.
- Mark: Now were there some who didn't make it? I mean, I would imagine there were some who fell out there, too.
- Maurice: Yes, they usually didn't fool around with people who couldn't keep up their scores. And I had a failing score one week, and so I had to get up before this board, and there were twelve people up before the board, and I was the only that survived and stayed in school because I told them I wanted more than anything else to be a sonarman. Plus I had a lot of voluntary night school, and that went well for me. So I went over and studied three, four hours after school. So I was able to get through there, and I was very happy that I became a sonar man.
- Mark: And this training was how long, did you say? Six months?

- Maurice: Six months.
- Mark: And then you got to your first ship?
- Maurice: My first ship was—well, the assignments of the graduating class depended upon their grade average, the final scores. Top man in the class got his first pick, second man got the second pick, so on down the line. It so happened that they only had one submarine for our class and the first man on the list, he picked it. He picked subs, the second man picked—you know, submarine helicopter duty, and then the rest of the ships, they had ‘em by name and number on the board. And your class, how you stood in your class, that’s how you got your pick. So by the time they got down to me—I was sort of towards the lower end of the class of graduates—I got a destroyer escort; it happened to be the same training ship that I went out on during sonar school.
- Mark: Huh. I want to come back to that ship, but I’m curious as to why submarine service was so appealing to you, and apparently to so many others. I mean, what was it about it?
- Maurice: It just seemed like a very important job and it had—oh, there’s an amount of danger to it. But it was like an elite force; I wanted to be a member of an elite force.
- Mark: Sort of like the Green Berets would be to the Army or something?
- Maurice: Exactly.
- Mark: I see. Okay, so this destroyer escort, the Vammen?
- Maurice: Vammen, yeah, DE-644.
- Mark: Uh-huh. Why don’t you describe that ship for me and what its combat role was supposed to be.
- Maurice: Okay. Combat role of a destroyer escort is to escort ships in a convoy to a destination, wherever. Like troop ships or carriers or any type of a convoy we would be out away from the convoy on the outskirts and we would search for submarines, we’d be ahead and behind and to the side of the convoys. Search for submarines and protect the convoys. We were loaded for anti-submarine warfare. We had two depth charge racks in the stern of the ship and then we had K-guns. They were thrown from the side of the ship by an explosive device so you have a depth charge pattern. And then we had hedgehogs, that would be the forward-throwing missiles that they would shoot ‘em ahead of the ship and they would form a ring and they would go down and they would detonate upon contact. And then



we had anti-submarine torpedoes that you could fire over the side and it had a homing device that they would home in on the submarine and blow 'em up.

Mark: So this wasn't a wartime period?

Maurice: No, this was the Cold War. Cold War period.

Mark: Yeah. So during this period, where did you go with the ship and what did you do?

Maurice: The first cruise was overseas, that was in 19—in the fall of 1956. Our first cruise went overseas. One of our duties was to call on all the islands in the Carolinas and Marianas to check on the natives and see how they were doing physically and see if they needed anything. So that was quite an experience.

Mark: In what way?

Maurice: Well, we went ashore a few times and saw how the natives lived and all. It was very interesting.

Mark: Oh. A little more primitive than Mishawaka, I'd say?

Maurice: Oh, yeah, very primitive. And then also, we went to—we covered a lot of countries: Korea, Philippines, Hawaii, Midway, Australia and New Zealand. And on that trip we took mail to—it was Operation Deep Freeze, when they had a big expedition to the South Pole, Antarctica.

Mark: Right.

Maurice: So we took three hundred bags of mail to the forces that went on that expedition and we took 'em down to New Zealand. We were in New Zealand for a couple weeks and then we went to Australia for a day.

Mark: Sounds like some pretty exotic ports of call there.

Maurice: Yeah, and then we went to Singapore and Penang. Penang is a little island right off of Singapore. They called us to Singapore as a kind of emergency run because they were having elections there and they were expecting a lot of violence, and so they sent us in there to show our flag and to rescue any Americans that might be in danger. And nothing happened, but just showing the flag showed that we meant business.

Mark: So as a sonarman, then, are you just monitoring the waters?

Maurice: Every time we left port, either in the States when like, we went out on training exercises or on long cruises, like the cruise I was telling you about that lasted six months, every time we left port our sonar was operational and we had the watches. We had two sonarmen to each watch. We had four hours on and eight hours off round the clock, twenty-four hours a day. And when we were off duty, then we were expected to work also, do other things like maintenance of the equipment and maintenance of the depth charges, whatever. So a typical day might be a sixteen hour work day aboard the ship.

Mark: I'm sort of curious as to whether or not you actually found any Soviet submarines or anything out there.

Maurice: Yeah, we found unidentified submarines, right.

Mark: So if you're in a convoy or something, they're just trailing you?

