Civil Air Patrol
Oral History Interview

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MR. ROBERT E. NEPRUD

NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMITTEE
Headquarters CAP
CIVIL AIR PATROL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interview

of

Mr. Robert E. Neprud

by

Lt Col Lester E. Hopper, CAP

Date: 12 August 1983

Location: Las Vegas, Nevada
KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, Robert E. Neprud, have this day participated in an oral-magnetic-taped interview with Lt. Col. L.E. Hoppev, covering my best recollections of events and experiences which may be of historical significance to the Civil Air Patrol.

I understand that the tape(s) and the transcribed manuscript resulting therefrom will be accessioned into the Civil Air Patrol's Historical Holdings. In the best interest of the Civil Air Patrol, I do hereby voluntarily give, transfer, convey, and assign all right, title, and interest in the memoirs and remembrances contained in the aforementioned magnetic tapes and manuscript to the Civil Air Patrol, to have and to hold the same forever, hereby relinquishing for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, and assigns all ownership, right, title, and interest therein to the donee expressly on the condition of strict observance of the following restrictions:

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Robert E. Neprud DONOR

Dated 3/15/84

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CIVIL AIR PATROL ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Civil Air Patrol Oral History interviews were initiated in early 1982 by Lt Col Lester E. Hopper, CAP, of the Civil Air Patrol's National Historical Committee. The overall purpose of these interviews is to record for posterity the activities of selected members of the Civil Air Patrol.

The principle goal of these histories is to increase the base of knowledge relating to the early accomplishments of Civil Air Patrol members who in their own unique way contributed to the defense of our great country. Certainly not of a secondary nature is the preservation of the contributions of individuals as Civil Air Patrol continues its growth.
The following is the transcript of an oral history interview recorded on magnetic tape. Since only minor emendations have been made, the reader should consistently bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word. Additionally, no attempt to confirm the historical accuracy of the statements has been made. As a result, the transcript reflects the interviewee's personal recollections of a situation as he remembered it at the time of the interview.

Editorial notes and additions made by CAP historians are enclosed in brackets. If feasible, first names, ranks, or titles are also provided. Any additions, deletions and changes subsequently made to the transcript by the interviewee are not indicated. Researchers may wish to listen to the actual interview tape prior to citing the transcript.
SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

In this oral history interview Mr. Robert E. Neprud speaks of his experiences as a professional writer and editor, with specific emphasis on the preparation of the book FLYING MINUTE MEN - The Story of the Civil Air Patrol.

The interview begins with his early childhood in rural Wisconsin and with emphasis on his education as a Journalist. His observations on prewar Europe add unusual insight as regards early war preparations in Germany. He discusses the development of his writing skill while assigned to various projects in the Army, which culminated in his selection to write his definitive history of Civil Air Patrol. He provides excellent insight as regards the personalities who directed Civil Air Patrol during World War II. His candid discussion and admiration of various CAP members operating in the field lends much to the knowledge of both people and methods.

Mr. Neprud concludes with a very interesting summary of his postwar activities. Although not specifically related to Civil Air Patrol, his postwar experiences provide an excellent opportunity to learn more of the dedicated individual who produced the only really definitive work to date on the early history of Civil Air Patrol.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Documentation Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Reception by CAP Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Selection of Publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Writing Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Experiences with Ralph Earle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Closing of Personal Narratives Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Finalizing &quot;Flying Minute Men&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Evaluation of CAP Wartime Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Army Times Publishing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>State Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Experiences in Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Visit from Eleanor Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Whaling Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Visit to Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Acquaintance with John Wayne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Move to Laguna Beach, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Association with Boeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Association with Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Work with Transpo 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Retirement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GUIDE TO CONTENTS

Page

1    Personal Background
1    University of Wisconsin
4    Early Journalism Experience
4    Prewar Visit to Europe
5    Experiences in Germany
7    First Editing Job
8    Return to University of Wisconsin
9    Experience with Superior Evening Telegram
9    Entry into the Army
10   Train Accident
11   Assignment to write "Nurses in Action"
13   Assignment to Bolling Field
14   Association with Personal Narratives Division
16   Experiences with Wisconsin National Guard
16   Duty with Citizen's Military Training Camp
19   Birth of First Child
20   Well Known Authors at Personal Narratives Division
21   Assignment to write "Flying Minute Men"
22   Initial Contact with Civil Air Patrol
22   Support Received from Kendall Hoyt
24   Interplay between Colonels Blee and Johnson
25   Initial Contacts in the Wings
26   Meeting with Bill Madsen
27   Visits in the Northeast Area
H. Bob, suppose we start with a little bit of family background and learn something about your early life so we can start from there.

N. Well, I grew up in two small towns in Wisconsin. Neither one had as many people in them as any of the major hotels in Las Vegas. I think one had a population of about 2100 and the other was about 2749. I grew up in a middle-class family. My own father had died right at the end of the first World War of the Spanish Influenza. Later on I acquired a stepfather who was a banker and was a very frugal fellow. At times his attitude turned me against banking and, temporarily at least, against money. That's something I was later able to overcome - at least my attitude toward money. Anyway, I went through the steps growing up, having the usual rites of puberty, the athletic adventures, the youthful love affairs and so on. Then I went on to University of Wisconsin where I took Journalism. My stepfather warned me that I would have holes in my socks and in the seat of my pants if I took such an impractical course. There were times when he may
have been right. Anyway, I carried on with Journalism and met the girl I later married, although our courtship was a long one. I had illusions that I was still a pretty good football player when I joined up as a Freshman and I went out for spring football at the University of Wisconsin, which was definitely a mistake. This all came home to me one day when I was backing up the line and the scrubs were battling the varsity. On one play an All-American named Eddie Jankowski broke loose. I couldn't get away from him and he couldn't get away from me. I tackled him and he flew 15 yards one way and I flew 20 yards another. I was still recovering from that blow when on the very next play, a halfback from the coal fields of Pennsylvania called Bronco Malesvitch roared through on an off-tackle play and I moved up to stop him. I found myself at the bottom of the pile with Bronco and at least ten people were stacked top of us. After sober consideration, I turned in my suit.

H. What year was that, Bob?

N. I graduated from high school in 1935, so this was the spring of '36.

H. And you went to high school in the same town you were born?

N. No. First I should say I grew up in a part of Wisconsin
that was overwhelmingly Scandinavian. I was born in a small town and moved to the county seat when I was a couple of years old. It was a place where they served lutefish and lefse, which is a sort of a holiday treat in the late fall. The coffee pots were always on the stove and there was a lot of Norwegian spoken in the streets. Every other church was a Lutheran church. It was really Scandinavian.

