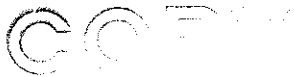


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ORAL HISTORY OF MARK ROBERT FURMAN

December 29, 2003



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2 MR. CLARK: This is an interview
3 at the Division of Military, Naval Affairs
4 Headquarters, Latham, New York, the 29th of
5 December, 2003, approximately twelve forty-five
6 p.m. Interviewers are Mike Russert and Wayne
7 Clark.

8 INTERVIEW

9 MR. CLARK:

10 Q. Could you give me your full name,
11 date of birth and place of birth, please?

12 A. My full name is Mark Robert
13 Furman, F-U-R-M-A-N. I was born October the 28th,
14 1948 in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. Beaver Dam, located
15 forty-three miles northwest of Milwaukee,
16 Wisconsin, the son of Gordon Edward Furman who was
17 born in Frontenac du lac, Quebec, also commonly
18 known as Foot of the Lake.

19 Q. And were you --?

20 A. Because he was the son of George
21 Furman and George Furman's son had come out of
22 Canada, but popped over from England. Grandpa
23 George Furman married a lady named Rose Ferguson
24 whose parents came from Ireland. So just when I

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2 was just a little boy I'd say well, hi, Grandpa
3 George, hi Grandma Rose. And --.

4 Q. And before you entered the
5 service what was your military -- your educational
6 background?

7 A. I just had a general diploma,
8 graduating from Senior High School in Baltimore,
9 Maryland. I was living with my parents in Towson
10 Maryland, and just got a general diploma. And my
11 graduation date was June 6th, 1966. 6/6/66.
12 And -- and it was my fond desire to continue on to
13 college, so the following fall I went to the
14 University of Baltimore with hopes of getting a
15 four-year degree in psychology. And forgive me for
16 saying this, but I did a lot of stupid things,
17 cutting out of classes and everything, and I ended
18 up being there for less than a semester.

19 Q. Did you -- were you drafted or
20 did you enlist?

21 A. Then -- yeah, the following
22 summer that I ended up getting a draft card for the
23 U.S. Army. So just to share with you, shall I --
24 shall I read my entire --

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2 Q. Well, that's up to you.

3 A. -- entire thing?

4 Q. However you want to do it.

5 A. Yeah. I joined the U.S. Army in
6 the fall of 1967. I went through basic combat
7 training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, P-O-L-K, Fort
8 Polk, Louisiana, graduating with a rank of E-two.
9 I was an enlisted man. And arriving at Fort
10 Walters, Texas for primary helicopter school I
11 became a warrant officer candidate -- a warrant
12 officer candidate and my money went up to E-five
13 pay, which was a -- which was a nice jump in -- in
14 money.

15 MR. RUSSERT: Was that primary
16 school more difficult than basic training?

17 MR. FURMAN: It was just
18 different.

19 MR. RUSSERT: A lot of
20 harassment?

21 MR. FURMAN: And all of this in
22 formation, marching around, you know, the -- the
23 place and I did have a problem when I ran out of
24 fuel once with the TH-55 because evidently the gas

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2 cap was on incorrectly or something and gas was --
3 was pouring out of the back of that thing. And all
4 of a sudden, boom, out of fuel and I just was able
5 to flare and land, put that -- that TH-55 called a
6 Hughes 269 into a field. And then I climbed out, I
7 think I stood there and all of a sudden a heli was
8 flying by and I jumped -- jumped up and down and
9 waved to help me out. Whoa, what's happened there.
10 So they came down and landed and helped me. And
11 then they got another helicopter out there to bring
12 the -- bring the TH-55 back in.

13 I was successful, you know,
14 completing my -- my training there at Fort Walters,
15 Texas. And then I went back to Baltimore just to
16 stay with my parents for a little while and then
17 hopped down to Fort Rucker, Alabama flying the D
18 and H model helicopters and also receiving
19 instrument training in the Bell-47. And it was --
20 you know, it -- in the fall of '68 that I one
21 day -- one day they pinned on our warrant officer
22 bars, W.O. I, and the next day we got our wings,
23 our set of silver wings. And back -- back to
24 Baltimore for visiting for a little while and then

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2 off to Vietnam in November of '68.