Maurice: Yeah, we'd find unidentified submarines and then we'd report it, and then we would follow the sub for three or four days. We would send information to Washington D.C. and then they would give us instructions on how to proceed. I would try to—we had an underwater telephone in our sonar shack and we would try to communicate with the submarine by voice and code. Morse code. I had to learn Morse code as a sonarman also because you would send code underwater with our underwater telephone. And naturally we didn't get any response. So we would follow the unidentified contact for a number of days.

Mark: Yeah. Now it was presumed to be Russian, I would assume?

Maurice: Yeah. But we didn't know for sure. See, a lot of times American submarines would be on secret missions and they wouldn't answer either. We would assume that.

Mark: So you were on this particular ship for how long?

Maurice: Two and a half years.

Mark: So that would bring you to about 1960 or so?

Maurice: No, it was 1958, I believe, I left.

Mark: I see, and then you went and got into helicopter—

Maurice: Yeah, helicopters.

Mark: Anti-submarine?

- Maurice: Right, yeah. I was trained as an air crewman then. And then I also instructed future air crewman on how to pre-fly the helicopter and also to operate the sonar equipment and maintain the equipment. I was also in charge of the sonar maintenance shop of the helicopter squadron. And we would hover over the water about seventy-five to a hundred feet and drop our sonar dome in the water and we would ping for a submarine and search for submarines that way.
- Mark: I see. Now on the datasheet I had you fill out, you mentioned some of these Cold War crises that erupted during your service time, so I just want to go over each of them and sort of see how they impacted upon you. The first was the Berlin crisis in 1961-62. When they first started putting up the wall, where were you and what were you doing, and how did that whole crisis impact upon you?
- Maurice: As I recall, when we sent them a threatening warning not to do it and then all the ships went to sea; that's standard procedure in an emergency crisis.
- Mark: So was this the first emergency crisis you had experienced during your time in service?
- Maurice: Mm-hmm, right.
- Mark: So you went out to sea, and just—
- Maurice: Yeah, we just went out to sea for a few days to see what happened. I mean, until we got orders to proceed in our normal mode of operation.
- Mark: Now at the time did you think a war was going to break out?
- Maurice: Yeah, yeah. Well, we prepared for war. I mean, we were trained to a razor-sharp edge to do our jobs and we were ready.
- Mark: So at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, you were on the Hornet by this time?
- Maurice: Yeah, I was on the Hornet, and I was trying to catch a ship. I was given orders for the Hornet and so I had to fly from the States overseas, the ship was overseas, and so I flew from Travis Air Force Base to Japan via Honolulu. When I got to Japan, they said the ship was in Hong Kong. So I got another flight and went to Hong Kong, and all the ships were at sea. That was during that Missile Crisis; they sent all the ships to sea. And so I had to—so they sent me back to Japan. I was there for a few weeks before I finally caught up to the ship; everything was calmed down by that time.

Mark: And of course the Vietnam War was sort of creeping up on the country by that time. Now as a young sailor, were you paying attention to what was going on in Vietnam? What did you know? I mean, I suppose to use the political terms, what did you know and when did you know it? Just sort of walk me through your recollections of how that war came upon us.

Maurice: Well, what we saw was happening was the president—President Kennedy—was sending Green Berets over there to work with the natives in Vietnam and we could see it starting to build up. And then Johnson sent a hundred thousand plus troops, I think it was in March of—early March or February of '65. And I saw what was happening right there, that this is gonna be a big war.

Mark: Yeah. Was it something you supported, or didn't support? Do you recall?

Maurice: I felt like it was gonna be another Korea. I just felt frustrated, because we were trained to fight to win. I was frustrated when I was in high school when the Korean War was going on, that our troops had their hands tied behind their backs, they couldn't fight to win. But it looked to me like it was going to be the same situation. And by that time I had three kids and all my kids were born when I was overseas on cruises. And I was just kinda—I was ready to get out.

Mark: I see. Because you were halfway to retirement by that time?

Maurice: Yeah, right. My family was more important to me then, by that time, even though I loved my job. I thought it was very important and I thought it was the greatest job in the Navy. I had mixed emotions about it, but I thought it was time to get out.

Mark: I see. And so you did.

Maurice: Yeah.

Mark: So when you got out of the service, you went back to Indiana?— **[End of Tape 1, Side A]**

Maurice: Right.

Mark: I'm just interested, if you can set up your post-military experience. You know, what were your goals and how did you go about trying to achieve them?

Maurice: My goal was to get a good job to support my family and then go to college, try and get a degree. So I was very fortunate to get a job with General Motors in Muncie, Indiana in the transmission plant. I started out

in the forge shop as a forge inspector. It was very hot, very noisy, about driving me crazy.

Mark: Was it worse than the ship?