H. What was the name of the town?

N. The one where I did most of my growing up was Viroqua, which was named after an Indian princess who jumped off a large rock when pursued by marauding white men. My next town was Mauston. That was where I did my high school work. They were two very different towns: the first was a hilly and beautiful place, almost mosquito-free because of the altitude, one of the higher places of the state. The other was a much lower, flatter place with a meandering brown river running through it. Both the towns were great in their way. Of course, getting away to college provided me with a chance to spread my wings and escape a certain amount of parental authority. At the University of Wisconsin, I took Journalism and enjoyed the student life in a beautiful setting.

H. Excuse me, did you work on any student newspapers or anything like that?
N. Yes, I did some pieces for the student newspaper called The Daily Cardinal. But I did most of my writing for the Wisconsin humor magazine called The Octopus, which was rated among the best of the college humor magazines. I wrote light verse and short sketches, mostly. When I graduated in Journalism it was not really the most prosperous of times. It was in 1939 and the Depression, whether people thought so or not, was still on especially in that area. Before I got my first job late in fall after my graduation, I had painted our house and our picket fence white.

H. This was at your parental home?

N. Right. Oh yes, I think we've skipped the fact that while I was at the University of Wisconsin between my junior and senior years, I traveled to Europe. That was the summer of 1938, just the year before the war. It was a special present from my grandfather who was a very indulgent and wonderful guy. I traveled with my college roommate, who was a medical student, and we took what you might call a modified tramp trip. We crossed the Atlantic on a Dutch cargo liner which carried about 50 passengers and we returned on an English freighter which carried only 12. In Europe we traveled by bicycle, by second class rail and by bus. We started in Holland and spent about three weeks in Germany. We couldn't see what was going on behind the scenes, but we did see a great many troops on military maneuvers in the
countryside. And the Hitler youth members in their brown and black uniforms and with daggers in their belts were roaming the same highways and staying in the same youth hostels as we were. In fact, we got acquainted with a number of them and we found them to be rather pleasant little guys, but we couldn't help but wonder what was around the corner.

H. Did you really, as a young college student relating to those people, get it on the plane where you questioned their motives or was it just that they were doing something different than you?

N. Well, you didn't feel the full impact at the time. You were having daily adventures meeting good people most of the way. You were treated rather well by the German people because, while they hated the English and the French, they were still trying to court the American tourists. They made sure we had good meals with lots of butter and extras. Trying to butter us up, I might say. I think the folks at home reading the big black headlines probably felt more misgivings about what was going on over there than my friend and I felt just riding through the countryside and talking to a lot of the people.

H. In other words, you really didn't have an assessment of these people that were your contemporaries, age wise, being bad guys.
N. No, not really. Because the unthinkable had not really happened yet. It had happened to a point. The Nazis had gone into Austria that March and when we traveled through Vienna there were the Swastika flags flying everywhere and there was the broken glass in buildings in some parts of town with the label "Juden" on them. Some sinister things were beginning to creep in and even we weren't stupid enough not to notice some of them. I got acquainted with a rather prosperous doctor in Vienna and he confided that he didn't know how much longer he would be in his wonderful big office with the teak paneling. Things were changing, he said, and didn't know quite how long he'd be able to carry on his practice.

H. He was apparently Jewish.

N. He was. Of course, that's almost a counterpart of what you saw in the "Holocaust" if you remember the doctor being dispossessed and driven off into exile. Anyway, we traveled through Italy, France and Budapest - in Hungary. Of course, that city was badly shattered later on. But then it was still a city of lights and a city of Gypsy music and was populated by some of the most beautiful women and handsomest men in the world. We had our various adventures along the way and headed west, traveling to England and Wales. We sailed out of Wales and we were on the ocean about the time of the Munich
incident because the news was coming in via the ship's wireless.

H. But again, pulling back just a little bit, the housework you were doing. You weren't married at that time. This was at your parents' home?

N. Yes, it was at my mother's home and it was a sort of limbo period for me. I was at the typewriter quite a bit, but I was also doing a lot of the routine tasks — certain amount of painting and fixing.

H. Paying your mother room and board.

N. Right. Trying to make myself useful so she wouldn't throw me out. My first job finally came through in Milwaukee where I edited a small travel magazine. The publisher was an accountant who had a dream of publishing a travel magazine, but he had very little money to work with and he overreached badly. However, I needed a job and I was very happy to take on the post of editor. I wrote a great deal and I met a lot of people. I put a couple of editions of the magazine together before the project died of malnutrition. This was just about the time the U. S. was going to get into the war and pleasure travel would soon be halted. There was a period when I didn't eat much because a number of the publisher's checks in the final weeks were not to be cashed immediately.
I still have a neat little bundle of uncashed checks which are known as "Baker's bouncers".

H. Laughter. Baker's bouncers, huh?

N. The project ended in a kind of forlorn fashion. Everything was exciting then; even the bad news was fun, or so it seemed. The publisher left town about the time his wife was having a baby. I think he ran off with a B-girl from Chicago while he was out trying to solicit advertising for the magazine. Anyway, I contributed a blood transfusion to the mother. And then the day came when workmen removed all the furniture from the offices and the telephones were set upon the floor and there were scattered ghosts of things all around the place. That's when I went home to fatten up again.

H. About that time good old Bob got the word.

N. Yes, I got the word that the Tourist Calendar Magazine was finished. I went back to the University to take a couple of extra courses that might help me in Journalism and I lived at my old fraternity house, sort of like a ghost that didn't belong there anymore. Most of my contemporaries were out of school and out of town. And then, after several months, my second prewar job came through as a reporter for the Superior Evening Telegram, "upper Wisconsin's great home daily", which was located in the
coldest, draftiest corner of the state, just across the bridge from Duluth. I enjoyed this experience although it was a harrowing time, too, because the pressure was on and the staff was small. I was used to doing somewhat more creative things. But I handled just about every kind of assignment that came along, although I later specialized in feature articles and got some fair reaction from readers. My beat included the schools, the state college, some of the courts, the museum and miscellaneous features. I also covered the draftboard which gave me, this being the spring of '41, almost the illusion that I was important to the prewar effort. Then, one day, I got a notice saying I had drawn a very low number in the draft. Meanwhile, my college sweetheart had gotten herself a job in the state health lab in Superior. I married her the middle of March and by the middle of June I was inducted into the military service.

H. That was the middle of June of '41.

N. Yes, the middle of June of '41. I was on KP at Camp Grant, Illinois on my birthday, June 20th.

H. What birthday was that, Bob?

N. That was my 24th. I was stationed at the Camp Grant Reception Center for a couple of months while they sorted things out. Then I was transferred to Chanute Field,
Illinois, down in Rantoul, and assigned to the base newspaper, "Wings".