3 BY MR. CLARK: (Cont'g.)

4 Q. Well, let me just stop you for a
5 second. How long was your schooling to be a pilot?
6 Is that a year course, six month course?

7 A. It was -- all -- all of those
8 things were done in -- in over a year.

9 Q. Uh-huh.

10 A. One of the -- one of the things
11 was that when I went to Fort Walters that they had
12 so many people who were waiting to -- to go through
13 the training that it was almost for I think two or
14 three months that we were all living in barracks at
15 the bottom of the hill instead of being up in
16 the -- in the specific locations. And we're just
17 down there in a bunch of old World War II style
18 barracks waiting, you know, for the -- waiting for
19 the darn thing to start.

20 Q. Uh-huh.

21 A. But eventually got to go up -- go
22 up to the hill and I was part of the 6th block, the
23 6th warrant officer candidate company. Six block
24 was what -- what we were called.

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2 Q. Did you find the training
3 adequate or were they just trying to push people
4 through to and get the number of pilots they
5 needed?

6 A. I think the -- I think the
7 training was -- was very well done.

8 Q. Uh-huh.

9 A. Riding, you know, with -- with
10 the chief warrant officers, being warrant officer
11 candidate and -- and having -- you know, teaching
12 me all the tricks.

13 Q. Uh-huh.

14 A. They did a -- they did a really
15 good job. Now, just to share with you, I served
16 one tour of duty in Vietnam, arriving there in
17 November of '68 ending up at this placement depot,
18 but all of a sudden a captain came in and grabbed
19 the two of us and took us up to B Troop and Charlie
20 Troop of 3rd and 17th Air Calvary in Don Thng. And
21 I ended up being assigned to B Troop which our call
22 sign was Burning Stogies. My buddy ended up in
23 Charlie Horse, which was the nickname for Charlie
24 Troop, Charlie Horse. And A Troop was called the

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2 Silver Spurs. But neither one of us were -- were
3 being assigned to that.

4 During the ten and a half months
5 that I was in Vietnam it was in March of '69 that I
6 got shot in the posterior the first time by a
7 phosphorus round. An enemy soldier jumped out of a
8 bunker, put about twelve rounds in my O.H. 6
9 helicopter and one round hit me and it hit me in
10 the posterior and it was a phosphorus round and it
11 was hot. Another round went between my legs, hit
12 the wires that went up to my Cyclid (phonetic
13 spelling) and cut the wires. And I was trying
14 to -- trying to call the Cobra, you know, I was
15 fifty feet off the deck and a Cobra circling around
16 at twelve to fifteen hundred feet and I couldn't --
17 couldn't speak. So I hopped out behind the
18 infantry, set the helicopter down, jumped out and
19 looked it over just to see if it was still flyable.
20 And it was acceptable, you know, it was -- was
21 still flyable.

22 Q. Were you in a great deal of pain
23 at that point?

24 A. And -- well, I had blood, you

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2 know, running -- running out of my posterior,
3 running down -- down my -- my thigh, left side.

4 But when I jumped back in the helicopter I swapped
5 cords and reached over and hit the cyclic on the
6 left side where my scout observer was sitting --

7 Q. Uh-huh.

8 A. -- and told the Cobra, you know,
9 that I had been shot, I had been wounded, can you
10 get another team out here and I -- I needed to get
11 into a hospital. And fortunately there was another
12 Cobra over in Laos that was just a few miles away.
13 One Cobra called the other one and they came over
14 to then go back on the -- go back on the attack
15 while I ended up flying back to Don Thng, landing
16 my helicopter and then getting into the hospital to
17 get that -- that wound fixed.