Maurice: Yeah, it was worse. [laughs] I mean, my ears were my life when I was in the Navy, I protected my ears, because once a sonarman lost his hearing, I mean, he was out. He had to be a gunner's mate or a boatswain's mate. And so it was very difficult. It was summertime and it was about a hundred-thirty degrees around the heat-treat furnaces, and inspecting forgings. I did a lot of praying that the Lord would help me out of this situation into a better job, and lo and behold, I was on this job a month and here they come and ask me if I wanted to be on plant security. I said, "I'm outta here." I was so happy.

Mark: Now they approached you about being in security?

Maurice: Right.

Mark: Why do you think they did that?

Maurice: Probably because of my military service.

Mark: That's what I was wondering. So that was a much more amenable job, shall we say?

Maurice: Yeah, it was very good. However, it was fifty-two hours a week year-round. I worked weekends and holidays. But I made good money. I made more than the foreman in the plant because of the overtime and all. And then I attempted to go to Ball State.

Mark: Right, yeah, you went to school on the G.I. Bill?

Maurice: Right.

Mark: Now, this was a different G.I. Bill than the World War II guys had?

Maurice: Yeah.

Mark: And some of the complaints of some later veterans was that the post-World War II G.I. Bill programs didn't really match up and didn't really cover all their expenses. What was your experience in that regard?

Maurice: Yeah, it didn't cover much. It covered books and tuition, that was about it. I don't know how any post-World War II veteran could survive, you

know? Try to feed his family on that. But anyway, I had a job, so I was going to school part time and it paid for what I did.

Mark: Yeah. So you were working fifty-two hours a week and going to school?

Maurice: Fifty-two hours a week and I went to school for three years part time. And I just got burned out.

Mark: Yeah, that's pretty rigorous. Did you have to take night courses and that type of thing?

Maurice: No, I worked at night and went to school in the daytime. I was taking up to twelve credits and that was a real back-breaker.

Mark: Yeah. Now, as I've mentioned, I've spoken to a lot of World War II veterans, and they've described getting out of service and going to college on the G.I. Bill and the campus was filled with veterans, almost everyone was a veteran. I'd imagine your experience was kind of different than that?

Maurice: Yeah, it was different. I was the oldest man in my class. I was twenty-eight years old. I was older than some of my professors, too. When I reported to school for the first time, for the first class, kids were coming up asking me where to sit; they thought I was the professor. [Mark laughs] I come in with my hat and my galoshes and overcoat, and you know, my briefcase, I looked just like a professor to them. That was funny. But I learned a lot. I was a very conservative, you know, pretty hard-nosed veteran and—

Mark: Yeah. Now the big Vietnam—well, I guess it was just starting up at this time then. Now I don't know that Ball State was a hotbed of radicalism or anything, but were there tensions involved with the war and your military experience as opposed to those who hadn't been in the service?

Maurice: Not really. It was pretty calm down there in Indiana. Indiana was pretty supportive of the military. I just had something to say every day in class as far as my beliefs. And I also learned how to listen to the other side too. And that was a very good experience for me to be able to have to sit back and listen to the other side, and that was the most valuable point I got out of a college education.

Mark: Yeah. But it was a dignified discussion, it wasn't shouting and that type of thing you sometimes think about with the '60s and the radicals and that type of thing?

Maurice: Right.

Mark: So I've got to make this interview tie into Wisconsin somehow; when did you come to the Badger State?

Maurice: We moved up here in 1972 and settled in Lake Mills.

Mark: Did you have a job up here?

Maurice: Well, I thought I did. I had made arrangements to transfer from the General Motors plant in Indiana to the Janesville plant on security, plant security. The reason we wanted to move up here was to put our kids in the Lutheran school system in Lake Mills, grade school and high school at Lakeside Lutheran. And so I went there to get a final interview at the General Motors plant in Janesville and they said, "Oh, we'd love to hire you, you've got great recommendations, but we can't do it because the government's on us to hire minorities." And there were no minorities in Janesville, so they had to go down to Beloit and others within a fifty mile radius to try and find minorities to get on security. That about broke my heart. I was really dead set on that. That was reverse discrimination, my first run-in with that one. So I found out about a life insurance job that was open with the Aid Association for Lutherans. So I tried that for ten months and I found out that wasn't for me. And I found out later after I got into it that only one outta ten make it in the life insurance business. So then I was lucky enough to get on a job with the APV[?] in Lake Mills. And I took a test and qualified to be an inspector. So I inspected product in this heavy food manufacturing plant. It was a food equipment manufacturing plant in all areas. And that was a very good experience for me.

Mark: I've just got one last area that I want to ask some questions about, and that involves veterans' organizations and that type of thing. I noticed on the sheet here that you joined the American Legion.