H. In other words, the Army fit you.

N. Yes, but I had a near miss. The Army nearly sent me to Fort Riley, Kansas, as a combat engineer - an assignment for which I was singularly unqualified. However, happy to say, they did reclassify me and move me to Chanute. Actually, I didn't stay at Chanute very long. That was my year when everything happened. Married, drafted and then that fall, in November, when my wife and I were taking my first furlough heading for Washington, D. C., where we had relatives and where my mother was visiting, we were involved in a freak train accident on the Pennsylvania that resulted in my being confined to Walter Reed Hospital and several other hospitals for a full year. I don't know how much you want to know about that.

H. Well, what was the accident?

N. We were riding on one of their better passenger trains which ran between Chicago and Washington and were in a reclining chair coach. It wasn't a sleeper or anything like that. As a buck private I was earning $21 a month, out of which some went to laundry and some to the Old Soldiers' Home. My wife held a fair job and was carrying the load. There were no special allowances paid to married
folks at that early date. Anyway, it was about mid-evening and we were just preparing to bed down and push our chairs back. The fellow across the aisle had changed into his old scrubbies so he wouldn't get his suit wrinkled. People were turning off their reading lights and some were already sleeping. All of a sudden the coach we were in shuddered and jumped up and down and baggage started falling on our heads. The lights flashed on and off and then there was a tremendous impact and I had the sensation of being thrown through space. When I came to, I found myself lying on top of wreckage outside the train. The train had been derailed when another train on the other track tossed a cylinder head and tripped us up. Our engine plowed into an abandoned old red brick depot at Dunkirk, Ohio, and our coach was cut in two like a watermelon by the wreckage in front and the rest of the train behind. Out of about 18 fatalities, 15 were in our coach. My wife was one of the two or three to walk out, although she was confined to the hospital for several weeks with a whiplash. I had no marks on my body except for some very badly shattered legs. We were evacuated that night to a local hospital, and I had the first of six or seven operations. Then I was transferred to a regional military hospital at Fort Hayes in Columbus, Ohio. Later I was moved to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D. C. for more operations and treatment. This is a case where the bad things that happen aren't always all bad. It was through my stay at Walter
Reed that I was able to pick up the assignment to write "Nurses in Action".

H. You coauthored it with the then Chief of Nurses, right?

N. It wasn't really coauthored, I ghosted it for her. She wrote very little. She was the person who pointed the way and helped me make the contacts.

H. Who was this lady?

N. She was the first woman in the military to hold the rank of Colonel. She was Col Julia O. Flikke.

H. How do you spell that?

N. The last name was spelled F L I K K E. She was my great aunt - my grandfather's sister. She had been with the Army Nurse Corps for years and years in France, in China, in Philippines and at several posts in the United States. She was the grand lady of my memories of the early years. She would come back from these glamorous places with exotic gifts and wonderful stories. When the war broke out, several publishers urged her to do a book on the Army Nurse Corps. We talked things over and decided to collaborate on the project. It wasn't her word that got me the assignment. I had to come up with the outline and then had to convince Bertram Lippincott that I could do the job.
Finally they gave me the go ahead. By early summer of '42 I could get around on braces and crutches. Then I took a long convalescent leave from the hospital and my wife and I stayed at Colonel Flikke's home in suburban Silver Springs for a couple of months. I wrote about three-quarters of the book during that period. The last few segments were picked up by her office when I was called back to duty.

H. Just by way of clarification. During this period of time did the Army also take care of your wife?

N. No, they didn't take care of her in any way. She didn't really need much care after the first couple of weeks in Dunkirk, Ohio, where we were bedded down in a small hospital. Once we landed in Washington, she got herself a job with the Civil Service Commission. We were in Washington for practically the rest of the war. When I was sent back to duty, I was assigned to Bolling Field. I wrote and edited a squadron paper and a yearbook first, then I was assigned the job of editing the Bolling Field "Beam", the base publication. After putting in a couple of years as "Beam" editor, I got wind of the Personal Narrative Division of the Air Force which worked out of the Pentagon and New York City. A fellow came through our squadron on his way to PND. He was a very colorful and charismatic person and I became well acquainted with him. While at Bolling, he contributed pieces to the paper.
He told me about the project he was going into. He had worked for Life Magazine so he had a good background. He helped open some doors for me at PND and I subsequently joined the group.

H. Who was he, Bob?

N. Roland Gammon was his name. He was quite religious in a very intellectual way and he later coauthored the book "Truth is One".

H. When was this you moved to PND?

N. This was early 1945 and it was in October of that year that I was discharged from the service. I was presented with my ruptured duck and was sent out into the postwar world as a civilian, but PND assured me that they were almost certain that they could take me on as a civilian writer-researcher. Within a few weeks to a month, the job came through.

H. Excuse me, and that was how long after working for PND in military status?

N. As I recall, I joined them early in January of 1946. I did a lot of research around the Pentagon and Gravelly Point for various book projects, including a book on the 13th Air Force called "One Damned Island After Another".
Another one, on the 20th Air Force, was titled "Giants in the Sky". We had a very interesting and talented group made up of a mix of military people and civilians.

H. Bob, when we changed tapes we were talking about the final throes of your military experience at Personal Narratives Division, but regress just a little bit. You were with the military for nearly five years and you gravitated toward the Air Force. Did you know much about airplanes at that time?

N. Like most small boys growing up in those exciting years of the 1920's, I was very conscious of aviation and greatly intrigued by it. Of course, the Lindbergh flight and the Richard Byrd expeditions and other pioneering feats were grist for the mill. Then, when some barn-storming pilots would come to town from time to time, I would look with awe upon their airplanes and their rakish uniforms - and envy them their adventurous lives.

H. White silk scarves and leather helmets.

N. All of that and more. Most of the planes they flew were Jennies, or similar types left over from World War I. My grandfather, who treated me to a number of good things in my life, took me for my first airplane ride. We flew out of a cow pasture at the edge of town. Back in those days they'd even do loops with you. You were strapped in and
the noise was wonderful. The wind whistled in my ears and the excitement was unbearable. You'd see those tiny objects below - cars, houses and people - and you were up there. It was something only a bird could have experienced. Then I took my second ride not long after that in another Jennie with my "shrieking aunt" who didn't quiet down from the take-off to the time of landing. But this was all just wonderful stuff for me. And then, later on, I had another touch of military when my step-dad who was an officer with the local National Guard took me to encampments two summers in a row. We were based at Camp McCoy and Camp Douglas, both in Wisconsin, with an artillery supply outfit. I rode on the caissons and almost got sunstroke. Another day, I was in a small tornado. I had the fun of being around all these soldiers most of whom were not exactly the top citizens of the town. I got acquainted with many of the leading bootleggers at one of the encampments and enjoyed it thoroughly. I ran errands to the PX for the Guardsmen, netting a nickel or dime profit each time. This was the good life, I thought. And then I had a couple more sessions in late high school and early college when I attended the Citizen's Military Training Camp at Fort Snelling in the middle of summer - and there's no place that can get hotter than Fort Snelling in July and August. I received more military training there probably, than I did when I went into the military in WWII. We had our marksmanship, our days on the range, our long hikes and our military drill, almost none of which we even
touched when I joined my special contingent in WWII.

