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“YOU’LL FIND OUT HERE PRETTY SOON THAT I HAVE PTSD”

EXAMINING HOW A VIETNAM VETERAN

COPE WITH TRAUMA

by

Matthew L. Stockett

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF ART

in

English  
(American Studies)

Approved:

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Major Professor

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

2015

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## ABSTRACT

“You’ll find out here pretty soon I have PTSD”  
Examining how a Vietnam Veteran  
Copes With Trauma

by

Matthew L. Stockett, Master of Art  
Utah State University, 2015

Major Professor: Dr. Shane Graham  
Department: English

This thesis is rooted in understanding trauma. Through a series of interviews with Zach Stockett, my grandfather and medical helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War, I identify his unique coping strategies. Zach uses humor, religious beliefs, and his ability to contribute meaningfully to the war effort to cope with the traumas he experienced. I drew from trauma theorists such as Maurice Halbwachs, Dori Laub, Cathy Caruth, Ruth Leys, Dominik LaCapra, and Marianne Hirsch to build a framework for understanding the different aspects of trauma that Zach experiences. On a personal level, these interviews provide insight into my own personal identity by seeing how Zach’s coping strategies influence familial social relationships. On a larger scale, these interviews and experiences do not completely coincide with the national collective memory surrounding the Vietnam War. Because of this disparity between the accepted canon of Vietnam media and Zach’s personal narrative, he did not feel the need to share. Veterans like Zach need an outlet to tell their stories because although they may not fit the national collective memory, they most certainly add to it and create a more accurate collective memory. Telling these stories also allows the veterans to work through their traumatic experiences.

(107 pages)

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I arrived in Mountain Green Utah on September 14, 2014 to begin a series of interviews with my grandfather, Zach. My grandfather flew medical helicopters for over half his life and, notably, in the Vietnam War. He served two tours in Vietnam, the first in 1962 and the second in 1964. His time spent in Vietnam was something everyone in the family knew about and acknowledged, but never talked about, leaving me to wonder why. I assumed from the movies I had seen that my grandfather's experiences were too traumatic. I would learn that Zach didn't talk about Vietnam with anyone. Not the family, VA groups, or even the men he served with. Acquiring this knowledge surprised me. Why was my grandfather so willing to talk to me about his war experiences but no one else?

After the initial hugs with grandma and grandpa, I quickly began the interview. I started with an explanation that I didn't want these to be thought of as interviews but as conversations. My grandfather laughed, the way he easily does, and answered with a hint of sarcasm, "Ok, that's fine, well we'll start a conversation. And we'll talk awhile and then your grandma will holler, 'Hey dinner's ready!' And then we can take a break." My grandfather's humor is an important aspect of his character. For as long as I can remember he has been putting me and the rest of the family at ease with his ability to find the lighter side in the difficult aspects of his life. I should not have been surprised to discover the substantial role humor plays in the way Zach dealt with the trauma he experienced as a rescue pilot. He would often make jokes when relating painful stories. I was glad to think my grandfather's humor indicated he had overcome his traumas but I was also worried; thinking the work I had done, studying trauma theory, would not help

me make sense of his stories the way I had hoped. However, after a month of visiting, Zach divulged to me that there are times when he experiences hallucinations of the War, experiences that confirm some of the precepts of “trauma theory”.

In the past five years, Zach has had numerous medical issues. He has gone through chemotherapy for leukemia, which the doctors diagnosed was from his exposure to Agent Orange. He also developed non-Hodgkins lymphoma from his leukemia and chemotherapy. Zach has had treatment for both carcinoma and melanoma, an extremely rare combination. He has also had five of his vertebra welded together and four discs in his back replaced, due to all the rough landings he has had in his flying career. Zach learned that the use of painkillers such as morphine caused him to have hallucinations and a recurring dream:

Oh I just uh.. dream that I’m back over in Vietnam and then, in a field and I’m trying to pick up the wounded people and what not, and then, it’s, it’s, every time it’s the same dream. And morphine makes me uh.. have hallucinate, and I think I’m in Vietnam and what not and yeah. And uh.. I know when I had my back operation I told them “hey I can’t take morphine” you know “make sure I don’t you know.” So what do they give me you know, when, I first wake up wondering what’s going, morphine and I really got, and uh.. you’re supposed to be really quiet and I really, I remember got pretty violent and what not because I was having all these hallucinations and what not of fighting, back over in Vietnam and what not, yeah. Yeah, you’ll find out here pretty soon that I have PTSD, (he laughs, I laugh). (10/20/14 #1 pg. 104)

This was the first explicit example of the traumatic effects Zach deals with as a result of his time spent in Vietnam. The incomplete sentences and repetitions take on a more significant role when he attempts to explain his experience. He also uses humor at the end to relieve the pressure of talking about this occurrence. Witnessing the way Zach talks about this particular experience allowed me to identify these same coping strategies in all the other interviews. This particular moment, so closely aligned with a traumatic symptom, opened the door for a further look into the ways Zach has learned to cope with trauma. Through his long life he has found strategies that allow him to function with very little noticeable effects from his experiences in Vietnam. On a day-to-day basis his “common memory” seems to overshadow his “deep memories,” to use Lawrence Langer’s terminology. Talking about his experiences does not prevent him from functioning in his normal life. It is only with painkillers that his deep memories fully surface and take over his common memory.

Langer explains the complicated relationship between deep and common memory: “Deep memory thus suspects and depends on common memory, knowing what common memory cannot know but tries nonetheless to express” (6). Common memory is the functioning memory that attempts to fill in the gaps of comprehension created by trauma of the incidents that someone may never fully understand. It allows individuals to function with the traumatic experiences they have witnessed. There are times when deep memories, or traumatic memories, try to emerge in due to traumatic experiences. When deep memories come up they disrupt the common memory that individuals use to function.



For those who have experienced traumatic events there is constant negotiation between the two memories, and this negotiation becomes apparent when traumatic events are retold. Zach's sudden stops and his repetition of certain words during his narrative illustrate the negotiation between his common memories and his deep memories. There are instances when he thinks he gives information that he doesn't give. In these instances, the deep memory is attempting to come out and the common memory is trying to accommodate it. The common memory is not able to fill in the blank because there is nothing that can adequately define or explain it. Both common memory and deep memory function within an individual and both of these memories contribute to the shared collective memory of a social group.

Maurice Halbwachs' foundational text *On Collective Memory* (1992) defined collective memory as social frameworks for memories. He explains, "Collective frameworks are... precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of society" (40). Social groups create a framework for memories. Group members participate in the framework to create a collective or shared memory that all members partake in. Halbwachs explains, "...what we call the collective framework of memory would then be only the result, or sum, or combination of individual recollections of many members of the same society" (39). Everyone that participated in the Vietnam War create and participate in the collective memory of the war. These individuals are able to connect to and implement the shared memories into their own memory, which allows personal memories to be reconstructed with the aid of the other individuals that served in the war. Halbwachs continues, "One may say that the individual remembers by placing himself in

the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifest itself in individual memories” (40).

This process of sharing and reconstructing memories creates a shared collective memory. In the case of social groups, such as families, their shared collective memory is private and unique to them. In larger social groups, such as the United States, there is a wider collective memory that is created and shared. The Vietnam War is a perfect example of the creation of a wider collective memory because it was the first war that received extensive visual media attention. Television coverage, along with books, and movies contributed to the shared collective memory of the war. For this reason I will use the term ‘national collective memory’ to distinguish and refer to the generally negative images, narratives, tropes, and themes surrounding the Vietnam War, created by a national social group. Zach’s traumatic flashbacks and hallucinations are caused by his detachment from any collective memory which Halbwachs argues, takes place in dreams.

The painkillers put Zach in a state where no collective memory exists. Halbwachs further examines the phenomenon Zach experiences while using painkillers. Halbwachs says, “Only detached shreds of the scenes we have really experienced appear in dreams” (41). It is only in dreams that all experiences are manifested, even traumatic ones. This is because although the brain cannot make sense of the experience, it is nevertheless in the brain. Halbwachs goes on to say, “Furthermore, in all these cases and in all imaginable dreams, the actual personality—not the personality as it once was—is actively involved in a dream” (42). The morphine takes away the frameworks of Zach’s collective memories and allows the deep memories to function without being fully mediated by his common memory. He relives a summation of his recurring trauma of rescuing people in

Vietnam. Although the common memory is negated, there is still a violent reaction when his common memory attempts to account for the deep memories that are exposed.

To regain the equilibrium afforded him by common memory, Zach adds his touch of humor when he talks about his flashback by saying he has PTSD. This is funny because of the national collective memory surrounding veterans with PTSD, and because he does not feel he fits the stereotype of individuals diagnosed with the disorder. His humor reminds him of the control he has over his deep memories and indicates how he handles recounting the recurring traumatic effects in his life.

In an effort to better understand the effects of this national collective memory I conducted the interviews with my Grandfather. I worked to understand how Zach deals with trauma in his life and identify if his coping strategies have affected his family and me. I also wanted to see the differences in his perceptions of the war and contrast them with the national collective memories perpetuated by authors such as Tim O'Brien and a and by Hollywood films. Through this examination I discovered that Zach's religious beliefs, his meaningful contributions, and use of humor allowed him to cope with the traumatic events he witnessed as a medical helicopter pilot. Zach's coping strategies helped him survive the war and helped him cope with trauma after the war, but paradoxically kept his stories from being told. As a result, these same coping strategies played a role in my personal familial relationships and development.

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Psychologists recognized trauma as early as the 1860s but it wasn't until the 1980s when it was included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, in the form of PTSD, that trauma was validated worldwide as a medical disorder. This diagnosis, although prominent in war veterans, has also found uses in survivors of natural catastrophes, rape, child abuse, and other violent occurrences (Caruth 3). Most scholars agree that individuals do not experience traumatic events when they are happening<sup>1</sup>. The trauma happens as individuals attempt to understand and make sense of the event after it has taken place. Cathy Caruth explains, "The pathology consists, rather, solely in the structure of its experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experienced it" (4). We see this with PTSD when the experiences are reenacted through dreams, hallucinations, flashbacks, and other behaviors (4). Dori Laub further explains this traumatic effect when he says, "Massive trauma precludes its registration; the observing and recording mechanisms of the human mind are temporarily knocked out, malfunction" (57). Being disconnected from the event makes it difficult to understand it. If the mind is not experiencing the event at the time the event takes place, then how is the individual able to give an accurate representation of what they experienced? There are further complications to obtaining an accurate representation by the way collective memories are

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<sup>1</sup> Although it is clear that trauma plays a substantial role in violent events, there is some disparity between what is considered traumatic enough to cause PTSD and what is not. For instance, Ruth Leys gives the example of Paula Jones, who claimed she suffered from PTSD because of the alleged sexual harassment from President Clinton. Jones claimed she experienced "long term symptoms of anxiety, intrusive thoughts and memories and sexual aversion" (Leys 2). Leys is further skeptical about the way trauma has been examined and worked to show these issues by examining the history of its uses. Leys claims that the understanding of trauma theory was based on hypnosis which allowed individuals to recount the events in the form of imitation. Individuals imitated what they saw or experienced which would be inaccurate because they were disconnected mentally from the incident. This is a problem because an individual's recreation or reliving of the event would not be considered accurate if they were borrowing from memories they had or memories that had been created from other parts of their lives, such as events from before the traumatic event or after.

created and reconstructed. The reconstruction shapes the way a collective body of people understand traumatic historical events.

In the case of the Vietnam War, as with other violent incidents throughout history, what happens to the collective memory with the information and accounts that have been published about the event? How has a collective memory shaped the way the Vietnam War is understood and perceived by those who have not fought in the war as a result of different forms of media such as memoirs, interviews, and movies?

In a preliminary attempt to better understand the varying effects and issues that arise within trauma theory, I read the works of Tim O'Brien, one of the most, if not the most, widely read writers to depict the war in Vietnam. O'Brien has influenced not only the world of fiction, but also how individuals perceive and understand the conflict in Vietnam. His experiences have engrained themselves into the public understanding of the war. Through his fiction and non-fiction, O'Brien has contributed to the creation of a national collective memory for Vietnam that has affected the perception of the war.

*If I Die in a Combat Zone* was Tim O'Brien's memoir and second published work. It came out in 1975 and was one of the first memoirs by a Vietnam veteran. He would continue to write and win awards for his fiction, most notably *The Things They Carried* (1990). Because of his writing, O'Brien has been called the voice of the Vietnam War and a spokesman for Vietnam veterans (Harris 88). Being referenced as a spokesman is warranted mainly because O'Brien has presented, for many veterans, the most accurate representation of the conflict. His responsibility for being a spokesperson, not taken lightly (89), has informed the way a large audience understands the conflict in Vietnam. O'Brien tries to distance himself from the role of spokesperson, insisting many of his

books downplay the Vietnam aspect. Still, any reader of Tim O'Brien can see the effects his Vietnam experience has had, as well as his influence in popular media, such as movies.

His descriptions of combat training coincide with many movies, including 1987's *Full Metal Jacket*. Private Kline's fat, whimpering quivers match Leonard 'Gomer Pyle' Lawrence's bumbling slow private in Stanley Kubrick's film. The frequent drug use, insubordination, and apparent murder of a commanding officer (174) are echoed in Oliver Stone's 1986 *Platoon*. O'Brien even shows absurd superior officers such as Major Callicles, and their at times irrational ideas surrounding combat and dealing with the war (202). Similarities appear in Francis Ford Coppola's depiction of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz or Lieutenant Colonel Bill Kilgore in 1979's *Apocalypse Now*. There are now countless histories written illustrating the drug use and general understanding of the war, which have confirmed O'Brien's representations<sup>2</sup>.

I have not been the first to question the way the Vietnam War has been packaged and understood by the public. Kali Tal points to "The Vietnam Experience"<sup>3</sup> published by Time-Life Books. She cites Timothy Luke who said that the collection suggests, "If you

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<sup>2</sup>Some notable histories such as Marilyn Young's *The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990* discuss veteran drug use (256) as well as the difficult psychological issues the veterans experienced after the war. Michael Biton and Kevin Sim's *Four Hours in My Lia* recounts the massacre at My Lia and coincides with O'Brien's descriptions of daily combat life. Their account also illustrates the United States' perceptions and reactions to the war. The United States attempted to cover up the massacre which would further add to the national collective memory of the wild, psychologically disturbed, veteran. The government's attempt to cover up the massacre only strengthened the national collective memory.

<sup>3</sup>The Vietnam Experience is a 25 volume set published from 1981-1988. The volumes are comprised of a variety of sources including: photographs, transcripts from military archives, newspapers, monographs, and interviews. Robert George, the publisher of the series, said this about the compilation: "following the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C. in November 1982, interest in the series spiked, and sales quickly followed, particularly after Time-Life Books signed on to market and distribute the series. Many new subscribers were veterans, the majority of whom had served only a year in country (thirteen months if they were Marines) and had little understanding of the history of Vietnam or the war in which they had fought. For them the series provided a way to contextualize their own "Vietnam experience" within a broader historical framework—to see how the war had escalated and changed over time, how the combat experience of an Army grunt in the Iron Triangle in 1966 differed from that of a paratrooper in the Central Highlands in 1967 or a Marine combat pilot based at Da Nang in 1969. But vets were not the only ones to buy the books. *The Vietnam Experience* ultimately attracted more than 700,000 subscribers, who collectively purchased more than 11 million books. It was apparent that many people, vet or not, still wanted to know "how" And "why?" (The Vietnam Experience).

were there, this is your story. If you weren't here's your chance to learn what it was really like" (Tal 11). There is a distortion of ideas surrounding the Vietnam War when a collective group creates a perceived understanding of the war, such as Time-Life books. The distortion leads to misrepresentations of the events and creates a framework for individuals to understand the war. When veterans, like Zach, don't fit the collective ideas surrounding the war, they may feel alienated from the collective group, which keeps them from contributing to, in this case, the national collective memory. Furthermore, those who propose that anyone can understand the war misrepresent the veterans and individual's perceptions of the conflict.

Tal examines the effects of trauma on targeted groups to show how people's understanding of Vietnam veterans is due to misrepresenting the group. She argues that Vietnam veterans are classified as a targeted group, "Those exposed to combat or other life-threatening events, and those exposed to carnage resulting from combat [who] were traumatized" (10). Most veterans fall into the category of a targeted group. They witnessed horrific violence and traumatic scenes. I am interested in experiences and individuals that challenge the condition Tal describes: "Much recent literature – popular, clinical, and academic – places the combat soldier simply in the victim's role; helpless in the face of war, and then helpless to readjust from the war experience upon his return home" (10). Considering the tropes that O'Brien and his works, as well as many popular movies, perpetuate about the Vietnam War, it is easy to see how the national collective memories surrounding Vietnam veterans continue to influence the collective understanding of the conflict and those who participated in it.

Vietnam veterans form a complicated group that scares and evokes pity from Americans while simultaneously causing individuals to question their feelings of pride for the soldiers. Exploring my grandfather's role in the Vietnam War further illustrates the conflicting ideas presented by Tal. He did not shoot at the enemy but instead rescued people. He took orders and saw violence like the combat soldiers, but his perceptions of the war challenge the ideas perpetuated by the national collective memory surrounding the Vietnam War. Tal identifies and points out that oppressed groups "almost never control the tools of violence" (10). My grandfather carried the tools of violence while also offering the tools of rescue and safety. His experiences and perception of the war add another element to understanding the ways he dealt with and remembered traumatic experiences.

Understanding how trauma is manifested in my grandfather requires the examination of past events, making memory a vital part of understanding the theories surrounding trauma. Those theories are concerned with memory, and the ways memories are recalled and transmitted. Many theorists acknowledge the difficulties and paradoxes that come with relying on memory. LaCapra says, "Memory not only plays tricks; it is purportedly constituted by its tricks, which make it intrinsically unreliable as a historical source" (16). Although memory recall presents natural problems with details and validity, LaCapra also acknowledges its value. He says, "Even in its falsifications, repressions, displacements, and denials, memory may nonetheless be informative – not in terms of an accurate empirical representation of its object but in terms of that object's often anxiety-ridden reception and assimilation by both participants in events and those born later" (LaCapra 19). Memory may not be the most accurate means to obtain empirical or



historically accurate information. It does however provide a unique perspective into traumatic events and the ways that individuals view them. Memory may not be the most historically accurate but it is the best means to see how individuals cope with and understand events.

Dori Laub believes that historical accuracy is less relevant to understanding trauma than the silences of the individuals being interviewed. The event overwhelms their capacity for comprehension, so their witnessing of the event becomes something they essentially didn't mentally comprehend. This can be troubling for historians because empirical quantitative data is lost, creating unreliable historic information. Laub contends that individuals who are unable to give accurate information actually give a more significant insight into traumatic events. If a person is mentally disconnected due to trauma, then they would naturally be unable to recount exact information. Therefore, when someone is incapable of giving information about events or they give inaccurate information, it actually indicates the traumatic nature of the event. There is a mental disconnect that takes place because of the trauma, and the silence proves the disconnection.

Although memory creates issues of authenticity and may not lend itself to the complete understanding of trauma, it nevertheless provides the best access to traumatic events, which makes memory still relevant to the study of trauma. This would suggest the need to access the events despite the incomplete nature of the memories. The act of accessing memories is one of the most controversial aspects of trauma theory. Caruth believes that a traumatic event is traumatic because there is a "delay or incompleteness in knowing" (5). The trauma is a returning to the literal event because the individual is

incapable of understanding the event. This would suggest that, in order to overcome the trauma, one must come to a complete understanding of the event. How one comes to a complete understanding varies, but most theorists agree that witnessing and listening play an integral part in the therapeutic healing and understanding of the event. LaCapra explains the implications of witnessing when he says, “The traumatic event has its greatest and most clearly unjustifiable effect on the victim, but in different ways it also affects everyone who comes in contact with it: perpetrator, collaborator, bystander, resister, those born later” (LaCapra 8-9). There is a joint effect that trauma has on the witness and listener. Understanding the role of each individual in the process allows for a more complete understanding of the event and individuals involved. Laub elaborates on this idea when he says:

Bearing witness to a trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener. For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an other – in position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking to somebody; to somebody they have been waiting for a long time. (70-71)

The act of witnessing allows the individual to begin his understanding of the event as Caruth identified.

My talks with my grandfather allowed me to further understand the effects of trauma. I would go to his house and spend the majority of the afternoon talking with him about his experiences in the war and other life events. The interviews have given me an unparalleled look into the life of my grandfather and the ways he dealt with traumatic events. I wanted to remember my grandfather, and I wanted other family members in the

future to know about him. My grandfather's experiences have never been documented, and this project would allow me to archive his stories, while also giving me personal insight into the life of a man I respect and admire. During the interviews, I did not consider the effects my intentions would have on the interviews. However, through my examination I was able to see how my own biases affected my perception and expectations regarding the information he provided. This identification led me to understand the ways perceptions effect the transfer of memories that leads to what is contained within a collective memory.

As with any genre, there are certain expectations that come when reading or examining that genre. These expectations inform individuals' understanding of that genre. When I first listened to the interviews, there seemed to be very little, if any, recognizable traumatic effects being manifest in my grandfather. But I soon came to realize that my expectations as a listener had been influenced by the national collective memory of the troubled war veteran, that has been created by movies, memoirs, and other media. Marianne Hirsch, in her examination of the different transmissions of past traumas, says, "Even the most intimate familial transmission of the past is, it seems, mediated by public images and narratives" (30). I expected to witness grand obvious gestures that would mark psychological issues and a troubled disposition because that is how veterans of the Vietnam War are portrayed in the national collective memory.

There was always a concern that certain questions would bring up past memories and feelings that would disrupt my grandfather's normal everyday functions. To the contrary, there seemed to be no effects in our conversations. He constantly made jokes about situations he experienced. I was concerned after the first interview, thinking I was

laughing too much and not taking his experiences seriously. As a result, I tried to back off, laugh less, and be more of a listener. For a time I was still frustrated when he didn't stop with his humor. He continued to point out "good things" that came out of the war, which he agrees were few. Later I was able to determine that humor played an important role in the transmission of his stories. More importantly, he needed to incorporate humor in order to re-live the traumatic events.

The following section examines the interviews by first looking at physical and verbal manifestations of the traumatic events Zach experienced. I then look at specific sections of the interviews identifying the rhetorical choices he incorporates into his narrative. This examination shows how he coped with the traumas he experienced with his own unique strategies.

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Zach Stockett was born January 24, 1931. He is 84 years old. The natural effects of age compound the effects of trauma on his memory. There were times in the interview when Zach admits he cannot remember specifics. He has trouble with names of his different crew members. He also admits that many of the experiences bleed together: "You know, I was telling you about the typhoon and the ship sinking and what not and so yeah, that, that was one mission there. And I guess there's quite, you know we had quite a few missions over there. I, I, they all kind of run together uh..."(9/29/14 #1 pg 66). The one defining mission is the typhoon rescue, which stands out from the rest because it was unique. The other missions are more difficult to distinguish between. Indications of the difficulty Zach experiences can be identified in long pauses and repetition of words and

phrases such as, “uh.” and “you know.” These repetitions are common in everyday discourse, but they take on more significance in the interview setting when talking about traumatic events. Many of the pauses were accompanied by increased rocking in his chair, head dropped back, and closed eyes, which indicates an increased concentration and effort to remember. These actions are more apparent when the subject matter changes to violent or stressful incidents. Added to the physical actions of rocking in his chair, he rolled up his pants just above the knee. He would continually roll and unroll with both his hands making his knuckles white. There were also changes in voice, higher pitch or strained vocals. There were times when interviews would go an hour and a half, so it makes sense that a voice would be strained. But in some parts of the interview, especially when talking about violence or saving individuals, the changed pitch seemed to be associated with the subject matter more than duration of talking.

Beyond the physical manifestations of the effects of trauma were the rhetorical choices made by Zach. It has been almost fifty years since Zach served in Vietnam, and in that time he has learned to control his deep memories with his common memory. This control is apparent with the rhetorical techniques he uses in his interviews. These techniques became more obvious after examining the interviews and seeing how they still play a role in Zach’s life.

My grandfather has had a long career of flying helicopters. The majority of his time was spent flying rescue missions in the United States. His training in the States heavily influenced his assignments in Vietnam. As a result of all his experience, he is very quick to talk about his experiences outside of the war. There were many times he would tell a war experience and then quickly shift to a rescue mission in Arizona. The

most telling time was when he began to talk about a flak trap he almost flew into. He begins to tell the story:

Like one time I was going in and they'd set up a flack trap and they'd like to do that to suck you in and they could have people that could, with our radios that would call in an emergency and you'd go out there and they would have uh, you know a trap set up for you with machine guns and what not and I know one time I was going in and boy uh.. and the, the voice you know, "pull up, pull up" and I, I know I, I turned and yanked, you know full back stick and full power, you know I just turned and there just came a wall of fire like that. (9/22/14 #2 pg. 64)

He stops here and says, "I'll tell you about those stories some other time. I'll give you some good war stories. Yeah" (64). He wants to tell the story; he begins it but then abruptly stops.

This retelling is interesting because of how much he didn't think he told me. The traumatic nature and significance of the event and the retelling are later evident when he gives what he believes is the full account. The main differences between the two incidents are the surrounding details. In the second account, Zach gives background about the protocols associated with flying rescue missions including lines of communication between him and those who coordinate the rescue pickups. He also explains the tactics of the Vietcong, and how they set up the flak traps (9/29/14 #1 pg. 67). The details that remain the same are the details he presented in the first telling. It is almost word-for-word with the addition of specific details about how he handled the helicopter. Here is a negotiation between common memory and deep memory. Zach needed to negotiate this particular deep memory of the flak trap. The full understanding and negotiation for Zach

came with the added details, even though the climax of action remained the same. In order for Zach to assimilate the incident as Caruth argues is necessary to understanding (4), he needed to incorporate all the surrounding details that create the entire event in a cohesive narrative.