18 I had my major shake down ten and
19 a half months in the country. We were down in the
20 Plain of Reith. There were two enemy soldiers who
21 crawled out of some sleeping positions. I had a
22 brand new scout observer in the left seat whose
23 name was Harllo. His last name was Hall. And I was
24 teaching him, you know, how to use the Core-15,

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2 Colt automatic rifle. And we found one enemy
3 soldier hiding under a bunch of grass and his legs
4 were, you know, just sticking out, but they were
5 under water also. And I just said Hall, squeeze
6 the trigger till it doesn't work anymore and he
7 (witness makes a noise) emptied the full clip into
8 that enemy soldier.

9 And then he went looking for the
10 other soldier. We kept circling around. It's very
11 sad, but I was about fifty feet off the deck, I had
12 slowed down looking for this guy when all of a
13 sudden he jumped out, jumped up out of a rice patty
14 on the right rear and he was no more than I think a
15 hundred to a hundred fifty feet away. And he
16 emptied his entire AK-47 into my helicopter. Many,
17 many rounds, hitting the Kevlar plate on the back
18 of my seat and took big chunks out of it when the
19 rounds came through. And I took a round through
20 the left forearm which shattered the radius. As
21 you can see, I still can't get full pronation on
22 the left side because of that one -- one round that
23 went through and shattered the radius of my left
24 arm. I got hit in the rear end again. A round

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2 entered and left about five inches away.

3 When my helicopter crashed my
4 helmet flipped off and I cracked my head on the
5 side panel and then all of a sudden blood was
6 flowing out of my forehead, my entire body turning
7 red in blood. The enemy soldier was walking over
8 to finish us off. By the grace of God and the fact
9 that we had another Loach in the area the Cobra
10 that was circling above both of us just screamed
11 out one nine's down, one nine's down, get over
12 there right away. And that other loach was over
13 there within I think a minute and he was able to
14 stop the enemy soldier, made him throw his weapon
15 down, told him to back up. The huey helicopter
16 that was up at Three Grand started circling down
17 and one of the enlisted guys in that helicopter ran
18 out and grabbed that soldier, tied him up and threw
19 him in the Huie, got him -- got him the heck out of
20 there.

21 And in the meanwhile the scout
22 observer whose name was Mike Hall had -- oh, also
23 to share with you my nickname in Vietnam was Rocket
24 J. Squirrel -- Rocket J. Yeah, Rocket J. Squirrel.

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2 And the nicknames many of us had -- had nicknames
3 in the Cav troop. My top two left seat guys were
4 Mad Dog and Duck, Larry Duck Simpson and Lind Mad
5 Dog Swernen. We just had these goofy nicknames.
6 But as I -- as I kept telling people, me with that
7 nickname of Rocket J. Squirrel Furman --.

8 Q. Now what happened to the -- the
9 observer who was with you?

10 A. Fortunately he was totally
11 unhurt.

12 Q. Uh-huh.

13 A. Even though several rounds hit
14 the back of his plate they didn't come through and
15 they didn't get him. He was totally unhurt.

16 Now with -- with my posterior
17 being wounded again, with blood running out of two
18 locations, both sides of my left forearm, and
19 running out of my forehead, the observer who
20 had pulled me into their L.O.H.6 and we took off
21 over gross in that L.O.H.6, with four of us on
22 board.

23 Q. Uh-huh.

24 A. He took off his cav scarf, his

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2 scarf and wrapped it around my forearm to try to
3 stop the bleeding there. And he took his tee shirt
4 off, told me to drop trousers, and he tied off my
5 posterior and tried to stop the bleeding there.
6 And he grabbed a bandage behind the ammo box and
7 put it on my forehead. And with the reduction of
8 all that blood that was running out, which I was
9 under the assumption that I was probably going to
10 be dead before we got into -- they were able to hop
11 me into the third field hospital in Saigon, the
12 third field hospital, Army Hospital, got me in
13 there in seventeen minutes. And I staggered out of
14 that thing, gave a little wave to the two medical
15 guys who helped me in and they put just numerous
16 amount of stitches. They got me all stitched up
17 and repaired. I ended up only spending one week in
18 the third field hospital. But then I was sent to
19 Camp Zama, Japan. And I was there for two weeks.
20 Then I got on one of those big freedom birds and
21 was flown back to the States and landed at Andrews
22 Air Force Base near Washington D.C.

