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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Harold Hushbeck
Conducted by Jason Stewart
February 24, 2009
Transcribed by Jessica Fontenot**

NOTE: Any text included in brackets [] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.

1 Jason Stewart: This is Jason Stewart with the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
2 University conducting an oral history interview with Mr. Harold Hushbeck. Today is
3 February 24th, 2009. I am in Lubbock, Texas, in the Special Collections Library on the
4 campus of Texas Tech. Mr. Hushbeck is joining me by phone from Eugene, Oregon. Is
5 that correct, sir?

6 Harold Hushbeck: Yes, it is.

7 JS: Okay. All right. Why don't we begin, if you don't mind, if you could tell me
8 a little biographical information about yourself? First of all, when and where were you
9 born?

10 HH: I was born in Berkeley, California.

11 JS: Okay. All right. And when?

12 HH: October 15th, 1946.

13 JS: Okay. All right. Could you tell me a little bit about your parents? What were
14 their names and what did they do for a living?

15 HH: My mom was Kathleen Sculls Hushbeck and she was a housewife for most
16 of her life until the kids moved out and then she did some office work as an office
17 administrator. My dad, his name was Harold Evan Hushbeck, Sr., and he went to school
18 at Berkeley. That's why I was born there. Got out and was hired as a livestock feed
19 salesman. Yeah, that's what he did for the first fifteen years of my life.

1 JS: Okay. All right. So did you grow up in Berkeley?

2 HH: No, once he was through the school there he got hired in Modesto,
3 California, the home office of this livestock feed company.

4 JS: Okay. All right. Could you tell me a little bit about growing up, about what
5 you did for fun as a kid, that type of thing?

6 HH: I spent a lot of time—I was born in Berkeley and then we moved to
7 Modesto. In Modesto I kind of went through kindergarten. So we ended up being
8 socialized in public schools. We also socialized a little bit at the Presbyterian Church
9 which my folks were associated with from when they were kids. My dad got transferred
10 to the Fresno office which is in California, as well. He basically drove around to various
11 growers, chickens, and sold them chicken feed and things like that, but I spent my time
12 mostly around the yard. We did, like I say, socialize in the church, but there were very
13 few neighbors, there were a few that were close to us and we would play with them on
14 the yard, on the lawn. Then we would go swim in the swimming pools. Especially in the
15 Central Valley there that was a big thing during the summer time because it was so hot. I
16 went to—a couple of times I was in Cub Scouts, but most of my socialization was at
17 school.

18 JS: Okay. Where did you go to school?

19 HH: Well, I went in—there were public schools that were close to where we
20 lived in the school district. Do you need the individual—?

21 JS: No, that's fine. Did you enjoy school growing up, or what were your favorite
22 subjects?

23 HH: Excuse me, I'm gonna get some water.

24 JS: Sure.

25 HH: As a grade school kid I always felt I was short and fat. I wasn't what people
26 would call in a major clique. So I tended to be more of an outdoor kid instead of a person
27 who was the center of social families or groups. Since my dad did move quite a bit in my
28 primary school years, I tended to have to go through hooking up with the bad kids when I
29 first got to a new school. Then gradually my ability in math was a big thing that I liked. I
30 really did enjoy math because it was fairly—you knew you had to answer right if you
31 worked on it. I had a lot more strong association with that. I didn't do so well in English

1 or composition until after I got out of—well, after I went through the service. As we
2 moved through school I basically just sort of went along with the crowd and tried to keep
3 from getting hit mostly.

4 JS: Sure. All right. All right. When did you graduate from high school?

5 HH: In 1964.

6 JS: 1964. Okay. All right. In this time when you were a kid as you were growing
7 up, did you pay any attention to U.S. foreign relations and the Cold War and what was
8 happening in the world?

9 HH: You know, I was very—I wouldn't say that my family was insular where we
10 tried to avoid looking at those things. We did have a television so we did get to see
11 things. I was very much affected by the Kennedy assassination. I was watching some
12 things, obviously rockets were a very big thing at that time and watching rocket launches
13 was big. I don't believe that—we did move down to Lancaster, California, when I was in
14 high school and that was very close to Edwards Air Force Base. Most of that that I
15 understood was not necessarily associated with Cold War politics as much as it was just
16 exploration of space, a pure science thing. It wasn't really a political thing that we could
17 feel or that I got when I was a kid. I wasn't that aware of that. There was certainly—we
18 were—the Barry Goldwater and that kind of reactionary right was down there in big
19 numbers. There were a lot of people in Southern California who really got into that, but
20 my parents were more either centrist or—in today's language they were a bit left leaning,
21 more progressive. So I picked up on that quite a bit. We didn't really jump onto the
22 reactionary right bandwagon. We tried to maintain an open communication with those
23 people because they were in our church and it was interesting to watch that dynamic a
24 little bit now that I look back on it. I think at the time I was more—I wasn't being—my
25 folks didn't try to make—they weren't really—we didn't talk politics that much at the
26 table. I think we did talk about how to live with other people in such a way that you
27 didn't create a lot of tension, but we didn't necessarily say, "Yeah, this is the way to go,"
28 or, "That's the way to go." My father had a very intense experience in World War II as a
29 pilot. He never got shot down, but his aircraft took a bit of fire, enemy fire. So he had a
30 very strong sense of patriotism and was very glad to have come out relatively unscathed

1 in the sense that he didn't ever get hit himself personally. He didn't have any disabilities
2 from that.

3 JS: Right. Okay. All right. Did your father ever talk to you about his World War
4 II experience?

5 HH: He certainly did. He talked about those close calls a lot and his interactions
6 with his—he was the commander of a Martin seaplane. So he was very young. He had a
7 lot of people who were older than he that were under his command. He died last year. He
8 talked a lot about it as he was—we knew he was dying. He had cancer. So I went down to
9 take care of him and he talked a lot about it because I think that was his most—he felt
10 most successful about what he had done then. So he talked about his various times where
11 there were close calls.

12 JS: Okay. All right. Did your father's experiences and what he told you, did it in
13 any way influence or color your view of the military?

14 HH: Yes, I think so. For instance, he really encouraged me to try to get into the
15 military academies, which I did as I was—as a junior and senior in high school I was
16 working on that. I did not qualify or at the time a lot of those appointments were political
17 appointments. My dad didn't have the connections, nor was I particularly a good
18 candidate because I didn't have a lot of extracurricular activities in school and I didn't
19 play a sport. I tended to be more a geek and was not very physically developed. I wasn't
20 aggressive, which was at the time I think it's kind of essential for doing any of those
21 things. But other than that he did talk about the military service in a positive way. He
22 didn't really just give it a bad rap at all. He thought it was certainly valuable in the
23 Second World War. I'm not sure how—at the time he didn't feel particularly strong in his
24 sort of anti-communist or anti-things-that-weren't-totally-American. He certainly had
25 his—he didn't project that I should be following a particular way of thinking about
26 things. He really wanted me to be open to hearing all sides of the thing. Both he and his
27 brother had been in the Navy and he had a sister in the Marines, one of the early women
28 Marines. They had all had very successful military experiences. They all kind of gave me
29 pats on the back and said, "Sure, go ahead, go and get enlisted. Do something. If you
30 don't have"—I didn't have the grades to get a free ride in college. So the military was

1 one of the better ways to get out of the house and not burden my dad with the cost of
2 supporting me. That's kind of why I went in.

3 JS: All right. You mentioned a moment ago—I wanted to ask you a couple of
4 questions about some of the things you mentioned a moment ago. You talked about the
5 Kennedy assassination and the effect it had on you. Could you tell me a little bit more
6 about that? What do you remember about that day?

7 HH: Well, just it was much like September 11th, the idea that something—and
8 also the Martin Luther King assassination. Our family was relatively insular from those
9 kind of things. We lived in the suburbs. So we didn't associate with violence very much.
10 So it had a very large impact in the sense that to realize that that was possible, that people
11 did that and that there were folks who didn't have sort of the social break on that kind of
12 behavior. I think for the most part it was just like a personal adjustment where you're
13 going through and recognizing that my view of the world is just really small or really not
14 very large and very just uninformed. I didn't associate it with—I mean, I heard that it was
15 possibly a plot from somebody from—the Russians were trying to assassinate him, but it
16 was very difficult, all the signals seemed to be mixed and there was just no way to say
17 that it was one thing or another. I've believed that all the way through. I don't know what
18 to believe about it other than the fact that it was a tragedy. Who knows? It just made
19 making any statement about the political situation at the time uninformed. I mean, you
20 couldn't really make anything. I felt really, I think, I don't know, devastated, but also
21 where you don't really know which way to go necessarily because there's no real—you
22 don't have anything to base it on other than a lot of hearsay or what you think people
23 want you to understand, which is, it's very strange. I don't think I recovered from it
24 necessarily. It wasn't the only thing that was causing that because as I became more and
25 more understanding of those forces in the world, you couldn't just step out and say,
26 “Well, I believe this.” It made believing anything just really suspect.