H. It prepared you well ...

N. Well, it gave me a little feeling for it and it made me feel more relaxed when I got into the real military service. Regarding my interest in aviation, my best friend when I was growing up was a wonderful craftsman who built wood scale models of all of the airplanes flying at the time and all of the airplanes of WWI. I acquired just about every known brand of airplane for prices that ranged from 25¢ to 50¢ apiece.

H. So you were not a total stranger when you finally met the Army Air Corps?

N. That's right. Of course, I was fortunate to have gotten into the headquarters squadron of the Air Force at Bolling Field and Gravelly Point and this was a pretty much of a picked squadron with many very special skills represented. A number of the fellows in the outfit staffed important jobs over at the Pentagon. Others were known on the concert hall circuit. Virgil Fox, the concert organist, was one of them.

H. You need to read William Manchester's latest, "Edge of Darkness" or Roll Back Darkness" - I forget the title. He was sort of one of the special people like yours, and they called themselves the "Raggedy Ass Marines". (Laughter)
They put them into an intelligence combat unit because they were smarter than anybody else. They were college students and that sort of thing. That's probably about the type of unit they established for you.

N. That's right. At Bolling Field, for instance, I was in Special Services and edited the base magazine.

H. Much better educated than the people you were working for, probably.

N. Well, in some cases - not always. There were many college types. Of course, I had managed to finish my college before things began to pop. But the captain, who was my superior during my later days at Bolling Field, was the most unmilitary officer I have ever seen. They had only about one military formation per week at Bolling Field and he would usually show up late or at the very last minute. He's dash into the office and we would go to work on him like they do at an Indianapolis 500 pit stop. One of us would put on his puttees, the other would hang his belt around his middle, give him the proper headgear, and then we'd hang his ceremonial sword onto his belt. Finally, we'd push him out the door toward the parade field.

H. And he might make it. (Laughter)

N. Just possibly. He was a dynamic millionaire type from Texas
who owned some big insurance companies. From time to
time he'd say, "I'm going over to the Pentagon, fellows.
If you don't see me for a little while, don't worry." Maybe a week later he'd show up with a Texas tan and say,
"Well, I'm back fellows. Did anything happen while I was
gone?" But it wasn't all that crazy and there were a lot
of very good and conscientious people there.

H. That's a good regress into an area that badly needed to
be covered.

N. We had our first child while I was at Bolling Field. Our
son was born at the base hospital with airplanes practi-
cally flying in and out of the windows and the WAC atten-
dant warning me to stay away until the moment of truth.

H. Then, bringing us up to date. You were released and shortly
thereafter hired as a civilian by Personal Narratives Di-
vision.

N. That's right. Here's a little background on PND. It must
have been around 1944 or thereabouts that the Air Force de-
cided that they should establish a unit to write human
interest, narrative type histories of various of the Air
Forces and Auxiliary groups, of which the CAP was one.
The people working there, as I said, were a combination of
military, civilian and some name authors who were contacted
and paid for their work. They were assigned certain projects
and they had a lot of research help from our unit. Among them was Walter D. Edmonds, who wrote "Drums Along the Mohawk" and other early American stories. Then there was Phillip Wiley, who was well known who worked for a time on the 20th Air Force story.

H. He went off on things like "The Generation of Vipers".

N. Yes, that's what I knew him best for. And then a good friend of mine, Vern Haugland, who is retired and now lives near me, did a book called "To the Philippines and Back", a story about General Douglas MacArthur and the recapture of the Philippines. So it was a very lively outfit. Much of the time we were based in lower Manhattan at 57 Broadway, an old office building which housed some other Air Force enterprises. We were just a few buildings from the Yank office and Camp Newspaper Service. I met Private Hargrove up there in Yank, along with some other people. We were just around the corner from Wall Street. I was living at Hempstead, Long Island, and my commuting left something to be desired. I would walk to a bus stop, take the bus up to the Long Island Station, then ride into lower Manhattan. There I would get one subway and would then transfer to another. I walked the last three blocks through Trinity Church yard and some other very picturesque corners of Manhattan. It took me almost two hours to get to work in the morning.
H. And that was as a civilian?

N. This was first as a military type and then as a civilian. But we did have our house up there in Hempstead. Every now and then, I would be sent down to the Pentagon in Washington to follow some research leads down there. So it was a lively and exciting time. I was a member of the PND at the time of VJ day, August 15th in 1945, when Japan surrendered. I remember the riotous and wonderful celebrating around Times Square and up and down the adjoining streets. It was just an exciting period and I felt lucky to be in on it.

H. In a place like that. Then you were in a civilian capacity when you received your assignment to go on the "Flying Minute Men" project. Is that correct?

N. I was, yes. I looked in my journals the other night. I think it was in early April of 1946 when I was assigned to do this book on the Civil Air Patrol. Truthfully, I hadn't heard too much about the Civil Air Patrol before that.

H. Now, how did you physically get the assignment? Did somebody walk up to you and say, hey, Bob?

N. Well, the fact that I had done the Nurse Corps book and had a good record with my research and my other writing assignments probably influenced the PND bosses. I probably
had more contacts with the Air Force than most of the people on the staff. The book was designed as one way the Air Force could give some special recognition to the Civil Air Patrol for its wartime missions.

H. Was this a relatively high priority project? Or was it just one of the many?

N. I'd say it was fairly high. I'd say they gave it a real push. I had pretty much carte blanche to ask for what I needed in the way of some back-up help and to go back and forth to Washington. I immediately made personal contact with Civil Air Patrol headquarters back when Colonel Johnson was in charge. Major Blee, I think it was Major then, was second in command. Kendall Hoyt was just about phasing out of the office down there at that time. He was going into some PR projects of his own in Washington.

H. Kendall was getting out of the military then, too.

N. Yes, Ken gave me a lot of guidance in those early days regarding the beginnings of the Civil Air Patrol. He also helped acquaint me with a lot of the people he thought I should talk to. My basic guidance came from Blee, Johnson and Kendall Hoyt primarily, and then from a fellow by the name of Major Burroghs. He followed Ken Hoyt into the Public Affairs slot there.
H. Oh, Hoyt at the time had settled down to just public affairs? He had left the training side of the house.