Maurice: Yeah, I did. I joined the Legion; I'm a member of the state headquarters in Milwaukee and I support the organization. However, I have been pretty busy and I didn't transfer to Verona.

Mark: When did you join the Legion and for what reason?

Maurice: I just support the idea of keeping our country strong. And it's a pretty patriotic organization. I don't agree with all their philosophy, especially about the flag. I don't believe that they should make an amendment to make it a crime to burn the flag; I figure that's freedom of speech, that's what we fought for. You can't hold a piece of cloth up and say that's—it's almost like a religion to some people, you know. I don't go for that.

- Mark: But the Legion's close enough to your points of view?
- Maurice: Yeah, close enough for me. They also help the veterans that have problems, just like in Saudi Arabia where this terrible syndrome that the veterans picked up, if it hadn't been for the Legion, nothing would have happened.
- Mark: Yeah. Did you join before or after you came to Wisconsin?
- Maurice: After.
- Mark: And are you what you would call an active member? I mean, do you go to post meetings and that type of thing? You mentioned involvement with the state headquarters, for example.
- Maurice: Yeah, I'm a member to the state headquarters and I contribute to some of their fundraisings, but I'm not a post member in Verona.
- Mark: I see. I guess we've pretty much exhausted all my questions. Is there anything you'd like to add? Anything you think we've skipped over or anything?
- Maurice: Well, one of the reasons I left the service was I told you I tried to catch the ship the Hornet in Hong Kong when the Cuban Missile Crisis broke out. Well, I didn't catch the ship for I think it was almost three months. And I couldn't get paid. The Navy had a policy that until you got aboard your ship you would not get paid. However when you get transferred to a ship, they offer you up to three months advance pay, but I only took a month. You know, once you take that money, you gotta pay it back, too. So I only took a month. So I was trying to catch that ship, I wasn't getting any pay.
- Mark: Well, I presume you needed some money at the time?
- Maurice: Yeah, I needed money for my own needs, plus my family. You know, I'd send some money home from my check every payday to my family. Plus, well, they were getting a dependent's check, but then I'd send extra. And my wife was pregnant, she was due any time, and I was worried about that. She had to go down to a hock shop and hock some of the TV set and wedding rings and everything else to try to get enough money to have a baby.
- Mark: Huh. And the baby wasn't much of a help, I presume?



- Maurice: No. That's when I decided to get out. I said if they can't take care of me and my family, I'm out of here. So it wasn't only the Vietnam thing, that was the main thing, was the family thing.
- Mark: Yeah.
- Maurice: However I did have, after I was out a year or two, I had pangs of conscience; I figured I should be there. I should—you know, I was trained to fight and kill, and I should be there to help my service mates over there.
- Mark: You didn't think ten years of service was enough?
- Maurice: I just felt like I should be there to help out. That's what I was trained to do. So I went down to the Marine Corps and tried to join up, but they wouldn't take me. [laughs] They said, well, they could take me, but I'd have to go down to a private and I really couldn't afford that. [laughs] I was an E-6 when I got out of the Navy.
- Mark: That's a pretty steep pay cut.
- Maurice: Yeah. So when my wife found out about that, she was kind of upset. [laughs]
- Mark: So there were no more re-enlistment attempts, I imagine?
- Maurice: Nope, that was it.
- Mark: Well, thank you for taking some time out of your day.
- Maurice: Oh yeah, one more thing. In 1976 I joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard and they were looking for someone to get in the band in Madison there, and—
- Mark: What do you play?
- Maurice: The drums. I played in the Drum and Bugle Corps at Great Lakes when I was going through basic training. That was extracurricular activity that was after a full day of drill and ceremony and classroom work and then in the evening hours you'd practice for the Drum and Bugle Corps. So anyway, I played the drums in high school for four years and I loved it. So anyway, I got in the Wisconsin Army National Guard band for a year, and at that time they had a number of people who had signed up for six years to get out of the Vietnam War. They weren't very motivated and kind of sloppy. I couldn't be a part of it. I had to be with a proud outfit, so I joined the infantry in Whitewater and I was glad I did.

Mark: People do sometimes suggest that people who were joining the National Guard and the Reserves and that to get out of going to Vietnam; was that your experience?

Maurice: Yeah, I saw it, I saw 'em. I saw 'em in the band. But when I got with the infantry, I didn't see any down there.

Mark: That wasn't the case there?

Maurice: No, they were more motivated.

Mark: I see.

Maurice: But I served those six years in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, and then six years with the Army Reserve, and then I'm starting to get retirement now, at age sixty, from the Army, because I have thirty-one years of total military service. I could still serve my country, and I kind of enjoyed the Reserves.

Mark: Yeah. You could serve your country and your family at the same time.

Maurice: Yeah, right.

Mark: I guess that's a good place to end.

**[End of Interview]**