23 When I walked out of that -- that
24 huge Air Force bird I saw -- I saw the Army

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2 ambulance and an enlisted man came running up to
3 me. He said "Sir, they sent me down here to get
4 you to take you up to Fort Meade, Maryland to
5 Kimbral Army Hospital." Well, okay. So I ended up
6 spending a bunch of time there at Kimbral Army
7 Hospital and then it wasn't long before they
8 pulled -- pulled all of those stitches out and I
9 was totally recovered.

10 My follow on assignment was at
11 Aberdeen Proving ground Maryland. I was able to go
12 up there and I flew A, B, C, D, H and M model
13 Hue's, O.H.58, O.H.6s and they also had a flying
14 club at the air field with a couple of Cessna 172s
15 and I joined the flying club and got the add on
16 ratings of flying civilian aircraft. I did that --
17 so I was at Aberdeen for several years.

18 I was only at Aberdeen for a
19 couple of months and I just made C.W. II, Chief
20 Warrant Officer when all of a sudden in the mail I
21 got a package. That package had promotion to first
22 lieutenant armor branch -- first lieutenant armor
23 branch. Based upon the awards and decorations that
24 I had rolled up by putting myself at risk in

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2 Vietnam they included two distinguished flying
3 crosses, two air medals for valor, the air medal
4 with thirty-nine oak leaf clusters just rolling up
5 my bouncing hours of time, the Bronze Star for
6 meritorious service, two Purple Hearts and an Army
7 commendation medal. I received all of those awards
8 and decorations just for being a twenty-year-old
9 helicopter pilot in Vietnam.

10 Now back assigned to Aberdeen --
11 Aberdeen Proving Ground, receiving that direct
12 commission, I made two phone calls. I called the
13 armor -- armor branch and they said by the way, you
14 know, you're going to make captain in one year and
15 you're going to go off to the armor officer basic
16 course maybe in a year and a half. So I ended
17 up -- I ended up getting my captain's bars in one
18 year, then going of to Kentucky, Fort Knox, in that
19 vicinity to go for the armor officer basic course.

20 My follow up assignment I had --
21 it was my fond desire to stay right there at that
22 air field and just fly the helicopters, but
23 unfortunately they were totally filled up and I was
24 then assigned to Fort Jackson, South Carolina as a

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2 range inspector. I was assistant B.C.T. Committee
3 Group Coordinator, going out and just doing range
4 inspections while all of the guys were doing
5 their -- their shooting and their crawling under
6 the barbed wire and -- and whacking each other with
7 pugle sticks, doing -- doing all that kind of
8 stuff.

9 Then the next sad part of the
10 story is that Richard Nixon bounced twenty-three
11 thousand of us out of active duty. It was my fond
12 desire to continue and do twenty years. I'd
13 been -- I'd been promoted to captain and I thought
14 if I could do a twenty-year retirement that I could
15 go out as a lieutenant colonel and then go get a
16 follow up job. But Richard Nixon bounced
17 twenty-three thousand of us off of active duty in
18 '73. He said don't need you, we'll call you next
19 war. And as you two gentlemen are probably aware,
20 North Vietnam invaded South Vietnam in '75, killing
21 hundreds of thousands of people and taking over the
22 entire country.

23 From 1973 to 1989, being bounced
24 off of active duty and making almost twenty-four

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2 thousand dollars a year as an Army captain, which
3 in those days was a tremendous amount of money,
4 going to half that money as a GS-7, aircraft
5 dispatcher up in Petersburg, Virginia. While I was
6 there I was giving flight instruction even on
7 weekends, a lot of C.F.I. time and several years
8 later I was able to hop up to Newburgh to Stewart
9 Airport, Stewart International and I jumped up over
10 thirty thousand dollars in salary coming in because
11 I jumped up to a GS-12 instructor pilot position.

