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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Jim Hall & Minnie Mae Hall
Conducted by Laura Calkins, Ph.D.
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Transcribed by Jessica Harrell & Jessica Fontenot**

1 Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
2 University beginning an oral history interview with Col. Jim Hall and his wife Minnie
3 Mae Hall, who is also here with us. We are all sitting in the interview room in the Special
4 Collections building on the campus of Texas Tech. Today is the twenty-fourth of March
5 2005. I want to first of all thank you, of course, for visiting with us here and for agreeing
6 to participate in the program and be such wonderful supporters of the Oral History
7 Project and the Vietnam Archive. Jim, if I can, let me begin by just getting some
8 biographical data onto the record. Could you tell us where you were born and when?

9 Jim Hall: I was born on a farm just north of Greenville, Texas, which is about
10 fifty miles northeast of Dallas, Texas, on April 8, 1919. My mother—my mother's
11 parents lived there, and that's why I was born there, although my mother and dad lived in
12 Greenville.

13 LC: Now how long had you had family members on your mom's side here in
14 Texas? Does this go back a long way?

15 JH: My grandparents moved here before the turn of the century. They moved to a
16 little town called Cego, Texas, down just southeast of Waco, where my mother was born.
17 Then they moved to Kingston. This is the farm community that I mentioned just north of
18 Greenville. I don't know what year, but she went to school in Kingston and finished high
19 school there.

20 LC: Is that right? Now where did your grandparents move from?

1 JH: My grandmother was from Mississippi and my grandfather was from
2 Alabama. Their name was Horton.

3 LC: Okay, spelled like you would think? H-O-R-T-O-N?

4 JH: Correct.

5 LC: Any military background for any of those folks that you know of?

6 JH: Not that I'm aware of. I don't think they were involved.

7 LC: Now did you have brothers and sisters, Jim?

8 JH: I had one sister. She died in 1969.

9 Minnie Mae Hall: '79.

10 JH: 1979.

11 LC: What was her name?

12 JH: Gwendolyn.

13 LC: Okay. What did she do? Did she stay in Texas?

14 JH: She stayed in Texas. She married a Navy man from World War II. His
15 parents lived in Lytle, Texas, just out of San Antonio. She moved to San Antonio when
16 they married. He became a president of a bank down there and she passed away down in
17 that area.

18 MMH: She had an interesting career, too.

19 LC: What did she do?

20 JH: She was a teacher.

21 MMH: A postmistress.

22 JH: And a postmistress.

23 LC: Is that right?

24 MMH: Yeah.

25 LC: Good for her.

26 JH: Yeah, she did that in Lytle.

27 LC: Now where did she qualify to become a teacher?

28 JH: At Howard Payne in Brownwood.

29 LC: Okay. How did she come to go to college, then? Did she pay for that?

30 JH: No. It's a long story. If I'm getting off base here, you can stop me.

31 LC: No, it's fine.

1 JH: My mother and father were divorced when I was eight. My sister was three
2 years younger than I. When my mother and father divorced, my father moved to Dallas
3 from Greenville and left us stranded. My grandmother and grandfather had sold their
4 farm in Kingston and moved to Commerce, Texas, just again, east of Greenville and
5 established a boarding house for young ladies attending East Texas State University. It
6 wasn't a university at the time. My mother moved us there with them. She moved to
7 Dallas to try to find work. She had no experience in anything. She was a seamstress. She
8 got a good job—not a good job—she got a job as a seamstress at a dress factory in
9 Dallas, a so-called sweatshop.

10 LC: You mentioned that, yeah. Do you know what the name of that company
11 was?

12 JH: It was Marcy Lee. I don't know, company, corporation, whatever. It's gone
13 now. She worked six days a week, at least ten hours a day. Some weeks during the
14 Depression she made as few as six dollars a week. So we lived on that until I got old
15 enough to begin to earn a little money mowing lawns, working in a grocery store, filling
16 station, carrying a paper route when I was fourteen. My sister and I went onto high school
17 and got out of high school, but I didn't go to college because there was no money. I
18 didn't know anything about earning big money enough to go. My mother didn't have any
19 education to try to get me along that line. I had a good friend who was a tile-setter and
20 got me a job as a decorative tile-setter's helper, and eventually an apprentice. Now to go
21 back to my sister, she came along three years after I did. She established contact with my
22 father, who then gave her the funds to go to Howard Payne, but I never did contact him
23 and he never did contact me until I actually was drafted into the service and he realized
24 he had a namesake.

25 LC: Okay.

26 JH: Then kind of took an interest in me and then continued on after World War
27 II. During World War II and after World War II, we became close.

28 LC: That's a very—that's an incredible story, actually.

29 JH: So that's how my sister got her education, because she got back and
30 contacted him. Long story.

1 LC: Well, no, it's a very interesting story. Now I'm going to ask Minnie Mae
2 now some of the same kinds of things. Where were you born?

3 MMH: I was born in Dallas, Texas. Love Field now has been built over our home
4 place. It expanded and they took our—we lived on Lemon Avenue and Love Field had to
5 grow. So we moved to Irving.

6 LC: What about your family?

7 MMH: Well, I was born coincidentally on April the eighth, 1922.

8 LC: No kidding.

9 MMH: He tells everyone I'm older than he is. It's not true. Anyway, I went to
10 North Dallas High School. Two years I was in Irving High School because we moved
11 there to—my mother inherited her people's farm out there.

12 LC: So you would've graduated from Irving, then?

13 MMH: No, I went my freshman and sophomore year in Irving and then I went
14 back to Dallas and I graduated from North Dallas.

15 LC: What year was that?

16 MMH: I graduated in June of 1939.

17 LC: Okay. Now—

18 MMH: I did not go to college. I had two older brothers. One became a lawyer in
19 Dallas and the other one went to A&M and then he joined the Air Force. I lost two
20 brothers in World War II. One was a pilot in a B-25, the younger one, and the older one
21 was a bombardier on a B-24, both in the European section of the war.

22 LC: Now, Minnie Mae, do you feel like you could tell me anything about those—
23 about where they were serving?

24 MMH: Well, I think my husband probably knows more about—we know a lot
25 about them now. We didn't know anything at first. They were just missing in action.

26 LC: Okay.

27 MMH: It took about fifty years to find out about one of them.

28 LC: What was his name?

29 MMH: You want to tell her all this? He's better about words than I am.

30 JH: Harry, Jr., Harry Clay, Jr., was the older.

31 MMH: C-R-U-M-P was the last name. Crump. C-R-U-M-P.

1 JH: Following him was Walter Pershing Crump.

2 MMH: Named for the general.

3 LC: Sure. Now tell me first about Harry.

4 JH: Okay. Harry—let me first tell you about Walter.

5 LC: Walter? Okay, sure.

6 JH: His nickname was “Bitsy.” He joined the Air Corps in late 1940 and became
7 a pilot in ’41. They sent him to Brazil for some kind of action, we don’t know what. He
8 came back to the United States in 1942, mid-1942 and was reassigned to Columbia,
9 South Carolina, B-25 training organization, and from there went through Europe and
10 through England and down into North Africa into Algeria while Rommel was still in
11 charge of North Africa.

12 LC: Okay, so ’43?

13 JH: Early ’43. February?

14 MMH: Yeah. He was lost in February.

15 JH: He was lost on a bombing mission over either Algeria or Libya. We’re not
16 sure exactly where he was shot down, but several years—and we never did know any
17 details about that. Several years later—am I getting too—?

18 LC: No, this is wonderful. This is very important.

19 JH: Several years later, I read an article in a magazine, an Air Force magazine,
20 said something about B-25s in the Mediterranean. So I contacted the publisher of that
21 book and asked who I could talk to about the author, if they could tell me. They gave me
22 the author’s name. He was actually the secretary of the association of the bomb group
23 that Bitsy was in. He said he published either a monthly or a quarterly newsletter. He
24 would put in a note in that if we were interested in finding out something about Walter
25 “Bitsy” Crump who flew out of Algeria in 1943 and was lost. As a result of that, we got
26 about three letters from people who knew him. We’ve had phone calls from a couple
27 people, one who was actually his wingman when he was shot down. So that told us what
28 happened. He got hit directly by an anti-aircraft fire. The airplane exploded and he went
29 down. Later, after the ground forces had moved Rommel out of that area, the wing
30 commander sent a team out to see if they could find any evidence of what might have

1 happened. In that Arabic country, everything had already been picked over and they don't
2 know what happened to the bodies or anything.

3 LC: So they never got any evidence?

4 MMH: No.

5 JH: None whatsoever.

6 LC: You heard the wingman tell you, the eyewitness?

7 MMH: Mm-hmm. It was so nice to talk about it.

8 LC: I believe that probably was. That probably was very—

9 MMH: After about fifty years, wasn't it? It was a long time afterwards.

10 JH: Yeah, a long time.

11 MMH: Then later, I received a telephone call one Sunday afternoon from a
12 history teacher from Grand Prairie, Texas. He had been to an estate sale and found—well,
13 he bought things pertaining to the war. We had both of our names listed in the Dallas
14 telephone book because we lived there for years. There is a set of books called *The*
15 *Fighting Men of Texas*. On one page are my two brothers, Jim, and my other brother.

16 LC: All in a photograph together?

17 MMH: All in a photograph together, and a little bio there. It said Jim Hall was
18 married to Minnie Mae Crump, who was sister of these three men. Well, he bought these
19 books or had these books. This teacher looked in the Dallas phone book, found my name,
20 called us up, and he had bought all kinds of pictures and awards, certificates, and medals,
21 and everything that had belonged to my brother. He had married right before he went
22 overseas. She had died not too long after that. Her family had all this and why they didn't
23 return it to our family, I'll never know. Anyway, he bought all this. We met him and he
24 wanted to give all this to us. I said, "No, that's yours." He had copies made so we have
25 that.

26 LC: Okay, well, that's very nice. That's wonderful.

27 MMH: That kind of tied it all together for us.

28 LC: Yeah, that was a wonderful phone call and a very good thing he did, a very
29 good thing he did. Good for him. Now do you know much about Harry, then, that you
30 can tell me?

31 JH: Again, we knew very little about him.

1 MMH: Well, go back and tell her what he did before he went in the service.

2 JH: I will. He graduated at the University of Texas Law School and established a
3 practice in Dallas with a young partner friend of his. When Bitsy was lost, Sonny is
4 Harry, Jr. Sonny—

5 MMH: Before that. When Bitsy went into the Air Force, he—

6 JH: I'm going to tell them. Sonny closed his law office and went in the Air
7 Corps.

8 LC: Now, he enlisted. He wasn't drafted I take it?

9 JH: That's correct. He wanted to become a pilot, but he couldn't pass that exam
10 so he became a bombardier.

11 LC: Now was there a physical issue with him?

12 JH: Usually eyesight or something like that. It could be so much as colorblindness
13 will disqualify you as a pilot.

14 LC: Right.

15 JH: So he became a bombardier in a B-24. His wing was stationed in—I can't
16 think of the first name, but it's in eastern Libya. It might be Benghazi, I think, but I'm not
17 certain right off. They were on the Ploesti bombing raid and were quite damaged by anti-
18 aircraft fire over the target, but came back from Romania through Italy to come back to
19 their base. Leaving the boot of Italy over the Mediterranean, some *Luftwaffe* fighters got
20 them and shot them down. They ditched into the ocean. For years, for a long time, their
21 parents knew he was dead or knew he was missing in action, knew nothing of the details.
22 When the war was over, his pilot and co-pilot and engineer on the B-24 had survived the
23 ditching. They did not know what happened to Harry, Jr. because with all the damage that
24 had occurred to the airplane before bailout or ditching, they have a bell that they would
25 ring. It was certain signals to say, "We're going to bail out," or, "We're going to ditch,"
26 or whatever. They don't know whether he ever heard any of this or not because the
27 wiring might have been damaged. Anyway, they didn't know exactly what happened to
28 him, but they were in a life raft together. The engineer subsequently died, but the two,
29 pilot and co-pilot, were POWs (prisoner of war). The pilot came to Irving, her mother's
30 parents' home, and—I mean, her parents' home, and briefed them on as much as he knew
31 about it. Later, many years later, when we were living—I had already retired and we were

1 living in Granbury, a good friend of ours, our postman became a good friend of ours. He
2 was a B-24 crew chief, and they had a big reunion in Fort Worth. I said to him, “Will you
3 check around and see if anybody knew anything, if anyone knew Harry Crump?” He
4 came back to me one day or, he called me from Fort Worth, in Granbury, and said, “Hey,
5 I’ve got his co-pilot up here.” So we set up an interview with the co-pilot at that reunion.
6 Her sister came down from St. Louis. We all three sat in and got these details that I’ve
7 told you up to know. He never did know what happened to Harry, Jr., either. So.

8 LC: Now they were in a raft and they were picked up?

9 MMH: The pilot and co-pilot.

10 JH: The pilot and co-pilot. The engineer had died in the raft.

11 LC: He died?

12 JH: The other two were picked up as POWs.

13 LC: Now they were picked up by a German or Axis surface ship?

14 MMH: The guys, for some reason after the war, they were not friends anymore.

15 LC: Something must have happened.

16 JH: Something caused that.

17 MMH: There was something. I wonder if the co-pilot tried to do something
18 differently than the pilot did. I don’t know what happened.

19 LC: Sure, something happened. They were under extreme, extreme
20 circumstances. I can’t even imagine. Do you know where they were held as POWs?

21 JH: No.

22 MMH: I really don’t.

23 LC: Okay.

24 MMH: It was nice that we finally found something.

25 LC: That’s incredible, actually.

26 JH: Many years after.

27 LC: These reunions are pretty useful for families who need resolution.

28 JH: You know the unfortunate thing is about things like that, so many parents
29 never were able to find out. We were just fortunate in incidents, incidents.

30 MMH: My parents didn’t know all this.

31 JH: No, they didn’t.

1 MMH: They were already gone.

2 LC: Now, you have a sister as well?

3 MMH: Yes.

4 LC: So do you only have the two brothers?

5 MMH: I had three brothers. The other's younger than I, and he died about, I
6 guess, about six years ago. He was a county judge in Glen Rose, Texas, in Somervell
7 County, but he joined the Army. He could not go overseas because of the loss of the other
8 two brothers and that grieved him.

9 LC: Yes, I can imagine.

10 MMH: I had Bitsy. We married on July the twenty-fifth, and Bitsy and Annalee,
11 his girlfriend from Irving, married the week after. She went with him to South Carolina
12 and then he went overseas. They were just together about, what, three months?

13 JH: Mm-hmm.

14 MMH: Before he left. Then he was lost in February of '43 and six months later
15 Harry, Jr., was lost. So that was a double whammy for the parents.

16 LC: Well, and for you.

17 MMH: Yeah, sure. Then, of course, he was over there fighting all these wars and
18 I didn't know whether I'd ever see him again.

19 LC: Well, that must have been extremely—

20 MMH: I didn't really worry because I felt what's to be is to be.

21 LC: Was that what you thought at that time?

22 MMH: Yeah.

23 LC: Do you think most young people your age thought that, what, during the war,
24 what will happen will happen?

25 MMH: Well, I don't know about everybody.

26 JH: More so than today.

27 MMH: Yeah, oh, yeah. We were much—I wouldn't say stronger, but I mean, I
28 expected him to do what he had to do.

29 JH: Well, the situation with war, too, is much different than what we're
30 experiencing today. It was, "We've got to be involved to stop this expansion of Nazism."

1 We've got to be involved to stop the imperialism of Japan or we're not going to be a free
2 nation."

3 MMH: That's right.

4 JH: That was the focus that we had right here. You know, we honor Veterans'
5 Days and veterans and all of that, but in anything I'm ever involved in along that line, I
6 always say I was an active war veteran, but you were an active war veteran, also, because
7 without teachers, without doctors, without farmers, all those, and production line
8 people—she was Rosie the Riveter. Without all those kind of people, we wouldn't have
9 had any support to have won the war. It was remarkable the way our country came
10 together in those days, whereas today if we need a new weapons system it takes ten years
11 to get it on the ground, that type of thing. So it was a much different situation in those
12 days. Everybody contributed toward gaining the possibility of freedom.

13 LC: To what do you attribute that, the fact that everyone came together? Was it
14 that the mission was so clear?

15 JH: It was clear.

16 MMH: I think so.

17 LC: No doubts, no anti-war.

18 JH: We had to. If the Nazis had taken England and the Japanese were already
19 taking all of the Pacific—we were an isolation nation at that time, anyway. Eventually,
20 they would've been trying to override us over here in our own country, unless—and our
21 Congress at that time was very opposed to any kind of outside war.

22 LC: That's right.

23 JH: Fortunately, Roosevelt and Churchill got together under the table, so to
24 speak, and had some agreements that Congress wasn't even aware of and were able to
25 save us.

26 LC: Now—go ahead, Minnie Mae.

27 MMH: I was just going to say, the scrap drive, scrap metal. Mother and Daddy
28 gathered up everything they could find around. They didn't farm. It was a small thing
29 she'd inherited over the years. They went down around the barn and they gathered up
30 anything that looked like metal, gave it to the collection. Everybody had victory gardens.

1 They grew vegetables and everything. Of course, there was rationing and everybody had
2 to be very conservative with gasoline, tires, sugar, coffee, everything was rationed.

3 LC: It applied to everybody. There wasn't—

4 MMH: Oh, yeah. That's right. The women—while he was gone, I stayed with my
5 parents. They had the Women's Corps—I've forgotten what we were called, but we went
6 to meetings to find out what we could do and all that. It was just a different world then.

7 LC: The atmosphere was very different. Now I want to ask how you two met.

8 MMH: Can you make a short version? You know men don't like details.

9 JH: There's no short version.

10 MMH: Women like me go into too many details, so I'll let him give you a short
11 version.

12 LC: All right, we'll see if that will suffice, and then if not, we'll come back—

13 MMH: If he doesn't tell it right, I'll tell you.

14 LC: There we go.

15 JH: In February of 1940—before February of 1940, she and her best girl friend
16 named Corky went to a religious camp, a Christian camp up in Sherman, Texas. From my
17 church two good buddies of mine went to the same camp. Among about six different
18 couples of them they all met and kind of shined to each other up there. Well, her best girl
19 friend Corky and my best girl friend Emory—

20 MMH: Boy friend.

21 JH: Boy friend, Emory, continued to date when they came back from that camp
22 to Dallas. Corky invited me and my girlfriend at the time, named Betty, who I was almost
23 engaged to, to come to her house and play Monopoly. So the four of us gathered and
24 opened the Monopoly game and behold the dice weren't there. So Corky said, "Emory,
25 you've got to go up to Minnie Mae's house about a quarter mile away from Love Field
26 and get the dice. This game is Minnie Mae's." So, here we go, Emory and I knock on this
27 front door. Here comes this lovely vision, a vision of loveliness. A hundred little pin
28 curls, bobby pins all over her head—

29 MMH: I didn't know they were coming.

30 LC: You weren't ready for visitors.

31 JH: That's another story.

1 MMH: He thinks it was set up.

2 JH: A housedress on and fluffy house shoes. We got the dice and walked back to
3 the car. I said to Emory, “You’ve got to get me a date with that.” Not her, with that. So
4 we went back and played Monopoly. Later, Corky invited Emory and me back to her
5 house to play Monopoly and invited Minnie Mae.

6 LC: Yeah, no Betty this time.

7 MMH: No Betty. We left her out of it.

8 JH: So during this game, Minnie Mae said, “My mother’s giving me my
9 eighteenth birthday party”—at a nice park in Dallas, Lee Park, which was very nice. It
10 has a nice kind of ballroom-type hall that you can rent.

11 MMH: Arlington, just like the Arlington.

12 JH: “Would you like to come to my birthday party?” I said, “Sure, when is it?”
13 She said, “April the eighth.” I said, “Oops, sorry, my mother’s giving me a birthday party
14 the same night with my Sunday school class guys to play Forty-Two and have homemade
15 ice cream.” Well, a little silence there, and she said, “Well, when you all finish playing
16 Forty-Two and have your ice cream, why don’t you bring your guys over to my party?”

17 MMH: See, I was a fast thinker.

18 LC: I guess. You caught that very quickly.

19 JH: There was about six or eight of us, these South Oak Cliff boys, about twelve
20 miles away from there, came barging into this party and those north Dallas guys didn’t
21 like this at all.

22 LC: I’ll bet they didn’t.

23 JH: Anyway, we had a good time. So that kind of broke the ice and we started
24 dating. By mid-1940 we were beginning to talk about marriage.

25 MMH: It was the summertime.

26 JH: Well, first of all, she was going steady with a guy named Homer Whitley. So
27 she dropped Homer and I dropped Betty.

28 LC: Had to get rid of them.

29 MMH: Get rid of them, yeah.

30 JH: So by mid-1940, we were talking about marriage, but we were also hearing
31 and reading that there was a possibility of a draft in late-1940. So we said, “I’m twenty-

1 one. I might be drafted so let's wait and see what happens because if there is a draft I
2 don't want to be married and leave you here alone." So we decided to wait. Well, in
3 September they had the big fishbowl drawing up in Washington pulling our numbers out.
4 My number was pulled out to be January or February of '41 with the first draft out of
5 Dallas being November of '40. So we talked about it and I said, "Why don't I volunteer
6 for this first draft, get that year out of the way, and then I'll come back and we'll save
7 three or four months before we get married?" So we did that. I was in the first draft out of
8 Dallas. November 26, 1940. Before that year was up Congress passed another law that
9 said, "You're in for the duration." So that's how we met.

10 LC: That kind of scotched the plans about you would come back after a year
11 and—

12 MMH: Yeah.

13 JH: It did.

14 LC: So when did you actually get married, then?

15 JH: Okay. I was stationed in San Antonio at Fort Sam Houston in the field
16 artillery.

17 LC: Now had you gone to basic there?

18 JH: I went to basic, yes.

19 LC: At Fort Sam?

20 JH: 1940 and got out of there in January of '41.

21 MMH: Field artillery.

22 JH: I went into the 15th Field Artillery and made corporal while there.

23 Immediately after Pearl Harbor in December '41, I heard about the aviation cadet
24 program. So in January of '41, I went down and applied for it. Wait, '42. I went down
25 and applied for aviation cadet, passed the exam, and was accepted, but had to wait for an
26 opening, which became available in June of '42. In the meantime, Minnie Mae had
27 moved up to Austin to be closer to me. I'd get off on maybe one weekend a month and go
28 to Dallas to see her from 1940 on. In early '42, her friend Annalee that we mentioned a
29 minute ago, Bitsy's wife, had an apartment there in Austin, and she worked in the
30 Department of Education and getting her law degree at UT (University of Texas).

31 LC: She was going to law school?

1 JH: Yes.

2 LC: Wow, that was brave.

3 JH: Yeah. She invited Minnie Mae to come down and share the apartment, live in
4 the apartment with her, got her a job in the Department of Education there in the capital
5 of Texas, small, small government at that time. So that made it easier for me, to get to
6 Austin. So in May of '42, I was home on leave already planning to think about getting
7 married. I went out and bought a ring without her knowledge. I went to her mother, who
8 we were just like this (gesture). I said, "Minnie Mae and I are talking of marrying. Do
9 you concur?" She said, "Oh, yes, that's fine." So I said, "Well, I think I should ask Mr.
10 Crump." She said, "That would be real nice." So one day I was there while I was on this
11 leave. Mr. Crump put his hat on and said, "I'm going to go down to the barn and look at
12 my cows." So I said, "May I go with you?" So we went down—is this getting too
13 detailed?

14 LC: This is wonderful.

15 JH: We went down to the barn—I have to digress a minute. Several years before
16 that, he had been cranking a—

17 MMH: Oh, years before, he had been cranking an old water pump in our home in
18 Dallas. Some way it broke his finger. People didn't run to the doctor all the time as they
19 do now and blood poisoning set in.

20 LC: Oh, dear.

21 MMH: All of a sudden he had streaks and everything on his arm and he went to
22 the doctor. They removed his finger about to here (gesture).

23 LC: At the knuckle, the second knuckle?

24 JH: Now back to the barn. I said, "Mr. Crump, Minnie Mae and I have been
25 talking about getting married, and I wonder if you would give me your permission to
26 marry your daughter." That was on his right hand. He took that little finger like that
27 (gesture), pointed back at the house and said, "You go ask her mother." I already had.

28 LC: You cleared that one already.

29 JH: So Minnie Mae and I were dating one of the nights there while I was on
30 leave. We were talking about engagement. She said, "Let's—I don't accept it. Let's get
31 engaged. We'll talk about marriage later." Well, I already had the ring in my pocket. I

1 said, “Well, I have to know the size of your finger, so take your class ring off and let me
2 try it on my finger so I’ll know what size to get.” So she gave me her class ring and I put
3 it on. Then I took the other ring out and put it back on her finger. She said, “That’s not
4 my class ring.” Then she yelled and she said, “Turn on the headlights.”

5 MMH: She doesn’t know where we were.

6 JH: Oh, we were parked on the shore of Bachman Lake just north of Love Field.
7 That’s another long story. I’ll get to that. She ran around the front of the car so she could
8 see that ring. She hadn’t seen it. She started yelling, “I’m engaged! I’m engaged!” Well,
9 there’s security in numbers. She had about six friends parked over there, too, you know.

10 MMH: That was my plan.

11 JH: All these girls jumped up with their boyfriends to come over to see that ring.

12 MMH: We were all listening to Kay Kyser and his musical college on the radio.

13 JH: So, that started our engagement. Then by July, we decided July was time to
14 get married.

15 LC: Now you had just gone into the training—

16 JH: I was still in the field artillery when we were engaged, but before we got
17 married, I was an aviation cadet. I was an aviation cadet in June of ’42. We were married
18 in July of ’42.

19 MMH: They frowned on wives.

20 JH: Yeah. They did not want wives following the husbands as cadets because it
21 interrupts the continuity of study and training and learning and all of that.

22 LC: Sure. So you stayed in your job in Austin?

23 MMH: No, I went home to Mama.

24 LC: Would you have been allowed to keep your job when you were married?

25 MMH: I don’t know. I don’t know.

26 JH: Oh, probably, yeah.

27 MMH: Well, I’d imagine because they were short of help with all the men gone.
28 Annalee, of course, stopped school. Well, it was summertime. She didn’t go back to
29 school then. She did later. I went back to Irving and stayed with Mother and Daddy. So
30 that was when—

31 JH: Then she went to work at North American Aviation.

1 MMH: Yeah.

2 LC: Now tell me a little bit about that. How did that come about?

3 MMH: Well, Irving, where Mother and Daddy lived, had—

4 JH: Let me set the stage for that.

5 LC: Sure.

6 JH: Irving is a suburb community of Dallas.

7 MMH: About ten miles from Dallas.

8 JH: Grand Prairie is another suburb of Dallas. Grand Prairie had a huge bomber
9 plant. North American Aviation had a branch plant from their California operation there.
10 They were building B-24 airplanes in that plant at Grand Prairie. So now you can take it.

11 MMH: Well, there was a man who worked at North American in Irving. He was
12 probably in the personnel some way. I don't remember his name or anything, but people
13 were contacting him if they wanted to work. There was a bus that came all around in
14 Irving to pick up people to go to Grand Prairie, which isn't very far from Irving. I
15 somehow got a job. I wasn't trained to do anything, but I was in the machine shop. I
16 guess I was a gopher, really, because when this person was running out of parts I had a
17 little clipboard and I would write down what they wanted. Then I'd go over to the
18 machine shop and where they were making the screws and the nuts and the bolts and
19 everything and get the product and take it back where it was needed.

20 LC: Okay.

21 MMH: I worked at night. I figured I couldn't go anywhere anyway, so I worked
22 at night. The bus would pick me up in front of my mother's gate, front gate, and I would
23 get on the bus and they would bring me back to the gate.

24 LC: So that was pretty convenient.

25 MMH: It was. It really was.

26 LC: Did you mind working at night?

27 MMH: No, I liked it because Mother and I had all day to play.

28 LC: Okay. Did you sleep?

29 MMH: Well, a little bit.

30 LC: A little bit, okay. Did you make any money at all?

1 MMH: Well, I don't remember. I'm sure it wasn't a lot because I didn't have a
2 very important job, but I thought I was doing my part of the war, you know. I felt like I
3 was doing something.

4 LC: You were doing something.

5 MMH: Yeah, not much, but it was something.

6 LC: Now how many women were working in the plant?

7 MMH: A lot. A whole lot. Some of them were really Rosie the Riveter. I didn't
8 do anything quite that good, but it was interesting and it was nice to be watching them
9 build the airplanes.

10 LC: Involved. You must have felt involved. Especially since he was now going to
11 be a flyer. So that kind of probably felt good.

12 MMH: Yeah, it did. So it just gave me something to do while I was at home.
13 Mother and I were good friends and we'd go shopping and everything in the daytime, so.

14 LC: Now what about your sister?

15 MMH: My sister is the youngest of the family. She's seven years younger than I
16 am. She was a little princess. Well, all just, you know—

17 LC: I bet.

18 MMH: Did for Nancy. Right now, she and I are the best of friends.

19 LC: Does she still live in the Dallas area?

20 MMH: She's in Irving now, by the way. They live in Las Colinas, which is a
21 lovely part.

22 LC: I know exactly where that is. Yes, it's very nice.

23 MMH: She, of course, was in high school. When the war was over and he got out
24 we went back to Irving and rented an apartment. She was a cheerleader. We were really
25 wanting an apartment and they were hard to come by. She came home one day and she
26 said, "Our advisor's leaving and our pep squad needs somebody. Would you take it?" I
27 didn't know one thing about being a pep squad advisor, but to get that lady's apartment, I
28 said I would do it.

29 LC: Sure enough.

1 MMH: So we were involved. He would bring home the convertibles where he
2 was working with his daddy, bring them home and they'd ride around in the convertibles
3 at the game.

4 LC: That sounds all right.

5 MMH: So it was a fun time.

6 LC: I bet it was.

7 MMH: She's in Irving now so we see each other.

8 LC: Well, that's very nice, isn't it?

9 MMH: It is.

10 LC: Jim, let me ask you about the transition that you made from the artillery to
11 wanting to be an aviation cadet. Now, had the fact that you'd known her brothers, they
12 were fliers, did that influence you at all or why did you decide to make that jump?

13 JH: Since I was about that high (gesture) living in Commerce, every once in a
14 while, maybe once every two or couple weeks an airplane would fly over. I'd watch that
15 thing 'til it disappeared. I always wanted to fly. In fact, in 1937 when I graduated from
16 high school I went out to a little airport in the southern part of Oak Cliff and took flying
17 lessons in a little Piper Cub. I soloed it after five hours at forty horsepower, forty miles an
18 hour. If you got a forty-mile an hour headwind, you just stood still.

19 LC: That can happen in Texas, too.

20 JH: Yeah. So I wanted to graduate to a little higher level of flying and I got into a
21 Spartan C-3, which was an open cockpit biplane, 225-horsepower engine. It flew about
22 sixty or eighty maybe ninety miles an hour. So that was my interest in aviation. Then
23 while I went in the field artillery, well, it wasn't a possibility because I didn't have a
24 college education. That's all they were taking initially until the war got to where they had
25 to back down and get people who didn't have a college education. So the transition from
26 field artillery to aviation cadets was very simple. After I passed the cadet examinations,
27 both physical and mental, and was accepted. My battery commander in field artillery
28 supported me a hundred percent, except he said, "I don't know why"—I put in for OCS
29 (officer candidate school) in the Army at the same time. He said, "I don't know why
30 you're accepting this. All those guys do is drink." He was the biggest drunkard in the
31 world, but that's another story. I got my orders to go into the cadets. I went to Brooks

1 Field in San Antonio. The first—I was a corporal and that was considered non-
2 commissioned officer in those days. The first thing I saw was an Air Force staff sergeant,
3 an Air Corps staff sergeant, mowing the lawn, not his lawn. I said, “Staff sergeant
4 mowing?” I said, “Man, I can’t go over this. I’m glad I’m a cadet.” Anyway, I went
5 through cadet training and had no problems at all. I had to go to what was called the San
6 Antonio Aviation Cadet Center at Kelly Field, which is now Lackland Air Force Base.
7 That was our preflight training. I think we were there about three months and then we
8 moved to Ballinger, Texas, to a little civilian-operated, Army-controlled airfield named
9 after Ballinger, Texas, for basic flying. We had civilian instructors, but we had military
10 check pilots to check the efficiency of what the civilians were teaching us. Then on to
11 San Angelo, Texas, to basic flying. We had military instructors there. Then on to
12 Ellington Air Force Base in Houston for advanced flying where we flew feeder-type
13 airplanes. I flew a twin-engine Beech, a twin-engine Curtis, AT-10s, AT-9s, and a single
14 AT-6 for gunnery, single-engine, and graduated from there. Going back to basic training,
15 when we were to leave basic training they would either send you to single-engine
16 advanced or twin-engine advanced. If you were in the upper ten percent of your class
17 academically and flying-wise you had to choose which one you wanted. Otherwise, it
18 was just the drop of a hat. So I got to choose. Well, I dearly, dearly wanted to fly a P-38
19 twin-engine. So I chose twin engine. When I graduate, I get orders to go to Midland,
20 Texas, to fly bombardier cadets and AT-11s.

21 LC: Which are the—

22 JH: Trainers for the bombardiers. They carry five bombs on each side in the
23 bomb bay, two cadets, and a bombardier instructor. One cadet would drop his five
24 bombs. The other cadet would then drop his five bombs. Then if we had a spare time
25 maybe and I’d give them a good ride around. That was very disconcerting to go back into
26 a trainer airplane after graduation and not get my P-38. So I kept volunteering and
27 volunteering.

28 MMH: I had decided he didn’t like me.

29 LC: Yeah, I bet you wondered.

1 JH: I kept volunteering to get out of that environment and get into a combat
2 outfit. She always asked me, “Why do you want to go fight?” “Well, somebody’s got to
3 fight the wars.” Anyway, but I was always declared essential, couldn’t be released.

4 LC: Now that was based on the fact that you were training people and they
5 needed trainers.

6 MMH: Yeah.

7 LC: Jim, of course, I’m sure that wasn’t, as you’ve said, what you wanted to do,
8 but did you see how important that was? Upstairs, you could see how important it was?

9 JH: I did and later in my career, in B-29s, I realized how very important it was to
10 me as a pilot and I’ll tell you why in a little bit.

11 LC: Okay.

12 JH: Then here came one day on the bulletin board, an offer for people with, for
13 pilots with over a thousand hours to volunteer to go into the 20th Air Force to fly B-29s.
14 Well, nobody out where we lived ever heard of a B-29. They were so new. So I thought,
15 “Well, this is an opportunity.” I knew it was a four-engine airplane, so opportunity. I
16 volunteered. I had 1,019 hours and I was accepted. Before I could go to B-29s I had to
17 have four-engine experience. They sent me back to Tarrant Army Airfield, which is in
18 Fort Worth. I had to go through B-29 transition there for two and a half months and then
19 go to my B-29 outfit. Well, they sent me to Lincoln, Nebraska, to be assigned to a B-29
20 outfit, but it wasn’t ready. They weren’t—the base wasn’t ready to accept the bomber yet.
21 They sent me to Tucson to be on standardization board for B-24s.