27 JS: Sure. All right. One of the other things I wanted to ask you about what you
28 mentioned a moment ago, you talked about Barry Goldwater and the politics. How did
29 the politics play themselves out in the community, like in the church? Was the exchange
30 between the different political views, was it fairly civil or not at times?

1 HH: There again, I think I was pretty sheltered. The adults would have their
2 functions where I'm sure there was a lot of sort of political things that people do that you
3 don't really recognize that that's going on. I know we were asked to—I remember
4 hearing from this Barry Goldwater partisan how he had asked my parents either to
5 contribute or—I think it was money or maybe even sign a statement, I don't know exactly
6 what it was, but my folks just said, "You know, he's a nice enough guy. We really want
7 to not stomp on him for expressing his views, but we don't really want to be a part of
8 what he's saying," because it just didn't feel very socially acceptable or appropriate for
9 being in a group of people who have a diversity of opinion because I think they just
10 basically said we don't want to be that partisan. If that meant that there was going to be a
11 schism in this church, they were gonna stand by it. I'm not sure that my—my mother was
12 more the powerful one there. My dad might've gone along with it I think at the time
13 because he was a salesman and that meant working with what the other person brought to
14 the table. My mom was more of the sort of the moral rock in the family.

15 JS: Okay. All right. As far as the timeline goes, after you graduated from high
16 school, did you go directly into the military at that time?

17 HH: Yeah, I got out of school in June. I worked at a grocery store during the
18 summer, but I was pretty much committed to going in the fall.

19 JS: All right. What made you decide on the Air Force?

20 HH: I think there were a number of things. One, is it was probably the least likely
21 to get me into combat because the Vietnam War was they were just really increasing the
22 staffing for that. The other thing was that I had been down there at Edwards Air Force
23 Base. So I had this real fascination with airplanes. I wasn't quite sure—my dad was in the
24 Navy so I wasn't quite sure that the Navy was what I wanted to do because I'd never
25 been on boats for a long time. I'd always kind of been ground based. I'd never been on
26 boats, actually. So I wasn't quite sure that the Navy—but I knew between those two that I
27 would have the best chance of getting the—I had an uncle who was an electronics
28 engineer for one of the companies that supplied jets and rockets to the Air Force. So he
29 was kind of my vision of what I wanted to be when I grew up was an electrical engineer
30 or electronics engineer.

1 JS: All right. You mentioned about the possibility, about the Air Force the least
2 likely chance of going to combat. At this time had you been paying attention to what was
3 going on with the developments in Vietnam? If so, did you feel that there was any chance
4 that you'd be drafted?

5 HH: Oh, I definitely knew I would be drafted. I definitely felt at that point, the
6 potential was that I could be drafted. I think the big reason I went into the service was I
7 had not had a job that I knew would support me on the level that I was used to living with
8 my folks. Without going to school, there was no question that I would not go to school
9 and go to college. There was no way I was going to be able to afford to go to college if I
10 didn't get any kind of scholarship or aid to go. I had no thoughts at all of having some
11 sort of a loan at that time. In making the choices there the only thing that seemed to be
12 right for me was—because I was not motivated to get a good job or a job that paid well
13 enough for fear of getting stuck in it, for one thing. I think I was still really immature at
14 that point. You look at some of the kids coming out of school now and they seem to be a
15 lot more aware of what's going on outside of their family. At that time I wasn't very
16 aware. Like I say, again, I was a pretty sheltered person. So when I did come out, it
17 wasn't a done deal that you would get drafted right away, but the draft was in process.
18 You still had to register for it and you could get drafted. So it was much better to enlist.

19 JS: Okay. All right. Where did you go for basic?

20 HH: It was Lackland.

21 JS: Lackland. All right. Could you tell me a little bit about the basic training?

22 HH: The story I tell is that whenever—I knew about two days in that I definitely
23 wanted to go to college. It's like being homesick and going to camp. You understood that
24 you were in this social culture that was nothing that I'd ever experienced before. There
25 was not the things that I was used to. It seemed that it was a lot more crass than I was
26 used to. Everybody was sort of being their worst in working out how to be in that
27 situation. You knew that the sergeant that was responsible for your group was the person
28 you had to please as far as listening to and responding to. I just tried to keep my head
29 down as much as possible and do the right thing. I wouldn't have known the difference
30 between what—I had gone through a Marine Corps devil pup type of a two-week camp
31 or a week long camp when I was a junior in high school. Mostly that was a bunch of guys

1 with a lot of testosterone that were hanging out trying to figure out who's gonna be,
2 where they're gonna be in the social order, the pecking order. There again, I kept my
3 head down and tried to just go along and figure out what the experience was about. I was
4 really pushing to get more—my big thing was I was not very well physically developed
5 at that time. So a lot of what I was dealing with was the aching abs and the shoulder
6 muscles from doing push ups and sit ups because they really pushed physical activity.
7 The same thing was at basic, too.

8 JS: Okay. Did you go to the Marine camp to prepare you for basic?

9 HH: It was something that my parents suggested because it was sort of something
10 they saw in the newspaper and they thought, "Well, this is something you could do as one
11 of the camps." We went to camp in the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association)
12 during the summertime. It was one great way for my parents to get rid of me, not that I
13 was particularly bad, but it was a situation where it was a cheaper way for me to go and
14 do stuff than sending me to some other big camp that was—it was just a way to get out in
15 the summertime and do stuff. Since we were down, we were in Lancaster, California, at
16 the time and this devil pup thing was in Camp Pendleton. So it was a bus trip to LA (Los
17 Angeles) and back for a week. I think what they were doing is giving me, saying, "Here's
18 an experience outside of what you're gonna see with us here in the family and with the
19 YMCA." They didn't feel like it was any kind of—they felt it was okay. It wasn't gonna
20 be—they weren't hoping that I would go into the Marine Corps, that's for sure. For me I
21 didn't feel that I needed to go into the Marine Corps. Once I was there, I was just taking
22 it as an experience to check out. If anything, it made me feel less averse to doing
23 something like that because I had the experience and knew I could get through it.

24 JS: Right. Okay. So then did you feel that it in some ways helped to prepare you
25 for basic?

26 HH: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I think I was beginning to—my body at that time was
27 getting more built up and had the capacity to do that and not be just so blown away by it
28 that I tried to avoid it. I mean, I got into doing the stuff, the physical activities and
29 physical development activities without moaning and groaning about it or trying to avoid
30 it.

1 JS: Okay. All right. Could you tell me a little bit about the instructors at basic?
2 How would they enforce discipline and that type of thing?

3 HH: Well, you know, “Drop and give me five or give me ten or give me fifteen,”
4 or whatever, if you had missed the queue of what you were supposed to do. At the time
5 they were really pushing to get people through quite quickly. I remember there was only
6 three or four times when I had really screwed up. It was mostly because I had missed the
7 communication and didn’t understand what they actually said. I never felt—I didn’t
8 really challenge—I don’t remember challenging the authority. I just sort of knuckled
9 under and did what needed to be done to get through. The guy that I—I remember the
10 guy’s name. His name was Calita. He was a southern white guy who I felt was—he was
11 fair. He didn’t really jump on anybody that didn’t deserve it. When he reprimanded me,
12 that I remember it was always with respect and just sort of a good, solid nudge to, “Stay
13 aware of what’s going on here, buddy. You’re here for a reason.” I always felt it was
14 appropriate. I never felt that I was unfairly disciplined.

15 JS: Okay. All right. Did you find the training you received here, did you find it
16 sufficient for preparing for the rest of your time in the military?

17 HH: Yeah. For me I think what I did in the military was I removed and replaced
18 black boxes in electronic systems on airplanes. I don’t think that I really needed a lot of
19 discipline. I always felt it was very easy to give the military, to respect the military
20 hierarchy. I didn’t really look for ways in which—I never felt like I needed to challenge
21 that. Everybody was trying to do a job where that rank was respected and I probably
22 didn’t recognize it or maybe wouldn’t have recognized it if they were abusing it. I think
23 that was the big thing that we needed. What they assumed was you were bringing a
24 certain capacity to troubleshoot and hand-eye coordination to change out these black
25 boxes. So that didn’t really require very much. You just had to, when you weren’t doing
26 that stuff, not create a lot of problems by your other social stuff that you were doing. So I
27 don’t know if that answers that question or—

28 JS: Yes, sir. It does. All right. Do you remember if there were any—well, I
29 should rephrase it this way: Were there any memorable or humorous moments during
30 basic that you can recall?