12 Unfortunately ten years after
13 being out of Vietnam, because of ingestion of Agent
14 Orange, I had a tumor growing up and down my spine
15 and I came down with a stage four non-Hodgkins
16 lymphoma. And I thought that I was going to die.
17 I immediately went to a doctor who checked me out.
18 He hit me with five weeks of radiation therapy to
19 kill that tumor.

20 The follow up was to go for six
21 months down to West Point where Colonel Trainer,
22 the top flight surgeon down there kept giving me
23 chemotherapy, giving me shots every two weeks. At
24 the end of the fifth month I went down there and he

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2 said, "Mark, you're perfectly fine. You're
3 perfectly totally recovered. I'm not going to do a
4 six-month chemotherapy on you." Thank God. By the
5 grace of God that I was -- I was perfectly --
6 perfectly fine at that point.

7 Ended up moving from Stewart
8 Airport up to living in Fayetteville, New York, but
9 running my own flight facility out of Hancock
10 Airport near Syracuse. Had my own -- own facility
11 for much of the years. I had a lot of great pilots
12 who would hop in from all the surrounding counties
13 and I had a good staff up there. And then all of a
14 sudden at one point they decided to shut us down,
15 turn our assets over to the National Guard and just
16 close us out. Some of the people ended up putting
17 in for retirement.

18 I ended up calling a buddy of
19 mine who at one time was the maintenance officer
20 down at Stewart Airport while I was an instructor
21 pilot giving tons of check orders. And his name
22 was Fred Leanelli. I chatted with Fred and he was
23 now the assistant division manager for the F.A.A.
24 And he said "Mark, how about a job with the F.A.A."

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2 Terrific. Because they're -- they're shutting down
3 my facility here. I said what -- what book do you
4 you have and he said we have three openings out
5 here in Long Island and we have five openings up at
6 Albany. And I said, "Freddie, I'd like to go to
7 Albany."

8 Just to share with you, I
9 transferred to the F.A.A. in February of 1989 with
10 assignment to an aviation safety inspector position
11 in Albany, New York. I was promoted to principal
12 operations inspector, P.O.I., nine months later
13 with a Certificate of Responsibility from Part 135
14 operations, the designated pilot examiner program
15 and provided training for new inspectors. When the
16 safety program manager retired I visited the
17 officer manager and I was given the job. He gave
18 me the safety job. Robert Martin was the name of
19 the first manager of the office. In 1990 I was
20 armed with the organization's special achievement
21 commendation and again in 1992 with the Palmist
22 Spot Award. In '94 I received Original Star Award
23 for class act and value added service. I also
24 received an F.A.A. outstanding performance rating

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2 in 1995. I had developed over one hundred power
3 point presentations that were being used nationwide
4 in the Aviation Safety Program.

5 While I was with the F.A.A. I
6 actually hopped down to the 1052nd Reserve Training
7 Unit in Albany, rose to the rank of lieutenant
8 colonel and doing training as a Army Reserve
9 Colonel with being able to have attended yet
10 another class down at Fort Rucker.

11 Right now, gentlemen, I have
12 rolled up thirty-six years of government service.
13 And it is my desire to continue to run the safety
14 program for four more years and then go out of the
15 government with the forty-year hopefully excellent
16 retirement.

17 And by the way, just to share
18 with you, I never did get a full four-year degree.
19 I received an Associate and science degree in
20 liberal studies from the University of the State of
21 New York in 1982. I got a two-year degree, I
22 didn't get the four-year. Never got the four-year
23 degree.

24 MR. RUSSERT: Did you use the

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2 G.I. bill at all for that or --?

3 MR. FURMAN: Yeah. So I -- I
4 have to say that that concludes my presentation of
5 my just under six years of active military service.
6 Five years, eleven months, I think it was twenty --
7 twenty three days or something like that.