N. Well, he left the Bolling field headquarters fairly soon after my tie-in with the book, but he still was available for phone queries and for personal conferences and so on. So I considered him a very key person in helping me get underway with the book. Concerning the mechanics of writing a book like this, there's no set way. I read just about everything that had been written about CAP and talked personally to the people at headquarters. Then, very soon, I went on a tour of at least eight of the State Wings.

H. Before your tour, let me establish your rapport with Colonel Johnson at the time. Was he interested in the project?

N. He was tremendously interested in it. Wonderfully helpful. He was just a fine gentleman and a very knowledgeable guy. Of course, Colonel Blee knew everything that had happened and he was a bearcat on the policy, the administration, the whole story. So, between the two ... of course, Colonel Johnson was undoubtedly the spearhead who went all over the country and made all kinds of appearances. He was gone a lot. Blee was the man in the saddle. You could always count on him being there. So they gave me a very good start and good follow-on support.
H. Personal perception more than anything else, how about the relationship between Blee and Johnson? How did you feel that thing was?

N. As far as I could tell, they were sort of a hand and glove kind of combination because Johnson was doing things Blee could never do. Blee was the detail man who was handling things at the desk and at headquarters that Johnson probably wouldn't have had the patience to handle. So they were really an ideal team.

H. Good case of complementary staffing?

N. I had great respect for both of them.

H. In case you suspected that query had a very specific purpose. From the standpoint I'm a personal admirer of Blee and I'm not discrediting Johnson, but I think Colonel Blee was somewhat overlooked in CAP history.

N. Well, he wasn't as colorful and dynamic a figure as Johnson, but he was the solid operator, the solid day-after-day worker and handler of all kinds of problems and projects.

H. For fear of putting words in your mouth, I'll ask you this in the form of a question. Your assessment of Colonel Johnson's wartime role was what?
N. Well, I can't give you a comprehensive answer. I can't pretend to have known all of the things he did, because I think he was very active in the Ohio Civil Aeronautics circles and many other national projects before CAP came into being. My principal contact with him was in the Civil Air Patrol Headquarters office and through reading various articles and reports regarding his various projects.

H. Well, to quote Col Grace Hopper, "He was a true leader and not a manager". And Blee would be the manager.

N. I would say that's a very good assessment. And it's quite natural that one person can do things the other would not be too likely to handle. So it was a 1-2 punch really.

H. As you probably know, in military nomenclature that's called complementary staffing.

N. Right.

H. And it's not only good in the military; it's really good in civilian life too.

N. Continuing with my field trip, I hit at least eight of the Wing Headquarters and some of the activity sites. I became acquainted with such people as Ike Vermilya down in Florida, and of course, Zack Mosley. Later on, he
added his cartoon touches to the book. William Pruit, in a place called New Orleans, Louisiana, was wonderfully helpful. A very personable fellow. I didn't have as much time in New Orleans as I would have liked. I was just discovering Bourbon Street when I had to move on. Oh yes, I met Harold Byrd down in Texas.

H. The Harold "Dry Hole" Byrd?

N. Yes, the Harold Byrd who was, as you can guess, a most expansive and dynamic personality. He generated a certain amount of super-charged air along the way, but he was a very wonderful guy. Earlier, I visited the Michigan and Wisconsin Wings. Out in Colorado, I think the name of the Wing Commander then was Smethills, something like that. Of course, it was out there that I met Bill Madsen who was one of the chiefs of the Courier and other special flying services for CAP. He treated me to a wonderful afternoon of acrobatic flying out in the mountains near Boulder, and supplied me with excellent material for the book.

H. How did you travel during this period of time, Bob?

N. I flew commercially.

H. Did you have a budget? Or did you just go like you wanted?
N. No, we worked through some of the CAP people to set up reservations, but it was paid for by the project. I was treated hospitably everywhere I went and, of course, was treated to a number of dinners and invited to special functions wherever they were occurring. Back to my key contacts, I met Frank Dawson in Charlotte, North Carolina. I got to know him quite well. It was a terrible shock when he crashed.

H. How did you choose your ports of call, Bob?

N. It was a matter of practical selection. I could reach a number of the authorities and the veterans of the CAP projects, including Coastal Patrol, in the Northeast. I made several day runs up to Philadelphia to talk to Col Ralph Earle. He brought many members of his old Coastal Patrol squadrons to the Jockey Club and they staged a lunch around a large round table one noon and we talked until about three in the afternoon. I got some wonderful stuff out of that. Then I went up to Wilmington and met with Hugh Sharp and others who were prominent in CAP. I made these local shorter runs to reach these people. Once I had mined my Northeast contacts, I targeted the Midwest and part of the South and the Southeast. Just about the same time, another member of the Personal Narratives Division, a fellow by the name of Herb Rosen, visited the Nevada Wing and continued on to several other West Coast stops including California and
Oregon. He fed material back to me and brought back a lot of photos and personal impressions.

H. That naturally leads to your primary source of documentation then were CAP'ers or ...

N. The CAP Bulletin and other secondary sources were valuable, but the liveliest stories and the most interesting details came directly from veterans of the missions themselves who could tell their stories and could answer direct questions.

H. So you would say then that your primary sources were more CAP oriented than Army Air Force?

N. Oh, yes, much. I suppose I wrote scores of letters tracking stories and asking for amplification of certain details. I corresponded with Civil Air Patrol people in almost all of the states.

H. How did they receive you?

N. Without any exception, very well. They wanted their story told.

H. We were talking when we had to change tapes about the responses from CAP members. You said they were overwhelmingly in favor of the project, therefore they were
free with their information.

N. Very cooperative. Not all of them had the kind of time anymore to sit down and write a great deal in detail, but they would usually do what they could or refer you to somebody who could handle some segments for them or give you some other insight. As the project developed, the book skeleton that had been laid out in the form of chapter outlines began to fatten up. However, later in '46, with so many of the Air Force projects being dismantled, we detected early signs that our unit would not be going indefinitely. Because of the time pressure, PND assigned another man to the project to give me a hand. He handled certain parts of the book in close coordination with me and others.

H. The handwriting started showing up that you were going to lose your money.

N. Well, the handwriting was becoming very prominent upon that well known wall that come sometime in early 1947 the unit would probably be dismantled. Some of the projects that were only halfway along or hadn't progressed too well had to be dropped, and the available resources were turned to those that were in progress that had good chance of making the deadlines.

H. That was a triage arrangement. If it could survive you'd
spend the time on it.

N. Right. We had several senior editors who were becoming increasingly involved as the book progressed and got nearer to the finish line. Lining up a suitable publisher was another consideration. There were several that were interested but not all of them were reliable companies. But things were sorted out, luckily, through one of the editors who was a friend of Charles Pearce. He sold the idea and the book, so to speak, to Duells, Sloan and Pearce. The publishers were enthusiastic and worked closely with CAP Headquarters.

