The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with David Hause
Conducted by Steve Maxner
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Transcribed by Jennifer McIntyre

NOTE: 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.

Steve Maxner: This is Steve Maxner beginning the interview with David Hause on the 21st of March, 2001 at approximately 3:15 PM. I am in Lubbock, Texas and Mr. Hause is in Mickleton, New Jersey. Sir, why don't you go ahead and begin by telling us when and where you were born, where you grew up.

David Hause: Okay, I was born in the city of Philadelphia on October 21st, 1952 and I grew up basically in the city. I guess some more stuff would be my father married a girl from Detroit, Michigan. He met her during World War II and they ended up having ten [eight] children and I was right in the middle there. I was number five. When I was in second grade my parents were separated and my mom went back to Detroit and my dad raised all the kids by himself. He had a little bit of help from a great aunt, a great uncle that would come over and watch us. Of course I attended high school in Philadelphia but at age seventeen I dropped out of school and enlisted into the military.

SM: Now, what was it about school, did you like it or dislike it?

DH: Well, I guess basically with school, it was probably a result of the type of work I do now, I've always been a person that didn't care to be indoors so a lot of times in school I was staring out the window instead of paying attention to the pissed teacher. The other thing that happened was, my father, when I was in high school, he got married, married a girl from New Jersey and at age sixteen he was moving over to New Jersey. I told him that, at age sixteen in Philadelphia you could drive but you had to be seventeen

or over in New Jersey and he said that I wouldn't been able to drive and I had already worked and had enough money to put a car together, purchase a car. So I made arrangements to live with my sister in Philadelphia. Then at that time in Pennsylvania you didn't have to have auto insurance and I got involved in an automobile accident. I plowed into the back of a car, the woman was the wife of a doctor and she was saying her neck was sore, stuff like that. So I got kind of scared not having any insurance so I decided that maybe I ought to go join the service and get out of town, try and run from my problems I guess I was thinking of. So I went to my dad, I said, "Look, I've seen a recruiter but because I'm only seventeen I need a parent's signature." He had said no, that he wanted me to finish school. So I looked my mother up and she signed for me. I went in the service and then when I got in the service I contacted the woman that I had the automobile accident with. She was a little upset that I had joined the service and said, hey there was no problem with her neck but she wanted the money to have the car repaired so I set up an allotment and paid off the damage to the car. That's basically why I ended up dropping out of school, joining the service.

SM: Did any of your other siblings enter the service?

DH: Yes, at the time my oldest brother was in the Air Force and then just as I got out of the service the next youngest brother joined the Army and he was in the military.

SM: Your older brother, did he go to Vietnam or serve in theater?

DH: Yes, he served in Vietnam; he was at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. In fact when I first got my orders to go to Vietnam, I was only seventeen years old and my brother was over there so I contacted my CO then and told him, you really can't send me over there because I've got a brother there plus I'm only seventeen. They cut me orders for Fort Hood, Texas and I stayed there until my eighteenth birthday, then they gave me orders for Vietnam.

SM: Did you have a very close relationship with your older brother in the Air Force at the time?

DH: At the time, yes I did. In fact he was always someone that I looked up to, he was, I would say, six [eight] years older and he was always, growing up in the city, he was the big brother that watched over you. If anybody gives you trouble you go tell him and he'd go talk to the person that's giving you trouble and straighten them out.

SM: Did he write home much about his experiences in Vietnam before you decided to enlist?

DH: No, actually he didn't write home that much because at the time, he went in the service and he got married so I guess most of his writing was to his wife and he had a child I know so no, he didn't speak too much about his experience. In fact from the point that he went in the service, to this day I really don't get to see him that much because when he ended up retiring from the military he was in Alabama and that's where he's living now. So I really don't get to see him too much.

SM: Now, you said your father was in World War II. Did he talk much about his military or wartime experiences with you as you were growing up?

DH: He was pretty elusive about what he did. In fact I would always ask him questions, like what did you do and he would say that he carried this big rock with him all the time and whenever anything happened he would hide behind this big rock, he would tell us. So, he really didn't speak about his experience too much in the military. But he was, I believe he ended up he was like a pay clerk and what he ended up doing he was over in India in that theater there and he told me he used to fly around in a Piper Cub and go out to the field on payday pay everybody there. That was basically his job.

SM: How about uncles or other friends of the family that had military experience either in the 2nd World War or Korea or maybe even the 1st World War that talked to you at all about their experience?

DH: I had an uncle that was at the Korean War and he talked a little bit about it. He was at Pork Chop Hill, the hill that they made that movie about so he talked a little bit about it. He said that the Chinese were just coming at you in wave, or the Koreans I guess, mixed with Chinese but he really didn't indicate that it was a bad experience or anything.

SM: Well, when you were making your decision to enlist, how much about the Vietnam War did you understand or know about?

DH: Well, as I look back on it today I was pretty naïve as to what all was going on over in the Vietnam War. I knew that you would see the press release on the news at night. There was a guy that I knew that joined the Marines and went over there and came back and he really didn't talk too much about it, although he told some boastful war

stories about that basically all we're trying to get body counts, stuff like that. But he didn't really kind of get into the details like why we were there or what was the purpose or anything like that.

SM: Did you understand when he said all they were trying to do was get body counts?

DH: No, he was basically, he said that they used to keep marks on their helmets for each time they would get a confirmed kill and basically I understood what the theory was behind it, that every time they would get a confirmed kill they would put an X on their helmet liner so I basically understood that.

SM: When you entered the service, it was 1969 or well when was it?

DH: Actually I went in, in January of 1970.

SM: Okay, it was January '70. By that time President Nixon had come into office, was talking about shifting the war to Vietnamization. Were you aware of any of these political activities, just domestically in terms of news, did you keep up with news at all or anything like that?

DH: I vaguely kept up with it. I knew more so when I got to Vietnam, there was more talk then about downsizing the U.S involvement and turning it over to the Vietnamese but I didn't at that time. When I went into the military I knew Vietnam was a possibility, in fact I thought it was a pretty strong possibility and growing up at the time that I did, with all the John Wayne movies and things like that and with the family background, which basically was that was the thing to do, to serve your country.

SM: You mentioned John Wayne movies, had you seen "Green Berets"?

DH: Yes, I believe I did see it but I don't know that it made more of an impact than probably some of the other war movies or some of the TV series that was on, like there was a show called "Combat" and I think it had Vic Moro in it or something like that. That probably had more of an impact on me as to the deal about going to serve your country.

SM: Did you think those TV programs or movies misrepresented or, looking back on how those movies influenced you, what do you think now?

DH: Well, I definitely feel that they weren't quite the real thing. I guess they were more dramatized than my actual experience over in Vietnam. And it seemed like in

my particular case anyhow, it seemed like if you watched "Combat" or one of those movies, it seemed like they were almost constantly in battle for prolonged periods of time where my experience seemed like it was more, you could go weeks or a month at a time not even seeing the North Vietnamese. And when there actually was a situation where it was getting shot at or something, it happened so fast and then it was over almost as fast. At least with my experience where the movie almost portrayed it like it was something that was ongoing over and over, non-stop almost.

SM: So when you enlisted, were you all that concerned about going to Vietnam?

DH: No, I kind of figured I probably would be going and I would think that back at that time, I guess that young age you almost feel like you're invincible. It could happen to somebody else but its not going to happen to me so I really wasn't that concerned about it then.

SM: Well, what was basic training like for you?

DH: Basic training was, I thought it was a pretty good experience myself. I took basic training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and I was with an outfit that was, the training company was E-8-2 and I guess after I got done with basic training, I believe that probably I was in the best shape of my life, I don't think I was ever in such good physical shape. They really did a good job with that. It was kind of, everything I had heard before going down there, basic training is going to be the worst thing you've ever experienced in life and pretty much it was tough. But overall I think its something that the Army had to do to get you in shape and then also played a part of getting you mentally ready. I would say they mentally break you down so that when somebody tells you to do something, you do it without thinking. I think that was part of the training and then they gave you basically an overall good idea about the military. They covered military justice, they covered a little bit of all the different ranks and things of that nature, gave you an opportunity to qualify with the weapons. Plus they gave you all the shots that you needed to go overseas. It was a pretty good experience I think.

SM: What was the most challenging part for you?

DH: I would say, the most challenging part, I guess the physical fitness was probably the most challenging because it was very strenuous and I'm the type of person, that if you do challenge me I'm going to take on that challenge and try and do the best

that I can do. I found that to be an interesting challenge. By the time basic training was done I scored pretty high in what they call the PT test and in my platoon I ran the one-mile race that you had to run with the pack and everything on. I finished first in my platoon. In fact, the drill Sergeant used to get on me because I was a cigarette smoker and he said, "Wait until the mile test, wait until the mile test. We'll see how good you are, you want to smoke. You'll finish last in the platoon." Well that was a challenge to me so I was going to prove him wrong I was going to finish first so that's what I did and he probably knew that. He probably could see that I was in pretty good shape and that was his way of getting the most out of me.

SM: Did anybody have any serious problems while they were going through basic training in your platoon?

DH: Well, we had a, it was kind of like, it was a mixture of a lot of different people. They had what they call RA, which was regular Army, they were the people that enlist, of course I was part of that group. And then there was US, they were the people that were drafted and then they had the NGs which were the National Guard and they kind of teased them and called them Nixon's Girls, for the acronym. But some of the drafted personnel like there was one gentleman, I believe he was from Ohio, he was kind of tall and heavyset and very much out of shape, but he was also very brainy and they wanted him to go to West Point. I guess he must have had a real high aptitude test score plus I guess his high school records and I don't know, maybe he even had some college before he got drafted. But they wanted him to go to West Point and he kept on refusing to even consider it and they tried to put more pressure on him, you're going to be in the infantry so you're going to have to run harder, so you have to do more push-ups. They were trying to break him down so he would eventually say okay, send me to West Point. Then there was some of the other drafted guys, there was one case where one of the, I was on fire watch one night, fire watch was, they would have somebody awake in the barracks at all times so in case something would catch fire they could wake everybody else up and I guess it was probably more trying to train you about guard duty and you would stay on one hour shift and then you would wake up the next guy. And there was a guy named Tony, I can't remember his last name, but he was up on the second bunk and I was sitting at the top of the stairs and all of a sudden I hear him fall out of bed. He hit the

floor and he didn't move so I walked down there and I tried to see if he was okay and I shook him a little, "Tony you all right, you all right?" And all of a sudden he just stood up and started running full speed, non-stop right into this wall, hit a wall and just dropped to the floor. So I picked him up, threw him on my shoulder, carried him down to the night guard, called the CQ in the orderly room and they took him away in an ambulance. Everybody was saying that he was probably trying to get out of the service saying that he's a sleepwalker or something like that; they'll cut him loose. Well, a couple weeks later I saw him marching in a company that was two weeks behind us so I guess he was in the hospital for a little bit and then they just put him in another company. I guess they were some of the problems. I'm trying to think, one of the other things that happened was at the time the Army had regulations that you were allowed to grow a mustache. So I think I was in the Base Exchange or something like that and they had the regulations on the wall saying that you were allowed to wear a mustache. Well, our platoon Sergeant wanted everybody clean shaved so I started growing a mustache and so the platoon Sergeant was telling me, "Hey, you better shave that mustache off," and I told him, I said, "Well its in the regulations, you're allowed to have one." So he took me in to see the Commanding Officer. The Commanding Officer read the regulations and it was supposed to be an eighth of an inch up from the top of your lip and it could be no wider than a quarter of an inch and it couldn't extend past the corner of your mouth, so I said okay. Well, every morning he would call me to the front of the formation and look at my mustache and say, its extended past the corner of your mouth, you run in there and shave it. It finally got to the point that I said, its no use even having it and I shaved it off. That was some of the little problems I guess, but nothing major that I can think of.

SM: No one was injured or hurt?

DH: No, just that one kid that ran into the wall that I can remember. I guess there were some guys that maybe pulled muscles when they were running or something like that and had to go to the medics and get taken care of for pulled muscles but no bloodshed or anything that I can remember.

SM: What weapons training did you receive?

DH: Well, at the time they actually, in basic training they qualified us on both the M-16 and the M-14 rifle. Basically we carried the M-16 and we qualified with the M-16

first and then afterwards they had us sight in M-14 and shoot that. It was kind of funny because with the M-14 I qualified as an expert and with the M-16 that I probably fired most of the time I was a marksmen. I don't know if the M-14 was more accurate or maybe it was just more comfortable for me.

SM: Did you yourself have a personal preference after you fired both weapons?

DH: I thought if I was going to be an infantryman I would rather carry the M-16 around because it was lighter weight than carrying the M-14 which was wood stock and everything, it seemed like it was three times heavier. That was the only preference that I would have think of.

SM: Did they explain to you why they had you qualify with both; you've got the M-16, why are you also qualifying with the M-14?

DH: No, they didn't really explain to us at that time but I guess I found out later, but I think that happened a couple years before I enlisted that originally the M-16 was having problems so I guess maybe, it would be just pure speculation on my part, that the Army figured if we have any more problems with these M-16s we're going to go back to the M-14, I don't know, or maybe it would be a weapon that might still be in service over in Vietnam and there's a chance that you would run into it. The other possibility would be that we did have some National Guard guys and maybe when they went back to their outfit, maybe they had an M-14 gun so I really don't know why they had us qualify with both of them.

SM: The drill instructors that you had, did they have Vietnam War experience?

DH: Yes, we had a Drill Sergeant and an assistant and I believe they both had Vietnam experience.

SM: Did they talk much about it?