22 LC: Now, I’ll stop you there for just a second. Can you tell me about that
23 standardization board? What was the work of that group?

24 JH: Okay. When a crew—when a B-24 pilot and co-pilot had graduated from B-
25 24 transition had to wait to get a combat crew they would send them to a place like
26 Tucson, what we called a repo depot.

27 LC: A repo depot?

28 JH: I don’t know what all that stands for, but R-E-P-O, something like that.
29 Gosh, what did it stand for? Doesn’t matter. Anyway, that’s where they would go for
30 their training as a crew to get ready to go overseas.

31 LC: They would train them together as a unit.

1 JH: Yeah. We, as a standardization board, would ride with the crew after they
2 passed certain phases of recruit training to assure that they were compliant with the book.

3 LC: That they were working together?

4 JH: Working together. So that they would meld as a crew in combat.

5 LC: Absolutely.

6 JH: That was our job. I was only there a couple months before the B-29 base
7 opened and I was pulled out and sent to Great Bend, Kansas, for 19th Bombardment
8 Group.

9 LC: Now did you know that you would only be in that standardization group for
10 just a short time or did you—it wasn't certain?

11 JH: No.

12 LC: No, you did know?

13 JH: My orders said I was going to the 20th Bomber, 20th Air Force.

14 LC: So this was just you were in kind of a holding pattern and they found this for
15 you to do. Okay.

16 JH: In fact, when I got to Lincoln, Nebraska, they hadn't even heard of the 20th
17 Air Force. So I showed them my set of orders that said, "You're assigned to 20th Air
18 Force."

19 LC: That's new.

20 JH: Well, we got to Great Bend. They didn't have the B-29s for all of us to
21 really learn right there. So they had B-17s as companion trainers. So we had to check out
22 in the B-17 before we could get to the B-29. After checking out the B-29 we flew both,
23 depending on the availability for whatever we wanted.

24 LC: So there simply weren't enough B-29s available?

25 JH: That's correct.

26 LC: Jim, since you've flown the 17, the 24, and the 29, you've flown them all,
27 can you just put them side-by-side in your mind and evaluate them from a pilot's
28 perspective? I think that'd be very interesting.

29 JH: Okay. The B-24 was a beautiful flying airplane. It had what was called a
30 Davis Wing high-lift aerofoil. It flew beautifully. It could outperform, in normal flight, a
31 B-17, almost—

1 LC: Meaning responsiveness to the controls?

2 JH: Yeah. They had—plus, it was faster. It could carry more bombs, longer
3 range, that type of thing. The B-17 was more prominent than the B-24 because the B-17
4 could get shot up real badly and come back home. The B-24, if it was shot up badly, it
5 was going in.

6 LC: Now why was that? What was the characteristic?

7 JH: I think it was just the design of the airplane and the sturdiness of the
8 manufacture.

9 LC: So that was an engineering distinction between the two, that the B-17 could
10 take more structural problems, more structural damage?

11 JH: Yep.

12 LC: Wow.

13 JH: Yeah, you've seen pictures of B-17s, I'm sure, come in with a tail almost
14 shot off?

15 LC: Yeah.

16 JH: If that happened to a B-24, it's in. That old B-17 would come on back, but it
17 was slow. Well, I shouldn't say slow. One hundred and fifty miles an hour, and it didn't
18 carry near the bomb load the B-24 did. It didn't have the range a B-24 did, but I loved the
19 B-24 more than the B-17, but I would not have wanted to take a B-24 into combat.

20 LC: Just because of it's relative fragility? I mean it's more fragile.

21 JH: Yeah. Now, the B-17 compared to the B-29. The B-29 was so far advanced
22 in technology in those days, it was unbelievable what we were flying with in those days
23 compared to what the guys in Europe were with their B-17. They were in the Pacific, too,
24 the B-17s and B-24s. So that's the comparison.

25 LC: What made that B-29 the aircraft that it was? What were the changes? What
26 were the upgrades that made it just beyond the others?

27 JH: Well, it was a much larger airplane.

28 LC: It's huge.

29 JH: It would fly, cruise, at 210 miles an hour. Over the target we'd go 260 miles
30 an hour. It had—it was pressurized, which we could fly at high altitudes without the
31 oxygen mask on. It was always hanging on our helmet right beside, in case we

1 depressurized. It had remote controlled gun turrets, so the guys weren't standing there
2 doing this (gesture). Instead, they had optical-type gun sights, both for the bombardier
3 who was the forward gunner, and the right and left gunners and what we called central
4 fire control gunner who was in the center of these two and up on a pedestal looking out a
5 dome. The tail gunner, but he was all enclosed anyway, but these gun sights—not the tail
6 gunner. Well, yeah, the tail gunner had the same type of gun sight. These gun sights,
7 instead of looking through this and this (gesture), they had an optical lens with a little
8 reticle, circle. That was adjustable by size, by a knob over here. In our study of the enemy
9 airplanes, just the silhouettes of them, we had to learn what that airplane was just by
10 looking at a black silhouette, and then learn what the wingspan was of it. Once you've
11 identified as this probable type—when we're in combat, now. Once identified out in the
12 distance as that type airplane, the gunner would set in. As an example, a fighter had a
13 108-foot wingspan. Set in at 108, that made the reticle 108. Well, when he then got that
14 fighter with its wings crossways in this reticle at 108, pushed a little trigger over here and
15 that turret would swing around and zero right in on them.

16 MMH: Just like that.

17 JH: Just like that.

18 MMH: Automatically.

19 JH: The turret was some, oh, fifteen feet, thirty feet, twenty feet from where this
20 happened and that could be the bombardier with the upper turret, lower turret, and the
21 nose. Not in the nose, but right behind the pilot and co-pilot. Or it could be the upper or
22 lower turret aft of the gunner side, the gunner, the CFC (central fire control) was in. The
23 central fire control gunner, he could see all around and above him for 360 degrees
24 whereas the side gunners could only see 180 their way. So he, the CFC gunner, could
25 control who had the access to whichever turret depending on what he could see. His right
26 gunner says, "I have one at ten o'clock." Well, the CFC gunner would say, "You got
27 him," and flip a switch. He had two turrets to go on him like that. Or if the CFC gunner
28 saw one coming at ten o'clock high he'd say, "I've got it." He'd take something like that.
29 Well, then in addition to that we had radar-bombing capability. Never heard of it. It was a
30 retractable turret. I know on the B-17s, you've probably seen the ball turret that they've
31 got. Well, similar to that, except it's just a solid mass of cover. It can be retractable up in

1 between the bomb bays up into the enclosure here and there to preclude drag, except
2 when we were nearing the target, we'd put it down then. The bombardier had to be radar
3 operator.

4 LC: They'd put it down?

5 JH: They put it down and have the antennae then to pick up the target and bomb
6 by radar if the bombardier can't see the target because of clouds or whatever.

7 LC: Now during training, how much did they explain to you about how that radar
8 worked? Did they just give you a general overview or they put you through the paces?

9 JH: No, our radar operators went through school, a separate school.

10 LC: Okay, they had a whole separate training. Where was that school? Do you
11 remember? Do you know?

12 JH: No. Wait a minute—no. It might have been at what is now Edwards Air
13 Force Base, then Muroc Air Force Base, out in California. It might've been there. I'm not
14 certain.

15 LC: That had to be all introduced—that whole training program had to be
16 designed and introduced as the technology itself was coming in, which is really quite
17 something. Then you put it together all in the B-29 package. Do you remember your first
18 time that you flew a B-29?

19 JH: Yes. No, the first time, I can't say exactly the first time. I can tell you this,
20 though. The first—it didn't matter whether it was the first, second, third, or fourth—I got
21 to Great Bend, Kansas, in late August 1944. It was H-O-T.

22 LC: I'll bet it was.

23 JH: The B-29s had a history of—up to that time, a short history, but a history of
24 real engine problems, overheating. Before you could take off in a reciprocating-engine
25 airplane, you have to check the magnetos. To do that you set the propeller RPM
26 (revolutions per minute) and the inches of mercury by the throttle to so much. Then you
27 check the magneto, turn it to the left, right, off, and see if you get it as much as, oh, I've
28 forgotten now. I think a seventy-five RPM drop in the engine. You've got to go back in.
29 There's something wrong with the engine. So in doing those checks the cylinder head
30 temperature sitting on the edge of the runway, 212 is the maximum, as I recall.
31 Sometimes you get up to 230, just checking the engines in hot weather. So what we'd

1 have to do after we checked the engines, if we didn't get the drops, we would open the
2 cowl flaps on the engines, wide, taxi the full length of the runway to let the air cool the
3 engines, hot air cooling the engines. Come back and if the engines were down below 212
4 then you could take off, but they also had terrible oil leak problems with the first engines
5 we had. When we got to combat, we didn't have nearly that problem, but in training we
6 did.

7 LC: Was that a problem with seals or do you know what the problem was with
8 those oil leaks?

9 JH: I think it was seals. They were—I hate to say this. They were Dodge engines,
10 but Dodge is a good corporation.

11 LC: Okay. I'm from Michigan, so you've got to be careful with that stuff.
12 (laughs)

13 JH: That was basically it, were the seals. I don't know—

14 LC: Now did they change—go ahead. Go ahead.

15 JH: I don't know why it was just the seals from that particular company, but
16 they're the ones that always got their fingers pointed at them. You know, I was young in
17 those days, and I don't know the reality of whether it was just Dodge or not.

18 LC: That's what you guys heard. That was the scuttlebutt.

19 JH: That's who we accused. (laughs)

20 LC: That's right.

21 MMH: Had to blame someone.

22 LC: That's right. Did they switch out those engines?

23 JH: Oh, yeah.

24 LC: Who made the later ones? Do you know who made the later ones? Were they
25 still Dodge?

26 JH: Yeah, they were all under the Wright patent. Wright patent? That's not right,
27 just a Wright engine.

28 LC: A Wright engine?

29 JH: Yeah. There's another word there. It's terrible to get old.

30 LC: I think you're doing pretty well.

31 MMH: I think he did.

1 LC: I do too. Well, how long then were you at Great Bend?

2 JH: We got to Great Bend in late August of '44. Our group was ready to go to
3 combat in late January of '45. At Christmas, I took her—she was with me there. She
4 came with me after I got my wings.

5 MMH: I was with him after.

6 JH: After I got my wings, she went wherever I went.

7 LC: Okay. So could you live on base?

8 MMH: No.

9 JH: No. There was no space for civilians. I mean—

10 LC: There was no such thing?

11 MMH: We lived everywhere in anything.

12 LC: So you would just find somewhere?

13 MMH: Yeah, we stayed at a motel in Tucson.

14 LC: Catch as catch can.

15 JH: If you want to interrupt right here, before I get into—she can tell you about
16 housing.

17 LC: Sure.

18 MMH: When it was time for him to get his wings at Ellington Field, the whole
19 family, his mother, daddy, friends, after all the past years—we all went to Houston to the
20 graduation. He had no idea where he was going. People had been giving me going
21 away—I had been home all that year, just visiting him about once a month wherever he
22 was. People gave me going away parties because they didn't know if they'd ever see me
23 again. I was going to be gone. When he pinned his lieutenant bars and wings on him and
24 when he opened his orders, Fort Worth, Texas, thirty miles from my home. What a
25 letdown.

26 LC: Right, all those parties for nothing.

27 MMH: Yeah. I think everybody wanted their presents back, but anyway.

28 JH: We were only there for ten days.

29 LC: Oh, okay.

30 MMH: There, we lived in a gloomy, dark, old, old house that rented out a room
31 to us in Fort Worth. I could—

1 JH: A boarding house without meals.

2 MMH: I don't know where it was. I'd like to know now, but I didn't remember
3 where it was. We were there just a short time. I'll have to tell you something funny,
4 though. He was sleeping. He was flying and everything at different hours. One morning I
5 was supposed to wake him up and he was so tired that night—

6 JH: Let me interrupt. I need to set the timing here. When I graduated, we went to
7 Tarrant Army Airfield in Fort Worth. I was there about ten days, then got orders to go to
8 Midland, just without ever getting in a B-24 there. Then from Midland we came back
9 there to get my four-engine training.

10 MMH: Oh, is that the time?

11 JH: That's what she's going to talk about now.

12 MMH: I was mixed up on which time it was. Anyway, I hated to wake him up.
13 He was so tired when we went to bed. He told me to wake him up at a certain time, but I
14 was going to let him sleep a little while longer. Finally when I woke him up, he was
15 scared to death he was going to be late. I never let him sleep any more. That was a no-no,
16 but I just hated to wake him up. I found out later you don't worry about that.

17 LC: You found out later you don't worry about—?

18 MMH: Letting him sleep. You just get him up no matter how tired he was, but I
19 was able to follow him around. We lived in Tucson and Lincoln. In Lincoln we rented a
20 room. A dentist and his mother rented that. They were patriotic and they rented out a
21 room. I had no kitchen privileges. I could keep a little carton of milk and a sweet roll or
22 something because he flew different hours at night and all. The Y (YMCA, Young Men's
23 Christian Association) wasn't very far from there at all.

24 JH: I didn't fly at night then.

25 MMH: No, you were in Lincoln.

26 JH: Administrative, waiting for an assignment.

27 MMH: Well, anyway, we ate our meals at the Y and—

28 LC: Now did they have a cafeteria there at the Y that you could go and—?

29 MMH: Yeah.

30 LC: Did you just pay for what you selected? Is that how it worked?

1 MMH: Yeah. We had friends that were in the same outfit or the same boat. They
2 lived across the street in someone else's home. So we'd jump around with them.

3 LC: How did you get back and forth to the Y?

4 MMH: Well, he had a car.

5 JH: I had a car.

6 MMH: His dad gave him a car when he graduated. I probably mixed everything
7 up.

8 JH: Let me interject here and go way back now that we've kind of skipped over.
9 Just before I got my wings, my dad realized that I'd probably be going into combat and
10 that's when he made the first overture to us.

11 LC: Now he had kind of—he had not been in the picture. How was he keeping
12 track of what you were doing? Do you know?

13 MMH: Through his sister, I imagine.

14 LC: Okay.

15 MMH: Because they were—

16 LC: Closer.

17 JH: So my dad then—

18 LC: He's going to put in an appearance now?

19 JH: Yeah, he put in an appearance. He had an automotive salvage business in
20 Dallas, very, very lucrative. I shouldn't say very lucrative.

21 MMH: Well, it was the largest one in the Southwest.

22 LC: So he did all right?

23 JH: He did all right. So when I was in advanced flying at Ellington Field he gave
24 her a little Studebaker Champion to bring to me for my graduation present.

25 MMH: Bright red.

26 JH: 1941.

27 LC: Oh, boy, I bet you wish you had that now.

28 JH: So that's aside of how we got back together. Then after that, then we became
29 pretty close.

30 LC: Okay. Later on you worked with him for a little bit. Is that right?

31 JH: After a while. We'll get to that later.

1 LC: I thought you mentioned that. Okay, sure.

2 MMH: Anyway, we lived in very funny situations.

3 LC: I'll bet you had to.

4 JH: We had that little Studebaker to get around in.

5 MMH: Yeah. In Midland, when we went there, it was my job to go find a place
6 to live when he reported in. It was hard. There was one apartment house in Midland, if
7 you can imagine. I found—I guess we found this room, The Grapevine or something.
8 Anyway, we moved in there. All military people were there.

9 JH: Twelve apartments.

10 MMH: Twelve apartments in this one. It's still there.

11 LC: Is that right?

12 MMH: It has a new name and it's been improved, but it's still there. We visited
13 the area not long ago.

14 LC: How interesting. That must have been a funny feeling, too.

15 MMH: All the wives would chum around together.

16 LC: Sure.

17 MMH: All young, no children, and all that. Then let's see—in Tucson, we lived
18 in a motel room. In Lincoln, in the dentist's office—oh, the dentist's mother, his mother's
19 home. Where else? Oh, in Great Bend, we lived in what had been a little grocery store
20 connected to a house. They figured they could make more money renting it out than a
21 grocery store. While—a lot of details.

22 JH: Actually, it wasn't in Great Bend. It was in a little community a few miles
23 from Great Bend. It had two or three grain silos—

24 MMH: And the railroad tracks.

25 JH: The railroad tracks by the grocery store, and about half a dozen houses—

26 MMH: A one-room schoolhouse, back then.

27 JH: It had a little schoolhouse.

28 LC: Tiny. Tiny.

29 MMH: We were happy to have it.

30 LC: I bet you were.

1 MMH: When I went into the newspaper office to see if there was any ads in the
2 paper, and a young airman was being transferred and he had an apartment in this place. I
3 overheard him trying to put an ad in the paper. I followed him outside and he told me
4 what it was. I said, “Could I look at it?” So I took him in our car and took him out there.
5 It was a—what was the name of that little town?

6 JH: Dundee.

7 MMH: Dundee, Kansas. It was like one room had been the store. They had one
8 little partition for the bedroom. Two walls. Our bed was in there. I was so glad to find
9 somewhere I didn’t even look around, really. Come to find out we had no sink. We had a
10 dishpan with a faucet. It had a little bathroom to take a shower. We went down to the
11 basement and shared with someone else who lived down there. It was a place to live.

12 LC: You were in charge of finding—

13 MMH: Finding a place.

14 LC: That was your department?

15 MMH: That’s right.

16 LC: Once you would find a place—and you didn’t really know how long you
17 were going to be at any of these places, what did you do? You were probably very busy
18 managing the food and trying to get all that arranged.

19 MMH: Yeah. Everything we owned we could put in that little Studebaker.

20 LC: Yeah.

21 MMH: You should see us now. (laughs)

22 LC: You’ve accumulated since then.

23 MMH: Anyway, we managed just fine. They had big lights like a little grocery
24 store would have in the ceiling. When you came in, you’d turn one switch and the whole
25 place, you know.

26 LC: It would light up.

27 MMH: They had a lot of coal oil lamps, kerosene lamps sitting up there. I said to
28 the lady that was showing me the place, “Why do you have those up there?” She said,
29 “Our power goes off real often.” You know, it was a nice place to live. We made do.

30 LC: You made do.

31 MMH: It got cold while we were there.

1 LC: Well, just as it gets hot up there, it gets cold.

2 MMH: Yeah. We took our milk from a local farmer. They brought it to us in the
3 glass milk bottles with a little cork, little cardboard stopper. It was so cold, the cream
4 would freeze and raise up about that high over.

5 JH: Just sitting on the steps outside.

6 LC: That's right.

7 JH: Let me tell you about housing. When we rolled into Great Bend from Tucson
8 with the B-24s, we went to a hotel hoping to get a room. No room at the inn. So they
9 were very accommodating. They called the little town of Hoisington, which is just north
10 of Great Bend. They said, "Yeah, we have one room. You can have it for three nights." I
11 said, "We'll be there." So we got there and checked in and we were on the second floor.
12 Tied to the bedstead is a coiled rope with little knots in it. Minnie Mae looked at me and
13 she said, "What's that?" I said, "That's your fire escape." And it was.

14 LC: They were not kidding.

15 JH: That was the way to get out if you had to get out.

16 MMH: We were on the second floor of this old wooden building.

17 JH: We only had three nights there because of a housing shortage. They wouldn't
18 let anybody long term in the hotel. They just rotated them.

19 LC: Wow.

20 JH: Fortunately, she was able to get us into this place in Dundee.

21 LC: It's almost just unimaginable now.

22 MMH: It built character.

23 LC: Yes ma'am, I think you're right. Well, you had to solve a lot of problems
24 and once you had them solved you weren't done because you had the next time it was
25 going to be a whole new set of circumstances. You probably had to become very self-
26 sufficient and confident I would think, too. I mean, she had to on her own.

27 MMH: Yeah. Well, we did more worry then. They had more serious things to
28 worry about.

29 LC: Well, yeah, that's right. You were fully engaged in the training process, I'm
30 sure. I'm sure. Well, let me ask you a couple of timeline questions. This will kind of help
31 set your own personal experiences against the broader background. At the end of 1944

1 when you were up in Kansas, I'm sure you were paying as much attention as you could,
2 given all of your engagements, to what was happening in the war. Of course, you had two
3 brothers who had gone missing and you had no information. So that's very worrying, but
4 at that time, did you know whether you were going to be deployed to the European
5 theater where Battle of the Bulge, for example, was taking place or out to the Pacific?

6 JH: Didn't know.

7 LC: Had no idea?

8 JH: No. When we finished our B-29 training at Great Bend and we're getting
9 ready to deploy overseas, they told us, "Pack summer and pack winter." They gave us
10 winter clothes and summer clothes. "You don't know where you're going and don't even
11 speculate." They let us ship a footlocker, what—

12 MMH: About like that (gesture).

13 JH: About like that of anything we wanted to an overseas base. That's one
14 advantage of being in the Air Corps, rather than on the ground, where you carried
15 everything in your duffel bag. So my crew, we packed everything we wanted, thought
16 we'd want overseas. That was shipped. We didn't know where, but they put us on a train
17 and sent us to—well, I'll regress. Several of the crews flew their own airplanes out of
18 Great Bend. I was a junior. I was still a second lieutenant. No, I was a first lieutenant, but
19 I had just made first lieutenant in December of '44. So I was a junior aircraft commander
20 and my crew didn't get an airplane to fly overseas. We were put on a train and headed
21 west to Hamilton Field, just north of San Francisco. When we were there a couple, three
22 days, I don't remember exactly, and they put us on a C-54 transport. I didn't know
23 whether we were going to Alaska or we were going to Panama or we whether were going
24 to the Pacific somewhere.

25 LC: Just had no clue?

26 JH: Had no idea, but we did have—when we got on the airplane, they gave me a
27 set of orders for my whole crew. "Don't open this for two hours after you're off this
28 base." So we opened it in Guam. We landed in Honolulu and Johnston Island, and maybe
29 (unintelligible), I don't know where. Anyway, but we got to Guam first.

30 LC: Let me ask, before I ask you about Guam, what did you do?

1 MMH: Well, he took me home at Christmastime and I stayed with Mother and
2 Daddy again.

3 LC: Okay. That was the plan that you had devised, that she would stay?

4 MMH: They always seemed glad to have me. I don't know whether they were or
5 not.

6 JH: They were.

7 LC: I'm going to guess they probably were. I'm going to guess they were. Let's
8 take a break for just a second. Now Jim, you mentioned the route that you were taking
9 out to the Pacific. Did you fly any of that or were you cargo?

10 JH: Cargo on a C-54.

11 LC: Your crew was with you?

12 JH: Mm-hmm.

13 LC: Were you all understanding that you would fly together as a crew? There
14 was that integration had already occurred? Okay. Can you tell me about the guys that
15 were in your crew at that time, and their names, if you can remember?

16 JH: Sure. My co-pilot was from Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He was still a second
17 lieutenant. He had come from B-17s into the B-29 program. Let's see. I was about
18 probably—this is '44. I was twenty-five.

19 LC: All of twenty-five.

20 JH: '45, yeah, just before and he was still twenty-one.

21 MMH: He was old.

22 LC: He was—you were the old man, and he was just a nipper, huh?

23 JH: Yeah, an old man. Then we had—

24 MMH: Tell her his name.

25 JH: Oh, his name was Francis Thompson.

26 LC: Thompson, okay.

27 JH: From Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I'll tell you, I'll just go back through the
28 airplane rather than sides. I will tell you we had five officers and six enlisted men. The
29 engineer was a tech sergeant. His name was Donald Leber. I think he was originally from
30 California. Then the next one would be my navigator who was 1st Lt. Eugene Victor from
31 New York City. My radio operator was Ernest Vick, who was probably nineteen. He was

1 from Ellijay, Georgia. Now that's all of the people in the front cockpit. Then we had, in
2 the pressurized compartment, we had a long tube over the bomb bays that went back to
3 the gunner compartment. That was pressurized, too. Then in the gunner compartment, the
4 CFC gunner originally was John Keough. He was a staff sergeant from Wallingford,
5 Connecticut. The right gunner was Donald Komer from Birmingham, Alabama, probably
6 nineteen at that time. My left gunner was Marvin Beatty, who was from Rochester, New
7 York, and he was probably twenty-three. He was next to me as being the old man on the
8 crew. Our radar operator, initial radar operator, was a first lieutenant named John Segal.
9 He was from Chicago. He sat just in the compartment just aft of the gunner's
10 compartment. That was a radar station and also had a storage place in that same
11 compartment. Then that's the end of the pressurized area, except it had a tube that went
12 on back to the tail gunner's compartment, a small tube about so big (gesture) to
13 pressurize it. He would have to crawl through an open area.

14 LC: I've seen that, yeah.

15 JH: Okay. His name was John Turrell and he was nineteen. He was from New
16 York City. When we got to Guam, we were met by a six-by-six truck and all loaded on it.
17 It took us up to what we called a bivouac area. Just huge berms of jungle had been
18 bulldozed out and nothing but red, red, red, red dirt all around. We had about three
19 wooden-type buildings with screens on them that were the headquarters, operations, and a
20 dining hall. They pulled us up in front of a big pile of canvas and says, "That's your tent.
21 When you pitch it, you'll have a place to sleep tonight," all eleven of us. I said, "Where
22 are the cots?" He said, "You have your sleeping bag on the ground."

23 LC: Wow. That's it.

24 JH: So we got busy, pitched our tent, and I don't know how long it was, but after
25 a couple, three weeks, or something like that, they came to us and said, "Okay, you
26 officers, we have some Quonset huts back down here that need to be built. If you want to
27 move out of here and go build your Quonset hut then in between missions you can go
28 down there and build your Quonset hut." The enlisted men—we got cots before we left
29 the tent.

30 LC: Okay. So you're off the ground at least.

1 JH: Off the ground. So the enlisted men still stayed in those tents, but we officers
2 joined with another crew—they put two crews to one Quonset—and built our Quonset
3 hut. It was nice. It was nice. Believe me. (laughs)

4 LC: It was better than the ground. How many crews were there? Were guys
5 coming in as you were at the same time?

6 JH: Well, some of them had gotten there before us and some of them—well, we
7 were the last ones there.

8 LC: You were about the last ones.

9 JH: Initial crews, yeah. We'd get replacement crews later. I don't remember
10 exactly how many crews to a group now. We had three squadrons to the group. We had
11 the 30th Bomb Squadron, 28th Bomb Squadron, 93rd Bomb Squadron. If I remember
12 correctly, we each had eleven airplanes, each squadron. We had a flight leader, who in
13 our case was a major, an aircraft commander. We would always fly on daylight missions.
14 We would fly in a nine-ship formation in elements of three in a, "V," type. I was, after
15 about the second mission, I became an element leader of the right hand element, flying on
16 the right wing of the three echelon.

17 LC: How soon after you got to Guam did you start to fly missions?

18 JH: I got to Guam on, I think it was, the twenty-fifth of February or something
19 like that. I flew my first mission I believe it was the sixth or the ninth of March.

20 LC: So about a month?

21 JH: About ten days, maybe, eleven or something like that.

22 LC: Okay, sorry. What did they tell you about your missions?

23 JH: We always had a mission briefing, a very detailed mission briefing about the
24 target, what we could expect in the way of anti-aircraft, what we might expect in fighters,
25 the forecast weather, which was very unreliable because there were no reporting stations
26 west of Japan. It was just kind of a guess on weatherman's part. We would be briefed on
27 the type of bombs we would carry, the target we were going to hit, and the purpose of the
28 type bomb for the target. That was just about it for the briefing. Usually it took about
29 thirty to forty minutes for this total briefing. Then we would be put on trucks and taken to
30 our airplane and do our preflight. Then our engine start time, about ten minutes before
31 our start time, we would all be in our seats ready to fire up. Then we fired up, taxi out and

1 just have a long stream of airplanes down the taxiway taking off at thirty-second
2 intervals. At the end of the runway, there would be an operations officer with a green
3 light gun. When it was our turn to release our brakes—first, he would put a yellow light
4 on. That means we would come up to full power. Then he'd turn the green light on and
5 we'd release our brakes and go.

6 LC: He's standing there with this device like a gun almost that had some kind of
7 light on the end of it? About how far away is he standing from the—?

8 JH: He's standing off the edge of the runway, probably just a hundred feet from
9 where we were.

10 LC: Is he getting radio signals? Does he have headphones on and so on?

11 JH: From the tower, mm-hmm.

12 LC: Okay. Jim, this is a very important thing that you're telling us about so of
13 course any details you want to pitch in, very interesting.

14 MMH: The crew chief. Tell her about your crew chief, Cecil. You didn't mention
15 him.

16 LC: Now this is the ground crew?

17 MMH: Very important man in my life.

18 LC: Oh, yes ma'am.

19 JH: Well, before our first mission, I was given my airplane, our crew airplane.
20 We flew the same airplane every mission as long as it was in commission to fly.

21 LC: The crew would stay together. They would stay with an aircraft. Did you
22 stay with a ground crew and a crew chief?

23 JH: We didn't stay with them. They were separate from our air crew in the
24 bivouac area, but our air crew worked closely with them in the aircraft preparation. If, for
25 example, the ground crew consisted of five people it had a crew chief and four helpers. If
26 it got beyond their capability, they had what they called crew maintenance that would
27 come in, but our air crew would come down after they got their rest, come down and
28 assist in doing various things. The armaments section—I'm sorry, the bomb section
29 would come down and load the bombs for us for whatever the type mission was. The
30 ground crew, they would assist, but they were not responsible for loading them. That's a

1 technique in itself to make sure that they're properly engaged there so that when the
2 bombardier flicks a switch it will open.

3 LC: Not before. Not any other time. Yeah, sure.

4 JH: So that was the coordination she was talking about. Just as she said, I give
5 Cecil Corley, my ground crew chief, a great deal of responsibility for me being here
6 today because he took such good care of the airplane.

7 MMH: We still are friends with him.

8 JH: We still have dinner or lunch with him once every three or four months.

9 LC: Does he live down in the Dallas area? Fort Worth?

10 JH: In Greenville.

11 MMH: They lived there first. They lived in Dallas.

12 JH: About seventy-five miles from where we are now.

13 LC: So you still see him?

14 MMH: Call him, talk on the phone.

15 LC: How wonderful. That's really, really special.

16 MMH: I thank him every time I see him.

17 JH: I still have two crewmembers that are still alive that I keep in touch with, two
18 air crew members. My last bombardier—we changed a few people—my last bombardier
19 and my original co-pilot, but he is so ill. He's hardly hanging on.

20 LC: Where does he live?

21 JH: Right now they're in Spokane, Washington.

22 LC: Okay.

23 JH: My bombardier lives in the winters in Las Vegas and in the summers in
24 Smithfield, Michigan.

25 MMH: I was going to say I think I took better care of him. He was the old man
26 on the crew and most of them are gone.

27 LC: I guess you did a pretty good job, Minnie Mae. I'd say he's in fine shape.

28 MMH: I'm bragging on myself. (laughs)

29 LC: So you had a very close working relationship, which I'm sure you cultivated,
30 with those guys on the ground crew. You've described the flight, the pattern that you
31 were in. How many missions did you fly? Let's start there.

1 JH: Thirty-five.

2 LC: That was what you had to fly in order to rotate out? Is that right?

3 JH: That's correct.

4 LC: Okay. Did you ever encounter fighter aircraft, Japanese fighter aircraft?

5 JH: Hm-mmh. Let me go back a little bit. We got the green light for takeoff. I
6 don't remember now the length of the runway. Off the top of my head, I think maybe
7 eighty-five hundred feet. Not extremely long like we have today. A B-29 was originally
8 designed for max gross load of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds. We were flying a
9 hundred and thirty-five thousand, a hundred and thirty-eight thousand.

10 LC: Because of how much—

11 JH: How much fuel, how many bombs. The stalling speed of the airplane was
12 just about the same number of miles per hour as the gross weight, 135,000 pounds 135
13 miles an hour. So you want to be above 135 miles an hour before you broke ground. A lot
14 of the pilots thought that meant that if you break ground at 135, well, taking off at Guam,
15 at North Field, Guam—there were three airports, three Air Force airports on Guam. One
16 was Harmon Field in the middle of the island where the transport airplanes came in. No
17 combat there. Then the other was, Northwest Field where the 315th Bomb Wing was.
18 They had a special mission we weren't involved in. The 314th Wing that the 19th Bomb
19 Group was in was at North Field. So our runway started out with a little bit of a slope
20 down. Then it had a little sway on it, just a little bit of an up rise on the far end for
21 takeoff. Beyond that, they had several hundred yards, four or five hundred yards, of the
22 jungle cleared away in case you had to skid through that, but there was still a problem.
23 The end of the runway to the edge of a cliff of Guam was roughly a little over a quarter of
24 a mile, maybe as much as a half mile, anyway, something close to that. It was jungle
25 beyond that cleared part on over to the edge of a six-hundred-foot cliff. So what we were
26 always worried about was losing an engine on takeoff. If we did that, there was hardly
27 any way you were going to survive getting over that jungle and be able to dive down. We
28 had many crashes into that jungle.

29 LC: You did.

30 JH: Loss of an engine crash.

31 LC: Why were the engines coming away on takeoff?

1 JH: A lot of times an engine just goes out for no given reason. It just quits.
2 LC: So it would just quit, it wouldn't actually come away from the airplane?
3 JH: No, it wouldn't fall off.
4 LC: It would just die.
5 JH: It might internally come off. I mean, come apart internally.
6 LC: Just not functioning.
7 JH: Yeah, but anyway, I told my crew, I said, "The end of that runway is hard top
8 and beyond that is a little bit of coral. Then it's just nothing but dirt, but the end of that
9 runway is where the nose wheels are going to come off the ground. I'm going to use as
10 much speed as I can," which was usually around 150 miles an hour. So in case I lost an
11 engine I have 150 miles an hour to hopefully sustain. A lot of my contemporary aircraft
12 commanders said, "Why are you doing that?" I said, "Here is the reason." I just
13 explained. "Well, that seems to make sense, maybe we won't pull it off, won't pull that
14 nose wheel up so soon." After we got to the edge of the cliff and dove down that six
15 hundred feet, almost six hundred feet, we had good airspeed then and could go.
16 LC: You could get going?
17 JH: We had two different type missions. We had daylight formation missions.
18 We had nighttime single-aircraft missions. Before we got there, the 93rd Bomb Wing over
19 on Saipan, which is 125 miles closer to Japan than we were, had a lot of trouble at
20 altitude hitting their targets because they bombed from west to east, had a bombing run
21 from west to east. A bombing run consists of a point called an initial point. You fly that
22 point and then you start your run to the target and that run is where you've got to hold
23 that airplane straight and level at a certain altitude and airspeed for that bombardier to get
24 his bomb site working correctly, the Norden bombsight. That's where my training
25 bombardier cadets came in. I had to do that for them to get their accuracy on their
26 training bombs. So I was pretty adept at that.
27 LC: So it came back and paid off for you.
28 JH: It paid off, yeah. That's why I made the comment that I did way back earlier.
29 LC: Absolutely.
30 JH: The 93rd had found that going from west to east the airplane had a ground
31 speed—do you understand ground speed?