H. Then the selection of the publisher was primarily looking for a quality publisher who was willing to take the book on as a project?

N. Right, and not getting sold off to some little dummy publisher who would merely do a printing job and hope to profit from tapping the membership rolls.

H. What was, if you will, the underlying factor in the decision to go commercial rather than through the Government Printing Office?

N. All of these books written under PND were intended for commercial publication. They wanted to get wider readership, wider representation, and more acceptance on the
outside than if they had merely been turning out a military history or an in-house brochure.

H. So it was a policy decision?

N. Yes, and it was decided early in the game. Actually, it worked out pretty well.

H. I think it was a good decision, I was just curious to find out why it didn't go the other route.

N. Of course, the PND set things up so the book proceeds were to go to the Civil Air Patrol.

H. Repressing to your mechanics. How do you go about writing a book like that?

N. Well, it's a matter of doing what a sculptor does in a way. It's that way with most kinds of serious writing. You gather the essential facts, the basic materials, and they're like the clay the sculptor works with. You don't have the fine edges yet, and you don't have all the shapes, but you build on this material and attach the logical requirements of telling the story. Then you fine tune as you go along and you sort things out and you edit and you discard and you amplify and you finally get a balance that you're satisfied with.
H. How do you build in? Do you build in from a chapter title? Do you build in from the material and then decide on a chapter title?

N. Well, first thing I did, within two to four weeks of taking on the project, I did all the reading I could. Then I talked to all the available people at headquarters. Then, based on my findings to that point, I established a chapter outline which changed very little in the course of all the writing. You'd summarize, you'd tell those things you wanted to hit in each chapter. Of course, you showed what you were doing and how you conceived this thing to people like Colonel Johnson, Colonel Blee and the people in your own outfit.

H. How about the editing? Did you do it or was it internal PND people who did the work?

N. Well, they did a lot of it. Especially toward the end. They did some I didn't always approve of. Like knocking off that "Propwash" chapter, for instance.

H. Well, we paid them back.

N. Yes, I know.

H. It's now downstairs and sold out.
N. That's good. I felt that was a good one because it was sort of a catch-all. But I always do a lot of my own editing along the way because I've always been as much of an editor as I have been a writer. About half of my jobs have been editing jobs. But a book project is really something; it becomes almost a living thing that grows as you're working on it. Sometimes it establishes new directions and breaks through new frontiers that you hadn't thought of before. It's a growing thing.

H. Look, you know you've talked about some of the interesting people you met during the period - Hugh Sharp and Ike Vermilya and others. How about it, did you have any really spectacular interesting experiences that would be worthy of note?

N. You mean tied to the Civil Air Patrol?

H. Yes, tied to your tour when you were developing the story.

N. Well, I had quite a number that were almost equal. The ride with Bill Madsen in his stunt plane and other contacts with him during my Colorado visit stand out in my memory. Then, getting acquainted with such a personality as "Dry Hole" Byrd down there in Dallas probably rates a close second.

H. Yes, that would have been. I had the privilege of reviewing
his papers three or four months ago and he must have been quite an individual.

N. He was. And then, of course, Frank Dawson and people like Vermilya and Zack Mosley. Not that I had any flights with them, but I had some good talks with them. Then somebody like Ralph, Colonel Earle up there in Philadelphia. It was the Suffolk, Long Island Base, that he had been Commander of. He was such a gentleman and provided me with wonderful material.

H. Did you have the opportunity to visit very many of the Coastal Patrol bases?

N. No, because at the time I made my trip they had all closed down.

H. Course they were closed down.

N. So the wartime exploits were mostly recreated from printed accounts or by contacting people who were there. I later on, of course, became fairly well acquainted with George Haddaway although I didn't meet him on my Texas part of the trip. I did meet Larry Fisher, though, and he was wonderfully helpful. He had worked with the Forest Service for the fire-spotting and had been associated with the Beaumont Coastal Patrol Base.
H. Yes, he was the base photographer and a few other things.

N. He was great. I understand that he since has passed away.

H. Yes, he passed away. Let me put it this way, Bob, I think he must have passed away because all of his papers are at the University there in Beaumont. He did a really fine photographic history of Base 10. When we get off tape I'll let you look at it. You might enjoy it.

N. Well, I'll bring this book-writing phase to an end. Things started to fall apart. At one point it looked as if the book would be taken away from me and handed to one of the senior editors. However, Civil Air Patrol Headquarters objected to that and the move was foiled.

H. Uncommon good sense.

N. The Personal Narratives Division started to dismantle. By late March or April of '47 it was pretty well gone except for the Washington office which handled administration and the archives. The New York side had disappeared completely. I was able, with the permission of CAP headquarters, to carry on with the project even after I'd been discharged from PND. I worked about a month on my own just to wind the thing up.
H. You volunteered for a volunteer organization.

N. I did. At that time I was making my transition to Air Force Times down in Washington. We left Hempstead and we took up residence in the suburb called Chevy Chase. I handled a number of cleanup details and continued to work closely with CAP Headquarters and the publisher.

H. So you actually finalized "Flying Minute Men" after you left the Personal Narratives Division.

N. Yes, I tied up the corners.

H. The loose ends, huh?

N. Yes. This was 1947, it wasn't until sometime early in 1948 that the book actually appeared in the bookstores.

H. You were in a very unique position to sit back and analyze, sort of a Monday morning quarterback position. What kind of assessment do you give to the value of the service performed by the CAP during the war?

N. I would say that, by and large, it was almost unbelievably effective in certain areas, and I would say Coastal Patrol was one of the more productive areas that nobody thought they could handle and they did. There were many others. I think that they built an esprit de corps that was tre-
mendous. About the time I came around and after the wartime missions were pretty well over, it appeared that CAP had started to lose momentum, although there were still a lot of very dedicated people following on in that postwar era. From my experience, I'd say that they more than fulfilled the expectations of the planners who conceived their missions.

H. Getting more direct, it was a positive contribution to the war effort?

N. It was a positive contribution and I'm sure that we'll never have a war of that type again, but if we ever did I'm certain that the work they did and the showing they made would guarantee that the civilian aviation would play a major role.