This assimilation period takes place over the preceding week between the two interviews. There is added significance in the second interview in the way Zach begins. He says, "I, I guess uh.. I'd like to talk about it maybe." He has now made the conscious decision, which seems difficult, to go into the details of this event. He is almost reluctant to begin and yet there seems to be a level of relief here, when he says, "I guess...", or giving in to the chance to tell the story. This specific event illustrates what Laub identified as understanding silences. Zach's inability to first fill in information indicates that a disconnect occurred. As a result, the information needed to be filled in as a way for Zach to understand this event in the retelling process. Through reconstructing this memory, Zach creates a picture for him and me to comprehend. The details, while interesting, don't bear as much significance as the traumatic nature of the event. It doesn't matter if it is historically accurate or not. What matters is the way he conveys this traumatic experience. The value of his testimony, far beyond its historical value, is that it helps Zach maintain an active relationship with the past, rather than remaining a passive victim to traumatic memories. He is able to cope with his trauma and communicate it, because he has a reason, which he never had until now. He works through the events under the excuse of documenting his life to his family. This documentation may have less historical value, but more value for understanding Zach and his way of dealing with trauma and the way it will affect future generations.

Zach uses other devices to avoid talking about traumatic experiences. One of these is his ability to change the focus from himself to other people. He is quick to say that infantrymen had a more stressful time being out on patrols and being shot at. In his narrative, he often would downplay his own experiences and highlight others:

I would have a lot rather been flying a helicopter than I would going out on those patrols and I can understand how that would just be really nerve racking where you're out going through that old thick jungle waiting anytime for just someone to start shooting at you, that would be really stressful. Uh.. you know and a helicopter mission you are so busy you know, the crash phone rings or you get a phone call and you run as fast, to the helicopter, jump in and you're taking off and strapping in and heading out and you're calling on the radios to get, you know gunships to cover you and uh.. you know, make sure you get all the information and you're just busy you don't have time to think about being scared. (9/22/14 #1 pg. 39)

By talking about his stressful schedule, Zach conveys that there was very little time to be afraid or think about the potentially dangerous situations he was in. There is a disparity here between the ideas generally associated with those that served in Vietnam. The disparity can be seen in O'Brien's memoir (123) or the popular films previously mentioned such as *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*. There are instances when soldiers are resting in-between firefights or when soldiers are coming back in from patrols and having time to rest. Soldiers are portrayed as having time to think about the paradoxes and morally compromising situations they find themselves in between battles for their lives against an enemy determined to drive the occupying army out of their country. They not



only had to fight an enemy but also boredom. There was time to do drugs or lounge on hills or rice paddies.

Zach paints a very different picture here. His routine is, comparatively, constantly stressful and he rarely ever had a break from it. He would reiterate his busy schedule at a later date, explaining:

I guess you didn't. I mean you just were there, I was detachment commander, maybe your troops could feel like they could take a break but I guess as a detachment commander you're just there all the time and uh.. and it wasn't, it was like 7 days a week 24 hours a day, a lot of times you were, you'd think you could be off at night cause we weren't flying operational missions but yet it seems like a lot of times there were things going on and uh.. so you'd be on alert and uh.. so you know the missions would be down in, in so you could lay down. I had a couch or a, you know, something, not near this nice but it was like an old settee that we found someplace you know at night a lot of times uh.. I had my flight boots, I had zippers in them and you know, you lay down and doze off but you had the radios on and you'd hear people talking and, and if it was really an emergency usually you could tell, you know you could hear somebody call in and even if they were trying to be cool about it you just, the tone of their voice, when really something was going on and you'd, or the crash phone would ring and you'd jump up and answer the crash phone and while you're doing that you're putting your boots on and then we had another, built another thing out of plywood for the crews to sleep in... and push uh.. the scramble button and that, they'd take off and run for the helicopter and, but then you know, usually I'd have the info

that we need and run to the helicopter and away we'd go. Some nights I felt like as if I didn't really wake up until I was climbing out. (10/6/14 #1 pg. 78)

Zach was always connected to his responsibilities. Even when he was trying to rest, his radio was on, linking him to the constant activity of the war. His continuous activity challenges the perception of other veterans but also becomes significant in the ways he handles stress and traumatic events. Zach may have never had an opportunity to sit down and contemplate the same issues of life and death or ethical decisions that other veterans faced. Zach saw death and injury daily, but he was in rescue. He was constantly saving lives, and this allowed him to contribute meaningfully to the war efforts. This allowed him to focus on different aspects of his duties instead of thinking about the injuries or deaths he faced each day. Zach continues to stay busy today, focusing his time on various projects around the house, visits to family, and several church duties. His ability to stay busy and contribute meaningfully to his family and other people is an important personal characteristic that continues to help him deal with stress.

When asked specifically how he handles stress, Zach often avoids the question and instead gives more examples or stories. When asked how he got over the stress, he begins to answer but quickly changes to talking about another story, his answer, "No, I, I guess you just, oh one that really bothered me for a long, long time, and that was a friend of mine crashed. He, he just lived a couple of doors down we were living on base and uh and uh..." (9/22/14 #1 pg. 46). It happens so fast it is almost unnoticeable. He begins with "No, I, I, guess you just-" which is his initial response to the question, and then he switches to the story of his friend who was killed. This switch signifies that his coping with all the traumatic events isn't over. There are still incidents and questions he isn't

ready to answer or talk about. Answering a question head on would indicate he has worked through or gained an understanding of how he handled stress. Instead, he uses what might seem like unrelated illustrations to indirectly work through traumatic events. He switches to the death of his friend to show how he dealt with the stress saying it bothered him for a long time because he can't fully explain the way he dealt with stress. This is part of his process of recognizing the incident and understanding how he coped.

The most direct answer he ever gave about the way he handled traumatic events perfectly illustrates the unique perspective he had. He says:

I don't know uh.. you know if you're on two or three in a row you start feeling depressed, I mean that's the thing about rescue and you can go out and feel like you saved somebody and feel really good, when you go out and you can't find the guy or you find them and they're dead or you know, like a crash they're really gruesome, you know, and if you go two or three a week like that you're really starting to feel depressed you know and uh.. so yeah I guess some people go to the club and have a few drinks but I never did that. (9/22/14 #1 pg. 46)

This outlook is different from the popular perceptions of Vietnam veterans. Zach was rescuing people, which is obviously different from the infantrymen's duties. He explains how he felt good about what he was doing. Contrasting how Zach talks about the good he did with the perception of infantrymen who rarely indicate "feeling good" about what they did, illustrates the way Zach dealt with his responsibilities. He never fired a weapon, but the enemy still confronted him. He was also constantly witnessing the violent effects of the war when he would rescue individuals from plane crashes or firefights. He saved lives but despite that, what he witnessed still affected him. He never used drugs or

alcohol to deal with the traumatic events, implying that those substances did not tamper with his memories. This adds lucidity to his stories. It also further illustrates how his perspective adds a different dynamic to the national collective memories surrounding the Vietnam War. Our understanding of the Vietnam war needs to allow stories like Zach's and other veterans', that don't fit the national collective memory, to exist within that memory and help increase our understanding of the war.

Added to his already unique perspective is the way that Zach's religion influenced the way he viewed and dealt with incidents in the war. He often acknowledges his religion for helping him deal with stress and fear. He also credits his beliefs for protecting him during different violent encounters. Recalling the flak trap, he believes the voice he heard say, "Pull up, pull up" to have been divine intervention. Zach's crew knew he was religious, and his beliefs were accepted by the crew members. No member of his crew ever died during his tours. The crew would promote Zach's beliefs by ensuring that he said his prayers:

I, I think they were all wanted to make sure that I'd said my prayers before we (we laugh) went out and I know I said a lot of prayers and I, I guess I said a lot of prayers when we were going and taking off and flying out on those missions that we'd be able to find the people and be able to pick them up...(10/20/14 #1 pg. 99).

Zach's faith inspired those he worked with every day. The comfort he felt due to his religion was to some degree passed on to his crew, indicating his crew noticed a marked difference in the way he acted. The crew members could tap into Zach's method of dealing with trauma and stress. They could indirectly rely on the religion, which allowed

them to deal with their own stress. This interaction worked twofold because it helped Zach personally, and he could feel like he was contributing to his own crew members' lives in a meaningful way. He never pushed his religion on anyone, but he never compromised his beliefs either. Through his conviction, he was able to find meaning in his day-to-day operations that many other soldiers lacked.

Even though Zach was not proselytizing, he still played an active role in practicing his religion. He says that one good thing came out of the war. There was a religious conversion that took place, and he was instrumental in the process of the individual joining his church. He says in recounting the baptism:

Sunday morning we went down to the beach and uh.. kind of set up a little perimeter there and uh.. and uh.. he got baptized in the South China, oh and I flew out, I had the helicopter there and my crew, cause we were on alert, so we went out and chased the sharks away because there was thousands of sharks in the South China Sea. We used, you wouldn't believe the number of sharks that, and, chased the sharks away and, and uh.. that uh.. sergeant uh.. baptized him and uh.. and then they set him apart and so that was our baptism (he laughs) oh and uh.. I said we set a perimeter cause the crew had all come down from up at the army base so we had a helicopter and two 6xs<sup>4</sup> and (he laughs) and a little 'ol area right there at the South China Sea. So that was our one baptism. (10/6/14 #1 pg. 80)

To say something positive came out of the war is rarely ever heard. Yet Zach is able to identify this positive outcome, despite his constant encounters with violence. He even explains that he and other church members would have weekly church meetings. These meetings would provide him with a break from his duties:

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<sup>4</sup> Zach is referring to a shelter made with wood and the size of the wood used.

Yeah. Yeah our meetings were just, just you know good to get together with the other members of the church. I can remember how happy I was just when those other two guys came, you know, came along and I could get together and talk with them. And uh.. they were probably at first, “what’s this major doing walking around here looking for me?” (we laugh) you know. Cause, to find them I went over in their barracks, you know, looking for them. Had their name, didn’t know what they looked like... So yeah we really had uh.. it was really good to get together with them. Then as we started getting other members and, I thought we had some pretty, pretty good meetings. Yeah. That was really a, really good to get together on those Sundays. Probably the only good thing that happened all week. (I laugh). (10/20/14 #2 pg. 107).

There are multiple repetitions of how “good” the meetings were. There are no details about why these meetings were good, aside from him being away from his other duties and being surrounded by other members of his faith. Considering Zach’s schedule, it is easy to understand why all he needed was something to break up his daily routine. Zach also gets involved in finding members. He finds humor in the fact that he, as a high-ranking officer, goes around to different barracks searching for other members of his faith. This small act of contributing to his church coincides with the way he contributed to the war efforts through rescuing individuals. Zach had the ability to find purpose, no matter how small, during his combat service. His meaningful contributions supplemented the effects of traumatic events he saw on a daily basis. There were times when Zach didn’t feel like he was contributing, and he had to use other techniques to deal with traumatic experiences.

Zach uses humor in all aspects of his life. His use of humor illustrates another personal coping strategy and plays a substantial role in the way he communicates and deals with traumatic events. There are instances of it in every interview. He tells stories about his company seeing him get electrocuted and laughing about it. He talks about practical jokes that members of his company played on each other, such as placing gourds in a watermelon garden. He also talks about items they stole or times when they had to scrounge for equipment. The use of humor becomes especially important when Zach interjects it into traumatic events. Zach witnessed a convoy of trucks get ambushed by the Vietcong. He could do very little to assist the convoy during the attack. He attempted to dive down at the enemy, but because he was in a medical helicopter, he was not equipped to offer any other help. He had to watch the incident unfold:

Yeah, I mean, we did you know go down and, and of course the guys in the back were shooting at them with an M-16, that's about (he laughs) about like using a pea shooter you know but uh, but yeah the, the, really we couldn't do, really do anything, in fact if the, but that the, I mean they hit the, and ambushed the convoy then the convoy kind of fought them off then you had so many trucks blowing up and quite a few casualties and what not. It was just, those things went on all the time you know and, and uh.. you never knew when you were going to get shot at. It was beautiful coast line over there, you could fly along the coast and think "oh how beautiful that is" you know and you could be well looking and maybe taking a picture and then all of sudden you're getting shot at you know, so you, you just had to be, you never knew what was gonna, where they would have, have a gun set up (10/6/14 #1 pg. 76).

Zach laughs as he begins to explain his futile attempts to help the convoy. By comparing their M-16 to a peashooter, he amplifies how insignificant their efforts were. Having to sit and watch this destruction would be difficult for anyone. Considering how Zach worked to contribute in meaningful ways, this must have been especially difficult. He naturally finds the humorous aspect of the situation to alleviate the difficult scene he witnessed. Zach also attempts to show how jarring this experience was by introducing the coastline and landscapes that he saw. His juxtaposition indicates that he wasn't ready for what he saw. If he knew it was going to happen then he would have been able to do something so he could assist more than he did. By explaining that there was no possible way for him to be prepared, he can account for his inability to give aid until the fighting was over.

He uses humor when talking about almost every aspect of his service. When asked specifically about the funny, lighter moments in his service he replies, "oh, there had to be, there had to be light, or you'd go, there was so, uh.." (10/6/14 #4 pg. 88). Zach doesn't complete the sentence. He almost says what happens to someone without humor, but then stops and switches to something else. He goes on to talk about a specific crew member who helped find lighter moments for everyone. By not completing the sentence, Zach indicates the horrific nature of what someone would become without humor. He doesn't have a word to describe what exactly happens to someone, which further shows he experienced it himself or has witnessed it in someone else. Psychologist Michael Sliter recently examined the use of humor as a coping strategy in high level stress jobs such as firefighters, policemen, and rescue personal. He found that humor plays a significant role in helping individuals cope with stress, explaining, "Simply put, individuals high in



coping humor tend to interpret stressful events in a more positive light. Through this more positive interpretation of events, and through altering the emotions elicited by the environment, humor can buffer against the negative effects of traumatic stressors” (Silter 260). The release of tension and stress through the lighter moments is a cathartic outlet for Zach and helped him “buffer against the negative outcomes” he witnessed (260). Zach’s humor illustrates how he dealt with the war, but also how he continues to cope with the trauma he experienced.

After the interviews had been collected, Zach and I learned that this process had become more meaningful than we anticipated. I was able to learn more about my grandfather than I ever have before. Zach confided that he had never talked to anyone about many of the stories:

Oh, you know, it, it’s made me remember a lot of things I haven’t thought of for a long, long time. Seems like once I start talking about them I start remembering things I forgot yeah well I don’t think it bothers me and in fact a lot of that stuff I’ve never really talked about before, you know just bringing it up and yeah...(10/20/14 #1 pg. 106)

For Zach it became an opportunity to deal with the traumas he faced and come to a better understanding of what he witnessed for himself. Having a family member to recount his experiences to allowed for a unique kind of transfer and familial collective understanding. There wasn’t a concern for the national collective memories that have been created by a broader body of work and media. Marianne Hirsch has extensively examined the familial relationship in her book *The Generation of Postmemory*. Hirsch explains that the transfer of memories can occur through family generations, even though

later family members did not experience the traumatic events of their parents. Hirsch says, “Family life, even in its most intimate moments, is entrenched in a collective imaginary shaped by public, generational structures of fantasy and projection and by a shared archive of stories and images that inflect the broader transfer and availability of individual and familial remembrance” (Hirsch 35). This transfer becomes important to the shaping of a familial collective memory.

The effects of Zach’s memories on post-war generations are not as easy to identify. The difficulty stems from the fact that, like many of Zach’s experiences, there are issues the family avoids talking about. Zach’s memories take on the form of the silenced traumatic experience that Laub discusses. It is common knowledge to the family that Zach flew helicopters in Vietnam. It is further known that his experiences were bad because he didn’t talk about them. Other forms of communication take on this same form in the family. If it is difficult, if it evokes emotions, then the family doesn’t talk about it.

I believe Zach not telling his stories affected the family and trickled down to not talking about difficult issues that family members face or experience. Conducting the interviews and learning about Zach allowed for the identification of how his trauma has affected the family. Trauma has a substantial effect on familial relations, and Marianne Hirsch did an extensive examination of how she was affected being a part of the second generation to holocaust survivors. She said, “I could recall particular moments from my parents’ wartime lives in great detail.” She goes on to explain how she could describe streets, residences, schools, and other pre-World War I areas (5). My grandfather’s specific memories did not transfer to me for the obvious reason that I never heard about them. Instead the social and coping strategies were passed on. This transfer, although

different from Hirsch, is still significant. It accounts for my own national collective memory being created by the media. Having the stories from my grandfather now plays a more substantial role in understanding his identity and the way his service has affected me. Although I cannot recall specific places, I now understand the implications behind certain social interactions within my familial relationships.

Many Vietnam veterans have stories they have not told. There are obvious traumatic reasons, but I believe many of them, like my grandfather, need a reason beyond the therapeutic motive to tell their stories. The generation of Vietnam veterans is passing away and it is concerning that their stories might be lost. After talking with my grandfather, I believe that many of them may not feel they fit the national collective memory surrounding the Vietnam War and as a result they keep their stories to themselves. I provided a reason beyond the normal notions that veterans with PTSD are the only ones that need to talk about their stories. Zach does not want to wallow in self-pity nor does he feel the need to work through his experiences. Having a reason to justify recounting his experiences for the benefit of future generations allowed him to work through the traumas in a way he never had before. These stories and other silenced Vietnam veteran's stories need to be told for future generations; not only for the different aspect it adds to the familial collective memory, but also for the understanding of personal identity and for national collective identity that challenges preconceived notions of the Vietnam War.

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## Appendix 1

## Interviews

9/22/14 #1

GS: Well that kind a.. outlines things there and puts them in an order, guess some of the stuff I was telling you about

MS: OK

GS: The last time you were here. I know I was jumping around.

MS: No, that's, that's fine. But yeah this will be great. This will be really good.

GS: I've talked there about growing up and different places I was stationed and what not. So you can read through it.

MS: Cool. I like this, "Health: Excellent"

GS: That was a few years ago (we laugh)

MS: I wish I could say that now, even. I had a, had a big wart on my foot that they've been working on so I went in on Friday and they froze it and it hurts.

GS: Oh.

MS: It hurts really bad. So I guess I'm getting old too, I've got the weird warts.

GS: What causes those, do they have any idea.

MS: They say it's a virus, and I guess, they say the virus is everywhere and you can come into contact with it all the time but usually your skin, you know your skin can fight it now problem. But a.. I don't know I guess they say stress makes it worse so since I've started grad. School it got really big so I think that my immune system just wasn't strong enough I guess with everything going on.

GS: That's what there, anymore they say so much that stress can really cause a lot of different things.

MS: Yeah. Do you think, well I don't know, why... that wasn't really a problem back in all your growing up or anything. They didn't really talk about stress did they?

GS: They didn't talk about stress or PT....PTSD you know and then they the Korean war or the Vietnam war, a.. maybe starting in the last part of the Vietnam war, but not World War II, they called it shell shock in world war II and a.. yeah, a lot of these things they put a name too I guess but a.. but no you didn't, I can't remember ever hearing about stress when I was growin up you know it was get out there and get to work you know. (we laugh)

MS: I wonder when that happened, when that shift happened. When they started thinking about it more. Cause I guess you didn't really, when you, when you went in, when you joined the air force you weren't even worried about anything like that...

GS: Like stress?

MS: Like stress..

GS: No I guess you just worry about getting shot or blown up or something like that. A.. yeah a.. you, you know not about the mental side of it and a.. you know there in the Korean war they had, a lot of my friends were killed by explosions and things. I think out of your class of 10 a.. that first year in Korean I think 5 of them were killed. So that's pretty high, high rate and a.. yeah.

MS: What were they doing?

GS: A.. working with explosives, bombs..

MS: Same thing you were?

GS: Same thing I was doing, yeah and a.. I think I, I've always been had a tendency to be more careful or worried about things being right than a lot of people... do, or did.

MS: Yeah.

GS: And a.. I try to be safety conscious. Same way with flying. You know I think I was a.. you know there's always an element or risk but yet you a.. try to minimize that, you try not to be too foolish. So yeah. But maybe was luck, (we laugh). Maybe it was the holy ghost. How's that?

MS: Yeah. Could have been. When do you remember any specific precautions you would take when you were in Korean working with those bombs? That...

GS: Um... I, I a.. not really other than the fact just having the knowledge and a.. knowing it when a bomb was armed and when it might go off and just being careful with it and handling of it and a.. Yeah they, a.. those always kind of ticklish situation because I, I they, you have arming wires and a.. a, there hooked into solenoids, arming wire comes out and when you put the, fuse in a bomb it has a.. a pin, a coder pin with a flag on it, you know it keeps the propeller on the fuse from rotating and then you put that in a.. screw that in the bomb and then you put this arming wire through there or pull out the coder pin and put the arming wire in it. And if the pilot wants to drop that bomb safe, where it won't go off, he doesn't activate his solenoid and that way when the bomb drops, the wire is still in place and the propeller has to spin so many times before the bomb, the, the fuse is, is a.. is armed and goes off and a.. he can drop it safe or you know if he wants it to go off than he arms his solenoid then drops the bomb, than the armed bomb arms and goes off. But anyway yeah, a.. hopefully you know when they come back that bomb is, is not armed you know and a.. you can take the fuses out and everything but every now and then he might have tried to drop that bomb and it got caught up or something and he'd



armed, armed it and the wire pulls out and its hanging like this, the fuse is hot and a.. so then then you're veery careful (he laughs) how you take the fuse out.

MS: Yeah

GS: And a.. you put a pin in it and try to get it out and don't drop it (We laugh). So I don't know if that. But a.. other than just trying to be careful and realize what you're doing and a.. or but you know a lot of times a.. you know when you're loading unloading things just, accidents would happen. Maybe not the persons fault or anything but just a bomb would go off, bombs are sensitive and go off. Rockets were really more dangerous. The old rockets we used, 5 inch rockets had a salient propellant. If that rocket has ever been dropped that propellant would break then that made it really sensitive and then they could go off really easily. So all those things. It, but it I don't know I was just always, we all went through a class, like 10 of us went through a class together and then we went over to Korea and then when we we're all coming home about the same time and you know you were running into, like I was the only one out of that squadron, out of that class in my squadron and so I hadn't seen those other guys for 10 months and your all gather back to port getting ready to come home then you start asking about this guy, what happened to him and that guy, yeah cause you knew them all. That's the way it used to be with helicopter pilots. There wasn't that many helicopter pilots. You all knew each other, that was before the Vietnam war. Than they trained a whole lot of pilots for the Vietnam war but back before then everybody, seemed like knew everybody or knew about you know the different people.

MS: Um hm

GS: So yeah. Alrighty where should we start, or have we started?

MS: I think we've started. (WE Laugh). Well I was, with those other people in your class, you really didn't hear about them um, having their accidents or getting killed until you met up afterwards then you started....

GS: Well I'm sure some of them I did, you know how you hear things or hear about accidents but I.. some of the others we didn't hear until we were back until we were running into different guys coming home talking about it. And a couple of those men that I went the class the training, a.. class to were came you know after we came back to the states we were stationed together out a Toole so yeah, so it was, yeah I knew them before we were stationed out here. Yeah.

MS: Um, so I was looking back over everything and I just wanted to make sure, which you've kind of already answered. You went to Toole before you went to Korean. IS that right.

GS: No I went to...

MS: You went to Korea first. Ok. And then, oh that's right ok

GS: I went to Korea right out of technical training school. And a.. straight over there and then came back and then that's when I went out to Toole.

MS: Ok

GS: And from Toole I went to aviation cadets and went through training, navigator training, later on pilot training.

MS: OK. So when, I was wondering what your motivation for joining the air force was. Was it just purely to fly, you saw that as kind of, this is my way into fling? And that was really all?

GS: Uh huh. Yeah that was my main motivation. I was interested in flying a.. and I thought you know that was probably my only way to every get to, to, to be a pilot was to go into the air force. Go through that. And a.. so it took a long time but I eventually I, I guess I reached my goal (we laugh).

MS: I was just wondering how, I guess, you kind of how you dealt with the war and you know if flying was your motivation, how did you I guess, were you worried about dying or how did you work with that worry or knowing that your life was in potential danger, how did, I guess you decide it was worth it enough to be in the air force and learn to fly knowing that you could potentially be killed. Or did you not even..

GS: I guess I didn't even worry about it. I think when you're young you don't even worry about those things (we laugh) you know you don't ever think you are going to be killed and that.. I guess a.. Korea especially I know I wasn't worried about that, you know but a.. maybe, maybe in Vietnam you, I was older and I thought more about that, that that could happened but I, I still don't think I ever really worried about that too much or nervous about it a.. I went to a, a.. a serviceman's meeting over in a, over in Vietnam, I remember that they were having it down at, at Trang and a.. Merrian D. Hanks was there, was represent.. at that time Gordon B Hinckley and Merrian D Hanks were the servicemen's representatives in Vietnam and they spent a lot of time over there. That was kind of our... our LDS joke that they had more time in country than we did, because they were over there so much but anyway we went over to this servicemen's conference and a.. and they had their speakers and it was in one of those old huts like we build over there you know, metal roof and, and a.. sides were open so the air could blow through and, and a.. a.. just benches or chairs you sat on, if you were lucky, you had chairs and a.. it was so hot and I can remember a.. a.. setting behind a, a sergeant and it was so hot I could just remember the swear running off of him and puddleing underneath, (we laugh) but anyway they had that conference and a.. and a.. I took a .. what.. a.. Can't remember now, but we went around and picked up the army troops that a.. to, to take them a.. and flew them down to Trang and a.. a.. a lot of them you know, a lot of the pilots just getting back from missions and a lot of those troops didn't have time to change. They were coming in from their portals and were still muddy and all that and .. a and a.. of course we had the.. a the meeting and a.. talks and what not and then as they were closing Merrian D hanks said, well if any of you have any questions why, just stay after the meeting and I'll try to

answer your questions. And a.. I remember the meeting was over and everybody just sat there (we laugh) and a.. one of the questions that they ask was that a.. if you're wearing your garments and a.. and you're keeping the commandments, you know, a.. will you be protected, will the, and a.. I remember this really well because he went to answer, he started answer then he just stopped, Merrian D hanks and he just stood there for a long time with his head down and then he said, well you know, I can't give you blanket assurance of that he said we all know our Heavenly Father has that power to protect you but he says, a.. I can't just give you a, a blanket answer for that but a.. he said if you keep the commandments to the best you can a.. you'll, you'll have no fear of death and a.. and a.. so you know a.. and he said you know, don't, don't ever underestimate the power of prayer. A lot of you are alive today because of the prayers of your wives and children. I thought that was pretty good.

