Civil Air Patrol
Oral History Interview

WNHC3.83-8

Mr. George E. Haddaway

14 May 1983

NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMITTEE
Headquarters CAP

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CIVIL AIR PATROL

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interview

of

Mr. George E. Haddaway

by

Colonel Lester E. Hopper, CAP

Date: 14 May 1983

Location: Dallas, Texas

CIVIL AIR PATROL ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

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

The principle goal of these histories is to increase the base of knowledge relating to the early accomplishments of Civil Air Patrol members who in their own unique way contributed to the defense of our great country. Certainly not of a secondary nature is the preservation of the contributions of individuals as Civil Air Patrol continues its growth.

FOREWARD

The following is the transcript of an oral history interview recorded on magnetic tape. Since only minor emendations have been made, the reader should consistently bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word. Additionally, no attempt to confirm the historical accuracy of the statements has been made. As a result, the transcript reflects the interviewee's personal recollections of a situation as he remembered it at the time of the interview.

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

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

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

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

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George E. Haddaway DONOR

Dated May 14 1983

Accepted on behalf of the Civil Air Patrol by L. E. Hopper

Dated 14 May 1983

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

In this oral history interview, Mr. George E. Haddaway relates his early experiences in the establishment of the Civilian Pilot Training program. Because of his unique background as a professional, well travelled journalist his observation on the country's state of preparedness prior to World War II are quite significant. He continues with his early association with Gill Robb Wilson and his personal role in the establishment of Civil Air Patrol in Texas. Haddaway places considerable emphasis on his statement of fact that patrol missions were flown in the Gulf prior to the official "first flight" from CP 10 on July 7, 1942.

By means of two examples of the acquisition of a link trainer and a life raft, Haddaway illustrates the difficulties in building up his base at Beaumont and equipping it for safe and efficient operations. He very graphically recounts the loss of pilots involved and explores it's impact on the morale of other personnel.

Haddaway's reflections on the relative worth of Coastal Patrol Operations are of considerable interest to those involved in the study of the history of World War II.

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CAP ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Number WNHC3.83-8
Taped Interview With: Mr. George E. Haddaway (G)
Date of Interview: 14 May 1983
Location: Dallas, Texas
Conducted By: Colonel Lester E. Hopper, CAP (H)

H. George, suppose we get started with the way back there thing and give us a little personal background where you came from, how you got interested in aviation and first started flying and that sort of thing.

G. I was born in 1909 in Fort Worth, Texas. My first exposure to aviation was when the Canadian Air Force came to Fort Worth and established 3 or 4 flying fields in WWI because of ideal weather and georgraphy for training pilots. Canada was already in the war. My aunt and my mother often held tea dances for the pilots. I often sat on the laps of these picturesque guys with swagger sticks, overseas caps, boots and goggles. The airplanes would fly low over our house. That was my first exposure to airplanes and the men who flew them. Then our next door neighbor was a guy named Dutch Bartgis, a barnstormer with a Jenny. He gave both my sister and me a ride in 1921. That innoculated me too with the bug to fly. It wasn't until entering the University of Texas (1926-1930) that the next step came, not to mention Boy Scout days when we were called out to help moor the dirigibles at the helium plant near Fort Worth. I bought some time whenever

I'd get $30.00 at the University Flying Service in Waco 10's. I'd go out and take an hour or if I had $15.00 I'd take a half hour. Graduating in 1930, first depression year, I couldn't get a job. I had gone to sea during summer vacations, first as a deck boy and then as an ordinary seaman. So after graduation I went back to sea to eat and keep from being a burden on my parents who were hard up. In '30, '31, '32 I worked on my AB ticket and I thought, well, I can't afford to fly so I'll just become a mate, make the Merchant Marine my life. I enjoyed travel and always got along with foreign people. I left Austin with a few logged hours before the depression really hit. I was in Germany when Hitler came into power. I have diaries of that period. In them I predicted WWII. I wrote a letter to my father that I had observed two German battleships coming out of Helgoland right near Bremen. I said Hitler had kicked over the traces, that the Versailles treaty is no more and a new war is brewing. Of course, my Dad thought I was crazy because WI was the war to end all wars.