DH: Yes, they basically would use their Vietnam experience to say, if you were slacking or something like that, you're the kind of guy that Charlie's going to get and if he doesn't get you, if you're a slack like that, your own guys will get you because you don't want a slack guy in the platoon because they'll end up getting you killed, so he used that type. They really didn't explain where he was or what his job was over there or anything.

SM: Did they talk about booby traps and stuff like that?

DH: I don't know. They didn't talk about it but what happened was when I was getting ready to, when I finally did get my orders to go to Vietnam they sent me to Fort Lewis, Washington where they process you to go over to Vietnam and you're there for about a week. While you're there for a week they give you RVN training and then at that site there, they had like a Vietnamese village set up and it actually looked like a Vietnamese village and they covered trip wires and stuff like that. Then they put, I guess a collection of whatever MOS's were there and put them all together and made them like an infantry squad and you would go into this village. You'd have to watch out for booby traps. It was all done with blanks. They had guys that were playing VCs, dressed up in black pajamas and they would be coming out of the jungle at you or they'd be inside the hooches, pop out a window, start shooting at you or something like that, so that's where you really got into booby traps. Then when I got over into Vietnam, when I finally, I got assigned to the 101st Airborne. Before you actually went to the company that you would work for, they had in country RVN training. One of the things that they did do was they took us down to the perimeter and they said all of you would be doing night duty and they said we have a Chieu Hoi, North Vietnamese soldier that came over to our side and the drill instructor's back was at the wire and this North Vietnamese that Chieu Hoi'd, what he did was demonstrate him crawling through the wire, how he was a sapper, how he would sneak through the wire at night. And you could see it actually going on, how he could find his way through wire and he walked into where he stood right up alongside the instructor while he was talking there. That was basically the only training that I got about Vietnam, a week before I got there and then a week after I actually arrived in country.

SM: When you finally got out into the field, did you find that limited RVN training that you did receive before and after, that it did help some?

DH: Well, in my case I don't think it gave me a clue what was going on, but I was a helicopter crew chief so one thing, I was exempt from guard duty so I never had to stand perimeter guard. So seeing that sapper come through the wire put me on guard, thinking okay, well this can happen. It also put me on guard that if there was an attack on the base that they could be walking around within the base, so it made me aware of that. As far as walking into the village and looking for booby traps and stuff like that, it didn't come into play for me because, thank God, I never got shot down where I had to walk

through the jungles or into a village. I guess it gave me a better idea of the type of enemy we were facing though.

SM: Now, so you went from basic training at Fort Bragg to Fort Rucker, Alabama for your advanced training, correct?

DH: That's correct.

SM: Why don't you go ahead and talk about your advanced training?

DH: Okay, what had happened was, I guess I could start with when you enlisted in the service, I went in with a guaranteed MOS of becoming what I thought was a helicopter repairman, actually an aircraft repairmen. When I went to see the recruiter and told him I was interested in it and he said, "What would you like to do?" I told him I worked at a gas station as an auto mechanic; maybe I could be an auto mechanic in the Army. So he said, "Well we have to send you in and give you an aptitude test." So I took an aptitude test and when he called me back, he said, "Hey, your score's come in and if you come on into the office, I'll talk to you." When I got there he says, "Look," he says, "you scored so high on the mechanical end, we can make an aircraft mechanic out of you." Well, I thought oh, that's the greatest thing because when I get out of the service maybe I can get a job as an aircraft mechanic. That probably pays pretty good. But little did I know at the time that the Army was looking for helicopter crew members. So when I went to Fort Rucker, Alabama, they gave you an introduction course, its like a three week course if I remember right, of basic aircraft maintenance and they covered both rotary wing, which is a helicopter and fixed wing which is an airplane because the Army had both type aircraft. It gave you just a basic understanding of aircraft which I thought was pretty good. It kind of covered the theory of flight and all the four forces acting on an aircraft when it's in flight, talked about all the different type engines, some of the different fuels that they use and lubrications and gave you a general background on aircraft maintenance. Then while you were there, they had you pick out three of, I think they probably had about maybe ten aircraft that you would be interested in crewing and two of them were fixed wing, so I picked them as being what I wanted to work on and then the third one was a helicopter. So I picked the Huey, the Huey to me looked like the nicest one, not knowing what the Huey's job was. So then at the end of that three week period, they said okay, well you qualified for Huey school so then they sent you on to

another class and then I specialized just in the Huey helicopter. I thought they did a pretty good overall job of getting you familiar with all the ins and outs of the Huey helicopter. They covered everything, the power plant which would be the engine, they covered the rotor system, both the main rotor, the tail rotor, the transmission. They went into the airframe itself, how it was built and also they covered the construction of the skin, how that was made, what it was made of. They went into the flight controls. In each different class you went to you had a Huey helicopter that was disassembled to the point where you could actually see what they were talking about and then they would also actually have you do some hands on where you would work on the different pieces, pull it apart, put it back together and they covered some of the hydraulic system. They really didn't cover any of the electronics. They basically told you what they were and most of those units, you can remove them and replace them but within those fields they had avionics guys that would work on the radio equipment and all the flight instruments and stuff like that. I thought they did a very decent job. I thought the five weeks time they crammed a lot in there. I found it pretty interesting and I scored pretty high on all the tests. In fact, I finished the top of my class there and because in basic training I did so well I was promoted to E-2, I think the top ten guys in the platoon became E-2. Well then when I went to advanced individual training I did well enough there that I was actually never an E-3, I got promoted right to an E-4 so I had no time in rank as a PFC. I went right to a Spec-4. I think they did a pretty good job; they had civilian instructors along with military instructors there. The instructors did a pretty good job about keeping you awake. Some of them had a system where they could see a couple of the guys that were nodding, let's go outside and run around a little bit. There was one civilian instructor I remember that he had, this was probably the power plant system class, he had a drive shaft, a drive shaft on a Huey is like a three inch round tube and if you would fall asleep he would walkover and just hold it about shoulder high and drop it on the floor and it would make a heck of a noise and wake you up. So there was all different personalities which I thought was good too because each instructor specialized in their own phase of the training so it wasn't five weeks of the same instructor. It was like a different instructor every day it seemed like. The only thing that I thought that maybe they lacked in there was they actually didn't cover too much of the actual crewing of the helicopter. What I mean by

that is when you're actually, as a crew chief, when you're flying onboard, there's communication that you have to have with the pilot and your gunner. When you were landing in some of those tight LZ's, the crew chief and the gunner can see the back of the helicopter. So there's got to be like coordinated talking so that you tell the pilot, "hey you're getting a little too close to the trees along this side, move to the left." When you're steady talking, "Come on down. The tail rotor's clear, the skids are clear." So they didn't really cover anything like that and then the radio system on board the intercom system on board the helicopter, there was some toggle switches where you could listen to probably four or five different radios at one time. You'd have an FM radio; an AM radio and then that helicopter actually had two FM radios so that you could be tuned in to two different nets so there was a selector switch for that. When I went to Vietnam I didn't know anything about that. Then the other thing that they didn't cover was instrument flight flying in a cloudy environment. The first time it happened, we were flying in a cloudy environment, I kind of had a little bit of vertigo because I didn't realize that the pilot was using instruments to fly. I thought, "How could he tell if we're upside down or not. I sure can't tell." I thought maybe they could have covered a little bit more on crewing than they did. It was basically a maintenance school. Then when I did get to Vietnam, I guess my military MOS was helicopter repairman and anybody that crewed was on a voluntary basis, maybe that's why it isn't covered, I guess maybe they figured maybe only two guys out of the whole class are actually going to be crewmen, do I don't know.

SM: Now when they were talking about the physical characteristics of the aircraft in particular the skin, at that time did they talk about magnesium component, fire hazards, stuff like that?

DH: Yes, they did say that the magnesium was pretty combustible but they also covered the fact that the fuel cells were, if bullets should go through the fuel cells they would seal up, automatic seal up so, they did mention the fact that it was highly combustible.

SM: Was there anything else that you would wish they had talked about in your training before you got to Vietnam?

DH: I guess the other thing that I thought that maybe they should have covered a little more was firing the machine gun from the air. It seemed like the training on that

was pretty short. If I remember correctly I went up one time and it was both sides of the helicopter shot. There was a target range and it looked like to me like they had sheets strung out down on the ground and I would say that we were probably up in the air for only a half an hour and both side of the aircraft had to shoot. I think by the time I got my instructions and everything, I may have only fired a machine gun for five minutes up in the air. I thought maybe they should have gave you a little more detail on that and then the other thing that was they didn't cover at all was like trying to, we could carry all different kinds of weapons on board. We had a M-78 grenade launcher that we would shoot from the helicopter. We would also carry, there was like a post that was in front of the gunners seat that you could hang just about anything you wanted on there. So we carried tear gas grenades, smoke grenades, fragment grenades and they really didn't touch base along that at all in AIT.

SM: Did they treat you differently in AIT versus basic training?

DH: Yes, it seemed like to me in AIT you were more on your own than supervised. We had a class, I would say there was probably twelve guys in the class and they made one of the guys the class leader. He was probably the oldest guy in the class that I remember and they made me the assistant class leader and they gave us more responsibility. They would tell the class okay, they gave the class leader the class schedule and he said make sure your guys are there, and it was almost you wake up in the morning, you get them to the mess hall, you make sure that they're ready to go to class and we would march ourselves to class where that never happened in basic training. The drill Sergeant was forever there. It seemed like the guy never slept or something. In Advanced Individual Training, it was almost; they left you on your own a little more. I guess they used the theory, if the class was out of order, if something went wrong, the 1st Sergeant would chew out the class leader and then the class leader would chew out the assistant class leader and the chain of command they used more.

SM: Well, how about in terms of physical, well use of mechanisms for discipline, that is dropping you for push-ups or even physical contact between trainees and trainers, how did that differ between basic and AIT?

DH: Well, at the time that I went in 1970, I think physical contact in basic training was kind of like almost taboo. I can't remember the drill Sergeant hitting

anybody or anything of that nature. Like I said, basically in AIT you were almost on your own as far as any kind of discipline for the, I'm trying to remember some of the, I guess the teachers if you were out of order, definitely they would threaten you with either an Article 15 or they would give you some kind of, go out to the parade field and run around the flag pole and back or something like that. But I would say it was, when you got to AIT in my particular case, these were all people that volunteered to be there so the attitude was a little bit different than somebody that was drafted. So I don't think there was really any discipline problems that I can really remember. One thing that did happen to me was when we got a pass one time and went down to Panama City, Florida which wasn't too far from Fort Rucker and spent a weekend down there and I got sunburned real bad. One of the things in the military, we were told that if you had a sunburn that you could get an Article 15 because the instructors said that you're now government property and your body is government property and if you get sunburned and can't perform you damage government property. So I had gotten sunburned real bad and I really had a hard time walking, but I didn't want to go to medical or anything, so what I did was there was one big guy in the class that I held onto the back of his belt and he kind of pulled me to class while I was almost walking stiff legged or trying to march or whatever. I guess it was basically a different frame of mind amongst the guys that volunteered to go into the military. They weren't forced to be there.

SM: Well, how much before and while you were still stateside going through training, how much did you hear about the anti-war movement?

DH: Basically, I wasn't really, one thing that I wasn't really much for watching television so I really didn't hear too much about it except for the fact that I did have a girlfriend that was going to Penn State at that time and writing back and forth to her. She had told me about some of the demonstrations on campus and things of that nature so I was basically, I was aware of it. Its not like I was oblivious to it but it didn't seem like it was something that the instructors would talk about, "Hey did you see the news last night, there was a riot here or a riot there," so it wasn't something that was really talked about.

SM: Was there anything else you wanted to discuss about your training?

DH: Let's see, I'm trying to think of anything else. I think I covered pretty much on the training that I can remember.

SM: Well, why don't you go ahead and discuss when you received your orders to Vietnam, what were some of the thoughts that went through your head, you realized you were going to war?

DH: Okay, well like I said earlier, when I got done in Advanced Individual Training actually had cut my orders for Vietnam and I was able to get out of that because I was only seventeen at the time and my brother was over there. So they sent me to Fort Hood Texas. When I went to Fort Hood, Texas the put me with an armored division and I ended up being a truck mechanic which was kind of ironic because I thought when I was going in, well that would be a good job. So I was with the 502nd, the Armored Division down there in Fort Hood, Texas and so I really didn't care. I know you're from Texas, but I really didn't care for that part of Texas. It was like we were in the middle of nowhere. It was a little town named Kileen, Texas and it seemed like if, I think the closest town might have been Temple, Texas if I remember, and it seemed like that took forever to get to. I wasn't accustomed to that. Growing up in the city it seemed like everything was readily available to you. In fact, I could be to the shore in one hour's time if I wanted to and in the mountains in one hour time and Texas was kind of like spread out and you just drive forever through this flat desert or whatever. So when I went there, there was almost nothing to do so I enrolled in Central Texas College. I was actually taking a private pilot's course, just for something to do to keep me occupied in the evening. I wasn't there that long and on my birthday they gave me orders for Vietnam and the orders were actually dated the day before my birthday, October 20th and my birthday was October 21st. So somebody must have marked their calendar or I don't know, maybe they had a computer database at that time and my name was spit out as, and my brother had returned from Vietnam. I received orders and I guess one of the first things that came to my mind, at this point I hadn't had any leave. I'd left home for basic training and I hadn't returned home so one of the first things on my mind was, "Good, I get the chance to go home," and the other thing I was thinking was well, I don't really like this Texas, plus the fact that I was working on trucks when at that point I thought I

did quite well in the helicopter maintenance school and I figured well, maybe I'll get a chance to work on helicopters now. So, I actually looked at it as a positive thing.

SM: You weren't afraid, concerned?

DH: No, for the most part, just turning eighteen, like I said earlier, you feel invincible at that point. It won't happen to me.