31 HH: From basic training. Humorous, no. I felt it was kind of oppressive mostly.

1 JS: Okay. Sure. All right. All right. So after finishing your basic, at the end of
2 basic they gave you your MOS (military occupational specialty) and was it the one that
3 you wanted?

4 HH: There again, I was just sort of going along. So I didn't have a big agenda
5 there. I was glad that I had already qualified to work in the electronics field. So I
6 could've gone to radar, radio, or I know there's a couple of other people—or electronic
7 countermeasures. I didn't have any sense that one of those was better than the other. So I
8 ended up working on electronic compass systems and autopilots. As I look back on it, it
9 was probably as good, although radio might've been better. I wouldn't have known that
10 at the time.

11 JS: Okay. All right. So where did you go to advanced training?

12 HH: At Chanute, in Illinois.

13 JS: Okay. All right. Would you mind telling me a little bit about the training itself
14 and just maybe a little bit about a typical day in advanced training?

15 HH: Yeah. We'd have classes most of the day during the week. First it started out
16 as electrical theory and we would be doing circuit boards and we'd work on a unit for a
17 week and then we'd have a test at the end of the week. That one took up two or three, two
18 months. I think we did eight months there. Then they started doing electronic theory and
19 then they did systems training for the systems we were likely to operate or to be repairing
20 over the eight-month period. So it was an eight-month program. We had—most of our
21 crew would be, they called them flights. They were ten to fifteen people, I think there
22 were twelve of them, actually. We'd all live in the same barracks. We'd have to walk to
23 the school together as a flight, but when we were off we were pretty much free to do
24 whatever we wanted. There wasn't a lot of structure in our off-school times and nothing
25 during the weekends. There weren't parades or anything like that that we had to perform
26 in. We didn't have to do any kitchen patrol, KP. It was pretty easy at that point. I was
27 surprised. When we took the test I really did a lot of—I really wanted to perform well in
28 tests. I ended up being the person who was able to get the best grade on tests. So I
29 became the flight leader because of that. It wasn't something that—I was kind of blown
30 away by that because I thought there would be more, the stuff would be harder, and it
31 could've been a lot harder. My assessment at the time was that I could've done what I did

1 when I got out of eighth grade, before I even went in to high school. It wasn't because I
2 was particularly gifted, I don't think. I think anybody who had gone through eighth
3 grade, who was at all academically inclined could've gotten through it that way. So it was
4 very easy to understand. If you were there to learn that stuff then I don't think there
5 would've been any problem with it if you were an eighth grader. So it was more a matter
6 of just wanting to perform, I think, that got me through it on that level. I think everybody
7 else in the flight had the capacity to do it, it's just that they weren't as motivated. At
8 times—there was competition between us. There were some people that just had it
9 naturally, I think, that they came on towards the end, a lot of other people did really well
10 in that sort of competitive atmosphere, but the way that the schooling was and the
11 progress that you made through the theory, electrical theory, you could pick it up later if
12 you didn't get it right at the first. So it was something that was constantly reinforced. I
13 thought it was good to get where we were going, but it wasn't good for much else other
14 than what you would get in the first four years that they ask you to work. A lot depended
15 on where you had to work. If I had to go to a shop where I was the only person there I
16 don't know that I would've been able to do what was necessary to fix an aircraft. Once I
17 got out of Chanute, they actually sent me to other tech schools where I would learn the
18 particular or get more information about the system that I actually worked on.

19 JS: Okay. All right. Did you enjoy learning about electronics?

20 HH: I did, up until the point where it got kind of abstract. Transistors, the
21 electrical series is kind of linear whereas transistors become a little bit less, seem to be
22 more complex. I did have problems with that kind of stuff and for some reason I wasn't
23 picking up on how to move beyond that more linear progression. I liked it because it was
24 something that I have since in my life spent a lot of time doing manual things and
25 troubleshooting both with automobiles and farm machinery and electronics like we're
26 kind of hooked up to in this whole world here. It's more basic understanding. I really
27 appreciated having gone through it to get that. I did a lot of home wiring based on the
28 information that I understood from that instruction. I enjoyed figuring it out and I
29 certainly enjoyed the practicality of it or the functional aspect of what you were learning
30 there and how you could apply it through your whole life or through what you were
31 doing.

1 JS: Okay. All right. You mentioned other tech schools after this. Did they focus
2 on specific aircraft or was it more generalized at that point, as well?

3 HH: It was individual aircraft. I was working on C-130s at my first duty site. It
4 was a weather squadron on Guam. The C-130s were fairly new. They were switching
5 over from two based amplifiers to transistors. So the systems were just a bit different. So
6 they wanted to give us information about the transistor system that they were gonna try to
7 change everything out to. So we had both of them and we could understand them. The
8 squadron was more of a transport—well, Guam was a transport stop over place for all the
9 stuff that was going to Vietnam. We would also be fixing all the transport material or
10 planes that were coming through. Some of those planes had different systems on them
11 than we were trained on in tech school in Chanute.

12 JS: Okay. All right. Did you receive—was all this training after advanced, was
13 this all C-130s or were there other planes, as well?

14 HH: Well, we worked on the C-141. They shared the system with the C-130, the
15 basic autopilot system. I think it was the autopilot one. There was also a different
16 compass on it, as well.

17 JS: All right. I wanted to back up a moment, if you don't mind. You mentioned
18 because you did so well on all the tests and everything that you became a flight leader.
19 Could you tell me a little bit about that and what duties that entailed?

20 HH: I think it was an attempt—well, mostly what we did was we had to—where
21 our flight had responsibility for cleaning up or waxing the floors or taking care of the
22 areas that we were using, the flight leader was supposed to sort of dole out the chores,
23 like who's gonna do what or let's make sure we do this, have the quality control. It really
24 wasn't, as far as other privileges, I can't remember what value was there. There wasn't a
25 lot of—with the group that we had I think the things that we needed to do were not of a
26 nature that we got in trouble if we didn't do it right. I don't remember ever getting in hot
27 water or anything for not having the guys all do the right thing. I don't remember there
28 being any huge benefits from being the flight leader other than just recognition of doing
29 well on the test.

30 JS: Right. All right. After you finished the advanced training, how many more
31 schools did you go to?

1 HH: This initial one was, I think it was one month. It was in Okinawa for the C-
2 130. Beyond that, actually, I don't remember any others. We might've had a couple of
3 them where they came to us and did a couple of weeks. I don't remember.

4 JS: All right. Okay, then. After you completed the school at Okinawa, were you
5 then given your first, I guess, assignment post training?

6 HH: Yeah, that was on Guam.

7 JS: Right. Okay. All right. About when was this, timeline wise about?

8 HH: Well, let's see. It was in the summer of '65. Yeah, the Chanute was eight
9 months from September or October. I went in on September ninth. I think it was only five
10 weeks at basic. So I was in Chanute from October to April or May. Then I went to Guam
11 and they sent me to Okinawa. Then I came back and then I was there on Guam for two
12 years total, eighteen months, excuse me. That was an eighteenth-month thing. The weird
13 thing is I went back to Guam at the end of my period, at the end of my tour of duty of
14 four years. I was in the Strategic Air Command at that point. So that was another six
15 months. Anyway, so I was on Guam for total of two years.

16 JS: Okay. All right. After you completed your training, did they give you any free
17 time or was it report to duty immediately?

18 HH: Between Chanute and I think I had a couple of weeks in Guam. Then Guam
19 was a solid year and a half. I never got off the island except to go to Okinawa, or excuse
20 me, I want to be sure here, if I said I went to tech school in Okinawa, I meant to say
21 Japan. I'm sorry I misspoke there.

22 JS: Oh, no. That's all right. No problem. All right. Well, once you received your
23 orders that you were going to Guam and that's where you knew you were going, what did
24 you think of it? What did you think of the assignment?