8 MR. RUSSERT: Uh-huh.

9 MR. FURMAN: Just shy of six
10 years of active duty and then sixteen years as a
11 Department of the Army so advanced Army Reserve
12 technician and all the rest F.A.A. time.

13 MR. RUSSERT: During your time in
14 Vietnam how -- what would you say most of your
15 helicopter flights -- the position was, that most
16 of your helicopter flights was?

17 MR. FURMAN: When I first arrived
18 with B Troop they popped into the front seat of the
19 Cobra, Cobra Good Ship. At the end of four months
20 I had rolled up three hundred and fifty hours in
21 the front seat of that Cobra. The back seat guys
22 allowed me to fly from -- fly from the front seat.
23 Also many times when we went on the attack we were
24 firing that six-barrel mini-gun I was firing it

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2 from the front seat. We also had that forty
3 millimeter cannon thumper (makes noise) and when --
4 when our troops or Marines or Navy or South
5 Vietnamese were being attacked by enemy soldiers we
6 just went after -- went after them firing air of
7 rockets, firing the mini-gun and firing the forty
8 millimeter cannon.

9 MR. RUSSERT: So of them would
10 have that support and --?

11 MR. FURMAN: And -- yeah, and --
12 and checking -- checking a bunch of them off the
13 planet. And then as I -- as I had mentioned
14 before, it was at the end of that four months when
15 I went down, talked to the captain who ran the gun
16 platoon, the Cobra, the gun platoon, and I said
17 when can I go off from Thau for the transition so I
18 can become a back seat aircraft commander. And he
19 just screamed at me to get out. He said you're
20 just going to be a gunner co-pilot for the whole --
21 whole time. And it was at that time that I
22 immediately went to visit Captain William Smith who
23 ran the scout platoon and he took me immediately.
24 And so that other six and a half months of my

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2 flying was rolling up over six hundred fifty hours,
3 mostly -- mostly in the right seat, the O.H.6. And
4 I also ended up providing training -- training to
5 the scout pilots. Captain Smith made me the
6 trainer for new scout observers and for new scout
7 pilots, with my nickname of Rocket J. -- Rocket J.
8 Squirrel. He just said hey, Rocket J., take this
9 guy, put him in the left seat, give him some
10 training. Okay, sir, will do.

11 MR. RUSSERT: Your first move
12 were you have to fly at all for that, because it
13 didn't sound like --?

14 MR. FURMAN: Yes, because it was
15 a phosphorus round I ended up just doing three days
16 at that local -- that -- that hospital. It was
17 just a few blocks away from where our compound was.
18 Our compound at Dhou Tgiam (phonetic spelling) was
19 not on the flight line, it was in the middle of the
20 camp and just south of us was a Navy P.X. on the
21 south side of our compound. On the west side was a
22 P.O.W. compound where there were a lot of enemy
23 soldiers. And there was a P.O.W. compound on the
24 west side of our -- of our building. And the only

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2 thing that I can share with you is that all of a
3 sudden we would have incoming mortar rounds and
4 rockets coming in and everybody just ran out of
5 those barracks and into that little covered stacks
6 of -- of dirt and bags --

7 MR. RUSSERT: Uh-huh.

8 MR. FURMAN: -- with a metal roof
9 and then more -- more bags on top of that. And it
10 was a protected -- protected area. Even when --
11 when a round came down and hit that roof on that
12 day it -- it didn't go through and hurt any of us.
13 We were all just -- just hiding down -- hiding in
14 that bunker, nice -- nice baggy backed bunker. And
15 as I said before, you know, that major -- major
16 shoot down almost checked me off the planet ten and
17 a half months, but able to make it out of there
18 alive and able to make it back to Fort Meade,
19 Maryland and then that follow on assignment to
20 Aberdeen Proving Ground for years and doing lots of
21 flying and doing special test projects.

22 Q. How did you feel about being at
23 home?

24 A. The anti-war?

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2 Q. The anti-war@.