1 LC: Why don't you explain it, just in case someone listening doesn't?

2 JH: Okay. Ground speed is the speed the airplane actually moves across the
3 ground, although it's in the air, across the ground. That consists of the speed the airplane
4 says it's going on its airspeed indicator plus the wind it may have from the tail or the
5 wind it may have from the nose or side wind. If it's going nose-wise that wind will slow
6 it down. The ground speed, it may read two hundred miles an hour on the airspeed
7 indicator. If you have a thirty-mile an hour headwind, you're going a hundred and
8 seventy miles across the ground, same with the rear. If you have a tailwind 30 miles an
9 hour, you're going 230. They found they were going at their bombing speed—which is
10 between 210 and 260 air speed—they were finding they were going almost 350 miles an
11 hour ground speed. The bombardier just couldn't synchronize.

12 MMH: I'd imagine.

13 LC: Going too fast.

14 JH: Nobody knew anything about the quote, "jet stream," in those days. That was
15 the first indication aviation had of jet streams.

16 LC: Is that right?

17 JH: That's right. So General LeMay came over from England.

18 LC: Curtis LeMay, right?

19 JH: Curtis LeMay, yeah. He says, "Guys, we ain't hacking it. We're going to
20 change things. If we get good forecasts on weather and they can tell me that the wind
21 probably aren't going too strong, we may fly daylight formation at the high altitude
22 bombing," which we did on several, many missions, "Or we're going to go in where we
23 can really put the bombs on the target, between five thousand and twelve thousand feet at
24 night, single ship." Boy, we air crew says, "Wait." This is in our minds and in our private
25 conversations, never question LeMay. In our minds, we said, "Man, they could throw a
26 sink up and get us there!" Well, fortunately, their anti-aircraft, they didn't have very
27 many automated aircraft. Radar aircraft, those things are all automated for twenty-five,
28 thirty thousand feet, twenty to twenty-five thousand feet calibrated for that type of thing.
29 So fortunately, we're moving fast enough they couldn't find us. The antiaircraft fire
30 wasn't as hectic at those low altitudes as we had anticipated, but the thermal clouds that
31 were generated by preceding bomb drops, those clouds were the most horrendous thing

1 I've ever been in my life. The fire—first of all, these night missions were primarily
2 incendiary bomb missions. We burned out huge parts of various cities around the
3 factories. The primary reason around the factories was because the Japanese would
4 contract out or make a contract specify, “You have this sort of machine, you’re going to
5 do this kind of job. You have an electric saw, you’re going to do this in homes.” So there
6 was no feeling, compassionate feeling on our part, young guys, about letting those homes
7 burn outside of the factory complex itself.

8 LC: So you were thinking that these, although the description might be civilian,
9 that in fact they were part of the war effort?

10 JH: Yes. That was our briefing. That was the LeMay’s concept.

11 LC: You guys all pretty much accepted that and felt that was probably correct?

12 JH: Correct.

13 LC: So emotionally, you were okay?

14 JH: Had no emotion about it.

15 LC: Okay. So there wasn’t any emotion with it.

16 JH: No, because what we had heard of the atrocities on the islands and all the
17 POWs were getting, we could hear about it. We had no—

18 LC: No compunction about doing this. Okay. So the incendiary missions, you
19 were talking about the clouds.

20 JH: The big incendiaries would cause huge clouds. If we were going—if there
21 was not a huge wind to move that cloud away from the target complex and it just came
22 up, we had to go through that cloud, put our bombs close to the target, at least. Once you
23 got in that thing you were hoping you’d come out right side up.

24 LC: Because you had no way to check your—

25 JH: Only way was our instruments.

26 LC: So you’re flying only instruments?

27 JH: Only instruments, but up or down and sideways—

28 MMH: It was rough.

29 JH: The bombardier or the radar operator, bombardier couldn’t see anything, so
30 the radar operator was the one who was zeroing in on the target area where the
31 bombardier would drop the bombs. That was the worst environment I’ve ever been in,

1 including severe thunderstorms. In fact, on one mission, my CFC gunner's pedestal, he
2 sat in this rotating seat, that came loose from the floor of the airplane. It didn't hurt him,
3 fortunately, but it came loose. We used to lose a lot of rivets in airplanes bouncing around
4 like that with the wings.

5 LC: Now the bouncing, was that because of the different pressures inside and
6 outside the clouds? So you're just getting banged all around?

7 JH: See, when these clouds come up, they swirl like this. So on this side you may
8 go up. This side you're going down. Just swirling like that.

9 LC: So it would really toss you around.

10 JH: Oh, really.

11 LC: You're in formation.

12 JH: No, single ship.

13 LC: No, this is single ship? Okay. Okay.

14 JH: Another sweat on that was, we had an exact time, exact altitude to be over
15 that target. If this guy up here is early, he drops his bombs and here I come, the
16 possibility of him—we never did have this occur, but it was always a big sweat and no
17 one—I shouldn't say no one. If there were many, many that never did make it exactly on
18 time and either before or early or late over the target, but we, to my knowledge, we never
19 did lose an airplane by friendly fire.

20 LC: Now I have seen photographs taken from inside a B-29, flying in formation
21 with the bombs raining from all of the aircraft at the same time. I think that's what you're
22 describing.

23 JH: No, that's daylight formation.

24 LC: Oh, that's with the formation bombings?

25 JH: Yeah, that's daylight formation.

26 LC: Okay. So with the single-mission bombs, single-plane missions, you might
27 be on one, someone else might be simultaneously also on a single-plane mission, flying
28 to a point and dropping.

29 JH: Lots of them.

30 LC: Like how many?

31 JH: Oh, like—

1 LC: I mean, say with one major city area.

2 JH: One major city? Probably be over 150 airplanes, but it would start at maybe
3 midnight. Then every three minutes or every two minutes or something another airplane
4 was there and so forth. It would take a long time for the whole mission to be over the
5 target.

6 LC: Right because they're coming in this kind of graduated way, incrementally.
7 Where was a mission like that planned? Was there a headquarters on Guam itself that was
8 making all of those design decisions?

9 JH: Right. General LeMay's headquarters was on Guam, 21st Bomber Command
10 under the 20th Air Force. His staff would plan the whole mission. Each group, each wing,
11 would get their requirement and then it'd be passed down to the group for our
12 participation in it. Everything was outlined, our takeoff time, time over target, altitude,
13 flight, everything was already prepared for us.

14 LC: Now over your thirty-five missions, how many of those were nighttime
15 missions? Can you guess?

16 JH: You know, I could count in my diary. I kept a diary. I don't know whether I
17 sent you one or not. Oh, no, I didn't because it didn't involve Vietnam. I kept a diary of
18 that so I could count that. I would say probably sixty-four, sixty night and forty day.
19 That's just off the top of my head.

20 LC: Now from a pilot's perspective, which would you rather fly? Which did you
21 feel better flying, the nighttime single missions?

22 JH: Daylight formations.

23 LC: I guess I'd have to say, knowing nothing about it, I would, too. Can you go
24 ahead and just take us through why that would be the case? It's sort of evident, but go
25 ahead and just tell us.

26 JH: Well, being the case here, it's daylight. You can see all around you. One
27 problem was in daylight you get the fighters, but not in the dark. You just had the feeling
28 of camaraderie with nine airplanes that you're a part of. You know this guy's leading this
29 one, I'm leading this one. You know this guy's leading this one. You know they're
30 wingmen, and—

31 LC: You're together.

1 JH: You're together. What you can expect of each one. On that type mission the
2 lead ship is the lead bombardier. The rest of the ones are just toggle—what we call
3 toggle—on the first bombs we saw come out of the lead airplane. Toggle means you flip
4 a switch and our bombs go at the same time. If it was set up on interim the bomb would
5 drop here, here, here, here, here. Then we'd have the same intervalometer setting back
6 here on the bombardier's panel. If it was just a mass drop the lead plane would just go
7 with all the others. That's what you've been seeing mostly, I think. The pictures I've seen
8 just looks like just mass instead of intervalometer. Another point was—oh, about the
9 fighters. When we first started flying in March, when I first started flying in March, we
10 didn't have any fighter support for ourselves. I've forgotten now at what month. It was
11 some time probably in late April or early May, Iwo Jima became secure enough that they
12 moved in a fighter wing there, P-51s. It had, I think it was three B-29 mother ships for
13 them they called it. Based on what the mission was, the daylight mission was, these B-
14 29s would take off, the fighters would take off. This mother ship would lead them to the
15 target area that each group of 51s were assigned to protect. Then so the mother ship
16 would head back to the Iwo and the fighters would do their thing with Japanese fighters.
17 If there weren't too many of them they'd go down and do their work on the ground and
18 then they'd come back up. After we finished our bomb run they'd hook onto one of our
19 airplanes, which went right over Iwo anyway, and just fly in formation until we got to
20 Iwo and they'd land.

21 LC: They'd drop out?

22 JH: Mm-hmm. We had a procedure—the P-51 silhouette looks much like a
23 Japanese "Tony." It was hard for the gunner to determine which was which. So we had a
24 procedure that the 51 never did come toward you to hook onto you like this. They came
25 like this and kind of slid over, with the nose still pointing away (gesture).

26 LC: So the silhouette would look different?

27 JH: That's right. So we knew it was friendly rather than coming at us, but there
28 were some P-51s who got friendly fire on them. Not shot down, but got friendly fire.
29 "Hey, guys!" (laughs)

30 LC: I bet there was some radio traffic over that. I can only imagine. Let's talk
31 about the night missions a little bit more. Did you, or did you hear of—did you

1 experience or did you know of ground-based anti-aircraft fire on during those night
2 missions by March of 1945?

3 JH: Never did have, to my knowledge. I don't remember anyone ever reporting
4 damage from ground fire.

5 LC: That's really extraordinary. It tells you—

6 JH: There was probably some, but I didn't here about it. I never did. I think it
7 was because they couldn't aim at us directly. They couldn't see us.

8 LC: So there still were—did your briefings provide information that there was
9 active anti-aircraft defenses in Japan, but they just couldn't reach you?

10 JH: They could always say what intelligence would tell them, that there was
11 this—you could expect this many anti-aircraft batteries around a given target. Let's see,
12 another point I was going to make right there. I'm trying to think.

13 LC: It'll come back to you, sure. At nighttime, did you ever, any of your missions
14 or ones that you heard about, get that enemy fire interference?

15 JH: No. Not that I know of.

16 LC: Man, that's just incredible.

17 JH: We would get searchlights until we got in the cloud, and searchlights had a
18 big psychological effect on us.

19 LC: Can you describe that?

20 JH: Well, my very first mission, it was a nighttime mission, but it was a high
21 altitude formation. We left IP (initial point), headed toward the target in Nagoya. I don't
22 remember the name of the aircraft factory. About halfway to the target, about three
23 searchlights got us, and man, you talk about bright in the cockpit. It was scary, but we
24 kept going straight. My bombardier got real upset. He was just excited. In fact, he didn't
25 even release the bombs over the target.

26 LC: Because he was rattled by—

27 JH: Yeah. So I said, "We're going to make a 360, we'll come back, second time
28 over the target." Vern Davis was his name. Wait a minute, I didn't mention him.

29 MMH: No, he was your first one.

30 JH: I didn't even mention the bombardier earlier. Vern Davis from, somewhere
31 in New York, northern New York, was my first bombardier. So I said, "Vern." I said to

1 the whole crew, “Hey guys, we’re going to make another run. We didn’t drop our
2 bombs.” So we did, but the second time the lights got us again and they stayed with us
3 all the way over the target. Man, once those bombs were out of the bomb bay I made a
4 diving turn and got out of the lights in a hurry. Then everything settled down. They were
5 a real psychological menace.

6 LC: Absolutely.

7 JH: Once they got you because you knew if they got you that the anti-aircraft
8 guns could see you.

9 LC: Could train on you, they could train on you. That didn’t—I mean, for you
10 that did not follow?

11 JH: Well, on the lower altitude missions, it did. This was high altitude.

12 LC: How high were you?

13 JH: Oh, we were probably at twenty-two thousand, somewhere in that twenty-
14 two to twenty-five thousand.

15 LC: It’s still extraordinary that the lights were powerful enough.

16 JH: Oh, yeah.

17 LC: I could see how that would rattle your cage a little bit, actually, more than a
18 little bit.

19 JH: I might say, in that respect, mentioning altitude, I mentioned earlier about
20 being pressurized?

21 LC: Yes.

22 JH: We never did go over the target pressurized. We always went over the target
23 with our oxygen masks on.

24 LC: Can you explain why that was?

25 JH: Yes, because if we got a hit in a pressurized compartment we might have
26 explosive decompression and we’re gone. So being unpressurized over the target with our
27 escape hatches open so we could bail out if we had a problem, but then once we left the
28 homeland of Japan and got out over the ocean we went back to pressurization.

29 LC: How long did the pressurization and depressurization process take when you
30 would—?

31 JH: Once you turn it off, it goes down almost immediately.

1 LC: Right away? Okay. So there wasn't any gradualization there, just—

2 JH: It might take three or four, five minutes, something like that.

3 LC: At most. Okay. Who was responsible for making that transition?

4 JH: The flight engineer on my command.

5 LC: Did you get to decide who on the aircraft? Was that something that you as a
6 pilot had discretion over? Which member of the crew would take care of that, the
7 pressurization issue or was that standard operating?

8 JH: No, he, the pilot, co-pilot and he had a switch that would turn off the
9 compressor, but it was the aircraft commander's responsibility to determine when that
10 would be done, unless there was an emergency. In emergencies, the flight engineer
11 automatically turned it off. He didn't have anything to do except monitor the whole
12 airplane, all the radio instruments and switches and all. Plus the pilot and co-pilot had to
13 worry about staying in the air.

14 LC: A few other things. So that was essentially his duty as a basic item. Okay. Is
15 there any mission that you remember particularly that you can share or more than one?

16 JH: My navigator was quite a writer.

17 LC: A writer?

18 JH: A writer. He wrote up an overview of this particular mission that, well, a
19 wonderful overview. He started with the time we'd wake up, the briefing, go down to the
20 airplane, get the airplane ready, pull our propellers through, get in, start number one,
21 number two, and so forth. Detail, right on up through the whole mission, come back,
22 landing and all. Remind me and I'll send her a copy.

23 MMH: Oh, that's wonderful. It's a wonderful story.

24 JH: It's about how a mission goes. Anyway, this particular mission was a
25 formation over Osaka, Japan. I think it was the sixth of June, but anyways it was in June
26 of '45. We were in our nine-ship formation, the 19th Bomb Group—I mean the 30th
27 Squadron of the 19th Bomb Group. I was a number two element leader. After we left the
28 IP en route to the target over Osaka my right wingman called and said, "Jim, I've just lost
29 an engine." I think the number four—that's immaterial. "I've just lost an engine. I can't
30 keep up." We had fighters. So I said to the flight leader, number one element, I forgot
31 what his name was—Tobin I think his name was. I said, "Number one," or whatever I

1 said, "I've got to drop back," and give Lorent the extra firepower that we can afford to
2 give him a two-ship formation rather than a three-ship. Rather than a single-ship
3 formation, with the fighters, they would knock him down.

4 LC: Now these are Japanese?

5 JH: Japanese fighters.

6 LC: Enemy fighters. Okay.

7 JH: We didn't have P-51s in the area, for some reason.

8 LC: Okay. On this mission, you had no cover?

9 JH: No.

10 LC: Okay. No fighter cover.

11 JH: I told him my number, my left wingman to join up under the lead element. I
12 asked Lorent what airspeed he could hold and he told me. I pulled back and we flew
13 formation, just a two-ship formation. The fighters just came after us like wasps. We got a
14 little anti-aircraft fire also. We both dropped our bombs on target. We continued on
15 target. Then after target we peeled away. That's when the fighters really began to get us.
16 My airplane, I had over sixty holes in it. One of them was through the top part from the
17 center fuselage going down and out the far side of the bomb bay, about this big around
18 (gesture), and through the tube that we crawl through from the front compartment to the
19 aft compartment. The other sixty holes were just all over the airplane. Lorent got quite a
20 few too, but we got him back to Iwo Jima. He landed there to get repairs and then we
21 went on home, but that was the mission that I was the most satisfied. I got the DFC
22 (Distinguished Flying Cross) for that.

23 LC: Jim, can you tell me about the tactics that you used and the tactics that the
24 enemy used? How did you—why did you not get shot down? Truly. Good flying? Good
25 equipment?

26 JH: No.

27 MMH: The Lord.

28 JH: Good airplane. We stayed basically, no evasive action.

29 LC: None?

30 JH: No, not on the IP especially because you have to give the bombardier that
31 stable platform for the bomb. Regardless of what happens outside that airplane he has got

1 to be able to synchronize that bomb site so that the bombs will hit the target. You don't
2 do anything except fly straight and level.

3 LC: You as the pilot prioritize the dropping of the bombs over evasive action,
4 regardless of the—

5 JH: That's right. It's just the gunners and our support airplanes on the other
6 wings, it all helps. Once you're in a nine-ship formation you've got terrific firepower
7 against fighters, but they'll sneak in on you. The first fighter I ever remember seeing was
8 coming in from ten o'clock and I saw these little pink specs. I thought, "That looks just
9 like a movie." Then I thought, "Hey, it's real!" I got my armored vest out on me and all
10 that. I called in the fighter at ten o'clock and the bombardier shot him down, thank
11 goodness.

12 LC: Did shoot him down?

13 JH: Yeah.

14 LC: Did you see that happen? Were you watching that all?

15 JH: I was watching that, yeah.

16 LC: Can you describe what you saw?

17 JH: Well, oh, man. The bombardier saw him about the same time I did, I guess,
18 because all of a sudden there was nothing but a ball of fire out there. After I first saw
19 those little pink things, I mean he just peeled down. He was a good way from us when he
20 was shooting at us.

21 LC: How close?

22 JH: Oh, he was probably—he never probably didn't get within maybe seventy-
23 five or a hundred yards of us when he exploded.

24 LC: A hundred yards?

25 JH: A hundred yards. Well—

26 LC: That feels close.

27 MMH: Pretty close.

28 JH: Well, we've had them come through the formation, either already shot out or
29 already shot up coming through the formation. In some cases hitting an airplane or
30 luckily missing the whole thing.

31 LC: That close?

1 JH: Yeah, but after we leave the bombing target, then we kind of loosen up a
2 little bit in our formation. Formation flying is very precise. I don't know if—what you do
3 is you get a point on my airplane and a point on the airplane you're flying a wing on. You
4 line those two points up. If one point starts moving a little forward you're gaining. You
5 pull back on the throttle just a little bit. You stabilize so those two points stay right
6 together.

7 LC: You were doing this all visually. Of course, this isn't how it's done anymore,
8 but—

9 JH: That's right.

10 LC: You were just doing this by reckoning, by just visual reckoning?

11 JH: Visual reckoning, yep.

12 LC: Tell me about landing from that mission. Your compatriot in the other plane
13 landed at Iwo Jima. You flew on back to Guam?

14 JH: Yeah, after we left, after the group left the homeland of Japan, we each on
15 our own to get back home. The engineering section of the group gives us a proposed
16 altitude to fly and a proposed power setting, depending on fuel level. If your fuel is
17 running low, you run a little slower so they don't burn quite as fast, but you're still—in
18 other words, you don't use as much fuel. So it's up to the pilot then to make that decision.
19 So we would be on our own.

20 LC: Now when you brought the aircraft in, of course you didn't know it had sixty
21 holes, but you probably could guess you had a few.

22 JH: Had a bunch.

23 LC: Any hydraulics problems while you were landing or anything like that?

24 JH: No.

25 LC: So all of your flaps and everything were functional?

26 JH: Fortunately.

27 LC: Your landing gear? No problems. So you just put it down to a beautiful
28 landing?

29 JH: Yeah. We knew we had holes because the gunners would tell us, "Your right
30 wing has, I can see such-and-such. I can see such-and-such." Then we knew that big hole
31 was through the center there because it was open.

1 LC: Open draft, right. How big was that hole?

2 JH: It was probably—what? Fourteen, sixteen inches, something like that.
3 Through the skin of the fuselage and then it decreased in the tube because it had maybe
4 ten feet to go after it exploded and then tore into the tube and tore into the far side of the
5 tube.

6 LC: Now did you guys all go and have a beer after that, or what?

7 JH: I wasn't a drinker. In fact—

8 LC: That was a good thing, probably.

9 JH: Speaking of that, after every combat mission and after we landed and we'd
10 get off and be taken back up to the intelligence briefing hut, but outside that, there'd be a
11 table with Red Cross girls behind it and serve you a little shot of whiskey, kind of calm
12 you down when you went into intelligence for debriefing. All my guys would fight to see
13 who got behind me, to see who got seconds.

14 LC: Because you were going to go right past that? I'll bet they did.

15 JH: That's right. The same way we officers—this is way off the subject—we
16 officers would get, or were allowed, one bottle of liquor every week. I didn't drink so I'd
17 always give that to my enlisted crew because they didn't get it. One of my other officers
18 also didn't drink and he—so, the enlisted crew, if they had a drink, they'd share it with
19 the ground crew. So they had good camaraderie there.

20 LC: Yeah, that was a very good thing to do as a commander.

21 JH: Coming back from a mission like that, after we landed, everything's fine.
22 We're happy.

23 LC: I bet you were.

24 MMH: Did you mention your flag?

25 JH: Oh, Cecil Corley, my grandmother knew Cecil's mother, sent him a Texas
26 flag. He put it on a broomstick. He came to me and he said, "Lieutenant, would you fly
27 this flag out the window of your airplane on taxi, and then after you land, slow down,
28 open your window, and do it again?" I said, "Well, the co-pilot can do that. I'll be busy
29 flying, I mean, landing and taking off." I mean, taxiing. So, every mission, my copilot
30 would hoist that Texas flag out the copilot's window from the time we left the hard stand,
31 down the taxiway, until he had to close his window for takeoff. Then he had to give it

1 back to the engineer. He'd fold it up and roll it up and hide it somewhere. When we got
2 down and landed and slowed down enough at the end of the runway he could open his
3 window again, here came the Texas flag. That flag is now in the Frontiers of Flight
4 Museum in Love Field in Dallas.

5 LC: Is it really?

6 JH: It's not on display.

7 LC: Now did Mr. Corley give that to them?

8 JH: No, he gave it to—originally, after World War II, this is way, way off story,
9 after World War II—no, no, no, not after World War II. Going way back for the 19th
10 history. Now, they were at Clark Field on December the seventh, 1941.

11 LC: The 19th Bomb Group was?

12 JH: The 19th Bomb Group and B-17s. Early B-17s, not the ones like what was all
13 over Europe. On December the eighth, 1941, which was December the seventh at Pearl
14 Harbor, the Japanese bombed Clark Field two hours after they bombed Pearl Harbor.
15 They tore up a lot of the 19th airplanes there. Eventually, the 19th was evacuated from
16 there with whatever they could and took MacArthur to Australia. Then they flew out of
17 Australia, moved up to Java a while, got run out of there, and then bummed around. Then
18 they came back in late '42, I think it was, to Pyote Army Airfield, which is about roughly
19 a hundred miles west of Midland, Texas. They did combat crew training there for a while.
20 Then they were deactivated and became the 19th Bomb Group, Very Heavy, for B-29s in
21 mid-1944. Then when it got to be Great Bend then in early August, maybe late July, they
22 began to accumulate all the air crews. The B-17 crews at Pyote did not go to Great Bend.

23 LC: Okay. So the flag that got put at Love Field—

24 JH: Oh. It started out that, later, after World War II now, because there had been
25 a 19th at Pyote, the Ward County commissioner decided to make—one of his
26 commissioners for that particular precinct decided to make a museum of the history of
27 Ward County. In addition to the building that she had for that, there was a lot of extra
28 room. She had a good friend in Monahans, which is sixteen miles away that had a big
29 military collection. She asked him to put the military collection in there. A lot of it was
30 from the 19th days when they were at Pyote. So our 19th Bombardment Association, back
31 in the day we have annual reunions, decided to make that a repository for anything any of

1 our people want to send to it. So the flag went to Pyote first, but this little museum was
2 only open on the weekends. Pyote now is a little town of about three hundred people. No
3 signage on Interstate 20. It comes right through the middle of Pyote without saying
4 there's a museum there. So everything that's in that museum is just kind of stagnant. I
5 went to the county commissioner who we became pretty good friends and I said, "You
6 know, I want to take that flag out of here." She said, "I don't blame you. Take it. Go." So
7 I kept it in my garage until a couple, three months ago when Frontiers of Flight built a big
8 brand new museum on Love Field.

9 LC: I haven't been there yet, but I hear it's something else.

10 MMH: It's wonderful.

11 JH: It's pretty good. They've got a lot of things to do on it yet, but I took that
12 plus several other artifacts over there.

13 MMH: You asked Cecil if he wanted to fly it.

14 JH: Oh, yeah. I asked Cecil a long time ago. He says, "No, Jim." He says, "My
15 kids don't want it and I don't have any means for it." I said, "Well, I don't either, Cecil,
16 it's hanging on my garage wall all framed, glass and all." They did that Pyote. So I
17 donated that along with some other memorabilia.

18 MMH: Did you ever—Fowler writing up about your flag in the paper, in the
19 *Dallas News*? I mean the *Times Herald*.

20 JH: Well, during World War II when we were on Guam, the *Dallas Morning*
21 *News* had a war reporter over there named Wick Fowler famous for his chili cook offs
22 down in Terlingua.

23 LC: Oh, I think I've heard—okay. Uh-huh. He was on Guam.

24 JH: Yeah, as a war correspondent—

25 MMH: He came over there.

26 JH: He got wind of this Texas flag. So he came up and talked to Cecil Corley,
27 who was at the airplane all the time when it was on the ground. He talked to him and they
28 got me down there and holding the flag out the window, picture.

29 LC: Taking the picture. Oh, yeah.

30 MMH: It was in the paper, a big write up.

31 JH: "Texan does this." We'll crank Cecil into it 'cause he was a Texan, too.

1 LC: Well, sure and he's the one who had the flag, right?

2 MMH: Yeah.

3 LC: Now, let me ask you this. I like the flag story very much. Did you have a
4 name for your aircraft?

5 JH: *City of Flatbush.*

6 LC: *The City of Flatbush?* How'd that come about?

7 JH: Well, here's the story on that. Most all wartime airplanes had girly nose art
8 on them.

9 LC: They sure did.

10 JH: Our wing commander, General Powers at the time, Tommy Powers, said, on
11 Guam said, "Any of your airplanes in this wing that have girly—they have nose art on
12 them eradicate it. We're going to do something positive for the war effort. We're going to
13 name every airplane in this wing after some city in the United States. You aircraft
14 commanders put in your request for a city." So being from Dallas and my crew agreed,
15 Dallas. We put in a request from Dallas and it had already been assigned. Then they said,
16 "Well, take Minnie Mae's home Irving." Well, Irving had already been assigned.

17 LC: Really?

18 JH: Yeah. So we said, "Where we go from here?" My navigator, Brooklyn, New
19 York.

20 LC: I remember you saying that.

21 JH: Says, "Well, let's name it Flatbush." "What is Flatbush?"

22 LC: Now was this Eugene—what was his name?

23 JH: Eugene.

24 MMH: He got Jim married. (laughs)

25 LC: Eugene Vic—

26 MMH: Victor.

27 JH: Victor. V-I-C-T-O-R. He said, "Let's name it Flatbush." Well, all of us little
28 young dummies didn't know what Flatbush was. He said, "That's a nickname for
29 Brooklyn." So he said, "Oh, well, I need to regress the object of this whole program was
30 name your airplane. We'll write a nice letter to the mayor," in this case it'd be a borough
31 president or whatever you call them, or mayor of New York, whichever. In that case, it

1 was the mayor of New York and, “We’ll send this letter to him and say ‘Here’s what
2 we’ve done to advertise your city. What we want you to do is get some publicity on this
3 and say, ‘Hey folks. Here’s B-29 named after our city. Go out and buy some war bonds to
4 help support this war, build another B-29.’”

5 LC: Smart, very smart.

6 JH: So *The City of Flatbush*, that’s how *The City of Flatbush* came about. We got
7 a nice letter back from whoever was the mayor then. I’ve looked and looked for the copy
8 of that and I can’t find it.

9 MMH: Can’t find it.

10 LC: Now, did the plane get decorated at all?

11 JH: No.

12 LC: I mean, did it have *City of Flatbush* written on it or—?

13 JH: Well, yes. I’m sorry. In a big circle it had the North American continent on it.
14 Canada, Alaska, United States, Mexico, Central America. None of those were named.
15 The U.S. wasn’t named, but it was a different color. Wherever that city was in the United
16 States a pennant pole came out of that little, streamer with a pennant came out with *City*
17 *of Flatbush*.

18 LC: Now who did the art, do you know?

19 JH: We had several artists that could do that.

20 LC: This was all sort of centrally organized by the squadron then?

21 JH: By the wing.

22 LC: By the wing, oh, okay.

23 JH: Wing commander said, “I want all of you girly artists to come and see me
24 and here’s what we’re gonna do.”

25 MMH: It wasn’t near as much fun.

26 JH: It’s easy to find girly artists. (laughs)

27 LC: Well, I’m glad to have that story.

28 JH: That sure is far away from Vietnam.

29 LC: That’s all right. We’re getting there. We’re making good progress. You
30 mentioned in the notes that you provided that your last mission was at the end of July

1 1945. Now, let me ask how did you feel at that point? What were you thinking about how
2 long the war might go on, just given what you were seeing as a pilot?

3 JH: On my thirty-fifth mission it was my crew's thirty-fourth mission because I
4 had to fly an orientation mission with another crew on my very first mission without any
5 of my crew onboard.

6 LC: So you were one up on them?

7 JH: I was one up on them. I was planning to fly my thirty-sixth mission with my
8 crew, but the wing had a policy. Thirty-five missions and that's it. I went to my squadron
9 commander and he said, "Oh, we can arrange that." Then he went to the group
10 commander and says, "Here's the situation." The group commander said, "Okay. We'll
11 do that," but the wing flight surgeon came in and said, "Oops, sorry. He might
12 psychologically be unable to continue to complete that mission because it's an extra
13 mission. I can't let him fly that extra mission."

14 LC: That doesn't sound like it had anything to do with you or an evaluation of
15 you. It was just a statement.

16 JH: No, not on me. It just might be. So, very sadly I didn't get to fly my crew on
17 their thirty-fifth mission, which was about four days later than mine, July the twenty-
18 ninth. I sweated it out. They had a brand new aircraft commander from the other ten crew
19 members. I really worried about them.

20 LC: You worried about them. What kind of—?

21 JH: Cecil Corley and I—well, after they took off we went back to get some bunk
22 time because it's a sixteen, seventeen, eighteen hour mission. We rested then, but we
23 got—from when there's about time to get back down there, back down there and it was a
24 happy occasion because there was a company called in a "milk run." We had heard, been
25 told, in fact, that—I had been told before when I completed my thirty-fifth mission I was
26 told, "You're not gonna rotate back to the States, because all eastbound transportation has
27 been frozen anticipating the invasion of Japan in November. Therefore we're not
28 allowing any eastbound releases at this time." So I had to sit there. Then the two bombs
29 were dropped and they opened it up.

30 LC: When did you find out about the atomic weapon having been dropped? Was
31 it the day of Hiroshima?

1 JH: I think it was probably either the day or the next day and so much speculation
2 around “What in the world is an atomic bomb?” It went all the way from being a capsule
3 that the co-pilot’d throw out his window to being a huge thing like it really was. One
4 navigator that was in our—I don’t know whether he was in our group or wing, group I
5 think— had a buddy on Tinian. It was in the 509th. He went over there one day on some
6 kind of transport just to visit his buddy. They wouldn’t let him even close to the
7 airplanes, but the navigator in that group, 509th, told them. He says, “It’s a completely
8 different configured airplane.” So when he came back, he says, “I don’t know what
9 they’re doing over there, but it’s something very unusual.” So once they dropped it and
10 he had told us about—we just kind of assumed it was a big thing. We didn’t know what
11 the power meant at that time, never heard of megatons.

12 LC: Never heard of megatons?

13 JH: I never heard of a megaton.

14 LC: What was your reaction? The fact that you didn’t know, you probably
15 couldn’t visualize it.

16 JH: When we heard about it officially and heard what it had done, “Wow, one
17 bomb does all that?” Then we heard about Nagasaki and “Wow!” But you know what?
18 We, we being our nation, not all of the nation, being the ones who protest the use of the
19 two atomic weapons over there and criticizing the killing of the number of people that
20 those two bombs did, we killed a lot more people than that with our just regular bombing
21 and fire raids. Fifteen percent of Tokyo was taken out on one raid. Think how many—I
22 don’t remember how many people advertised taking them out, but it was equivalent to
23 what Hiroshima was.

24 LC: Or more.

25 JH: Nobody screamed about that.

26 LC: What do you make of that, Jim?

27 JH: I don’t know. I don’t understand why people would not—would try to take
28 apples versus oranges when they’re both apples, killing people. I had no compunction
29 about the people I killed. Doesn’t bother me in the least today because we were doing it
30 for a good cause that kept our nation and possibly a lot of the world free from that
31 authoritarian dictatorship that was over there.

1 LC: Now let me just shift for a second and ask Minnie May. What did you—were
2 you getting letters from him?
3 MMH: Every day.
4 LC: Every day?
5 MMH: Every day I wrote to him. Every day he wrote to me.
6 JH: Almost every day.
7 MMH: When he was able.
8 LC: Do you still have those letters?
9 MMH: Part of them, I saved nearly all of them. I don't know how many we have,
10 but a lot. You know, they didn't come every day cause sometimes they would be two or
11 three in a day and maybe not.
12 LC: They'd bunch up because of the service.
13 MMH: Now people call each other. You know, I have a friend whose son is in
14 Korea. He calls his wife all the time.
15 LC: Yeah, can you even imagine?
16 MMH: No. 'Cause we were so excited when we got a letter.
17 LC: I'm sure you must've been. You must've been.
18 JH: You know, I'd take the time flying back from a target, back to Guam, seven,
19 eight hours. I'd take the time to write her a letter.
20 LC: You would let the co-pilot just kind of manage things while you would—
21 JH: Sure. Well, we had it on autopilot and the co-pilot and I would take naps all
22 the way home. So.
23 LC: So you would write her a letter?
24 JH: Write her a letter.
25 LC: That was time well spent, I think.
26 MMH: I think I would tell her about your lunches. This is funny.
27 JH: Oh, this is off.
28 MMH: Well, she wants to know these little—
29 LC: That's all right. That's right.
30 JH: When we started flying our missions we'd get a peanut butter and jelly
31 sandwich in a little sack. They'd give us maybe a big can of some kind of juice, which

1 had to split among—maybe it was two of those or three I don't remember—to split
2 among the crew. Each person just got one peanut butter and jelly sandwich for a sixteen,
3 seventeen, eighteen hour mission. We complained to the group commander in our
4 preflight briefings. He went to the, we called it the mess officer, the dining officer, one
5 day the food service officer. He said, "Either they're gonna get that adequate flight
6 lunches"—no, he didn't say that. He said, "I've cautioned you about getting them some
7 adequate flight lunches. You're scheduled for a combat mission with crew such and such
8 tomorrow."