MS: Yeah.

GS: And a.. so then he answered a lot of other questions and then he, a.. said a.. then he gave us, he wanted to give us a blessing and he gave an apostolic blessing to all of us. And part of that was if we would keep the commandments to the best of our ability that we would have no fear of death and so I don't think I ever did.

MS: Wow.

GS: Really. You know you're always trying to be careful and you don't want to have an accident but a.. as far as you know worry about it or brooding about it or having to drink, you know the night before a mission or anything like that, of course in rescue you're on alert 24 hours a day, you never know when you're going to take off, a lot of those fighter pilots or bomber pilots, they, boy a night before a mission they were really nervous and what not. So yeah. Yeah anyway, but I think you know, our faith really helps us and keeps us on a level keel. So many men really did drink a lot over there and, not in, in my detachment I was really lucky. I had really good troops and none of them, none of them really drank a.. They a.. they might take a drink but they never, you know, as far as really having quite a few drinks and feeling they needed it, what not, I, I, I had one sergeant that would get drunk out of 75 you know, 70, 75 people in my detachment. One guy in, that drank and all the rest of them were, and especially the pilots, they were really, really good troops and a.. and they gave you a liquor ration over there and so that way, we had a lot of trading material. (We laugh) We could trade liquor, trade booze for just about anything you know. So yeah. So since nobody drank a lot of that available to trade. Yeah I, I had I just don't I just can't ever remember, ever being really worried to answer you question.

MS: That's, I think um.. Oh.. I thinks that's unique from what I've read. About the war and experiences the perception of most the soldiers, were you know always on edge, or they had to rely on drugs or narcotics to deal with that, that stress so.. It's very interesting and...

GS: Well, well I think the, our belief our LDS faith has a lot to do with that too. That a.. you don't have that. But I'll tell ya, they, you know, the statistics after the war you know well if you were a helicopter pilot had, 9 times more chance of being killed than an infantry men in Vietnam. I always questioned that because I would have a lot rather been flying a helicopter than I would going out on those patrols and I can understand how that would just be really nerve racking where you're out going through that old thick jungle waiting anytime for just someone to start shooting at you, that would be really stressful. A.. you know and a helicopter mission you are so busy you know, the crash phone rings or you get a phone call and you run as fast, to the helicopter, jump in and you're taking off and strapping in and heading out and you're calling on the radios to get, you know gunships to cover you and a.. you know, make sure you get all the information and you're just busy you don't have time to think about being scared (we laugh). The scariest thing over there for, I guess, for me was a.. er, our troops was, when, if you got caught in a mortar attack. You'd always try to get off the ground and get airborne you know, that way your helicopters were, we could usually get two airborne and not damaged and then you could go back and pick up any wounded or what not, haul them to the hospital but if you're just having to sit there and wait than that's, that's stressful.

MS: Yeah that's when you start thinking about it. (we laugh)

GS: Yeah, that's, that's when you have time to think. Yeah, I, I don't think most people realize you know, how hectic it really was on a mission, or most mission. A.. you know on the, on the TV and everything, you're joe cool and you're making wise cracks and everything, you know it's, you're, you get out there on a mission and you're trying to make a pick up and a.. you've got all these airplanes circling around wanting to help, and, and a.. you know there "hell, and I've got 8 minutes of fuel left. Where do you want me to put this bologna" you know and everyone wants to help and radios are all.. and you just wanted to say "I wish everyone would shut up and just let me fly." (we laugh. Me especially because I've never heard my grandfather use those words) You know, and, and that I tried to always send two helicopters if I could, if I had them available and have low bird go in and make the pickup and the guy up here handling the radios and just let this guy, fly. And a.. the radios. If you were lucky you had a forward air control and a.. to and he would handle all the radio transmissions and direct the fighter bombers and you're cover and a.. those guys were always really good and a.. and a.. but if you didn't then you're the pilot the rescue pilot and you're forward air control, you're making the pickup, yeah it's pretty hectic. That, that, that was probably the most dangerous job in Vietnam, was those forward air controllers, I mean the one that went in and marked the targets and directed the strikes, you know close air support and he goes down low to fire his rocket and then he tells the fighter pilots or bombers or you know the fighter bomber pilots, you know, you know drop 200 yards north of that smoke or you know, he's down there right were all the fire is coming from and, and day after day right in the middle of things and that's, those were the guys, that's now, I would agree that, was a dangerous job. They were some of our best customers. We were picking them up all the time. (we laugh).

MS: What were they, what did they fly?

GS: Well a.. when we first went over there they were flying the, oh.. a.. I'm trying to think what it was, an A-1 or a.. O-1, it just looked like you know an old piper cub, single engine, real slow airplane and they had rockets where they could fire, no mark, I guess for armament they could open the door and drop a hand grenade or something but yeah, and then they got O-2 and that was a twine engine airplane and then eventually they got, a, a O-10 and that was a good airplane, it was a fix winged airplane, two engine it was pretty fast. And they put guns and rockets and things on there, yeah that was a good, good airplane, a lot safer than that old piper cub.

MS: YEAH

GS: it wasn't a piper cub but that's what it looked like. That is what I first started fling in was an old piper cub. You know when president Uchtdorf it was one of his articles or speeches he was talking about getting this, learning to fly in this old, piper cub, or J-cub and a. I thought well that's what I learned to fly in. That's what I took my first lessons in. (We laugh)

MS: That's funny. Ok, so you got from Korean, you went to Toole, you met grandma

GS: Uh huh

MS: Then you moved to New Hampshire.

GS: After I finished Navigator we went to New Hampshire.

MS: And where was navigator school at again?

GS: It was in Arlington Texas.

MS: And were you married during that?

GS: Well I went up there and stationed up there about 6 months. Saved up some money then, a.. WE, Jewel was out, started working in Californian in Anaheim. So I went out there and we got married and then we had our honey moon all the way back across the states and a.. and like I told you the other day, we'd rented this really nice house up in Manchester New Hampshire. A really pretty place and we went up there and a there were other newlyweds that lived on that same street so we had a, 6 months, there, we lived there and I was flying back and forth to, to, to a.. Goose Bay, Lavarador, Toole, Greenland, and Europe and so I'd be gone about a week and then I'd be home a week and then I'd go another week and then, we moved from there to a.. Maguire Air force base in New Jersey. And then we were flying DC-6s. The, the other base was C-54 and a.. and there I was fling mostly back and forth to Europe and a.. I guess oh, then we were there for a while and then we went, went from there to pilot training and went down to a.. oh, Moultrie Georgia. And went and a.. that's where I joined the church was in Moultrie Georgia.

MS: M=So before Georgia, all those other places you were flying back and forth from Greenland to Europe, was that part of navigator school, you just had to get the hours.

GS: I was a rated navigator.

MS: Oh so...

GS: I was flying as a navigator then

MS: Oh ok. So they, they were missions

GS: Yeah they were. A.. at that time the air force had their own airlines, Military Air transport Service. And a.. the, you know flying airplanes you carried passengers or cargo and if you carried passengers you had seats just like an airliner and you had, well if you're going up to Toole than you had male flight attendants if you were going to Europe you had female flight attendants just you know like an airliner would.

MS: Oh Ok.

GS: So a.. yeah, so we were flying a.. people mostly, on the DC-6s there were mostly people back and forth to Europe. Other air force people or we carried, we had a.. a.. I, Later, later part of it I was in what they called a VIP, Very Important Person, squadron and we, we'd go down to Washington and pick up, oh we flew generals, and ambassadors, and carried people around wherever they wanted to go. We had a, airplane fixed up really nice and, and one time we even flew vice president Nixon and his wife to a.. on a tour of Europe and a.. North Africa, you know, we went to places like Tripoli, you hear about that in the news and a Casablanca, and Madrid Spain and just a lot of different places, It was a nice trip. And a.. and Nixon and his wife Pat they were, you couldn't have met any nicer people. I mean, you know they talk so terrible about him on the news. He sure seemed like a nice guy (we laugh).

MS: So you got to talk with him a couple of times or..?

GS: Well you know you're just kind of a.. a tour through there and you meet him, or you, he's you know, "Hi" you know and talking and I guess I never was a big talker, I just kind of let other people talk but you're there and you, you get to see how they act and treat people and what not. And so that, that was an enjoyable tour. And a.. In when we were at McGuire that's the first time we had really been able to go to church. We were in New Hampshire they, they wasn't any meeting place, any members up there so we, we weren't able to go to church but a.. when we were at McGuire, we were about 20 miles from Trenton New Jersey and there was a.. a little branch there. I don't know how many people, maybe 30, 40 people and so we, we. When I was home we would attend there. Our neighbors in the apartment building where we were living turned out to be LDS . So a.. we could go, go with them a.. we became really good friends. It was Pat and Floyd Fox. And A.. their relatives lived in Morgan so they were kind of from this area but anyway I used to play a lot of tennis with him and Jewel and Pat were really good friends and a.. He was a pilot. He had an administrative job so he wasn't traveling a lot so when I

was home why I would go to priesthood with him and a.. wasn't a member but I'd go to priesthood (we laugh). Jewel would come with Pat and a.. they were just a really good LDS couple a really example and a.. so anyway I, when I was home well I would meet with the missionaries but a.. you know there wasn't much continuity because they were moving and I was gone so much and but when we got down to Georgia well I started meeting the missionaries there and that's where I gained a testimony that the gospel was true. I remember a.. it was two sister missionaries and they gave their lesson and by that time. it was two sister missionaries and they gave their lesson and by that time I knew the lessons probably better than the missionaries did (we laugh) and a.. and then afterwards this one sister bore her testimony and the and you know they talk about getting that burning in your bosom well I just knew it was true and a.. so they got through and said "well would you like to be baptized" and I said "yes", and a.. and she bout fainted and I think Jewel did (we laugh). They were both so surprised and so, that's, that's where I was baptized. Moultrie Georgia.

MS: Why did you go before- why did you go to church before all that? Why did you go to priesthood meeting and all that? What a.. just to be nice 'er? I don't know it seems like-

GS: I guess I just enjoyed it. (we laugh) I don't know any better.

MS: Ok.

GS: I guess Floyd would ask, Floyd a.. Fox a.. had asked me if a.. you know I wanted to go, so I was home I guess I just thought well, and I always enjoyed the meetings and a.. a.. it was kind of that way down in Moultrie Georgia too. Cause we moved in and our house was only like 3 houses down from the chapel. We didn't know that when we rented the house you know it was after dark and we were looking for a place to rent and we found this really nice little brick house and, and said we'll rent it and I guess maybe we moved in a.. a little bit and got up the next morning and was looking around the neighborhood and there was a chapel, just a small little LDS Chapel. So I was always really close, we were close and I went to the meetings and anytime they, the relief society needed anything done I was handy and I'd like fly in the morning and maybe be off in the afternoon or something er, they were always running over ask me to fix their microphones or move their piano or something. So when I got married everybody kept coming up to me saying, "We didn't know you weren't a member." (we laugh). Yeah, the relief society, "oh if we'd know you weren't a member we wouldn't have been asking you to do all this stuff" you know (we laugh).

MS: That's funny.

GS: Well they had a musical cantata thing a big program there and I remember they asked me to be the M.C. so I got up and conducted and was the M.C. for the program and afterwards they found out I wasn't a member (we laugh).

MS: Yeah well I don't think the usual profile for an investigator, you know someone who enjoys going to the meetings and..

GS: Well I, yeah I always enjoyed going to church with Jewel you know we.. she never bugged me about going but I'd you know, hey, well I guess when I was growing up until I was about 14 I always went to the Methodist church, we'd go to Sunday school and I guess when I was about 14 or 15 I got disgusted with the people getting drunk on Saturday night and then getting up and preaching on Sunday and I quit going and I never went back to church again until after I met your grandma and then I, guess, guess I just like to go to church (we laugh). And the other thing was the branch president down there in Moultrie, really a rough old farmer and truck driver and I remember that interview that, that was kind of a weird interview too, where he interviewed me for baptism and it was like as if he was trying to talk me out of it, of getting baptized. I've always remembered that you know.

MS: Yeah that's weird.

GS: an a.. he was, I remember him saying, "well" I guess he assumed all air force people a.. smoked and drank, "well you're going to have to quit smoking and drinking." And I said, "I've smoked" you know (we laugh) "well you're going to have to quit drinking" and I said, "well I don't drink either." And he says, "well you're going to have to start paying tithing." And I said, "well if you look at your records I've been paying tithing ever since we've been here." I guess that's unusual too.

MS: Yeah (we laugh).

GS: Yeah, we've been paying our tithing and so I guess he decided he would let me get baptized you know. (we laugh).

MS: Wow.

GS: That was a nice little community down there and a.., and a.. in Moultrie Georgia pretty little town.

MS: And that's where, so you started your pilot training there?

GS: Uh huh. I was there 6 months.

MS: 6 months.

GS: And that was called primary. And I went from there to Salma Alabama and that was called basic training, and that was in the single engine jet training and a.. you, you they had two different basic training programs. One was for multi-engine type or jet pilot and of course I wanted to go to jet pilot training, so I went to that and a.. there a.. they had a, just a small branch and a.. we'd meet in the upstairs part of the, I'm trying to think what it was. What are some of these places that they- VFW. Sometime of a club, the upstairs part, kind of a lounge part up above a, a store I remember we'd go in there on Sunday morning, you only had 9 priesthood holders in the, the, 9 of us and a.. I, I'd go early and



go in and open up all the windows and everything because it just reeked of cigarette smoke and, and, and a.. alcohol cause that was the lounge for one of these clubs, and a.. we'd open and get it aired out and that was where we'd have our church meetings, it was up there and then they were building a stake house up in Birmingham Alabama and, they, we'd go up there on Saturdays to work on the building. Cause at that time you had, that's when the members were building, they would do the building they would have a supervisor from the church but the members actually did the building and we'd go up there and work on that stake house and, and we were the only branch or ward that would have a 100% attendants, priesthood attendance cause all 9 of us would go up there to work. But that was our claim to fame (we laugh). All those other wards or branches would have 20 or 30% turn out, we, we'd have 100%.

MS: So you did all that just in that 6 month period of time in Alabama?

GS: Yeah. I had it was 6 or 7 months there at Alabama.

MS: Ok. And then from there.

GS: There I went to Reno Nevada in helicopter school after. I got my pilots wings and then I went for advanced training up to, to Reno. So we were there I guess 6 months or so, in Reno.

MS: And then

GS: From there we went to Luke Air force base in Arizona.

MS: Just to do more helicopter training or that's just where you were assigned?

GS: No that's where I was assigned, as a helicopter pilot.

MS: Do you remember what year that was by chance?

GS: It was probably about, I got to Luke around August of 59. And I remember because it was hot (he laughs. I laugh). I never had an air conditioner in my car or cars but after we got down there to Arizona I think two days I went and got an air conditioner put in the car (we laugh). A.. that was so hot and then, yeah so we were there for 3 years at Luke. And there I flew helicopters and fixed wing. They had a lot of different kinds of airplanes there. And I, I was assigned as a helicopter pilot but I volunteered to be assistant a.. base ops officer, and that, that when that as base ops officer I could fly anything I wanted to and I really enjoyed flying and so I, I flew just about every kind of airplane they had, there on the base, and checked out on it, and a.. a.. I built up a lot of flying time cause we would fly be on alert like one day, the next day would be a training day and you'd, you'd go out in a helicopter and train or a.. and then the third day was kind of like a.. a day to do paper work or, or whatever you needed to be done and a.. or you could go fly and a.. and the base always needed a lot of a.. of chorus or you know an air plane test hoped or they might have a part, and that was a big training base at that time, it still is, where they train pilots and fighter tactics and what not, at that time they had F-84sand F-86s and a.. F-100 and a.. had a lot of crashes so we got a lot of you know, rescue type work picking

up bail outs or going to crashes and picking up the remains and what not a.. they might a.. you know, they might need someone to run down to cannon air force base in New Mexico or out to Edwards in California and pick up a spare part for one of their, for maintenance for one of their airplanes and so you know I'd just hope in a T-33 that's a single engine jet fly off to one of those other bases and a.. and.. they'd put the part in the back seat, strap it down and zip back home you know and it's just be you know like an hour out there or, an hour and a half and then an hour and a half back and then I'd, I'd just always really enjoyed that and, that type of thing and a.. oh they also had a C-47s and that was a twin engine, that was the old gooney bird from world war 2 and I, I a.. they had, they had those on all the bases and a.. carry passengers you know, like, some, the Kernels would want to go down to, oh I don't know, they'd usually pick out some nice place for their conferences, down in Florida or Louisiana and so they were always wanting someone to fly the kernels down to their meetings, so you know I'd, I'd do that. Just whatever. But our rescue missions there they, we, we really were busy, we a.. they didn't have helicopters at, at. Now it seems like everybody has helicopters, hospitals have med evacs and a.. the highway patrol has them and you know there, UDOT I think has, or their police department here for Utah has them but we did all that cause nobody had helicopters but us so we worked with the sheriff, they needed a something picked up or had a mission or car wrecks, we went on all, a lot of car wrecks especially that stretch from phoenix over to California, going across that dessert they was, always somebody wrecking out there so we.. we.. I flew a lot of rescue missions.

MS: And this was all before you even went to Vietnam, you were doing-

GS: Oh yeah, yeah. I had all kinds of missions before I went to Vietnam and a.. a.. I'm trying to think a.. I, and those were all single engine airplanes they were using to train with, the F-84 and F-86 and the old 100 they used to call that the led sled, and a.. it was so heavy and a.. and they, I can remember one week they lost 8 airplanes like from one Wednesday to the next Wednesday and they had you know, that was unusual, you know to lose that many in that period but still that just, seems like we were always getting bail outs, later on when they, the air force went to the twin engine air planes, fighters like the F-4 that really cut back on the number of accidents. I can remember at that time a.. the, the wives were really getting nervous because we had so many air planes went down, I think in that week out of those 3 I think we had 3 bail outs and 2 force landings and 3 fatalities, 3 crashes were there were fatalities so that, that was really a rough, rough period there and we, had a fire fighting capability with our helicopter where if there was a crash we could go in, go in and we, we carried, if we thought the air plane was going to crash we, we'd pick up a 1,000 pound fire bottle carry it underneath the helicopter and we had fireman that were designated you know, stood alert with us, and they'd of course get in the back and put their suits on and then we'd fly out unusually and if the air plane was going to make it back to the, to the run way and thought maybe it was gonna crash, we'd fly out and intercept it and then follow it, you know just stay off to the side and back a little bit and then if it crashed we'd go in and land, you know just up wind, just a few feet from it and a.. or, or drop the bottle, come in let the bottle touch down, release it back up

and land, let the fire fighters out and they'd run up get the hose and we'd take off again and we'd use our router wash to knock the flames down and they'd cut a path in and go in and get the pilot out. We didn't worry about saving the air plane or anything it was just strictly rescue to get him out and, and we would normally you know, we'd fight practice fires but I'll tell you, after a few crashes you didn't do that cause if you saw, the wives saw some smoke going up they'd think another air plane had crashed and it really start worrying. And those times were really hard on the wives, there close to base and what not, yeah, so yeah I don't, I don't know how many mission we'd have. One time one of the kids asked me how many missions I'd flown and I said, I thought well I'll go back through my flight log. I went about two pages (he laughs) But I know I know I've flown more, I've somewhere between 2 and 3000 I, I, I estimated that, the missions and..

MS: Wow.

GS: and I don't know how many bail outs I've picked up. Bail outs were nice. I liked bail outs but I sure didn't like fatalities or...

MS: Um. How did you deal with the fatalities, when you'd go? I don't know is there something you, I don't know, you kind of had to learn-

GS: A..

MS: In Vietnam?

GS: I don't know a.. you know if you're on two or three in a row you start feeling depressed, I mean that's the thing about rescue and you can go out and feel like you saved somebody and feel really good, when you go out and you can't find the guy or you, find them and their dead or you know, like a crash they're really gruesome, you know, and if you go two or three a week like that you're really starting to feel depressed you know and a.. so yeah I guess some people go to the club and have a few drinks but I, never did that.

MS: I know, that's why I want to know how you got over it.

GS: I guess, just, just deal with it and keep going and yeah. Yeah, I, I don't know I guess, you were, you were just expected to deal with it you, we didn't know about PTSD or anything like that, that we were supposed to go and get treatment you know.

MS: Uh Huh

GS: No, I, I guess you just, oh one that really bothered me for a long, long time, and that was a friend of mine crashed. He, he just lived a couple of doors down we were living on based and a and a.. he, he you know, lived two or three units or houses down from me so he was always coming up through the backyards and we were always giving each other a hard time but still really good friends and a.. (he coughs) the tower, went, on the base there you get to know people, like on the tower, knew me, I would, a.. usually give the people in the tower and radar control rides and helicopter rides, and I'd call them up to see if they wanted to go on a ride and of course they were always happy to do that, cause

most, I guess the other pilots never did that and, but I'd always, you work with them all the time you know, just, and a.. they have a tough job and so I, and so they knew me and a.. so one night, I guess I wasn't on alert but a.. I just got back from a steak meeting. Came in the door and the phone rang and it was the tower calling and they says, "Hey I think Captain a.. no I can't think of his.. Boucher, a I think maybe he just crashed." They knew that I was a friend, and well they knew I was the commander of the detachment and so I.. jumped back in the car and went down to the detachment and we had our rescue helicopter had already taken off so a.. they were out and so I.. a.. I'd talked to the tower and operators, and they'd say, "well yeah he was coming back from California and a.. he a.. called in on final and a.. you know five miles out and a.. canceled his IFR, instrument flight plane, and was landing VFR, visual flight rule and we just lost contact and so I went, I got in another helicopter, or another crew I'd called them and we had a, and got in that air plane, or helicopter and flew out there and a.. you know of course we talked to the other helicopter and we were searching and a.. found the wreckage right away and then started looking for him and couldn't find him and the. The.. we'd landed and of course he wasn't in the main crash site but the crash was spread out over all, you know, a long ways because he had hit pretty flat and then I, I was out walking and found his body.. and a.. and a.. so you know that, that really bothered me, for, that one, cause to find your friend, someone you know like that, most of the time the people you find aren't, you don't know, just once in a while you do.

MS: Uh huh

GS: so yeah. So that, probably, that was one of them that bothered me, for a long time and then of course a couple of those over in Vietnam I still remember them pretty well too. So, a.. my a.. Jewel's sister's son, he was in Vietnam, he was in the Marines and he's a.. going on to and been treated for PTSD and got a disability so he keeps, he keeps telling me that I'm still suffering (he laughs) from PTSD he you know psycho analyzed me about where I live here and the way I act, you know, you, you've got all the, all the symptoms you know, you're paranoid and I should go and get treatment but a.. I think I'm doing alright (we chuckle).

MS: A.. um why, and I guess you've kind of answered that but you think probably the faith has, helped even with the PTSD, or I don't know..

GS: I don't really know about it I think they help you, you know like you're in stressful situations or dangerous situations I think you know, that the knowledge we have keeps you from undo worrying about it and a.. yeah, I, I don't know I just feel so sorry for these people you know, that spent all these tours in a.. Afghanistan and Iraq. That has to be terrible they've gone on over there and they complete one tour they're over there 1 year, they're separated from their family they have, there's really no safe place over there. They're under stress all the time day after day they come home they're home a year, some of them have been over there 4 or 5 years. Those guys are having to try and disarm those a.. those a.. IUD's and some of them been blown up maybe 4 or 5 times and a.. and, and.. the pay, I think all of our enlisted men you know those lower ranks are under paid.

You know most of them are on, their family are on food stamps in order to live and so you know, you know that's hard on the wife and family while they're gone and its hard on them and they, so it's such a terribly stressful, so I sure wouldn't compare my symptom that I might have or my symptoms to what they're undergoing now I, I just don't think it's fair. You know I had two tours in Vietnam and a.. and that, that's enough that was plenty, that was too much really I, I sure wouldn't want to go back over there again feel like as if, well you were lucky enough to survive once or twice you don't want it to be four or five times.

MS: Uh huh.

GS: Yeah, yeah so boy, I, I, I just don't think it was or is fair to these people they have to keep sending back. And, and right now my grip is they've decided ok we're going to send 3000 troops over to west Africa to help with the Ebola epidemic. That's not what our troops are trained for, and I just don't think that's fair either. They'd send people over there you know you get some medical people that know what they are doing and a.. get volunteers not designated unit you see.

MS: Uh huh.

GS: Go over there and catch it.

MS: Yeah that seems funny.

GS: That, that, that's my grip of the day (we both laugh). I just feel sorry.

MS: So when were you assigned, or when did you go to Vietnam first?

GS: Ok, in 1962. Now this wasn't a tour I just went over there for a short training period in 1962 to a.. I was just a training exercise to you know help train their forces this, and then in 1964 that's when Tonkin Gulf occurred. And then right after the Tonkin Gulf, you know that's whenever we decided we'd get involved and a.. we didn't have any rescue units, helicopter rescue units over there and so.. it was August of 64 I went over there to help set up some helicopter units and a.. we set one H-43 unit up in northern, on the Tia La Ocean boarder a.., a.., a.. at Nay Com Phenom and a.. at, it was only two, it only had two H-43s and then we didn't have anybody that could cover the western part of north Vietnam, you know the north western part a.. so I went up to Northern Tia Land Laos to a.. air America unit that was there, that was the CIA outfit that they had working with the special forces flying rice and ammo up into the special forces camps up in through Laos and I flew with them for 6 months and a.. they provided rescue up a.. on the extreme western part you know if you go west from Hanoi that area through there they are the only coverage we had for rescue helicopter at the time and a.. that was kind of an experience up there it was a.. something you'd read in a jungle gym book or something like that these people that a.. they were, they had been military pilots but they'd resigned and they were civilians working for the CIA and flying different types of helicopters and, and fixed wing airplanes up through that area and a.. I was, I was a liaison the air force liaison, I coordinated any rescue missions we had and a.. a.. the, the, they, they really

liked that cause they got paid extra if they picked up an air force pilot, they were making good money any way but they, (we chuckle) if they picked up an air force pilot they got what they called blood chits and they got extra money and a.. so a.. anyway I a.. a.. it was a really a horr- the base was really a swampy area and a.. the tent I was living in was kind of a built out kind on a dock or a plat- wood platform and a.. you know a tent, we had our tent sitting on there and.. one night I went to bed and you had a mosquito netting, you know the old army cot and a.. I remember I really tucked it in really good and tight you know, around the bed and, and a.. during the night, snake go in there-

MS: Oh geez.