H. Bob Neprud did, as we all know, an excellent job on "Flying Minute Men". What happened to Bob after he finished it.

N. Well, as I said earlier, I had made contact with the Army Times Publishing Company in Washington which published weekly editions tied to the various military branches. I had contributed a number of Civil Air Patrol articles, including a kind of a condensed history, to a special edition they sent out carrying the Civil Air Patrol story. Plus other special pieces. So when I was offered the
opportunity to join them in Washington, D. C. and work on what later became "Air Force Times", I accepted gladly. I was with them about two years and things were going well. I was laying out the Air Force edition and doing much of the writing on key stories and so on. Then I got itchy feet, as I'm inclined to do from time to time. I had a good friend who had been in the Air Force squadron with me at headquarters and who was now with the State Department. He informed me that the information side of the State Department was recruiting people who possessed special skills in the communications area. He suggested that I might be interested. I soon discovered I was. I put in my application and underwent the usual checks. While I was waiting, I took a concentrated Berlitz-type course in Spanish in Washington to get myself revved up a bit. I had already minored in Spanish at the University of Wisconsin so I had some background in the language. After the usual FBI checks, the position came through in the midsummer of '49. So I went to Monterrey, Mexico, as Public Affairs Officer, which meant I handled the press relations, the college relations, the scholarship programs, and radio station contacts and so on for the Consulate General which was headquartered at Monterrey and took in the states of Nuevo Leon and Coahuila and several other northeastern segments of Mexico. During that period I got my Spanish down pretty well.

Along with my work I did some fun things. I was the only
gringo playing baseball in their industrial league in Monterrey. Pitching and playing shortstop. The games always took place on Sunday mornings. Most of the fellows on the team were blue-collars and they whooped it up on Saturday nights. Some hadn't even been to bed at game time. We'd play these games on sunbaked fields with no boundary fences. You could hit a hard grounder through the infield and if it got past the outfielder it would roll another ten minutes. Games were played in a tough part of town. There were swinging-door cantinas where it was customary during your time at bat to go and get another bottle of Carta Blanca to refresh yourself because you were baking in 100-degree heat. Some of the ladies belonging to red-light establishments in the area would frequently come out and cheer the baseball lads on. You could meet some very interesting people if you had a mind to.

I also got out into the hinterlands where there was no electricity in some of the more remote villages. I would accompany our motion picture exhibition team which carried its own generators and they would show films which might include some Walt Disney health documentaries or travelogues or some based on agricultural themes, depending on the area you went to. Sometimes you'd have gatherings of two, three, four, five hundred people and you'd swear that there weren't maybe more than fifty people in the town. But the people would come in from around the countryside.
You'd be showing the films on adobe walls and in some areas the Indian men would be gathered on one side, and the women on the other, and the children almost all over.

We had other interesting times. I was the Number One backup to the Consul General as far as entertaining and official functions were concerned, and one of the duties I inherited from him was to represent the Consulate on the platform of the Municipal Palace on New Year's Day at a very early hour. Several years running while the Mexican officials delivered their reports and their "white paper" of how things had gone over the past year and what they had done to better the community. These sessions would usually last three or four hours and it was almost impossible to leave the platform, which made for understandably difficult situations at times.

H. Especially after partying all night. (Laughter)

N. Yes, after partying all night, and maybe you hadn't been to bed yet yourself. I loved the Mexican atmosphere. We in the Consulate had contacts with all of the American businessmen and with a lot of the prominent Mexicans. Because of my job, I had more chance than anybody else to get out and mix with them. I came to know many, many people, so this was good.

H. And how long did you stay in the North of Mexico?
N. I was there for three full years. Then I transferred to Santiago, Chile, as Press Attache.

H. And that would have been about 1952?

N. Yes, 1952 is correct. I was in Mexico from 1949 to 1952 and in Santiago from 1952 to 1954. This was a bigger job in a way and in a very interesting area. Not as friendly or homey in many ways as the smaller Monterrey situation, but it was undoubtedly more big league. More congressional visitors, more foreign correspondents coming through, and undoubtedly more pressure. For instance, Eleanor Roosevelt - Mrs. Roosevelt came down that first fall I was there to be the co-leader of the American delegation at the inauguration of the new president, President Ibanez.

H. So she stayed active then, considerably after Roosevelt died.

N. She certainly did. She was greatly admired by the Chileans. She was such a strong personality, such a gracious person, and so interested in everything. She made a very good impression down there. I was closely tied to her visits. I was also involved in the press conference when she first arrived, which could have turned out rather badly. But I had an unusual person on my staff by the name of Carlos Griffin, an Anglo-Argentine who had lived in Chile most of his life and who was a skilled interpreter. He had attended
an early session at the United Nations and had traveled abroad with the Chilean president. He handled the conference like a master and foiled several potential trouble-makers among the local press. There was one particular reporter representing a Communist newspaper who was out to make trouble. At the same time, he was partaking liberally of the free Scotch being served to the press people. Whenever he would bring up something that was way off track or very inflammatory, Carlos would give it a little twist and defuse it. He did a masterful job of expressing Mrs. Roosevelt's comments to the press in the finest Chilean Spanish. After the conference broke up, the hostile journalist found that he was not able to drive home in his own jalopy because he was too far gone with Scotch. He also wasn't going to be able to get his story in, obviously, so several people from the Embassy, including myself, offered to help him put his copy together. We took him back to the Embassy press room and helped him develop a news story. We then escorted him home after he'd turned in his story at his paper. The next day it appeared and it turned out to be one of the friendliest accounts that the paper had ever carried of an American sponsored event.

H. And he was assassinated the next day? (Laughter)

N. I don't know. I think he was still around a few weeks later, but he probably lost favor with his bosses.
I also had a chance to do some off track things down there. I went on a whaling trip, for instance, out of a port called Quintay below Valparaiso. It was an extremely active whaling station where they sent out their hunter ships for anywhere from a couple of days to a week at a time. They'd haul their catches back to the port where carcasses would be processed. I had a good friend, a Dutch photographer, who opened some doors on this. He was shooting pictures for an article and I managed to tie in with him.

We went out on one of the lead ships for three days and we came back with three sperm whales weighing from 50 to 60 tons apiece and measuring about that long in feet. It was an experience I'll never forget. On one occasion, it almost looked as though one of the whales might bash our low-lying deck with his flukes. There have been cases back in the old sailing days where ships, like the Essex, were sunk by whales of this same type.

The Chilean experience had its good spots and its bad. One of the unpleasant things about going to Chile at the time, was the inflation when I arrived there in the summer of '52, the exchange was 100 Chilean pesos to the dollar. By the time we left two years later, it was over 300 to the dollar. Many of the Chileans who worked in the Embassy had a terrible time financially. Some of them literally pawned the family jewels if they had any. This was some-
what depressing.