SM: Well, how much leave time did you get before you left?

DH: I got thirty day's leave and I think it was seven day's travel time, something like that.

SM: So what did your folks think? You went home, you told them you got your orders for Vietnam?

DH: They were concerned I guess, but my dad really didn't express it to me. I guess he was trying to be strong but I found out years later after I came back from Vietnam, my brother told me that when I finally did get on the plane to leave to go to Vietnam they said my dad had cried like a baby. They'd never seen him cry like that before.

SM: While you were on leave, did you get a chance to see your brother who had just come back?

DH: No, because he went from Vietnam, he got stationed down south, he got stationed in South Carolina I believe is where he got stationed, so no I didn't get a chance to see him.

SM: When did you finally leave home and head over to the West Coast to get yourself to Vietnam?

DH: It was in early December, in fact I would say it was probably right around December 6th or something like that, that I flew there. I know I spent a week there and I arrived in Vietnam on the 15th of December.

SM: What was the trip over like?

DH: Well, of course I flew but what I did do while I was home, I grew a beard. I didn't shave while I was home and I was flying, you would get that discount if you flew military but you had to wear your uniform. So I figured, well let me see how long I can go with this beard and I actually reported for duty in Fort Lewis with a thirty-day-old beard. So a lot of the people on the plane were kind of looking at me funny, what's this

guy in the military with a beard? Because at the time there was no facial hair except for a mustache. If I remember right I think I went to Chicago, stayed on the plane and went right along to Seattle, Washington and then when I got on the base, it didn't take long, and the company commander grabbed me in the office and told me to go shave immediately or else I'd get an Article 15, so the beard disappeared.

SM: When you got off the plane in Vietnam what were your first impressions and thoughts?

DH: I guess the heat probably hit me the most when I walked out. Then I was surprised, I almost thought like, "oh my gosh this is almost like a very secure area," because there's a lot of people walking around, nobody had weapons. Actually where I landed, Cam Ranh Bay there was also a civilian airport there because I saw civilians walking toward a small prop plane and it seemed like they were carrying their worldly possessions with them, chickens and everything else. So I thought well this must be pretty secure, not in a war zone. I do remember, and then the other thing that I knew it was probably going to be a pretty safe area when we landed because there were stewardess on the plane, a female stewardess. So I figured well they're not flying us right into a combat zone. I did remember there was an elder officer, an Air Force GI on there and I guess when we started our descent into Vietnam, he started crying and I thought that was unusual. But then I said, well maybe he was here before or he's got a wife and some children, so I figured it was an emotional moment for him. But I guess the thing that struck me the most when I climbed out of the plane was, you're in this air conditioned plane and all of a sudden they opened up the door and you walk out there and you're on the flight line and the flight line is probably hotter than the surrounding area because it's this blacktop area that just soaks up the sun. It's just kind of like wow, it's really hot here, it's even hotter than Texas. That's probably the thing that struck me most.

SM: What was the atmosphere on the plane like? You mentioned the Sergeant when you're descending into Vietnam starting to cry. What was the general atmosphere for most of the flight over?

DH: It was pretty quiet. I thought for the most part it was quiet. I remember I had a window seat and I was looking out the window when we were descending in there, I

was looking down and I said boy, what a beautiful looking country. It was very lush green, that I remember but basically it was pretty quiet. I guess a lot of people were probably doing some soul searching as they were flying in. I really can't, I just remember that he was a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force. He was the guy that stuck out the most in my mind. It was just like being on a regular airline. They served some meals, offered you drinks, just like that, commercial flight. I think it was, if I remember right, it was called Flying Tiger Airlines, was the name of the outfit that flew us over there. I later on found out that there was actually a guy that flew prior to World War II for the Chinese, they were called the Tigers and one of those gentlemen actually started that airline.

SM: What did you do when you got off the plane?

DH: Well, when I got off the plane, at that point it seemed like it was pretty hustle bustle business. We went into the terminal and they organized you and split us up and said you guys are going here, get on that bus and actually they sent us to a replacement center. And the replacement center was, to me as I look back on it, I think maybe I would have segregated it a little bit because actually what they did was you got mixed in with the guys that were going home. So the guys going home were telling you all these war stories and scaring the heck out of you, telling you how bad it was and things of that nature. If I was in charge I think I would have separated them so that the old guys didn't scare the heck out of the new guys. It was very evident who was new and who was old, by just looking at their fatigues. The guys who had been over there for a year in that climate, they were all weathered and the guys who had just arrived, spanking new green fatigues. So they hustled you over and then when we got there it was kind of late in the evening and they directed us to the mess hall and showed us which barracks we'd be staying in. Then there would be a formation in the morning and so when I woke up in the morning, they started telling everybody where you were going and when they got to me they said I was reporting to the 101st Airborne and someone said they were up in Phu Bai. The other guy was looking, he said, "Oh man, that's right by the DMZ. That guy don't have a half a chance." So there was kind of some teasing with the old timers, they would tease the new guys. So of course the replacement center had a map of Vietnam so after they told you where you were going, everybody was trying to look on

the map to try and figure out where you are going. I found the little town of Phu Bai up there just below the city of Hue and I said, "Man that is up there pretty good." Cam Ranh Bay was kind of a little bit north in Vietnam and there were some [guys going] more central South Vietnam and there were some people that were going south and I'm looking at the map and looking up there around the City of Hue. I said man, you can't get much closer to the enemy where I'm going. I thought the guys going south actually had a better job but here as I found out, it didn't matter where you were in country, the war was all over South Vietnam.

SM: So how did you make your way up to Phu Bai?

DH: Well, what they did then is they put us on board a C-130 and it was basically set up to carry cargo and on each side of the plane they had these seats that would fall down from the wall. They could strap them up once they got cargo, they could drop them down and actually it was a mixture of both. We had some cargo on board and we were actually sitting on the outside wall. I don't think there were a whole bunch of passengers, it seems like it was more cargo than passengers and I thought it was kind of unique because as soon as we got up off the runway, it seemed like the pilot pointed the plane straight up in the air and it climbed and got as much altitude as he could. I figured I guess he's doing that to get out of rifle fire or whatever but I imagine he also did it to get away from outgoing artillery and stuff like that. Then he went out onto the coast and flew up over top of the, I guess the South China Sea, and it was the reverse thing when we got there, it seemed like he'd come in high and nose dive down for the runway and come in for a landing. Then when I got there they said, well, you have to go up to Camp Evans for what they called in country training. They sent everybody there and they put us in some deuce and a half trucks and rode us up Route One through the city of Hue up to Camp Evans and that's where they did the in country training. Part of the in country training was they actually did, they put everybody in a helicopter and flew them outside the wire, dropped them off and then you had to march back to the camp so that was actually part of the training. So I guess I did one combat assault where I got out of the helicopter instead of staying in it. Then from there, they dispersed everybody and I was assigned to the 3rd Brigade which was at Camp Evans so I stayed there and the other guys, there was another guy that was in my group, he was in Armor and he got stationed

down at Fort Campbell which was down around Phu Bai. So they loaded him up in a truck and sent him back down south. Then from there went to my unit, I was assigned to my unit there.

SM: Did you ever link up with any of your former AIT classmates?

DH: No, I never did because they went, everybody got orders for Vietnam after we got done and they were like four months ahead of me so I never did. I do have a photograph of them with all the names on the back and I often thought I would try and look them up but in fact I might do that in the near future, see how they made out. But no I never ran into anybody, either that or any of the guys from basic training. Once we left, that was it.

SM: So your first unit of assignment, this was Headquarters, Headquarters Company 3rd Brigade?

DH: That's right.

SM: What did you understand in terms of your role and your mission as a part of that company?

DH: Well, basically there was one other guy that come up through the processing, his name was Dave Woods and he was a LOH mechanic and when we got there the Captain told us that he hoped that both of us would become crew members eventually. Right now there was no opening and he said for them. He asked what were our private skills, I told him that at the time I entering the service I was an automotive mechanic, I worked in a gas station and Dave Woods was a carpenter. Well, as soon as the CO heard that, he said oh, that's great we need some stuff built and he asked me if I could help him and I said yes, I could help him. So we ended up building a new latrine and I believe Dave went on and built like a shower. But, an opening came for a chance to fly and I took that. I think I spent two weeks with Dave building that latrine. Actually, my first chance to fly was on a LOH. They had what they called a White Team, I don't know, are you familiar with that term?

SM: No, sir.

DH: What a White Team is, is they actually have two LOHs that go out and they'll fly at treetop level and they do an actual recon. They actually fly around trying to locate the enemy while they other one would maintain a higher orbit away and they

actually did some scouting for the 3rd Brigade. So, there was one guy that was a gunner on the White Team that went on R & R, so they were looking for a gunner so while he was on R & R. The Captain asked me if I'd be interested in trying it out. So, I spent the first day actually, we flew out to what they called was a fox box, it was an area like a one kilometer square area where there's no friendlies, it's out in the jungle and you can practice target shoot there, the fox box was a free fire box, that would be the practice shooting area. So the pilot would have me out there and he would fly by, he'd say, "Hey, see that bomb crater with the wood in there, see if you can get hit it with the machine gun." He would fly by and I would try and hit it with the machine gun and then if I got that down, the he said, "Try the M-78 grenade launcher." And I would try that and then at the one point there, we came across what looked like what they called a spider hole in the side of a mountain. It looked like a little man-made dig-in hole in the side of the mountain, so he said, "Let's see if we can get one in there." He says, "But I don't want to hover in front of it, in case somebody's in there, they'll shoot at us." So he says, "I'm going to fly by and you see if you can shoot it." So we're flying by this hole and with the M-78 grenade launcher when you shoot it you can actually see the projectile, it's a little blurry but you can see it and it was kind of funny because I'd shoot at it and it would go right at the hole and then it seemed like just at the last second when it got close to the ground all of a sudden it would turn in the direction that the helicopter was flying and it would miss by fifteen yards or something like that. It was kind of strange and that's what I was talking about back in training. They should teach a little bit more about firing from the air to the ground because you actually almost have to lead your target and so it was a little bit of a technique on that. Then he showed me how, on the LOHs, they had the mini-gun that was electrically operated, Gatling gun, the pilot would fire that and he showed me how that thing would work. In this fox box there was a cliff and he hovered in front of the cliff and he said let me see if I can carve my initials in the side of this cliff. When he pulled the trigger on the mini-gun it actually, the force of the ammunition coming out of the mini-gun kind of tilted the helicopter back a little bit and it almost felt like, from the hover it was pushing it back, so it was kind of hard for him to control it, so he said well that's enough of trying to get initials on the side of it. I guess when he first opened that thing up, I had never been exposed to a mini-gun and it was very noisy and it

didn't' even sound like what you would think a regular machine gun, it would almost sound like a loud belch. You almost couldn't pick each round firing. I mean it went ERRRNT! like that, it was amazing. So, after we spent that day of training then we went out and of course there was two helicopters, so we would take turns maybe a half hour down, scouting around while the other one was up hovering the overhead and then, after a while staring into the jungle trying to pick up anything walking or anything that's not natural and you're doing circles, circles, circles, you start getting a little dizzy or whatever so then you would change. You would shift over, the other LOH would get down and you'd go up and fly big doughnuts around them in case he had contact. We never did, in the week's time that I did it, we never ran into anything. But the idea was if you did see something, you were supposed to immediately throw a smoke grenade out, mark the target and then the other helicopter up high could hit it with a mini-gun and usually they said what they would do then, they would bring in a platoon of infantryman to try and find out what they had there, or they would call artillery in on it or whatever. Then right after that I got a job as, I guess maybe it was also a combination of the Captain spent a week with LOHs to see hey, how is he flying, can he shoot a gun or something like that because right after that, guy came back from R & R I went right to a Huey and I was first the gunner before I was the crew chief and I spent, I guess it was probably over a month as a gunner before they actually ended up giving me my own helicopter where I was the crew chief.

SM: Now when you were flying those LOH missions with the White Teams, were there also Cobra gun ships in your units and HK teams, the Hunter- Killer Teams?

DH: Yes, what they did was, there was, in our particular company, I was with the Headquarters, Headquarters company, we didn't have any Cobras but there was a Cobra outfit that was available for them. Then what they did was, when it was one LOH and a Cobra up high, they would call that a Pink Team and then sometimes they would fly two LOHs and two Cobras and I believe they called that a Red Team, so the White Team a lot of times did work with Cobras, they did do it in that fashion also.

SM: At this point, what do you understand in terms of what the United States is trying to accomplish in Vietnam and where is your unit fitting into that?

DH: At that point what I understand what we're trying to do there is, we were trying to keep the village people, the people that live in a town and the villages around it, free from harassment from the North Vietnamese soldiers was basically my, at that time, that's basically what I believed what was going on. It was very defensive posture. It was almost like we got all these people and they're around the city of Hue and all the village and around it and we're here to stop you from coming in there and harassing them, killing them or hitting them up for taxes or things of that nature. Basically when I first got over there that's what I thought our role was. To me it wasn't an offensive, it was more defensive.

SM: What did you think the overall American scheme was? What was the United States trying to accomplish in Vietnam?

DH: Well, of course basically to stop the spread of Communism, that would be the overall scheme. I knew about the talk about the Domino theory about the one country falls to the Communists, then they'll get the next one and the next one, so basically that was the overall view was to stop the spread of Communism. Then I can remember at the time that President Kennedy was pretty inspirational of, in several speeches that say, "we will fight any foe, protect any ally," so if that was the mindset of the country then I was performing that duty that he spoke of.

SM: What was the morale like at your unit when you got there?