GS: Went crawling across my chest and I tore that bed apart. That was the fastest I ever got out of bed in my life (we laugh) and of course no, electricity but I'm up with my flash light looking for that snake and a.. it was gone. but yeah that was the, I can remember, I'll always remember that experience because I'm so afraid of snakes any way (we laugh).

MS: I hate them too. It must be where I get it from.

GS: So you came back, did you-

Grandma: I looked for that and I couldn't find it. I did find the, that story that was on the computer though, I found a copy right there.

GS: Oh.

Grandma: It's not, don't think its accurate but it..

GS: So yeah, so a. Anyway I was up there for 6 months I guess and I spent some time in a Saigon and a.. something a.. that.. really shows you how war deteriorates people and places, like first few times I was over in Saigon like 62 and 64, you know that, that was a beautiful city you know and it was, looked like a Paris you know I've been to Paris the Louvre and all that and a.. the main street of Saigon looked just a lot like the a.. the a.. Chomp de les in Paris and the people you know, didn't look to bad, where later on in the war those people just looked so tired and beaten down, and said and all that and Saigon got so it looked like a war zone almost so.. so yeah any way a.. then I was in Saigon, then I went back to Hawaii. I guess I, I didn't mention about our, that after three years at Luke we transferred to Hawaii. And it was while I was in Hawaii, I was working in the headquarters and that's when they, the Gulf of Tonkin took place and I wound up over in Vietnam and Laos.

MS: So were, were you the only one that, that was coordinating this, the helicopter rescues and things?

GS: I had a a.. sergeant went over there with me, my body guard, my aid (he chuckles, I laugh). Really wound up a good friend of mine. A.. yeah, he always claimed he was my body guard, and, and I'll tell you that guy, he was about my height but he was about that broad (he holds his arms out to show the width of the shoulders) and, it was like a gorilla walking, (we chuckle) and by, no one would dare mess with me (we laugh). Yeah, there

were just the two of us, I, but I was the one that did all, he, he was just there to do paper work or whatever I wanted him to do but I did the, all the liaison and a.. I, it, I'd pick up a lot of info and a.. and you know about where, anti-aircraft guns were, and rockets, where the rockets where from the other pilots you know, that were flying up there every day and so I'd encrypt that and a.. and send it back to a.. to the 7<sup>th</sup> air force headquarters down in Saigon and they could pass that on to our pilots that were flying missions up there so it kind of was a twofold thing I'd get, I'd coordinate the rescue missions but in-between I'd be trying to debrief those other pilots and find out where that stuff was located there, there various anti-aircraft rockets and what not so yeah. But that was quite, quite the experience to fly, fly with them and I remember they made a movie after we were living here, they came out with a movie called *Air America* Mel Gibson was in it and after, I really looked forward to see that and about halfway through the movie I just turned it off in disgust because I said, "that isn't the way it was at all, you know, that you know all the pilots were all psychotic and weird doing all kind of crazy, and they were flying, doing all kind of crazy things with their helicopters." Those pilots were professionals, they'd been in the military. They, they weren't wanting to get shot down, they, they'd

MS: Uh huh.

GS: They just, were very business-like. I was disgusted with that movie (we chuckle). They were running dope and all kind of stuff, so yeah.

MS: So were there any other helicopter units or was that the only one, did you say? Or that was just the one you were assigned to?

GS: That was the one I was working with. I'd helped set up and Air Force detachment over at It-Na-Phenom which was, you know if, a.. There's Cambodia and Laos, south Vietnam, north Vietnam and It-Na-Phenom(got to look this up) was right on the river and a.. and a.. Tia Land, and so, that's where the air force helicopter was and then, we were up farther north, right on the La Ocean boarder and a..

MS: Ok.

GS: So, a.. so we covered, they covered, this helicopter detachment covered the southern part of North Vietnam down to the DMZ and then we carried from here on up.

MS: Ok. Did you do a lot of flying- I'm sorry.

GS: Go ahead.

MS: Did you do a lot of flying that first time or were you mostly coordinating things inside?

GS: I was mostly coordinating but I was flying with them but I was doing most of the coordination but a.. I wasn't the main, I was the co-pilot you know, the, with, it was their helicopters so I, I was, I was riding with them (we laugh) yeah.

MS: Ok. And how long did that-

GS: 6 months.

MS: 6 months, ok then it was back to Hawaii?

GS: Yeah, I was back to Saigon for a while,

MS: Oh, ok.

GS: And then a..

MS: And what did you do in Saigon?

GS: I'm trying to remember what I did. A.. I, I don't, I guess I was just, I guess I wasn't there very long because I can't really remember anything we accomplished there at that time. A.. maybe I just stopped there to debrief for something and then back to Hawaii so probably just, just after I finished up there I went back to Hawaii.

MS: Ok. And then how long were you in Hawaii before you went back?

GS: Well, back in Hawaii, what did I do a.. we went to Hawaii in 62, so I was busy, that was 64 so there was a.. couple of years before I went over there so a.. I'll have to fill that in. One of my first assignments out of Hawaii we were the headquarters for all the pacific area so that, that's in 62 is when I went down to the Antarctica for six months.

MS: Oh ok.

GS: And that was an interesting tour too. Went to New, went to Fiji, a.. we went to Canton Island and refueled and a.. blew a tire had to set and Canton island and that's about the most remote island you can think of and a.. till we could get another tire and then from there flew to Fiji and from Fiji to New Zealand and then I was in New Zealand flying back and forth to the ant artic. We were the, providing rescue coverage for the navy and any air force planes that were flying back and forth and a.. we had to C-54s, 4 engine air planes and a.. two crews and we were, no helicopters I was flying fixed wing then.

MS: Oh ok.

GS: And a.. yeah when I first got to Hawaii, when we first went to Hawaii they didn't have any helicopter, rescue helicopters there so a.. so I, I, I had to start fling fixed wing, so C-54, of course I'd been checked out on those before and a.. the old gooney bird, got a lot of gooney bird time, C-47 but then I had, I flew down there, it was in the C-54 and a.. that's the worst fling weather I've ever been in, was the ant artic that was unbelievable weather down there. And they have three oceans that come together right there in Antarctica and I think, I guess that's what causes all that terrible weather and we didn't have many weather stations down there we had the.. the weather station at the south pole and the one at the McMurrtle sound and then the Russians had one over in Western Antarctica and then we'd, we'd share weather with them and a.. but any way you'd never know, you'd think we were going to have decent weather then all of a sudden you're in a one of their blizzards and yeah, anyway that was an interesting tour. They have volcanos



down in the Antarctic and that's what I, they keep talking about the Ozone hole that's over the Antarctic and it gets bigger and now this year it's got smaller and I says, "yeah the volcanos haven't been erupting so that's why its smaller." They keep claiming its because we've cut back on the fluorides and things (we chuckle). Oh.. yeah. Ok you were going to ask me a question and I..

MS: Um.. so you went, ok in 62 you were in Antarctica

GS: Uh hu-

MS: and then 64 you went to Vietnam the first time-

GS: Yeah, and in between that I had another 6 months tour in the Philippines, see Jewel had three years in Hawaii, I had about a year (we all laugh). I kept calling..

Grandma: Then we were in New Zealand, did you go to Antarctic from New Zealand?

GS: Yeah, yeah, that was that 6 months cause I was, in New Zealand and I kept flying back and forth to the ice.

MS: When did you go back to Vietnam the second time?

GS: That was in 66, but I didn't, we'd moved from Hawaii back to San Angelo, Texas and we were only there for a year and that's when I went back to Vietnam for another tour and that was for a yearlong tour. But in San Angelo we were doing high altitude research for NASA and that was another interesting job.

MS: How long, and.. so just before Vietnam you were doing the high altitude testing?

GS: Yeah, uh huh.

MS: How long was that?

GS: That was a year.

MS: A year...

GS: I keep skipping over things cause, you, Hawaii I was down there in 62 for 6 months and then, then I was back to Hawaii, then I went to the Philippines but in between that was when they had this Mercury program, this space program, and a.. I was in one of those a.. what they called a contingency recovery officer and a.. that's where we had to learn to put the stock and collar around the capsule and a.. we were, we had para-rescue people to do it but we flew over and dropped them out but they went out and did it and anyway a.. we had to, they had the primary air where it was supposed to come down but if they had any emergency's they had what they called a contingency areas and, and, so I took a couple of 6-54s and went to Fiji on three different missions, to, you know, in case it came down in our area and we, we had all that navi-, communication gear, you know that, the big satellite dish so we could hear them talking and a.. and oh we, we had our airplanes and our para-rescue people and all of this equipment, the stock and collars and a.. and then plus I contracted with several people that had big docks incase, you know the

navy couldn't get there after, if we secured the capsule to pick it up and all those people were thrilled to death, the idea that maybe they would get go out and participate (we laugh) any way I was on three of those missions during that time. So I wasn't just goofing off in Hawaii and I really liked Fiji. Fiji was 18 degrees south of the equator and Hawaii is 18 degrees north so it's just, the climate is just like Hawaii and but it was back the way Hawaii was back, you know, 30 or 40 years before. They still had the narrow gage railroads and did a lot of their picking and cutting, you know cutting cane, and picking pineapples by hand I really enjoyed that place.

Grandma: What was the name of some of those things that you picked up? The flights, you know they were your first ones weren't they.

GS: The, the, space?

Grandma: Uh huh

GS: That was the Mercury program. And I don't even remember who the astronauts were, I could go back and look it up in the encyclopedia I guess or on the Wikipedia but luckily they never came down in our area, they always landed up where the navy picked them up. (coughs) So then we were in San Angelo and then we left from there and went back to Vietnam and we, we had bought a really nice house there in San Angelo but we only got to enjoy it for a year and then we wound up a.. moving, Jewel and the family moved back Arizona because that's where my sisters lived and they were close to the base there. We bought another house there, we bought a lot of houses over the years. Sold the one in San Angelo and bought a house there while I was gone.

Grandma: Yeah, in Arizona there I'd be closer with the kids with Zach and some of his family that was there and we'd also be close to medical care from the base there at Luke. So that was a nice place.

MS: So who was all born, who was all born when you.. maybe we should have been-

GS: We'll have to back up here

MS: Yeah.

GS: Jewel should have been here cause she would have filled us in (we laugh). A... when we were stationed in McGuire that's where ted was born. He was born in the base hospital there. And a.. Neal was born right after we got to Luke, then 59. You know Neal don't you? Your dad?

MS: Yeah. I've heard of him. And then a.. let's see Julie was born while we were there at Luke-

Grandma: 61

GS: Before we went to Hawaii, so we went to Hawaii and about a year after we were in Hawaii, that's where Alan was born, that was 63 then.

Grandma: Uh huh. Then we didn't have any more until 70. When we went to Wichita Falls.

GS: We haven't quite got up that far yet.

Grandma: OK. (We all laugh) Did you tell him we got to go to Hawaii on a nice luxury liner?

GS: No. (Grandma laughs). Maybe I should tell him that story. (we all laugh) When I first went to Korea I went over on an air craft carrier and that was nice. That was a very enjoyable voyage. It took about 20 days because we swung down south and we went by some of the islands and everything. Anyway, coming back from Korea I was on a troop ship and a.. they took the northern route where it was cold and foggy and I, I don't know how many thousand troops they had, army and air force troops they had on that ship. IT wasn't very enjoyable and I can remember my bunk was about three decks down and the bunks were stacked so close to each other that you couldn't turn over. Your shoulders wouldn't let you turn over. To turn over you had to swing your shoulders out and turn and then go back in and you really couldn't lay on your side because you, there wasn't enough room for your shoulders so you were either on your stomach or your back but that wasn't the bad part. The bad part was when the guy above you got sea sick.

MS: Oh yeah, geez (we all laugh)

GS: And after, about the first night, I didn't go down there to sleep. I'd just stay, find me a spot on the deck and, where I could sit down with my back against something and I'd sleep there, that, that was just so miserable and a..

MS: Sounds awful.

GS: Anyway, this is leading up to something, (we laugh) when, when we got our assignment to go to Hawaii, well the sergeant from our headquarters called up and told me we had the assignment and he was really excited. He said, "Hey I was able to book you and your family on the Laura Liner, to go to Hawaii, you know from L.A. to Hawaii." And a.. so I said, "I don't want to go over there on a ship. Book us on an airplane." And he said, "are you sure?" and a.. I say, "Yeah I'd much rather fly" and so I go home and tell Jewel we are going to Hawaii and she was pleased with that and then I told her, "yeah they wanted to send us over there on the Laura liner and I told them to change it to an airplane.

Grandma: I didn't think that was a good idea.

GS: That didn't go over so good. (we all laugh) Cause the Laura liner at that time was a really nice a.. luxury, tourist type ship. So the next day I'm calling up this sergeant again saying, "Hey a.. you remember when I said (he laughs), I've changed my mind could you rebook me, us on that ship." He laughed. He just laughed and said, "I never canceled it out." (we all laugh)

Grandma: He knew what would happen.

GS: So he said, "Ok captain Stockett we've got you, you're all confirmed. We'll send you all this information about going on the Laura Liner."

Grandma: It was really nice.

GS: Oh that was a nice trip. We really got the VIP treatment on that ship, I'll tell ya.

MS: That's funny.

GS: Yeah consult with your wife before you make any decisions like that.

Grandma: When we got to Hawaii in, his, is it a detachment that you call it? Anyway his group where he'd be working they were all there with lays, flower lays to welcome us. So that was something new for us, so we liked that.

MS: Yeah. That's cool.

GS: Yeah, they'd booked us an apartment right down on the beach a.. you know while we were waiting for housing.

MS: Uh huh

GS: And they had a car for us, it was an old 53 Chevy but it was wheels. (we laugh)

MS: That's funny.

GS: So yeah, we had a nice month down on the beach before we moved on, on a.. before we got a house and got moved into our house. That, that was nice. Cause the air force paid for it, that's what made it nice.

MS: Yeah. (we laugh) That's funny.

GS: Hawaii was nice, I'll tell ya. I, I, we, I keep complaining cause I didn't spend as much time as family but I enjoyed the time I was there. We did a lot of fun things. We did a lot of sight-seeing. We'd go to the beach and set up a sun shelter and put out crab nets and just really enjoy it.

Grandma: We go to know a lot of the local people. Through the church there. Went out crabbing with them on the beach. That was fun.

GS: Yeah. And Flip and Carol came over while we were there and we rented a cabin over on the North Shore and spend a week over there and the kids just really had fun. Yeah. That's a beautiful place, and a.. we helped build a chapel while we were there. The, a.. Lava Heights, if you're ever there that's probably one of the most beautiful chapels on the island and I know they have a lot of them but, it between my trips, we, there again they had a supervisor from church headquarters and they had some labor missionaries and a.. all the other labor was provided by the local members.

Grandma: But they didn't contract out things then like what they do now.

GS: They well, the members had at that time had to raise 50% of the money and the church paid the other 50%.

MS: Wow

GS: and then you provided labor too. So it was pretty labor intensive.

MS: Yeah. Hm.

GS: Those big old Samoan and Tongan men were sure strong. They were, they were like horses. They must have weighed 300 pounds, some of them. Huge arms. I know one time we were putting up the rafters and, and there's about 8 of us there, all haole, that's white people and I remember two of those big old Samoan men came up there to help and so a.. those rafters were really big and heavy to put them up and a.. so I remember the one guy said, "ok you Hawley's get on that end and we'll get over here." Just two of them, so "ok", so you know we, most of the guys ran over and we picked our end up first and picked it right up you know to make it harder for them to pick up their end (we all laugh). WE lifted our end up and those two big ol' guys just went over there and picked it up so easy it wasn't any fun (we laugh). And so, we had about 8 room, 8 or 10 rooms to put the rafters up in, up a, cause the walls were built and we had to lift these big old heavy rafters, like we've got out here in the garage.

MS: Oh yea.

GS: Up, beams I should call them and we just went right down the row there. A.. 8 Hawley's on one end and 2 Samoans or whatever Tongans on the other, just pick them up and put them in place. (I am laughing) and no, no trouble at all, those, they, those guys were so strong.

MS: That's funny. Well I've had you going for an hour and 40 minutes. Are you tired?

GS: Yeah. (We all laugh)

MS: Probably need a drink or something.

GS: Yeah, I do. I a.. I hunted up that stuff for you.

MS: Yeah.

Grandma: Well Matthew, can you stay for dinner?

MS: Um. Yeah, Whe...

Grandma: When would you like to eat? I can go ahead and start now

MS: Well when do you normally eat?

Grandma: Oh, usually about 5.

GS: 5 or 6 along in there.

MS: Um, maybe. When a..

Grandma: If it was alright with you I thought I would just fix some tacos. Chicken tacos

MS: Yeah, sure, sure.

Grandma: and have some corn and I've got, made you some brownies.

MS: Yeah, I just don't want to..

Grandma: Is your mic turned off now?

MS: I forgot to. Um..

9/22/14 #2

GS: I don't know, if you're interested in this but..

MS: Yeah, no of course, of course I am

GS: That, that, we had, when I was at Luke, there before we went to Hawaii, we had quite a few mission up to the Superstition Mountains you probably hear ab out that, the lost Dutchmen mine, up in the superstitions, and at that time there'd been over 80 people murdered,

MS: Wow

GS: up on that mountain you know, when they were looking for that mine, a lot of people killed, a lot of crazy people up there wandering around and that's what, that's weaver's needle up on the superstitions and a.. and of course that's just another picture there of, I can't even see it, of the helicopter, and a.. oh, this is something differen.t But one of the missions up there, one of the prospectors had shot another man and we took the sheriff up there and, and wound up picking him up and bringing him back so you can see the old sheriff there with his old 45, but all those old, you know miner, prospectors running around up there, you know they'd all have beards and tobacco juice running down the side of their mouths and they all carried magnums, big old magnums, at one time they carried rifles but the sheriff had taken all there rifles away but they carried big old, they really make you uneasy when you're around those people cause you, you know they're crazy.

MS: Mm hm

GS: And they all think they're going to find it, find that lost Dutchman's gold mine, someone else comes up there and they think there trying to beat them out of it and, that was a picture where we were getting, getting metals, I, I, that's a DFC and I don't, I don't know what that is. And a.. commendation metal and I, That looks like that's a.. air metals and I got a DFC and a bronze star and some stuff

MS: Wow

GS: And a.. that's down in the grand Canyon and that, we used to fly down in there quite often. Pick up those Indian tribe down in there the Supai, Indian tribe down in Supai Indian Canyon. I think that's me. So

MS: That's cool

GS: There. Yeah, there, there's some of the Indian that are down there.

MS: Wow.

GS: That, they all like to see the helicopter and that's Luke. Yeah now let's see. That was Enlisted Housing and that's officers housing and

MS: There's not a lot of other stuff (I laugh)

GS: Not at that time but boy now that's all filled in with houses

MS: Wow

GS: and I was trying to think, we lived over, right next to the open area there. That's where, we really had a nice house. And I don't know when I, I was either a Major or Lieutenant Kernel and so.. Oh.. and somebody sent me these after I left. A.. this was Vietnam in a.. when I was over there we lived in tents and a.. and had a, a.. pad just made out of sand bags. So after I left they got really modern they got a.. a building and a cement pad.

MS: No snakes are going to get in there (he laughs)

GS: I think this was while I was still over there. You can see our two lonely tents out there. Runways were out here. But I don't know, that looks like our tents and, and I don't know what that was. Anyway yeah, there you can see what our, our operation looked like when I first was over there in Vietnam.

MS: Where was everybody else?

GS: A..

MS: Were you stationed with marines or anything?

GS: Yeah and this was my second tour and I was at Tuy Hoa. And they were building the base um.. back over, in this area and the runways, you can see they're just starting to build runways, out in, that's a taxi way and the runway is right out here so we had our operation out here close to where the airplanes would take off and land. And it was probably a half a mile over here and at first we had a.. south Vietnamese guards and they were really good. Then they moved them out and they put in oh, army guards and then, there, that's when we started getting mortared you know and the people really tried to come in and give us trouble and a.. so then they brought the south Vietnamese back. They didn't mess around you know, they just, they just went out and killed people (he laughs)

MS: Wow

GS: and a.. I'd fly the south Vietnamese lieutenant was in charge, about every day, morning he'd come over and fly him around because, and he'd pick out ambush spots from the air and then in the nighttime they'd go out, they didn't wait for them to come in and hit the air field. He'd go out, ambush their mortar squads, and what not.

MS: wow

GS: And they, they got so they, the Vietcong was really scared of those South Vietnamese. They were tough little troops. And this was the helicopter I was in when we crashed once. And a.. a.. I'll tell you about the crash I guess but, after, back then I liked to go hunting quite a bit and a.., deer hunting and dove hunting and quail. Anyway, one time I climbed up, after this happened why I was out there and I climbed up on the top of the helicopter and posed with my rifle, you know how they pose with a deer. You know?

MS Yeah (I laugh)

GS: Somebody, you know how there's always a busy body, sent that into our headquarters and boy the commander really didn't like that (He laughs) I really got in trouble for posing with my rifle on top of the helicopter (I laugh). He didn't think it was funny. On that the, a blade broke about 2 and half feet broke off along the blades and.. we fought it and got it down on the ground and then the, one of the landing gear collapsed and we rolled over and that's what happened to that. And it was, it rolled over there and the blades were still going around and that old helicopter was really a.. jerking ur, you know every time a blade would hit the ground it would jerk and I can remember my helmet flying off, I had it snapped but it just flew off and that helmet went right out through the, the, glass or the cockpit plastic, went right out through there and went sliding down, or you know, flying down the hill and I thought "I've had it" and I can remember wrapping my hands around my head like this (he laughs) because we were really getting thrashed around. And I, when we got it a.. a.. stopped, we shut the engine off and a.. got the rotors stopped, the, I remember the, the co-pilot was, 'er the pilot was a.. lieutenant, can't think of his, I do that all the time.. a.. was hanging up kind of by his shoulder straps, kind of hanging down and I'm trying to lift him up and get his seat belt and shoulder harness unsnapped and one of the mechanics that was in the back or, it was a medic that was in the back a.. he jumped up on top there, he reached in and grabbed him by the, the flight suit and one handed him, you know.

MS: Wow

GS: This level of adrenalin would do for you, I remember he just reached in there, grabbed that guy (grunts) just jerked him right up out of there and a.. and a.. you know swung him up, up on top the helicopter you know. Normally I don't think you could do that with one hand, but I remember that really well.

MS: No (we laugh)

GS: Cause he just jerked him, jerked him right up out of there a.. I've got a picture of our crew here. Yeah that was captain McMean and captain Berbelvis and this was a



lieutenant that was up there in the, in the a.. right seat, he was always getting into trouble you know (we laugh) and Captain Coles and lieutenant price and that's me. And a.. talking about drinking, he always did drink a lot of beer but a.. over in Vietnam he started drinking, you know, vodka and heavy, and he just became an alcoholic

MS: Oh.

GS: and he, he died young just from drink. And he got shot down over there and, and the other pilots were killed and, and he kind of went off his rocker, he was such, really a nice young man, I always really liked him and a.. he was always a good friend hmm. Yeah, those... That captain Berbelvis I said was always a good friend. His daughters joined the church, he'd, I'm sure he'd of liked to join the church but his wife was southern Baptist

MS: oooh

GS: She would have left him if he joined the church but his daughters joined. He never drank, smoked, he just, he was really just a good guy, I always enjoyed flying with him. We flew together, oh I don't know...

MS: Well if I knew, figure out a way to make a copy of some of those. We could put them in.. My paper.

GS: If they were significant I, I've got other pictures someplace but I don't know where a lot of my stuff is, you know, I guess I should have put it together but it's never really meant anything and, a.. you know it's, it's kind of scattered. A.. Grandma says, "Its down under the stairs in a.. old, a.. footlocker, so I'll have to dig back in there someday and pull it out (we laugh). I've got pictures of a.. of a.. you know puffs, the, those gunships you know the C-47, they put mini guns in the, the, you know mounted them, you know I've got, I've got, some of the guys took time exposures of them flying around the perimeter of the base and it's just like a wall of fire all the way, all the way around those mini guns are, put out a terrific amount of fire power and a.. yeah, and that's what they used to do whenever we'd get under attack. They'd just come in and, just put the old airplane up in a 30 degree bank and just fly around the perimeter.

MS: Wow

GS: and a.. nothing survived after.. just a wall of fire coming down. Well what else could I tell ya?

MS: Well, I'd like if you're willing to maybe focus on these two Vietnam tours, um, and just get as much detail but I don't know if that's asking too much today because we've already gone for so long (I laugh).

GS: About the missions? Some of the missions?

MS: Yeah, just even, yeah if you could remember the first kind of, first day there and just move forward, if you can. Just as much detail about those.

GS: Ok, (clears throat). First headed over for Vietnam in a.. I, I went to jungle survival school in the Philippines and a.. and a.. you know I, I think I, I would never, never mention it, but I've been to every survival school that you could think of, the artic survival and the escape and evasion course for, like FACCAS and that was up in the mountains, a.. between Reno and California in the High Sierras and a.. you know, oh, I, I can't.. oh sea survival and that, but this jungle survival was different you know, and so we spent, I don't know, week, ten days, out in the jungle there in the Philippines and then I was supposed to go to Tuy Hoa and set up a detachment there from scratch and a.. there were, there wasn't a base there you can see.

MS: Uh huh.