9 LC: That got him motivated.

10 JH: Yeah. So when he got back from that mission we began to get bologna
11 sandwiches, Spam sandwiches.

12 LC: So did you get enough so that you could have maybe a little snack as well?

13 JH: Yeah.

14 LC: You got a little bit more extra.

15 JH: Yeah. I've forgotten now what else, something else that was canned. There
16 was far removed from the flight lunches you get today when you make a flight in the
17 military airplane.

18 LC: I can imagine, you poor guys. Well, let's take a break there.

19 MMH: Okay.

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Interview with Jim & Minnie Mae Hall

Session [2] of [3]

Date: March 24, 2005

1

2 Laura Calkins: This is Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
3 continuing the oral history interview with Col. Jim Hall and with his wife Minnie Mae.
4 Again, we're all three of us sitting here in the interview room on the campus of Texas
5 Tech and the date is the twenty-fourth of March 2005. Let's continue, Jim, with your
6 permission talking about your return to the U.S. after your service in the Far East.

7 Jim Hall: As I mentioned after completing my thirty-five missions I could not
8 come home right away. I got home about the middle of September of 1945 and landed on
9 a troop ship, landed in Oakland and took a troop train home. Troop commander of about
10 two hundred troops as a captain back to Ft. Sam Houston where I originally entered the
11 Army. After arriving there and resting for a night they put us in a theater one morning
12 and said, "You have two choices. You can either get out of the Army right now or you
13 can stay in Reserves and it'll take you about three days to process all the paperwork and
14 get you into the Reserves." Well, I wanted to see this sweet young thing so I said, "I'm
15 outta here. I'll be home tonight," which I did. So I went home. My father, as I mentioned
16 earlier, had an automobile salvage business and he wanted me to come in business with
17 him rather than to continue my apprenticeship as a tile setter, made my tile setter friends
18 very unhappy and especially the president of the company. That's another story. So I
19 went to work for my father. Then the Reserve program opened up out of Hensley Field in
20 Dallas, western Dallas. I guess it's a combination of Grand Prairie, but Dallas actually
21 owned it. It was in conjunction with a bomber plant I mentioned earlier, North American
22 Bomber Plant where Minnie Mae worked. Initially we had AT-6s, single-engine trainer.
23 Then we got some AT-11s and they formed a troop carrier wing then, a Reserve troop
24 carrier wing, with the AT-11s just phasing out and C-46s coming in. So we would fly all
25 kind of missions in Reserve, transporting people and/or material and going to the various
26 airborne bases, Army Airborne bases to drop the troops on their training missions,
27 parachuting training missions. Along comes the prospect of Vietnam, I mean of Korea.
28 So we were all—the wing was recalled in to active duty in, I think it is late 1950 early
29 '51. In the meantime I had already been recalled on active duty as the former
30 maintenance officer at Hensley Field on a program called Category R. That was a

1 commitment for three years that could be finalized either by commitment of the three
2 years or by war or by the wing being moved and my inability to move with it, but then
3 the Reserve all these recall for active duty and I stayed with the wing to Donaldson Air
4 Force Base, South Carolina. We were programmed get C-119s to replace the old World
5 War II C-46s, but I wasn't happy being, the prospect of being a troop carrier pilot in
6 Korea. So I volunteered for A-26s.

7 MMH: Here he goes again.

8 JH: It was a little fighter-bomber, a real hot little airplane, World War II-type that
9 had their training school in Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. I was accepted, except that
10 I had to go to the Strategic Air Command Survival School at Fort Carson, Colorado, in
11 February of 1951, '52.

12 MMH: Two.

13 JH: 1952. That was a two-week course. In February in the Rocky Mountains isn't
14 a very good time to—

15 MMH: Survive.

16 JH: Be outside and survive, but it was really good training. They gave us six days
17 of classroom study. I mean, no, they didn't. About four days, I guess. Then they took us
18 into the field to put this training into practice under supervision. Then with about a week
19 left, I'll regress just a minute. In those days the B-36s and all were programmed for one-
20 way missions if we got in a fiasco with Russia, with the Soviet Union. They would fly
21 and drop their weapons and then fly as far as they could toward the Eastern Europe and
22 then bail out in the Soviet Union and hoped to be rescued. So this was the premise that
23 we worked on at the school, didn't have anything to do with my A-26 except the survival
24 aspect.

25 LC: Right. This is SAC training.

26 JH: Yep, SAC training. So this particular morning about six or seven days before
27 the end of our course, they assembled us on a mountaintop and gave us a guide for each
28 crew, eleven-man crew and said, "Thirty-five miles over there is where we're gonna
29 supposedly pick you up, land a troop carrier airplane and pick you up behind enemy
30 lines. So you have a plus or minus two hour leeway there to get there or you're out of
31 luck." Snow's almost knee deep. During the outdoor activities they had given us regular

1 in-flight lunches which were really good lunches. In there they had a can of Hershey
2 chocolate, little round can. I think it had three rounds of Hershey in it. So I saved those
3 back because—I saved them back because they were going to, after we left this briefing
4 on top of this mountain we were on our own to survive with food except that they gave us
5 a Pemmican bar which is dehydrated compressed beef. We'd shave it, put it in our mess
6 kit with some water and you'd build a fire and boil it or stir it up and eat it cold. That
7 didn't sound very appetizing to me so I saved these Hershey rounds and because we were
8 supposed to either catch rabbits or shoot, no, not shoot birds, trap birds or whatever. I
9 said, "Six days. Thirty-five miles. Man, we will be moving. We're not gonna have any
10 time to set up traps." So we departed. They had aggressor forces throughout this whole
11 area, the six miles, simulating Soviet military. If we got caught, then they would take us
12 to an interrogation camp and interrogate us as though they were really Soviets. It really
13 got nasty when they started talking about what was happening to our wives and our
14 families back home and all that. They really made it realistic.

15 LC: They did make it realistic?

16 JH: Made it realistic and walking a couple of miles with your hands like this, you
17 can't believe how tiring your arm can get.

18 LC: Your hands folded over on top of your head.

19 JH: Folded over the top of my head. We got—I was a senior officer. I was a
20 major and I'm a senior officer with eleven people therefore suggesting as the aircraft
21 commander. We had Navy mixed in with us. So I said, "Guys, we don't want to go as an
22 eleven-man crew. It's too easy to track. We split up in twos and we'll try to stay pretty
23 well abreast moving toward that point thirty-five miles over there. Not really in yelling
24 contact. We're not gonna yell because if these aggressors hear us—" Anyway, we got to
25 a pretty lively road and I can see some of them getting into ditches. Me and my buddy
26 were down in a ditch down over here. One of the couples way up the way made a run to
27 cross the road. The aggressors run over there and caught them.

28 LC: Saw them.

29 JH: So then they came along the side and caught us, too. So we all marched in to
30 the interrogation tent. We were kept there probably a couple of hours and being
31 interrogated. Then they released us saying that if you get caught two more times you fail

1 the course. So you won't have this training that you need. That was the only time we got
2 caught. We got to our destination okay, within about an hour of the time for pickup. In
3 fact, we just kind of sat back on the outskirts when we knew where we were for, I don't
4 know, three or four hours, waiting until time to get up real close.

5 LC: So you had to hang back, you hadn't gotten there so good.

6 JH: Right. So then they had six-by-six trucks there to simulate these and took us
7 back to Ft. Carson. Fed us a huge steak, as many steaks as we wanted.

8 MMH: Go back to your chocolate, what you'd do with that on your trip?

9 JH: Oh, well. Oh, yeah. Okay. I rationed myself. In the morning I would have
10 one bite. Lunch I'd have one bite. Dinner I'd have one bite. That took three chocolates.
11 So during up until about the third day I did pretty good, but after that I just could not wait
12 for that minute when I could take a bite of chocolate. I mean I became a chocoholic. So
13 after they released us, after we had these good steak dinners. I went down to Broadmoor
14 Hotel, got a room, went to their gift shop and I bought a dozen bars of Hershey. I laid in
15 my bed and ate chocolate. The next day on the commercial airplane going back to
16 Greenville, South Carolina, we stopped in several little places, and I was running into the
17 gift shop and grabbing chocolate. It took me about three months to get over that. I mean I
18 really became addicted. Got back there and learned that my orders had been changed, no
19 more A-26s. I was going to go to Kirtland Air Force Base to be in a nuclear test group,
20 task force, I guess you'd call it, to support the atomic energy commission and their tests
21 out in the Pacific. The sole purpose of the base at Kirtland was to support the atomic, you
22 know, they called it the Special Weapons Center. The Air Force base wasn't the center
23 and they had one airplane of each type that the Air Force was going to marry a nuclear
24 weapon to. So they would test on these various tests. So I was the operations officer to
25 this task force, not a part of base compliment ready to go overseas. I got there in, I think
26 it was March of '52.

27 MMH: '52, yeah.

28 JH: We left there in July of '52 for—I think it was July, mid not the end of July,
29 '52 for Kwajalein Island where the Atomic Energy Commission was going to detonate a
30 weapon on Eniwetok, actually Eniwetok Atoll because there's several islands in the atoll
31 and this was Elugelab, E-U-G-E-L-A-B, I think. We were stationed at Kwajalein. I was

1 operations officer of this task group and our mission was basically just to support
2 whatever the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) asks for and we'd transport it to the
3 accommodations there at the Navy base at Kwajalein. On the day that—this was called
4 Operation Ivy. On the day that the first thermonuclear bomb, Ivy Mike, was detonated I
5 was flying an old C-47 thirty miles south Eniwetok and had about four or five AEC
6 scientists and an equal number of AEC photographers. They wanted to—the scientists
7 had just old-fashioned navigator sextants to check the ascension on the nuclear cloud as it
8 went up. The photographers were to photograph it so they'd have a firm documentary.
9 We had to actually have on the extra dark glasses to keep the flash from bothering us, but
10 there were two other effects, thermal and blast. We didn't feel a thermal effect, but we
11 felt the blast effect thirty miles away after, I don't know, a minute, maybe forty—I don't
12 know how many seconds maybe. That elevated us just five hundred feet just real quick
13 like.

14 LC: Just like—

15 JH: Boom, inside of a thunderstorm or something.

16 LC: Instantly? It just bumped you right up?

17 JH: Mm-hmm.

18 LC: What did that feel like at the controls?

19 JH: Well, all you do there is hold the stick forward, keep her from turning like
20 that, turning straight up. So we did that and survived easily, but it just doesn't—kind of
21 like a sonic boom if you've ever encountered one.

22 LC: Jim, can I ask you some questions about that?

23 JH: Sure.

24 LC: Were there other aircraft besides your own that were flying similar missions
25 for photography and measurements?

26 JH: They had one C-54 that was configured very similar to ours, more
27 sophisticated equipment and higher level scientists, I'm sure, on it. But the other
28 airplanes that we had at Kwajalein were all our Air Force airplanes that we didn't—we
29 didn't have a B-52 or B-36 or B-47. We had a B-47 there. Then a squadron of F-84
30 samplers and the B-47—that was the only one that practiced being in position as though
31 it had actually dropped this device and then made it's escape as though the bomb was still

1 near it to see what effect that would have on that airplane in that particular position. The
2 F-84s were there to take samples of the cloud on filter sheets and bring them back and
3 send them back to the laboratory at Los Alamos to be analyzed. Now the B-47 did his
4 mission okay, but when he got back to Kwajalein the base was socked in with a
5 thunderstorm, terrible thunderstorm, and he didn't have very much fuel. There was a
6 small Japanese island, I think it was Roi, R-O-I, in the Kwajalein Atoll. We told him,
7 "Try that buddy. You can't get in here because there's no radar here. There's no way you
8 can see it. We can't even see across the room hardly." So he made it this time. The next
9 day you see where he tore up all the old, old, old asphalt on those brakes. The next day
10 we loaded a lot of fifty gallon drums of fuel with a hand crank pump, JP-4 and an old C-
11 47, here I go up out of Roi and we crank all of this into that B-47, enough to get him
12 home. He had JATO. That's Jet Assisted Takeoff rockets on the side of the airplane to
13 help him. It was a very high-density wing, high-loaded wing airplane. It took a long
14 runway—

15 LC: To get it up?

16 JH: To get it off and this little runway, I think, was only maybe thirty five
17 hundred feet, four thousand possibly, old, old, old asphalt. But he made that just fine with
18 his JATO. Then we had a couple of other shots up there that we monitored. Not to the
19 degree that we did this thermonuclear, the others were just normal nuclear shots.

20 LC: Not hydrogen bombs?

21 JH: Not thermonuclear. So I was only there about six or seven months. Came
22 back to Kirtland. Was then assigned to the base group there as a flying safety officer and
23 there I flew the T-33, the B-25, and then just administrative-type flying. Then along came
24 task group, Task Force Castle in 1954. I was pulled into that task group, but before that in
25 preparation I knew I was going to be pulled back in and it was part of the original
26 assignment there was task group rather than just base people. So I was going to be the
27 flying safety officer for the task group. I've got the number now. 132.40 over 7, I think,
28 anyway for the Castle Air Force task group. We were going to have a bigger array of
29 airplanes on this one than we did on the Ivy shot. So everyone would be Eniwetok
30 because the shot was going to be at Bikini. So we had a B-36, a B-52—no, didn't have a
31 B-52 there. Had a B-36, B-47, and many fighter types that were going to drop nukes. So

1 back before the task group formed, the task group commander was going to be a SAC
2 general, Strategic Air Command general, General Howell Estes. He came down and took
3 the people that were going to be in the task group for a briefing. He says, “I want all of
4 you to be knowledgeable of the aircraft we’re going to be flying out there. After this we
5 can all just”—he just briefed us on things he expected. After this briefing he said, “Jim,”
6 he says, “I see you’ve been flying the B-20, T-33, and B-25. I want you to be conversant
7 in the B-36 and the B-52. So go down there and get checked out as a co-pilot in those.” I
8 did. Our B-36 was what we called a “featherweight” B-36. It was stripped all its
9 armament to make it real light to fly those class five, in those days, around sixty plus
10 thousand feet, up almost in the U-2 range. So I did that, but in doing that we had the
11 flight surgeon for this task group was the flight surgeon for the base at the time. He took
12 me and we went to Gunter Air Force Base to the super high altitude chamber there with,
13 and were fitted for partial pressure suits. This was the forerunner on what the astronauts
14 are wearing now.

15 LC: Now where is Gunter?

16 JH: Gunter is at Maxwell—

17 MMH: Montgomery.

18 JH: Montgomery, Alabama. It’s in conjunction with Maxwell Air Force Base, but
19 it’s a much smaller. Not an airstrip.

20 LC: Now can I ask you how you got—well, do you know why they pulled you
21 out for this?

22 JH: No.

23 LC: Was it because of the—?

24 JH: No, I don’t know except maybe my experience in operations, possibly,
25 because I had been an operations officer back in the troop carrier. Then I was squadron
26 commander in the troop carrier. Then I was the operations officer on the Mike, on Ivy
27 rather, and flying safety officer back at Kirtland. Oh, and they sent me to flying safety,
28 First Flight Safety School at University of California for a semester. The Air Force
29 contracted with USC (University of Southern California) just strictly for an engineering
30 course, well several subjects, but engineering with aeronautical engineering basically
31 hidden.

1 LC: Apparently you were doing well at these different tasks because they pulled
2 you out for this special duty, yeah?

3 JH: Yeah. I was quote, “kind of making a name for myself.” So we, Colonel
4 Howland, I believe his name was, the flight surgeon and I got fitted for partial pressure
5 suits. Now this is, as I mentioned, similar to the astronauts, but not near as all-
6 encompassing and as safe as they are. Instead of having the full pressure suit on over us
7 we had on our lower extremities what we call capstans. They’re rubber tubes interlaced
8 with crosses of fabric all the way up the cap, the tube on both sides of our legs and then
9 up our body and down our arms. Then we had a tight-fitting helmet, very similar to the
10 astronauts. We had forced oxygen into this helmet. We had caused reverse breathing.
11 Instead of sitting here and inhaling and then exhaling normally, you inhale by the
12 pressure and you had to push out to exhale.

13 LC: You had to work to exhale?

14 JH: To exhale and to talk. (Makes sound) (Laughter).

15 LC: Did you have a—did they let you get acclimated to that?

16 JH: In the pressure chamber.

17 LC: Okay.

18 JH: At sixty-three thousand feet without any kind of constraint, your body
19 explodes. So the capstans on these things, on our suits, were basically if we were to be in
20 a non-pressurized altitude of above fifty thousand feet these things would pop and expand
21 and tighten everything on our legs tight so they wouldn’t come loose, our body wouldn’t
22 come apart.

23 LC: So it holds you together?

24 JH: Very simple. It holds together. Then we went into the pressure chamber with
25 all this and they took us to sixty three thousand feet and decompressurized. It popped and
26 we lived. They wanted to take us to sixty-five. Colonel Howland says, “Nope. Sixty-three
27 is a maximum altitude. We go to thirty-six and I won’t go above that.”

28 LC: Now how many guys that you know of were in this program?

29 JH: There were at Kirtland, I think—no, wait a minute. I apologize. I know of
30 two other airplanes other than ours at Kirtland and these two were at Carswell Air Force
31 Base at Fort Worth. They were configured for nuclear testing in addition to us. They had

1 gone through the same program that Colonel Howland and I went through. One of them,
2 instead of our B-36 going to Eniwetok on Operation Castle, one of the Carswell B-36s
3 went out there. Oh, and Castle, what we had to do—we had an aircraft carrier out there
4 with all good radar on it. Before we went out there we went down to North Island Naval
5 Air Station, San Diego, with this carrier out just off the shore there. Took our—the only
6 airplanes we were gonna fly out to Eniwetok to North Island and had them practice with
7 the aircraft carrier radar spacing them at certain spaces that were predetermined as though
8 they would be the ones who dropped the weapon out on Bikini. This is well before we
9 ever went over for that shot.

10 LC: So you would practice the entire shot, essentially?

11 JH: But no shot.

12 LC: Without the weapon?

13 JH: Yeah.

14 LC: What they're trying to do is organize the aircraft in the air, their spatial
15 distribution?

16 JH: Right. See, each aircraft, each airplane would be in a different space, in a
17 different position in space depending on what the ballistic drop was from the weapon. For
18 instance, a B-36 at fifty thousand feet would be much longer than F-100 at thirty-five,
19 forty thousand feet.

20 LC: The downward trajectory of the bomb would be very different?

21 JH: Yeah.

22 LC: Okay.

23 JH: So this is what the practice was about was to get the crew on an aircraft
24 carrier along with some Air Force people we'd put in with them, radar experts to simulate
25 putting these aircraft in their various positions on a map and then in the air based on a
26 point on that map. Just to practice so that they would be sure to get them in that spot. So
27 the pilots up here would also know what they're gonna have to do out at Eniwetok. So
28 then we'd go back home and I don't know a couple months, maybe a month and a half,
29 we go over there to Eniwetok. General Estes, as I mentioned, was the commander here.
30 I've forgotten the commander's name on Operation Ivy. I don't remember. So we flew
31 some practice missions there with the aircraft carrier. Then on the day of the shot 180

1 miles east of Eniwetok-Bikini, a hundred eighty miles east. The airplanes were all put in
2 their exact position at the exact time the AEC says we're going to detonate this shot.
3 Then when it came off they all made their escape maneuvers from the point that they
4 supposedly were to release that weapon.

5 LC: The purpose of all of that was so they could measure the impact on each
6 aircraft as it gets away at a certain path?

7 JH: Right. Right. I should've mentioned all these aircraft were instrumented to
8 assure what both the thermal and the blast effect was on them in their getaway position.

9 LC: Did they have radiation sensors as well so that they were—?

10 JH: Did they what?

11 LC: Have radiation sensors so you would get how much—?

12 JH: Oh, yeah. We all wore those sensors.

13 LC: You all had those sensors on.

14 JH: Yeah and they were checked daily.

15 LC: I'll bet. I'll bet they were.

16 JH: Right after a shot. So this occurred and I didn't—I wasn't involved in the
17 flying activity there, but that morning that they detonated the first weapon on Bikini I was
18 standing on the runway on the ramp at Eniwetok at the detonation time. It looked like a
19 second sunrise a hundred and eighty miles away. Then after, I don't know, three or four
20 minutes or so here came the shock wave, no heat. Well, no thermal blast, but the shock
21 wave I could feel it 180 miles away, very lightly.

22 LC: Very lightly? So you're standing there. You were okay to stand there
23 through it?

24 JH: Mm-hmm.

25 LC: Wow. Do you know, Jim, whether there was equipment even where you
26 were that was going to be assessed for the impact, equipment on the ground or maybe in
27 the water, ships or anything that were just kinda sitting out there?

28 JH: Yeah. They had radiation instruments, test instruments all around, yeah. They
29 were all monitored regularly. They had been there essentially before Ivy Mike because
30 Elugelab, I don't know, this in Eniwetok Atoll and they think contaminated that area
31 pretty seriously. So that's why they monitored us everyday because this is two years later

1 after the Mike blast there at Eniwetok. So they still had to monitor equipment there for
2 everything on the island, yes. So then the airplanes came back and my good buddy from
3 the 19th Bomb Group in World War II on Guam was flying that B-36. So I went up to
4 him and his name was Savage, George Savage, but you know those old time gun shooter
5 name Doc Savage. So his nickname was “Doc.” I said, “Doc, how’s the blast?” He said,
6 “It was a blast.” He says, “Come back here. I want to show you something.” You know, a
7 B-36 has the aft-facing engines. They were pusher-type engines, instead of—

8 LC: Pulling.

9 JH: They have, on the propeller hub, they have a cone about an inch, I mean about
10 a foot in diameter coming down to a sharp cone. They’re painted. All that paint was
11 burned off.

12 MMH: Woo.

13 LC: Really? How far had he been from the blast?

14 JH: Well, I don’t know exactly, but he was in his position as though he had
15 dropped that weapon and then did his escape.

16 LC: The heat just—

17 JH: When the heat came up he was going away and it got him.

18 MMH: Still got him.

19 JH: It’s also—it had USAF (United States Air Force) markings on it also, kind of
20 what you call—singed them, I guess.

21 LC: Wow.

22 JH: That was a good test, though, for us to know that we had escape maneuvers
23 planned for all these airplanes in case we did ever have to go to war and they would have
24 to do that—that the guys were safe. If a test had failed, as an example, on any airplane,
25 that airplane would be subject to question whether or not it would ever drop a nuclear
26 weapon on the Soviet Union.

27 LC: Was there any aircraft that was actually eliminated from—?

28 JH: No.

29 LC: Never?

30 JH: No.

31 LC: Really?

1 JH: Uh-huh.

2 LC: Wow.

3 JH: Well, see fighters would be the ones who would be the closest and boy, they
4 (makes swoosh sound).

5 LC: Their speed.

6 JH: Zoom away, yeah. Full of speed, so the B-36, for example, maybe 250 miles
7 an hour in a turn, but it all worked out well.

8 LC: Now what were you wearing when you saw that second sunrise? Did you
9 have protective—?

10 JH: Normal khakis.

11 LC: Nothing else?

12 JH: Mnh-mm.

13 LC: Your eyes? Nothing else?

14 JH: Mnh-mm. Too far away.

15 LC: Too far away, but you felt the shock.

16 JH: I felt the shock.

17 LC: Of course, radiation effects probably—

18 JH: No, it didn't come over that far at all.

19 LC: Yeah, too far.

20 JH: The weather forecast—it's always west to east. The weather forecast was not
21 accurate. It changed at, I don't know, before or at shot time and it just totally irradiated—
22 what was the island's name, little island. I want to say Rodem. No. No.

23 LC: Rongelap?

24 JH: What? Rongelap. Totally, yeah. Rongelap and we had an Air Force, small
25 Air Force detachment there plus the natives and boy they were evacuated immediately
26 back to safe ground. They had to relocate completely, the natives, in a new environment
27 for many years. They're back there now, but for many years it was so hot.

28 LC: That was an accident.

29 JH: It was really an accident.

30 LC: That was really based on the poor weather forecasting?

1 JH: The change, well, I wouldn't say the fore—but the change in the weather
2 forecast.

3 LC: That couldn't be foretold or wasn't picked up in advance.

4 JH: Yeah.

5 LC: Yeah.

6 JH: Right up to shot time it was still going to go northeast where Rongelap was.

7 LC: Now just thinking about the experience of seeing a couple of shots. I mean
8 you saw at least two that you've described. You're watching something that's absolutely,
9 in the case of Ivy Mike, unprecedented.

10 JH: That's right.

11 LC: What impact did it make on you? Did you think about how powerful the
12 United States was, or the science, or did you think about God or I mean, what did you
13 think about when you saw that?

14 JH: I didn't think about the United States particularly, but I thought about—I was
15 awestruck really to see such a thing. This thing building up, building up and what I
16 wanted to do was turn and go away, ninety degrees away, but I couldn't because the
17 scientists want to do their little thing. So we kept flying.

18 LC: So you had to hold steady in.

19 JH: Perpendicular to it, yeah. Until they got what they wanted and then we went
20 away. This thing just looked like it was blossoming so fast coming right at us that I
21 wanted to go, but my impression. I didn't think about God. No. In later, well, in World
22 War II I did quite a bit, missions always said a little prayer. "Get me out of this one, God,
23 and I'll promise." But then the next, I'd go say it again, the next mission. "Get me out of
24 this one God and I promise." This one I wasn't really that close. I thought—yes, I did
25 think, "Wow! What an impact that will have on the world attitude toward warfare." The
26 United States is the only one that has a thermal nuke. The Soviet Union already had the
27 just plain nuclear weapon.

28 LC: They had the straight up Hiroshima style, I guess, bomb from 1945.

29 JH: That was my big concern was, what is the world coming to? What do they
30 think based on this and what can it do? Thermal nuke based on that twenty thousand
31 milli-ton that Paul Tibbets dropped on Hiroshima.

1 LC: Which was a squeak compared to—

2 JH: Compared to this, yeah. I've forgotten the megatons now that were dropped.

3 LC: Yeah, I don't remember either, but the film of that that I've seen, which may

4 have been shot from your plane, I don't know.

5 JH: It could've been.

6 LC: It is—I mean words fail you. It's frightening, but I cannot imagine having

7 actually been there. You had to hold the plane, as you said, until the scientists got what

8 they needed. How did you know? What was the signal that their tests were complete, they

9 had everything they needed, you guys could get out of there? Was there—?

10 JH: I think basically the cloud, the fireball of the cloud had ascended so far that it

11 was out of their range, within a confined cabin, to get for any higher. They says, "We've

12 got what we want. Let's go." That were strictly up to, I've forgotten the chief scientists'

13 name we had aboard.

14 LC: Were these AEC employees?

15 JH: AEC scientists. Uh-huh.

16 LC: So civilian scientists?

17 JH: Yeah, mm-hmm. The photographers were civilian, also.

18 LC: They would just let you know "We've got what we need"?

19 JH: Yeah. Then after we finished Bikini test, went back to Kirtland again and I

20 became the Air Force Special Weapons Center flight safety officer then.

21 LC: What did that entail, Jim?

22 JH: Trying to reduce the number of aircraft accidents we would have throughout

23 a year. We were based on a year. Had a percentage figure in an accident with so many

24 hundred thousand flying hours, X number of accidents equals so much percentage. Just

25 trying to actually protect ourselves from losing airplanes and people, basically people.

26 That's what it was all about, but establishing programs where the units that flew airplanes

27 would instill in their pilots, "Here's what we've got to do to be real careful."

28 LC: So setting up, say SOPs (standard operating procedures) for certain types of

29 missions?

30 JH: Yep.

31 LC: Did you get involved with logistics and supply as well?

1 JH: No. No. That was strictly up to them.

2 LC: Okay.

3 JH: One good example of that, not getting involved in logistics, I came up with a
4 great idea that I saw on some airbase. I think it was a SAC airbase and I don't remember
5 where, but they had what they called a rolling command post. Back in those days most
6 command posts were on the base with all kind of radio equipment and electronics and
7 that type of thing. This one had all kind of radios and telephones. You know, we didn't
8 have satellites then so telephone was restricted somewhat, but all kind of equipment like
9 that to help near at or near the site of a crash. So I came back from that and I kind of
10 designed a vehicle with all this equipment on it that could help the commander at a crash
11 site keep in communication with whomever it was necessary through radio, if by
12 telephone, by telephone. Then the onsite he was the on site commander of the
13 investigation on the crash. This solved a lot of problems. When I designed this and
14 general, commanding officer of the Special Weapons Center, General Canterbury
15 approved it. He said, "Send that right on down to the base and tell them to get going with
16 it." So all I had to do was send this drawing down, not drawing but specification. So the
17 base flying safety officer came to me and says, "Where we gonna get all this stuff? Have
18 fun."

19 LC: "I just had the great idea. I'm not here to implement it." Right? So
20 implementation became somebody else's—

21 JH: It's terrible to be a bureaucrat like that.

22 MMH: Not my job.

23 JH: Well, that wasn't—well, they had the resources. At our center had a higher
24 Air Force priority on personnel and equipment and the supplies than they did. So I told
25 them they could use our priority to get whatever they needed for it, which helped.

26 LC: They could pull in what they needed. Now that actually raises another
27 question. Was there any time in this period that you had an opportunity, but declined to
28 go to SAC?

29 JH: I never asked.

30 LC: Oh, you never asked? Okay.

31 JH: I was never asked and I would've declined anyway. I was happy.

1 LC: Why is that? What was going on—?

2 JH: I was just real happy in my job where I was, had a good job. The
3 environment in Albuquerque, we loved it. It had good family. General Canterbury and I
4 became real close friends. You can't beat having a general being your best friend.

5 LC: Tell me about that relationship. What can you tell me about his background,
6 first of all?

7 JH: I don't know. Well, wait a minute. I do know his background.

8 LC: If you can fill in some blanks.

9 JH: I'll tell you what. He came there as a commander of a unit I'm gonna tell you
10 about in the future called AFOAT-1 (Air Force Office, Atomic Testing).

11 LC: Called?

12 JH: Air Force, A-F-O-A-T.

13 LC: Okay.

14 JH: AFOAT, Air Force, T. I've forgotten what the other two letters stood for, but
15 I'll get to that in the future. He was commander of that and then came out as commander
16 of Kirtland, special weapons on Kirtland, the Special Weapons Center there.

17 LC: Air Force Special Weapons. Uh-huh.

18 JH: Then when I became his flying safety officer he had reviewed my
19 performance on Castle and the flying safety base, center flying safety officer leaving. So
20 he called me in and he says, "You were base flying safety officer, base flight safety
21 officer over there. You're wanna be my flight safety officer." I said, "Boss, if anybody up
22 here wants me, that's where I'm at." So that's how it came. His background, let me get to
23 that in another section 'cause I go into this outfit he came out of. So I was the center
24 flying safety officer. I had one little anecdote I was gonna tell you about that, but maybe
25 I'll remember it. In the mean time I still had about—this was 1954. So I had three more
26 years to be in Kirtland. I didn't know how long I'd be there, but that's how long I was
27 actually there. I stayed as the center flying safety officer. He and I became real good
28 friends. In fact, I don't know how much you know about Albuquerque, but in those days,
29 1950s Albuquerque, there's a series of mountains called the San de Cristo.

30 MMH: Sandia.

31 JH: Sandia.

1 LC: The Sandia Mountains?

2 JH: Sandia Mountains, just east of Albuquerque. Well, there was a long space of
3 miles between the eastern edge of Albuquerque and the base of Sandia Mountains.
4 General Canterbury came to me one day and says, “Jim, several of us are getting an
5 investment group together to buy some of this land out here on the foothills of the Sandia
6 Mountains, northwest of downtown Albuquerque. Would you like to join us?” I said,
7 “Northwest of downtown Albuquerque? General, nothing out there but sand dunes.” He
8 says, “But wait, it’s going to develop.” I said, “Let me think about this.” So I took the
9 family out. We rode over these sand dunes out there.

10 MMH: The kids loved it.

11 LC: Oh, I’ll bet they did.

12 JH: The sand, oh man. I came back and told General Canterbury, “You know,
13 I’m a realist and I don’t ever see any building out there.” (laughs) He said, “Well, Jim I
14 respect your decision, but you’re making a mistake.” I did make a big mistake. We were
15 going to invest five thousand dollars. Five thousand dollars was a lot of money.

16 MMH: That was a lot of money then.

17 LC: Goodness.

18 JH: I wish I could think of other things, but anyway. I finished my time there. I
19 was a Reserve officer. I applied for—the Air Force opened up an opportunity for long-
20 term Reserve officers to apply for regular officer status. I replied. I applied to become a
21 regular officer. At the same time I applied for assignment to an Air Command and Staff
22 College at the Air University. I was accepted for both.

23 LC: Now, what rank would you have been? This is 1957, if I’m right.

24 JH: I was a major.

25 LC: A major? Okay.

26 JH: I went to—I went to Maxwell Air Force Base to the Air University there, the
27 Command and Staff College. I heard Minnie Mae mention long ago that a problem in the
28 world is difference in languages, but our first block of instruction is the world’s greatest
29 religions. I said to myself, “Religion?” So I went up to my professor and I said, “Why are
30 we studying religions, especially as a first block, and we’re military.” He says, “You’re

1 gonna get into this and you're gonna see what I'm telling you right now, but the very
2 basis of war is the fighting among various religions escalating into a war."

3 LC: That's really interesting. I bet that popped your eyes open.

4 JH: Today.

5 LC: Yeah, right now.

6 JH: Iraq, look at that.

7 LC: That was very—did you buy in? Did you accept, kinda get on and go with it?

8 JH: Oh, yeah, after I got in there I—oh, yeah I could see it right away after
9 several other courses combined with that.

10 LC: Sure. I want to ask you a little more about the curriculum in a minute, but
11 Minnie Mae, did you move then to and you had two kids by now, is that right?

12 MMH: They're four years difference in our children's ages.

13 LC: In what years were they born?

14 MMH: Well, our son came after World War II. We waited to start our family
15 after he was working for his dad. We thought we were civilians. So we had our son in
16 October of '47.

17 LC: His name is Jim, right? Is he Jim, Jr.?

18 MMH: Third.

19 JH: The Third.

20 LC: Jim III.

21 MMH: Third. Off the record, we have five now. It's ridiculous, but anyway.
22 Then we built our dream home and all that and we started another baby. I was expecting
23 her in September, but he got recalled for the Korean War.

24 JH: September of '51.

25 MMH: '51. So I moved back with my mother.

26 LC: Your mom and dad had a lot to put up with. Did they—?

27 MMH: They loved me to death. Mother was a good sport. Daddy put up with us.

28 LC: That's right.

29 MMH: So we stayed there until Christmas. She was born in September, the last
30 part of September '51. Then he was already in Greenville, South Carolina. So he came

1 for us at Christmastime. We went back with him and that was before he went to that
2 survival school and all that.

3 LC: Right. Right. When he left, you had been at Kirtland or in the Albuquerque
4 area, and then when he moved to Maxwell you also went to Alabama?

5 MMH: Oh, yeah. Our son was going into the fifth grade and our daughter hadn't
6 started elementary school yet. I went to our son's teacher and I said, "This worries me
7 because moving around, I don't see how he's gonna do well in school." She looked at me
8 and she said, "Travel is very educational. Your son is a bright student and he makes
9 friends easily. You don't worry about him." So I took that attitude.