25 HH: The guys in my flight had been—the other orders had been there were a
26 couple that had gone to Vietnam, a couple that were other places in the States, and I was
27 the only one that got shipped to Guam. There were some that went to Europe. So we were
28 just kind of spread out all over the place. I was kind of glad that I was going to Guam.
29 Everybody else said, "I don't want to go to Guam." I don't know why I wanted to go to
30 Guam other than the fact that I—I wasn't particularly interested in going to Europe and I
31 didn't want to go to Vietnam at this point. I didn't recognize or realize what going to

1 Guam would've meant at the time. I felt sort of ambivalent about it, but in general felt
2 good.

3 JS: Okay. All right. How did you get there? Was it by commercial airliner or
4 military transport?

5 HH: It was commercial. It was under charter for the military, it was a chartered
6 airplane.

7 JS: Okay. All right. You mentioned there being a stop over point. Were there
8 guys on the plane that were then continuing on to Vietnam, as well?

9 HH: Yeah.

10 JS: Okay. All right. What was the attitude like on the plane? Were people talking
11 about Vietnam and I guess talking about what was ahead for them?

12 HH: I don't remember. And I don't remember if—I think it was all branches of
13 the military were using that at the time. So some of them might've been just going to the
14 Philippines, as well, because that was kind of the next stop.

15 JS: Okay. All right. Was there any sort of in processing when you arrived there?
16 What was arrival like in going to your new unit?

17 HH: You know what? It was very low key because it was a weather squadron. It
18 wasn't particularly—there was already—at the time I was there the B-52s were there, as
19 well, that were bombing from Guam. They were flying over from Guam. So as a weather
20 squadron we were kind of on the side watching everything else go on. Although the
21 weather squadron was looking for hurricanes and the island had been hammered pretty
22 hard in a couple of years before and there had been a lot of rebuilding of the place. So it
23 made understanding the weather pretty valuable at the time. For us, my shop only had
24 three—well, at the time there was only two people in the autopilot shop. The guy that was
25 above me had three stripes. I was only one stripe at the time. It was pretty low key. We
26 were mostly on standby because there wasn't always work to do that we didn't have a lot
27 of aircraft and the aircraft we had were fairly new. So they weren't breaking down.
28 Where I ended up working mostly was on the swing shift and it was on standby. So what
29 I did most of that first year was I would show up in the afternoon and see if there was
30 anything that still had to be fixed. If not, I'd just make sure they had my phone number
31 where I could be reached and tell them where I was going to be and I would leave. So I

1 wouldn't go to work. I wouldn't have to be in the shop if there wasn't any work to do.
2 They didn't have us doing other stuff. They just had the shop staffed as if they might
3 have inferred the worst case scenario. Otherwise, I don't remember much about what the
4 orientation was like. I do know that once a month we had the whole squadron go in and
5 watch the Air Force news. They would send a reel of what's going on in the theater
6 around every month or so. We'd have to go watch that.

7 JS: Okay. All right. Outside of hurricane hunting, did the planes in the squadron
8 have other responsibilities, as well?

9 HH: As far as I understood it they didn't. Like I say, we were responsible for all
10 these transit military airplanes that came through. Where we had similar systems we
11 would be asked if they had problems to try to fix them because folks who were flying
12 across the Pacific really wanted the autopilots to work so they didn't have to be flying all
13 the time. I would be working on C-130s and C-124s. Didn't really work on any of the
14 larger planes, the C-141s at the time, they were fairly large, even though they're dwarfed
15 by the C-5. Mostly it was the older planes that had things on them that were almost like
16 analog to digital that, they just were things that wore out. So we would repair them when
17 they came through. I don't think there was anything, nothing that I knew about, there was
18 certainly potential for other more secret stuff. Around Guam, well, Guam had a fairly
19 heavy naval presence in naval air as well as a dry dock. So I would expect that a lot of
20 that patrolling was done by them.

21 JS: Okay. All right. Could you describe in a little more detail the airbase itself
22 and a little bit about your quarters and all?

23 HH: Yeah. The airbase, well, it's a coral island and we were on one end of the
24 island from the naval airbase and the naval water bases were south, or if I remember
25 correctly, they were south on the island, the other end. There was a very nice beach
26 associated with the base. It was big enough that they had a lot of—I think there were twin
27 runways plus there were a lot of B-52 pads where they could park them and they were
28 distributed all over the base, the flight line. They had the capacity to deal with all this
29 transit traffic, as well. So it was a fairly large base. A lot of the quarters were cement
30 because the hurricanes had knocked down all the Quonset huts or the corrugated steel
31 type buildings, infrastructure. So a lot of them had been built up with cement and were

1 built with louvered windows so the air would blow through. We had rooms where there
2 were six people could live in, six beds, but oftentimes at the time I was there, they
3 weren't totally full. It was built like dorm rooms where you have a central bathroom with
4 beds on both sides and all of your lockers had heating elements in it to keep the place
5 from getting real musty because it was very high humidity there. The weather was such
6 that you didn't really need to have a solid window or a solid wall because the temperature
7 just never got down low enough that you needed it to keep the heat inside. So it was
8 tropical. Because all of that was fairly new, it had been rebuilt since the initial
9 infrastructure had been blown down, the quality of the barracks were very—they were
10 oftentimes three stories high or two stories high. It was pretty nice. As the war progressed
11 and when I came back the second time there was a lot of temporary type buildings that
12 were put up that were basically corrugated or steel buildings that were low. They were
13 just single story with almost like hospitals where you just have the long, open bays with
14 beds adjacent to each other, footlockers for storing your material and your stuff gear. I
15 always felt that it was quite nice. The food was great, even though people would say that
16 it wasn't. It was fine for me. I never really got sick while I was there. I was probably in
17 the prime of my physical condition because I really didn't—the work was not that
18 stressful and most of the time when I was off work I was either swimming at the beach or
19 swimming in the pool or playing handball or something like that. It was like I was at the
20 country club.

21 JS: Right. All right.

22 HH: The facilities were great. There just weren't any women there.

23 JS: Right. All right. You mentioned the weather and hurricanes knocking down
24 the buildings and stuff and the Quonset huts and all. Were there any weather issues,
25 hurricanes or tropical storms? Did any of that come through when you were there?

26 HH: There were some near misses, but nothing where they just moved all the
27 planes off because they weren't quite sure that they could predict the path of it. There
28 were times when it seemed like the rain was going sideways, but we never had any direct
29 hits while I was there.

30 JS: Okay. All right. Could you tell me about the people of Guam? Did you have
31 much contact with them?

1 HH: No, I didn't. I have to say I understood from various people that if you lived
2 off base and you got to know the local people that it was pretty easy to be integrated in
3 their little society. They would often have fiestas that people would go to, but I never
4 really was in that kind of a position, especially on my first tour there. I had friends who
5 lived off base, who felt that they were very nice people. But I understood that a lot of
6 guys are just trying things out and a lot of times there were stories of if you went
7 downtown on your own you really took your life in your hands in that sense. But I think
8 you had to try to exploit them before they would do that. You had to try to exploit the
9 natives before they would actually come back at you on that level. At the time there were
10 so much military that we were overwhelming them at the time when I was there. So it
11 made sense that there would be some animosity. I just never was in a position to either
12 feel it or understand the level of it. I went to the beach a lot. There were natives,
13 Guamanians who were actually operating the concessions. They were always really open
14 and positive to the people that were their customers. The one big thing where I had a very
15 strong connection was they had a Guamanian lifeguard at a pool on the base. I was at the
16 time trying to figure out how far I could swim under water without going up for breath. I
17 actually passed out underwater and the guy pulled me out and resuscitated me. So I felt
18 really gracious about that, or gratitude, with a lot of gratitude about that. That was
19 worthwhile. I didn't have any negative feelings about the locals. I just felt really sorry
20 that their culture was being totally overrun by us. Not that it hadn't been overrun by a lot
21 of people before. The Japanese had been through their pretty heavily and the Spanish had
22 been through there before that and we'd been through there a couple of times.

23 JS: With all this influence from other cultures, American culture, Japanese and
24 Spanish, I know you didn't have too much contact with them, but could you get a sense
25 of their culture? Was there a sense of it?

26 HH: No, not that I would be able to—I think I had preconceived ideas based on it
27 being a tropical island culture. It could be similar to Hawaiians or Tahitians or the other
28 things, the other ideas that were set by understanding that there were island cultures that
29 were more laid back, sort of more organic and less technological than we are. I think in
30 some cases or in a lot of cases, that was there, but I think they were also affected quite a

1 bit by the other—like I say, I didn't get exposed to that at all while I was there. I was
2 pretty much insulated on the base.

3 JS: Okay. All right. You mentioned a little earlier that about once a month you
4 guys would watch Air Force films about what was going on in the war. Could you talk a
5 little bit about that and what did you guys think of the films and did you talk about them?