GS: The, the over there. While I was in the Philippines I got this a.. twix and a.. and its this, "Don't go to Tuy Hoa" you know a.. "Go to Saigon." So I a.. I got on the phone, they had a classified phone from the Philippines to, to Saigon and I said "hey I got your twix, why, why don't you want me to go, to, to Tuy Hoa?" and they said, "OH, well a.. the Vietcong retook it, took that area last night (he laughs) so we didn't want you to co up there." (we laugh) so I went to Saigon and then a.. a.. I was there for a little while and then I went over to a.. a base in Thailand for, till ,till we could retake Tuy Hoa and a.. so I spent some time over there and flew with them for several missions with them and that's where the base were they were in lots and they a.. the a.. the a.. F.. a.. 1, I, I forget now, it was a fighter bomber that was flying a lot of the missions up into the northern, a.. north Vietnam, anyway and we had, we had several good missions out of there with them, then anyway finally they retook Tuy Hoa and they called me and said "OK, you can go back over there and set up a detachment." And I said "hey, if it's the same to you I like it here. I'd just stay right here (we laugh) in Thailand." But they said no so I, I guess we went back over to, to Saigon and picked up a helicopter and picked up a couple of crew men and a.. a.. and, and a.. Captain Fishbeck and we flew up to Tuy Hoa and to, set up a detachment. Nothing there really other than we've got the north, south Vietnamese for guards but no tents a.. you know a.. no vehicles you know and so we started scrounging around to got a, got a couple of tents and set them up and.. sand bags, we fixed sand bags to land on the pad because there was nothing but sand. You'd come into land you'd just, you'd get, you know a dust cloud there every time. Then we started getting a few crew members and just within a few days why we'd got things kind of pulled together and, and says, "ok we're operational" and a.. one helicopter and, and a.. I was the only one that had a survival vest, you know with the radio and all the stuff you're supposed to have and a.. we a.. it was really funny because a.. I think that first day there was a forward air control, in fact I was telling you about, came in and said "hey I heard you guys were operations I thought I'd come over and see what you got." That afternoon he got shot down and we picked him up so that was our first mission (we laugh). The guy that'd we'd met that morning a.. so how's that for first day of op.. being operational. So then we, we gradually started getting stuff together. A lot of it we'd just scrounge up. We, we got a fire suppression kit that I was telling you about. They call it the sputnik, big red ball, 1000 pounds of foam. We picked that up from Trang or some place and then a.. a.. it, it

just seemed like, you, we didn't have anything to operate with. We'd go out, we needed a pole positioner, you know where you over up, and that, and you have a rubber thing on the top of it and you hover up to that and then that tells you when you're located over this kit so they can hook this fire bottle up. We didn't have one of those and I know, he, Fishbeck and I, and Captain Fishbeck and, and he was a.. he had an engineering degree and he could fix anything and the world's greatest scrounger and the. And were, oh, and one of our sergeants went over and stole the truck from the army, you know just stole it, you know you see these movies of people you know, how they, in world war II how they scrounged, hey we got better stories than that. This guy went over there and stole the big ol army truck so he and I are driving down this dirt road and a.. where they're, construction going on and there's a sign with the.. and a.. I said, "Ed, you know what that looks like?" and he said "what?" and I said, "that looks like a pole positioner." He's driving, he slams on the breaks and I jump out and grab the.. (we laugh) and a.. and that's the way we operated and, and emergency vest, you know with the emergency radios and all your survival equipment in them. I told one of our sergeants, and he was young, good lookin tech sergeant and I wrote him up orders, you know, hand wrote them, we didn't have a type writer, we wrote hand orders, that he could ride in the airplane, and I told him "go out and.." and I didn't say steal I says "scrounge us up enough survival vests for the whole crew." And a.. and you know, "go wherever you need to go." So he was gone about a week. He comes back he's got survival vests for everybody and a.. a couple of M-16s and a.. (he laughs) I, I often thought when we got back, I trained a lot of people how to be.. to how to steal stuff while I was over there. I wonder if I'll be held accountable for that (I laugh) cause that's how we, we got a lot of our equipment and eventually we got build up, till we had, we had two airplanes and we got more crew, kept coming in and, and eventually we got 4 air.. helicopters, is what we were supposed to have. I don't know, it just went like that for the whole tour where we, if I couldn't think of, of any, what to steal, the crew got indoctrinated and they, they were always out scrounging stuff all the time. We a.. we needed something it was, we'd trade for it or, steal it, you know. (we laugh). And a.. yeah, we got so we were probably the best equipped detachment over there (he laughs) cause the army, army was, well they were really good about helping us out and giving us stuff and a.. a.. but too, but then like a.. that, that big old army truck they, the when we finally start, people started coming on and building the base I remember the supply people didn't have big truck like that so they'd always ask if they could barrow our truck and we'd say, "well, we'll, we'll let you, we'll provide a driver but you can't just take the truck and drive it." And, and so that way our driver would go and they'd pick up all this good stuff from the supply and, and they'd usually stop by our detachment before they'd go on to the supply depot. (we laugh). So yeah, yeah so that was Vietnam a.. we had, a lot of good missions and a lot of tough ones over there too. You know the, the oh, one of the worst ones was, I think this is what she found, a little bit about it on the computer was where a.. a.. a Vietnamese ferry had run aground about a mile off shore but they had a.. a.. a.. hurricane or typhoon they called it over there, had gone through and it was just off the coast you know, going north so we got the, the left side of it, it'd blew down all of the, the fighter pilots' tents, just blew them away and a..

and so, and a.. but anyway this ship had a.. run a ground, capsized, broke up out there and a.. we went out and a.. the wind were so bad and the waves, the waves were 20 or 30 once in a while about a 50 foot wave (clears throat) and we went out to try and rescue them and the winds were so bad you didn't dare turn down wind with the helicopter because the winds didn't have enough back stick, to take the edge... you had to keep the helicopter into the wind and, or close into the wind and if you wanted to go down wind, you backed up you know, and a.. anyway the, there's just all these people and kids in the water and a.. and the, the, there's a lot of wood there and you didn't, a lot of kids and women would be holding onto that, and men would go there and, they'd just knock them off so they could, because they were all panicky about drowning and what not, and a.. yeah we started to pick trying to pick them up but, drop down a rescue basket, and it's designed where you can just scope people out of the water, but they'd, just, a mass of them, so many of them would grab a hold of it, you know, men would be pulling women and the kids away, that's what really bothers me,

MS: uh huh

GS: Still does. Till you couldn't pick it up (voice raises a bit) and so then, that's when we started just getting a whole mass of them and we'd just drag them right upon the beach then go back, and like sand fish or something, just get another mass and drag them up, so we saved, I don't know, probably 80, 90, 100 people like that. Not a single kid. We saved some men and some few women but all the kids, they, children drowned. You know. And just cause the waves were so high and you know, beating you know big ol wave washing up on shore and then another ship had been driven in on the beach and, you know, right up against the beach then a lot of those waves were taken the people in and slamming them right up against the side of that ship and they were in under there so you couldn't get the hoist back in to drag them out so finally I got around to the side and just used the rotor wash, just shoved a whole lot of those people out from underneath there, down, and my detachment, people in the detachment had all come out and they'd formed a human chain from the shore out onto, out into the water you know, you know and those waves were just beating them.

MS: Yeah.

GS: and a.., and they well I flew them out and they'd grab and pass them in to the chain up onto the shore so I don't know how many they were, saved that a, way. But all we had, that was a bad one and a.. so that write up there in a paper that said, that we had saved 8 or 9 and I know it was like 80 or 90 or a.. lot I mean there was no way, I didn't, count or anything

MS: Uh huh

GS: or even try to count but a.. any way. That, that was that was a.. a bad mission a.. we had a lot of missions over there where we would search for people and couldn't find them um.. a lot of missions where the people were, you'd find them but they'd been shot and a.. were dead. We, picked up a lot of army, you know, evacuated, you know the army had

their dust offs. They helped us out you know, fi they could get to somebody that, a pilot that was down before we could of course they'd pick them up. The same with us if they needed help picking up wounded or stuff, we'd help, we'd go in and pick them up so.. um. It, it was, yeah it, it, after a year you're ready to come home.

MS: Yeah

GS: I'll tell you that.

MS: Yeah, I bet.

GS: Yeah, and over, a.. couple of times over there I know the, heavenly father really protected me cause I was, I, you know turn, like one time I was going in and they'd set up a flack trap and they'd like to do that to suck you in and they could have people that could, with our radios that would call in an emergency and you'd go out there and they would have a, you know a trap set up for you with machine guns and what not and I know one time I was going in and boy a.. and the, the voice you know, "pull up, pull up" and I, my know I, I turned and yanked, you know full back stick and full power, you know I just turned and there just came a wall of fire like that

MS: Whoa

GS: So I know heavenly father has quite a few times over there I was protected by that and so yeah. I'll tell you about those stories some other time. I'll give you some good war stories. Yeah. (I laugh).

GS: Cause I smell food.

MS: Yeah, we've been going a long time. That's.. Interesting. Lots to think about it makes me tired just thinking about, I can't even imagine how.. you went through all that.

GS: And a.. yeah. But you know I flew a lot of rescue missions here in the states too and some of those were kind of hairy. And nothings more scary than a night rescue, rescue mission up in these kind of mountain at night. You know day time, you know, no problem but boy

MS: Uh

GS: you start trying to fly around these mountains at night and have to make an approach or what not, that'll, that'll tighten things up (he laughs) yeah I, I, course I've follow these missions, these, these medivac guys from the hospital, they fly some pretty hairy missions up here. So I, those are nice helicopters, those are a lot nicer helicopters.

MS: I was going to say.

GS: Very different. They've got all, they've got some good NAV equipment on those and they've got a nose, pictures of them, they've got what they call a flier, or Forward looking infrared, that's nice to have.

MS: Yeah.

GS: So...yeah, I, I, see those I get the feeling, "boy I'd like to try those out I'd like to fly those." (we laugh)

MS: Would they let you, could you do it or,

GS: Oh, no

MS: Did you, your license expires or something kind of deal.

GS: oh, no I still have a commercial license, you know and a.. and if I wanted to fly I'd just have to get an instructor and get requalified but I, I'm old (we laugh) they wouldn't want me in, flying (I laugh). Oh my depth perception is bad, and a.. I'm sure my reflexes are terrible (he laughs) I'm lucky to drive the car up and down the canyon (I laugh).

MS: Well you want to a.. , want to show me your shed out there? I still haven't, you're new..

GS: You've haven't seen it?

MS: I haven't seen inside.

GS: Come on up.

9/29/14 #1

(We are laughing)

MS: We'll call you when we get to the blind date stuff again. We'll let you know.

GS: Yeah.

MS: Well we left off, you were telling me about that first time in Vietnam and how you pulling everything together, scrounging everything up and then, you ended on that rescue, the ferry ship, ferry boat rescue of all those people.

GS: oh ok. Yeah. Yeah that was on my second tour in Vietnam

MS: Oh the ferry boat rescue was second tour?

GS: Yeah, the first, the first time was a.. when I was over there with Air America and that was over in a.. very north edge of Thailand and up into Laos. And a.. we, yeah, and so then I came back to Hawaii and then from Hawaii we moved to a.. a.. San Angelo and then that. And San Angelo is where we were doing that high air altitude air sampling for NASA.

MS: Ok.

GS: It was when a.. China was, was exploding there, or testing their nuclear weapons you know their nuclear bombs and that, all that they were air bursts and all that stuff was going up in the air and getting into the jet stream and coming right over the United States and we were checking and, and you know you could take those samples and send them in

you know to NASA and the a.. the people that analyzed and then within a short time they knew exactly, you know what the bomb was composed of and the size and everything you know.

MS: whoa.

GS: So that's what, that's what we were doing there. And then from there, that's when I went back to a.. Vietnam again and a.. That was in 66, and a.. you know I told you about not going to Tuy Hoa first yeah, because a.. the Vietcong had taken it. I went over to Thailand to another rescue detachment over there. Flew with them until, for a while, till we retook the Tuy Hoa and then we went back over and that's when we set up, set up the detachment and then it was after that, that a..

MS: OK

GS: You know, I was telling you about the typhoon and the ship sinking and what not and so yeah, that, that was one mission there. And I guess there's quite, you know we had quite a few missions over there. I, I, they all kind of run together a.. There was, there's one story there that a.. that is kind of complicated but a.. yeah. I, I guess a.. I'd like to talk about it maybe. It was where a.. they, the enemy liked to set up what we called flack traps, a.. and lure the helicopters out and this particular day they set up really well cause there was a forward air controller, a FAC was flying, and, and there was a, a battle going on the army was, it was about, oh I don't know 25, 30 miles from the base and this operation was going on and I get a phone call from what they call a pull hip controller, that was the controller for the area, and said, "Hey, FAC," I think it was 37, "FAC 37 just got shot down." And a.. and I, I knew that particular pilot, that that was his call sign. And if its someone you know, you know, I, I guess you're, you're really able, you're wanting to get out there and pick people up if they get down but if its someone you know, a friend or something, its, it seems like its even more urgent. And so we hopped in the helicopter and headed out there and as we got out to the area well, you know, they, the artillery was firing and exploding and you know all the confusion that normally goes and along the, a, a.. just there was a.. oh rice paddies and then there was kind of a.. a.. dyke and then there was tress all along the dyke and a.. and there was smoke coming up and a.. and someone called it, a.. that's where you'd crashed and we, boy we just really headed in there, you know just really, really fast to get in and pick up and on the way out there I called for, you know, joker's, that was helicopter gunships, the army call sign was jokers and, and the air force gun ships were green hornets and so you just, headed, head out on a mission and call you know jokers or green hornets, call on guard channels and anybody that in the area that's got fuel and ammo you know you come up the, call channel you know and you'd set it up and I had a couple of gunships fallow me back a little ways, they were trying to catch up and, and a.. we were just headed right in there and a.. just, just we were, you know, I don't know, not out very far and going as fast as we could and descending and, and a.. all of a sudden there was a voice screams, "pull up! Pull up!" you know and I remember I just racked in full power and 90 degree bank and you know climbing at the same time. And just as I did there was just a whole wall of fire just came

up, right where I would have been a half a second later and a.. and a.. so we pulled up and a.. you know, you know climbing turn and come around again and a.. and then the gun ships, you know they saw what has happen and they just went in with their mini guns and they just leveled that area and a.. and I mean when they, when I say they leveled it, you do, you gotta see, see what a mini gun can do you know.

MS: Uh huh

GS: You know one was right behind the other one and they just chopped trees down

MS: Wow.

GS: And just leveled the whole area no more gun fire

MS: Uh huh

GS: And a.. and then you know the rest of the story you know, how that came about was a.. the Vietcong had been there and they knew the, the call sign of the forward air controller, they had radios and were listening, they waited till he left and a.. and you know to go back and re-fuel and then they called in like to Phewhip or somebody, "Hey you know I'm going in or you know a planes crashed" I don't know how exactly they call it in. And then they set a little fire down there to simulate a little crash area in the jungle area and they just had it set up really nice and a.. and a.. later on you know the, oh the were milling, or we are still milling around with the FACs coming , got refuel and is coming back you know, you know and "wants going on?" you know, and you know that's just a confusion that goes, goes on but a.. the well when we pulled up I looked over and a.. and I saw a huey that had been shot down so a.. we were checking on, checking on them and a.. and I a.. the that, the huey crew had been picked up by another helicopter and a.. so because that one, it was really all shot up and so then I was talking with him, with the, the pilot of that first huey and he, and a.. and he said a.. and he was telling me what had happened to, cause he'd been fooled, just and went in there and got shot up just before I had.

MS: Ooh

GS: And it was a miracle cause they had.. twin 58 caliber, which are just, are deadly for a.. for a helicopter. I'm going to turn this thing off.

10/6/14 #1

Grandma: Well I'm going to go and let you guys talk (I laugh)

MS: But yeah and then like I said, I'll just, somehow figure out how to put it all up for everybody so the whole family can look at it and type it up, and I'm going to type up your papers that you gave me, and I, I realized about halfway home that I forgot that folder of the pictures

GS: Oh yeah, I came in and it was laying right there, and (I laugh)



MS: Nooo

GS: Ah, he forgot, yeah well a.. well you're busy so you take care of your stuff you have to first

MS: Yeah, ok

GS: use that as a priority and I was thinking today maybe I could make up a time line cause I know it's probably confusing cause I talk about this time and you know maybe Vietnam or right after Vietnam and then I go back and talk about earlier and all that so maybe if I made up a timeline about the, when I was at different places it would make more sense.

MS: Yeah, yeah,

GS: I can write that out.

MS: OK

GS: and do that

MS: I think, yeah, I mean if you want to, you don't have to. I'm you know, putting it together and those first couple of times you know I was a little not sure, but now I kind of, I think I kind of got enough of it that I can figure out where it all fits.

GS: Yeah I jump around so I'm sure that doesn't help any.

MS: That's alright, that's alright

GS: So did you have questions you wanted to start on.

MS: Yeah, I a.. well I don't, well I guess I was going to ask you if you thought of any, I actually have a bunch of questions today, be really prepared but I was wondering if you thought of any since last week, anything that came to mind that you were thinking about sharing or.. stood out to you

GS: oh, I guess I did think of a couple of missions maybe but now I've, I've forgot what they were (we laugh) but I'll think of them.

MS: ok

GS: I don't know now what it was I was thinking of. Wow that, that's a senior moment (we laugh)

MS: Well that's alright then, we'll, we'll start with my questions. I've been reading, um.. a couple memoirs of people that have gone over there and I actually found another interview of, of a Vietnam vet up in Logan and I read through his interview and a.. he was talking about sickness over there. He would get, everybody would get a.. um oh, shot, dangn-

GS: Dynegy fever.

MS: Malaria.

GS: Dysentery and all those things.

MS: Uh huh. Did you ever have to deal with any of that.

GS: A.. I, I think I had what they called Dynegy fever, just a slight case of it but before you went over there they gave you shots a.. and a.. and then pills that to take every day to help keep you from getting malaria and a.. I, I took those, a lot of people didn't want to take them, they were nasty, big 'ol nasty pills and a.. and I remember that shot that they gave ya, in the rear end, to keep you from getting some of those illnesses to help your immune system. I can remember you know, that left a great big knot back there and then you had to sit on your survival pack and, and put that pressed right up on, I remember how uncomfortable that was and I was saying "man I sure hope that shot was worth it" you know, cause mammaglobin shot was what they gave you and it was seemed like as if, it was a big 'ol vile and it was about that much of stuff they shot into you

MS: Geez

GS: Yeah and I, when, when we first went to, got over there at Tuy Hoa everybody was stuck there for about 6 months and I can remember how healthy everybody was and then after 6 months a.. every, people started going on R&R you know rest and relaxation, going different places and when they got back they brought back all these different viruses you know colds, and all these different things and then from then on everything was normal again everybody was getting sick here and there. They, people that didn't take their pills and a lot of them wound up with, with you know Dynegy fever and malaria. And I, I had a touch of it seems like just about the time I came home, you know and rotated back but I got over it so I never, never really sure that's what I had but it was some, I had a lot of the symptoms and a.. yeah. But a.. I, I, I think I, I was probably healthier than most, you know I can't ever remember really being sick over there. Um.. the, the dysentery and stuff that, that can be really bad. I know other people had it really bad and worms and all these things that, that were prevalent but, so I guess I was just lucky. Healthy then, I was young and healthy.

MS: And you flew the medics, so were you close with the medics if you ever needed anything?

GS: Oh, oh yeah it was always that way in rescue a.. you know even here in the states you had the medics right there with you and a.. flight surgeon and a.. that flight surgeon was your family doctor I mean not only for us but that's one if jewel and the kids needed anything he was available for them too. So yeah. Yeah it made it pretty nice. Yeah we were, we were close to the, to the medics usually. I mean when you're on alert they're sitting there right with you for 12 hours and if they're night flying 24 hours a day so yeah..

MS: Yeah, it seems like a good spot to be, that close to the medics.

GS: And we had really good medics. Some of them were years and years of experience working in the emergency room and they liked flying with us because they got extra pay and a.. and.. I don't know it was just something different for them and those guys were a.. a.. authorized to, to, to give you know shots or, or drugs or more so than a nurse. You know a nurse would have to do all these things under a doctor's supervision but a.. you know, they, they had the medics had authority if the doctor wasn't with them to go ahead and give whatever drugs were needed, shots that were needed. For pain or, or what not. But yeah. Good, good bunch of people. Some of them you, like I said had you know, well I don't know 12, 14 years' experience working in the, so they

MS: Whoa

GS: ON a lot of those mission if we had a medic or a young doctor seemed like the medics knew a lot more than that young doctor did. (I laugh)

MS: So in Vietnam how many, would you just take one medic with you, or sometimes not take a medic and just bring them back?

GS: We always had a medic with us..

MS: Just one?

GS: Just one yeah, yeah and a.. If we were going to be, if we thought the plain was going to crash close to the base, we carried two firefighters and the fire bottle, if it was away from the base we didn't, we knew we wouldn't be using a fire bottle, we didn't take the firefighters with us, we just took a crew chief and the medic and the pilot and co-pilot. Here in the states a lot, a lot of times you wanted ,you flew with one pilots, except at night and then at nighttime you always had to have a pilot and co-pilot but in Vietnam you had two pilot, pilot and co-pilot on all missions over there and that was a good idea,

MS: yeah

GS: you never knew what you were going to run into. And a.. yeah,

MS: And you never lost any co-pilot or anybody right, you said?

GS: Out of my detachment I didn't have any casualties. Very little damage a few times we had some bullet holes up through the rudder blades and things like that but very little damage to the helicopter so, a.. you know like I've told you different war stories about how close it was, you know, the you know taking ground fire and what not but we were just, just lucky. And a lot of times a.. you know, those, pour army helicopter pilots they fly in the hewys, they took so much ground fire you know the way they operated. I picked up one young, one crew, hewy crew, and a.. pilot was about 18 or 19 years old just looked really young and that, and that was the third time he'd been shot down that month, you know, three times in one month and I looked at his helicopter and it, it was just like a sieve, it had just been shot to pieces and a.. yeah.. that, yeah we just ,we didn't take near the battle damage, or the casualties that the army hewys did. Cause they'd you know, if they were going in dropping off troops on a.. on a operation they were

committed you know and they'd just be go in either at a low hover or land and drop their troops and out of there like in 5 or 10 seconds because there's another helicopter coming in right behind them just a string of them and when they were committed even if they were taking fire they had to go in there anyway and a.. where a.. our pilots for the one had the discretion to do whatever they thought was necessary you know. If we headed in and we were taking fire and we wanted to pull out you know, we could pull out and go in it from a different direction. In fact that was rule of thumb, you know, like as if you went into a spot and a.. you know to pick somebody up and, and a.. then later you had to go in again. You never went in on the same route. You always varied your approach and take off.

MS: Ok

GS: because they would, the 'ol Vietcong would set up and wait for you, me, you know going into a crash site, you made more than one approach, and they were there, approach from the same way, they'd get you. Had to use good judgment.

MS: What a.., what was the weather like there? Did the weather ever give you problems? When you were, and flying or anything?

GS: Well, a.. you know, there was a lot of times if you know when we'd have storms like the typhoons would be up, and things like, bad weather, yeah and it would rain. I was trying to think of you know thunder storms, we had those we were kind of in a, a sandy area close to the ocean and then a river that went up a.. in land and it kind of was setting in that little a.. rectangle or between the ocean and the river and it was just sand and it was a real fine sand and a.. we a.. when, when the wind would blow that, we'd really get the dust and stuff and a.. of course it was, we were always every time we'd come into land since we didn't have a regular pad like you'd normally have. You'd raise a big cloud of dust. That probably bothered us more than anything. For our pad when we first go over there we filled up sand bags and we laid them down to make a pad to put the helicopter on and that helped a little bit but yeah, you'd, you'd make a real fast approach and plop the thing on the ground really quick, keep, try to keep the dust down but on the days when the winds were blowing I, I know you'd, after being there all day or around you know the air, airplane or taking off and landing what not, you'd look in the mirror and you'd have a little white spots around your eyes and the rest of you would just be black from the dust. And a.. a.. showers a.. were a luxury (he laughs) to have water for a shower and a.. yeah the, but I, I guess over all I guess the weather wasn't too bad right where we were at. I mentioned once about getting the, the typhoon, the winds and stuff from a typhoon that went by just off the coast and a.. other than that I just can't remember the weather being really bad.

MS: The rains, because they'd have those monsoon season right?

GS: Yeah, yeah the rain and its be kind of cold, yeah cold and rainy we had a lot of rain.

MS: But that wouldn't really effect flying or.. or anything?

GS: oh yeah you, whenever it was raining really, really bad, a lot of times they cut back on the missions and didn't fly. We didn't like to fly in the rain if we didn't have to cause that was hard on your rudder blades you know and a.. a.. we a.. but and, plus the rain and moister and that sand and everything that really would get into the controls on your rudder blades and things. Made it really hard and a.. it was hard, and if you put regular oil like you would think to, to lubricate your flaps and everything all that did was just attract more dirt and dust and sand so there was a special lubricant that we try, always tried to get, a millennium dal sulfide was what it was and, and a.. I can remember we couldn't get it through regular channels so one of the guys wrote home to his wife and had her go and buy it and mail it to us and it was like, goooooold. (We laugh) this special lubricant for our blade flaps but... a... can you imagine that, you, you could get it through civilian market but you couldn't get it through our supply channels. Yeah..

MS: So you were right by the river there?

GS: Well it, we were probably half a mile from the ocean

MS: Ok

GS: And probably a half a mile from the river

MS: Ok

GS: and a.. and it was always really weird because a.. a.. Russian ships would bring in supplies down at a.. at a port that was about 20, 30 miles south of us and they would off-load and a.. Saipan, in little boats and things. We couldn't shot at them as long as they were out in the water. But once they started up the river then they were fair game and of course they did that mostly at night and what not. I always thought that was weird, we couldn't shot, shot the Russian ship and they kind of took turns and sometimes it was American ships in port unloading our supplies and then Russians would have their turn. It was really a weird war and all the, and a.. you know like a lot of targets were off limits up north, you couldn't, couldn't bomb, always wanted to drop something on that Russian ship (He laughs) that was against the rules.

MS: So that river was dangerous, then? And the ocean or..

GS: a..

MS: were you ever worried there?