10 LC: That was probably good advice.

11 MMH: She was right. We just did fine everywhere. We were there a year. We
12 decorated our home. We started the little Cub Scout troop. I was den mother.

13 LC: You pitched in as den mother? Uh-huh.

14 MMH: Yeah, and for the year. Then they weren't gonna let our boy join the Cub
15 Scouts because we're only gonna be here a year. I said, "Are you gonna waste a year of
16 your life? Don't do that. Just live it."

17 LC: That's interesting and it makes me think about the atmosphere, the social
18 atmosphere, in Alabama around this time.

19 JH: Terrible.

20 LC: This is a lot of change going on. What can you tell me? Of course, I'm
21 referring to race relations.

22 MMH: That's what we're talking about.

23 LC: I know that you know that. Are there vignettes or what did you observe?

24 MMH: Well, one, I'll tell her one story about the city park.

25 LC: Please.

26 JH: Okay.

27 MMH: They had a big city park. Downtown was on one side of it and quite a few
28 of the black people lived on the other side. One day I was really upset about this. A
29 young black man worked in town. He cut across the park to go to work. They arrested
30 him because he was in the park. This really bothered me.

31 LC: How did you find out about it?

1 MMH: Oh, it was all in the paper and everything. I grew up in Dallas. My daddy
2 had a grocery store and there were black people. He owned quite a bit of property there
3 and there were black people on both sides of our property. We were not allowed to play
4 with them, but they respected Daddy and he respected them. He helped them when they
5 were without groceries. He called the doctor when—I had no ill feeling toward black
6 people. It just bothered me that they were treated the way they were.

7 LC: In Alabama?

8 MMH: Well, everywhere.

9 JH: Especially in that part.

10 MMH: Yeah.

11 LC: Very, very apparent there. You couldn't escape it.

12 MMH: Even in Dallas they had white water fountains and black water fountains.
13 They couldn't go to our movies. They might sit up in the very top balcony at the big
14 Majestic Theater, but they couldn't go through our box office.

15 LC: In Dallas?

16 MMH: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

17 LC: Now, Jim, what do you remember about that year that has to do with the
18 social situation?

19 JH: Let me digress just a minute from that and go back to her.

20 LC: Please. That's fine.

21 JH: Mentioning Dallas, I don't know how it was for you. We eventually lived in
22 those days, but on our public transportation all we had were electric streetcars. On each
23 window it had a little receptacle, metal receptacle.

24 MMH: Up high.

25 JH: Up high, yeah. They had a little motorman on the streetcar, had two little
26 signs, one for each side of the streetcar. A little wooden sign about so long, a little metal
27 prong on it over on one side. On one side it said "white," on the other side it said
28 "colored." He'd put that prong in, leaving about maybe two rows in the back of the car. If
29 a colored person, a black person, as they liked to be called today then was colored.

30 MMH: No, it was nigger.

1 JH: The colored person could not sit in the forward of that. If they did then they
2 wouldn't move, the motorman will stop the car and somehow get a policeman. Then
3 they'd be arrested. If he was overloaded with white people and the colored people seats
4 were all taken, he would go back and move the sign back and make these colored people
5 get up and stand up and white people take those seats. Now that's for Dallas. Now let's
6 go back to Montgomery, Alabama.

7 LC: Now that was Dallas in say the—

8 MMH: That was when we grew up.

9 JH: Oh, yeah, '40s, uh '30s.

10 LC: Then '30s.

11 MMH: '30s.

12 JH: Alabama in late 1950s. In addition to what she told you about the black man
13 in the park, one of my professors' wives had a tea party at her home one day and invited
14 certain of our class.

15 MMH: And their wives.

16 JH: All of a sudden—Minnie Mae was one of them. All of a sudden a knock
17 came on the door and here stands a policeman. He says, "I have been told that you have a
18 black lady in your home." She just says, "I do. She's my friend. She's attending a tea
19 party of this group from the air base." He says, "You're under arrest for entertaining a
20 black person in your home. She's under arrest for being here. Come with me." So they
21 did, but the wife when they got to the police station called her husband on the staff at the
22 university who called a base commander and says, "Hey, you've got a problem down
23 here." Base commander got deeply involved in a hurry and that was all hush-hush-hush.
24 Wiped out, never happened again.

25 MMH: You didn't read that in the paper.

26 JH: That was the way it was in Alabama in those days from a personal point of
27 view. Terrible.

28 LC: Wow, that's really scary. Certainly, I'm sure, the presence of the base not
29 only provoked some incidents like the ones you're talking about, but probably also
30 helped push change, too.

31 MMH: Yeah.

1 JH: It did. Yeah, because we were already being integrated.

2 LC: Absolutely. Were you finding, Jim, by this point in your career, black pilots
3 coming in?

4 JH: Coming in? Yeah. Not in great numbers, not like they are today, but yeah.

5 LC: Yeah. You were starting to see that change, too.

6 JH: Yeah. Yeah. It wasn't Tuskegee Airmen type. It was right in with us.

7 LC: Right. Exactly. Not segregated units.

8 JH: I never had any problem with that. Just like Minnie Mae tells about her dad's
9 store. In addition to having blacks near, some of the main streets in the near North Dallas,
10 just Love Field and all. I don't know how familiar you are with Dallas.

11 LC: Pretty familiar. Yeah.

12 JH: Northwest Highway runs east and west just north of Love Field. Some of the
13 main streets in there, big, big homes, now named after some of her father's grocery
14 store—

15 MMH: Customers.

16 JH: Customers.

17 LC: Those streets now named after those families.

18 JH: Streets.

19 MMH: Yeah.

20 JH: Yeah. Some of those families still owed him lots of dollars, but he closed his
21 store.

22 LC: I could see that happening. Well, he gave credit, though, to them.

23 MMH: Yeah, credit. Oh yeah.

24 JH: What I'm trying to say there based on that, the inter-mixture there, the blacks
25 were not as looked down on in that particular area as they were elsewhere in Dallas.
26 When I first moved to Dallas from Greenville at the age of eight, I was probably nine
27 when we actually moved into South Dallas, which had a section of blacks in it. We lived
28 a half a block from a railroad track. On the other side of the railroad track was nothing
29 but blacks. Those little boys would come over and we'd play together. Have fun together.

30 MMH: Talking about this son.

1 JH: Never did, seldom ever saw their parents, but I grew up just like she did. I
2 grew up among blacks.

3 MMH: Didn't bother us.

4 JH: Right. It never did bother us.

5 MMH: Tell her about the sign in Greenville.

6 JH: Oh. In Greenville?

7 MMH: Yeah.

8 JH: Up until the Civil Rights Act passed, before I was born Greenville had one
9 main street, had a square. Had a couple of main streets in it, but one main street came
10 down across the railroad tracks and a depot right on the edge of downtown. Right across
11 this street, it was a two-lane street with parking on either side and across this street, great
12 big sign all the way across the street about that thick in width.

13 LC: So maybe a foot and a half.

14 JH: Yeah, width, maybe four or five feet high. It was all lighted up inside.

15 MMH: Across that street.

16 JH: Had a cross both sides of it "The blackest land and the whitest people." That
17 stayed there until the Civil Acts of 1964. Then the City Council agreed to take it down
18 and they set it over on the edge of the depot properties. The depot was out of business
19 and the train didn't stop there anymore, that train didn't. It sat there for I don't know how
20 many year, several years, but it's not there now. My dad ran a garage on the opposite
21 corner from the depot right under that sign. I have a picture of that with—

22 LC: Do you really, with your dad's business there?

23 JH: Never had a business. I got a fireplug in front of his business.

24 LC: Fireplug, well, that's good. That was important for the business to have that
25 there, too.

26 MMH: You know a lot of the towns—

27 JH: You know that's way off of what we were talking about, but it's important
28 for the world to know.

29 LC: It's very interesting

30 MMH: Let me tell you one other thing about little towns. I don't know. In Irving
31 where we finally lived, they had a rule. "Don't let the sun go down if you in town."

1 LC: For African Americans? For blacks?
2 JH: With you still in town.
3 MMH: Yeah they had another section, Bear Creek, they called it. Now it's a very
4 affluent name there. After it got a little late in the day, they vacated Irving. You never
5 saw one in there.
6 LC: I think similarly—there's similar stories about what went on in Lubbock,
7 too.
8 MMH: Oh, yeah. I'm sure.
9 LC: There were certain roads you couldn't if you were black you need to not be
10 west of this certain road at night.
11 JH: It was pretty prevalent throughout the South.
12 MMH: Yeah. Well, anyway that's all.
13 LC: It's very interesting. I mean, I lived in Atlanta. I've seen some of the changes
14 there and I think it's interesting for us, for the other observations that you make along the
15 way as you move to different parts of the country what was happening. I mean, 1957, '58
16 Dr. King was just becoming a public figure and he did a lot of his work in northern
17 Alabama.
18 MMH: That's right.
19 JH: That's right, his march movement.
20 LC: That's right. Did you pay attention to him as that was starting to—?
21 MMH: He wasn't around.
22 JH: Well, he wasn't marching then.
23 LC: Not yet.
24 MMH: Yeah. It was before.
25 JH: He was preaching and advocating civil rights. I don't remember what the
26 year of the march, was about a year after we left.
27 MMH: Yeah.
28 LC: Probably '59
29 JH: Maybe '58, '59
30 LC: No, '58. Somewhere in there. You know it's interesting these things that you
31 observe along the way because they're kind of touchstones for placing all the rest of what

1 we're talking about into the society from which it came and some of the problems that we
2 had internally as a country, not to mention, of course, our international issues with which
3 you were involved, but turning to the curriculum at the university. Now you've
4 mentioned that the first thing out of the shoot was this survey of all the religions. This
5 was kind of a new thing for you. Although you'd been to all kinds of different training
6 schools and had acquired all these skills to kind of sit back and soak up all of this
7 information must've been kind of—was it a thrill? Was it hard work?

8 JH: It was very interesting. We had a lot of good outside speakers that came in
9 and they verified what this professor had said that "Here's why. Here's how it happens."
10 One professor in fact, boy, he really set me off. Now, he wasn't a professor. I'm sorry.
11 He was a—I think he was a lay speaker from some church in Washington, D.C. I don't
12 remember the exact details. He came down and he says, "Look." He says, "You're a
13 mixed group here." He says, "You have foreign students here," in our religion class, "you
14 have foreign students here. Most Americans are Christians, but you have Muslim in here,
15 who believe the Islamic faith. You have Hindus in here from other countries studying the
16 same thing we were studying." He said, "What do you as a Christian think is gonna
17 happen to your friend right here who is a Muslim, leads us along, Hindu, Buddhist, I
18 mean Hindu?" Then we also studied Buddhism and Taoism. "What's going to happen to
19 those people who don't believe in the divinity of Christ and therefore can't get to
20 heaven?" Boy, you talk about a pop out of the box. Oh, twenty-six or -seven year old Jim
21 Hall sitting here. What is gonna happen? I hadn't even thought about such things.

22 LC: Had you not?

23 JH: No.

24 LC: You had not thought about that.

25 JH: I didn't know anything different.

26 LC: You were busy. You had a few other things going on.

27 JH: I didn't know anything except Christianity.

28 LC: Sure.

29 JH: I didn't know about those other religions.

30 LC: That was eye opening.

1 JH: It really was. That set me to thinking a whole lot about that. I'll get into
2 another part of that way on down, another assignment.

3 LC: Okay.

4 JH: With a good Islam person. You asked about curriculum, the world's greatest
5 religions, the constitution, military regulations, command procedures, how to be a
6 commander without alienating your troops but still getting them at best you can onto
7 them without agonizing or what not. Then setting up a staff to help you be a commander,
8 saying you must have proper—all of that was encompassing in the curriculum.

9 LC: Were they trying to teach you how to both command and to delegate?

10 JH: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Delegation's a big deal.

11 LC: Yeah. Can you talk about that a little bit?

12 JH: Well, yeah. In the military you run across two types, the centralists and the
13 non-delegators, I mean the delegators. The non-delegators, they're micromanagers. "My
14 way or no way; outta here." The delegators are, "This is your responsibility. I expect you
15 to do it and if you don't do it the right way, the way I'm counseling you, then you and I
16 are gonna have a little talk and we'll give you an opportunity to change your perspective.
17 If that doesn't occur then we'll have another little talk." We're talking about basically
18 chain of command and how it figures on down to the very basic airman.

19 LC: So that you can be a more efficient operator presumably at—you're at this
20 higher level and the emphasis on efficiency as well as cooperation, I suppose.

21 JH: That's right. Yeah. General Estes, as I mentioned, SAC commander, I mean a
22 SAC staff officer who became commander of the Castle Task Group. He was a tyrant. He
23 was a non-delegator. "My way. This is the only way. This is the SAC way." Well, we
24 weren't SAC so we didn't know about all of this.

25 LC: Did he communicate to you what it was that needed to be done his way?

26 JH: Oh, yeah.

27 LC: Was he good at that part?

28 JH: Oh, yeah. He'd say, "You gonna"—example, if he wanted that little sign on
29 that thing turned around backwards he meant now. He didn't mean "Why do we need to
30 turn it around"—now. That's the way it—boy, I was just flying safety officer and, oh, my

1 gosh, but I was able to satisfy him, but I didn't so call "brown nose," but I worked my
2 way with his way.

3 LC: That's a skill, too.

4 JH: That's my description of him. He is a good description of a non-delegator.

5 LC: Was the year well spent?

6 JH: Yes, exactly. Well spent. That year I made lieutenant colonel while I was at
7 school based on my previous work.

8 LC: I should think so.

9 JH: It really shook my—one of the staff officers up on the staff, he was a major.
10 He and I had gotten in a couple entanglements about curriculum at one time. When I
11 made lieutenant colonel he was a major. It just tore him up badly, but in conjunction with
12 that—well, before I made lieutenant colonel, I got a letter from the boss between me and
13 General Estes out at Castle that I knew at Kirtland, Col. Paul Fackler.

14 LC: How do you spell his last name?

15 JH: F-A-C-K-L-E-R.

16 LC: Okay. Mm-hmm.

17 JH: He was in the Pentagon, an offshoot of AFOAT-1 and I'll get to that in a
18 minute. Very highly classified mission and a very, very high priority in the Air Force.
19 The Air Force probably had ten or twenty thousand priorities depending on what
20 missions were at various stages, places, and whatnot. We had number four out of—

21 LC: Out of all of those.

22 JH: Out of all of those. The first one was a presidential decree, the second one
23 was war, the third was on Chief of Staffs operation. We were even with SAC, be tied
24 with SAC at four. I'll get to that in a minute.

25 LC: Jim, can you hold for just one second?

26 JH: Okay. Sure.

27 LC: Okay. Go ahead.

28 JH: Okay. Well, I guess maybe February or March. January, February, or March
29 of '58 winding down toward June graduation, I got a letter from Colonel Fackler in the
30 Pentagon. He said, "Jim, I've been following your career and I'm in an organization. I
31 can't tell you anything about it, but if you'd like to come up here and work for me, I'd

1 like to have you. I've already got arrangements made for you to come if you want it." So
2 I wrote him back. Again, like I told General Canterbury, "Boss, if you want me that's
3 where I'm gonna be." So here I graduate. The family, we took the family to Irving until I
4 could get up there, 'til you and I could get up there and find a place to live.

5 MMH: We left the kids with our parents.

6 JH: Up in the area surrounding Washington. We lived in Alexandria, Virginia. I
7 went in and reported to Colonel Fackler and he said, "I want you to schedule tomorrow
8 for a mission briefing and don't expect anything except lunch because it's quite
9 comprehensive. I must tell you now you have a top-secret clearance, but that's not good
10 enough. You also have a 'Q' clearance, which is atomic clearance. That's not good
11 enough." He says, "There are only a few hundred people in the world that even know this
12 exists other than maybe intelligence of foreign countries where it might have
13 inadvertently leaked." He says, "You're all cleared for this. I've already arranged your
14 clearance for this."

15 LC: Did that clearance have a name? I know about "Q" clearance.

16 JH: No, it didn't. Unh-uh.

17 LC: Okay. So this was something that was kind of on it's own, didn't have a—

18 JH: Well, let's see. What did they call it? They called it "a need to know." Need
19 to know. That meant that it had to be deeply involved in what we were doing. For all of
20 the time, for the rest of my career in the Air Force, she never did know what I did during
21 those ten years except what she could see on service, on the base and all. She didn't know
22 what was happening.

23 MMH: I really didn't want to know.

24 LC: Had you come to that point where you just—

25 MMH: Yeah. I thought I might say something that I don't need to say.

26 LC: So you didn't talk much about work when you saw each other.

27 JH: No. (Minnie laughs).

28 LC: I'm sure you had other things though, kids and all.

29 JH: I want to regress from that period and go on fast-forward. One day after I
30 retired in Granbury I was sitting here reading the *Air Force Magazine* and all of a sudden

1 I turned the page it says, “Air Force Special Weapons Center.” This was an offshoot of
2 AFOAT-1. I started to read that. Here’s our mission.

3 LC: Here it is.

4 JH: I handed that to Minnie Mae and I say, “You want to see something
5 interesting.” She said, “Is that what you were doing all this?” “Yeah.”

6 MMH: You know, I would watch him pack. He packed his own bag when he’d
7 travel. I kind of looked what kind of—was he taking winter clothes or summer clothes?

8 JH: Or civilian clothes.

9 MMH: Or civilian or both or all of them? You know, I didn’t know where he was
10 going. The children would say, “Where’s Daddy?”

11 LC: Yeah. Where’s Daddy?

12 JH: I’m going to compress ten years into a pretty short time here, but—

13 LC: Is this by necessity or because you feel—?

14 JH: Oh, well, it’s just kind of—it’s all encompassing the same. The same thing
15 I’ll tell you here you can ask any question you want. It’s completely declassified. What
16 we did—we operated the U.S. Atomic Energy Detection System, AEDS, USAEDS,
17 which is now wide open. That comprised of a build up, not today, in 1958 when I
18 reported in, but it was the beginning—it started in 1949, I think, with General
19 Eisenhower—oh, wait a minute General Truman, or President Truman saying we better
20 do something to monitor the nukes from the Soviet Union, but it was very minor and that
21 was AFOAT-1. For the life of me I can’t think of what—(both talking at the same time).

22 MMH: Well, you’ll find it out when you wake up—

23 LC: We can add it to this later.

24 JH: Okay. That’s what it was initially and then they changed names several times
25 becoming eventually the Air Force Technical Application Center, which it is today. It had
26 a Washington office when I got in it. It had the Washington office and it had three field
27 offices, one in Wiesbaden, Germany, one in Sacramento, California, and one in Yokota,
28 Japan, which subsequently moved back to Hawaii. They had their own areas of
29 responsibility. Germany had all of Europe, Africa, Mid-East as far down as India and
30 Ceylon. The United States had the whole North America, South America and the one in
31 Japan and then Hawaii had the Pacific Rim, Australia, New Zealand and that as

1 monitoring. Now what we did on our mission was, was to detect the advancement in
2 nuclear technology of Russia and China and in some cases France, good old France. They
3 didn't share all of their information with us. They wanted to be a member of the nuclear
4 group, but they wouldn't share all their information with us. So we had to suspect them,
5 monitor them closely. We do with the British every time they wanted to pop one we
6 knew in advance.

7 LC: Right. There was a lot of collaboration, a lot of Anglo-American
8 collaboration, but of course the French not.

9 JH: So to accomplish this mission we eventually had around 330 attacks just
10 scattered throughout the world. When I first walked in and Colonel Fackler says, "Go to
11 that briefing," and they started telling me where we had some detachments, I didn't even
12 know the country existed, let alone an Air Force detachment in it. The detachments
13 consisted of about eleven people, one officer and ten airmen. They worked a twenty-four
14 hour shift except it was cut down drastically in the evenings, had to monitor the
15 equipment in the evening, in the nighttime, for any indication of an adverse affect on the
16 atmosphere or the surface of the Earth through seismic, acoustic, electromagnetic.
17 There's so many included in electromagnetic. I can't—don't remember them all, but
18 those three were the main three that we monitored the activities throughout the world
19 from these detachments scattered all over. When something unusual would happen, like
20 even an earthquake, it would trigger seismic. The seismic guy would say, "Well, it
21 triangulated right here." This detachment saying, "There's direction. Here's the direction.
22 There's the direction, triangulate." The acoustic guy would say, "Well, we got that air
23 change, atmospheric change, sub-atmospheric change, through our system. Here, there,
24 and so forth correlates with what you've got." The electromagnetic was the same way. So
25 once we got the triangulation of where this occurred, we knew pretty well whether it was
26 an event of nature or whether it was an actual nuclear event because of the difference in
27 the handwriting in the instrument, if you will, the wiggle of the needle in the
28 instrument—

29 LC: There was a signature for different types.

30 JH: You'd get a little bit different signatures, a little bit different, but it got to
31 where we knew exactly where the Russians were going to, the Soviet Union, was going

1 to test or where China was going to test because we knew where we tested. We knew
2 they knew where we tested, Nevada and the Pacific. They had the same thing I guess, but
3 then when we would triangulate on a specific point, we had a special weather forecast
4 section in this outfit I was in and, God bless them. There were no reporting stations
5 throughout Asia.

6 LC: There were no stations when you came in?

7 JH: No. None that would reported openly. They might report it locally, but not
8 where we got the weather reports. So this weather detachment, oh, boy, they were—let
9 me regress just a minute. That 1.4 priority, this organization was just filled with the elite
10 of the elite. I'm not bragging on me, but they were highly selected for individual
11 positions. Even the air, the same way that our personnel people could go down to San
12 Antonio to the personnel center and look over record after record after record. "We want
13 that guy. We want this guy. We want that guy," based on what they read in there. Then
14 they would send them to our school up in Lowry and train them in these techniques.

15 LC: So there was a training facility?

16 JH: At Lowry.

17 LC: At Lowry Field?

18 JH: At Denver. It was run by us in conjunction with the training command, Air
19 Force Training Command. I think it was maybe 2nd Air Force. I don't remember. Once
20 we triangulated this then the special weather people would put their best thinking to try to
21 determine where that air mass was going to move and when it would emanate out into
22 legal air space for us to get an airplane in and get a sample on it. That was usually the
23 Pacific rim, anywhere along from Japan all the way down to the Philippines.

24 LC: That's because an event on the Asian landmass anywhere would be moving
25 out toward—

26 JH: West to east.

27 LC: Yeah, west to east.

28 JH: Usually.

29 LC: So you would wait 'til—

30 JH: We'd wait, well, the weather people would say, "Based on what we can
31 determine, it'll be about this date." In conjunction with these 330-something

1 detachments, we had sampling equipment on various major air commands and airplanes.
2 We only own two airplanes, AFTAC (Air Force Technical Applications Center). We
3 owned initially a C-47 and a C-54. We got rid of the C-54 and the C-47 and got a C-118.
4 We had sampling equipment on it. It was also used as one of the general's airplanes to
5 scoot around various places in the country. We had agreement with SAC to put sampling
6 equipment into their bomb bay on the B-52, the B-36. I believe that was all SAC. No, and
7 the U-2. We had an agreement with the Air Weather Service to put it on their B-50s
8 initially and then the B-47 and the KC-135.

9 LC: This second agreement was with who again?

10 JH: The second one?

11 LC: Mm-hmm.

12 JH: Was with—

13 MMH: The weather—

14 JH: The weather—what did I say? SAC?

15 LC: Yeah, the first one was with SAC.

16 JH: SAC and then Air Weather Service.

17 LC: Air Weather Service.

18 JH: Air Weather Service.

19 LC: Okay. Sure.

20 JH: Let me think just a minute now. It seemed like another weather service,
21 another service in there that we used their airplanes had samplers on them. I don't recall.
22 It seems like we had three different commands and we put these samplers on them. In
23 addition to the sampler in the airplanes we would have accommodated. Oh wait a minute,
24 I know. It was TAC (Tactical Air Command) on some of them.

25 LC: Oh, TAC.

26 JH: Tactical Air Command on some of their F-84s.

27 LC: Okay.

28 JH: 'Cause we had that sampling squadron at Kirtland and it wasn't involved
29 with AFTAC. It was strictly ARDC (Air Research and Development Command), Air
30 Research and Development, at that time. We designed the equipment to fit the airplane

1 and whoever built the airplane had to agree that it had no affect on the aerodynamics of
2 the airplane.

3 LC: Okay.

4 JH: In some cases, it would be, as an example it would B-52 and B-36 would be
5 the pod we would put up in a bomb bay. It was probably the width of four of those
6 cabinet doors.

7 LC: So about six feet maybe? Maybe more?

8 JH: It could be seven, about seven or eight feet long. In that we had several
9 different circular-type pad type samplers, like rice paper, circular rice papers that work
10 kind of like the old nickelodeons. It worked where you put one in and you take it out and
11 then push another one in, take it out, push another one in.

12 LC: Right and they're all lined up.

13 JH: Lined up, yeah, with one air group blowing through. Once the operator inside
14 read the radiation that was collected on the first one, he'll take it out, put a clean one in
15 and see if the direction they were flying would increase this. If so they'd keep flying that
16 direction because they're—well, first let me back up again. They would go to, as an
17 example, the Pacific rim. They go to the Pacific rim and start flying square patterns,
18 expanding square patterns hoping that they would find a piece of the debris that was
19 coming in this air mass. Once they get any kind of radiative index on these sampling
20 papers, then they go to work right in the whole area there and keep reading. If the second
21 or third paper decreases, it'll turn around. It's max collection.

22 LC: Right they're trying to—each time they hit something they're trying to make
23 sure that they follow direction-wise such that they get increased hits.

24 JH: That's right.

25 LC: Each time so they can get the volume of the air that's contaminated
26 effectively and try to measure that.

27 JH: Yeah. Yeah. Now these big things on a B-36 and B-52 had three of those air
28 ducts. So the operator, our operator sitting in the B-52 punches buttons and moves all of
29 them at his discretion based on what he's seeing on his instruments up there. In addition
30 to that, when we begin to get to the hot spot, we had huge wire-enforced balls, steel balls,

1 hollow, to pump air into it. We would pump this air into that ball and then he would close
2 the valve on it.

3 LC: Seal it.

4 JH: Yeah. Seal it and then when the airplane would get back to a base, wherever
5 it was, we had to set up special couriers to get those samples back to one of three
6 laboratories, one in Yokota, Japan, one in Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska, and one in
7 McClellan Air Force Base in our biggest laboratory in Sacramento. Our Air Force
8 scientists, not AEC, but our Air Force scientists there both being civilian and military
9 would analyze this data and could reconstruct the weapon in it's entirety, tell exactly
10 what the nuclear activity was, exactly what the case consisted of, exactly what the
11 detonator was, and they could almost reconstruct the shape on the weapon based on these
12 little bitty parts. I'm talking about pinhead or smaller of particles that we would get. Then
13 we would send this to the AEC for their evaluation on what which showed the increase in
14 technology in the Soviet Union, China, or France.

15 LC: So you're measuring by making these physical measurements of the
16 samples.

17 JH: Last year, this year, that year.

18 LC: You can watch the technology change in the enemy.

19 JH: That's right. Now the way the AEC knew whether or not we were accurate
20 going back now to the nuclear tests with ARDC testing for the—when I was in ARDC.
21 This outfit was testing them unbeknown to me, testing the same tests that we were
22 helping the AEC with. This organization, AFTAC, Air Force Technical Application
23 Center, would take their samples from a known AEC test. AEC would only say “On a
24 certain date we're shooting on this shot at this location. You do whatever you want to to
25 get samples.” So they would get samples, send them back to these laboratories—

26 LC: The Air Force would?

27 JH: Air Force, AFTAC.

28 LC: AFTAC. Okay.

29 JH: They'd take these samples, analyze them, send them to AEC and say, “Grade
30 us on what you knew was going to happen at that site, and what your analysis was of that
31 site.” Ninety-nine point nine percent so they knew we were accurate in getting the—

1 LC: So that refined the techniques for the—

2 JH: Very much so. The other samplers that we had, example, on a KC-135 it had
3 a big sampler on the outside of the fuselage where we had an operator sitting inside with
4 a nickelodeon-type thing. Then on the U-2 we had another pod, much smaller than a B-
5 36/B-52. It only had one nickelodeon type sampler that the pilot himself had to operate.

6 LC: The pilot had to?

7 JH: The pilot had to and then the fighters also.

8 LC: Well, in a U-2 there's only one guy, right? So he's got to do everything.

9 JH: The U-2s were extremely important to us because of the extreme altitude
10 they could get to so we'd know what was happening up there, so to speak. We didn't
11 have too much monitoring, aerial monitoring, too much aerial monitoring in the Southern
12 Hemisphere because of the magnetic flow of the Earth's properties, whatever. The
13 scientists just didn't think that too much would cross over in the Southern Hemisphere.
14 We found they were wrong by another system that we had in AFTAC where we would
15 work with the embassies throughout the world through the air attaché office in the
16 embassy throughout the world to buy wine and also to take air samples with these balls I
17 mentioned earlier. Then they'd ship that back to us in Washington in a diplomatic pouch
18 that no one knew anything about. Now why wine? Well, the grapes absorb what's in the
19 atmosphere out here. On the bottle it says, "Vintage 1959, 1963." So a bottle of 1959
20 would show this much radioactivity in it. We had the biggest wine seller in the world
21 probably. (laughs)

22 LC: No kidding.

23 JH: Nobody ever touched it.

24 LC: Was this at Sacramento? Was this all kept at—

25 JH: No. This was in Washington, D.C., there.

26 LC: Okay because the air attaché's things would all go to D.C. to—

27 JH: To the State Department.

28 LC: To the State Department.

29 JH: Then we'd pick them up at the State Department. Take them to our scientists
30 there in headquarters at Washington. Wait a minute. No. They contracted this out to a
31 civilian contractor there in the Washington, D.C., area somewhere, Maryland or Virginia.

1 LC: Do you know which contractor it was?

2 JH: I don't know. I don't remember. I knew at the time. They would then take
3 this wine and run it through—get the radioactivity, tell whether or not this particular area
4 had increased in the amount of radioactivity this year versus this year.

5 LC: Over the past year.

6 JH: If so, what caused that? So eventually AFTAC commander went to Chief of
7 Staff of the Air Force and said, "We think we need to go to the Southern Hemisphere
8 with U-2s." To make a long story very short, we set up a detachment in Australia and a
9 detachment in Argentina and sampled the air with the U-2s and those papers were sent
10 back to McClellan. Then after we found very minimal down there, so those detachments
11 were vacated after about two maybe three years.

12 LC: Would this have been in the early 1960s, do you think, or even earlier?

13 JH: Yeah. Oh yeah. Early '60s. Maybe late '59, early '60, '61. Throughout that
14 period because I went down to Australia to help set up the detachment there. I visited a
15 detachment in Argentina. That was in '60. I went in '61 to Australia.

16 LC: Now the detachments in setting them up, these two that you're speaking of in
17 the Southern Hemisphere, did they follow the same pattern of eleven people?

18 JH: No. These detachments were SAC people and only one AFTAC person.

19 LC: Okay.

20 JH: AFTAC just to say "Here's what we need to do and here's what we're gonna
21 do with the papers when you bring them back. You run the mission."

22 LC: So it was much more simplified from the AFTAC.

23 JH: Yeah. SAC had their people on site in Australia and Argentina with only one
24 AFTAC person.

25 LC: Your role in general during all of this?

26 JH: My role—when I first started out I was the director of air operations in the
27 headquarters of Washington, D.C., for three—

28 MMH: Almost four years, I think.

29 JH: Let's see, we left there—

30 MMH: After command (unintelligible).

1 JH: We got there in '58 and left there in April of '62. Four years. I went then to
2 Wiesbaden to the field office there as director of operations, not just air operations, but
3 director of operations, which included any air operations that came into our area and all
4 of the ground detachments.

5 LC: So director of all operations for that regional office?

6 JH: Mm-hmm.

7 LC: How many of the three-hundred-and-some detachments were assigned to
8 Wiesbaden?

9 JH: Off the top of my head, probably seventy-five or eighty, stretching all the
10 way from Kirkenes, Norway. You never heard of that town.

11 LC: No, sir.

12 JH: The very northern tip of Norway. It has a little very short, maybe, I don't
13 know, guessing now, twenty-five mile border with Russia and that's an interesting story.
14 While I'm there I'll just tell that story.

15 MMH: Tell that story.

16 LC: Okay.

17 JH: I had to go up there a couple of times, but I had to go through the Norwegian
18 CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) system. I would report to Oslo and I would go in and
19 they would make me Jorgen Johannes or somebody like that and give me a passport like
20 that.

21 LC: A Norwegian passport? Just to clarify.

22 JH: Norwegian passport, diplomatic passport.

23 LC: Even better.

24 JH: The CIA guy who was actually a Norwegian Air Force guy working for CIA
25 would accompany me. I couldn't speak Norwegian.

26 MMH: He couldn't say a word.

27 JH: He said, "Unless we're separated from the group don't you say a word,"
28 because Norway had an agreement with Russia. They would rely on no NATO (North
29 Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces above the Arctic Circle, but we had a detachment up
30 in Kirkenes near the Russian border. So when this Norwegian escort took me there twice.
31 The first time he said—he had a car waiting for us at the airport and he said, "Jim, first

1 thing we've got to do is drive out to the checkpoint between the borders." He says, "They
2 know you're here. We've got to keep good face with them. We've got to let them know
3 that we know you know you're here." So he says, "We'll drive out there in about seventy
4 five feet or a hundred feet or so. We'll turn the car sideways. You'll be in the passenger's
5 seat. They'll take a picture of you and we'll go and they'll be happy." They hope'd we
6 didn't know what we were doing up there, but they knew I was up there.

7 LC: Right.

8 JH: So I would make a staff visit to the detachment to see if things were going in
9 accord with what we required. We could tell basically by the reports, but it's always good
10 to drop in and say, "Hi. How you doing?"

11 LC: This was a morale thing, in part?

12 JH: Yeah, morale thing.

13 MMH: You had to get stationed there.

14 JH: We had three Air Force type there and the rest of them were Norwegians.

15 LC: The Air Force personnel, how long would a tour up there be?

16 JH: One year.

17 LC: One year?

18 JH: Mm-hmm.

19 LC: Yeah. So kind of showing the flag and being interested was a very good idea
20 because, of course, they're very close to the Soviet border, too.

21 JH: Yeah, very close. They were right there, just to the south.

22 LC: The dissatisfaction among those people's not a good idea.

23 JH: The eastern—the city limits of Kirkenes is almost on the border. That's how
24 close.

25 LC: When you were up there and you're of course very close to the border and
26 that would probably be a very electronically-defended border if nothing else by the
27 Soviet Union. Could you see anything on their side?