6 HH: I think it—we did talk. I think people were starting to realize that there was
7 questioning about what we were doing and whether or not we were going to be successful
8 and how much these shows could actually create that illusion. But it was obvious after a
9 while and over that period of eighteen months that we really, number one, they weren't
10 able to give us the information that would actually give us a sense of that. They could
11 show a lot of things being blown up and a lot of napalm, but they also said that there were
12 people getting shot down and there were bases that were being overrun. It wasn't that
13 they were hiding that much from us that we could tell, but certainly the emphasis was on
14 we're doing what we know how to do there. We're not done yet, but the way we could
15 talk about it, I don't think anybody felt that they could stand up and say, "No, this is all
16 bull shit. This is not right." There wasn't anybody that was willing to do that or ready to
17 do that. I think everybody was just sitting there saying, "Well, if we're not winning, how
18 do we deal with that?" We can't really take anything away from this other than, well,
19 we've got to keep on going and slogging through it.

20 JS: Right. Okay. Based on what you had seen and the conversations you'd had
21 with other guys there at Guam, had you begun to develop an opinion about the war at that
22 point or was it not clear enough at that point?

23 HH: I think on the first tour it was certainly not clear. I was just sort of
24 information gathering. There wasn't a strong need to get clear because I wasn't being
25 threatened by decisions being made by what's going on above. I wasn't being threatened
26 by it. I was just going through doing what I was told and making sure that I didn't get in
27 trouble by not doing those things. As people were talking about it, there was a variety—I
28 think some people were feeling that they understood that it was kind of a wash as to what
29 we were doing, how successful we were. There were some—I didn't ever feel there was
30 any kind of—I didn't get a clear picture of how other people felt about the righteousness
31 of what we were doing. I think people were not, a lot of people either were not talking

1 about it or they just didn't know. They were at a job and they were just doing their job.
2 They had a job. They had some security there. They were gonna keep making that happen
3 as well as they could. We weren't affected by it that much on Guam. We actually as a
4 weather squadron, we kind of kept apart from those guys who were working on the
5 bombers who might've had more of a say-so or more of an idea, but that's still pretty
6 remote to working on the B-52s.

7 JS: Right. Okay. All right. Well, before we move on to Okinawa, is there
8 anything else we should mention about Guam, any memorable moments or anything like
9 that before moving on?

10 HH: I thought it was a beautiful place and because I've spent so much time there,
11 whenever Guam is mentioned in the news I kind of, my ears perk up. Let's see. I thought
12 the beach was terrific, the fact that we were able to go to the beach and enjoy that. It was
13 fantastic, but I spent a lot of time there dreaming about what would happen back in the
14 States. I was very aware that there were things going on in the States because I read a lot.
15 I listened to the radio, which had some pretty what I thought, it wasn't shut down that
16 much. There was a lot of music coming across that was telling the story and it would've
17 been very difficult to shut that off. Most of the time I spent there in a very material
18 pursuit going after new stereo equipment and that was a big thing during that time.
19 Everybody felt that they needed to have sounds and they needed to have a great camera
20 and I spent a lot of time and energy researching and talking and buying those kinds of
21 things. When I think about the idea that's been my greatest near death experience was in
22 a pool there, but that seems rather ridiculous relative to what other things were going on
23 in Vietnam at that time as far as insignificance. I had a coworker who burned up in a car
24 accident that was pretty—I had a lot of respect for him and his world view. I think he was
25 very ambivalent about the war, but he made a mistake when he was working on his car.
26 He ended up getting airlifted to the Philippines burn unit in hopes that they'd have the
27 technology to help him survive, but he died anyway. So that was the closest I came to any
28 death in the military, too. The other thing was working on aircraft that had been sprayed
29 with Agent Orange and was very sticky inside the aircraft and also working on aircraft
30 that had, helicopters that had been shot at in the cargo bay. That just kind of brought the
31 war to me that way. The other thing that was amazing was the transport planes that were

1 bringing back caskets and they wouldn't leave them in the plane during the day. They
2 would bring them out and put them on the deck, on the flight line because it was too hot
3 in the airplanes. That gave me a lot of pause for thinking. The other one good thing is I
4 saw a U-2 drop in there one day and then it took off. That was pretty fantastic to watch.

5 JS: Sure. I bet.

6 HH: My second tour is when I worked for the Strategic Air Command working
7 on the bombers was a bit different because I had had more information. We can talk
8 about that later.

9 JS: Yeah, definitely. All right. One thing I wanted to ask you, a moment ago you
10 mentioned the music and the message that it was sending and how that couldn't be
11 blocked out. Was there any particular song or songs that really spoke to you or influenced
12 your opinion?

13 HH: Probably all the ones—I would say the songs that talked about the drug
14 experience as opposed to the anti-war or how it led to anti-war experience, I think there
15 were a number of those or questioning the status quo or questioning the folks that were
16 running the country at the time. There were a lot of them. I just have a lot of flashes in
17 my head. Any one in particular? Jimi Hendrix would be one. I don't think he necessarily
18 said anything particular about the war itself, but he did talk about questioning the way in
19 which people had been viewing the world and any individual that makes up the U.S.,
20 United States, or any culture, for that matter that has—where is the source of what you're
21 doing, of your behavior? There were lots of others during that time. I was just new to jazz
22 at the time. Jazz didn't really say anything about the war, necessarily, but it did question
23 sort of the dominant paradigm, just speak about it in those kind of jargon type terms. Like
24 I say, I went in very naïve. I came out a little bit less naïve, maybe, I don't know, just
25 differently experienced.

26 JS: Okay. All right. After you left Guam, did you go directly to Okinawa or was
27 there anywhere else in between?

28 HH: Actually, I was stationed at Riverside. That was a SAC (Strategic Air
29 Command) base. So they had the B-52s and the KC-135s to refuel them. When they
30 changed out, they changed air commands over there on Guam, they would send the B-52s
31 there and they would send the KC-135s to Okinawa for refueling them. So my first

1 station from Riverside was to go to Fort Worth, Texas, to work in a shop there where
2 they were actually over there on Guam and Okinawa. Basically I worked there for, I think
3 it was a six-month tour of duty. Mostly what I did was go around to various bars in
4 Texas. I don't know. I don't remember much about working on the base there.

5 JS: Okay. While you were back there in the States, did you notice any changes?
6 You're talking about this questioning of authority, rise of counterculture, if you will,
7 whatever, did you notice changes at that point from before you had gone to Guam?

8 HH: Well, you have to realize that the Central Valley of California is quite
9 different from Riverside, its sort of access to that. I did notice the changes mostly because
10 I was listening to, the music is definitely different. I've been away for a year and a half
11 and I was just eating up, gobbling up the culture that was available down there. I was
12 going to car races and I was going—it was the culture that was really pulling me in there.
13 As far as the way that people were relating to us I never was confronted as a military
14 person about what was going on in Vietnam. I never tried to project it, either, that I was a
15 military person. I didn't emphasize that and I still spent most of my time with military
16 people. I didn't really integrate with local culture there in Riverside because almost
17 immediately I got sent to Fort Worth. When I came back from there I was almost
18 immediately sent to Okinawa. Then when I got back from Okinawa I was almost
19 immediately sent to Guam again working with their military, with the bombers down on
20 Guam. I was in there only in Riverside as a transition. I didn't get very much experience
21 with the local culture personally, although I did observe it a lot in going around to various
22 places, but mostly I was just looking at the women or trying to put myself in a situation
23 where there might be a possibility that I could find some, have some female interaction,
24 but the problem was that I was also a military person and it made it very—I think at the
25 time we weren't—like I say, we weren't confronted about it. I felt alienated from the
26 culture just a bit for that. I would imagine—I'm not quite sure how much I was being
27 affected by the fact that a lot of the culture, a lot of the people in my peer group that were
28 outside the military were thinking that Vietnam was not the right—the peace movement
29 or that they were associated or aligned with the peace movement, I don't remember
30 feeling very much about that. It just didn't have an impact on me. I was certainly aware
31 of the fact that there was something like that going on and that it was college—a lot of

1 the universities were sort of the hotbed of that kind of information, or that kind of effort.
2 My identity was that I was going to go to college afterwards. So I was looking at that
3 idea, that identity. I was looking for reasons why they would choose to think the way that
4 they thought in looking at that. I don't think it was very—it hadn't formed in such a way
5 or set or gelled in such a way that I needed to change my behavior other than
6 understanding that I was only gonna have to go to September of '68 and I wasn't gonna
7 re-up. I think I knew I wasn't gonna re-up, like I said earlier. Three days in I knew I was
8 going to be in only for four years and that was it.