GS: Well actually that whole area was unsafe, it was like probably the old, forts of Indian times you know in the old west. You had your little fort there, your base and a.. and anything outside of that you just never knew what, what was going to happen. You could get shot at. A lot of times we'd get shot at just as we were going over the perimeter to take off. They'd move something into the little huts or something that was just outside the perimeter. You never. And we more or less controlled the area you know, about the rice paddies went out about 3 miles or so and then there was starting to get into mountains and we, we controlled that during the day but the Vietcong controlled it at night,

MS: Wow

GS: they'd move in really close to the base and, and you could tell when they were getting ready to, you know, have an attack, you know, they, hear the, you'd hear our people you know out on the perimeter start a lot of chatter going on and, and then I don't know they, they just if it got really bad well that's when we'd call in those a.. gunships oh the puff, they called them puffs, or magic dragons and that was the C-47s with the mini gun yeah, and that, when we had the, the south Koreans as our perimeter guards, you know, then, they, they would usually they'd set up ambushes at night and everything and pretty soon they'd move the Vietcong back, get them away from the base but when we'd have American guards they, pretty soon they were moving closer and closer so kind of, kind of weird. The Koreans were tough, you know, and a lot of times they, you know, the Vietcong, they'd have their kids come up a.. like a clothes line and a.. hook on the end of it. They'd throw it over and start pulling the wire and the Americans would just keep warning them, you know "Go away" those Koreans they'd just tell them maybe once or twice at the most and if they, and then they'd just shot them, I mean they were, they didn't mess around. They were tough, tough people. And their discipline on their people were really, really tough,

MS: huh. How often was the base attacked? Was it a nightly thing or?

GS: There was harassment that went on just you know, you couldn't say every night or every other night but fairly often where they'd lob in a few mortars or just a little faint and what not a.. big attacks you know where they really, where you thought they were really wanting to get serious why they, oh I don't know, I'd say once a month, you never knew just quite what, what was going on. Just a.. just now and then these things would happen, enough to, to keep you alert I guess or worried.

MS: Yeah

GS: About what was going on. They a.. They never did really take the, take the base after once we started building it up, I mean. I told you about the, when we were , when I was first, first to go over there and set up a detachment, they got word when I was in the Philippines, " don't go to Tuy Hoa, Vietcong took it last night. Re-took it. Gotta wait till we take it back again before you set up, start setting up a base."

MS: What did you do when they would attack or...?

GS: A.. if we could a.. yeah, get our helicopters airborne, well before you know, like as if they would start mortaring and they were predictable about you know if the mortars started hitting here, out at the end of the runway then they would start walking them up well then you'd know just about how much time you'd have and if we had time then we'd try and get two helicopters airborne. If we had enough people, usually you know ,like you only had five pilots that was the detachment commander and then two crews and a.. and I, I always pulled alert just regular put myself in the schedule so that we never had more than one extra pilot but anyway if there was happen to have all four pilots there

well we'd get two helicopters airborne if not, we'd get the alert helicopter airborne. If, if a.. you didn't have time well you'd just go in the bunker and wait until they, quit mortaring or whatever they were doing and a.. if you were, our place we had, had a.. shelters or places where we slept a.. was away from the flight line a little ways and otherwise it was so noisy down there you'd try, and a.. we had bunkers there that you could run and get in the bunkers but a.. I, I fixed myself a shelter in a.. in a.. I don't know what, how to describe it. It was like a tin box you know about a 10 by 10.

MS: Ok

GS: and a.. dug it down, put it down in the sand about halfway, you know and then a.. put sand bags around it and up on top of it and a.. usually it, and then on my bunk I took some steel planking, you know, you know, the bunks here and then you put some steel planking on it and then put my mattress on that and if they started mortaring I'd just take my blanket and my m-16 and role under the bunk and figured I'd be as safer there as I would be in the bunker and not even bother(I laugh) cause they'd keep you up running back and forth to the bunker. That's what they wanted to do, just a lot of harassment. You just stay in. Usually what they were trying to do was blow up our fuel dump or, and damage our airplanes, our, and a.. that's why, that's what they're trying to do. They weren't, the helicopters weren't their primary targets but you know, you could get mortars you know, that would hit something or other but a.. yeah, and, and then they'd have people try to infiltrate the base a.. you know sneak in from the ocean usually to go in to get to the bomb dump.

MS: oh

GS: Blow that up or the fuel storage area, or and then of course a lot of times it, we'd use the helicopter and a.. to try to track them and we had night vision, we had starlight scopes on the, the helicopter and on our M-16s and you could, you know it would be really clear but you could still see people moving and a.. so we used those and direct the people in to a.. to pick them up. If it, if it was good, but if it was raining really bad weather where we wouldn't be flying, couldn't get 'em up well then, that was bad for the people that would have to track them down because they'd, they would have to go in and try to find them and they were always carrying explosives and that was one thing we had to worry about too was not getting to close to them, you know.

MS: Oh,

GS: if they blew up they could get us too. So a.. yeah and a.. and sometime a.. they'd just turn those dogs loose and then that was pretty gruesome that just, let the dog get 'em. Get the bad guy

MS: Uh huh

GS: Yeah, so yeah, so yeah, that was, that was just one little side light of what, what would be taking place a lot of times. That's why I didn't get much sleep for, (he laughs) for all the time I was over there.

MS: I didn't know they had dogs over there.

GS: Oh yeah, they had attack dogs. And they worked them, used them, usually like to track and what not

MS: Uh huh

GS: and what not but they kept them under control. But if they got cut off and tired of trying to take the people well then they'd just turn their dogs loose.

MS: Wow. Huh.

GS: A.. yeah what else, I'm not, thinking of many things today. (He laughs) what other question have you got matt?

MS: I was just, I guess I was thinking you were so close to that river and that ocean, I've seen a couple of movies where , you know they'll go out and be surfing or doing stuff in the water and I always wondered if that was real or if, cause it seemed a little crazy to me and so I was wondering if you ever thought, I don't know, take a swim in the river, or take a bath in there cause you couldn't get a shower or anything

GS: Oh now, I guess it never crossed my mind.

MS: Cause it was too dangerous I..?

GS: Yeah you just didn't play around off base at all. We.. a.. like for our a.. out services you know, like we'd have meetings on a Sunday we'd have a priesthood meeting and then of course sacrament, no Sunday school and there was an army detachment that was up about, oh I don't know 15,18 miles up north of us and they, there was, I think 6 or 7 or 8 members up there and they would come down to our, to our meetings that we would have on the base and we had about the same number of people there on our base, for service and to come down they'd load up a.. a couple of big 'ol 6 by trucks and they had machine gun mounted on the back and they put sand bags on the floor and on the, on the fenders or and a.. running boards of those trucks and these were big old diesel type trucks and it was just like they'd make a.. and they'd try to take two if they could incase one would get disabled, they would have the other one.

MS: Ok

GS: And they'd make a dash down to our base and they never knew what was going to happen really, but as far as I know they always made it ok, but yeah, and a.. well you know over there it was really hard to tell who the bad guys were from the good guys. Like, a.. there was this army, army truck and a.. it was in town and there was some kids walking along the road and you know how GIs like to be friendly "Hey you want a ride?" "sure" you know, and they climb up the back and they got up a.. to the base the gate to come into the base and they stopped and says "oh you know, ok you'll have to get out here" and so the kids hop off and then the truck starts up to drive in the base and one of them just threw a hand grenade in the back of the truck and it went off and so, yeah. You



know, you think they're kids and you're being nice, and you know those things just happened all the time and a.. convoys between that port where I was talking to you about and coming back to the base, they were getting ambushed all the time.

GS: Well, you know over there it was really hard to tell who the bad guys were from the good guys like a there was this army, army truck and a.. it was in town and a there was some kids walk along the road and you know how GIs like to be friendly and they "a you want a ride" and "sure" you know, and they climbed on the back and they got up to the base, the gate to come into the base and they stopped and says you know, "Ok you'll have to get out here we're..." and so the kids hop off and then the truck starts up to drive into the base and one of them just threw a hand grenade in the back of the truck. And went off and so..

MS: Wow

GS: Yeah, you know you think there kids and your being nice, you know those things just happened all the time and, a.. coveys between that port where I was talking to you about and coming back to the base they were getting ambushed all the time. I've been flying over, you know, right over the convoy and you know.. see it happen. See them get ambushed and a.. you don't have any really way to help. You could dive down and pretend that you're you know.. gonna shoot at them or something but a.. mainly just waited till it was over and then pick up the wounded and then haul them off to the hospital.

MS: Did that happened a lot where you just had to sit and watch?

GS: Only, only one time that, that where I was actually over them. I went in picked up people several times but I mean where I was actually over it and saw it start and, finish, you a.. it was just one time.

MS: Seems like it would be difficult to have to watch that.

GS: Yeah, I mean, we did you know go down and, and of course the guys in the back were shooting at them with an M-16, that's about (he laughs) about like using a pea shooter you know but a, but yeah the, the, really we couldn't do, really do anything, in fact if the, but that the, I mean they hit the, and ambushed the convoy then the convoy kind of fought them off then you had so many trucks blowing up and quite a few casualties and what not. It was just, those things went on all the time you know and, and a.. you never knew when you were going to get shot at. It was beautiful coast line over there, you could fly along the coast and think "oh how beautiful that is" you know and you could be well looking and maybe taking a picture and then all of sudden you're getting shot at you know, so you ,you just had to be, you never knew what was gonna, where they would have, have a gun set up.

MS: Uh huh

GS: They a.. there was a.. I guess a Buddhist.. um.. I'm trying to think now, where there'd been a Buddhist temple on those mountains. Only about 5 miles from the base. I guess it would have been west of, of Tuy Hoa. Not very far in fact you, you couldn't, you could see the mountain but you couldn't actually see the ruins or anything and, and people liked to fly over there and maybe take a picture and, of course the Vietcong thought "oh, well that's a good place" and they set up a machine gun there and this army helicopter was flying over, you know flying in there, you know, usually it's like a.. the older guy showing the new guy the scenery and what not, and a.. so he's flying and they just really zapped him and a.. shot the, trying to think, a.. my memory must be really getting bad a.., they hit, hit the stick, the bullets hit the stick, oh ok, they hit the co-pilot he had a chest protector, a ceramic chest protector, they hit the co-pilot in the chest and it knocked him out and then it hit the.. the co-pilot, went in and hit him right in the hand and a.. the chest protector only come down to about here, and it shot him right in the groin and he a.. he flew the helicopter back and landed right by our pad and a.. of course a.. I don't, I, it shot out his mic and everything but at first we didn't realize anything was happening when this helicopter flopped down right by our pad. And of course we went running out and of course he was bleeding really bad and we put him, and our medic was working with him and we put him in our helicopter and the co-pilot and flew them down to the, well the, it'd be the, mash unit

MS: Uh huh

GS: They don't call it that over there but it was that type of facility. Flew him down to that , oh it was about 8 miles south of where we were at and there, and the pilot died. He bled to death. They couldn't stop the blood. The medic was working on him all the time but he's the one that flew the helicopter back. But the co-pilot lived. He was just hit and it was such air force there from 50 calibers, a couple of those hitting you that it knocks the wind out of you and knocked, but he, he lived, the co-pilot did but the pilot died.

MS: Wow.

GS: And a.. yeah, there's just rules of thumb that you, you a.. you never fly level, you know, across a field, if there, cause if, that's just like you're standing still, you're heading straight for a gun

MS: Ok

GS: And a.. so you, you fly low over tree tops. You fly high over level ground over that, like the rice paddies and you don't fly directly into a mountain cause then you're, they seemed like those gunners over there, they really had trouble leading the target. They, just, just like they, you know, just like if you're shooting a duck or something, you've got to lead it.

MS: Uh huh

GS: And a.. and a.. they're were pour shots going, flying, if you're fling diagonally across, but boy they would really zap you if you were heading straight in on something.

MS: Huh. Ummm. How, you said you didn't sleep a lot and it was just kind of relentless I know the Vietcong, that's kind of what they're famous for, taking these gorilla tactics were you're always on edge or, or something.

GS: Yeah.

MS: What did you do to, I don't know, to relax from that or.. to get away from that ?

GS: I guess you didn't. I mean you just were there, I was detachment commander, maybe your troops could feel like they could take a break but I guess as a detachment commander you're just there all the time and a.. and it wasn't, it was like 7 days a week 24 hours a day, a lot of times you were, you'd think you could be off at night cause we weren't flying operational missions but yet it seems like a lot of times there were things going on and a.. so you'd be on alert and a.. so you know the missions would be down in, in so you could lay down. I had a couch or a, you know, something, not near this nice but it was like an old settee that we found someplace you know at night a lot of times a.. I had my flight boots, I had zippers in them and you know, you lay down and doze off but you had the radios on and you'd hear people talking and, and if it was really an emergency usually you could tell, you know you could hear somebody call in and even if they were trying to be cool about it you just, the ton of their voice, when really something was going on and you'd, or the crash phone would ring and you'd jump up and answer the crash phone and while you're doing that you're putting your boots on and then we had another, built another thing out of plywood for the crews to sleep in. That was our operational tent where I was and then we had to build another thing out of two by fours and ply wood, a little better place for the crew and push a.. the scramble button and that, they'd take off and run for the helicopter and, but then you know, usually I'd have the info that we need and run to the helicopter and away we'd go. Some nights I felt like as if I didn't really wake up until I was climbing out. You know you get in the helicopter and start it up and take off (we laugh) then you're about 5 miles out and then you start really getting awake. (I laugh). Fly out to where ever it was the crash was and, and there was, see it was not only air force operations but you know, army operations were going on all the time and, and a.. different people fling and what not so yeah so it just seemed like as if, really busy and, and when first went over and started setting up a.. none of the pilots had ever flown a rescue mission.

MS: huh

GS: You know they'd, they'd you know couple of them had a lot of helicopter time but it'd been the type of time like flying people out to missile sites where they were landing on a prepared pad and what not. And they were good pilots but you know before I went over there I, I had hundreds of actual rescue missions on the mountain side or having to evaluate the spots to get into and, and I and its, so I flew low bird on every mission we had for the first 6 months, you know, I might not, I would, had them put them in the right seat and a.. try to get the experience but I'd be riding in the left seat to tell them what to do and where to go and, and so after, after a while you know I get, well I, I got to let

these guys, turn them loose sometime you know, you try to give them the best training you could but, I can remember that first mission, after I got to let them go by themselves, and it was two helicopters and, and I had a, both crews flying, sitting back there listening to the radio and really sweating it out, (he laughs) you know, that was worse, a lot worse than flying a mission yourself, just finally turning, turning them loose. But yeah, I, it was a.. it was really hard because you'd, it's hard to get that concept into people about the, the difference you know between flying, just, flying from one airport to another type of flying, or flying, and actually seeing a, you know, a spot you have to evaluate it and know whether you can get into there or not and the best way to actually do a rescue mission and a.. and you know the concept of hoisting people up out of the jungle and what not. Making them realize how, if you've got somebody on that hoist, you've got to stay there, you can't drag him up through the trees, and injure him that way, yeah so, yeah, so I, that first 6 months over there I really didn't get much rest, or much sleep and I, a.. after I guess one of the reasons I felt like as if I had to get them trained and get them on their own was cause I was anting to go on my R&R and your grandma met me in Hawaii, I flew back from there back to Hawaii and we met there and spent a week in Hawaii and that was, that was good (he laughs) that was great (I laugh). Oh, one thing we had a.. we had one baptism while we over in Vietnam and I think that's an interesting story.

MS: Ok

GS: I don't know if I ever told you that or not?

MS: No

GS: A.. there was one good story from Vietnam (We laugh). I was coming back from a mission and, and I saw a.. you know somebody walking from the tent, at that time there just setting up tents over where the main part of the base would be, walking across the sand dunes to get over to where we were at. Quite a walk in that sand, like I was telling you it was just like powder walking in it, and I can remember landing and telling one of the sergeants I said "take the jeep and go over there and find that guy" you know "and see what he wants, what he's doing before he gets lost out there out there in those sand dunes" and so the guy took off and I was back in the tent, or ops tent, writing up our report or something and, and the Sarg. comes in and says "that, I found that guy and he said he wanted to see major Stockett." And I said "well ok" so I, well he came in he was a young airman, corporal, started talking to him and he said, well, he told me a story, he said a.. "my wife wrote to me" we didn't have telephones, like cell phones like you have now, it was strictly just letters you know, week to write a letter, get home another week for a letter to get back, but anyway he says "my wife wrote me a letter and she said some missionaries came to the house and she said she was really interested in what they were telling her but she wanted to get my opinion and she didn't want to you know meet with them, or, you know, unless he approved and she wanted him to try and find out you know, something about the Mormons" and so he said he went to the Chaplin there on base and at that time they had a catholic Chaplin, and alcoholic by the way, ( I laugh) and

a.. a.. a young captain and, and a.. and the Chaplin told him he didn't know anything about Mormons the only one he knew that was a Mormon on base was major Stockett. And that's why he was trying to a.. to meet with me or, find me so he wanted to find out about the Mormons (I laugh ) so, so I talked to him and a.. and a.. awhile and I, we had a a.. two LDS, first it, first I was the only LDS on base and their wasn't hardly any guys, but then as people kept coming in you know after a.. about a month why there was a sergeant that came in, he was LDS, then a little bit later a Corporal came in, and he had just got off his mission and then it was immediately drafted.

MS: Oh wow.

GS: So he, he brought his charlas with him, all the charlas and all his stuff so a.. anyway I told him well, "you know we have these two, people that used to be on a mission and I could get them to maybe teach you the lessons and, that your wife a.. can be getting from the missionaries back there, so.. a.. what, called the, our, regional representative was up in Da Nang, so talked to him and he said "yeah go ahead and teach him" you know, we were trying to do it, we were doing it anyway,(I laugh) but we were trying to do it the proper way. And got permission for a.. to, to the, those two to teach him the lessons and so of course, boy that young guy that had just got back from his mission boy he was really gun ho. So they started teaching him the lessons and, and a.. he started coming to our meetings a.. first it was just three of us that would meet but then later you know more people started coming in and a.. so he decided he wanted to get baptized and his wife wanted to get baptized so there again we, the regional representative flew down and interviewed him and authorized us to baptize him, so a.. a.. I, figured out when she was, found out when she was going to get baptized and then I figured out like, she was going to get baptized on Saturday evening at 6 o'clock in Indiana. That would correspond to about, because of the international date line,

MS: Uh huh

GS: 8 o'clock you know, Sunday morning in, over there so we set it up where they could get baptized at the same time and so.. we a.. Sunday morning we went down to the beach and a.. kind of set up a little perimeter there and a.. and a.. he got baptized in the south china, oh and I flew out, I had the helicopter there and my crew, cause we were on alert, so we went out and chased the sharks away because there was thousands of sharks in the south china sea.

MS: Wow.

GS: We used, you wouldn't believe the number of sharks that, and, chased the sharks away and, and a.. that a.. sergeant a.. baptized him and a.. and then they set him apart and so that was our baptism (he laughs) oh and a.. I said we set a perimeter cause the crew had all come down from up at the army base so we had a helicopter and two six byes and (he laughs) and a little 'ol area right there at the south china sea. So that was our one baptism.

MS: That's cool.

GS: So yeah, he was always a really good member. And so his wife had got baptized so they were (he laughed) I never, I should have kept track of them after I came home but I never, never did. HE was still over there when I came back. So many of those people that I, I knew that I wish I would have been able to keep track of but you're in the military and you're moving around and it's just you're..

MS: Yeah

GS: ..Busy and you just don't do it.

MS: Yeah.

GS: There's another instance that I've really wondered about and that was the one I was down in New Zealand you know and, flying back and forth to the Antarctic. And it, a.. President Benson, it was before he was president of the church, was coming down there, it was right after he had been released as the secretary of agriculture under president Eisenhower, so it, they were, he was going to come down there and they were, he was going to meet in the, a.. have a meeting in the LDS church and they had a beautiful church in Christchurch. The LDS people did. And a.. so, a.. that, they really advertised that. They were going to use it as a.. as a.. kind of a missionary tool and a.. it was open to the public and a.. they a.. a.. I, I had one, one of the, the a.. air craft commanders that was there working for me a.. he a.. he was catholic but he didn't drink, he was really an unusual catholic, didn't drink didn't smoke, really a good guy. Didn't play around.

MS: Uh huh

GS: You know, that, that was a bad part of going on these TDYs, was playing around. But anyway, he asked me he said "hey are you going to go to that meeting" and I said "yes I am" and he said a, "you think if it'd be alright if I went with you" "well sure you know ,it would be great you know" so we drove in from the navy base where we lived down into Christchurch to the chapel and a.. and of course a.. president Benson or elder Benson got up and spoke and a.. oh it was jammed with all the local people came to see him.

MS: Oh yeah

GS: Cause he was quite famous. And you know he just gave a really outstanding talk you know and, and I think, I know they were all expecting more political type talk but it was, it was LDS (we laugh) LDS doctrine and, and a.. you know a.. after the meeting a.. you know, we were, the meeting was over and a lot of people lined up to talk to president Benson and a.. a.. we, this captain and I, keep trying to think of his name, were standing about halfway back, where we'd been sitting and we were standing there kind of watching what was going on and president Benson came up and he didn't stop to talk to, he just shook hands with the people and just walked straight back and walked straight up to us, shook hands with me and shook hands with this, a captain that was with me, and

started talking to him and he stood there and talked to him for I know 10 or 15 minutes, and then before he went back to the other people. And it was just like he'd picked him out, came back and talked to him. I always thought that was really good.

MS: Yeah. Except he didn't talk to you.

GS: huh?

MS: He didn't talk to you.

GS: Well, you know just, you know very, very briefly, you know just, but like as if he knew he was a non-member and you know he just, and a.. yeah, so a.. so I often wonder well did he later get baptized..

MS: Yeah.

GS: ..that captain (we laugh) cause he was a.. he would have been a really good LDS man, you know he was a good man.

MS: huh

GS: but, there again I didn't follow up. (we laugh) and I didn't keep in contact. A.. yeah, that, that was a wild place there in Christchurch you know in the, boy, so many of those guys, once we got there why, boy the, the women all, (he laughs) were, really interested in all those Americans. They all walked out to the base you know,

MS: huh. It's the uniform.

GS: Something, yeah, the money and the booze and all that stuff was available. The American had all that.

MS: Oh, yeah, yeah, ok. Yeah.

GS: And they were all out for a party and a good time.

MS: Well let's take a break quick, cause I need ....

10/6/14 #4

GS: We're all charged up?

MS: We're ready to go.

GS: Ready to go huh

MS: So I was just thinking, um from the, some of the stuff you said, you didn't get a lot of sleep. You didn't have, I guess I was wondering what kind of sleep rotation you did. Or how did you, cause there was only 5 of you, 5 pilots.

GS: Uh huh

MS: 2 Helicopters,

GS: We had, well first you had, first got over there we had 1, then we had 2, then later on we got our 4. We were supposed to have 4, 4 helicopters. But, helicopters are really hard to keep in commission. Really a high, maintenance rate on helicopters and so a.. you know, 4 helicopters usually probably only 2 of them were in commission

MS: Ok

GS: ready to, ready to go.

MS: And you still only had 5 crew?

GS: Five pilots,

MS: With the 4, or sorry yeah 5 pilots with the..

GS: Yeah,

MS: Did you ever want more, or did you feel like you should have had more pilots?

GS: Oh, we, we should have had more pilots we were just, that's all, that was all that was available. They were always short of helicopter pilots over there, yeah we should have had 7 as the minimum. 3 crews, and then the detachment commander but a.. but you, you know, 2 crews and that was it. And so, and so a lot of time you know you'd have a mission you'd fly with one helicopters but if, a.. you know you would have the alert people and you know, they had to stay right there and, and be ready to get off the ground in about, you know, 3 minutes, that's what we would, what we would shot for a lot of times we would get off quicker and maybe a little bit longer but if it was a.. looked like a really tough mission and quite a ways out from the base I liked, and, that was the thing if the guy, the people were not on alert but they still were there as, you know a.. where else do you go.

MS: Yeah (we laugh)

GS: They're on duty even though they're not on alert so a.. they would really, so we'd take 2 helicopters if we could, if it was gonna be a tough mission and out

MS: Uh huh

GS: and that always worked out a lot better cause then you know the, the what you call, we had a low bird that's the one that we'd go in and actually make a pickup or a.. you know the high bird could handle the radios, could talk to your cover, the gunships or the fighters that were there if you had those, and, and, and when you get down low you'd have trouble talking to anybody other than the one, the airplane right over you anyway, it was UHF, you know line of sight radios and a.., a.. and then we eventually we put in FM radios a.. that, so we could talk to the army. That was a funny thing, the army all their helicopters and their ground people were on FM radios, we had UHF so you, you know (he laughs) and a.. so a.. and there again this is just another war story of sorts, the army was, we worked really good with the army and a.. and they send, you know why don't you get FM and I said, "well you know, sure like to have FM" air force kept talking about



it, you know, we're going to put F.. give you FM and put it in" so finally the army gave us a bunch of FM radios. I go down to our headquarters or call on them, talk to them about if we could put in FM radios and told them, "hey we'll put them in where they you know, they won't interfere with anything, we can take them out anytime, you know,"

MS: Uh huh

GS: "we can get our own modification in there" and a.. they said no, you can't do it, unauthorized mode, you can't do it" so we put them in anyway, that way we could talk to the army people on the ground. That made it a lot safer for us you know, if you're going in to the, where there's a little fire fight going on you can talk to the guy on the ground "oh don't come in from the south, there's bad guys down there. Come in from the north or north east or something" you know, tell you exactly what's going on. But that's what got me you know we wanted to do something you know and the people that were in our headquarters, most of them had never flown a helicopter, or never been on a real actual mission and they were trying to go by the book and they just didn't want to give you permission to do things you know. And a.. they give you.. so yeah.. What, where were we? What was the question? (we laugh) I go off on..

MS: Um, I was just wondering about, yeah, just crew life, crew questions

GS: Oh yeah the crew.

MS: ..and the sleep rotations and all that.