DH: I would say the morale in my unit amongst the flight crews I thought was pretty good morale. I think there was good morale there and even within the guys that were the support for the aviation platoon, we had avionics guys, we had crew chiefs for the LOHs that didn't fly. They weren't gunners and we were one aviation platoon part of Headquarters, Headquarters Company 3rd Brigade. So there was, across the road from us was the administrative end of the Headquarters, Headquarters Company, they did have a recon platoon that was across the road, and those guys, whenever they weren't out in the field seemed like they would come across the road and hang with us because we were people that were, even though every night we went and slept in our bunks, we were actually out of the base fighting a war where they didn't want to hang around with the clerks and I guess there was truck mechanics and that type thing. So they would hang with us. For the most part I think the morale was upbeat.

SM: What was the relationship like, and actually we can take this question back to your basic training and AIT, relationship between different groups of people in the unit, for instance along ethnic lines?

DH: Well, in the ethnic lines, if I went back to basic training, my Drill Sergeant was a black gentleman and my Assistant Drill Sergeant was a Mexican-American and I would say that ninety percent of the guys that were in my basic training platoon were white. There were some black soldiers and some Hispanic but for the most part I think they got along. I didn't really observe any racial tension in basic training. When I got to AIT, in my class there weren't any blacks. I guess that could have been some racial discrimination in its own that there wasn't any blacks within that type AIT. And then the same thing when I got to Vietnam, the platoon that I was in, there were no blacks in that platoon. There were blacks on the base camp and I know there was some of the guys that were within the aviation platoon that weren't on flight status told me, go up to the PX during the day and if you pass by a group of black guys they almost stare you down. You can feel that hate coming from them, so there was that tension on the base camp although, with my job I really wasn't exposed to it too much.

SM: How about the relationship between officers and enlisted men?

DH: Before we go there, the only thing I did want to say within the aviation platoon, there was almost, since there wasn't blacks there was a separation between some of the guys that, how we classified them over there was, there was juicers, they were the guys that drink beer and there were heads and they were guys that probably would smoke marijuana or whatever. So there was a little bit of tension there and maybe that's a problem because there wasn't – it seems like if you get a group of people together they almost separate into cliques, you know what I mean. So maybe because there wasn't any blacks there, the whites busted into two different cliques and became a little bit of tension there, but not too much.

SM: And what about, on the subject of kind of cliques, lifers and draftees, or regular Army and draftees?

DH: Yes, there was definitely a little bit of tension between it seemed like within the enlisted men, sometimes the guys that, I guess non-flight status. The 1st Sergeant would be the guy in charge and these people, like if he was pushing them too hard they

would say, I'd come back and they'd maybe tell him, "No, this guy's not good. He's a lifer," and stuff like that, "all he wants to do is work all day." But for the guys, we called them REMFs, for Rear Echelon MFer's and life for them was pretty boring because they were stuck on this base camp and they couldn't go (with 101st Airborne Division, they wouldn't give you any passes to go into the towns or villages) so they were basically stuck to the base camp. So they were almost like a year in jail or something. So, there was some tension there between the guys that received the orders and the guys that had to give the orders I guess.

SM: While we're on that subject of giving and receiving orders, back to the question about enlisted and officers and also what was the make-up of the officer Corps in your unit? Were there a lot of warrant officers or mostly commissioned officers?

DH: Out of the pilots I would say that 75% of them were warrant officers and there were some commissioned officers that were pilots. Of course our commanding officer and our XO were commissioned officers and then we had a fellow, he was the maintenance officer in charge of maintenance. He was a commissioned officer and then we had, I think there was maybe two more that were just Lieutenants that were pilots but the rest of them were warrant officers. I would say that amongst the flight crews, I think there was a pretty good relationship between the two guys up front, the pilots and their crewmembers, whether they were a warrant officer or an officer because you worked together as a team. But it seemed like after hours the commissioned officers, they wouldn't mingle with the enlisted men, where the warrant officers would do it occasionally, so I would say that would be the little distinction between them.

SM: But you got along well with both warrant officers and commissioned officers?

DH: Yes.

SM: Equally well?

DH: I think probably more so with the warrant officers because a lot of the warrant officers were pretty young guys. One guy we had was nineteen years old, a guy from Green Bay Wisconsin so we did have some young warrant officers where the commissioned officers, they were more likely to be, twenty-two, twenty-three years old, that kind of thing.

SM: What about the organization? You mentioned that you'd crew together and you'd work together. How was your unit organized in terms of, when you became a crew chief and even when you were a gunner, did you always crew chief and gun on the same aircraft and with the same pilots or how did that work?

DH: Well basically what happened was once you became a crew chief they would assign you a helicopter and that would be yours. You were actually the one individual that would never leave the helicopter. They could always rotate the pilots, which they did on a regular basis and the gunner they could rotate but for the most part they left the gunner intact with the crew chief because when I was learning to crew, they put me with a crew chief that had a lot of experience. And in order for me to learn what the duties were after we would come in at the end of the day, we'd perform all the maintenance that we would have to do on the helicopter and then go and clean the guns. Well, supposedly the idea behind the way it was set up was the crew chief would take care of the helicopter and the gunner was supposed to take care of the guns but the crew chief and the gunner basically worked together. For the most part they left that pretty much intact. In fact, when I was a gunner I was with the same crew chief the whole time for that month and a half I guess it was and then when I became a crew chief I had the same gunner the whole time I was a crew chief. So that stayed intact but the pilots would rotate. I don't know what the purpose of that was, maybe it was an effort to keep us from getting too close to them or whatever. But flight operations would always basically assign the crews and they had a CQ I guess it was called. He would come around, wake you up in the morning, tell you go get breakfast you're due out on the flight line in a half hour or something like that and then you wouldn't know. You'd go into the operation room and they had like a grease pencil board and you could look on the crew and see who your pilot is, so you wouldn't even know until the next day who your pilot's going to be, but that's how that was set up.

SM: So this will end the first interview with Mr. Hause.

Steve Maxner: This is Steve Maxner continuing the interview with Mr. David Hause on the 30th of March 2001 at approximately five minutes after three Lubbock time. I am in Lubbock, Texas and Mr. Hause is in Mickleton, New Jersey. Sir, we left off last

time, we're going to discuss your first missions as a gunner in the LOHs, so why don't you go ahead and discuss that?

David Hause: I believe last time I stated that they had put me in, they asked me if I wanted to be a LOH gunner because one of the normal gunners was on R & R and they needed someone to fill in for the week. I volunteered and I think it was also basically they were trying to get a feel for me to see if I would be worthy as an aircrew member and also give me an opportunity to get a feel for firing a gun from the air and stuff like that. It was an interesting experience as it was a first opportunity for me to fly and it was treetop level and everything kind of passed by below you pretty quick and so we got into an actual area where we were reconning and then we were doing circles around and around and looking for any movement of any kind down there. Then of course, like I said, there was some target shooting, things of that nature. We went to an area that was considered a free fire zone, there was no friendlies there and we would pick out targets and I would shoot at the targets and things of that nature. Needless to say, when I did get on the Hueys, I was happier to be on Hueys, it seemed like sometimes you would get a little dizzy when you were spinning around in circles like that. It was a good experience though.

SM: You mentioned that you enjoyed the Hueys more, was there a difference, not just in the aircraft but in the pilots that flew LOHs versus Hueys?

DH: Yes, I would say that the LOH pilots, they seemed like they were always warrant officers, they were very young warrant officers and they were kind of like, I guess you could equate them to somebody that would want to ride a sports car instead of a Cadillac. We kind of, when we talked about the two different aircraft, that's how we referred to them, even the pilots would refer to the LOH at the controls, when you moved the stick, it would move instantly, where the Huey was more like a Cadillac, when you hit the stick to move to the right, it would slowly turn to the right, it was a slower reaction than the actual Huey. And the LOH air crews, they were a more gung ho type where they were interested in going out and looking for charlies and I would say that the Huey pilots content not to find Charlie. They weren't afraid of them but they would just fly their missions. They weren't actually gung ho as the LOH pilots.

SM: Now how long did you fly in LOHs?

DH: Just for that one week.

SM: Did you make contact?

DH: No, I didn't make any contact. The only possible contact that we thought we may have had was we found what was a spider hole, it was a hole in the side of the mountain and they figured that it could have been an air tunnel or something like that. I unsuccessfully tried to shoot a couple unsuccessful M-79 grenade launchers in on it and then the other LOH put the mini-gun down in the hole and we reported it but I don't know if they followed up on it or not. A lot of times, what they would do, they would send a platoon of infantry guys out there to check it out.

SM: What kind of briefings did you receive as you were preparing for those missions on LOHs? Were you told anything when you got on board or before you got on board, what you would be doing?

DH: Basically, actually the pilot went around the aircraft and kind of showed me what the Gatling gun was and told me that he had operated it and he had showed me that when you sit on board the LOH, you would sit on the floor of the helicopter and your feet would be out on the skid and you actually fire an infantry style M-60 machine gun that had the pistol grip, where in the Huey it had the butterfly grip and you would fire it right handed and feed it with your right [left] hand, you would have to feed it where, in the Huey, there was an ammo box down below and we used the can of C-rations that we clipped to the side of the Huey type M-60 machine gun which had a butterfly grip at the end of it and it was actually hands free. You wouldn't have to feed it. So it was [a little more difficult}. and then of course in the LOH you had a harness that you would put on and they showed me how to put the harness on and it had like what we called a monkey's tail that you would hook to the floor so that, should you lose your balance or something like that, you wouldn't fall from the helicopter. There was a lot of times where the helicopter was actually turned on its side as it was doing a doughnut. You're actually looking straight down on the ground, almost flying parallel with the ground.

SM: Was there a risk, when the aircraft went like that, did the forward force, the motion, of the aircraft keep you in, or was it the harness that kept you in?

DH: Basically, centrifugal force would keep you in. It would be almost like if you were riding on a merry go round that's tried to throw you off, well, in the case of the

helicopter, the floor would be the outside edge of the merry go round, so the G-forces were pushing you against the floor. I guess there would be a possibility that if all of a sudden the pilot would see a tree, if you're going in a right hang doughnut and he would have to turn left or something like that, you could get jerked from the helicopter and that's the case then the harness that you had on, you would have that adjusted so it would hold you in place. You wore a bullet proof vest that would guard your chest. It was pretty thick armament too. It was probably I would say, three quarters to an inch thick so it was pretty heavy and with the chest shield, covered up over the top of the shoulders, went down underneath the neck and then went down to about belt line and then wrapped around, almost like to protect your kidneys.

SM: Well, what did you take away from that experience that was important for you personally in terms of being a gunner?

DH: I think what it did was it sold me on flying. I really enjoyed the flying, being up there, just seeing the countryside to not sitting in one place all the time and also, I learned a little bit about shooting from the air to the ground. You almost have to shoot behind a target because the bullets would, just as they get to the target it would look like they also, they would shoot forward in the direction that the helicopter was traveling. So I did learn that and I knew then that I wanted to fly after that week's experience.

SM: Actually, there was another question with regard to your, I was curios about pre-mission briefing, regarding suspected enemy that you may encounter. Did you ever get told anything like that? We expect that we go into here we might hit a squad, platoon, company, whatever?

DH: No, basically the only thing they did say that if you did see a target you would have to let the pilot know and he would give you the okay. I guess they wanted to make sure that if, should there be civilians in the area, that I accidentally didn't open up on civilians but I was supposed to be in contact with the pilot if I saw something. And they did also say if you're flying by and you saw something, always have a smoke grenade ready so you could throw it out and that would be a reference point. That was covered. But it was really a pretty fast walk around thing, it must have been fifteen minutes but to me it seemed like five minutes. I was getting a lot of information rather rapidly and then all of a sudden, off we went. It was in the jungle area, in the mountain

area, so there wasn't supposed to be any civilians past the mountain line into the mountains. The civilians in this area were allowed to be in the flat land but once you entered the mountains, there wasn't supposed to be any civilians.

SM: So after your week with the LOHs, then you went on to Hueys?

DH: Yes, that's correct.

SM: Now is this a completely different unit?

SM: No, it was the same unit. I was with Headquarters, Headquarters Company 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and the Hueys that I flew on were command and control helicopters. They flew around. I guess we had as high as the brigade commander, but mostly a lot of time it was battalion commanders, battalion XO's or we could be flying an artillery forward observer around in case there's a fire mission. And of course there was a whole bunch of other little side missions related to that. Sometimes we might be called in to take a couple guys that came back from R & R out to their outfit in the field or grab a guy or two from the field and take them back for R & R. We could be sent, asked to take a hot meal out to the guys in the field. Sometimes if you were in the area when somebody needed a Medevac you might be called in to do a Medevac, all different kinds of missions.

SM: Well, did you stay with the C & C ships for the time you were in Vietnam, for the rest of the time?

DH: Command and Control, C & C ships? Yes. The rest of the time I spent on command and control ships, yes.

SM: Why don't you go ahead and discuss your first operation where you actually encountered enemy on the ground, where you had to fire?

DH: Where I had to fire?

SM: Or where you were fired upon?

DH: Where fired upon, okay. Well, I guess one of the ones that I remember the most was, there was a fire support base out in the mountains called Rocka San. We had just left that fire support base and we were headed back to Camp Evans and we were going past a mountain stream there and I spotted two people doing dishes down in the stream so we got on the radio to find out if there was any friendlies in the area and they said no, there was no friendlies in the area so we actually turned and we did like a gun

run, which it seems like we were almost like a thousand foot up in the air and we started diving down at these two guys cleaning their dishes in the stream and we opened up fire on them and I could see all the bullets ricocheting in the stream and everything. It seemed like the one guy turned and he looked at us, just for a split second and took off into the jungle and I couldn't understand how all these bullets were splashing in the water and we didn't get the guy. So they sent some infantry guys in there and there wasn't even a blood trail so it was pretty amazing. I thought those two guys were the luckiest guys in the world to see all those bullets landing all around them in the water and for them not to even take a hit.