9 JS: Okay. (Whispering) All right. So after being back—you said you were back
10 in the States, what, about six months before being sent to Okinawa?

11 HH: Yeah, yes, yeah. There might've been a month in between each of those
12 deployments.

13 JS: Okay. All right. What was the unit you were assigned to in Okinawa?

14 HH: It was still the Riverside squadron. So they had their KC-135s on Okinawa.
15 They would fly down to refuel the bombers, flying out of Guam. So part of our group
16 was in Guam taking care of the bombers and part of our group was in Okinawa taking
17 care of the KC-135s. That's what was happening there.

18 JS: Okay. Was your job the same pretty much the same as in Guam?

19 HH: Yeah. They had similar systems. Once again, I really tried to avoid where I
20 could working on the day shift and I was really open to working on the evening. So I
21 worked the swing shift usually. Oftentimes was working on standby because there wasn't
22 anything to do. There would be a launch that we would have to staff when they were
23 all—the bombers would launch all at once and then the refuelers would have to launch in
24 response to that. So we would have to be available for the launch because sometimes they
25 would run into problems on their taxi and we would have to repair them on the taxi
26 runway or they'd scratch them and put somebody else in their place, put another plane in
27 the place, but they would run more planes up than were necessary in order to make sure
28 they had enough to refuel. So we'd have to staff those and a lot depended on when they
29 launched. So you weren't sure when to do that, when we were gonna actually be called
30 on to be on this launch. Usually we slept on that, too, because unless there was any work
31 to be done, we were just sitting on a truck on the flight line waiting to go around to

1 various planes. The thing that I remember most about Okinawa, or my service-related
2 aspect, I mean, there was an awful lot of things off base that weren't happening in Guam
3 because Okinawa was a lot more run by—the base itself was run by the local people.
4 There's a lot of civilian employees on the base. So we had house boys that if you paid
5 them extra they would clean your room. They'd wash your clothes. We didn't have any
6 of that on Guam. You'd do your own. The food was a lot different. It was local, but
7 because the base had been established a lot longer, the food was better on Okinawa.
8 There was a lot more integration of the local folks on the base than there was in Guam
9 because it wasn't so isolated. Then there were a lot more people on Okinawa.

10 JS: Okay. (Whispering) All right. What was your impression of the people of
11 Okinawa and could you get an impression or could you get a feel of what they thought of
12 the American presence there?

13 HH: You know, there again, I think they were—say, Jason, just a second here.

14 JS: Sure.

15 HH: I need to take a little break.

16 JS: Sure, no problem.

17 HH: Okay, thank you.

18 JS: Sure, no problem.

19 HH: The Okinawans were—because I got out a little bit more, I was feeling a lot
20 more confident at that point to go out and visit in the countryside. I did take some trips.
21 For the most part I felt they were tolerant of us, of me in particular. I didn't feel any
22 animosity there at all. I did feel a bit of a predatory thing because I was—I understood I
23 was money for them. It was a way for them to—we injected a lot of money into their
24 economy. So there was some bit of predatory thing there in that they were—if I was
25 interested in buying something they were right there and if I wasn't I was just, kind of,
26 okay, well, they're here. I got the impression that there were places that were not as
27 affected by us as others and that they were going on about their life okay, although it
28 seemed a little bit impoverished. Definitely outside the base at each of the entrances to
29 the base, there was this economy based on drinking and girls and buying of electronics,
30 and clothes and stuff like that. You had to run that gamut to get outside of that influence
31 and see what was going on in the countryside. I got the impression that it was worse

1 around the Army bases than it was around the Air Force base, but I don't imagine that
2 there was much difference there.

3 JS: (Whispering) All right. When you weren't on duty, besides from going out
4 into the countryside and seeing people and getting to see a little bit of Okinawa, besides
5 that, what would you do in your free time in Okinawa?

6 HH: Well, I was still in my acquisition mode there. I was buying stereo and
7 camera equipment. I was also using them. I was taking pictures of the countryside and the
8 local people and the markets and things like that. We could develop them on base. There
9 was a photo development thing on base. I did a lot of sport type things. Like I was very
10 much into handball at the time. There was a track that I used to work on my physical
11 development. I was running and doing sit ups and things like that. I played a lot of pool
12 and ping pong. I went to movies. I actually tried to go to school. They had a night school
13 on the base that you could go to. I started out in this very dry course of business law and I
14 kind of bailed on it. It didn't stick. It probably made me not want to be a lawyer for a
15 long time in any case. I came into the military and even all the way through being on
16 Guam the first eighteen months, I had never drank. I wasn't into drinking and I wasn't
17 into smoking. I never smoked cigarettes or dope at that time, up until that time. So I was
18 staying out of that. I didn't get caught up in it. I knew a lot of people while I was in
19 Guam and Okinawa who just would get real, as the expression was, they'd get shit-faced.
20 They'd have to be hauled back onto base in a pretty rotten condition and I never did that.
21 While I was in Okinawa I had some friends take me out and we did have a few drinks. It
22 wasn't something where I went overboard. I didn't get real drunk. I just started
23 experimenting. It wasn't something—I didn't really get pukey drunk until I got back to
24 the United States. I didn't start smoking pot until after I got out of the service.

25 JS: Okay. Did you notice, I know you touched on this briefly, but was there
26 concerns with drug use and drug issues in Guam or Okinawa?

27 HH: I never saw it. The only drug that I saw being abused was alcohol and
28 cigarettes. It could've been—I don't know why people didn't, if it was there, why they
29 didn't try to offer it to me. I'm not quite sure why. I didn't feel like I was a goody two
30 shoes on that at all, not that I would've exposed them and all. It could be that they were

1 keeping it pretty low profile at that point. I don't know. I'm not quite sure why I didn't
2 see it. I really didn't see it until I got out.

3 JS: Okay. All right. What about racial issues in Guam and Okinawa? Did you
4 ever notice any problems between racial issues?

5 HH: I didn't. I was raised to be very tolerant, actually, to be sort of hyper-vigilant
6 about it, but I didn't have any experience with it, either, where I was in the room with
7 them or had to work with them. On Guam I actually had a black roommate that was from
8 New York, I think. We didn't develop a very close friendship and I had real issues with
9 his saxophone playing, which was pretty bad. Like I say, I was hyper-vigilant about
10 really being—I didn't want to do any behavior that felt like it was racist. So I tolerated it
11 as best I could and we negotiated times when he could play in the room when I'd be out. I
12 had a black supervisor when I was in Riverside. I don't remember having—I didn't feel
13 any negativity towards him other than the fact that he sold me a car that I blew up almost
14 right away, but that's neither here nor there. It could've been my fault, too. He tried to get
15 me to re-up and I was at a point where I just, I said, "Look, I don't really want to re-up."
16 He was probably my most—he and the roommate on Guam were probably the most
17 intense interaction I had with blacks during my time there. I think that the Air Force was
18 kind of almost lily white at that point. I really didn't have any—in my flight there was no
19 blacks or any other race, I should say. The Latinos were not in the service at the time
20 either, none that stick out in my mind. So it was mostly a bunch of white kids that I was
21 with. I didn't feel that we were under a lot of stress that would've really exacerbated
22 those racial sort of political things that would've happened. I didn't feel that that was—
23 there weren't any special programs that were very blatant that I remember in the service
24 where people were out saying, "Look, you need to respect each other." I don't remember
25 that. I'm sure it was happening. I don't remember any anti-racial programs or racist or
26 anti-bigotry programs, for that matter.

27 JS: Okay. All right. Well, back to Okinawa and your time there, is there anything
28 else we need to say about that before moving on to Guam and your final six months
29 there?

30 HH: I can't think of anything else there. I know that it was farther along in my
31 career up in the Air Force. I was a lot more comfortable learning or exposing myself to

1 new things there. So time—I was feeling a lot more confident about my own personal
2 self. I think that's the deal. It was quite a nice duty. For me it was great. I don't think
3 there was anything—the only other thing, I mean, I did have a very really high point in
4 my technology use for my job there. It was to, we had to swap out a compass system on a
5 KC-135. You have to calibrate them on a compass rose. It means that you sit up in—you
6 have somebody on the ground move the plane around in the four quadrants or as you're
7 working around the 360 degrees. Then you adjust the compass system so that it nulls out
8 the extraneous magnetic fields. I did that at night. It started early in the morning, actually,
9 about one or two o'clock and went to about six. I don't operate very well at night
10 anyway, but it was a fairly high—I remember it a lot. From my understanding it was
11 successful and that really made a big difference, too.