GS: Yeah, I guess you, when you're on alert you didn't get much sleep

MS: uh huh

GS: on that, day off supposedly, then the crew, if they could get 8 hours sleep or you know, they could go to there, so called quarters and sleep and a.. but a.. but of, you know they'd, they'd sleep and then they'd come back and, and I, I guess you know if, if it was raining and we didn't think we'd be flying then, that was my time to catch up on my sleep I guess (we laugh) if we had really bad rains. And I, I can remember a.. it, we hadn't been over there very long and it'd been really raining and a.. we were in our, kind of a, Captain Fishbeck and I, were in our little hut like place and staying dry and they, this guy come by, "hey we got some mail" I guess I had a letter and Captain Fishbeck had a letter from his life. And I was reading mine and I was really happy about my letter and poor ol' Ed sitting over there all down cast and I said, "well what's wrong Ed?" and he said "Well listen to this," and his wife was writing home, he had about 8 kids and his wife writes, "you know Ed, the next time we take separate vacations I think you should take the kids." He didn't think that was funny at all. (we laugh). I thought it was hilarious. But, but I knew, I knew him and his wife really well, you know. We'd been friends before we ever went over there and a.. and, but you know and I could just picture his wife you know, she had a really sense of humor and a.. her writing that.

MS: That's funny.

GS: Yeah, “you know ed..” (we laugh), Ed didn’t think he was on much of a vacation.

MS: So most of your spare time was just left, ‘er spent catching up on sleep? If you had spare time..

GS: Yeah, you didn’t really, I can’t ever remember really thinking of the.. but yeah I guess if you did have any time off you probably catch up on your sleep a little bit. And you know, you’d write a letter home a.. you know that, there was lulls when you weren’t really that busy or, but you know with helicopters you know you’re always busy or, you know especially in a detachment like that where you’re doing your, have your own maintenance people. That’s the idea of a detachment is that you’re independent, you, you have your, you’re able to operate on your own more or less, you have your, like your own administrative people, you have your own engine mechanics, you have your own a.. maintenance people, make, you know the mechanics people that works on, own supply. A.. the way the concept used to work is that when you’re here in the united states you had a.. two helicopters and you had fly away kits and if you got the notice to deploy you were able to pick the, the airplanes up you know and put them on a transport, you know C-124, C-130..

MS: Ok

GS: Go any place in the world and a.. within 24 hours and once you got there you were supposed to be up and operating within 24 hours and bad part about that was that a.. you had to keep your shot record up to date. You had to keep your shots for any place in the world you know (he laughs) and so yeah we got a lot of, a lot of vaccinations and immunizations but any way with your detachment over there you know people, you’d, if you weren’t flying mission the maintenance people would want you to run up the helicopter for them and they would be wanting to track the rotors and a.. you know and you do that fly test top and you know, you’re were always just really busy that’s, there’s something going on all the time.

MS: Uh huh

GS: And a, as the detachment commander you’re responsible for your pilots and you’ve got all these maintenance people you’re trying to work with, keep track of and, they all have problems and you’re trying to work with them and a.. help ‘em out and, and a.. I, I don’t know whether it be anything you’re interested in but how they, people against the war, the communists would try to a work on the moral of the people and they’d do things like a.. they’d write letters to the wives or maybe call them on the phone you know, and they would you know, know about when you, when the people went to Tech school before they deployed and where they went to tech school and they were over in Vietnam and a.. what was so scary about some of the stuff that’s going on right now, but any way they’d call up the wife or write them a letter and say, “hey a.. you know I met a.. John when he was in tech school at a.. Wichita falls and we, he was lonesome and we got together and we became a.. I fell in love with him and now I pregnant and a.. I, he still loves me and writes to me and, he, he doesn’t want to hurt you, you know but I think you

should give him a divorce so we can get married when he gets back from Vietnam.” You know, that’s just kind of a thing...

MS: Really. Wow.

GS: ...that went on. And you wouldn’t believe the, what that would do to a wife that a.. that you know, her husband’s gone and to get a letter or call or something like that, you know and they, and even though she loves her husband and believes in him but yet all of sudden this is coming up, he’s over there she can’t call him and talk to him she’s got to write him a letter.. and there was just things went on like that all the time.

MS: Whoa.

GS: And a.. oh, you know, I don’t, so the people here in the united states were against the war you know, the anti-war stuff. Like when I got back from Vietnam and a.. went to the school a.. to be an instructor, to be an instructor at the school, you know it started up there, you know with the you know threatening the kids, you know, they’d call up the wives and say, “oh, well your son was wearing a red sweater to school and I know, I know him, you know, and we’re gonna get him.” So, so, so write now, I don’t know if you’ve heard on the news, were the people, the terrorist are calling their people here in the United States and telling them, “get the addresses of the families of the people that are in the military and go to their house and slaughter them, the wives.”

MS: I did not hear that.

GS: So you know what that does to the moral of the people that are over in Afghanistan

MS: Wow. Did grandma get some of those calls? Did you?

GS: I, I don’t think she did. Specifically, but all our neighbors did.

MS: Uh huh

GS: So you know, but they were talking about all the kids so I... yeah.

MS: Yeah

GS: So of course we felt threatened too.

MS: Uh huh, uh huh.

GS: And so, that, it a.. I know we the military people you know started guarding the kids as they went to school and some around the school and a.. and then of course trying to find out and then the FBI and I think I was telling you the FBI caught them.

MS: Yeah,

GS: a whole bunch of them and they got prison time out of it.

MS: Wow

GS: but, oh all the stuff goes on, went on all the time but those, some of those letters were really, really damaging and hurtful to the, and I had a lot of really good troops over there, really good people working with me, for me, over there. And a.. got to know, know them you know, really well. If you're with them 24 hours a day you get to know them( we laugh).

MS: Do you keep in touch with any of them?

GS: The only one I've really kept in touch with, in the you know and I, I guess I'm bad about that, not really you know trying to keep in touch is, a.. a.. hmm and now I've lost, I've forgot the name and it was just there on my tongue, but one, my, the, my he was my operations officer over, over there in Vietnam and then he took over the detachment when I left a.. a.. really a good guy. And a.. and the so he stopped here in we've taken him out to dinner and, and a.. but he's you know, want?(can't understand this) really I, oh, and yeah, and there's one other a.., a.. man that I, that lives out at a.. there in a.. Far West, that was over there that I still run into him all the time when I go out to the base so yeah.. but that, in the, he and his a.. his family a.. ha oh I always laugh, Van Dyke's his name. A.. a.. always laugh about him because a.. they was going in to make a pickup and a.. and he, he was a co-pilot and he was shooting with his M-16 and one of the rounds flew up and went down, back of his shirt, his flight suit, and it was hot and he started screaming, "I've been shot, I'm wounded, medic! Take a look at it." (we laugh) and stuff, just the hot casing. (I laugh). So he's never lived that down. Oh and that, you know I, I can remember the funny stories better, that, that a.. major that was my ops officer over there, a.. he, he was really a good guy a.. he reported in, we had to leave home on, he on Christmas day to get, to come over there and I can remember Captain Fishbeck was talking about his guy that would have to leave home, or maybe it was the day before Christmas, and shipped out on Christmas day, and said, "Man when that guy gets over here he's really gonna be a.. ticked off" and a.. and here you know was one, one of those rainy days and we were all huddled down and here comes a knock on my shelter door, and go to the door and, and open the door and here's this guy dripping wet, you know water running off him and I say "come in" and he, "Well I'm major Eldorf a.. you know and I'm your new pilot" you know and he's typical Texan and he's just happy as can be, "I'm your new pilot!" you know, so (he laughs) so he was a.. over there in that sand pit, he was always trying to grow stuff, have his wife send him seeds and, and a.. and we had, at the end of our ops tent we, why we had rifle pits you know, and it was sand bags in place where you, you know you could get in a fire, if you have to. We never, never used them so he gets some seeds, so he plants some watermelon seeds down in there and a.. and so the, of course the crew knew what he had done so they went out scattered around, found some wild gourd plants and they looked just like watermelon plants, so they, that night they dig up those and plant them down in the rifle pit where he'd put his seeds and, and a.. I thought of his name Eldorf, he comes back the next day, looks in there and he says, "well glory be." (We laugh) "They grew over night." (we laugh). And so that was so much fun for the crew the, the enlisted people, they, that night they went out and they found some, some small watermelons someplace, these little bitty watermelons, came,

brought those back put them down in there. The next day, next day you know 'ol major Eldorf comes down, "Well glory be. Grew watermelons over night." (we laugh). But a.. that was just sand, there wasn't any nitrogen in it so he was always wanting to try and raise something and, and so he got the idea of taken some of the, the stuff, the that you use to make the foam in the fire bottle, and, it had a lot of, of, the blood from animals and stuff, and it had a lot of protein in it so he put that down in the soil and he did get corn and beans to grow about that high but (he laughs) it all withered up. (I laugh). But he was a good cook and a.. he was, he was always trying, he figured out a way to, to cook stuff. He made him a.., a oven, he took an ammo box and lined it with tin foil off of the, some of the ammo, and put a lightbulb in there, about a 200, 300 watt lightbulb, and we had a generator so we could have, make electricity so then he could crank up the generator and put stuff in there and heat it up and.. (he laughs) he was always trying to cook stuff. He was a good pilot, I mean, he was always, a.. a, always in a good mood. And only saw him get mad one time. That was a.. we, we got in a. a.. new second lieutenant, right out of chopper school, he never, he never, he didn't have any flying experience other than right what he got in a.. school and he was, he was really nervous and a.. and, and a.. Major Eldorf was a.. on alert, he was the alert pilot and this guy was his co-pilot and, and the crash phone rang and that, this kid was, must have been 6 foot 3, you know really tall and skinny and he jumped up and he ran to get to the phone and he ran right over major Eldorf and a.. and knocked him over and Eldorf was pretty big and, and he just, just so he, so excited and, and a.. finally, you know they go out and they get in the helicopter and they're getting ready to take off and you could see Major Eldorf looking over at him and going like this (makes motions like he is yelling) and they went out and, and intermitted and intercept and the plane didn't crash and they come back in and they land and we were looking out you know watching them, and you could just, Major Eldorf was still just, (makes motions like he is yelling) (we laugh). Just chewing away.

MS: so there were some light moments though?

GS: oh, there had to be, there had to be light, or you'd go, there was so, a.. and somebody like, like him, like, they were, they helped the whole crew, they you know, They, he always had a great sense of humor and could lighten things up a little bit, plus he was a good, really a good pilot, a good man. And a.. so yeah. Oh, he was always coming up with something I, I know one time it was storming thunder and lightning and, and I, the, got a call from a.. from Saigon, our headquarters, and I'm standing in the door in the tent, talking to them on the telephone, I saw the lightning flash and hit right out in the field maybe a half a mile away then instantly it ran in on that telephone and it was just like getting hit with a ball bat, you know, and a.. it knocked me, I just did a flip, you know it hit me so hard, I went a kind of from the doorway to the side of the tent and landed upside down, I hit on my shoulders and a.. neck, my feet up in the air. You know I just, hit me, it just flipped me over and a.. I get up and a.. you know major Eldorf is there he's saying, "I told you, you better quite your lying to those people down there." (We both laugh) "see, that's what happens when you lie, to the.. telling stories to those people you get struck by lightning." (I laugh)

MS: Wow

GS: He was...

MS: So did he see you get shocked?

GS: Oh yeah, he was standing there, they could all see me, you know they're all, you know, in the military, they all thought it was funny. (we laugh). "Oh, that, that was really graceful." You know. (we laugh). Yeah, you don't, you don't get much pity in your, (we laugh). "Yeah, I told you about the, telling lies to those people"

MS: Were you older than most of the guys over there?

GS: I was. You know, I was a.. let me think, I was 36 or 37 and most of those guys were a.. oh, in their early 20s probably. And a.. these people and major Eldorf was probably a.. oh he might have been 27 or 28 something like that. Yeah I was an old man. (I laugh). Military wise. Yeah I think I was saying major Eldorf to, a while ago it was Ellif was his name Ellif, he made, he made a.. he made kernel and so he was, just before he retired.

10/20/14 #1

MS: I don't... I don't have nearly as many stories.

GS: Oh yeah. I've got lots of war stories.

MS: Yeah none of mine are as interesting as yours.

GS: Well I know, you know after I retired from the air force and I went back to school and they wanted us to write up our life story in 2 pages or something like that and I thought hey, you know, I've lived a lot longer than a lot of these other students. Do I get 4 pages? (I laugh) I should get twice as long.

MS: Yeah. That's funny. When did you go back to school? How old were you?

GS: Oh, it was in 73, so I would have been a.. boy, let me think a second. I must have been 43 when I went back to school. So, yeah now that doesn't sound very old.

MS: Uh huh

GS: But at the time I guess it felt pretty old.

MS: Well I guess I feel pretty old, to all my students and they're, they're 18, 19 and I feel old so. I guess, well it's not that, you know not that old.

GS: Yeah see, see that was half my life. I'm twice that now. But a.. I was middle age a.. but a.. yeah I. Well I retired from the air force and I wanted to go back to school, so I went back to school but I still worked. I still had a job and worked. And a.. I went to BYU for a couple of years and then I went up to University of Utah and went for a couple of years, so a.. yeah it did, it just seemed like the students were so young and I was so much older. I guess I was older than most of the instructors, yea so..

MS: Did you get a degree from.. I thought you got it from BYU?

GS: Well yeah, when I, see well I went to West Virginia University for a couple years and then I went back to BYU for a couple of years and got a bachelor's degree and then I went to University of Utah and I completed just about everything for my masters but I really had trouble with the thesis. They, everything I would write just seemed like they would turn it down.

MS: Oh.

GS: What I, I wasn't writing what they wanted me to write I guess. And I was older and stubborn so finally I just said and I had a good, a good job and so I just, I'm sorry now I didn't persist and, and, and, and get that, get the degree but I didn't. I had more than enough hours.

MS: So...

GS: So don't you do that (I laugh) cause I really regret that, saying, "ok, I'll do whatever you tell me to do"

MS: I a.. I mean the really the number one thing on my mind right now though, is if you would have gotten that degree from the U, would you be flying a U flag instead of BYU?

GS: OH never (I laugh), I'm what would they say, I'm true blue.

MS: Yeah, your true blue, you bleed blue.

GS: Yet I find myself cheering for Utah. You know if they're playing BYU I'm for BYU but when they're playing these other games I get really excited for them to win and thieve had a couple of really good games you know.

MS: I'm just seeing, you know, I've been sitting here trying to keep it quite that I went to the U I got my bachelors and here you almost got a masters from the U (we laugh)

GS: Well I guess I was keeping it a secret (we laugh)

MS: I'm going to tell everyone

GS: No, tell them your grandpa went and got his masters. (we laugh) and then I took some classes from a.. Utah State too.

MS: Oh really

GS: Yeah, there were some classes they had that I wanted to take so I can just cheer for any school I want too. I think it was Saturday we, afternoon we sat down, you grandma and I and we caught the last quarter of that west Virginia Baylor game and Baylor was rated #4 and west Virginia wasn't in the top 25 but west Virginia just, just really whooped up on them. Really it, a.. dominated them and a.. so we were, I can cheer for west Virginia we were really happy over that.

MS: Yeah.

GS: Or I was and, see I can cheer for Utah State or Utah or BYU

MS: And I guess Weber, most of your kids went to Weber.

GS: And I do cheer for weber..

MS: So..

GS: I've been looking for me a Weber hat I have all these weber hats and I need a weber hat and a.. and let's see and I took some classes from, a.. from I think it was University of California. Some extension classes, cause I was in the air force

MS: Oh ok.

GS: Cause I was always taking classes and a.. but I just, I can't bring myself to cheer for USC, (I laugh)

MS: Yeah, I don't blame you on that one. Especially with all that trouble they got into a couple years ago.

GS: Yeah. That was my school, and I, I, completed command and staff college a.. by correspondence and seminars and a.. there again, that, that will just, that's a.. a.. an advanced course that if you go just a little bit father you can get a master's degree from that so I almost completed twice

MS: You almost got two masters (we Laugh)

GS: Commander Staff was really interesting because that was you know military based and then the seminars you had to take turns teaching those. So yeah, so that, that was really and interesting a.. a.. course so..

MS: Yeah.

GS: So yeah

MS: We have to usually teach a class in the semester for our master classes too.

GS: Do you?

MS: Yeah, have to lead it. I know that, I know that a little bit (I laugh)

GS: Sounds like you've got a good master's program there

MS: Yeah.

GS: Well did you think of any questions that I could..

MS: Well yeah, I was

GS: Start out on..



MS: Um.. reading over the, the a.. some of the past interviews and thinking about your, your religious beliefs again. And I'm reading memoirs too, I think I've told you and it's just interesting to read some of these guys memoirs and how they were dealing with everything and then you know talking with you and, and your religious beliefs how they kind of grounded you, right, and I was just curious about some of the other people around you, if you noticed any differences in people that maybe didn't have religion or if you knew maybe Catholics, or Jews, or any other kind of religious beliefs, I don't know, if you just noticed something different in the way they were dealing with the day to day stresses and traumas and everything?

GS: You , know I, I, I You know I've, in the military a lot of times well you associated with all different groups. All the, and the and you know, it varied you know like I told you about a.. this one captain Pacreba that was his name, I could think of it the other day, was catholic and he a.. was really a.. a.. good family man very, you know, very devoted to his wife and his children and like, and unlike most Catholics he didn't drink or smoke cause most Catholics did that, cause they were.. and a.. and when we were TDY, you know he, he never a.. played around, you know with a.. other, you know women or what not and that was always one of the things that bothered me is cause it seemed like when we'd go TDY boy that, most the men were looking for, a.. other women or something, you know even though they had really nice families and good looking wives and everything at home, it just seemed like they felt as if that was their responsibility they had to go, go looking and chasing around and, and so I, I noticed that so much of the time of, a.. you know how, seemed like as if a.. wheels up and flaps up and autopilot and a.. where we gonna party tonight you know, let's get out the black book and see where that, and a.. so that, but yet there was exceptions to that and a.. a.. so a.. and one thing a.. it seemed like a lot of people a.. a.. really had respect for the LDS men you know a lot of times you'd be in a group and someone would swear and then they'd turn around and so "oh" sorry and that sort of thing or a.. I can only remember twice of anybody ever saying anything against, you know in front of me, against LDS people and a.. and both times the, the people around me and all non LDS, they just, I didn't even have a chance to reply, they just jumped on the person that made a comment and just really put them down you know. Better than I could (we laugh) probably, just really tore them up for making that comment and they just kind of slunk off with their head down and a.. so yeah. A.. So, I, you know as far as persecution or anything against LDS people I was in the military I guess I never experienced that, least not openly. And a.. and it seemed like it, it a.. was to my advantage because a.. they, in the units I was in they always made sure I had Christmas off because they wanted me to be the alert pilot on New Year's day cause they knew I wouldn't have a hangover (we laugh) and so it always worked out. I had Christmas off, wasn't on alert so that was good too, really good, yeah. And a.. a.. one time I was at McGuire, the squadron commander and he always got the best, always picked out the best trips and he always wanted me to go with him because he knew I didn't drink and oh he was a heavy drinker and I guess he always thought I would keep him out of trouble (he laughs) watch out for him. So in that case being a non-drinker

really paid, I got to go on some really good trips that way. Yeah. Oh, did that answer your question or help any?

MS: Yeah, um. Did anyone ever, cause you met a couple other members but you weren't, you were the only one right, in your, at the base there at Vietnam.

GS: For a while yeah. Yeah one of my, well when we first went there they were going to build a base. So all that was there when we first went there to set up a unit there was a 3000 foot PSP pure steel planking strip was all was there we set up our unit and then they started bringing in, oh and we had of course guards.

MS: Uh huh

GS: And a.. a.. a military guard and then a.. we a.. they started bringing in supplies and a.. by fling it in and by ship and to build the base and you know at first it was just everybody had tents and then they brought in heavy equipment and started building cement run ways and the base was probably, gradually built up and a.. at first and it was about three months I was the only LDS but as people would come in they would have them fill out the, the, in the, main base administration they would fill out a card you know and their name, and rank, and serial number and on the back they would put their religious preference so I got the, after a while I would go over and check those cards and then a.. I saw, one day I saw there were two, two LDS, two cards said that they were LDS so I went and found them and one was a sergeant and one was a corporal and a.. so we had a big reunion you know (we laugh) and so then a.. we started having meeting just the three of us and as more people came in why we gradually started having more meetings and then we had, I think eventually we had 8 members and then we had one baptized. I think I might have told you about.

MS: Oh yeah, yeah.

GS: And a.. then when we started having meetings there was an army base a.. oh it, it was probably about 15 miles north of us and there was, oh.. 6 or 8 LDS members up there and so when they could they would drive down and we'd have our meetings, and after a while we started having meetings on Sunday mornings, We would have priesthood meeting and then sacrament meeting and a.. so a.. So we'd have pretty good group there, they, the army was you know, they never knew when they could come for sure but if they could they would come.

MS: come down. Were, any were any of them challenged with, or have challenges with their beliefs out there? Did anybody ever question it, just because a lot of people in the, like I said these memoirs they, you know, have these kind of conflicts with their beliefs and I was just curious if you ever, I don't know, had any discussions with anybody or, I feel like...

GS: Well I can't, I was just trying to think of any direct challenges and I can't really think of any, a..

MS: Anybody just ever question their beliefs or anything out there? Just seeing all that stuff, make 'em.. not sure about...

GS: not.. you know, it, There might, you know with the enlisted people that's where it probably would come up because they're all living right in with all the other people and where my case, where I was a major and, and a.. kind of isolated from a lot of the, the rest of the base

MS: Right

GS: No one ever challenged me on religion. I sure had some problems with some of the people you know arguing about not being treated how they should be treated but those things come up all the time a.. in the military where you're fighting for, a more and better stuff for your unit and more supplies and all that yeah.. a.. I, I, I was trying to remember any conflicts and.. and that was, after the base was starting to get built back up a little bit well, they had a catholic Chaplin, came in, he was a captain and a.. a.. he, he liked to drink and play cards with the troops and what not

MS: Uh huh

GS: A.. I guess I never had a lot of respect for him because I knew he'd get drunk but a.. they wanted to build a.. a chapel and so, you know and, and it, it was just, just a building, a hut like building

MS: Uh huh

GA: and a.. with, and that's with their building over there, just like two by fours and siding and then screens with shutters that swung up or down so you could open up and let the air blow through but anyway at that time they didn't have electricity and a.. we had a generator, a portable gasoline generator and tools and so a.. and my troops were all, we were used to being independent, taking care of ourselves, and a.. so my troops, a lot of my troops I let them go over and build this building and, put it up and then after it was up a.. well, these two members had come in and they were both returned, had been on a mission and one of them had just got back, and so the way this little chapel was set up, there was like, you'd go in to like a foyer and then the chapel its self and then they had some chairs and some tables and things and you know, in the chapel itself we just built benches and things for people to sit on and I think we had a podium up front. And a.., after a while the, the Chaplin had and I guess the protestants had put out literature and a couple, these missionaries got copies of the book of Mormon and some literature and they went over and put some of that on the, on one of the tables and so the catholic Chaplin came in didn't like that and he took the book of Mormons and threw them out in the sand you know, and of course the sergeant and the corporal came over and told me. I guess they'd tried to talk to the Chaplin and he had just kind of, you know, not talked to them and so. And that really made me mad and so you know a.., I went over and had a talk with the..(he laughs) with the Chaplin and man a.. I, you know I usually am not pull rank but this time I was a major and he was a captain and I really went after him and (I

laugh) and when I was through he was just grobbling like, please, you know I'll put them back, so (we laugh). I don't know whether he was a.. afraid of me beating up on him or afraid I'd shot him(I laugh).. and a.. so yeah, so we put, the book of Mormons and all our literature went back in the in a place in the, in the little foyer there. (I laugh). And at first we just, you know, when there was three of us we would just kind of meet where I think it was, I kind of fixed up a little office space in the back of our operation staff, we'd just all get together there but then once we built that chapel then we started having our meetings there, so yeah, so you know 15, 16 people we could have a pretty good group.

MS: In those meetings did anybody talk about concerns they had or, were, you said normally you'd give talks or, were they I don't know, were they unique talks to being there, you know, or would you talk about struggles that maybe they were having or was it just, you more stuck to what you stick to in a sacrament meeting here?

GS: Yeah, I think we mostly just tried to keep it religious topics. Of course you know, we'd get, before or after if the, if there was any you know, we'd talk about what was going on and probably missions and the army troops always seemed to have it rougher than we did you know, talking about their going out on patrols and things and the, you know and how scary that was what not, so, yeah and a.. yeah, you know, a.. we, we worked really close with the army they treated us good we sure treated them good. We really depended on them over, and a.. you know where we had tents and shelters and what not, you know, those guys they were just living in foxholes a lot of them, and a.. to them a piece of plywood was like a gold, because they put that over, and it rained over, and they could kind of put that over, when there, in there foxhole and what not and keep the rain off of them and they were just living, just survival type living, so, so many of them. A.. oh like, we had a generator and pretty soon they got generators for the base and we had electricity and they still didn't have anything like that and you know, and it just yeah so, yeah a lot, I, I guess I talked a lot with those a.. a.. army, army troops that have problems maybe, that one of the differences that I saw over there was a.. with the married people, the LDS married people and the trust that they had between their wife and them you know I, I didn't worry about a.. your grandma being unfaithful and she didn't worry about me, that was not any of our worries but where on a.. so many of the families really had that problem where they, and, and I spent a lot of time with the men that worked for me where a.. you know you had these groups that were against the war and they would write letters to the wife and say, you know like "hey john and I met while he was at, at tech school before he went to Vietnam and a.. you know, we fell in love and a.. you know and a.. now when he comes home I think you should give him a divorce and so that he and I can get married or you know, anyway, I got pregnant and I'm pregnant with his child you know" and you can imagine what that would do to a wife.

MS: Yeah

GS: Or the husband might get a letter like "hey you know a.. I live down the street from where your wife lives and a.. I just thought I better tell you she's been messing around with this, this person or that person" you know all these sort of things and, and you, you

could really mess up a family and this could really weigh on the husband where you know his wife, he gets a letter from his wife, you know where she would send him a copy she got from somebody saying hey he's been screwing around while he was on TDY so yeah. So I think in the LDS families that there was just so much more trust and, and they, that, you, you worry about other things you know, the wife I'm sure was worried about the danger that I might be in but not whether I was parting or what not.