SM: Was that unusual or typical, that it was hard to hit targets from an airborne platform?

DH: Well, actually if you're diving straight on them, you don't have to lead the bullets or anything and it's a lot easier if you're diving straight on them whereas if you were shooting from a side target, you almost have to, like I said, shoot behind the target and let the bullets run up to them. The bullets were on target. For the life of me I don't know how they missed because the water all around them, you could see the bullets ricocheting in the water and the M-60s firing five hundred fifty rounds a minute. For the life of me, I don't understand how they missed.

SM: Now was this, in particular this mission, was it a reconnaissance mission or what was the purpose of your flight there?

DH: I believe we had just taken a couple guys out to a fire support base Rocka San and we were returning to Camp Evans. We didn't have anybody else on board that I remember and we just happened upon these two guys in the stream.

SM: Was that standard procedure that if you happened upon soldiers, or what seemed to be soldiers in a free fire zone, if there were no friendlies in the area you could shoot them up?

DH: Yes, of course you would have to check and confirm that there was no friendlies in the area. It just so happened to be, the pilot knew it was a free fire zone and he did call back to the base to check and make sure that there was no friendlies in the area before we dove on them.

SM: Just to make sure that I understand completely, again, the area in which you were flying most of these operations, what was the nearest major Vietnamese village or city?

DH: Now, where we flew out of was Camp Evans and the nearest village was the town of Phong Dien. Phong Dien was probably, I would say it was located halfway between the city of Hue and if you went northwards to the city of Quang Tri, Camp Evans was located right between the two and the village outside the base camp was Phong Dien.

SM: Did you have consistent interaction with the Vietnamese people while you were there?

DH: Vietnamese civilians, no I didn't. The only one that I really had pretty good contact was, there was a woman that was our hooch maid that I had pretty good contact with. We had a Vietnamese barber that would cut our hair. There were Vietnamese civilians that worked in the mess hall. There was an old Papa-san that, we had an outside latrine and his job was to, the latrine was actually fifty gallon drums that he would pull out the back and burn off with diesel fuel, so that was basically about the most contact that we had with Vietnamese civilians that worked on base. The 101st Airborne Division had a policy that they wouldn't give any passes to go out on the town so all villages and towns were off limits to 101st Airborne Division members.

SM: So as you were working the command and control ships, did you fly the battalion commander around or brigade commander around?

DH: Yes, we would change off and on but when I first started flying I was flying the brigade commander around and then after a while we'd switch to different battalion commanders but the first mission, I believe his name was Colonel Harrison was the brigade commander and he left shortly after that. He became an advisor for the 1st ARVN division.

SM: Would you typically fly at a particular altitude when you were flying commanders around?

DH: It would depend on the situation where we were and everything but it was all different altitudes for the most part. A lot of times the battalion commander would use us as a recon ship. We would go out there and he would want to check an area where

his battalions operation on and we would be down there flying low, trying to scout out in front of an outfit that was moving along or something like that or maybe there might be a company that's moving through the jungle and they wanted to confirm their position and then we would locate where they were and they would tell them on the net, that yes, you're where you think you are, or no your not, you're a little bit off, that type thing. So we could be flying at all different altitudes. A lot of times too we would do, like if there was a combat assault where they would insert the infantry into landing zones, we would go out and actually prep the landing zone for the insertion and that would involve a lot of things that would be, most of the time what would happen [first] would be, it would be an artillery barrage in one of the landing zones for a period of time. And we might have a forward observer on board and he would adjust the artillery to the landing zone. Then one of the last things they would do is they would bring a Chinook helicopter in and he had a sling load of fifty-five gallon drums that were loaded with Phougas and we'd drop in on top of the LZ and burn the top of the LZ and so we would direct the Chinook into the LZ and a lot of times, what happened, the crew chief would ignite the Phougas after it would land on there, the crew chief on the Chinook would do that and sometimes if he failed to ignite it, we always had white phosphorus grenades, we would fly over throw a white phosphorus grenade on top of it to ignite it to burn the LZ up. Then we would stay on station until the armada of slicks would come in with the infantry company that they were inserting or whatever, so that was one of the jobs that we did.

SM: You mentioned in your questionnaire, just before Lam Son 719, you guys did a reconnaissance and I don't necessarily want to talk about that particular operation yet, but did you have experiences where you would fly a reconnaissance mission with commanders or with intelligence people, you wouldn't uncover anything but later on people that went into the area would hit enemy?

DH: You're saying where we would go out doing a recon mission and then start something?

SM: No, you wouldn't find anything but if a ground force went near it, they got hit?

DH: Yes, a lot of times that would happen, sure because we would be out there flying around a lot of time The North Vietnamese wouldn't want to be giving away their

position by shooting at a single Huey or something like that so sure, they wouldn't give their position away so that would happen a lot. In fact I did mention in my questionnaire I was surprised as far as we went out Route 9, because I can remember the pilots when we were getting ready to go out Route 9 we went past Vandergrift. I think that was the last base camp that was manned by friendlies and he says, we're going out into Indian country and we flew real low level down Route 9. We were inspecting the road, I guess seeing what condition the road was in. I remember also coming up on the big plateau of Khe Sanh, all barren red clay, dirt, flying along beyond that. Afterwards, we found out that when we went in that area the place was crawling with North Vietnamese but yet they didn't shoot at us. It was amazing. Here we are a lone bird all by itself, could have probably have shot us down and nobody would know any different until we didn't show up.

SM: But they had the discipline not to.

DH: Yes.

SM: Was that typical from your experience in general for the year that you were in Vietnam? What did you think of the enemy?

DH: I think for the most part he was very elusive, hard to pinpoint, kind of dictated when he wanted to attack. It seemed like he kind of knew what the Americans were kind of, like we were in a routine, we would get up the same time every morning to go to work and we'd quit work at a certain time every night. So he basically knew our routine and could work around it. In fact one time, we were out early in the morning getting ready to lift off for the day and when we were in the procedure of starting the helicopter up and the helicopters were parked in these revetments. They were actually like steel walls on both sides that had sandbags and they were probably about maybe four foot high and they offered some protection in case there was incoming and a round would land close to the ship, that maybe the damage wouldn't go to the ship. We were inside a revetment and we were firing up and usually when you would fire up the helicopter, all the engine callans would be open so in the event there was a fire and either the crew chief or the gunner would man the fire extinguisher just in case there was and only the aircraft commander was onboard. Everybody else was out inspecting to make sure everything was okay and I guess it takes maybe three to four minutes to actually get the turbine

engine running to a speed where it probably can let off the starter. Well I guess we were probably about two minutes into it and all of a sudden you could hear rockets coming in and they went over our head and I was then standing behind the copilot and we both just leaped for the ground and his heel ended up in my face and there was like six rockets that went right over top of the helicopter. There was like one right after another and the first landed, I would say about a hundred and fifty feet from where we were and then each one got a little longer. We had jumped down and the pilot stopped or kept on starting the helicopter, I guess he couldn't hear what was going on because he was inside the helicopter. The first one landed next to our operations building and when I was sprawled there on my stomach I saw we had a clerk inside there and when it exploded I saw him running out and headed for a bunker and he was holding his head like he was hurt. So when the rounds stopped, there were six of them real fast, I said to the copilot, "Hey I saw the clerk. He was headed for the bunker," and I ran over there and his forehead was sliced so I said, "Well come on, we'll fly you down to Charlie med." So we took him back to the helicopter and it was only a short hop across the base to Charlie med and then we went on our mission for that day and we came back and it was kind of a humorous story there. One of the rounds had scored a direct hit on a barracks, and the barracks were wooden plywood with tin roofs and one guy had just got done off guard duty and he laid down in bed and all of a sudden he says I feel thirsty. He got up from his bed and he walked to the other end of the hooch where the refrigerator was and he was the only person in the hooch at the time and the rocket came through right through the roof and landed right in his bunk and the concussion blew him out the door but he wasn't seriously hurt or anything. He talked about how lucky he was that he got thirsty all of a sudden because the round would have landed right in his bunk. So that's something where I say that the North Vietnamese noticed every morning, there's all these air crews out there starting up their helicopters, that would be a good time to let some rockets loose then. So they saw that 6:30 every morning, we would get up and go out and start up our helicopters, that's when they did their damage.

SM: Did they rocket and mortar you every day or almost every day, about how frequently?

DH: No, I would say maybe once a month but no set pattern. It could be like, you could get one, one day and one two days later and then not see any for two months, things of that nature, so there was no set pattern. I guess they tried to make it a point not to set a pattern. Then of course the Army had ways of tracking where the rounds came from and they would shoot their rockets and take off and they would only do a short, six rockets and go. They wouldn't sit there for a half hour pounding you because they wouldn't get you.

SM: Let me go back to some of your flying missions, in particular, just kind of interested in what you remember about the command and control missions where you would fly either a battalion or even the brigade commander around. Did you ever fly any missions where they were actually in the air overseeing an operation on the ground, supervising what was happening on the ground.

DH: Yes, a lot of times they would go up while a company is moving or something of that nature. You're talking about an actual big engagement on the ground?

SM: Or just movement, movement on the ground or?

DH: Yes, basically they would be up there flying around when some of the outfits would be moving along through the jungles or things of that nature.

SM: In the communications system, were you privy to the communication between the commander and the element on the ground, or just the internal aircraft communication?

DH: Well, actually sometimes we were privy to it, sometimes we weren't. What happened was on a command and control helicopter there was actually a separate set of radios that were in the cargo compartment and there was actually an RTO that operated them and he would usually sit in the middle of the ship and maybe the brigade commander and whatever other officers that might be with him would sit on either side of him and he would I guess control the communications for the brigade commander because a brigade commander would have several different battalions that he would be monitoring, of course things of that nature. But now when we went battalion usually the battalion had a single net so what would happen is the pilots would tune to the battalion net and we had selector switches over top of my head where I sat in the back there was a selector switch up there where you could, there was like six different radios that you

could listen to at any given time or you could listen to one at a time or two at a time, or three at a time, whatever you wanted to, so sometimes we would hear some of the battalion network but a lot of times it would be a little confusing because we would also have like the tower net for air traffic control for Evans or if we were working near a fire support base, there would be pathfinder that had a net that we would listen to that you would be calling in. We'd call into him to get permission to land, then also you would hear all the over traffic that was going on. Also, our platoon had its own net, so sometimes it would be a little confusing if you tried to listen to three nets at the same time so a lot of times I would stay on the platoon net or along with the pathfinder net or the tower net or something like that.

SM: When you were on operations where you were listening to all the communication between the commander in the aircraft and the commander on the ground, did you have any thoughts about how that worked? Do you remember anything in particular about that worked?

DH: Well, I can remember that usually I believe that some of the things, like some of the call signs were always consistent like numbers associated with, let's say if for example they usually had like roadrunner would be maybe a name for one particular battalion or company within a battalion. Well if you heard this is Roadrunner Six, well that would be the company commander you're talking about, so there was, if you were listening to then net you could know who's talking to who, that type thing.

SM: How about the nature of control though, and here you've got this guy up in this aircraft. He's kind of trying to direct what's going on the ground and you've got the guy on the ground that's dealing with whatever he has to deal with, did you ever pick up on any kind of problems, conflicts?

DH: I can't really remember too many conflicts that would stick out in my mind that I can really remember.

SM: Well, why don't you go ahead and describe some of your more memorable experiences flying in the C & C ships?

DH: Okay, well one of the first times when I was flying on the Command and Control, we flew down to Camp Evans [Campbell], one day. It was prior to Lam Son 719 and there must have been a big meeting down there as to what was going on and when we

got down there, Bob Hope was running a Christmas show. So we were told we could go to the Christmas show so that was like a pretty good memory. In fact there they had a lot of the Miss USA pageant girls were there and the one from New Jersey was there so I got pictures of her. In fact I've still got quite a few of those photograph of all the Miss Americas that were there. Then after that it seemed like from that point on, Colonel Harrison, I guess unknown to me he was going to leave the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne and go to 1st ARVN division. I think he was one of the head advisors there. So we started doing a lot of scouting around in the future area of operation and we stopped at a lot of different base camps up there around Route 9. Some of the ones I remember was like, there was one place called Mai Loc which was in the flat grounds just below Route 9 before it turned into the mountains. It looked like it might have been an old French fort, it was kind of square shaped looking and it had a dirt runway and when we landed there, it was Special Forces camps and they had mostly Vietnamese Montagnards that were working for them and that was the first time that I ever had seen a Montagnard up close and we had to park the ship and the Colonel went inside and had a meeting and it seemed like all the family members were outside the perimeter along the airfield there and I'm looking out and I think the thing that stood out the most about the Montagnards were their feet. They would walk around barefooted and when you look at their feet, their skin appeared gray like an elephant and they looked leathered like they didn't need shoes, it was pretty amazing. They were primitive people so that was an experience there. Then we stopped at another place called Camp Carol which was a little bit further north of that and closer to Route 9 and that was an ARVN base camp and I remember running into, there was one American there and his job was, he operated a Quad-50 and he took us back to where his bunker, he had actually a rather large bunker and he said he was happy to see Americans, that he basically didn't see too many Americans at all. He talked about that he had a pretty good job and the ARVNs took good care of him because if there was a ground attack they knew that he operating the Quad-50 there would save their butts. So he said they treated him well, they fed him well, they would get him women in there to take care of him and things of that nature, kind of unusual to see this guy out there all by himself in the middle of nowhere. Then we also had an opportunity to go out to some of the base camps that were right up there on the de-militarized zone, they were called like