12 JS: Okay. All right. (Whispering) All right. After you finished at Okinawa, did
13 you go back to the States again for a short time before being assigned to Guam or was it
14 straight to Guam?

15 HH: Yeah, there was a short time in Riverside.

16 JS: Okay, that's right. All right. (Whispering) All right. This new assignment in
17 Guam with SAC, how did the job differ there?

18 HH: Well, the B-52 has much the same system, but it had some backup systems.
19 Most of the compass systems, when you think about compass systems, they're based on
20 the earth's magnetic field. They had one that locked on stars, the bombers did. That was
21 something that I didn't have any experience in. Fortunately, I wasn't the only guy in the
22 shop because somebody else did most of that work, but I would be able to work on the
23 old compass systems, which they left, I mean, the magnetic field compass systems and
24 the automatic pilot. For the most part I really didn't have anything to do there. I did swap
25 out, I did some work there, but in the six months that I was there, actually, I think I ended
26 up being there nine months. No, it was only six, because I was only on Guam for two
27 years total, sorry. Most of the time I remember there was, again, I worked on the night
28 shift. Again I worked on launches. If the planes needed to be fixed, we'd work on the
29 launch. If they came back broken or they came back from—we would do some debriefing
30 of the flight crew when they came back in. That way we could figure out whether or
31 not—get some more information about how to troubleshoot their system. I didn't get a lot

1 of experience working during that time because the planes were pretty solid. They were
2 hanging together better. I did spend a lot of time driving the truck out on the launch for
3 people. We would have all the electronic shops working out of that same truck. So we'd
4 be driving back and forth on the launch, on the flight line to the various planes that were
5 sitting, ready to go on the launch. Other than that I spent a lot of time at the beach again,
6 a lot of the time thinking about buying stuff, records, material. I was a lot more
7 experienced—I had a lot more friends during that time. They were the same people that I
8 knew in Riverside and had been building friendship circle in Riverside. There were
9 starting to be some more ideas about more drinking for me. There were quite a few more
10 discussions about whether or not what we were doing there was appropriate. If it's not,
11 what would we do about it? How are we gonna deal with this? Since we were getting
12 close to being out, a lot of guys were talking about going back to school, what was gonna
13 happen at that point. So they were focused more on what they were gonna do after they
14 were out, what they were doing when they were in. Because we were on Guam and we
15 were very remote from the actual combat there were people who were questioning
16 bombing at the time, a lot more than when I was there the first time because I was
17 working with the crews that were working on the bombers in that group of people.

18 JS: Okay. Was this 1968 at this time?

19 HH: Yeah.

20 JS: Okay. You talked about people beginning to question things more. Had the
21 Tet Offensive and what had happened in '68, had that played a part in this, I guess, more
22 pronounced feeling of questioning what was going on?

23 HH: Well, you know, at this point understanding the timeline, I don't associate
24 the Tet Offensive with any particular timeline with me and the military. I mean, given
25 that that was going on it could've been that there was a lot more questioning of it. Even
26 in the Air Force newspaper that came around for the Pacific, they were actually talking
27 about it in an ambivalent way, about what we were doing there. We were also getting
28 different movies that were addressing or thinking about that differently, as well. The
29 movies and the songs, again, people were picking up on that culture that was going on in
30 the States that was questioning what we were doing in Vietnam. I'm sure everybody was
31 talking—it was coming from people—well, since we'd been in Riverside, stationed in

1 Riverside, there was a lot of information out there in that area that was coming in to us,
2 brought in by individuals. It wasn't necessarily coming in through any kind of media or
3 they were transferring it. I think people were feeling that there was such an ambivalence
4 in the culture about why we were there and what we were actually doing. I can remember
5 a few conversations with people who were just, they were very conflicted. In some cases
6 they were just saying, "This is ridiculous. What are we doing here?" There were people
7 that I respected for just being conscious about stuff, being willing to talk about things on
8 a more intellectual level. We obviously had the benefit of not having to defend ourselves.
9 We were pretty remote from Vietnam itself, from the theater there. We never lost an
10 aircraft that I knew of, although there were B-52s lost over there and we never did. We
11 saw them loading those aircraft all the time with those bombs. So it was something that
12 we could think about in the abstract. It caused quite a bit of concern, you know, in
13 combination with all the other things that we were hearing and listening to or to question
14 about what actually was going on and what was our purpose there. So you heard people
15 just talking about—the only thing they talked about was when they were getting out.

16 JS: Right. Okay. All right. Let's see. Was this assignment at Guam, was this your
17 last stint with the military?

18 HH: Uh-huh.

19 JS: Okay. All right. Well, before we move onto post-military, is there anything
20 else we should say about Guam or about your military service?

21 HH: I really felt, there was one thing that was going on at the time. There's a
22 couple things. One was there was a huge sort of countermeasure going on that was called
23 Pride. I remember in Riverside there was this huge banner on the control tower that said,
24 "Pride," and it just stuck in my craw all the time because I could feel that there wasn't
25 much in the way of pride in what our mission was. The more I look back on it and the
26 more I recognize that they were fighting that pretty heavily from a standpoint of if you
27 didn't—I mean, people, humans just have a real tough time when they're ambivalent
28 about things. They really can't perform or do what the mission is very easily if they don't
29 feel strongly about it. It always felt to me that it was so contrived they didn't have it from
30 within. People didn't have it. They were trying to manufacture it and that felt a little
31 alienating, as well, for me. The other thing that I felt was that if a person came into the

1 service relatively healthy, mentally, like their attitude is good and they didn't have a lot
2 of problems getting through, that the system was built to take care of a person's needs
3 very well. At least their physical needs, and in a lot of cases their mental needs in the
4 sense that they've got a lot of things to sort of soak up your energy when you're not
5 working and then when you are working there's quite a bit of good support for making
6 sure that that happens well. I was very well taken care of when I had my incident with the
7 near drowning. I felt that people were very solicitous of me and they did watch to make
8 sure I wasn't trying to kill myself, because a lot of guys were trying to get off the island
9 by injuring themselves. So I felt well cared for while I was in the service. Subsequent to
10 the service has been the same thing.

11 JS: Okay. All right. When you returned home, did you follow what was going on
12 with the war closely through the media?

13 HH: Yes. I didn't watch a lot of television. I went to the movies. I saw *The Deer*
14 *Hunter* and all the other of those types of movies. Listened to the music, and I went to
15 school. I did go to the—started right off in Riverside City College. I took a lot of lower
16 division classes, which are pretty much college entry, let's see what you're thinking, let's
17 get you to put it down on paper, but also there was a social—I'm thinking. Let me think
18 here—I don't want to say socialist, but there was a couple of people that were instructors
19 there that definitely increased my ambivalence towards the bureaucracy or the United
20 States as a political power in the world. Plus, I started smoking pot at the time so I was
21 definitely open to persuasion.

22 JS: Okay. You talked about the professors and their perspective on things, but
23 there was much protest or anti-war activity among the students at that time?

24 HH: Yeah. At Riverside City College? No, there wasn't that I could tell. I wasn't
25 focused on it. I had a pretty tight group of folks that were ex-military that all came out
26 and went back to school kind of at the same time, and they had girlfriends and all, but it
27 was more a matter of I wasn't focused on it. I was focused on what do you need to do to
28 get through college at the time. I wasn't really focused on these extraneous activities that
29 would constitute like anti-war activities. I think I was aware of them because I was
30 interested, but I didn't join them. I didn't get into going along with them. I was aware of
31 the fact that there was a fairly large, heavy cultural influence of the hippie groups and just

1 drugs in general and how that affected people's openness to understanding that there
2 might be a different way of looking at things than what was going on at the national level
3 or on a political front where we would think it was worthwhile to have war. I was
4 questioning that, but I didn't really get into organized protests.

5 JS: Okay. What did you study while you were there at Riverside?

6 HH: I was just doing lower division.

7 JS: Okay. Right. Yeah. Sorry. You mentioned that.

8 HH: I was very much affected by this sort of a social look at—it was lower
9 division social—why am I missing the name—social science? Anyway. It just really hit
10 home. I didn't get the impression this guy had a particular ax to grind other than just
11 opening people's ideas. It was something that I hadn't heard before. It was kind of
12 impressive.