MS: Yeah, huh

GS: Oh and there was so much of that, went on a.. things that would, to tear down the moral, of the people over there. And.. a.. never had any worries with the, I think with the LDS people with getting into drugs or a.. not so much my people, but the people that we worked with so many of them really had drug problems you know the fire, fire fighters and, and medics and what not, some of them got involved with it. With drugs. And, and that's something anymore you don't hear very much about but right after Vietnam seemed like there was a lot of people talking about how so many of the soldiers had got involved with drugs over there.

MS: Yeah

GS: They started using really heavy.

MS: When um, when you talked to the army guys, that had you know, would come back with all their concerns, did you, I don't know, do you remember what, what you'd talk to them about or how'd you help them feel better about their situation you know, having to go out there, when you.. I don't know, I guess.

GS: I just can't remember anything specific.

MS: Yeah, yeah.

GS: other than you just, maybe, maybe listen to what their problems were and you know and, probably I, I can't remember for sure, but probably kind of turn it to the, you know, a.. the help their heavenly father could give them in prayer and what not. And I think I told you what a.. Elder Hanks had said, Merrian D Hanks had said about you know, a lot of, how we were protected by the prayers of our family and a.. yeah. Yeah I, it a.. I, I don't know it, it was really a busy time. You very seldom had, you know even when we were having meetings and what not I always had a radio you know, cause you know, Sunday, the, the Vietcong didn't shut down for Sunday (We Laugh). A.. you know you're always expecting to, all the time, a.. a mission and we had a lot of missions over there. A.. I can remember Christmas day the, my troops, they were really thinking ahead about that and a.. and we, on the bottom of our helicopter we had big loud speakers and a.. and a.. we, so that when you were hovering and you wanted to talk to the people on the ground, they, they, you could talk and you know it was, they were really. So they got this idea, "hey on Christmas day we want to fly around the base and, and a.. broadcast Christmas carols" Because I had, a.. I had a tape recorder and I had a lot of Christmas music on that and, they knew that and they wanted to hook that in to the, our system on

the helicopter fly around the base and, and sing Christmas carols cause there, a.. I, I, I guess at that time the base maybe didn't have electricity cause, cause, people didn't have, there wasn't a radio station there and maybe you could get, get a.. that a.. oh I don't know, a.. oh.. voice of America or something like that, maybe one station they might have been able to get. Anyway I said well it's alright with me. Ill check with Saigon, because we had to make a modification on the helicopter to hook the tape player in and so of course I called up about that and you know it was like, "not only no..(we laugh)" I said "go ahead and do it" (We laugh) so they fixed it all up and a.. you know rigid it all up because you know I had, I had people that were really talented that could fix, or build anything it seemed like in that unit and a.. and so they were all really lolling forward to that some of the younger troops and Christmas day I, it just seemed like as if anything that could happen happened that day (he laughs) there was a.. a.. and air America helicopter was flying and not to far from the base and it got shot down so a.. I think that helicopter happened to be on alert that day and I guess that was what we were going to use as the helicopter to fly around so I went out to pick those guys up and a.. and they it was a brand new hewy a.. a.. an air America was a CIA outfit and a.. so they were just going to toss a hand grenade into it and blow it up because you know it had a lot of good com. Equipment and I was like "no, no, no, if you guys don't want that helicopter I want it" (we laugh) I wanted the com gear if nothing else but it had the same engine we had on our helicopter you know a lot of good stuff and so, so then I had to get that helicopter back and a.. and so I got a, a.. a.. platoon of army guys to go out and guard it and a.. and a.. we had to fly them out and then I got a arranged or my ops officer called and got a Shanooch to come in and pick that hewy up and bring it over to our place and all this takes time. And then it seems like as if a.. some other, a medevac came up and somebody got snake bit or something like that an army troop and we had to go out and pick him and haul him to, I think we had to take him all the way to La Trang because the mash outfit couldn't treat him. All the day, the whole day went like that and then I can remember coming in about, I don't know in the late afternoon and there's all my troops and all the fire fighters and I walk in to ops and they're al sitting there looking at me (we laugh) like, like the Grinch that stole Christmas. And I you know, I tried to explain "hey you know, look at all the good things we did today" and it was like, (he shakes his head uh huh) I guess I kind of forgot about playing it (we laugh). Yeah, so that was Christmas day (we laugh). I never lived that down I don't think I really ruined the moral of the troops. And both that, you know, I said you know, we only had like two crews a.. and the.. both of our helicopters that day was just shuttling all day long and a.. and so we just, we never did play those Christmas carols. So yeah. (we laugh).

MS: That's funny

GS: but that tape recorder after I was over there and a.. that was one, a.. we had a.. somebody I knew was going to japan, oh I'd picked up, rescued a.. guy a man in the, his brother flew an airplane back and forth to Taiwan to bring supplies in for the civilians who were building runways and a.. so that pilot a.. always, a.. told me, "hey if you ever

need anything” since I’d picked up his brother “you know, just let me know” that’s how I got the tape recorder.

MS: Aa..

GS: I, he was, he’d bought me it and I’d given him the money for the tape recorder and a radio, a couple of radios so the troops had a radio if they could get anything. Oh, and you know talk about improvising, for the base, at first didn’t have a generator or, anything so a.. they, they eventually got a generator and they didn’t have any way to run it so they took a jeep and took off the rear wheel, put a pulley, run a belt over to the generator. And that’s the way they started the generator and electricity.

MS: (I laugh) Wow.

GS: And used the generator to drive, or used the jeep to drive the generator and, and a.. yeah.. yeah so

MS: That’s cool.

GS: Yeah you talk about improvising stuff and that, I guess that was interesting to watch them build the base. All the different things that happened.

MS: That s interesting. That’s funny. Um.. This is kind unrelated but it just it, you make me think, when you talk about like you’re a.. you ask if you can do something and then they’d tell you know and then you’d say do it anyway. Um.. my dad I don’t think would ever do anything like that. Ever. If somebody told him no, then it’s no, you know. He’d never say “a.. do it anyway” and I just wonder what.. I think. Me, I’m more like you. I’ll probably go and do whatever it was that I was told not to do, if I thought, you know, it outweighed, that and I just wondered what, why didn’t my dad get that?

GS: He probably does, he’s just not telling you.

MS: maybe that’s it.

GS: and I think I’m kind of that way, a.. you know I try to follow the rules and what not and a.. you know as far as religion goes,

MS: Uh huh

GS: I don’t question things or, and I think normally in the military, but yet you know over there where some of the things just didn’t make any sense at all.

MS: Uh huh

GS: You know and I guess that maybe why I, I got, was that way where I’d just say, “oh, the heck with it” like wanting to put FM radios on the helicopter so we could talk to the army troops on the ground, you know the, the facts say oh we can’t do that, just because there’s a rule you know something, we got to follow the rules. Well the rules don’t make any sense when you’re in a combat situation. They could get you killed maybe so I guess

that why I was a little bit that way with hooking up the, the, the, the tape recorder, what did it hurt you know?

MS: Yeah, yeah,

GS: And you know, the, the concept that they, that the a.. operations that they had at our headquarters down in Saigon anytime you went on a recovery mission you had to have top cover and all these different things and, and all that did was delay and the delay would make it more dangerous for you. You know cause I always felt like I want, if a guy bailed out you wanted to get there as quick as you could and you could probably could get to the guy before the Vietcong could get to them because they, cause if you wait for them to get in there and get set up and maybe capture the guy or kill him you know, and so I just never believed in waiting and that was a constant irritant with the people down there with me. (I laugh). And I figured well you know I'd never get promoted and a.. and I guess at the time I just didn't care really and so a.. when I did get promoted to Lt. kernel I was sure surprised ( we laugh). I was amazed. Cause after all the things that I had done to irritate those people in our headquarters when I was in Saigon I figured they'd follow me. (I laugh).

MS: Um with your, your crew, you never had a casualty, do you think they I don't know, did they understand the significance of that ever or was it just kind of one of those things that you just didn't talk about and you just were happy that you didn't have any casualties in your crew.

GS: I guess we were all really happy about that yeah, and I can't remember ever talking about it or not but a.. I, I think they were all wanted to make sure that I'd said my prayers before we (we laugh) went out and I know I said a lot of prayers and I, I guess I said a lot of prayers when we were going and talking off and flying out on those missions that we'd be able to find the people and be able to pick them up and maybe give them blessings you know, that they live so we could get them to the hospital and what not, yeah, but now I can't remembered really having any deep discussions about it or anything.

MS: And you haven't really kept in contact with any of those, any of those guys?

GS: No not really, I, you know I had, have heard, like a.. one of the captains that was over there that I, you know really got along good with him I mean we'd written, you know, for maybe a period of time but then lost contact and, and there was the my, the man, the, the major that was my operations officer over there a.. you know, I'd told you he'd stopped here a couple of times and a.. there's one a.. a.. sergeant that a.. lives not too far from here and I used to run into him when we'd go out to the commissary once in a while but not as far you know as having formal meetings and going back and forth and having formal visits I just never really kept up with the people. I know a lot of people do but I just really never cared that much whether a.. you know I went back to their, the yearly meetings for the helicopter people and it was like, I was in the military and I retired from that and then I was, I've been busy doing other things. A, so a.. you know maybe, you know maybe, I often think I would have liked to have kept track of some of



those people just to see what happened to them I guess, like the captain Macreba that a.. the President Benson talked to down in New Zealand, I often wonder did he ever join the church. Just seemed like he'd been an ideal, ideal person to join the church. Yeah, that's one of the things maybe that I should have done better is, to keep up with the people. Maybe, maybe I wanted to, to just kind of put that behind me and forget it the, thing, Vietnam.

MS: I just think with my mission and I guess and this is just maybe the closest thing I have (I laugh) because I don't really keep in contact with many of the other missionaries or anything and a.. I just kind of wonder about that too, if I was kind of a different person there on my mission and now I'm, moved on and, little different and just don't know if I could really talk about all those things, you know, that.. the same way.

GS: Called compartmentalization, (we laugh) that was, that was one phase of your life, you're in a different phase now.

MS: Yeah, but I don't know, I mean I guess that's kind of a hard comparison to make, a mission and Vietnam ( I laugh)

GS: Yeah, well you know a mission is really a stressful time, a different time I think. Yeah.

MS: Yeah

GS: Yeah, I think missions are tough, (we laugh) and a.. not I, I didn't go on a mission when I was a young guy but I, I sure saw how, how tough it was on those young men and young women when we were on our senior mission out there. You're a.. I didn't do a lot of counseling, but your grandma sure did (we laugh). With those young women that lived there in our same building and what not. They had their problems and then another part of that a.. ,was a.. we worked at historic sites and we did a lot of physical labor and a.. talking care of the different sites and, and so the young men and young women that would have problems you know, emotional problems, some of them think they want to go home or what not, they'd send 'em down to historic sites to work with us for two or three weeks and it was amazing how many of them it seemed to help. I mean maybe being around their grandma (we laugh) or they'd go out and work with us all day and it was really physical work, a lot of it and it seemed to do a lot, do a lot of them a lot of good they were able to go back then and finish out their mission. And there was one young women, I can remember her, she was just a tiny little thing and a.. and she just really liked to run the different machines down where we worked. She'd get on those mowers and go bouncing across the field. (we laugh) and after a.. a.. you know a couple of weeks she told the mission president she just wanted to finish out her mission down there working and he said no, no that isn't what you came out here for. I'm going to put you, you're going back to your, tour proselyting mission. But then we, we kept track of her for a.. and a.. she, she turned out just to be a really outstanding missionary and just really had a lot of influence on a lot of people and a.. and a.. a.. who was it maybe it was my sister Carol when they came to visit with us she talked with Carol for a long time and I think it

really, Carol could just really feel the spirit there, yeah. She a.. (he laughs) she was ready to go home and a.. and a.. she gave away, somebody needed a coat and she gave her coat away and then she, then she decided to stand and a.. then it was cold and she didn't have a coat (he laughs) so we, I don't remember who all it was, us and the senior missionaries bought her a nice warm coat but a.. and I, I guess I remember her because when she came back I don't know how we kept track of her I guess your grandma, she wound up a.. marrying one of the missionaries that a.. the.. the.. assistant to the president missionaries that was there at the last part of her mission was at the mission home and at the visitors center and so they got to know each other so then after they came back here they got married (we laugh). Ok that, that doesn't have anything to do with Vietnam (we laugh). But yeah we had some, some fun times with those missionaries that came down and worked with us and your grandma will tell you about this one football player from California and he'd, he'd been the real star and everything and it was just hard work and it was really different and he wasn't really sure he wanted to be there (we laugh) and a.. and so we were out, we were cutting down the big 'ol oak trees that one day and when we were ready to leave, your grandma told him, "don't you let Elder Stockett work too hard today and lift too much today" just kind of teasing with him and that guy kept following me around all day (we laugh) or for 2 or 3 days making sure I didn't lift anything, every time I'd go to lift.

MS: Grandma scared him. He knew he'd have to answer to grandma if he did...

GS: Every time, you know I was younger, that was 15 years ago I could still, work, I could put in a pretty good day's work. I was still in good shape and every time I'd go and lift something he'd run and pick it up (we laugh). But he was just strong as a horse so I.

MS: That's funny. Yeah I think it's a big adjustment from, cause I went from doing mowing lawns and all that stuff and then you go to a mission and you can't see results the same way, your used to seeing, you know, you mow a lawn or you build something or clean something up and you know you've done a good job but when you go on a mission you don't have that element you just don't know always if you're doing, if you're making any progress I think.

GS: and that can be really frustrating for, when I was working in social work that was a frustrating thing for me cause you know you're in the military as well or any job you're really goal oriented but especially in the military and you know or you're used to, that's a goal and you're working towards that and you can see that your accomplishing something and then and social works it just seemed like you never had any success it was just work and then, then the people regress and you just, and you had so many different people that you were working with and, that, after a while, after a while you get so discouraging cause you can't see any progress there.

MS: Yeah

GS: I guess that's the way with proselyting mission. A.. working in the you know tin the historic sites well yeah we, we'd go out and you know, clean up the place, the site and a..

and our, cut down trees that you think might be going to fall over or a.. I we had one man that was really skillful working with wood and a.. I liked to work with him and we built all, you know, a lot of cases or the display cases where they'd put the historic things and a.. the mission home the mission president wanted a.. a.. cabinet or, or case where he could put all the missionary pictures and then a little, a.. their history and he wanted that built and then he wanted it so he could close it up and lock it you know, and a.. and except, and then when he could open it up and he had, seems like over a hundred missionaries I forget now. So we built a, the cabinet or whatever you want to call it, the whole width of his office, you know and it must have been thirty feet.

MS: Wow

GS: and a.. and, and when you closed, and this guy was so skillful, and we built it out of bamboo so the doors wouldn't be too heavy, an accordion door, and whenever would close those doors it would just go (he makes a whooshing sound) you know, there air, it was air tight (we laugh). Yeah was, so you could see that that was an accomplishment.

MS: Yeah

GS: and you got through that and looked at it just amazed and, and if you ever go back to liberty, you know the little podium like things that they've got the busts of Joseph Smith and Emma setting, I helped build those

MS: oh

GS: and those, and I don't know if they're the same cases but there's all these places with glass you can look into, yeah "my grandpa helped with those" (we laugh),

MS: Yeah, I'll have to go, I'll have to see that.

GS: Yeah, that's, our mission, we they really kept us busy working but its, it was fun. It, really fun.

MS: and they even, they say now if you a.. garden that helps with the PTSD and they have a lot of the veterans that come over, that come back, they have these therapeutic gardens I guess where they just plant things and it's supposed to help them and so this makes me think, you bring some of these missionaries down and have them do some yard work and maybe grow things or whatever so they can see some progress and give a little break and some therapeutic element to all that so..

GS: It seemed so many of them it really, really helped you know. And some of them with medical problems it seemed like maybe they were depressed and it just seemed like they go rejuvenated.

MS: Uh huh

GS: They see all these old people down there working and they thought "well we can work too" (we laugh).

MS: You've got your garden out here.

GS: Yeah I'm working on PTSD. (we laugh)

MS: But you've always had a garden so that's tough to say. (we laugh)

GS: Yeah, I just like a garden. I, I didn't have a garden last year. Cause that's because I was just getting over the chemo and I had shingles and phenome and all up through about July I think is when I finally got over all that. But, but then you know in the fall, we just kept thinking "a, we don't have any tomatoes or corn" you know we really missed that so this year I said I'm going to have a garden no matter what, you know. And so we've have a good garden and it's been fun. I, I, a.. the man I rode, I used to ride to work with a.. well there was, saying "well how come you've got a garden. You can buy that stuff. It cost you more to grow it than you could buy it. So why do you have a garden?" and I said "well if I didn't have a garden I'd have to play golf." Both of them were golfers (we laugh) I'd have to go and play golf to have something to do. (he laughs) a.. We used, I used to give them a hard time cause they were both big deer hunters and a.. they a.. and I'd always tease them about how much it costs them to, per pound if they got a deer you know, the a.. the, the four wheeler and the license, and (I laugh) the gasoline you know, and I added it all up and, and I said "boy that's expensive meat" you know (I laugh). That was all part of our, our game. (he laughs).

MS: Funny. Um.. I guess, I was actually wondering about the, PTSD cause I was talking to some of my teachers and they, their saying that they've read some things where people that were in Vietnam they feel guilty because they, they don't have any PTSD or any, anything like that and, you know there are so many people that have this, these experiences and hard times and it's almost like they feel like they didn't enough to have this PTSD reaction and I don't know if you've ever thought about anything like that, if, because, it sounds, almost absurd right, that you'd be disappointed that you didn't get PTSD but I think, you know if I don't know, thinking about it more if you're involved in this, this war and, and so many people have this thing and then you don't, it could maybe alienate you in some way, as weird as that might be.

GS: Yeah, well they didn't know about PTSD during the Vietnam war, they didn't they hadn't come up with that diagnosis yet so I think a lot of people have it but they, they, they didn't wasn't diagnosed back then. And so yeah, I think that's what wrong with a whole lot of veterans that their, that their suffering, still maybe from that because they weren't treated.

MS: Uh huh

GS: And a.. like a.. Jerry, a Fern, your aunt Fern's son was in Vietnam

MS: Ok

GS: and a.. he had a lot of really, he was in the marines and had a lot of bad experiences and so here a while back well he went to the VA, finally got in the VA and then they

diagnosed him that he had PTSD and counselled with him (coughs) but he's had problems ever since he's got back from Vietnam and that was years and years ago so I think probably if he would have got treatment maybe right away he wouldn't have wound up with those problems. Yeah. And so a.. I know a lot of pilots that have been involved in fatal crashes and, and things and or a lot of survivors you know, from over there they feel guilty that they lived and so many people were killed. You know and that aspect I think, but I, I don't know of anyone that feels guilty that they hadn't done enough you know, over there or didn't get PTSD or what not. I haven't thought of it that way. But a.. no I, I there are some, you know sometimes when you're with pilots and their involved in a crash, and they survive and, and there's other people killed well a lot of times there is a lot of guilt feelings there. They feel like they should have been able to take care of the situations. No matter if it's a mechanical failure or what not, they "oh I should have been able to handle that." Ego. (we chuckle a little). But you know it's funny that World War II, people that were in combat really had problems. World War I they called it being shell shocked and they didn't get any special treatment or anything for that. A.. I know a lot of World War II veteran came home and really had problems. And, and Korea, and Vietnam and it's just more recently that you hear so much about PTSD. A.. flash backs and things like that, you know, I, I can't take any a.. pain medication cause, cause it causes me to have nightmares and I, I have that, the same nightmare over and over again if I take, I can't take morphine at all or a.. so, the pain medication they give you usually when you go to the dentist they give you a couple of pills hydrocortisone, I can't take that cause, yeah, I'll go to sleep I have the same nightmare and its always the same one just over and over.

MS: do you mind telling me it or...?

GS: Oh I just a.. dream that I'm back over in Vietnam and then, in a field and I'm trying to pick up the wounded people and what not, and then, its, its, every time it's the same dream. And morphine makes me a.. have hallucinate, and I think I'm in Vietnam and what not and yeah. And a.. I know when I had my back operation I told them "hey I can't take morphine" you know "make sure I don't you know." So what do give me you know, when, I first wake up wondering what's going, morphine and I really got, and a.. you're supposed to be really quite and I really, I remember got pretty violent and what not because I was having all these hallucinations and what not of fighting, back over in Vietnam and what not, yeah. Yeah, you'll find out here pretty soon that I have PTSD, (he laughs, I laugh).

MS: Well that seems a little, pretty serious

GS: Yeah,

MS: that that would cause that to happen

GS: So yeah, so I don't take any of those pain pills or anything cause I, go to sleep, I don't want to go to sleep and have that same, that same, that nightmare just over and over again. Yeah.

MS: Buts that, is that the only thing really that, you have to deal with is the pain medication?

GS: I think so, that's probably the only thing that bothers me. Just make sure I don't take any of that morphine or any of that type of pain pill. I can take oxycodone, you know and some pain medication I could take.

MS: Uh huh

GS: except I don't because I don't want to get hooked on it. (we laugh) But I've found out that there's some that doesn't bother me and just some that does, no matter, I don't know what the difference is.

MS: You don't know.. that's interesting. Cause, did you ever take morphine while you were over there, I can't imagine...?

GS: No, no it's just something, no, no I

MS: Maybe..

GS: I can't remember taking, you know, a.. any pain medication at all while I was over there and it, of any kind.

MS: Uh huh

GS: A.. no, the only drugs that I took over there were those anti-malaria drugs and things like that.

MS: Oh

GS: a.. I you know, I guess I've always been a.. afraid of a.. that if I drank that I probably would become an alcoholic or if I took pain pills I'd probably become, you know, get hooked on it and I, I never wanted to do that. My a.. grandfather, my mother's father was an alcoholic and if anyone hated alcohol it was, it was my mother (he laughs) and so, and I guess that's one of the reasons I never wanted to drink and plus the fact that he was so addicted to it that I thought well maybe that's passed down, maybe that'd be in my genes if I started drinking I might get hooked.

MS: they say that it does now, that addiction does run in.

GS: and for my back a.. after the operation well I finally a.. well I, I was really in pain you know I had, I really had a bad back operation. They took out four discs and fused 5 vertebrae together and you know I got all that titanium and stuff in my back and a.. anyway I was in a lot of pain and they kept wanting me to take the morphine, and they'd come in "You're not taking your morphine" you know, and I you know I, you know how you can get so frustrated, "I told you I can't take that and get me something else I can take for the pain" because "you gotta take something for the pain" I was really, that was really painful. Finally they started giving me oxycodone and that really helped. But then I got out of the hospital and I was afraid I'd get hooked on it so I called my friend over

here that's a pharmacist and asked him about it and he said "oh, you just don't have the personality to get hooked on it," you know, "don't worry about it you're not.. " so yeah, he said " I can tell by the personality of the person whether they'll get hooked on drugs or not, so you, you just like to be in charge of everything and you're just not the type." And I thought "I don't want to be in charge of anything" you know (I laugh). But anyway, I got, I got off of that just as quick as I could, you know. Tapered off of it and wouldn't take it. Anyway don't start on drugs (I laugh).

MS: No, I had similar concerns cause, my mom's dad drank and smoked and so I always thought I'd be the same if I ever tried it once, it probably be the end of it, same, same thought.

GS: Yeah, well then you know what I'm talking about.

MS: Yeah I do.

GS: Yeah, I, I guess from my mother or, her, her mother died when she was just real young and so she was kind of took care of herself and her, her younger sister and, and a.. to have a father that was an alcoholic I guess that was just really, really bad for her growing up. Yeah. So, boy I had it drummed in to me (we laugh).

MS: So talking about all this stuff though, hasn't caused you any problems, cause I was a little concerned I was asking you all these questions if it would bring stuff up again.

GS: OH, you know, it, it's made me remember a lot of things I haven't thought of for a long, long time. Seems like once I start talking about them I start remembering things I forgot yeah well I don't think it bothers me and in fact a lot of that stuff I've never really talked about before, you know just bringing it up and yeah and I, I don't think, well a Jerry, that's the Fern's son that I had told you about, they diagnosed him with PTSD so he's been going to counseling and he, he comes, or used to come up here fairly often when he's traveling and spend a night, so he's always psycho analyzing me, so he's always telling me I really have problems (he laughs) I, you know, I have PTSD so you'll get a kick out of this, you know, he says you know, the you know, the things that you do and the way, you know, you've lived your life, he says like "you go to restaurant you always sit with your back to the wall" and I said "well yeah, I think most people do if they have a choice" you know and a.. that doesn't mean anything and he says "look at your house" this is before they start building anything over there, you know "you put your house, you've built a house that's right at the end, you know of the street, you know where there's nobody behind you, you know it's like, with your back to the wall" he went through all this stuff (we laugh) and, and by the time he got through I just said "yeah I really have psychological problems" (we laugh).

MS: Wow. But what can you say now?

GS: I have to move. (we laugh)

MS: Well maybe we should take a break.

GS: I'm ready.

MS: We've been going for a while.

10/20/14 #2

GS: And a.. and those, those, those pilots or those army troops you know that were out there night, and day to a go on patrol, getting shot at so.. yeah when they asked a questions about, yeah do those garments really protect you if we're doing what's right? And you know a.. you know what assurance can you give us, you know, to help us? That's kind of what you were asking me, when I was talking to those soldiers, these were the kinds they were asking Elder Hanks, what they really wanted to know, they were down to earth type questions.

MS: Yeah

GS: Yeah. Yep

MS: Did you get asked those types of questions in Sunday meetings or?

GS: I don't remember that, that those ever came up you know in our, in our meetings but yet it was just a different setting I guess there with the, with the, with the, Elder Hanks

MS: General authority...

GS: Yeah. Yeah our meetings were just, just you know good to get together with the other members of the church. I can remember how happy I was just when those other two guys came, you know, came along and I could get together and talk with them. And a.. they were probably at first, "what's this major doing walking around here looking for me?" (we laugh) you know. Cause, to find them I went over in their barracks, you know, looking for them. Had their name, didn't know what they looked like.

MS: That's funny.

GS: So yeah we really had a.. it was really good to get together with them. Then as we started getting other members and, I thought we had some pretty, pretty good meetings. Yeah. That was really a, really good to get together on those Sundays. Probably the only good thing that happened all week. (I laugh).

MS: Well, do you need a drink?