Alpha One, Alpha Two, Bravo One, Brava Two and it was kind of strange when you went out there because you would follow the road. The skids would be almost right down on the road and you would fly and just as you get to the base camp you would flare up, you would go up in the air so that you could come down and land and if you were discharging a passenger or picking up a passenger, you would do it as fast as possible because across the DMZ they were watching with field glasses. And as soon as they see the helicopter land they would cut loose with some artillery. It was funny also when you flare up you see the guys on the base camp scramble for bunkers because they knew as soon as the North Vietnamese saw you they were going to start shooting some artillery and we'd drop somebody off and take off like hell and you look back and sure enough, you'd see the smoke coming up from the base camp there. They would fire some rounds at them. The one base camp, I believe it was in Alpha Two; it was so close to the DMZ that if you looked across the DMZ you could see the red flag flying on the other side. That was an experience. But as you ran out, Route 9 out towards Khe Sanh you would leave the flatlands and go out into the mountains, I'll never forget that first trip out there when we were doing that recon, Route 9 followed like, there was a stream that ran alongside of it and it was absolutely a beautiful place. The stream would, as you were raising in elevation, there would be, seem like waterfall after waterfall and it seems like the whole area was all this gray rock and they were almost wasn't any soil, but the trees found a way to drop seeds in between the rocks and root and shoot up and it was a very beautiful area. I've never seen so pretty as that area up there. Then there was an area that was called the rock pile, as you fly into the mountains and Route 9 would hook around to the left a little bit, almost heading south and there was this lush valley that was green grass that looked real dense, elephant grass and everything and right in the middle of this big valley was a pile of gray rocks that looked like a giant had one day just stood there and stacked all these rocks up onto a hill. So Vietnam was a very beautiful country. I'm trying to think of some other experiences that come to mind. Well, another thing that happened while we were out in that area, we came across a rainbow. I said to the pilot, well look why don't we fly to the other side, maybe we'll find a pot of gold. So we started flying right at where the rainbow kind of arced into the side of this mountain and we got to within about what seemed like fifty yards and all of a sudden the rainbow

disappeared and when we come out the other side of the rainbow, it reappeared. So something that I found that a rainbow actually occupies a space. I thought as we got closer to the rainbow it would keep on pushing away from us but it actually occupied the space so that was a golden opportunity for me to do something like that. Another thing that was pretty neat that it did on a helicopter was one time it was going to monsoon. We hadn't seen the sun in a long time. And the pilot says, "Hey, how about we go up and take a look at the sun," so we said yes, let's go. Off we went and we broke through the dark gray clouds, it was kind of strange to me, all of a sudden we pop up the top and the tops of the clouds are all bright white and it was almost blinding that all of us quickly put on our sunglasses because it was really, really bright and looking out my door and the top of the clouds almost to me, look like we're flying over the top of a large snow field or something of that nature, like you can almost step out and walk on it. The pilot put the skids right down on the top of the clouds and did a slow right turn and when it looked back, he had cut a path in the top of the clouds with the rotor wash and both ends of the clouds lifted into the air and turning back into the path and doing a swirl, so that was kind of an unusual experience. It was pretty neat.

SM: Did you guys take fire much from the ground when you were flying?

DH: For the most part, not too much because a lot of times, like when we did fly, we would fly at treetop level so if you happened upon someone and were doing like a hundred miles an hour and if you were in a triple canopy jungle and you hear a helicopter coming, its bouncing off of trees, you can't tell where its coming. So as we flew along at treetop level, by the time they actually saw us, they would try and raise a weapon or something we'd be going that fast so a lot of times. Only a couple of times going into landing zones or coming out of landing zones did we take fire and that would be, but not necessarily just flying from point A to point B, usually you wouldn't receive fire. Remember I was telling you in the LOH that there was a, we called it a chicken plate. It was an armored vest that you would wear on your chest. Well if we weren't going into an LZ, a lot of time what we did, we would take that thing and put it on the seat and sit on it and that piece that would wrap around your kidneys I was telling you about [earlier], well you would put that between your legs to protect the family jewels and so somebody could take a pot shot at it, then it would come up through the floor and you would have some

protection. The pilot sat in an armored seat so they had the protection where the aircrew didn't have the protection; we sat on a nylon seat, no protection from below.

SM: Did your aircraft get hit much?

DH: No, as a matter of fact the whole time I was over there my aircraft never took any rounds, took some shots but never got hit. In fact it was kind of funny because all the pilots used to make a joke. They used to say, "Well let's fly with Hause. He's lucky, he never gets hit, he never gets hit." And when I was getting close to the point when I was coming home, they started to change to, "Hey, don't fly with Hause. He's due." So no my aircraft never took any hits. I never had to do any skin repair so I was pretty lucky that way.

SM: Now, any other particular instances that you can remember or recall that were noteworthy, maybe encountering wildlife or anything like that, elephants or tigers?

DH: Yes, one time we were doing a recon mission and were flying just above the treetops and went across the stream there. You wouldn't even notice, it was a real narrow stream and I saw an elephant and a young behind it and they young had its trunk tangled with the mother's tail and it was trudging up this stream, heading up this hill. And I said to the pilot, "Hey turn around, come back. I just saw an elephant." And we turned around and would come back and we searched and searched and searched and never found the elephant and its kind of hard to believe a big animal like that, we couldn't find it and of course I got teased, everybody was saying, hey Hause seen a pink elephant. Then a couple days later another air crew had spotted it in the same area so it kind of made me feel like, whoa you really didn't see an elephant, I was kind of second guessing myself there for awhile. Then there was in some of the streams you would see, I guess over there would be crocodile, not an alligator, right. You would see them floating in the streams there. You would see, one time I remember one air crew came across a deer and they shot it and dropped down and swing load it and brought it home and it was across the runway from us, they had a big barbecue that night. They had deer meat that night. There were some animals that were there. I'm trying to think, some of the other, one time there was a place a little bit south of us called, a section of river that broke into three forks and we called it Three Forks. That was a marker point that was from the city of Hue, going up to Camp Evans and if you were calling Camp Evans for permission to

land, they would ask where you were, and you would say we're down around the three fork river. We were doing some recon around there and between Camp Evans and the mountains there was a fire support base called Jack and we were down on the surface pretty good. We were looking for, there were some reports that somebody had seen some sampans in the river there and they weren't supposed to be there and they thought maybe they were running supplies so we were searching the area pretty good and all of a sudden I just happened to, out of my peripheral vision I see fire support base Jack just blow up. It looked like it blown up and so I said to the pilot, I said it looked like fire support base Jack is taking incoming. So we headed over that way and the pilot got in touch with them and what had happened was the base camp was struck by lightning and all the claymore mines around the perimeter had gone off all at one time. Fortunately, nobody was hurt. A lot of times the guys on the base camp would be out there sunbathing on the bunkers or whatever, and it even set off some of the, they had phu gas drums that were buried down in the ground, fifty-five gallon drums in the event that there would be an attack at night they would light them up and it would act like a flare to light up the perimeter so they could see enemies. Some of them were on fire and everything so that was an unusual sight that I saw.

SM: And certainly not something you think, lightning, of course all the claymores are, if their command detonated or whatever, no matter what, they're electrically detonated.

DH: Yes, they're electrically detonated.

SM: So a high charged lightning strikes would detonate them.

DH: Yes, just set them off, it was unusual.

SM: Had you ever heard of anything like that before?

DH: No, that was the first and the last time I ever saw anything like that. Then, talking about that three fork river, we were down there running that one time. I guess we got another report that there were some sampans operating in it and at that time I had been, this was after the operation in Laos and I became a crew chief and I had a French Canadian for a gunner and he spoke better French than he did English but we were able to communicate with him pretty good and of course his nickname was Frenchie. We found the sampans and they were actually headed out of the flatland, just about ready to

go into the mountain and we hovered in front of them. We were trying to tell them no, you can't go here, waving them back but they kept on going towards the mountain. So the pilot said to Frenchie, he says, look put some rounds down in front of them so that he knows we mean business. Well, when Frenchie cut loose he must have put them like two foot from the Sampans and the pilot went crazy. He said, "What are you doing, you just about shot the guy, you put holes in his boots." But the guy got the message, there was two of them, they turned around and went back the other way. I'm trying to think of some other things that happened over there. One time one of our LOHs crashed and like I said, they work in teams of two and that particular day my aircraft was down for maintenance. Every hundred hours, you would have to bring it down and do some extensive maintenance which takes at least a day to do most of the work and we got a call on the platoon net that a LOH had crashed and one of the pilots that were off duty come running over to me and said, it was lunchtime. He came down to the hooch, he said, "Hey look, we've got a LOH down, can you come with me?" I said, "Yes, I'll come with you," and I grabbed an M-16 and he was a LOH pilot and I had flip-flops on, shower shoes and when I went running to the LOH and got on board the LOH and sat in the front seat and I looked around, there wasn't even a helmet, so I didn't even have the communication with the pilot except for hollering across to him and I couldn't hear what was going on through the net. But what had happened, we found out later on, they were doing treetop search and the pilot hit the tail rotor up against a tree and the blades come flying off, and the LOH was pretty well designed that if it crashed, the tail boom would go off and basically just the cab would stay intact. The way they got them out of there, was they lowered a rope from a Slick, from a Huey and the pilot got on it first and the gunner got on it second and they picked them up out of the jungles and took them over to a stream and dropped them off there and then they were able to get down and pick them up. But I've spoken to the gunner afterwards and he said he was at the bottom of the rope and the pilot kept on losing his grip and sliding down on him, sliding down on him. He said he was scared to death, he thought he was going to fall from the rope, he kept on hollering at the pilot, "Climb up, climb up!" But it was amazing how many aircraft responded to it, in fact it was almost, I thought it was dangerous in the area because it seemed like there was like a hundred helicopters flying around this one downed LOH and as a pilot you had to

keep your eye out so you didn't have a mid-air collision. But then everybody got organized and went in the same circle but if you call a mayday in, it seems like you get a lot of people that would respond, it seemed like they'd drop whatever they were doing and go try and help another air crew.

SM: Well, I'm curious, did you guys at this point, did you know about the Vietnamization project program that Nixon was putting into place to turn the war over to the Vietnamese?

DH: Basically we were aware of the Vietnamization. In fact at the end of my tour, 101st Airborne was standing down and the ARVNs were taking over our operations. So we basically were familiar with and of course it was going on before I actually went over to Vietnam. And it was kind of funny because when I first got up in that area, there wasn't that many Vietnamese soldiers in our area of operation. There were some police that operated in the villages, but we started seeing, like a lot of time what would happen, the Vietnamese Air Force, they took over flying helicopters and what would happen, we're flying around and of course you're always listening to Camp Evans air traffic controller and all of a sudden you hear the air traffic controller calling for an unidentified Huey coming at the base camp to identify himself. And then all of a sudden the next thing you know, the air traffic controller would say, apparently I got a VNAF helicopter coming from the South. Please be aware I have no contact with him and the guy would fly right into the fuel dump and load up his helicopter and off he'd go and he would never even call the tower or anything so it was a little confusing that way. That type stuff happened.

SM: But I'm curious, did that have an effect at all on the morale of the unit, knowing that here the policy is Vietnamization, turning the war over to the Vietnamese, obviously the handwriting is on the will, U.S. forces are withdrawing, no one wants to be the last person killed?

DH: Right, there was talk about that but I don't think it ever hampered the air crews. I think every day they went out and did their job. I don't think anybody did anything like fake missions or anything of that nature. You had a job to do, you went ahead and did it. It was a little discouraging, the fact that we weren't finishing the job over there, that type thing but maybe amongst some of the rear echelon guys or maybe

some of the ground pounders or something like that, but the air crews, we took our job serious and for the most part we did our job.

SM: Was there any change in the morale for the time that you were, from the time you got there to the time you left, did moral change at all?

DH: Not that I noticed, no, not that I could notice.

SM: How about, well we already talked about racial conflicts and stuff like that didn't we, racial tension?

DH: Right, I basically said within our platoon we didn't have any blacks so it really wasn't a problem. But I also said that could have been discrimination in itself, how come there wasn't any black air crew.

SM: Were you ever subject to a urinalysis?

DH: Yes, the urinalysis test was done when I left country.

SM: Just when you left?

DH: Yes, what happened when you reported to leave, I flew out of Da Nang and what they did was they said that okay, you're here, between now and five days we're going to schedule you for flight, we're not going to tell you what day it is, but before you get on the flight, you have to give a urine test. So I guess it was, you knew you were going to give a urine test but maybe I guess they figured maybe the hard core drug addicts they would procrastinate or say something like, well it'll probably be five days so I can do something and it will be gone out of my system or something like that. But that was kind of interesting. What happened to me was that I had gotten up early in the morning. I had gotten my shower, went to the mess hall, came back and used the toilet and everything and all of a sudden there was a morning formation and they say okay, your flight leaves in an hour and a half but you have to give a urine sample. I just used the bathroom. So they put you in a latrine and you weren't allowed to leave latrine until you gave the urine sample so I'm telling the guy [in charge] I says, look I don't want to miss my flight and he said maybe you can get one of these guys leaving to go get you something to drink. So when one of the guys, I said, hey go over to mess hall, get whatever you can and bring it back. I'm downing all these, I think its orange juice, milk, chocolates and stuff like that and finally at the last minute I was able to give a urine sample on time and when you get on the freedom bird and we fly out of there, everybody

is falling asleep except for Dave because every ten minutes Dave has to get up and go to the bathroom the whole flight home. So that's the only urinalysis I ever had.

SM: This will end CD number one of the interview with David Hause.