H. Maybe you were a little young for him to believe you.

G. In a couple of years as the depression deepened I couldn't even get a job on a ship. Every time I got a job assignment the ship went to the bone yard. This happened to me in San Francisco. In Frisco I used to hand out hymnals at the Seaman's church institute so I'd get an extra snail with my coffee. You know what a snail is, a danish. I finally got

tired of starving and took up with another bum, a lad who busted out of Stanford University. We started hitchhiking south heading for home to get some meat on my bones. We pearl dived in churches (washing dishes) and had some very interesting experiences. Arriving back in Texas I went out to Meacham Field and made friends with some of those old barnstormers. Dutch Bartgis was gone by then. Reg Robbins, Jess Bristow and Charlie Curry were especially encouraging. Bowen Airlines had started up and I thought, well, why don't I take my interest in journalism and my interest in aviation and combine them? They had a magazine down in Temple called the Southern Aviator and it had folded. I figured I could put out a better book and in late 1933 I teamed up with A. T. Barrett, Jr. who was A. P. Barrett's nephew. A. P. Barrett was a wheeler-dealer who picked up C. R. Smith on the highway and gave him a job with the Texas-Louisiana Power & Light Company as a bookkeeper. A. P. bought Texas Air Transport and C. R. soon was running T.A.T., which later became a part of American Airways. C. R., of course, went along with the new company, first as vice-president in charge of the Southern Division and then went on to become one of air transportation's greats. In 1933 A. T. Barrett, Jr. and I had made up our minds we were going to publish a monthly to be called Southwest Aviation. There wasn't any money in 1933 so we began working at different odd jobs, saving some money and finally saved enough and sold enough ads to get out an issue of the magazine. That was late in '33 so we decided we'd wait early '34 to get our first edition. We made a credit deal with the printer and we put up a $500 deposit. He was hard up for business. We had been warned that next to cafes and restaurants the highest mortality

rate among new businesses was in publications. If we had been convinced of that we never would have gone into it. We were wild-eyed aviation enthusiasts. Anyhow, we started to to to press on the January issue when something went wrong. We had a major ad cancellation. That really upset the printer. So then we said we'd wait till February. Well, then February came along and Uncle Sam cancelled the air mail contracts. Postmaster General Farley, President Roosevelt and Brown pulled off this disaster. Well, every ad of any national significance was cancelled. We didn't get off the press until April of '34. But from then on we never missed an issue.

H. That was some 45 years wasn't it?

G. Ya. So that pretty much takes care of those early days.

H. So basically you drifted toward CAP as a result of what, George?

G. Gil Robb Wilson was a fraternity brother of mine, not that that made any difference, but he was a spiritually motivating man. He had been a pilot in WWI. He was one of my heroes. Gil saw that war was coming on. He was one of those few who didn't agree with Lindbergh's advice to stay out of Europe's messes. At the National Aeronautical Association convention in Louisville, Kentucky in '41 Gil told me about New Jersey's Civil Air Defense operation.

H. And that was mid year '41?

G. Most airmen knew, they had a sixth sense, about getting involved in this war. We didn't have anything, no air power, no planning. Remember President Coolidge later court-martialled Billy Mitchell who called on the president with three or four of his fellow officers in the Air Corps. They desperately needed new airplanes. Mr. Coolidge sat there with that deadpan expression and said: "Well, men, why don't we buy one airplane and let all the boys fly it".

H. Real practical solution, huh?

G. That was the situation we were in all through the late '20's and early '30's. We had nothing. We had airplanes we couldn't even get into combat in WWI. None of our airplanes ever got overseas in WWI. In '41 most airmen knew we were hell-bent for war and we better get ready and that it would depend a lot on the civilians. Also, I'd been active in the Civil Pilot Training program, fought for it politically and editorially. You are, of course, acquainted with CPT program. It saved our butts in WWII. It gave us pilots and instructors - a solid base for immediate air mobilization.

H. No question about it.

G. The best thing involved one of the CPT directors in the CAA named Pop Nilson. Great man. A true believer in promoting aviation and marketing aviation through public relations promotion. Pop and I were splitting a few drinks one night some