Anyway, I had some things calling me back to the States so, in the spring of 1954, I left the Foreign Service. I discovered later that I would have been assigned to Uruguay or Argentina the next time out. Argentina I had gotten acquainted with on a 10-day trip my second season there. I arrived on the exact anniversary of Eva Peron's death which was an eerie time, because most things were shut down. The theaters were dark, many of the stores were closed, much of the public transportation was not operating, the street lights were dimmed, and there was mournful music and eulogies coming in over the loudspeaker system. Those were troubled times in Argentina and the evidence wasn't hard to find. My traveling companion, an American geologist, and I stayed at the Hotel Claridge just across the street from the Buenos Aires Jockey Club which had been gutted by fire, with firemen standing by, just a couple of months before, presumably by a Peronista mob. In contrast, I found Chile to be a very pleasant place. The general feeling toward Americans was friendly. The foods and the wines were absolutely out of this world. The Chilean women, not that I had a right to look very far in their direction, were the most attractive in all of Latin America. They dressed in kind of a saucy French manner, Parisian style, and even some of the little shop girls looked like motion picture actresses. Oh, yes, I should mention my meeting with John Wayne.
When he came to town with a couple of assistants, reportedly looking for a movie location, he received a warm welcome from the Chilean press and from the Embassy. At his first press conference at the Hotel Carrero where they serve a bona-fide American-Style martini, he amazed and mystified the Chilean press by downing at least eight or ten very dry martinis and hardly seemed to show any effects at all. Just the slightest slur to his s's.

I was among the group from the Embassy who accompanied him on a round robin tour of the sights of Santiago that particular evening. I left the group about 4 A.M. The others kept on going, almost without a break, right through the next day. They went out to one of the large country estates called estancias that somebody had access to.

H. The Duke was a real Duke.

N. Oh, he was a real Duke alright. He was a giant of a guy and he was a most pleasant person to talk with. I don't think he ever really acted much. He was just being Duke Wayne, whatever he did.

H. An interesting sidelight. Okay. You left and came back to the States. Was economic pressure the principal driver or did you just get fed up with the Foreign Service?

N. Well, there were certain disillusioning things that may
have influenced our decision. But we used to say that if we had two lives to live we'd probably want to spend one of them in the Foreign Service and the other in the States. We came to the conclusion that there were things back home that I wanted to make contact with again while there was still time. Then there was the question of schooling for our two children. My boy was about seven by the time I left there and our girl was born down there. Anyway, we got back to the States. Initially, I went back to Army Times Publishing Company for about six months on a temporary assignment. They knew I wouldn't be there forever. When we first came back from Chile my wife and I had taken a cross-country tour and we had discovered California, and especially Laguna Beach, the art colony situated about midway between Los Angeles and San Diego. When we were there, the annual pageant and art festival were in progress. Laguna Beach is one of the most beautiful places in the world and it seemed like Shangri-la. It hit me so hard that when we did get back to Washington, I was fully resolved that we would return as soon as possible - job or no job. And that's what we finally did in the Spring of '55. Somehow we made it work. I did features for a couple of the local papers and assignments for the Army Times people and other publications. As West Coast Editor for the Army Times Publishing Company, I got over to Hawaii a couple of times and up to Alaska once on assignment. I did pieces on Coast Guard activities and covered Air Force and Navy bases. I was also taking
part in community theater activities, not only acting in some things but also writing features about the theater for one of the local papers and reviewing plays as "The Playgoer". Along the way, I also wrote publicity for the Playhouse. I became deeply involved with the annual pageant, too, and was in some of the living picture and sculptures. In fact, my whole family was involved. My wife worked in the make-up side of it. Our son took part in some of the Norman Rockwell type things, and I was in some of the major productions including the "Last Supper". While all this was going on, I was wise enough to keep my contacts in the aviation field and I attended a number of aviation writers' conventions, traveling to Toronto and other far places, keeping my contacts warm. This paid off in the early summer of 1958 when I got a call from Gordy Williams, a PR chief in Boeing's airplane division near Seattle. When he asked me if I'd like to join their staff, I agreed. So I shook the sand out of my shoes (if I was wearing shoes), put on a shirt and tie again, and became a practitioner of the PR arts up in Seattle, where I remained for eight very full and exciting years. The kids pretty well got their growth in the Northwest and we all enjoyed living there.

H. That was with Boeing?

N. That was with Boeing. It was a combination of writing,
editing and special representation. The job also offered me a number of good trips including some to Latin America and Alaska with new aircraft on demonstration flights.

H. You should have been a natural for that.

N. Yes, it worked out well. My Spanish was a help, too, especially when delegations from the airlines or Latin American governments came to Seattle. I was always the person who would tie in with the sales people and others in handling the visits. I was also active with the journalists from down there. Then after eight years, tiring a little bit of the rain and the overcast, I moved to a similar position with Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach. I became the nontechnical expert down there, as I was at Boeing, cause I'm not very technically oriented. Besides writing releases and editing publications, I was the guy who rode herd, literally, on a series of cattle shipments by one of our customers down to the tip of Chile. I just missed getting a trip on one of the flights, but the cattle had top priority and I was bumped.

H. At the risk of alienating you, they already had too much bull aboard. (Laughter)

N. Perhaps. Soon after that I was given the marvelous assignment of following the progress and then handling
the publicity for the DC-9 with the big white rabbit on its tail, the Playboy rabbit. I handled the publicity and set up a lot of the shots and the Playboy bunnies would come out and pose.

H. You didn't get Larry Flint's airplane?

N. No. We didn't get Larry Flint's. Don't know what we would have done with it. I was tied in with a number of other interesting assignments, plus editing the publication that followed progress on the DC-10. Then, in the late spring of 1971, there was a terrific down-draft in the whole aerospace industry. In spite of my gray hair, I lacked seniority. After three people got bumped, I was the next to go. So, after five plus years, I left Douglas. Then I caught on with the public affairs staff of Transpo 72 during the first half of 1972 in Washington, D.C. It was the International Transportation Exposition which was staged at Dulles Airport. It only lasted about 10 days, but I think it was a year and a half in the making. It was said to be successful, but I would have to question whether anything that ran that short a time and cost that much money was really very practical. After it was over, I went to Los Alamitos, back to the home base I've maintained for 17 years. I soon got a job with an engineering consulting firm and they put me in charge of their publications and advertising. This lasted for
a year and a half. Then I hooked on with Long Beach College on a series of three different projects, including curriculum development for their technical school and work on special publications. About the same time, I was also beginning to work on PR and publications for a school district located near our home in northern Orange County. I stayed with this from September of 1977 until about a year ago. Along the way, I taught some creative writing classes at night. I took my retirement in March of '82. That's a little over a year ago. Since then I've done a few PR projects and have started to work on what I hope will be a book describing my growing up in rural Wisconsin.

H. You need to touch base with George Haddaway. George and you have paralleled an awful lot in that period. He's a little bit older than you are. Well Bob, it has been a real pleasure working with you.