13 JS: All right. Once you finished at Riverside, where did you go from there?

14 HH: I moved north closer to where my folks were living at the time, which was
15 Stockton, California. I went to San Joaquin Junior College in Stockton. I was there for a
16 quarter and then I transferred up to Columbia Junior College in the foothills near Sonora.
17 I was in the marijuana culture at that time pretty much. I also was the person who made
18 enough money to make sure that the rent was paid. I was using the GI Bill to go to
19 school.

20 JS: Okay. (Whispering) All right. What type of job were you working?

21 HH: When I first got out in Riverside, I was working in an aluminum anodizing
22 plant. Then when I moved to Stockton I worked in a plastic pipe extrusion plant. Then I
23 worked at the post office for the Christmas rush of packages. When I moved up to the
24 forest—I worked at the forest service when I was in Columbia at the Columbia Junior
25 College. That's kind of what I was shooting for. I was getting close to the end of my
26 lower division requirements and I was doing pre-forestry.

27 JS: Okay. All right. Is that what you ended up sticking with or did your goals
28 change over time?

29 HH: What happened was I needed to move to a four-year college. The one big
30 forestry school was in Humboldt in the northern coast of California. I didn't want to go to
31 school on the coast so I moved to Oregon and was gonna get into landscape architecture

1 there. I realized that forestry was not—I was gonna be working for people who were
2 actually doing a lot of cutting of timber. I wanted to protect the forest. I wanted to protect
3 the natural valleys. At that point I had become pretty much indoctrinated into an
4 environmental way of living. So I really didn't want to be exploiting the forest. I wanted
5 to be protecting it. The only jobs were in exploiting it. So I moved to Eugene and realized
6 that I—was thinking, okay, landscape architect is what they had here that was closest in
7 line to that. I ran out of the GI Bill. I ended up living on a farm outside of Eugene for
8 about twenty-five years. I did more schooling, a couple more years of schooling in a
9 tractor mechanics class. That helped me get through—I was able to pick up jobs. They
10 were part time and periodic and occasional. I gradually was thinking in terms of very low
11 impact on the planet by not earning very much money, which didn't make me very much
12 of an easy, a likely person to work for a job full time. I began working for nonprofits in
13 recycling. I was also on this place that I lived I was a caretaker. That's where I helped the
14 people build their country home and I took care of farm animals and did a lot of sort of
15 hobby farm type activities. We had a tractor and a baler. We'd bale hay for sheep, things
16 of that nature. Until these folks passed on they actually gave the property to one of their
17 grandkids and I needed to move out from there. I went back to school at the University of
18 Oregon in environmental studies because I didn't have a degree yet. I finally got my
19 degree in 1996 or '97. Right now I'm working as an environmental stewardship
20 technician, basically, in a park where I'm restoring natural habitat where once there was a
21 farm.

22 JS: Okay. All right. So you've been doing this since '96?

23 HH: Yeah.

24 JS: Okay. All right. (Whispering) All right. Well, I guess this pretty much takes
25 us up to the present, of course, but before fully wrapping things up what I like to do is
26 just ask you a few broad questions about the war and your opinion on it. I know we've
27 talked about some of this stuff a good bit, but just to get your opinion on some of the
28 things and you can say as much or as little as you'd like for this.

29 HH: Okay.

1 JS: All right. Looking back on the Vietnam War and the entire Vietnam era, with
2 your experiences since then, looking back on it from your perspective today, how do you
3 feel about American involvement in Vietnam?

4 HH: I think the Americans to the degree that we were a homogenous culture, a
5 homogeneous culture, we're very ill informed to think that they could do what they set
6 out to do in Vietnam. I don't think they understood the resistance of the people and that
7 the Vietnamese had been in conflict with a lot of different "super powers" quote/unquote,
8 that wanted to exploit that area of the planet. As far as how I was associated with that, I
9 feel that as people come up, as individuals come up through our culture, we're not
10 offered, or we don't have time to understand or to integrate the information that is
11 available to us. So we take a lot of people's word for it and take it on faith and say,
12 "Okay, we're gonna do what our powerful say we should do." To the extent that that
13 doesn't necessarily, isn't necessarily the right thing to do. It would be great if we had
14 somebody to work that out. I don't know what to do with that. I'm struggling with it even
15 now because obviously we've not done very well by ourselves because of where we're at
16 right now.

17 JS: Right. Right. Okay. What do you feel about U.S. policy towards Vietnam and
18 Southeast Asia today and this developing relationship that we have with them?

19 HH: I think it has a lot of potential in that obviously there are going to be
20 interactions between cultures, between political entities, between people who are sort of
21 have a different idea of how they want to operate on the planet. Being able to negotiate
22 those in such a way that we don't get exploited and we're not overwhelmed by either
23 their aggression and that we don't overwhelm them. We need to be involved or we need
24 to be thinking about them and we need to actually try to reach some sort of—I don't think
25 we're ever gonna eliminate tension, but I think we need to get to a point where we can
26 talk to them in a way that's respectful and gains their respect so that we don't feel
27 threatened or aren't unduly threatened by what's happening there in their country or in
28 our country. I think there's a lot going on down there in Southeast Asia and the fact that
29 it's so much affected by what's going on in China and India. I don't know that there's
30 anything that we have to offer that other than just a voice that says, "It would be
31 worthwhile not to create the strife that we had in the Vietnam War." It would be nice to

1 try to maintain it into something that's relatively peaceful rather than have it be based on
2 reaction and armed conflict.

3 JS: Right. Okay. You mentioned quite a bit earlier about how anytime there's
4 anything about Guam in the news you like to keep up with it. Have you ever been back to
5 Guam or Okinawa or thought about doing so?

6 HH: I've certainly thought about it. I'm not sure—I've seen enough or
7 recognized enough that you never can go back and see the same thing that you had
8 before. I've gone places where I've recognized that you've got to go through so many
9 layers of—I'm having a real tough time going anywhere else where it's not just a big
10 commercial—getting through the commercial aspect of it is really tough to where I really
11 get a chance to experience the natural world or the culture itself. It's very difficult to do
12 that in this planet with so many people trying to do it. I'm not thinking about it at all as
13 an option at this point.

14 JS: All right. Just a couple more questions. How would you say, or has it, your
15 military experience and your time in the Air Force affected you, or did it have an impact
16 on your life?

17 HH: Oh, I think it very much did. I have to say that one of the things that people
18 talk about, kids, especially young men leaving home and going into the military to come
19 out a man, to get that experience, to figure out what you are, where you are out of the
20 influence of your family, it very much was instrumental in that. So it's a big part of my
21 identity. I don't claim it that much and haven't until recently when I've felt that it was
22 something where I could present it in such a way that people could feel free about saying
23 whatever they thought about it. But for the most part I felt that people are very respectful
24 of the fact that I did it. I think they also can do that because they understand that kids at
25 that age are not particularly capable of understanding of what they're getting into. One
26 thing that I didn't talk about and we didn't talk about is that I was also part of an Agent
27 Orange study.

28 JS: Oh, okay.

29 HH: To the extent that I went through that, that was a fairly intense thing that
30 went on for twenty years. Even though I was a control subject because I was not actually
31 sprayed, I worked on similar aircraft and they needed people in their control study. I felt

1 that during that program and the fact I'm also using VA (Department of Veterans Affairs)
2 hospital services. Though I'm not disabled, I do get from my Vietnam era experience a
3 good break on medical stuff that I might need. So I've begun that and availed myself of
4 that for the last, I don't know, ten years. I get that not everybody is well taken care of by
5 the military, but I think it's an amazing amount of—it's an amazing system that cares for
6 that many people to that degree. I think it was a positive experience, generally. I certainly
7 can't say anything else, because I didn't experience other stuff while I was doing it. So it
8 had a big effect on me and I'm sure that in recognition of the fact that if you have an
9 organization of people that have a mission that it's very valuable, especially in defense of
10 either ideals or a country or you really do, it does benefit from having something
11 organized instead of having something chaotic, an organization to do that kind of stuff if
12 it's necessary. The difficulty, though, is that it has a momentum of its own and like in
13 Vietnam it kind of got stuck in something that it really probably didn't need to do.

14 JS: Right. Okay. All right. Well, is there anything else you'd like to say before
15 we wrap this up, anything else we need to cover?

16 HH: I don't think so. I can't think of anything. I think I've spoke about a lot more
17 things than I thought I would be when I started.

18 JS: Okay. All right. If you don't mind I'll go ahead and stop the recording and
19 talk to you for a few more minutes afterwards if that's all right.

20 HH: Okay.

21 JS: All right.