28 JH: I could see their checkpoint, but beyond that is just snow.

29 LC: Ice. Snow. Okay. So all the way from that point in northernmost Norway
30 your operations went—

31 JH: Yeah, all the way down to South Africa, Johannesburg.

1 LC: Did you ever go down there?

2 JH: Yeah. I've been all over the world. I've been all around the world to speak,
3 but that's another story. We basically—we had two whole detachments in Norway in and
4 around Oslo. We didn't have any in Sweden. None in Finland, but we had three in
5 Germany. We had none in France, none in Switzerland, none in Austria, none in the
6 Eastern Bloc, naturally. Beginning in Africa—well, let's see. In Greece we had two. In
7 Turkey we had three plus an air operation out of Incirlik, Turkey, just monitoring the air
8 activity down there with our pods. Let's see, the—

9 LC: Was that a continuous thing that you would be continuously have someone—

10 JH: Yeah. That was under USAFE, USAF Europe, their airplane with our pod.

11 LC: Got it.

12 JH: Then coming back across North Africa we had one unit in Tripoli, Libya.
13 That's the only one up in that general area. Then the most of them down in a big part of
14 Africa, Southern Africa, were mostly in the embassies and all that I've described earlier.
15 They didn't do any paper sampling down there. They just did the ball sampling and their
16 attaché was doing that for us out in a little cabinet in his office exhausting to the
17 outside—well, I should've said inhausting.

18 LC: Sucking in the air.

19 JH: Whatever that word is.

20 LC: Right. Sort of inhaling into those steel balls.

21 JH: Inhaling, yeah. Yeah.

22 LC: How often would they send—I mean the air attachés, there must've been
23 some protocol for this. How often would they do this sampling?

24 JH: It would take the air attaché, those little compressors we used, I mean intake
25 pullers we had on those, it would take about three days to fill a bottle and then you would
26 wait and send probably three or four at a time. I mentioned a diplomatic pouch. The
27 diplomatic pouch could be as big as this room. That's how those were handled. Then
28 we'd ship him some by return pouch, empty. Clean ones.

29 LC: Would he then send them in every three months or what was the frequency?

30 JH: About every three months we would resupply. Yeah. So I visited those,
31 briefed the ambassadors, and all that about how we were doing and what the progress

1 was. He might've known through the State Department, I don't know. Always a courtesy
2 call.

3 LC: Sure. Always a courtesy call to the ambassador or the DCM (deputy chief of
4 mission) or whoever's running the mission.

5 JH: There's many, many other countries in Africa we had these. I don't recall all
6 of them, but I know Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe. Anyway, Rhodesia, South
7 Africa, Kenya, Ivory—Ivory Coast, Ghana, Brazzaville, Congo, and some others, but I
8 don't remember any interior ones.

9 LC: Speaking of Europe specifically, did we do this kind of sampling, a program
10 like this or a detachment in France itself?

11 JH: Didn't have any detachments in France. Detachments were in Germany. In
12 fact, in Western Europe we only had three detachments there and they were all in
13 Germany. Then we skipped down to Greece and then over to Turkey and then back
14 around the northern rim of Africa, Tripoli. Well, Tripoli—

15 LC: Now in the Middle East, what regional office?

16 JH: Okay. Middle East.

17 LC: Was this again reporting to Wiesbaden or did it report somewhere else?

18 JH: Mm-hmm Wiesbaden, all the way over to Ceylon and India. We had two
19 detachments in Iran. We had two detachments in Saudi Arabia. We had three
20 detachments in Pakistan. We had one in India. Had one air attaché type in Ceylon. I
21 visited all those on a pretty regular basis.

22 LC: You did?

23 JH: One interesting incident. We had two detachments in Iran and we needed a
24 third one right up on the Caspian Sea to monitor closer to one of the Soviet Union test
25 sites. Our headquarters had briefed the general. They gave permission for the other two.
26 This one was in the Shah's game preserve, private game preserve, right on the Caspian
27 Sea. So the general says, "I ain't got no authority through our sources." He said, "I ain't
28 got no authority. See your State Department." So they had made arrangements for a
29 briefing to be given to the Shah to get permission to establish this detachment. So I was
30 designated to go brief the Shah of Iran. This guy was astute. I mean he was sharp.
31 Technologically sharp.

1 LC: Where did you meet him, Jim? Tell them everything you can about that.

2 JH: I walked into his office, not a palace. I was escorted into his office and I
3 saluted him, naturally.

4 LC: This is in Tehran?

5 JH: In Tehran. He was very cordial. He said, “I know exactly why you’re here.”
6 Introduced me to General so-and-so up here. “I know exactly why you’re here. Just tell
7 me all the details, what this will encompass up there and what you expect of us.” Very
8 simple. I did that. He says, “You’ve got”—just these exact words, “You got it. Just tell
9 General so-and-so exactly what you need. He heard you say it so go to work.” So that
10 was our third detachment in Iran.

11 LC: So he dispatched that very quickly?

12 JH: Oh, yeah.

13 LC: No friction, no upset?

14 JH: He was so pro-western. A genteel—he was a dictator, but he was a genteel
15 man. He brought the Iranians out of hell when he made it pro-western, westernized that
16 is. They came out of chadors and all this kind of stuff and it was kind of closed.

17 LC: That’s right.

18 JH: Then the ayatollah came on and took over and they’re back where they were.

19 LC: That was a hard—

20 JH: (unintelligible)

21 LC: Yes. You’re right. You’re exactly right, Jim. That was a hard, very hard time
22 when he was overthrown.

23 JH: It was.

24 LC: Of course, he came here to Lubbock. Do you know anything about that or his
25 son training here and so on?

26 JH: All I know is he had cancer. His son was training. I knew he had cancer and
27 he went to MD Anderson and also went to, what, (unintelligible), I think.

28 LC: I’m afraid I don’t know actually where he—

29 JH: I think he went—I don’t remember.

30 MMH: I don’t remember.

1 LC: It was so politically dicey. His son trained here at Reese and there are lots of
2 people here in town who remember him. Had him here and spoke so very well of him,
3 still do speak very well of the whole family. So it's amazing that you had that meeting
4 with him. Did you ever see him again?

5 JH: No.

6 LC: He left an impression on you, it seems.

7 JH: Yeah. So let's see. We got through—

8 LC: That was Iran.

9 JH: That was encompassing our detachments throughout that part. Maybe we
10 didn't have seventy-five. I don't know.

11 LC: Well, you're tidying them up pretty well here. The number's getting—

12 JH: Counting the embassies and all it got pretty close.

13 LC: Now you mentioned Ceylon, or Sri Lanka now, and India I suppose and
14 Pakistan, both of which, of course, are now established nuclear powers, but at this time
15 we're not. Can you tell me any instance you recall with regard to visits, say, in Pakistan?

16 JH: Very cordial up until—let's see. I was in Wiesbaden from '62 to '65. The
17 Pakistanis were very cordial, gave us everything we wanted in Pakistan up until probably
18 late '64. All of a sudden one of our detachments up at Lahore, Pakistan, a knock on the
19 detachment door in one day—it was a secure compound, had guards at the gate and all.
20 The Pakistani guard came in and told the detachment commander, “Captain so-and-so
21 from Pakistani army needs to see you.” So he went out there and here Pakistani guys with
22 his AK-47, “You've got twenty-four hours to vacate.” Our detachment commander says,
23 “Wait a minute. We're”—he pleaded his case. He immediately called Wiesbaden to talk
24 to my boss, the commander of the field office there and said, “Here's what's happened.”
25 He had an open telephone. We could've sent a TWX (teletypewriter exchange service),
26 TWX telegram, but that would've taken awhile.

27 LC: So he just picked up on an open line

28 JH: Open line and says, “Here's the situation I've got.” The boss says, “Close it
29 down.” We always had some kind of explosive there to take care of the equipment. So
30 they closed it down, pulled the string, and left.

31 LC: Blew it up, essentially.

1 JH: Before that, to show you cordiality, in Karachi we had a big detachment
2 there, three different techniques. We had a big compound there and a big dormitory for
3 the guys and all. The Chinese came to the Pakistani people, whoever's the head, I don't
4 remember and said, "We want to build an embassy on that spot right next door." They
5 didn't even talk about us. "We want to build an embassy right on that spot." It was right
6 next door to where we were.

7 LC: Just picked that out of the blue.

8 JH: Yeah, out of the blue. So whoever the contact was came to our detachment
9 commander there and said, "Here's what's happening. They want this. We don't want
10 them to have it, but it's hard to say no in a diplomatic way. So you know what they're
11 gonna do is put monitoring glasses there to monitor you. Tell your boss in Wiesbaden
12 that we want to work with you all very closely in the construction of their embassy."

13 LC: Very closely.

14 JH: Very closely. So to make a long story short, we had all kind of sensors
15 imbedded in the walls and whatnot of their embassy there. The CIA then moved into our
16 detachment, the compound, to monitor all that. We didn't, but they moved into our
17 complex.

18 LC: Did you continue, I mean did the Wiesbaden office continue to have
19 operations in that compound, as well as having the CIA guys in there?

20 JH: Yeah, until this 1965 incident, or late '64. They did the same thing in
21 Karachi. They moved us out of there, too, and also up in Islamabad, the capital. They
22 moved us out of there where we had a detachment.

23 LC: Did they move you out permanently or did you just relocate?

24 JH: Permanently.

25 LC: Yeah, because this is the time when Pakistan and People's Republic are
26 getting more friendly and turning against India.

27 JH: In fact, up at Peshawar—

28 LC: Peshawar Pass, uh-huh.

29 JH: One of the other kinds of secret services had a detachment up there and they
30 had to vacate that also.

31 LC: Is that right? Okay.

1 JH: Yeah. I've forgotten which one it was now. It was in—
2 LC: Not CIA, somebody else.
3 JH: Yeah. They weren't monitoring nuclear like we were. They were monitoring
4 other types of things.
5 LC: Sure. Right. Well, let me ask you a couple of questions and see if it sparks
6 anything you'd like to say about during this period. For example, let's just try this one.
7 The Cuban Missile Crisis. Did it have any impact on the operations of what you were
8 doing?
9 JH: Not us.
10 LC: You guys continued doing what you had been doing anyway? Okay.
11 JH: All they did, all that did was the missiles that came down to Cuba they
12 weren't in our bailiwick. The nuclear warheads came with them, I guess, but we weren't
13 responsible for that.
14 LC: Right. So it didn't hurry up your operations or accelerate the pace you
15 guys—
16 JH: The only bad thing about that crisis, one of my good buddies that flew the U-
17 2s out of Australia that I made a real close acquaintance with down there. His name was
18 Anderson. He was the U-2 that got shot down by a Cuban missile.
19 LC: He was the one?
20 JH: Yeah. That was the only connection I had with the Cuban Missile Crisis.
21 That's not in AFTAC, that was just personal.
22 LC: Right, but that's still upsetting that you knew him. The U-2, this was earlier
23 of course, but the shoot down in 1960 of the U-2s, you would've been already with
24 AFTAC at that point. Did it have any impact? Did, for example, I don't know whether
25 you can say this, did Gary Powers have a pod on that plane?
26 JH: No.
27 LC: He did not?
28 JH: So help me.
29 LC: Okay. I believe you. I believe you. I don't know.

1 JH: He was on strictly other missions and we—I don't even know whether there
2 had ever been any discussion about putting one on it. That was before, in the early time
3 when I got there.

4 LC: Sure absolutely.

5 JH: We did not have anything to do with that U-2.

6 LC: The U-2 aircraft were being flown on numerous different missions and
7 presumably were, I think you mentioned, did in some cases carry pods for you, for
8 AFTAC?

9 JH: Yes, in Australia.

10 LC: Was that the only place or—?

11 JH: No. I'm sorry. Out of Del Rio when they were stationed at whatever the
12 airbase is there, still there.

13 LC: California?

14 JH: No. Del Rio, Texas.

15 MMH: On the border.

16 LC: Oh, I'm sorry. Oh. Okay.

17 JH: Just up the Rio from Laredo. What's the airbase there? I don't have—

18 MMH: It's where Mac lived.

19 JH: That's the '60s. Mac's eighty-six years old.

20 LC: That's okay. Someone will look it up. We'll have them look it up.

21 JH: We would fly—now let me think a minute. We had pods down at, we had
22 operators down there. Why did we—I can't answer that. I don't remember.

23 LC: Okay. Okay.

24 JH: I had to make (unintelligible) down there out in Sacramento occasionally, but
25 why can't I remember? Why?

26 LC: You'll think of it later.

27 MMH: You can call her later.

28 JH: Oh, we dispatched them from there to Alaska to get high-altitude samples in
29 the Pacific Rim and/or at that time we were still at Clark Air Base in Manila and off of
30 Guam.

31 LC: U-2s were flying out of there, as well?

1 JH: Yeah.

2 LC: Okay.

3 JH: We'd have SAC dispatch one or two just to get high-altitude samples after
4 we'd made—not after, but in hopes we'd get contact. When we got contact then say,
5 “Here it is now. We can track it. We've got weather stations at these various sites and
6 islands.

7 LC: Another, again, timeline point and this surely did not, I think, report
8 probably to the Wiesbaden office, but you know in 1964 the Chinese demonstrated their
9 nuclear capability with that explosion at Lop Nur. Can you tell me anything about that,
10 remember? I mean them establishing nuclear capability in terms of international relations
11 was very important.

12 JH: The only thing there with us, we got involved in saying things we did on the
13 Pacific Rim once it triangulated Lop Nur. We just tried to get a forecast and we had better
14 options of forecast there because we were friends with Thailand and the Philippines and
15 all had, something.

16 LC: You had a lot of options around the Rim, the Pacific Rim.

17 JH: A little bit more than way down there South China than we did the others in
18 Novaya Zemlya and Semipalatinsk in Russia, the Soviet Union. So all we did was take
19 samples and give it to the AEC from there. It didn't have any impact on us, well, our
20 detachments were activated, but that was our mission.

21 LC: Did you ever go to India? Did we have detachments in India?

22 JH: Mm-hmm. We had a detachment in New Delhi. From Lahore I could go over
23 to New Delhi very easily, got up the Taj Mahal.

24 LC: Did you?

25 JH: Mm-hmm.

26 LC: What was that like?

27 MMH: You couldn't fly.

28 JH: You talk about that prince building something for his princess or the king,
29 whatever it was.

30 LC: It was a love thing.

31 JH: It was lovely. I'd like to have taken her.

1 LC: Oh, I bet you would have.

2 JH: We've been around the world together, but not that high. She didn't get to hit
3 India.

4 LC: Now, Minnie Mae, had you moved to Wiesbaden? I take it that you had.

5 MMH: Yes. We lived there.

6 JH: I was overseas six times and that was the only time they could go, a three-
7 year tour in Wiesbaden.

8 MMH: That was an overseas assignment we had. But, you know, you have to
9 look at the whole picture. We had a great—he had a great career and I enjoyed it, too.

10 LC: Oh, you must have. You must have. Now, how did the kids do with growing
11 up in Germany a little?

12 MMH: They did fine. They both remember so much about Germany and Europe.
13 I was thankful they were the ages they were because they could remember.

14 JH: Our daughter in junior high and our son was high school, American schools
15 there.

16 LC: They did go to the American schools?

17 MMH: Yeah. We were in the best place. Wiesbaden was a beautiful, cultural city.
18 Right across the river Mainz was just—

19 JH: It was not bombed during the war. Mainz across the—

20 MMH: It was industrious.

21 JH: The Rhine River when it was industrious—boy it was torn down, but
22 Wiesbaden—

23 MMH: It was just beautiful.

24 LC: I haven't been there.

25 MMH: Beautiful city and we had government quarters there.

26 JH: Not on a base, in town

27 MMH: No. They were in little sections around the city, but we enjoyed it. Made
28 some good German friends. They visited us.

29 JH: Our son particularly enjoyed it because he is a racecar nut.

30 LC: Oh, really? Oh, boy.

31 JH: He was a—

1 MMH: Explorer Scout.

2 JH: Boy Scout, Explorer Scout. Explorer Scout troops' goal was to see every race
3 track in Europe and they did.

4 MMH: They had an American leader. He was married to a German woman.

5 JH: He was an insurance salesman over there and he would just take off
6 whenever he wanted to.

7 LC: He could take them with him?

8 MMH: He'd take a van. He'd rent a van.

9 JH: Take a couple vans.

10 LC: Oh, what a riot.

11 JH: These kids, they didn't pay no attention to fences or anything. They got right
12 down in the pits with the drivers, the crews. They'd steal flags off of the fences.

13 MMH: Climb up and free them.

14 LC: Kids will do—

15 JH: I tried to counsel my son, but he says, "Dad. Everybody does it." I said, "You
16 ain't everybody, son. If you get caught, what you gonna do?"

17 LC: Did he ever get caught or in trouble for any of that?

18 MMH: No. They were lucky.

19 JH: No.

20 LC: They were lucky.

21 MMH: He still loves races.

22 JH: Coincidentally, in Dallas they have a racing school at the Texas Motor
23 Speedway.

24 LC: Oh, they do?

25 JH: On April the second, he's coming up and gonna take a one day course there
26 driving one of the NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) cars.

27 LC: So this is not something that ever went away?

28 MMH: No. He loves races. He watches all the races on TV.

29 LC: He's got the bug.

30 JH: He can tell you every racecar driver's name, what his winning percentage is.
31 He's a brain, you know, in races.

1 MMH: He's a brain, but that's his love is racing.

2 LC: Wow. Did that get started in Germany or was it already kind of—?

3 JH: He started taking *Car & Driver* when he was in college.

4 LC: Oh, boy.

5 MMH: Boy, if that postman wrinkled up a cover of that magazine he was furious.

6 JH: That's so far off the subject, though.

7 MMH: He probably still has all his *Car & Drivers*.

8 LC: Jim, let me ask a little bit about the observations. We've talked about the

9 Soviet Union and China a little bit, but can you tell me anything about the observations

10 that were made on France. Of course, I'm thinking that most of their testing was in the

11 South Pacific. Is that correct?

12 JH: Yes, except for Algeria.

13 LC: Oh, Algeria. You're right. I'm sorry.

14 JH: They popped a couple in Algeria.

15 LC: That's right.

16 JH: We were not prepared for that. All of a sudden we had to schedule some

17 airplanes over there in a real big hurry. We got what we needed from them down over

18 Libya and over in Kenya in that area and returned them back.

19 LC: But it was a surprise?

20 JH: It was a surprise.

21 LC: The shots in Algeria.

22 JH: Yeah, they would tell us. I'll tell you a little incident about their Polynesian

23 shots. We got word through the CIA—we worked very close with the CIA. In fact, the

24 CIA had their U-2 detachment at 1717 8th Street in Washington, D.C., that's immaterial. I

25 used to go talk to them about their U-2 operation versus SAC's U-2 operation, but we

26 didn't have anything to do with their U-2s, just friendly 'cause we were put in another

27 areas.

28 LC: You worked with SAC U-2s only for pods, not CIA's.

29 JH: That's right. Yeah.

30 LC: Okay. I'm clear.

31 JH: So, where was I?

1 LC: So you're going to talk about the Polynesian shots and you went to—

2 JH: Oh, okay. The CIA told us about the French were going to pop one down
3 there. So we deployed our good old C-118, an AFTAC's airplane. Where did we deploy?
4 I've forgotten, New Zealand, I think. I think it was at Christchurch. It had a good long
5 range. We had an internal tank in it also. Our technicians were out of this world. You
6 can't believe the quality of these guys. They ran all these shows. One of my guys said,
7 "You know what? I'll bet they have an operation center down there. I bet they have
8 televisions in it and watching what they're doing down there. I'll bet I can fix up
9 something in that bird of ours and tune in, maybe find a frequency that they're on." Sure
10 enough, he took a television with him. He turned in and we were looking at their
11 operation. He was looking at their operation center.

12 LC: Looking at the French operation center.

13 JH: French operation center in that C-118 before they shot. That sounds
14 impossible to me, but it happened.

15 LC: That's some impressive electronics right there. I can't even imagine. Do you
16 know what year that would've been?

17 JH: They were close in. That was—oh, let's see. It was when I was at McClellan.
18 I was at McClellan '65 to '68. So it had've been that era. I don't remember when.

19 LC: When you knew that they were going to—when you had this foreknowledge
20 that they were going to do a shot, did the tempo of your operations change then?

21 JH: Mm-hmm. We put airplanes in Panama and, let me think. Also the
22 Philippines because Polynesia is pretty close to the Southern Hemisphere. We didn't
23 know where what was going to go, but Panama was one paid off. It went east.
24 (unintelligible) So that's as close as we ever got except just out over the open oceans.

25 LC: How did you come to the—well, let me first ask. You were at Wiesbaden '62
26 to '65 and then from '65 to, I'm gonna guess, '68 when you left AFTAC. Where were
27 you based?

28 MMH: Sacramento.

29 JH: In Sacramento.

30 LC: You were in Sacramento that whole time? Okay. You moved back to
31 Sacramento with the kids.

1 MMH: Yeah.

2 LC: Okay. The Sacramento office was the largest?

3 JH: Yes. Well, it was other than Washington headquarters.

4 LC: Other than D.C. Uh-huh.

5 JH: Yeah. Uh-huh.

6 LC: This was the largest regional?

7 JH: Yeah because we had in addition to the ground techniques and my air
8 techniques we had the big laboratory there, the biggest of the three. The one that at
9 Eielson probably had—well, I don't know. I'm guessing now, maybe fourteen people
10 there. The one at Yokota maybe two or three more, but the one in Sacramento, it must've
11 had seventy or eighty.

12 LC: Okay. I wonder whether the different labs involved checked each other. Did
13 you do more than one test on each?

14 JH: Yeah. They would. Yeah. For an example, if the Alaska lab got a paper and
15 analyzed it they would also send the copy of it to McClellan. Of course, some of the
16 isotopes would have died, not many but enough. And then you would coordinate
17 activities, you coded the same.

18 LC: To make sure they were getting accurate readings and it would—

19 JH: Mm-hmm. McClellan would always send some of their people to these other
20 two labs if we got real hot samples, be there with them while they did the analysis. I had
21 a set of orders that allowed me to travel anywhere in the world. No, wait a minute. I'm
22 sorry. Anywhere from the longitude that's west of Alaska all the way through the
23 longitude that goes through Ceylon in India and the latitude through the very southern tip
24 of South America and all the way up above Kirkenes in Norway. I can go anywhere
25 anytime by any mode of transportation regardless of cost to get to a point if it was an
26 emergency and we needed to. Maybe there's another dozen people that had that same
27 type of order. I only had to exercise that once. The Russians popped one at, which was it?
28 Novaya Zemlya—was that the Banana Island or—the northern most point that they
29 detonate. It's an island way up north in the Arctic Ocean. It's easy—

30 LC: It's probably on this map right here.

31 JH: Okay. Here right here. Novaya Zemlya, right there.

1 LC: Oh, okay.

2 JH: Semipalatinsk is way back down in here somewhere and then Lop Nur is
3 down here somewhere. They popped one up at Novaya Zemlya. Instead of coming east it
4 turned around and went west. Boy, you talk about having to get it in a hurry. We didn't
5 have anything.

6 LC: You weren't set up for that.

7 JH: We weren't set up for that. Immediately I had to deploy to one of the English
8 airbases and go to the base commander and say, "Hey. Here's what's going to be coming
9 in right here and we've got to have this, this, this, this, and this. We've got to have it in a
10 hurry." "I ain't got no money." One dash four. When the airplanes got there we were
11 ready to operate.

12 LC: What's one dash four, the reference to the priority?

13 JH: The priority.

14 LC: So that means carte blanche.

15 JH: Yeah. That's right, whatever money it takes.

16 LC: Did you have any—were there any tensions with the British about this?

17 JH: No. Well, oh, yeah there was. Initially the tension was until we got the
18 airplanes in and we gonna get sampling because we weren't sure whether we'd get there
19 in time before it's gonna—well, we knew we'd gonna get it eventually, but it went out in
20 the Arctic Ocean somewhere.

21 LC: Right, but you wanted it sooner obviously. You always wanted it sooner.

22 JH: As soon as we could.

23 LC: Yeah and that would be a priority, too, for D.C., right? For the people in
24 Washington?

25 JH: That's right.

26 LC: What was your title when you were at Sacramento?

27 JH: Lieutenant colonel.

28 LC: But within AFTAC, before, you had been director of operations?

29 JH: I was a lieutenant colonel the full time I was in AFTAC, the full ten years.

30 MMH: She asked what was your title, what was your job—

31 JH: Oh, at Sacramento?

1 LC: Yeah.

2 JH: I was director of operations.

3 LC: So you were director again?

4 JH: I had air and ground operations.

5 LC: Who did you report to?

6 JH: I reported to my, the detachment—I mean to my—I’m sorry.

7 MMH: You’re getting tired.

8 LC: That’s okay. Yeah. It does get tiring.

9 JH: To my field office commander. He was a colonel.

10 LC: Let’s take a break for a second.

11 JH: No. I don’t need—

12 LC: We’re continuing now and, Jim, I want to ask at what point did you separate,
13 then, from AFTAC. You had been with them since 1958. How did it come about that you
14 went somewhere else?

15 JH: Selfishness.

16 LC: Oh, I can’t believe it. True? Is it true?

17 JH: True.

18 LC: Okay.

19 JH: In my questionnaire I mentioned to you that my son was graduating from
20 college. I’ll rephrase, he was in his senior year. My daughter was in her senior year in
21 high school. I didn’t want to move. I was subject to moving because I’d been there over
22 three years. That was one reason. I didn’t want to move then. The second reason was I
23 had been a lieutenant colonel for ten years, promoted way ahead of schedule. The
24 primary zone for colonel came, for me, in 1967 and I didn’t make it. I was very, very
25 shook up and disappointed. So when—no, wait a minute, 1968 not ’67.

26 LC: ’68, okay.

27 JH: That’s when I first came into primary zone. So my boss came to me and says,
28 “Jim, I’ve got some bad news. You weren’t on the colonel’s list.” He got a list before it
29 was let out. He says, “I have gone over all of your ERs (evaluation report). I’ve examined
30 every word to see if just one word might’ve tainted the promotion board’s decision.” He
31 said, “I don’t know why you didn’t make it.” I said, “Well, I think I do.” I said, “On the

1 chart at the personnel center there's a little blank up there that says 'Vietnam'." I said, "I
2 could do something about that. I could volunteer to go to Vietnam and maybe, just
3 maybe, I might make colonel." So I went home, talked to Minnie Mae. I said, "Here's the
4 situation. I can volunteer for some positions that I know in Vietnam through a friend of
5 mine in the lieutenant colonel branch." Not a lieutenant colonel branch, but the
6 promotion. Not the promotion branch, the personnel branch in San Antonio at Randolph.

7 LC: So you had some information about what might be possible for you in
8 Vietnam?

9 MMH: Yeah.

10 JH: Yeah. So I talked to her and we talked about my future career and all if I
11 didn't make it and the impact it would have on us, retirement and everything and being
12 back for her, being there and the mama and the papa of the kids and getting them through
13 college and finish high school. So that was agreed and I volunteered. I was accepted into
14 Task Force Alpha. I didn't know what Task Force Alpha was. I accepted an assignment
15 to Vietnam and then I was assigned to it. So I left in November 1968 and she became
16 mama and papa. Did a great job. I'll get to the assignment in a minute, but during that
17 tour in June of '59, '69 I was fortunate enough to have my R&R, rest and recuperation,
18 and come back to the States and pin my son's gold bars on him and see him graduate. See
19 my daughter graduate and go back. I'm sorry that was not R&R. That was leave.

20 LC: That was leave? Okay.

21 MMH: Yeah.

22 JH: Then, let's see, I guess it was before that in July I went back. Then to a base
23 and I had a great commander there.

24 LC: There being NKP (Nakhon Phanom), right?

25 JH: No, wait a minute. Wait a minute. This didn't happen at NKP. I'm sorry.

26 MMH: Yeah. That was your first tour there.

27 JH: My first tour. I came back from NKP on R&R. I was getting this mixed up.

28 LC: That's okay.

29 JH: I came back from R&R and then went back NKP and did my job with Task
30 Force Alpha there.

1 LC: Jim, let me ask how much you had been paying attention to what was
2 happening in Vietnam during the time you were in Sacramento, during the big build up
3 and, of course, you had a completely different mission supporting the radiological and
4 intelligence effort of the Air Force, but what were you thinking as you were observing the
5 huge buildup in Vietnam aside from how it might impact your own career, which you've
6 discussed a little bit?

7 JH: I didn't know whether I'd be sent over there or not. Honestly, I didn't know
8 what—I really didn't suspect I would be. The reason being I can go into more detail after
9 we get to NKP, if you'd rather, or I can do it right now.

10 LC: Why don't we do it now while you're thinking about it?

11 JH: When I left NKP, or I'll rephrase. Before I left NKP I made colonel in late
12 1959. When you make colonel you have a separate branch for assignments from the
13 normal personnel system. It's in the Pentagon. I got a TWX, getting closer to rotation
14 now for my rotation date preparing for the next assignment out of NKP. I got a TWX that
15 says, "Would you agree to be the Chief of Air Mission at Managua, Nicaragua?" I
16 TWXed back and says, "Hey, guys. I'm just finishing an overseas tour in Vietnam. I
17 don't want to go overseas again right away." So I didn't go, but when it came time for me
18 to rotate and before that time to rotate I had orders to report to England Air Force Base as
19 a deputy base commander and then the commander left and I became commander. I
20 hadn't been there six months when the colonel's assignments branch calls and says,
21 "Hey. How would you like to be the air attaché in Israel?" Now this is why I don't think
22 I'm going to Vietnam from AFTAC because somehow I was tagged in the so-called,
23 quote "diplomatic corps."

24 LC: You had all this experience.

25 JH: Yeah. "How would you like to be air attaché in Israel?" I said, "Hey, guys. I
26 just told you, I didn't want to go over to Managua." Okay. So about three or four months,
27 weeks, a month later, "How would you like to be the assistant air attaché in Moscow?"
28 "Hey, guys." "How would you like to be air attaché in"—

29 MMH: Ethiopia. (laughs)

30 JH: "Ethiopia?"

31 LC: That Minnie Mae is like, "I don't think so."

1 JH: Oh, yeah. So I came home and told Minnie Mae. I said, “Yeah.” I said, “You
2 know, they’ve asked me ‘How would you like?’ They’re gonna come in here one of these
3 days after I’ve been here about a year or maybe a little over and say ‘Here you go or
4 retire.’” After you get to be over twenty, what, twenty-something years they keep saying
5 oh if you don’t accept you’re just a colonel. They say retire. So I said, “How about if I
6 volunteer for two real safe Vietnam jobs that I know of?” She said, “What’ll I do?” Well,
7 our son was in the Army, going to Germany. Our daughter was in the university in
8 Louisiana and was getting ready to move to the University of Texas at Austin. So I
9 said—

10 MMH: I lived on the base.

11 JH: Yeah. We lived on the base.

12 LC: Oh, okay. You were living there. Okay.

13 MMH: It was basically that you had to live on the base.

14 LC: At England?

15 JH: Yeah, at England.

16 MMH: Louisiana.

17 JH: So I said, “You know, your mother is getting ready to move from Irving to
18 Glen Rose, Texas, which is down southwest of Fort Worth. She might need a little bit of
19 help and it’d give you a year of just being with your mother, just the two of you.” They
20 both idolized each other.

21 LC: What a great opportunity.

22 JH: She said, “You know, I’ll think about this.” So she okay’ed it. So I called the
23 colonel’s branch and I says, “Okay, guys.”

24 LC: I got Minnie Mae’s okay. I’m ready to go.

25 JH: Yeah. “I want to either be the commander of a FAC (forward air controller)
26 group out of Saigon.” I forgot the number of it right now. “Or I want to go to AB-triple-C
27 (airborne battlefield command and control center) as either the operations officer or as an
28 orbit commander. “Hey. We don’t get many of these requests. Stand by. We’ll be back.”
29 A week later I’m on a list to go to Udorn.

30 LC: To Thailand.

31 JH: AB-triple-C.

1 LC: So it's all—it's really—

2 MMH: I took the dog. I took the little dog and went home to my Mama.

3 JH: That's the answer to your question of why didn't they have them go to
4 Vietnam because I was apparently tagged to be in the diplomatic corps somewhere with
5 my experience.

6 LC: Absolutely, with how much work you had done internationally. It completely
7 makes sense. Well, describe, Jim, if you can, Task Force Alpha. This was your first tour
8 and your base at NKP.

9 JH: To get to Task Force Alpha, to get to any assignment in Vietnam, you had to
10 go through what they call "snake school" in the Philippines. I determined it was not a
11 snake school. It was a rat school. In two weeks, so I had to report to Clark Air Base en
12 route to NKP and survive and being taught how to escape and evade and survive if I get
13 shot down or whatever.

14 LC: Now how many other colonels, or lieutenant colonels at this point, were
15 there in the snake school?

16 JH: Gosh, I don't know.

17 LC: A few?

18 JH: Well, there were probably half a dozen there.

19 LC: Not many.

20 JH: Not many because—I wasn't going to a flying job except, well—

21 LC: You did fly a little, as I understand. Yes, sir.

22 JH: I flew, but I wasn't supposed to. It was illegal because I wasn't supposed to
23 fly over enemy territory or be in any enemy territory for one year after I left AFTAC.

24 LC: Ah, because of the—can you go ahead and say why?

25 JH: Yeah.

26 LC: Just to clarify why would that be.

27 JH: I'll have to regress backwards now.

28 LC: That's okay.

29 JH: The sample station—because any airplane that flies over a communist
30 country is subject to engine trouble, having to land inadvertently. Here I am, my name on
31 the roster up at Moscow. "Don't let him go. We want to interview him," that type of

1 thing. In a perfect example of how inconvenient this was when we were stationed in
2 Wiesbaden. If I wanted to go to Ankara, Turkey, as an example, Pan Am One flew direct
3 from Wiesbaden to Istanbul over Bulgaria.

4 LC: But.

5 JH: I couldn't fly Pan Am One because it might have to abort and land in
6 Bulgaria, a communist country. So I had to fly to Switzerland. Get on Swiss Air to
7 Athens. Get on Greek Air, whatever its called, fly around to Istanbul. Get on Turkish
8 Airways, Istanbul to Ankara.

9 LC: This restriction survived your appointment at AFTAC for one year only?

10 JH: No.

11 LC: How long?

12 JH: I couldn't do that for a full year after I left AFTAC.

13 LC: For a year after.

14 JH: The whole time I was in AFTAC—

15 LC: Yes, that was standard operating. You could not fly over a communist
16 country.

17 JH: It got kind of touchy down occasionally in some areas of Africa.

18 LC: Right, 'cause—

19 JH: They weren't communists. They—

20 LC: Right, but they weren't exactly friendly.

21 JH: So we had to be real careful, but of course we didn't have detachments, but
22 we just couldn't fly over them. Had to pick an airline that might go way around, but now
23 back to—

24 LC: That's interesting.

25 JH: That was illegal for me to go to, for me to fly the missions I did out of NKP,
26 but we're gonna finish snake school. At snake school, they put you in—they give you
27 academics first, teach you how to escape and evade, survive off the land for temporary
28 time. Then if you get caught here's what you do. Don't tell them anything. Be nice to
29 them, but take whatever they give you, whatever torture or whatever.