Steve Maxner: This is CD number two of the interview with David Hause on March 30th, 2001. You mentioned before that you conducted Medevac and obviously you were around when they picked up the LOH pilot that went down. How many other similar, how many other similar missions did you conduct in terms of medevac missions and rescue missions?

David Hause: I can remember two medevac missions, in particular, I can't remember any other rescue missions of that nature where we were actually on the scene like that. But I know during Lam Son 719 I believe there was a little bit over 600 helicopters that were involved in that operation and there was like 115 received such bad battle damage that they were unable to return to the air. So there were quite a few downed helicopters. There was a pretty bad time for helicopters that part of the war there. I think there may have been more helicopters shot down in that two-month period than any other two-month period during the Vietnam War. It was pretty bad, but most of that was over in Laos. One of the medevac missions that I pulled one time, we just happened to be in the area, we go in and pull this guy out that's shot in the chest and it was during Lam Son 719 and we flew him to Quang Tri and he was dead on arrival. And here what had happened was his best friend shot him and they said it was over C-rations. And we also went back and flew the guy out that did the shooting and took him to, I believe we took him back to Camp Evans, turned him over to the military police. Another medevac mission that I did, it was a guy that had, he wasn't wounded or anything but it was from the heat, he had heat exhaustion and we had picked him up en route to Charlie med he stopped breathing and I had to give him mouth to mouth artificial respiration. And we took him to Charlie med and later on we were flying around and the battalion commander had called on our platoon net and thanked me for what I had done for his soldier. They were two medevacs that I remember. I'm probably sure we've done other ones, but they're the two that stand out in my mind.

SM: Well, why don't you go ahead and discuss Lam Son 719 and the role of your unit in that operation, what you understood the operation to be and how you guys fit into it.

DH: Okay, from my understanding the role of the operation was to go into Laos and disrupt to Ho Chi Minh Trail which was the supply lines for all the manpower and munitions that were coming from North Vietnam down into the South. And the idea was to go in there and raise some havoc on it so basically the Khe Sanh base camp was going to be the staging area and Khe Sanh was the base occupied, I guess by the Marines back in 1968 and then it was abandoned and hadn't been occupied since. So one of the things I guess that they were concerned with was to keep the supply line open to Khe Sanh and one of the major supply lines was Route 9. During the siege of Khe Sanh with the Marines, Route 9 wasn't open so everything had to be supplied by the air and they didn't want that to happen again. They assigned the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, it was our job to keep Route 9 open from Dong Ha up to Khe Sanh. Then I believe from Khe Sanh to the border was actually the 1st of the 5th Mechanized Infantry but one of our outfits, I believe it was the 3rd of the 187th was assigned to the 1st of the 5th Mech so they actually ended up keeping open the rest of Route 9 from Khe Sanh to the border. So the 101st Airborne, that's basically what our, the ground troops that's what their job was. The other job for the 101st Airborne was they took charge of all the air crews that flew the ARVN soldiers to and from Laos. They op conned I believe of a bunch of other aviation outfits from around South Vietnam up in that area. I believe 101st, their job was to run that. So we had a pretty major job there and did a pretty good job at it I believe. The biggest blunder in the whole operation was the fact that when the ARVNs went into Laos they weren't allowed to take their advisors with them. No U.S. ground troops were allowed into, outside the South Vietnamese border so when they got to the border the U.S. advisors had to leave the ARVN troops and they went by themselves so there was a communication break down. All the air support was American and all the ground were South Vietnamese and the communication, just the language barrier in itself was a problem so it wasn't as productive as they thought it could be. That was probably the major problem. But for the most part I think the ARVN soldiers did the best they could do with what they had. In the end when they started pulling out of Laos the North

Vietnamese were right on their tails chasing them out of there. Some of the air crews that were pulling them out, said that when they were pulling them out they could fit eight to ten ARVNs on a Huey. Well they would be trying to swamp the helicopter and they'd be hanging on skids so a lot of the air crews said they would have to carry black jacks so that they could beat them off the side of the helicopter on the way out so that they could get airborne. Of course we heard stories about some of them would hang on for awhile and then they couldn't hold on no more and drop. You heard those type stories. It was a shame that the advisors couldn't go with them or some American ground troops but I think there was the U.S. Congress [had] passed some bill saying that no American troops could leave South Vietnam. I think it was sponsored by a gentleman by the name of Carter if I'm not mistaken. Not the president, but the Congressman Carter or something like that I can't really remember the name, [later remembers- 2 gentlemen named the Cooper-Church Amendment] but that was the result of when they went in to Cambodia, there was such a public outcry that now our boys are not only dying in South Vietnam, now they're dying in Cambodia. It really was a shame because that was their [the NVA's] supply route and if you could break down the supply route, maybe they would have lost the will to fight, but that's the way it was perceived stateside I guess.

SM: Well when it was finished what did you guys think?

DH: When we were finished with the operation?

SM: Yes, when Lam Son 719 ended what did you think and the soldiers in your unit?

DH: Well I guess we looked at it, as basically as our job was to keep Route 9 open and we did that so we accomplished our mission and I guess that was the basic feeling.

SM: Did you have a sense of the bigger picture, what actually happened at the time?

DH: I didn't really have a good, a real good feel of what was going on in Laos. I had a general idea, but not to the extent that I later read about. Since I've been home I've read a couple of books on it. For the most part I think everybody felt pretty good about what they did and we did the best that we could do, kept the road open, it never shut

down, there were a lot of ambushes and stuff like that and we reacted to those ambushes and that was an accomplishment in itself I guess, keeping the road open.

SM: But what did you guys think as the remainder of your time while you were there, what did you hear and what did you think about the Vietnamese and how they conducted themselves, the ARVN?

DH: Oh, the ARVN there was a lot of, I heard a lot of the guys talk about, oh they're no good and stuff like that, they're lazy, they don't fight as hard and stuff like that. There was a lot of bad mouthing of them for the most part but I think for the most part, I think they proved themselves, I guess right after I left there was, right near where I was at [in the same area], there was the North Vietnamese launched that Easter offensive they called it. They actually captured the city of Quang Tri and everything else, but then the ARVNs finally did chase them back across the border but when they did capture the city of Quang Tri, one of the main reasons that they did, did you ever see the movie called Bat 21?

SM: Yes.

DH: That was an Air Force Major [LTC] who was shot down and he was right near the de-militarized zone and what happened was when he got shot down, they [the USAF] put a no fire zone around him where the Air Force wouldn't drop any bombs. They requested that no artillery be shot in that area. What had happened was as the North Vietnamese were coming down Route 9 [one] they got to Dong Ha, there were some American advisors blew that bridge so they headed west to a town called Cam Lo which was right near where Bat 21 was and they [the ARVNs] wanted to blow that bridge there because they weren't allowed to because Bat 21 was on the ground so they were actually able to. And of course the North Vietnamese tanks weren't getting shot at by aircraft or anything so they were able to just run across the DMZ and down and capture Quang Tri because Bat 21 was on the ground. In the movie they depict, I guess there was an Air Force pilot that saves him but in real life it was a South Vietnamese soldier that went in him and rescued and pulled him out. In fact, from what I understand, that particular South Vietnamese soldier was the only Vietnamese that received an American Medal of Honor. Once they got Bat 21 out of there, they [the ARVNs] pushed them back across the border. For the most part after reading stories about that, they held on, the ARVNs.

SM: Is there anything else about your in country experiences that you'd like to talk about?

DH: Yes, there was quite a few things there. After Lam Son 719 we went back into the A Shau valley area and I guess that was a follow-up to it [Lam Son 719] because the Ho Chi Minh Trail ended, one of the forks that came off went into the A Shau Valley and it was an interesting experience. It was a very windy time of season. There was one particular mountaintop that was called Eagle's Nest that sat real high and overlooked the [A Shau] valley and I remember one time we sat down on top of there to pick up a couple GIs and the pilot said look at the air speed indicator and I looked over and it said fifty knots and you're flying in those real steep mountains with that high wind that the helicopter gets bounced all over the place, it was like being a roller coaster ride, it was quite an experience. Then there was one base camp out there called Cathryn, was the name and had a real narrow LZ, landing zone on top of that, in fact when you set down on it, it was probably only about eight foot wide. The pilot would be looking down the face of one side and sitting in the back you'd be looking down the face of the other side of the mountain, that's how narrow it was and of course you had the high winds. It was quite an adventure to try and land on that one. Then they found, out in that area [the A Shau], they found an NVA hospital complex that was all underground in this one mountain and when they found it they had reported it [to HQ]. A TV crew wanted to go out there, so we got selected to fly the TV crew out there, but there was no landing zone so the first thing they did was they lowered some chain saws down to the guys on the ground there and started cutting the LZ. When we went out there, it was real tight. The helicopter could just fit in the LZ so it was like hovering down the chimney almost. It was real good coordination between myself and the gunner, talking to the pilot because he couldn't see back so we had to tell him for the sides and where to back up, move this way, move that way. When we got close to the ground, the tree stumps, when they cut them with the chainsaw, they were sticking up like three foot high or so. We were trying to line up the skids to where we could land and not hit a tree trunk and the whole time I had my arm out, telling the air [TV] crew don't go, don't go until we touched down. So then we got ready, it felt like we hit a trunk so I leaned over to look and see what was going on and I took my arm down. And the TV crew jumped out and the bird started

rocking so it really pissed me off. When you're going on you have your gun on one hand and I kind of pointed the gun at the camera guy and he did the smart thing. He pointed the camera right back at me, [as to say] go ahead and shoot me but the whole world's going to know. So that was an experience.

SM: Is that the only time you dealt with the media?

DH: Yes, for the most part that I remember. I often wonder if that clip was on the news. Another thing that I saw was one time the Air Force dropped I believe it was called a ten thousand pound bomb.

SM: A daisy cutter?

DH: Yes, they roll it out the back of a C-130 and its on a pallet with a parachute and I guess its command detonated by the crew chief when it gets to treetop level, its about and there she goes and we were out watching that. We were a good ways off. When that thing blew and it seemed like maybe thirty seconds later we got all this rain of woodchips [tree parts] coming down on the helicopter and it made a great big mushroom cloud like an atomic bomb. It cleared a great big LZ, they were landing five and six helicopters at a time. I saw one of the last Australian bombing missions. They had a big black bomber plane, we were told that that's it, they were pulling out [of Vietnam]. Another time there was an ARVN base camp that was kind of to the north and west of where we were at Camp Evans and I believe the base camp was called fire support base Ann. And the one night we heard that they were getting this ground attack. We could see off in the distance all the flares up in the air and the mortar rounds flying and the artillery rounds landing. The next day we flew in there and the place was just littered with North Vietnamese bodies, all in the wires, tangled and everything. I remember remarking to the pilot, saying, look how big those guys look, they didn't look like Vietnamese. He said they're probably Chinese because they look like the size of Americans and those Vietnamese were kind of small guys so we kind of got the impression that they were probably Chinese mercenaries or whatever. I'm trying to think if there was, oh another thing that happened one time, the city [village] of Phong Diem which was right outside our base, I guess the powers that be felt that maybe there were some Vietnamese in there or a lot of the drug traffic that was getting onto the base was coming through there. So what they did was they had a night raid on the town [village] and they did it with ARVN

soldiers, but they surrounded the town with American soldiers, but they let the ARVN police I guess they were called, SQs, or I can't remember exactly what they're called but they had initials on their helmets and the ARVN police went into this town [village], did a search and everything but that night we were flying around command and control around the outside of the town [village]. Well, here one of the flares that they shot, the parachute failed to open, the flare landed right on a hooch and set it on fire and we got called in and we had to medevac a little baby that was all burnt. We flew the baby back to Charlie med then we did hear later on that the baby did die. The worst part about it was they found no weapons and no drugs in the whole town [village] so that was the horror story from over there.

SM: Do you know how that was handled in terms of?

DH: What they did for the family? I don't know how that was handled. I just remember landing it and the mother come running to the helicopter and the baby was wrapped up in a blanket and she run and handed it to me while she climbed on board and I didn't even want to look because we knew we were going in for a burned baby. That was a sad story.

SM: Well, did your company take many casualties while you were there, that is did Americans working in HHC, 3rd of the 101st get injured much?

DH: Headquarters, Headquarters Company, we had one guy that was, he was infantry MOS but he was working there as a supply Sergeant and all of a sudden he went back to infantry. The word was that he was pissed off at the Company commander and he was tired of being in the rear and he went back out in the field. There was an outfit that got attacked at night and it was right at the foot of the mountains, past fire support base Jack. They were getting fired upon from up in the mountains at night and they said that this Sergeant, he was a Sergeant, he just grabbed his M-16 and started running up the side of the mountain like a madman, took a bullet right through his head. His name was Sanchez if I remember right. But he's about the only guy that I can remember that I knew personally that was killed over there. None of the aircrews, we didn't have any one that was killed. We had some injuries, but no one was killed, which was good. In fact it was kind of crazy because when I got out of the Army they offered me an early out to spend, I had a year left, they said well if you spend a year with the National Guard in your home

town you can get out early so I said okay, good. So I signed up with the 112th New Jersey National Guard. We went away to summer camp down at Camp Pickett, Virginia. And it was a two-week thing and we went to Virginia Beach if you wanted to on the weekend. We'd come back from Virginia Beach and hear the motor pool Sergeant and two other of his guys, they took a Jeep and went out on the firing range and they collected souvenirs and they put two thousand rounds in the Jeep and they hit a bump and it blew. And all three of those guys got killed so here I am stateside with a National Guard out, lose three guys, over in Vietnam a whole year only lost that one guy.

SM: Well, lets go ahead and turn to something a little bit less serious. I was curious about entertainment, what you guys did for entertainment while you were there?

