2 minute, 30 second Excerpts with Introductions:
Vietnam War Audio Correspondence (NPM 2011.2020.1)
Recorded by
Pfc. Frank A. Kowalczyk, U.S. Army, HQ 46th Engineers Battalion, 20th Brigade;
Long Binh Post, Vietnam;
March 1969

[Start of file: Kowalczyk.mp3]

Narrator: Private First Class Frank A. Kowalczyk frequently exchanged audio
recording with his family in Calumet City, Illinois during his 11 months and 20 days in
Vietnam. Kowalczyk talked about his impressions of the war, memories of home, and
thoughts about his future. The following is an excerpt from Kowalczyk’s March 1969
tape.

Private First Class Frank A. Kowalczyk: . . . this tape, it might be a little short
because there ain’t much you can say around here to cover 1,800 feet of tape. But the
thing I wanted to ask you, like this buddy of mine just came up with ideas; when you do
make me a tape and send it back with all this talking on it, catch the weather or the
news or something on television on it. It definitely would be strange to hear something
like that way over here because you just don’t hear nothing that good back here.
So, how’s the weather been back there? Probably the snow and all that starting to melt.
I wish we had a little snow over here. It sure will kill a lot of these bugs and make a lot
of us feel a lot better. Of course, a lot of people here it doesn’t bother them, but at
nights since you pull guard around here and it gets cold, you wish you had your field
jacket out there because it gets cold. I know it’s going to be hard for me to get used to it
when I get back in the world, but I ain’t going to complain once I get back, I’m going to
take it. I’m going to ask Inland [Construction Company] when I get back to work to put
me on an inside job for the winter because I don't think I'll be able to hack that first winter out there. I'll give it a try if he can't do nothing for me. The most I could do is just freeze to death out there.

Narrator: Frank Kowalczyk continued the audio letter, recalling recent incidents at Long Binh Post and expressing his thoughts about the Vietnam War.

PFC Kowalczyk: My buddy over here, he had staff duty/runner one night; he had guard the next time. I'm telling you he was tired, he had no sleep that night and went out on guard and then we had alert the next day. He didn't even get -- he got his half-day sleep just like I did. Usually, when he has guard, I have CQ/runner.

Finally, we had guard together because he volunteered to take another guy's place because this guy was going home in three days and they sent him out doing guard which is very foolish. His lieutenant found out about it and he said, what's that man doing out there in the first place? So he volunteered to take his place. I was a little bit mad at him for him going out there since he's married and not single, but you can tell him nothing. He's just like the rest of us, wants to get — see a little bit of the action like anybody else does. You really can't blame him.

Everybody wants to try it once to see what kind of a man they are and believe me, the first time you're out there and something happens, you shake and you keep shaking after it because there's always -- the first time for everything there. This isn't my first time as you already know. I have been in trouble with it, but still I shook enough when the stuff was happening out there, but I still didn't do anything to let anyone else get hurt if it was possible to do it.

Right now in the background, you'll probably hear a chopper flying over. They fly
over here quite a bit. All day long, we have them coming over. It’s one of the best things we have over here in Vietnam, is the helicopter. [End of file & transcript]