30 LC: Just take it.

31 JH: Yeah. Take it. Yeah.

1 LC: What was the limit of what you were supposed to give back? Literally was it
2 name rank and serial number?

3 JH: Name, rank that's it.

4 LC: That's it?

5 JH: That's it.

6 LC: That's not just like a movie thing. That's for real.

7 JH: That's the real thing. Then they put you out in the field. I've forgotten the
8 name of the tribe, the Philippine tribe that they contracted with to try to catch us. It was
9 all at night. We'd go out three different nights. We had to go out and try to camouflage
10 ourself all night long so that one of these guys couldn't catch us. They roamed
11 throughout. They got paid if they caught us. We had three little chips, like a poker chip. If
12 one of them caught us we'd give it to him. We could stay there or we could move and
13 hide again, but he'd go to his buddy and say, "Hey, I got my chip. You go. He's over here
14 somewhere. Go close." Again, if you gave your three chips away you failed the course.

15 LC: Your chip was worth something to them? What could they do with it?

16 JH: It was worth a certain amount of money and I don't know what it was.

17 LC: Cash or food or something?

18 JH: Yeah. Cash.

19 LC: Cash. Okay.

20 JH: Cash. At least that's what we were told. So I got caught once and that was
21 all, but I gave a guy a chip and he patted me on the shoulder, "No problem, sir. No
22 problem, sir."

23 LC: At least he was gracious about it.

24 JH: Anyway, I finished snake school, rat school, and went on to NKP and
25 reported in. General John Dyas was the commander of Task Force Alpha. Had a big
26 compound on the airbase there and only the military assigned there—we had some Navy,
27 mostly Air Force. We had a few Army, and some IBM (International Business Machines)
28 contractors, civilian contractors, all lived on the base. In the compound, we had the
29 largest IBM computer complex in Southeast Asia, including 7th Air Force down in
30 Saigon. We were to monitor what was happening along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and
31 implant sensors wherever we could to try to determine their movement. The FACs on

1 basically from NKP—we had a big Special Operations squadron there and had several
2 different FACs in the group there, the FAC group flew several different types of
3 airplanes. The FACs would tell us various movements, but basically their mission, as you
4 know from Richard, their mission was to spot and then call in the strike forces to strike. If
5 they saw something that the strike forces couldn't get to or didn't get to then they would
6 notify us and we'd get a sensor. If we didn't have sensors in the general area, we'd put
7 sensors there. If we found that there might be a truck park—let me regress. The North
8 Vietnamese would come out north of the DMZ (demilitarized zone) through the mountain
9 ranges that separated Laos from North, from Vietnam. Mu Gia Pass was a big one.
10 There's one just north of Mu Gia Pass. Oh, gosh, this map is so complicated. Mu Gia
11 Pass is somewhere about—is that the DMZ?

12 LC: Yes, it is.

13 JH: About right there is the Mu Gia Pass and that other one right up in here
14 somewhere. So the Ho Chi Minh trail actually started here in a minor scale, not near the
15 majors coming through Mu Gia Pass on down here. Did I send you a copy of some maps?
16 Well, they're documented on there.

17 LC: Yes, you did. Absolutely and these will be included in the collection, also.

18 JH: The passes are documented there on there. I doctored the maps to show
19 generally what we were doing.

20 LC: Did you make the markings on these maps yourself?

21 JH: I made the markings on them.

22 LC: Let's see, I'm just—

23 JH: Gosh. You've got the black ones. I have some colored ones.

24 LC: I made a copy of these. This is a copy for me.

25 JH: Now this is the second tour.

26 LC: That's second tour. Let's see. Where's my map of the first—

27 JH: That's first tour.

28 LC: There we go. Now this is the map that's been deposited in the Jim Hall
29 Collection entitled "Sensor Patterns."

30 JH: Then I know up here.

31 LC: A little further north of Vinh.

1 JH: Yeah. It wasn't noted on this map. This was—
2 LC: Here are the passes.
3 JH: When I stole—borrowed a copy right here. Burned a copy. This was all—all
4 this was on here. This type printing I put on there myself.
5 LC: You did this.
6 JH: They would come through this pass up here in a minor scale and then come
7 through—oh, wait a minute. There's—Mu Gia and Ban Karai have got—oh, I'm sorry
8 there they are. That's the two. Ban Karai here and Mu Gia here. This was the minor of
9 the two. This was the major of the two. What we would do, after we got word from the
10 FACs if they needed some implementation of sensors to help them we would implant the
11 sensors, have either the C-130 group out of Da Nang, I think it was, implant the sensors
12 or the F-4 group at Ubon.
13 LC: Ubon.
14 JH: Down south—Ubon right there. Go plant them. Then we got the idea that in
15 addition to truck parks and all that had been being used, we got the idea to plant them
16 along what we thought was the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We would hear then—I'll regress.
17 These sensors were both acoustic and seismic and we had C-121. We didn't, but C-121
18 certainly stationed in Khorat from another organization stationed to twenty-four hour
19 circling over somewhere about the northern part, northeastern part of Thailand. They
20 would—these sensors would communicate their data back to them.
21 LC: So they're transmitting.
22 JH: Transmitting.
23 LC: They're both sensing and transmitting.
24 JH: Sensing and transmitting. Coming back into our computer center and the
25 sensors were approximately two feet long. You may have one in your—
26 LC: I don't know that we do, actually. I don't think so.
27 JH: Okay. Well, I drew you a little picture.
28 LC: Yes, I saw the picture here.
29 JH: The picture of how one looks, but I don't remember exactly.
30 LC: So about two feet.

1 JH: Two feet, something like that, and then this plate right here to keep it from
2 sinking into the ground. It would sink right up to this.

3 LC: About how big around would that plate be?

4 JH: About eight-, oh, sixteen, eighteen inches. Then a foliage—

5 LC: Fake—

6 JH: Fake foliage with antennas in it. The antennas were much different than this
7 illustration, whatever, on my drawing there. I just drew that that way. These sensors
8 both—these were better for seismic. We also had some that we'd hang in trees that would
9 pick up the acoustic, but this also had an acoustic capability, a minor, less capable than
10 the tree hangers, but it could, acoustic. So when we then decided to start putting them
11 along what we thought was the trail we would have these implanted there, and there and
12 there and there so forth. It's just not near to scale.

13 LC: Sure.

14 JH: Then when these would start transmitting, the trucks were coming through
15 this section and we got to this section. We knew how many hours or minutes or whatever
16 that took. Then we knew the distance from here to the next one.

17 LC: So you'd be tracking the duration.

18 JH: That's right. So shortly after the first one, and we knew their speed, we
19 would contact the fire bombers, the F-4s, out of Ubon and say, "Here's where they're
20 going to be at such and such a time. Go get them." When we heard them coming through
21 that particular group of sensors we could hear the bombs going off and then everything
22 got silent. So we knew that we did a good job on whatever number of trucks were there.
23 This was mostly at—not all the time at night. In the daytime, the foliage there, the trees,
24 the jungles there. The trees had three different areas of vegetation, the tall, tall, tall spout
25 trunk, then a lower vegetation area, a middle vegetation area, an upper vegetation area.
26 That's why they went in there with Agent Orange. Everyone's involved, associated with
27 that. That's what they're trying to do is defoliate that so that we can see—

28 LC: What was happening on the ground.

29 JH: Uh-huh under the jungle. So that was our mission was to try to kill as many
30 trucks, as many any kind of vehicle, even guys on bicycles.

1 LC: These sensors, then, were acute enough, sensitive enough, to pick up the
2 movements of bicycles? Foot traffic?

3 JH: Yep. Mm-hmm. Foot traffic.

4 MMH: Animals.

5 LC: Wow.

6 JH: Animals, oh, yeah. The elephants.

7 LC: Do you know where these—were these U.S. Air Force design or were they
8 contractor or do you know anything about that?

9 JH: I don't know.

10 LC: End of it?

11 JH: I don't know.

12 LC: Okay. Manufacturer, who built these puppies?

13 JH: I don't know.

14 LC: No idea.

15 JH: I'm sorry.

16 LC: No, it's fine. It's fine. I'm just wondering. I mean the sensors are really
17 interesting. They were seeded along particular routes. How did you know where they
18 needed to be placed?

19 JH: Basically by the FACs telling us. Oh, I forgot. There's another group. We
20 had a Special Operations unit that would be let down into Vietnam by helicopter like we
21 talked about at Herb out in Afghanistan. They would tromp all through this area down
22 here and report back by radio.

23 LC: Where the routes were.

24 JH: Here's where they are. Mm-hmm. Then the FACs would tell us that it looks
25 like trails here, trails there, no movement today, but trails.

26 LC: Okay. The sensors and transmitters were clearly powerful enough to get that
27 signal all the way to aircraft, then, circling over Thai territory, not over Laotian territory.

28 JH: It could be over Laotian.

29 LC: It could be?

30 JH: Might have spread over out over Laos.

31 LC: How long would the sensor be active? Was it run on a battery?

1 JH: Yeah, well, yeah. It was battery powered, so I don't really remember. All I
2 ever saw of a sensor is the display there at our compound. The sensors were all down at
3 Ubon or whatever the drop, the C-130s were. I think they were out of Da Nang. I might
4 be mistaken.

5 LC: Now, Jim, your title. I know your rank, but your title when you were at NKP
6 was what?

7 JH: When I first got there I was deputy director of operations. Then the
8 operations officer was transferred, rotated back to the States and I became the director of
9 operations as a lieutenant colonel.

10 LC: Your work was to get the aircraft?

11 JH: The work was to, yes, to coordinate with the units that we would employ to
12 do both jobs, to do the implanting and to do the destruction. Also, we relied on the FACs
13 so much that I flew with the FACs as a co-pilot just to understand what their mission was
14 and how they accomplished it. Then I take that back and massaged that a little bit. Say,
15 "How can we employ this for our mission in addition to what they're doing of just
16 spotting something and calling in the firepower on their own?"

17 LC: The aircraft that the FACs were flying were what? What type of aircraft?

18 JH: Oh, it varied. They were small. I think the largest one was a Cessna—no. I
19 don't remember the numbers. Had both a pusher and a puller propeller, one in front and
20 one in back. Twin tails and two passengers.

21 LC: Pilot and co-pilot?

22 JH: Well, no co-pilot. He was by himself unless someone rode with him.

23 LC: Like you?

24 JH: Like me.

25 LC: Okay.

26 JH: The others were smaller than that and I don't remember the numbers of them,
27 O-1, O-2.

28 LC: That sounds right, yeah, O-2.

29 JH: I could look it up in my records, but I don't. In addition, the Special
30 Operations group there flew the A-1s that I mentioned earlier, and they flew the A-20s. I
31 think they called them B-26s then, but they were maybe modified B—earlier B-20s,

1 World War II airplanes, anyway. Anyway there were B-26s in Vietnam. I flew co-pilot
2 on both of those. I didn't fly co-pilot in A-1. I flew backseat on it with a wing
3 commander of that outfit just to see how they operated in helping the FACs.

4 LC: How to coordinate—coordinating all that. Now how big—?

5 JH: Yeah.

6 LC: Go ahead, Jim.

7 JH: In the B-26, this was a nighttime operation only because they had night
8 vision. I don't know why the others didn't. The small airplanes didn't fly at night, but the
9 A-26s did, B-26s did. I flew co-pilot with one of my good buddies, AFTAC, who
10 happened to be there.

11 LC: Oh, is that right?

12 JH: Mm-hmm.

13 LC: So another AFTAC veteran out there in Thailand.

14 JH: There's still another one later. This IBM computer set up would take all this
15 information and process it and put it out to the desk of our operations people. Then we
16 had to report, in addition to planning for what we're going to do, report to 7th Air Force at
17 Saigon at Tan Son Nhut. "Here's what's happening. Here's our plan. We request
18 permission to strike." If there wasn't time to strike we had okay to go on our own if it
19 was a real hot one that might disappear.

20 LC: So you did have a priority clearance to go ahead and launch an operation?

21 JH: Under certain conditions.

22 LC: Wow. Those conditions were?

23 JH: Just if it was an emergency and the attack might disappear, the attack
24 capability might disappear.

25 LC: You were the one giving that order, making that decision?

26 JH: Yeah. Well, with the general approving it.

27 LC: Sure. You have staff below you who are also helping you get all the data
28 together?

29 JH: Sure. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

30 LC: How big a staff did you have?

1 JH: Oh, I had—let's see. We had two sections. We had the operation staff and a
2 technical staff, sixteen technical—about twenty-three, twenty-five. About eight or ten
3 operational staff and—oh, wait a minute. In the IBM room we had thirty people.

4 MMH: Tell her how big the computer was.

5 LC: Yeah.

6 JH: Well, oh.

7 LC: You mentioned that it was the biggest IBM station, but—

8 JH: Well, it was. I can't give you a size. Take a room roughly forty-by-forty and
9 like your cabinets upstairs that's the way the computers were in those days. This room
10 just solid with cabinets like that, that you can get on a laptop today.

11 MMH: I didn't know you'd already told her.

12 LC: Were they using at any point in their system those famous punch cards?
13 Where they—was there any punch card technology there?

14 JH: Unh-uh.

15 LC: We're beyond that now?

16 JH: Mm-hmm.

17 LC: Did tapes—?

18 JH: Mm-hmm.

19 LC: Tapes. Wow. IBM contractors?

20 JH: Mm-hmm.

21 LC: So civilian contractors operating this whole thing. Did they report to you?

22 JH: No. They reported directly to the general.

23 LC: Okay. Was this General Dyas that you mentioned?

24 JH: Yes. D-Y-A-S, Dyas.

25 LC: Oh, D-Y-A-S. Okay. What was his background? Was he—?

26 JH: You know, I don't really know. Well, wait a minute. He was a TAC man. He
27 was a fighter pilot before he came there.

28 LC: Fighter pilot even as far back, maybe, as World War II? Is that—?

29 JH: Was he that old? Could've been. At least Korea, but maybe World War II. I
30 really don't know. He and I became close friends.

31 LC: You got along with him, too?

1 JH: He told me one day. He said, “Jim, I’ve been in the Air Force a long time and
2 I’ve been in TAC practically all my career. You know more than any colonel I’ve ever
3 seen knew.”

4 MMH: That was a good compliment.

5 LC: That was pretty nice.

6 JH: He’s the one that pinned my eagles on me when the orders finally came
7 through.

8 LC: Okay. Well, he sounds like a good guy.

9 JH: Oh, he was a good guy.

10 MMH: I knew he was a colonel before he did.

11 JH: Then we got home.

12 LC: Oh, you did? How did you find out Minnie Mae?

13 MMH: His boss there in Sacramento and his wife are our good friends. One
14 evening—the kids and I were staying in Sacramento that year. He came over. I just
15 thought it was a visit. He brought me a big long-stemmed red rose and I didn’t know
16 why. I took it and on one of the little leaves was an eagle, a rank thing.

17 JH: Insignia, eagle insignia attached.

18 LC: He had put it onto the leaf?

19 MMH: Yeah.

20 LC: That’s pretty good.

21 JH: I didn’t even know he had.

22 LC: Now did you two, were you able to communicate very much?

23 MMH: Letters.

24 JH: Letters only.

25 LC: Did you ever call?

26 JH: No.

27 LC: Did you ever get on a MARS (Military Affiliate Radio Service) line?

28 JH: No. No way to get a call from there.

29 LC: No way, huh?

30 JH: No. There was no long distance capability for NKP. There might’ve been in-
31 country down to Bangkok. That town was away from us.

1 LC: NKP sits right up on the border.

2 JH: Yeah. It is. It's just right on the Mekong River right there. The little town is a
3 nothing town.

4 LC: I'll bet.

5 JH: However, I did get a wonderful pair of shoes made there for \$7.50.

6 LC: Did you? How'd you manage that?

7 JH: Well, that's like—

8 LC: There's a local—

9 JH: That's what they do.

10 MMH: They just draw around your foot.

11 JH: Take a big ledger and spread it out and you put your feet on there. He draws
12 around your foot. First of all, he gives you a catalogue and says, "What type do you
13 want?" He draws around your foot and then he puts tape around your instep and that's all.
14 You go back three or four days later you've got a pair shoes that just fit better than any
15 you buy.

16 LC: Custom. How long did you wear those?

17 JH: I still have a pair. I haven't worn them in several years.

18 LC: You've still got them?

19 MMH: They're still gonna fit him.

20 JH: Well, let's see. I lived in Granbury fifty—I retired in 1975 and I was still
21 wearing them when I retired. That's from '68, '69.

22 LC: Wow. Now did you get across the border into Laos much?

23 JH: Not from that tour. The other tour.

24 LC: Not on this tour? Okay.

25 JH: I flew with the FACs over into there, but never crossed personally.

26 LC: You weren't on the ground? Okay. Is this the time when Minnie Mae came
27 over and you guys had some time?

28 JH: No. That was second tour.

29 LC: That was second tour, as well? Okay.

30 JH: In addition to all of that, I might've mentioned earlier. I don't know. I went
31 down to base operations one day and told the guys, "Hey, guys. I'm in a non-flying job

1 over here in Task Force Alpha. I have a pair of wings. What do you have out here I can
2 fly?" They said, "Two old Gooney Birds." C-47s if you don't know what a Gooney Bird
3 is.

4 LC: C-47, wow.

5 JH: They said, "Do you have any time with Gooney Bird?" "Well, yeah from
6 Kirtland Air Force Base and then we talk about three hundred hours." "Well, let's go out
7 there and run around in a pattern one time and you'll be checked out and you can fly
8 Gooney Birds when you have time." So they'd have missions down into South Vietnam
9 as far as Saigon, frequently into Da Nang and Chu Lai here. I'd come from NKP across
10 Laos down in there and get small ground fire both on take offs and landings over here,
11 just locals. Then take people down to Saigon to 7th Air Force Headquarters and that type
12 of thing. Then we also had—the base had a program where once every week they would
13 send a C-47 to Chiang Mai, which is way over in the—

14 LC: Northeast.

15 JH: Yeah. Northwest.

16 LC: Northwest. I'm sorry. You're right.

17 JH: Way up near the Burma border somewhere right in there somewhere. It was a
18 beautiful cultural city and former old, old capitol of Thailand and stayed that way, but
19 they were beginning to modernize when I was going there. Some weekends I would have
20 a weekend off and I would fly them up there. I became acquainted—wait. You did come.

21 MMH: I came there.

22 JH: Yeah.

23 LC: You were up in Chiang Mai at some point?

24 JH: Yeah.

25 LC: Uh-huh.

26 MMH: Just visiting.

27 JH: I made a good friend of a teak furniture manufacturer there who had a friend
28 who was a taxi driver. I would always call my teak friend and say, "Tony," American
29 name, "Tony, can you get a hold of John and see if he's available for the weekend," if I
30 was going to go up there. I'd just hire him for the full weekend. Take me out in the
31 boondocks little communities and all. Explain to me what they were doing.

1 LC: What's going on.

2 JH: This is way off.

3 LC: Did you get a good feeling for the Thai people up in that area?

4 MMH: Oh, they were wonderful people.

5 JH: Yeah. I love the Thai people. They are the most humble people I've ever
6 known. You've probably realized that.

7 LC: Yeah. I've had some Thai friends, too. That sounds very much right.

8 JH: Yeah.

9 LC: Yes, exactly. It sounds very much right to me. Did you while you were at
10 NKP and in your position as director of operations have any interface with Thai officials
11 or Royal Thai Air Force people?

12 JH: Not at NKP. The general did and the wing commander did with the Thai base
13 commander. We were on a Royal Thai base and they ruled the base, but it was wide open
14 for us, anything we needed to do. No complications whatever. I wasn't involved in any
15 other activity other than kind of Saigon was Air Force types and the Navy guy I told you
16 about with the elephants.

17 LC: Okay. Now let me ask about your flights where you were actually taking
18 some ground fire. You hadn't flown under fire since really, am I right, World War II?

19 JH: That's correct.

20 LC: Was that a little scary?

21 JH: Well, yeah.

22 LC: I mean it had to have been.

23 JH: When you hear something ping on your wing or somewhere. It wasn't heavy
24 fire, just rifle. Maybe a twenty-two I don't know what size. Some of it got up to as high
25 as .30 caliber, but no .50-caliber type. It was just locals. It wasn't so called insurgents
26 down there. If we got fired—if we could verify we got fired on you have to call it a
27 combat mission.

28 LC: So am I right? I think your notes told us that you had about thirty-five of
29 those?

30 JH: I had fifty-five total, including the ones that I flew with the FACs.

31 LC: Fifty-five, you're right, combat missions.

1 JH: I had one mistake in that. I did say in my next tour, I said I had a hundred
2 missions, but I go with this ninety-six.

3 MMH: Oh, that's bad.

4 LC: Oh, ninety-six. Well—

5 MMH: That's really bad.

6 LC: Okay. This is in the notes that he's provided to us. So I'll just make a little
7 note there that you exaggerated by four missions. Were you able to keep your hours up
8 such that all your flying certifications—?

9 JH: Mm-hmm.

10 LC: No problems there?

11 JH: No problem.

12 LC: Jim, just while I'm thinking about it. I just want to enter into the record, what
13 was your, at the time of retirement, your total number of flying hours with the U.S. Air
14 Force?

15 JH: 11,034.

16 LC: That's amazing. That to me is amazing.

17 JH: That's why I have a unique career. I had all these staff jobs. Did all this other
18 stuff and normally a colonel with thirty years, twenty-eight years or thirty years, five
19 thousand, seven thousand maybe, something like that.

20 LC: It's absolutely amazing.

21 JH: I was a hog.

22 LC: It's astounding. Yeah. There's a lot of jet fuel down the drain.

23 MMH: He loves to fly.

24 LC: He loves to fly. Do you still fly at all? When was the last time you flew?

25 JH: Myself?

26 LC: Yes.

27 JH: Oh, probably 1976 or '77.

28 LC: So you haven't flown since then? You miss it?

29 JH: I did for a while.

30 LC: Not so much anymore?

31 JH: Mm-mnh.

1 LC: You're too busy. You've got too many other things going on.

2 JH: Shortly after I retired about a month or two, I guess, moved to Granbury. We
3 went out to the air base at Carswell. She looked around and she says, "Do you miss all
4 this?" I said, "No. Not really. I loved every day I was in it, even combat, but I don't miss
5 it a bit."

6 MMH: He forgot the colonel part. He was just—

7 JH: I said, "Everybody I met," I said, "Nope. I didn't say Colonel Hall, Colonel
8 Jim. Nope, I'm just Jim." I still say that.

9 LC: I noticed that.

10 MMH: Some of our friends are still Colonel and Mrs. Colonel.

11 JH: Oh, boy. Mrs. Major.. Oh, that's one of the contradictions I always felt was
12 terrible in the Air Force, wives trying to wear their husband's grading or rank.

13 MMH: He told me I don't have any rank. I'm a PFC (private first class).

14 JH: When I was base commander, people would come to her, "Minnie Mae, how
15 about getting Jim to do such and such?" "I'm sorry. I don't work for Jim." (laughs)

16 MMH: I said, "I don't have any rank. I don't have any rank."

17 LC: Good for you. Good for you. "I don't report to him." That's good for you.
18 Well, let's take a break for a sec.

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Interview with Jim & Minnie Mae Hall

Session [3] of [3]

Date: May 16, 2005

1

2 Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
3 University continuing the oral history interview with Col. Jim Hall of the U.S. Air Force
4 and his wife, Minnie Mae Hall, is also on the line with us. Today's date is the sixteenth of
5 May 2005. I am in the interview room in the Special Collections building on the campus
6 of Texas Tech. Jim and Minnie Mae are joining me by telephone from their home in Fort
7 Worth. Good afternoon to both of you gain.

8

 Minnie Mae Hall: Hello.

9

 Jim Hall: Good afternoon, Laura.

10

 LC: Thank you for finding time to continue the interview. I'm sorry we're not
11 doing it in person, but we'll have just as much fun, I think, and make good progress
12 today. Jim, you had worked on some notes that you thought might include in the record
13 here and I invite you to go ahead and include those if you will.

14

 JH: Surely. Before we officially start our interview on my Vietnam experience,
15 may I express my feelings about the military in Vietnam conflict?

16

 LC: Yes, sir.

17

 JH: I have over thirty years of active duty military service including enlisted and
18 officer assignments. I have never regretted a single day of that service including three
19 combat tours and being away from my family for about six years on various assignments
20 on which they were not allowed to accompany me. As to my feelings about Vietnam, I
21 fully supported our attempt to quell the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia.
22 The conflict in Vietnam was too politically controlled to allow us a total victory in
23 Vietnam and our withdrawal put a stamp on national indecisions on our actions.
24 Nevertheless, with the actions we did take communism has not spread into other
25 countries in that area and I attribute our Vietnam action to that success. I should also note
26 that I did not have to fight in the trenches as so many of our valiant servicemen did. So I
27 may not have the same perspective that many do have. On my first tour after the fifty-five
28 combat missions and on my second tour I flew ninety-six combat missions, but I had a
29 good bed to come back to each night, good meals and no fear if the enemy might attack
30 our base. So perspectives do vary depending on certain conditions. I'll begin by my

1 assignment to Task Force Alpha and Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base. I reported
2 there in September 19—correction, in November 1968. I reported to General John Dyas
3 who was the commander of TFA (Task Force Alpha). I entered as a lieutenant colonel,
4 initially as deputy director of operations and eventually the director of operations when
5 that spot became open. TFA had the largest computer system in Southeast Asia taking
6 info from many varied sources, both air and ground, pertaining to North Vietnam
7 movements both in the north and Laos. Intelligence reports were collected from Special
8 Ops ground forces, forward air controllers, 7th Airborne and Control Center, orbits, and
9 EC-121 airplanes. All of this data had to be processed for the largest computer complex
10 under IBM contract in Southeast Asia and forwarded to 7th Air Force headquarters in Tan
11 Son Nhut airbase in Saigon each morning at about 5:00AM. After collation of all this
12 data, I had to prepare the report for General Dyas's approval and transmission. Seventh
13 Air Force reviewed this data for the master operations order for their air units in Vietnam
14 and Thailand. We also had a division of high technical personnel who continuously
15 researched new ideas for possible implementation in assessing the build ups, movements,
16 and preparation of the North Vietnamese. One section's involvement was assigning in the
17 advancement, assisting in the advancement of using laser-guided bombs and other highly
18 classified functions. We had a C-47 assigned for our movement of personnel about
19 Thailand in South Vietnam for coordination of operations and understanding mission
20 complexities of the air operation's units. I also frequently flew General Dyas to Bangkok
21 for meetings at the U.S. embassy and to Tan Son Nhut to the 7th Air Force headquarters
22 meeting with 7th Air Force Commander Gen. Davy Jones, who, if I remember correctly,
23 became Chief of Staff of the Air Force at a later date. Back to intelligence and
24 information gathering. Through these sources we would get information about the
25 location of North Vietnamese missile sites. There was a wing of F-105s that are based in
26 Thailand nicknamed "the Missile Busters" with call signs of "Wild Weasel." These
27 specially-equipped planes with their radar and missiles would be alerted to the
28 approximate location enemy missile sites, and were airborne when the B-52 and other air
29 strikes were scheduled. When the missile sites came up on their radar to launch a missile
30 these Wild Weasels would home in on the site and try to destroy it. The North
31 Vietnamese would move these sites frequently so it was somewhat of a cat-and-mouse

1 game. As these sites would move we would try to keep abreast of the new locations. One
2 of our requirements was to lay strings of acoustic and seismic sensors in predetermined
3 locations along the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail and other identified locations to
4 determine the movement of vehicles, movements we have determined vehicles,
5 personnel, and other supply methods. After our analysis of such movements we would
6 determine the best location to lay these sensors. We had designated F-4 and C-130 units
7 equipped for this mission. Wing numbers and locations of C-130s is forgotten, but the Air
8 Force were stationed at Ubon Royal Thai Air Base in Thailand south of Nakhon Phanom
9 along the Mekong River. When our sensors would detect movements we would call in
10 strike aircraft with exact movement location for their bombing efforts. We could monitor
11 the success of these bombing missions by the sensory information. It was almost
12 instantaneous. These missions were quite successful. We would replant sensors if they
13 were damaged or lost their battery power. I might blow my whistle here a bit. General
14 Dyas called me in one day and told me I had just been promoted to full colonel. He also
15 told me that I was the most well-versed, knowledgeable, and personnel-oriented
16 lieutenant colonel he had ever encountered in his career including several colonel-level
17 wing commanders who served under him. Perhaps his endorsement on my annual
18 evaluation report reflected that and led to my promotion to colonel. After General Dyas
19 left, we got a big air general named Butcher. Chester, I believe was his first name, who
20 was an I-and-me man making decisions contrary to established policies and getting into
21 trouble with 7th Air Force headquarters. No one can please him. I think he had probably
22 been one of the colonel wing commanders that General Dyas mentioned. I have no idea
23 how he ever made general. Thank goodness I left after about two months under his
24 command. Later when I was stationed at England Air Force Base, Louisiana, an OSI
25 (Office of Special Investigations) agent came to me and questioned me about a lot of
26 General Butcher's actions while at Nakhon Phanom. I didn't give the general a very good
27 report and that was the last I ever heard of him. Other than this last comment, I believe
28 that our operation in Task Force Alpha helped reduce the resupply efforts of the North
29 Vietnamese, their efforts in the South, but again I feel that politics precluded the eventual
30 defeat of the North's efforts to overrun the South. Without that intrusion I believe the
31 conflict would've ended in our favor. I must note that we had two exceptionally highly-

1 classified missions that required a special security clearance above top secret. They were
2 nicknamed Alfredo and the Slinging Dart. Very few of our people even knew about them.

3 LC: What was the name of the second one again, Jim?

4 JH: Slinging Dart.

5 LC: Slinging Dart.

6 JH: D-A-R-T.

7 LC: Mm-hmm. Thank you.

8 JH: Very few of our people ever knew about them. I don't know whether they
9 have been declassified even today so I can't go into detail. I flew fifty-five combat
10 missions this tour including the old C-47, several different forward air controllers, and
11 EC-121 and an F-4. I was to be assigned to England Air Force Base upon completion of
12 the tour there. After leaving Task Force Alpha I was assigned as the deputy base
13 commander at England Air Force Base, moving to base commander when the current
14 commander was transferred. This was a Tactical Air Command base with an F-100 wing.
15 The wing commander was another of these colonels General Dyas mentioned, an I-me-
16 type without much experience except flying airplanes. We got along except in some of
17 his decisions, which were against Air Force policy. When I'd advise him of such he
18 would say, "We can do it this way," and we got in trouble a couple of times with the Air
19 Force inspector general's visits. I really didn't enjoy being around fighter pilots with their
20 wild parties and drinking, but continued to operate the base in a progressive manner. One
21 occasion, which really turned me off, was an order issued to me by the wing commander
22 in the officer's club one day. He had a nice club and he said to me, "Jim, there is one
23 thing lacking. We need a fireplace in that corner over there," pointing to a corner in the
24 bar. I said, "Colonel, we have a nice fireplace in the dining room and this area is well
25 heated in the winter." His reply was, "Yes, but these pilots don't have a place to throw
26 and break their drink classes after giving the toast." I said, "Well, I'd have it built only
27 with a definitive written order." The order never came, but that was the level of his
28 thinking. Just do it without any real necessity. After having been there about six months
29 the colonel's assignment branch in the Pentagon called me one day and asked if I would
30 like an assignment as chief of the air mission in Managua, Nicaragua. I told him I'd only
31 been back from Vietnam a short time and did not relish another overseas assignment so

1 soon. About a month later another call, “How would you like to be the air attaché in
2 Israel?” Then later, “How about the assistant air attaché in Moscow?” And still later,
3 “How about the air attaché in Nigeria?” I think it was Nigeria. It was an African nation.
4 My answer was the same. I talked to Minnie Mae, my wife, about this saying they’re
5 asking me if, with emphasis on, “if,” I would like so and so, but about the end of a year at
6 England they would probably come to me and say, “Your next assignment is such-and-
7 such.” Minnie Mae said what I told her I knew—Minnie Mae said—

8 MMH: What’d I say?

9 JH: Minnie Mae said, “What would I do during that year?”

10 MMH: Yeah.

11 JH: I told her I knew of two assignments for colonels in Vietnam and might
12 volunteer for one of those and would never have to go overseas again. She said again,
13 “What would I do?” I said, “Both of our children are out on their own and our widowed
14 mother is—your widowed mother is contemplating a move to a new city. You can enjoy
15 a year with her and help her move.” After some serious discussions we agreed on my
16 volunteer suggestion. I called the colonel’s branch and I volunteered for one of the two
17 jobs. Their response was, “We don’t get many volunteers. We’ll get back to you,” and
18 they did in about a week later with an assignment as an orbit commander in the 7th
19 Airborne Command and Control Center at Udorn, Thailand. We left England Air Force
20 Base in September 1971. I’ve always suspected the reason I was getting called about the
21 air mission and attaché assignments was because of my assignment in the Air Force
22 Technical Application Center where I dealt with embassies, consulates, high-level U.S.
23 and foreign civilian and military officials and having been a member of our air staff. So
24 much for the England Air Force Base assignment, now to the 7th Airborne Command and
25 Control Center in Thailand. So it’s off to Thailand I go in September 1971, but first there
26 must be a stop at Clark Air Force Base near Manila, Philippine Islands, to attend an
27 escape, evasion, and survival course before I can fly a combat mission. This is commonly
28 called “snake school” with a week of classroom instruction and then three days in the
29 field with implementation of supervised activities we have learned in class. Then we
30 return loose and adjoined to try to evade capture by hired indigenous natives who had
31 been paid to capture us. If we were caught three times we failed the course and had to

1 start over. I got caught once, which was less than most. However I never did see a snake,
2 just saw plenty of rats. Ugh. We all arrived at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base,
3 Thailand on the northern Mekong River. I was given a classified organization briefing
4 instructed in operation procedures 7th Air Force headquarters in Saigon to become
5 familiar with the interconnection of our operations with their plans and requirements.
6 Then back to the AB-triple-C and assigned as orbit commander of Cricket Orbit. Seventh
7 AB-triple-C mission was to control and coordinate all strike missions against the North
8 Vietnamese with two orbits manned twenty-four hours a day. One orbit over northern
9 Laos above the Plain of Jars and the other in southern Laos near the Cambodian and
10 South Vietnamese borders. These orbits were flown in specially-equipped C-130
11 airplanes. The control function was handled by six specially-trained air controllers and an
12 intelligence officer. The northern orbit was operated by a daytime orbit designated
13 "Cricket," which would stay on station till they leave after twelve hours by another C-130
14 night orbit called "Alley Cat." In the southern orbit the daytime orbit was designated
15 "Hillsborough" with the nighttime orbit being "Moonbeam." There was another C-130
16 mission named "Trump," which was very highly classified and I doubt that that mission
17 has been declassified. The air controllers would receive calls from all strike aircraft
18 originating from Thailand bases and would advise them of any other aerial activities in
19 their area of operation. The Navy also operated from their carriers and controlled their
20 own missions. One of our air controllers was in constant communication with the Navy
21 equivalent to 7th AB-triple-C to preclude conflict in air strike areas. Two other of our
22 controllers were in constant communication with forward air controllers accepting their
23 need for air strikes and forwarding information to the strike aircraft. The intelligence
24 officer was in contact with strike aircraft. I'm sorry, was in contact with Special
25 Operations groups on the ground in Laos accepting any information they might have for
26 immediate strikes, or further transmission to 7th Air Force in Saigon for other necessary
27 action. In the northern orbit, Cricket and Alley Cat, the intelligence officer would also be
28 in contact with Laotian Gen. Vang Pao's operations to people to coordinate their ground
29 call is artillery and aerial activities to ensure there was no conflict between our activities
30 and there's. I visited Gen. Vang Pao twice at Long Tieng to coordinate our joint
31 operations. I was also sent to Plain of Jars to coordinate artillery activities. Very