3 A. Well, seeing -- seeing so many of
4 those demonstrations, you know, while I was in war
5 I still felt that we were doing the right thing to
6 try to help the South Vietnamese. Our fond desire,
7 my -- my desire to help -- to help the South
8 Vietnamese to try to keep the Viet Cong and the
9 M.V.A., North Vietnamese at bay.

10 Q. Uh-huh.

11 A. I -- I felt that that was -- that
12 was appropriate. And I -- I know that during that
13 whole time frame had a tremendous amount of -- of
14 the anti-war demonstrators and -- and in some cases
15 where they're beating up people and doing other
16 stupid things and just was not a -- was not a
17 positive thing.

18 Q. How about Jane Fonda?

19 A. Hanoi Jane?

20 Q. Uh-huh.

21 A. Yeah, that's what -- that's what
22 we nicknamed her, Hanoi Jane Fonda, because yes, we
23 hopped in --

24 Q. Yes.

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2 A. -- and still having -- having
3 those poor Air Force gentlemen all in the prison in
4 North Vietnam. And fortunately a ship arrived and
5 they were able to get all of them out at -- at one
6 point. So that was -- that was a positive thing.
7 I cannot say that I have any positive feelings
8 about Jane Fonda.

9 MR. RUSSERT: Did you ever stay
10 in contact with anyone that was in service with
11 you?

12 MR. FURMAN: Actually just this
13 past fall -- actually fall -- fall of last year I
14 hopped down to Washington D.C. and hooked up with
15 Mad Dog and Duck, Larry Duck Simpson and Mad Dog
16 Swerenson and William Smith who was the captain
17 running scout platoon.

18 MR. RUSSERT: Uh-huh.

19 MR. FURMAN: I nicknamed him
20 Bungalow Bill from the old Beatles tune. Hey
21 Bungalow Bill, what did you kill, Bungalow Bill.
22 He went out tiger hunting with his elephant and
23 gun, in case of accidents he always took his mom.
24 And he -- Bungalow Bill, hey, Rocket J.

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2 So we had -- we -- so thirty
3 years later it was just terrific, you know, hooking
4 up with a whole bunch of enlisted, warrant officers
5 and commissioned officers, all of us just getting
6 together and -- and showing all of our old
7 scrapbooks and our old -- all of those old
8 pictures, you know, and photos. There's a photo of
9 me wearing my black cav hat with a big cigar in my
10 mouth at the age of twenty with my arms like this.
11 Choking sound and coughing while smoking the cigar.

12 Q. You ever join any veterans
13 organizations?

14 A. I had -- it was my fond desire
15 to -- to do it, to join, you know, some -- some and
16 I was unable to -- unable to do it for a bunch of
17 years, but that was a couple of years ago that I
18 joined the N.R.A., the National -- National Rifle
19 Association. I'm a member now, on the side door of
20 my little Toyota out there, I have that N.R.A.
21 sticker. And have made phone calls and chatted
22 with a lot of different people and ran into a lot
23 of fellow N.R.A. -- N.R.A. members, you know, just
24 at local malls and -- and things like that. So

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2 that was kind of fun.

3 Q. Do you -- how do you feel about
4 your service time, how it affected your life?

5 A. My -- my active military time?

6 Q. Uh-huh.

7 A. I -- I felt that it was the fair
8 and proper thing to do. I felt that it was the
9 correct thing to do to -- to try to help ourselves
10 and the Vietnamese comrades, but also to share with
11 you I saved an Air Force guy, I saved a Navy guy.
12 The Air Force guy one day we were just flying along
13 and all of a sudden I see this parachute come out
14 of a jet because a rocket hit this -- hit the Air
15 Force jet. I seen a parachute coming down and I --
16 I called the Cobra. You know, I said one -- 1-9,
17 there's -- there's a Air Force guy parachuting down
18 into a rice patty. And what I ended up doing was
19 to check all four tree lines around there because
20 if there were enemy soldiers in there, then I had
21 to check them off the planet before I went in and
22 made a landing to try to get him. The stupid thing
23 that he did, I land my O.H. 6, and I said -- gave
24 him a thumbs up, told him to come over towards the

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2 helicopter, but he picked up his parachute and he's

3 holding it in his arms. And I went "Throw away the

4 chute, throw away the parachute, it's going to blow

5 up into our rotor system and we're all going to

6 check off the planet." He goes, "Oh." He unhooked

7 it and just -- just threw it away and he ran over.