DH: For the most part there was an Officer's Club and an Enlisted Man's club. Now basically all they had in the Enlisted Man's club was cold beer. There was no actual hard liquor or anything. We were at the end of the supply line so that was about the only thing that we could get and of course I believe there was a dartboard there. They played music, it seemed like it was mostly country-western music. One of the things that me and a bunch of the guys used to do quite a bit at night was play chess. I had a refrigerator in my hooch and I always kept it stocked with beer and a lot of us would get together and the other fellow that shared the hooch with me, he had a stereo system so we had music. A lot of times that's what we would do to pass the night away. There was a couple of guys in the outfit that could play guitars. Another guy I think he played harmonica and basically just self-made entertainment. There may have been somewhere on base where they played movies but it was too far away or it wasn't within our outfit but I can't ever remember watching a movie over in Vietnam. I always see those war movies where they have an outdoor theater or something like that, but I don't remember anything of that nature. On my way over to Vietnam, we stopped in Tokyo and I bought a 35 millimeter camera and I took a lot of photographs. At the PX they had a trailer there that had a darkroom and you could develop your own film. They had a guy there that would instruct you on how to do it and everything so I did that to pass time. I also wrote letters home so that was basically it except for, if you went on R & R, you got a one week R & R and we also, there was a place called Camp Eagle that was along the beach that sometimes you would get a two-day pass to go down there. And it was a real nice beach resort, pretty

well kept and then they would have like, seemed like mostly Filipino bands that would come there, it would be live entertainment. I believe I went there twice I think for like a two day pass.

SM: How about radios?

DH: I can't remember, well that was one of the channel selectors on the helicopter; we had Armed Forces Vietnam network on there, that was the only radio station that was available.

SM: But for recreational purposes, when you weren't flying?

DH: No, mostly stereos with select music, that type thing.

SM: Well, when you were getting closer to leaving, operationally did anything change for you?

DH: Yes, what happened the 101st Airborne Division was standing down so the ARVNs were taking over and then part of the thing with the stand down was we had to account for all the parts and tools and everything that we have. When I had about a, I guess a month left in country, the CO come to me and says look, you've been flying long enough, its time for you to take a break why don't you and help me out with this. We've got to account for all the tools and all of our parts and stuff like that so I spent the last month in the supply room with another guy inventorying everything. They would do that with most of the aircrews, with the pilots when they got like a month left in country they would try and cut down on your flight time.

SM: In your attitude or your perception, did it change at all from the time you got there to the time you left as far as the war itself and how you think about it?

DH: Yes, I guess a change from the TV version to the realistic version. It was almost like when people got hurt or killed they really got hurt or killed. Also I believe I mentioned earlier to you, with the TV version it seemed like the war was more on a constant basis, whereas the Vietnam War was more like small period of times that came and went fast as far as if you were getting shot or something like that. I guess that was because of the job that I had, if you're on a helicopter and somebody is shooting at you, you can get out of the area.

SM: How did you feel when you left?

DH: I felt a little bad for the people, the GIs that were staying behind, thinking I hope they're going to be all right. I felt bad for the South Vietnamese people because I felt like with the stand-downs and everything that we were kind of deserting them. We were pulling them out and leaving them on their own. I thought, I really felt that if anything should happen where they would really get in trouble, well Americans will come back; they just won't desert them like that. I figured they had negotiated somewhat of a truce where everything was going to be all right and then when they did finally fall, when South Vietnam did fall I felt real bad then. I thought we deserted. That these people, they wanted to be free and they were counting on us and we kind of let them down.

SM: What was it like coming back to the United States for you? Why don't you go ahead and describe the flight over, where you came in and what it was like, was there anybody there at the airport, that kind of stuff?

DH: The return to Vietnam, I believe we stopped in Japan, refueled and then flew outside of Fort Lewis, Washington. I can't remember the Air Force Base, no actually I think we landed at a civilian airport. I got a tip on my way over there; at Fort Lewis Washington they had a reception center for everybody that was coming back from Vietnam. When you got there, they gave you a steak dinner and everything else. I was talking to a couple of guys that were coming back, quizzing them, hey what was it like and stuff like that and one guy says to me, he says, "Look, if you want to do something smart, take your dress uniform with you." I said, "What?" He says, "They'll tell you to turn it in but don't turn it in, take it with you." And I say, "Why?" He says, "Because when we landed in the airport the guys that had the dress uniforms, they didn't have to come to Fort Lewis. Since they had their dress uniform they could go get their ticket to go home and they went home." And he said, "We had to come here and they've given us this meal and then they're going to issue us our dress uniform and its all taking time." So I did that. So when I landed in I guess, it was SEATAC Airport, I was able to tell them I got my dress uniform and I went right through the ticket counter and purchased my ticket to go home. And the flight was pretty quick. It was like within a couple hours and we flew from there, I believe we stopped in Denver, Colorado, then Chicago O'Hare and then right to Philadelphia. When I got to Chicago O'Hare I called home to tell them hey,

three hours I'll be home and my brother answered the phone and said my dad and stepmother were out and they probably wouldn't be back but we'll come over and pick you up. So I believe it was my two brothers and sister were at the airport when I got there. We got home and I was sitting at the kitchen table my dad came back from being out for the night. The fact that when you're in Da Nang and you don't know when you're leaving until you give a urine sample, there's no chance for me to call and say hey, I'm en route and all this hustle bustle so there was no way to let them know until I was coming until I had a little layover in Chicago. As far as the rest of the people on the flight, with the military people they almost pretended like they weren't there, you weren't there, there wasn't anything like hey, thanks a lot for serving your country or none of that. But I didn't have anybody call me a baby killer or anything of that nature. There was the one stewardess that got on board, I guess in Denver, she much have gotten on board in Chicago and made the flight to Philadelphia and she treated me pretty good. She was very friendly. I believe the flight included one complimentary drink, well she gave me as many drinks as I wanted and I thought maybe she had somebody that was in the military the way she treated me pretty good. Then my dad walked through the door, seen me, came over there and gave me a bear hug and stuff like that but for the most part family, friends, nobody asked hey what was it like. No one seemed to ask any questions. It was almost like taboo or whatever I don't know. For the most part, I went on with my life kind of like Vietnam was a thing that you forgot and then I guess maybe ten years after I returned, all of a sudden there were some books coming out and I started doing some reading and then I worked at the Mobil Oil refinery. It was kind of funny because you're working with all these guys and here some of them were Vietnam vets and never said anything and then you find out ten years later. It was kind of funny because one of the guys that I worked with there for ten years, we just happened to be talking about basic training and he said that he had went to Fort Bragg and we were there at the same time and I asked him, "Well what company were you in?" He said, "E-8-2." I said, "You're kidding me I was in the same company." And I immediately went home and pulled out some old orders and his name was McCloud and he was in the same basic training company that I was in and we worked together for ten years and never knew it. He was in a different platoon but the same company and his recollection of the names of the drill

Sergeant was a lot better than mine. I was surprised, as soon as he said the name I said oh, yes I remember that guy. Then there was a couple other things that happened was one of the guys that was in the instrument department, where I worked, I didn't really know him that well, I knew him to see him I knew him by name and they were telling me his brother was killed over in Vietnam in a helicopter so I went over and I talked to him and his name was Dave Dempsey and his brother's name was Walt Dempsey and here he was over in Vietnam the same time I was there and he was with the 101st Airborne but he was stationed down at Camp Eagle and he had actually kept on re-enlisting, re-enlisting, and then finally his helicopter was shot down and he was killed. Dave Dempsey was telling me, he says, "I got these map coordinates for the site of where my brother was shot down but he was confirmed dead but his body wasn't recovered." He says, "And I've got these map coordinates, but every map I look, none of them match. And I said, "Well I've got some aerial charts from where I was over there," I said, "Let me get them." And I brought them into work and he had the map coordinates and matched the numbers that I had on my map and we were able to pinpoint the location where he had went down and it was right on the border between Laos and South Vietnam. So I said, "Well maybe he got shot down over in Vietnam [Laos] and they gave the grid coordinates right on the border." Because what had happened was this was during Lam Son 719 also they had sent a recon team out and they had a new commanding officer. He was a Lieutenant in a squad and when they inserted them they started getting surrounded by North Vietnamese and the Lieutenant started getting scared and they said he called back and requested an extraction right away, that they were surrounded and they were closing in on them. So Dempsey was the crew chief on it and they went out and they had a jungle penetrator and they had four guys on board and one guy was still on the jungle penetrator when they started receiving some pretty nasty fire and they started pulling out of there and the guy who was on the jungle penetrator, what happened was right before the helicopters crashed, the crew chief had chopped the cable and he fell into the trees. He was the only survivor and he walked out of the jungle. They had sent a rescue team in the next morning because they knew where the crash site was and they went down there and they put all the bodies in the body bag except for Dempsey because he was underneath the helicopter and they couldn't lift it. And then the North Vietnamese closed

on the rescue team and it was too foggy to pull them out and they walked out. So they never recovered any of the bodies. Then Dave Dempsey, the guy I knew, he actually about four years ago, he went over to Vietnam and worked with the U.S. recovery team and they went out [with some Vietnamese soldiers] actually into the, and the fellow that was on the jungle penetrator went with them and they went into the A Shau valley and they got some Montagnard scouts that took them to where they thought the crash site was. They found a Naval plane because it had a hook on it and then they were trying for another spot but there was Vietnamese soldiers that were with them and they got too close to the border and they said, "No, no, no can't go." I guess he was saying there is still some tension between the Laotians and the Vietnamese and so he wasn't able to get to the crash site but he had to try. Then there was another guy I worked with, name was Mike Spina. His brother was killed over in Vietnam and he said that the Marines never told him what happened or anything and I said, "Well let me see if I can do some research." So I wrote to the Marine Corps record division down there near Washington DC and they sent me a whole bunch of information on it, I was able to, they actually sent like the company journal and I was able to show him on a map where his brother was killed and actually what happened. But it was strange, it was almost like a ten-year period where nobody wanted to talk about Vietnam and then all of a sudden people started talking about it.

SM: Well was it a difficult transition for you coming back to the United States from Vietnam?

DH: No, to me it wasn't a difficult transition. I think the only thing that I thought was kind of funny was I wasn't back that long and I was riding in a car and somebody in a car in front of me threw a cigarette out the window and when the cigarette hit the street and then kind of exploded I flinched and that was probably about the only thing where I could say I was shell shocked or anything that I can remember. I was anxious to move on with my life. I used the GI Bill to go to school. And it really, I hear stories about guys having a hard time transitioning but to me, it wasn't a problem for me. Maybe I was kind of young, I was only nineteen at the time, maybe it was easier for me. I don't know.

SM: What do you think was the most important thing you took away from your Vietnam experience?

DH: I would say, let's see the most important thing that I took away from it, that I would never want to see anybody get hurt unnecessarily I guess. And as a result of it everywhere, when I worked at the refinery, where I work now, I've been involved in the safety committees, try and do my best to make sure that nobody gets hurt on the job site. I guess that would be probably the, I would think that would be the biggest influence that Vietnam had on me that nobody get hurt unnecessarily.

SM: What do you think we should take away from that experience as a nation?

DH: I think as a nation, I think that we should never do again what we did to the South Vietnamese people, abandoning them like that. If we're going to get involved in something like South Vietnam then you're going to make a total commitment. Don't do it half heartedly. Don't go in there and say, okay, we'll help you defend your country but we're not going to be the aggressor and go after the person that's trying to hurt you, that we're just going to stand here. And then if you want to make the commitment, make the commitment to the end. Don't say at some point in time okay, we had enough, we're out of here. And I think if you do make that kind of a commitment to an ally where you say okay we're going to come in and help you defend yourself then you have to be aggressive, you have to go after your opponent. You can't just sit there and be a defensive type operation, you have to be aggressive about it. I guess before the country should commit themselves to a war like that, I think they first have to get the support of the people. They can't just go in there and think that the support will follow. They have to get the support like they did in World War II, that nature, where the whole country was behind the military and what they were doing. I guess in the Persian Gulf War you saw that and there wasn't any messing around. They just went in there and did what they had to do and get it done, chase them out of Kuwait and basically had them surrender and negotiated a treaty, unfortunately they didn't follow up on that though. But they did liberate Kuwait. So I guess that would be the most important thing I think that the country should learn about the Vietnam War.

SM: What do you think about U. S. relations and policies towards Vietnam today?

DH: I think bygones should be bygones. I think it's kind of a difficult thing though because I know that they've probably almost have to treat it like they're treating

China. They have to get a little bit better with the way the treat their own people. There would have to be more human rights I think than what they have there. It was a shame as a result of the takeover of Saigon, there were millions of people that lost their lives as a result of it, all the boat people trying to escape South Vietnam were drowned in the seas, all the re-education camps, the killing fields in Cambodia and that's the type of government that's still in place over in Vietnam. I think it's not the type of government that we should be that friendly with but if we could persuade them to have better human rights then I believe that we could establish normal relationships with the country of Vietnam.

SM: How do you feel about your service in Vietnam today?

DH: Well, I'm very glad that I had the opportunity to do it. To me it was the experience of a lifetime. I grew up basically knowing that someday I'd probably have to serve my country so I feel that I did my part of that obligation. I did serve in the military. Vietnam is probably the most beautiful country I ever visited. I've been to a couple other countries. I went to Thailand. I went to Ireland. Ireland's a beautiful country but is nothing like Vietnam. It's, some of the sunsets over there were phenomenal, the lush green. It was beautiful and then the camaraderie that we had amongst the aircrews, I don't think I've ever experienced anything like that since. It was a good experience.

SM: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about today?

DH: No, not that I can think of unless you can think of anything.

SM: Not right now.

DH: Okay.

SM: Well, let me go ahead and end this officially. Thank you very much. This will end the interview with David Hause.