1 interesting and effective operation in northern Laos in an attempt to preclude the North
2 Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces from overriding north Laos from the northeast. In
3 April of 1971, our operation was moved on to Khorat in central Thailand. I might add
4 here that I was able to take two weeks leave at this time and Minnie Mae came to visit me
5 for three weeks. The main purpose was to celebrate her fiftieth birthday. I gave her a
6 grand tour of a portion of Thailand that I knew except Nakhon Phanom, which was
7 strictly no unauthorized visitors. After a few days in Bangkok, showing her that
8 wonderful city and celebrating our joint birthdays on April the eighth, her fiftieth and my
9 fifty-third, we then flew to Udorn visiting Thai friends there with a grand tour of that area
10 and then to Chiang Mai in northwestern Thailand where the Chinese and Burma, now
11 Myanmar, borders. On a few previous ends in—on a few previous weekends fly into
12 Chiang Mai, I had become friends with a manufacturer of teak furniture and artifacts. He
13 knew a great taxi driver that I could hire for the full weekend and he would show me the
14 countryside. I hired John, the taxi driver, to show Minnie Mae all of the area around
15 Chiang Mai. Tony, the teak man, and his wife were gracious hosts with an elegant dinner
16 and our gifts for another. Then we caught an overnight train back to Bangkok for another
17 couple of days before I had to return to Khorat. Minnie Mae shared my trailer home for a
18 week while I flew a couple of combat missions. Then back to Bangkok and the U.S. she
19 went, a great opportunity for both of us. During this tour, I flew ninety-six combat
20 missions and logged just over a thousand combat flying hours. This assignment was a
21 great pleasure, but again I must reiterate that we could've done a better job of winning
22 the overall conflict if we'd been allowed to make more air strikes on very important
23 targets in North Vietnam especially in Hanoi and Hai Phong areas. I left Thailand in early
24 September 1972 for an assignment to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, as a deputy base
25 commander. Then to Hill Air Force Base which is near Ogden, Utah, about fifty miles
26 north of Salt Lake City. It was one of five huge Air Force depots, which was the supply
27 sources for all Air Force needs. These depots were called air logistic centers under the
28 Air Force Logistics Command. Maj. Gen. Bryce Pole was the logistics center commander
29 when I arrived. He was the very best boss I ever had in the Air Force. I arrived at Hill as
30 deputy air base commander and was elevated to base commander upon retirement of the
31 then-base commander. Hill Air Force Base covered approximately six thousand acres of

1 ground with a multitude of large warehouses, several large airplane hangers, a Titan II
2 inverted missile silo deep in the ground, the air logistics center, a base hospital, helicopter
3 rescue wing, Air Force Reserve fighter group, and several other tenets. In addition, we
4 had over five hundred base housing units for military personnel and many on-base
5 dormitories for unmarried personnel. The missile silo was researching for the
6 development of the Titan II missile. The warehouses were cramped with several thousand
7 items needed throughout the Air Force and were specifically designated through our
8 logistics center. The center was also the designated supplier of all Air Force aircraft
9 landing gear needs. Also, being the repair depot over such. It was the prime depot for all
10 F-16 needs and depot repairs. During my tenure we automated all the warehouses so that
11 a computerized operation selected the appropriate request and delivered it over
12 designated moving tracks to the appropriate shipping department. We also had a museum
13 commemorating the contributions the base had made to the area along with many
14 artifacts from its beginning in World War II along with many restored U.S. Air Force
15 airplanes. This has now become a reality as Hill Aerospace Museum. The base is
16 outstanding and supported by all local cities, chains of commerce, the state legislature,
17 the Mormon Church headquarters, and an innumerable named organizations and support
18 groups. I was elected as a member of several organization boards, such as chambers of
19 commerce, advertising agencies, and one local bank. I suppose the bank was appreciative
20 of the approximate five hundred million dollar annual payroll we had. This was generated
21 by the twenty-one thousand civilian employees and six thousand military personnel on
22 the base for which me and my staff were responsible to assure proper working conditions,
23 dining facilities, healthcare, housing for military, and recreation. All of this constituted a
24 four billion inventory of physical properties, flies and invested assessments from earned
25 non-governmental sources. In addition to Hill Air Force Base, we also had the Wendover
26 Bombing Range up about one million acres and an auxiliary airfield there on for which I
27 was responsible. One interesting incident came as a result of the annual prayer breakfast
28 the president had encouraged for all military bases. At the February of 1974 breakfast, I
29 invited President Kimble of the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons, to
30 be our guest speaker. He graciously accepted and brought his military liaison Apostle
31 Boyd Packer along. It was a memorable occasion to hear such a highly respected

1 religious leader speak. Later I received a letter from Boyd Packer's assistant, David Hate,
2 signing an invitation from President Kimble to a visit to their headquarters complex in
3 Salt Lake City. This invitation also included my entire base, chaplain staff, and chaplains.
4 We were really treated royally with very depth of understanding of the LDS (Latter Day
5 Saints) religion royally and the very depth of understanding. I'm repeating myself. We
6 were really treated royally with a very depth of understanding of the LDS religion
7 without any attempt to convert us. A wonderful tour through the headquarters including a
8 session with their missionaries, their training program, and a special conducted tour
9 through the attic and normally unseen fortunes of their tabernacle, excellent rapport. Just
10 prior to my departure from Hill, we broke ground for over two hundred more base
11 housing units, a major accomplishment with the Congress cutting military spending for
12 1974. My departure was sad for me for my assignment there was the best duty I served in
13 my career. AFTAC was wonderful, but Hill was better as I had so much responsibility
14 and was able to accomplish a lot for the future of the base. Not withstanding, I asked
15 General Pole if he might find me an assignment there at the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex.
16 My stepmother had recently passed away and my eighty-five year old father couldn't take
17 care of himself. No home health in those days. Minnie Mae would fly there every other
18 week to look in on him and prepare him for another two weeks before she would return.
19 General Pole was very sympathetic cause he said he had a similar situation with his father
20 a few years ago. So after a couple of weeks General Pole told me he could get me an
21 assignment as inspector general at the air logistics center in Tinker Air Force Base,
22 Oklahoma City. I accepted as that was just over two hundred miles from Dallas-Fort
23 Worth and easier to look in on Dad. Thus we were transferred to Tinker Air Force Base
24 in September of 1974. I reported to Tinker in late September as the inspector general for
25 the air logistics center. However, Gen. Jim Randolph told me that it'd be temporary as the
26 then-air base commander would retire in a few months and I would become the base
27 commander. The inspector general is somewhat blah. Yep, blah. Besides inspections of
28 several operations on base, it was flooded with individual complaints that took a lot of
29 time to resolve and about eighty percent were not substantiated. The civil service union
30 was very strong leaving the production rate quite a bit below our goals. Not like Hill
31 where seventy-four percent of the base population was Mormon with outstanding work

1 ethics and no problems at all. I made a few civilian employees angry with me because of
2 the pressure to improve their performance. The base commander retired and I took over
3 as base commander. With my previous working as inspector general, I assumed my
4 assignment wasn't exactly popular with a lot of people and disconcerting to me and my
5 attempt to improve working conditions and productions among my staff, which was
6 about fifty percent civilians. As at Hill, I worked hard to fulfill my responsibility to
7 please General Randolph so it went pretty well. However in mid-July of 1975, Minnie
8 Mae and I took a two-week vacation without our grown children or one of our mothers as
9 we usually do. Driving back to Oklahoma, I said, "You know, I could take a whole lot
10 of—this is my kind of life," and retirement was off with. We talked about it and decided
11 that that would be our plan. Upon return to duty the following Monday morning I saw
12 General Randolph and told him I was putting in my request for retirement. He said, "Jim,
13 please don't do that. I like the way you operate." I told him I was sorry, but the decision
14 had been made. I initiated the necessary action that day. Consequently on September the
15 1st, 1975, I retired from the Air Force for thirty years and seven months of active duty and
16 four years in the Air Force Reserves between the end of World War II and my recall of
17 duty for the Korean conflict of 1950. My actual retirement started in Granbury, Texas.
18 Granbury is a quaint little town. Do you want to hear all this?

19 LC: I sure do. Please. Absolutely.

20 MMH: She hasn't gone to sleep yet.

21 LC: No. No. No. Actually I am very busy taking notes.

22 JH: Granbury is a quaint little town about thirty-five miles from Fort Worth, west
23 of Fort Worth. It was established in the mid-1980s while Indian tribes were still a
24 problem in the area, but it survived and became the county seat of Hood County. It was
25 surrounded by cotton, grain and peanut crops. This made their economic base. Also,
26 some cattle resources. It survived the depression, but after many years to regress, began
27 to regress economically. By 1970 about one third of the buildings on the square were
28 empty. Many boarded up and some with roofs caved in, but it was surrounded by the
29 Brazos River. The U.S. Civil Engineers had just completed a dam south of Granbury and
30 Lake Granbury was born. At that time, Hood County had about six thousand people in
31 the city and twenty-seven hundred residents. The original land for the county seat was

1 donated by two brothers named Nut who were quite popular in the area and had
2 established the general store on one corner off the proposed square before the courthouse
3 was built. Subsequently many other merchants and professionals built around the square.
4 Two of the Nut grandchildren left the little town in their early adulthood, made their
5 millions in the Dallas area and saw the potential future of the quaint little town as a
6 tourist attraction with a new lake. They returned, bought up several of the empty stores
7 on the square, renovated them, and started business there in. The town did become a
8 tourist attraction and began to prosper again. While I was on my second assignment to
9 Vietnam and Minnie Mae was in Minerals, Texas, where her mother had moved, the two
10 of them would frequently go to Granbury to shop, eat, and enjoy the plain atmosphere.
11 Minnie Mae fell in love with Granbury so we decided to test it and see if it was where we
12 would really be happy in retirement. We put all of our household goods in storage, rented
13 an apartment half a block off the square. Bought a limited amount of goodwill and garage
14 sale furnishings and set up house keeping. After a couple of months, having joined the
15 Methodist Church on one corner of the square and meeting a lot of the merchants that are
16 nice and other nice people, we decided this was the place we could be happy. So we
17 bought two residential lots with direct access to the lake only six blocks from the square
18 on which we would build our three thousand square foot four bedroom, three bath, living
19 room, dining room, den, kitchen, breakfast room, large tool garage and workshop, and
20 visual landscaping which we did our selves. In the meantime a local newspaper noted the
21 city manager had retired in the city council and was advertising for a new one. Minnie
22 Mae said, "You ran large air bases. You could do this job. Why don't you apply?" I
23 stated I was retired and didn't relish going back to work. She kept pushing me. So I
24 submitted my resume, was interviewed. Then the mayor in council was hired and started
25 to work. The city financial situation was pretty poor. So I began to search out the
26 problems and correcting deficiencies getting us back to a sustainable office situation. I
27 was really enjoying the job when I detected two flagrant violations of Texas state laws.
28 One involved personal property law, not land or buildings. The other involved annexation
29 of land for a residential development. As to the latter, Texas laws are quite strict on how
30 land annexation can be approved by city councils. The mayor was a land developer and
31 had convinced the council to allow him to annex one _____(??) at a time contiguous

1 to a section of the city limits, a direct violation of state law. I went to the mayor and told
2 him what I had found. He told me to sit on it till the forthcoming election. We discussed
3 it back and forth with no resolution. So I left. The next morning I went to his office with
4 a resignation letter justifying my position as having hired to uphold the federal and state
5 laws and the ordinances of the city. He saw my letter and said, "I hope this is not what I
6 think it is." I said, "I will stay on till they can find someone else." So I left that job after
7 only five months. The council, the city council was upset and tried to get me to remain,
8 but I was out of there. However, they then asked me to campaign for forthcoming open
9 city council seat. I was elected and served three terms with the new mayor. I really
10 enjoyed that state of elected public service and without being tied down with the morning
11 7:00AM until question mark question mark job. I was free to come back to admin a civic
12 charity club and church activities. Likewise Minnie Mae also became quite involved in
13 like activities, becoming president of the prestigious Woman's Wednesday club, which
14 has been organized for about a turn of a century. President of the only local garden club,
15 many boards and guilds of various organizations. We made our home and wanted to use
16 some of the leadership qualities we had developed over our many years of experiences
17 elsewhere. After living there for about three years, Minnie Mae's mother became ill and
18 spent her last four years as a complete invalid in our home. My mother was at a Granbury
19 nursing home and my dad was in a Dallas nursing home. So many hours were devoted to
20 their care until their deaths between 1982 and 1986. These were great loses to us, but we
21 overcame our grieving and went on with our active life. During our unencumbered
22 periods of retired life we did considerable traveling by far. We visited every one of the
23 254 counties of Texas taking a photo of the courthouses. All fifty of the United States and
24 extended driving tours through all the southern provinces of Canada, from the Eastern
25 Maritimes to Vancouver out in the west. Then we became addicted to ocean and
26 paddleboat steamer cruises on the Mississippi River complex and the Western Columbia
27 River. As I approached seventy years old, I could see that I would not be able to maintain
28 our wonderful home in Granbury and potential health problem might need more
29 specialized treatment that was not available there. Plus, if Minnie Mae or I should get
30 down health wise it would be a strain on our daughter to commute down there from home
31 in Colleyville, a Fort Worth suburb. So we began to think about moving to a retirement

1 community in a Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex. We did a lot of research of such facilities.
2 In November 1989 we first purchased a condominium in the Lakewood Village
3 retirement community in east Fort Worth. It has three levels of care, independent living
4 where we bought into, assisted living complex, and a scale nursing home, nurse care
5 facility. So we feel we would be ready for the future. Plus we only live about fifteen
6 minutes from our daughter. As we were leaving Granbury, there were many festive
7 events wishing us farewell and good luck in our new lifestyle, many accolades that we
8 never expected. To toot our whistle, here is the wording of one plaque presented to us by
9 the Hood County News, the local newspaper distributes three times a week. The one inch
10 printed heading reads, "Good for Hood," Hood being Hood County. Followed by, "For
11 dedicated service in their community they should be in the Hall of Fame," in three quarter
12 inch letters. Then these words, "Some people live in the world to serve others. Jim and
13 Minnie Mae Hall, Granbury's ambassadors of goodwill, are two such people. During
14 their fourteen years here, their volunteered efforts have helped a countless number of
15 individuals and about as many community projects. One would be hard pressed to name
16 another couple who has done more for Granbury. Unfortunately, the Halls will be moving
17 away in a couple of weeks to a Fort Worth retirement community. First thing about son
18 and daughter, the Halls want to be prepared if a serious health problem strikes. They
19 explained, 'We want to prepare ourselves for older age before infirmity possible sets in.'
20 The Halls are deeply involved in this community and the town's people enveloped them.
21 They were named citizens of the year by the prestigious Woman's Wednesday Club in
22 1987. They'll be sorely missed in our community as they leave." Ending with half-inch
23 letters, "Thanks Jim and Minnie Mae." So we left Granbury and moved into our new
24 condominium apartment in Fort Worth in November 1989. I'm getting close to the end.

25 LC: You keep going, Jim.

26 MMH: How's your tape?

27 LC: It's in good shape.

28 JH: It's rolling. So what do we do now that we have no homeowner
29 responsibilities? We have a cafeteria where we receive one meal daily included in our
30 monthly maintenance fee. We have no meetings to attend other than commitments. Well,
31 we just began all over again with homeowner leadership roles, civic activity, local clubs,

1 and our new church. I became president of our resident's council, a board member of the
2 Lakewood Village Condominium Homeowner's Association, and deeply involved in
3 getting a Fort Worth regional library built in our immediate area. Minnie Mae became
4 president of the Village Book Review Club, chairman of the Food Service Committee
5 and established a Woman's Red Hat Group. She is Mrs. Sunshine with her outgoing and
6 wonderful personality and greeting new residents and encouraging our old residents
7 about their aches and pains. This is a good life and as we previously stated, we just lock
8 our door and go, either on a planned trip, on a spur of a moment opportunity. As of this
9 date in May of 2005 we've been on twenty ocean cruises to most parts of the world
10 having completed a full around the world vacation and have sailed on paddle steam boats
11 on the Mississippi complex four times and one time on the Columbian River in the
12 Oregon, Washington and Idaho area for a total of twenty five cruises. We began to feel
13 our old age at ages of 86 and 83 with various aches and pains and a few other minor
14 problems, but medication takes care of that. So we continue an active life. Our next
15 planned trip will be to the 19th Bomb group reunion later this year in San Antonio. I look
16 forward to seeing some of my old World War II buddies as well as old newer guys from
17 Vietnam era, a couple newer ones from Desert Storm and the Iraq efforts. I am enjoying
18 working with Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archives at Texas Tech University and
19 presenting some of my memories about my life in general and about my military career.
20 This endeavor has taxed my memory in many areas and I have rambled along as various
21 incidents feel themselves. I hope this will be worthwhile to the archives and anyone who
22 might stumble across it. It is to preserve the future reference if any. I am Jim Hall. Thank
23 you.

24 LC: Jim, thank you very much for all the effort that you put into developing that
25 statement and, of course, all the time that you both have spent with us. Just for listener's
26 information, Jim and Minnie Mae have agreed to answer a few questions or to at least
27 consider them and think about what they might reply. If you're all right, Jim, we'll go
28 ahead and I'll ask you a couple of questions.

29 JH: Okay.

30 LC: Okay. Jim, thinking back over your career what was your favorite plane to
31 fly? What was the best aircraft you ever flew?

1 JH: Well, I would have to say two, but two totally different mission capable
2 airplanes. My favorite one, I guess, was the B-29 in World War II, a combat-type
3 airplane, because it was so highly technically advanced for those days. I had a cohesive
4 crew that I flew with on each of the thirty-five missions I flew over Japan. So that made it
5 real special to me. Coming on up into the more modern era, I flew the B-52 which was a
6 great airplane. Easy to fly and could accomplish a great mission. Then there was a little
7 T-39, which was an offspring of a North American civilian version Sabliner, and it
8 could carry about seven passengers. I loved to fly it. That's basically what I flew during
9 my assignment in Germany for three years. I flew it throughout, quite a bit, all over
10 Europe and Northern Africa and into the Mid-East countries, not too far into Mid-East. I
11 guess Turkey would probably be the farthest in Mid-East, but that was a wonderful little
12 airplane.

13 LC: What was the best thing about it?

14 JH: Oh, it's pleasantry in flying, just so easy to fly. It was very well appointed.
15 Had a little passenger airplane, not cargo. I called it the "Cadillac of the Air Force."

16 LC: Jim, if you don't mind, I want to ask you a couple of questions about the
17 service that you gave to the country during your tours in Southeast Asia.

18 JH: Okay.

19 LC: First of all, with Task Force Alpha, in the first tour, can you tell me a little
20 bit about this first generation of laser-guided bombs that you used—how did you get
21 familiar with them? Did you go to briefings and how effective were they?

22 JH: Here is my only involvement, very minor. As I mentioned, we had this highly
23 technical division under the director of operations, which I was. At an AC-130 base, and I
24 don't know where it was now, they were trying to drop bombs with a laser beam. They
25 were having a lot of trouble. They somehow contacted us and asked if we had a specialist
26 who might know something about such a process and could be of assistance to them.
27 And, fortunately, we did. I don't remember his name. He was lieutenant colonel and he
28 volunteered to go and work with them. It didn't get to the degree near of where we are
29 today, but they got to where they could come pretty close to the target by just dropping
30 the bomb out of a C-130 and following a laser path.

31 LC: Am I right in describing those as basically the first generation?

1 JH: Well, I'm not certain, but it was an early generation. I don't know whether it
2 was the first, but there might've been—well, there must've been other activities on it
3 because they were trying to do it before we got involved.

4 LC: Okay. So it actually predated your first tour in some ways?

5 JH: Yes. It was improved a bit by the assistance of this lieutenant colonel, but not
6 near the precision that it has today.

7 LC: What was the title of that technical division that was under you, that was—?

8 JH: You know, I've tried to remember that and I should've asked Lee Bird when
9 I was talking to him a while back.

10 LC: Well, I'll ask him when I interview him. How's that?

11 JH: Okay.

12 LC: Okay. Let me ask a little bit about other details from your second tour. In the
13 paperwork that you provided us, you mentioned that you had been on two backseat
14 missions over North Vietnam in an F-4.

15 JH: Yes.

16 LC: Can you tell me anything about those missions or what it's like to be in an F-
17 4?

18 JH: Well, we were on our AB-triple-C organization. I was on the base with an F-
19 4 wing and I became real familiar with the commander who eventually became chief of
20 staff of the Air Force, Charles—I might think of him before we hang up.

21 LC: You had mentioned him earlier.

22 JH: Yeah. Anyway, and I said, "You know, I've never been in an F-4 and do you
23 ever have an occasion where an airplane might go up and really didn't need a back-
24 seater?" He said, "Sure. I can arrange that, Jim." So I flew two reconnaissance, they were
25 so-called reconnaissance missions, over the southern part of Vietnam. We didn't go up
26 into the skillet part where the Hanoi and Hai Phong and all were.

27 LC: Over the southern part of North Vietnam.

28 JH: North Vietnam, yeah. Just probably, I don't know, maybe a hundred miles
29 north of the DMZ, in that general area. Anyway, they were just on a recce' mission both
30 times.

1 LC: Were there any events during the mission that you remember, either of those
2 missions?

3 JH: No. No. He just had automatic photo capability. He activated that. I just sat
4 there and rode and looked. I handled the stick a little bit, but not a whole lot.

5 LC: A little bit, huh? How did that feel? How did that plane feel?

6 JH: It was a great, great combat airplane. I mean, we didn't do very many
7 maneuvers in it. We just—he did most of the flying. I did very little, but it was just
8 mostly straight and level flying, climbing up and get to the desired altitude, and doing a
9 little recce' work and then heading back towards Udorn.

10 LC: Well, Jim, you also mentioned that you had in the course of that second tour
11 occasions on which you met a Gen. Vang Pao. Can you tell me the circumstances of
12 those meetings if you remember at all?

13 JH: Yes. As I mentioned, in this and I can expand on it a bit. General Vang Pao
14 had a little Air Force of his own. If I'm remembering correctly, our Air Force trainers, T-
15 28s I believe he had. They flew on their own. I guess it's legal to mention it now. We had
16 some civilianized Air Force instructors up there to help them out. General Vang Pao also
17 controlled the ground forces and the artillery, which was basically out in the Plain of Jars
18 firing towards the East towards the approaching—what vehicle—I mean Laotian—Pathet
19 Lao.

20 LC: Pathet Lao. Mm-hmm.

21 JH: In conjunction with this, we would have our FAC airplanes, the U.S. FAC
22 airplanes, sometimes necessary to get up into that area to spot a specified target that had
23 been reported to us by our U.S. Special Operations people. It was necessary for all of the
24 Laotian people to understand exactly what was going on and to coordinate with us and us
25 with them on what was happening both in their air strikes and in their artillery firings so
26 that we would not be hurting them any and them not hurting us any if we had a joint
27 involvement in that general area. General Vang Pao was very gracious, very
28 understanding. He says, "You're helping us more than we're helping you. We will do
29 anything that will help you." Especially with his little fighter pilots, he said, "We can
30 control them easily." The artillery batteries, the ones I visited at least, were run by the
31 Royal Thai Army people, not the Vietnamese, not the Laotian people. I went up a second

1 time where we had a minor violation by one of the fighter pilots interfering with one of
2 our forward air controllers. I went up a second time just to say hello to Gen. Vang Pao,
3 that I would go talk to his operations people about this, work something out.

4 LC: What was your impression of him? You met him under two different kinds
5 of circumstances. The second one sounds a little more pressed, a little more pressure
6 there. Did he receive you graciously?

7 JH: Oh, yes. Very muchly so. That ethnic culture that the Thai people have is
8 very prominent in Laos also. They're very humble, very understanding, and very
9 accommodating. It was real easy to brief him, talk to him. He concurred wholly with the
10 proposal that we made, real easy to work with.

11 LC: Did he have U.S. Air Force personnel around him generally at all, as
12 advisors?

13 JH: Yes, but to what level I can't really—I didn't really determine, but I know
14 that they were so-called "civilians," but they were Air Force people on special
15 assignment with civilians.

16 LC: Yes, sir. Yes. Most of that is now pretty well known.

17 JH: Yeah. In fact, I think if I remember correctly they were called Raven FACs.

18 LC: I think that's right. Yes, sir. I think they've even made a movie about them
19 now.

20 JH: I think so, yeah. As far as high-level advisor on his staff, American high level
21 advisor, I don't know that he had that.

22 LC: Minnie Mae, are you still listening in?

23 MMH: Yes, I am.

24 LC: I wonder if I can ask a question of you. You were spending a great deal of
25 time in the U.S. during these two tours I know although you did visit Jim in Thailand as
26 he said and went on that wonderful tour. What were you thinking about and what was
27 your reaction to the growing anti-Vietnam War climate in the U.S. during those years?

28 MMH: Well, I guess I really defended our position as much as I could. If people
29 were negative, I tried to say something positive. In Glen Rose when I stayed with my
30 mother the year, it's a small, small town and the people there were not as probably vocal
31 or as involved with it. They had people who were over there, of course, but I never did

1 run into anyone that was not for what we were doing. They were probably there, but they
2 never bothered me about it.

3 LC: When you were watching, for example, the evening news and so forth and
4 you would see the commentaries and reports on protests—

5 MMH: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I did all of that and cut out clippings of the paper and
6 saved those for him and all that, but—

7 LC: Did it bother you?

8 MMH: Well, you know, somebody asked me the other day didn't I worry all the
9 time. I really didn't. I think I watched my mother when she lost her two sons and I
10 thought, "You know, there's not one thing we can do about it." I'm trusting that
11 whatever's gonna be will be and Jim is doing what he wants to do. I just kind of didn't
12 lose sleep over it. People might've thought I wasn't really caring, but I was.

13 LC: Well, yes. That's a completely different thing, isn't it? I mean, how much
14 you care isn't necessarily denoted by how much you worry.

15 JH: I'm might interject right here.

16 LC: Yes, please.

17 JH: Laura, her grandparents were named Nickels and Steels and combine those
18 two and that's quite a strong alloy.

19 LC: Absolutely. She has given full demonstration of that in these interviews.

20 JH: Her mother and she are made of the same alloy and they withstood such
21 things greatly.

22 MMH: Yeah, I tell ya. Of course, inside I was worried, but I realized worry
23 doesn't really help much. I tried to keep a cheerful outlook and look on the bright side of
24 everything, kinda like Pollyanna.

25 LC: Well, but the two of you often discussed, it sounds like, what the next move
26 would be. You were on board with his decision to volunteer for a second—

27 MMH: Oh, yeah. We've always discussed everything.

28 LC: I think that's just wonderful and a great lesson to people now. Some of that
29 seems to be missing.

30 MMH: Well, thank you.

1 LC: Let me ask, Jim, a little bit about the period when you were at Hill Air Force
2 Base. You've described in detail the work of the base and your roles there, but of course
3 there were very, very important developments during that time period that affected
4 Southeast Asia and in particular I'm thinking about the Paris Peace Agreements and the
5 release of the POWs. Do you remember that in early 1973?

6 JH: The only thing—you're talking about the release of the prisoners from Iran?

7 LC: No, the U.S. prisoners being held in Hanoi.

8 JH: Oh, in Vietnam. I'm sorry.

9 LC: That's okay.

10 JH: The only thing I really—I wasn't involved in anything concerning it. The
11 only thing I saw was what came through the television, newspapers, and our daily report
12 that generated in Air Force headquarters. It was teletyped out, so it was just very minor,
13 summary of everything. Where we were we didn't have any problem with it.

14 LC: How did you feel though as someone who had served over there and all
15 kinds of Air Force guys getting released? Did you think the agreement was a good one to
16 conclude the war? Do you think that the timing was right and the agreement was a solid
17 one or not so much?

18 JH: No. It was long overdue and to go back before the agreement, as I kind of
19 emphasized, I think if the politics would've stayed out of it and given the goal to the
20 military Department of Defense as to what we were to accomplish over there and
21 basically turn it over to them about all of the decisions being made in, as I understand,
22 basically Lyndon Johnson's office and McNamara's office that things would've turned
23 out a lot better. We wouldn't have had our guys pinned up so long there as prisoners. I
24 think that the agreement would've been much stronger in our favor if we'd had more
25 pressure on the Hanoi and Hai Phong area to really show the Vietnamese they didn't have
26 a chance to win if they continued the war. We hoped that they would get rid of their
27 communist leanings. I think that as it turned out I'm happy that the agreement came along
28 as it did, when it did with all the other factors I've said and not being factored.

29 LC: Right, lots of other things kind of coming together. Did you feel the same
30 way about President Nixon's management of the war that you've come to feel about
31 President Johnson's?

1 JH: Yes, I did. He was a little too power—he felt he had to be too involved.

2 LC: Yes, uh-huh, and should've left it to the Defense Department.

3 JH: More or less set a goal. Naturally he has the final say, but I think the way that
4 we're working today is a good example of what way we should, with Iraq, the way we
5 should've worked in Vietnam. President Bush is very strong and very involved in
6 operations, but he's turned it basically over to his military, to the Department of Defense,
7 his military commanders, and Rumsfeld. I think that's what should've been done in
8 Vietnam.

9 LC: I see. Do you remember any strong reaction when you heard in 1975 that all
10 of South Vietnam was falling to communist control?

11 JH: Yes, I did, especially in the military. Very upset that we could be there as
12 long as they did, lose as many lives as we lost, and then give it away like we did.

13 LC: Did you have a sense that or do you have a sense now that we lost that
14 conflict or is there more to it than a simple pronouncement like that?

15 JH: We lost the conflict but we won, in my mind, the effort to preclude the
16 spread of communism beyond the Vietnamese borders. Cambodia, as you well know, still
17 has a communist factor there. I feel that if there had not been an action against the North
18 Vietnamese that Thailand would probably have been overrun as Laos has been. Laos is,
19 well, I guess, was partially communist. Right now they're not fully free yet.

20 LC: Have you been back to Southeast Asia? You mentioned that you had gone on
21 an around the world trip in addition to all of the miles that you have logged here in North
22 America. Have you been back to Asia at all?

23 JH: Just the one trip that we mentioned where we flew into Singapore and were
24 taking the trip of what's called the Spice Islands which is Indonesia. Our first stop—then
25 we got on, after four days of Singapore, we got on a cruise ship and the first stop was
26 Phuket, Thailand, which is way down south in the panhandle of Thailand, just a little bit
27 east of the northern tip of the big island of Sumatra in the Indonesian complex where the
28 tsunami occurred. It was so far removed from, Phuket is so far removed from the area
29 that I served in that it was just really a resort area.

30 LC: Was it recognizable to you as Thailand, though?

31 JH: Was what?

1 LC: Was it recognizable as Thailand?

2 JH: Oh, yes, yes. Humble people and the friendly monks and their temples just
3 like a miniature Bangkok, really.

4 LC: Let me ask you a question that this kind of overlays some of the comments
5 that you provided earlier about your retirement and how much fun you two have had
6 together and how many good plans you've made and lived into. How do you feel in
7 general about America's treatment of it's veterans including yourself, but more broadly?
8 Should the government do more than it has done or are you fairly satisfied that the
9 government is paying proper attention to the needs of veterans?

10 JH: I have two feelings on that, Laura. One is the government has established
11 good programs for veterans in general. The Iraq thing has caused a big influx of more
12 needs for more help for those guys who are coming back with long term, lifelong term
13 injuries, missing limbs and that type of thing which the government works with them on.
14 My other feeling is that veterans before this conflict, the Iraqi conflict, a lot of them are
15 expecting the government to do everything in the world for them. I've talked to guys who
16 are veterans who are living almost as good as I am saying, "Why doesn't the government
17 take care of us better? We spent all our time doing this and that and the other. Why
18 doesn't the government do more for us?" I tell him, "We are the government. How long
19 can we continue to give, give, give where the giving might not be essential. Would be
20 happy to have it, but not really essential to sustain your livelihood." That's my general
21 feeling, if that was clear enough for you.

22 LC: So you have some concerns about the fiscal intelligence of broadening
23 basically, probably, any government program, not just a veterans program. Is that the
24 direction you were going in?

25 JH: That's what I'm going. I think we the people expect—I'll rephrase. There are
26 certain factions of we the people who think the government owes them everything. I can
27 go back to the early days of Medicare. Medicare was developed to help people with
28 medical problems and it has expanded to cover so many others that in some cases are
29 absolutely not necessary, but they're convenient for people. At my age and stage, seeing
30 older people, a lot of their desires and in some cases needs, the government's just
31 overspending and overspending and overspending. In some—I won't identify them. I

1 won't attempt to identify the classes, but in some classes of our nation of our people the
2 healthcare providers are easy to be influenced—started to use the word bribed but I won't
3 use it—influenced to prescribe not medications necessarily, but other things that people
4 that don't really need to get them and that's a big cost to our economy.

5 LC: Right. That all has to be borne by someone.

6 JH: That's us. We the people.

7 LC: Absolutely. We the people. Well, I wonder whether either of you have any
8 additional observations or things that I haven't asked you about that you feel you'd like
9 to include in this interview.

10 MMH: I really can't think of anything. Laura, you've been so efficient in the way
11 you've handled the questions.

12 LC: Well, thank you, Minnie Mae.

13 MMH: I think you've covered quite a bit. If you think of something else after we
14 are finished today you can call us back.

15 LC: I will. I will do that.

16 MMH: We'd be glad to help any way we can.

17 LC: Okay. I appreciate that so much. What about you, Jim? Same thing?

18 JH: I feel the same thing. You've been so gracious. One thing about my
19 presentation to you, in getting prepared for this I've tried and tried to think of so many
20 things that I couldn't remember about. I'm sorry that I couldn't go into more depth in a
21 lot of them because I just don't remember the real details at this age. I'm sorry.

22 MMH: I thought he did pretty good.

23 LC: I thought he did pretty good, too. I was about to say that anybody who wants
24 to have a sense of the kinds of missions that you were assigned to and that you just
25 discharged so honorably in service to this country will find in this interview a terrific
26 resource. That's absolutely because of the two of you and certainly nothing that, really,
27 that I've done except call you up and spend some time with you, which I've been more
28 than happy to do. Of course, you also very graciously visited us here, too.

29 MMH: We sure enjoyed our visit with you. We were quite impressed with the
30 whole set up.

31 LC: Well, it is an impressive operation.

1 MMH: It is. I had no idea it was out there. One thing about his memory, I could
2 not remember all the names of those people if that had happened to me, or the names of
3 the towns.

4 LC: I tell ya.

5 MMH: I couldn't have done that.

6 LC: He's really done a terrific job. Well, on that note I'll go ahead and conclude
7 our interview for today.