8 I said "Duck down, duck down" because my rotor

9 system was lower than others. He ducked down and

10 he jumped in the back, put -- put the head set on

11 and I took off, did a right 270 by a left 90. I

12 just did my little magic tricks, you know, in case

13 there are any -- any enemy soldiers out there. We

14 ended up calling the Cobra and said we've got an

15 Air Force guy here, I'm going to drop him off at

16 the nearest facility. But on the way in he said

17 "Hey, if you ever get up to Tonsonuit dinner and

18 drinks are on me." I said, "Captain, sir, I'm

19 happy to help you out, we're going to drop you off

20 at that nearest facility there and there are Huie's

21 that come through all the time and one of them I'm

22 sure will be hopping you back up to Tonsonuit. And

23 he said -- and when we landed he just pumped my

24 hand and said, "Thank you for your help, still

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2 alive." Okay, buddy.

3 I pulled a Marine on it had
4 several bullet holes in it on -- on a another
5 occasion and grabbed an Army -- Army guy who was
6 unhurt, but he was running away from all of these
7 enemy soldiers who were shooting at him, rounds
8 just barely -- rounds barely missing him. And I
9 ended up in my O.H.6 dropping down behind him,
10 doing a one eighty and (brr-brrrr brr) just hitting
11 that trigger and making that six-barrel mini-gun
12 and checked off seven enemy soldiers, made them go
13 away. I then did a 180 and he was hiding behind a
14 rock and "Come on, come on, I'll give you a ride."
15 I sat down, he run over jumped in the back and off
16 we went. I got him -- got him back to his -- to
17 his infantry guys.

18 Only one tour of duty in Vietnam,
19 ten and a half months, one minor shoot up and then
20 the second, that major shoot down. And as I -- as
21 I shared with you earlier, one week in the third
22 field hospital in Saigon followed by that two weeks
23 at Camp Azaima, Japan, followed by Fort Meade,
24 Maryland for almost a month and they finally got

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2 **all the stitches removed, got me -- got me working**
3 **again and then Aberdeen.**

4 MR. RUSSERT: Okay. Oh, one
5 other thing. Could you hold this in front of you
6 and tell us when that was taken?

7 MR. FURMAN: Okay. How's that
8 for luck?

9 MR. RUSSERT: Now you're Rank
10 there and -- and where was this at? I note it in
11 the bottom of the photo, but where was it taken
12 and -- and when and --?

13 MR. FURMAN: Yeah, that --
14 that -- no, that was taken --

15 MR. RUSSERT: I think you said
16 Rochester.

17 MR. FURMAN: -- in Rochester, New
18 York. I had hopped over to the 98th Division.
19 They were called the Iroquois Nation. They -- they
20 had an Iroquois Indian on the -- on the badge. And
21 yeah, they asked me to -- to have my formal --
22 formal picture taken. So I had all of my awards
23 and decorations on and a rather short hair cut at
24 that point.

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MR. RUSSERT: You say that was taken in '88. What rank were you at that time?

MR. FURMAN: Major. I made it up to lieutenant colonel with the 1062nd Reserve Training Unit right -- right here in Albany.

MR. RUSSERT: Uh-huh. Thank you.

MR. CLARK: Thank you.

(The interview concluded) pwss

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I hereby certify the foregoing,
consisting of pages 1 to 32, inclusive, to be a
true and accurate transcription from the audio
provided to us, to the best of our skill and
ability.


Judith A. Spriggs

Associated Reporters Int'l., Inc.

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