months before Pearl Harbor, when Hap Arnold called in a bunch of big operators, ten or twelve of them. Gen. Arnold told them to go home, get ready to train thousands of pilots for the military under contract. Build hangars, shops, hire mechanics and instructors, get ready to go. Arnold said, "I don't have the money but I think I'll get it in this session of congress". So off the FBO's went and started up on faith, but they couldn't find instructors. So Pop and I broke into some Wilkins Family whiskey one night in a Texas hotel, and we came up with the idea that since I was fairly well connected with the reporters in the Associated Press, the United Press and the International News Service, we had the means to find all the old pilots whose licenses had expired during the depression. Some had old limited commercial or commercial licenses with any where from 300 to 3000 hours. They were back on the farm or out selling automobiles, vacuum cleaners, insurance or pumping gas in filling stations. They were seasoned airmen, seasoned in those old crates of the 1920's and 1930's. They didn't know much about meteorology but they sure knew weather recognition. They had crack up time and flew mostly by seat of their pants. Pop and I said CPT should call them in and offer them refresher training pointing to jobs as instructors. We called up Mr. Hinckly who was then Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Authority, I think they called it then, born of the old CAA and told him, "we've got a scheme here that will probably give us all the instructors the military wants if you will create a CPT refresher course for the physically fit older pilots whose license expired in the last ten years. There's thousands of them out in the boonies". Hinckly took two days to make the decision to

initiate the new syllabus. In three weeks we were training the instructors in a refresher course. They came from all over; farms, villages and cities. There was a flood of applications. The Wire Services did the job.

H. That was for your refresher course?

G. Yes. Pop and I called it the Wilkins Family War Plan. It worked. Within two years they were drafting pilots into the walking army. Well, that's the background on civilian "air reserve". Of course, CAP for me meant combat. I turned down a commission in the Air Corps for a Public Relations assignment and that's for the birds. I've never known what public relations entailed anyway. Everybody has their own theory of it. Usually my own impression of Public Relations is very much akin to prostitution and propaganda.

H. Okay, you say you met with Gil Robb Wilson and came home from the 1941 NAA meeting with a germ of an idea.

G. Yes, Gil's Civil Air Defense Program in New Jersey.

H. Now what did you do with that after you got back to Texas?

G. The Texas Private Flyers Association was briefed. A month later was Pearl Harbor and the idea spread like a prairie fire. We had some 200 volunteers on Love Field alone, walking up and down the ramps learning military diciplines.

H. Now actually your CAP got started completely on its own and did not spring from this Texas Air Defense Guard.

G. Absolutely not.

H. They didn't decide to join the plans?

G. Colonel Joseph Snyder was in charge of the so-called Air Guard, and he wanted to keep his "state" identity. We thought it should be a national effort.

H. You formed what? Just a couple squadrons or how did initially they form in Texas?

G. We spent about ten days flying into every major town where we had Private Flyer Memberships. We got them into the CAP nucleus and told them to choose a squadron leader, get to training and we'd give them the directives later. At first it was a kind of social deal, a fraternity type of thing with automatic esprit de corps.

H. Picked up things like the Wing Over Club in Beaumont?

G. Yes, totally.

H. At that time you all had gotten yourself arranged with a wing commander and that kind of thing?

G. That took some time. I can't remember the day but they did

accept D. Harold Byrd. Earl Johnson came down here and installed the wing. R. L. Bowen of Fort Worth, a great businessman, pilot who owned a Howard. Byrd would never have made it were it not for L. R. Bowen's dedicated efforts and total commitment. The Wing needed a seasoned pilot to get the respect of the Squadron pilots. Bowen filled that requirement.

H. Everybody needs a good number 2.

G. And R. L. didn't want the job. He just wanted to make his contribution.

H. There's a lot of people who, as the British say, make better number 2's than number 1's, and the number 1's couldn't survive without them.

G. One day R. L. flew me to Beaumont shortly after we activated the Beaumont Base. We wanted to visit the other Gulf Coast bases and see what their modus operandi was, compare notes and inform them of what we were doing. Flying over Lake Charles we lost the engine. R. L. skillfully made it into the Lake Charles Army Air Base dead stick. Out comes an Air Corps Jeep. Remember we had flaming red shoulder straps on and they didn't know who we were. We had the CAP insignia on the airplane. It was the "Wing" airplane, not officially on the base. Our greeting from the Seargent was, "get off this runway". I said, "Buddy, if you want us off this runway you tow us off. We ain't got no power". So they towed us off in a huff and ordered us into Operations. He said, "this place is off limits to you

people". So we went into Operations, where we were ushered into the boss's office. Talk about luck. There sat Major Sidney Price, a US Air Corps Reserve from Hensley Field near Dallas. Price, who was a doctor in civilian life, delivered my first child and was one hell of a good friend. He asked what the hell are we doing here? I explained the CAP and our convoy work. Are you running that outfit over there at Beaumont? I said, well I'm trying to. He said we were doing a hell of a job there on the coast. Thank you. What can I do to help you? I said two things, we need an engine mechanic and a Link Trainer. He explained the impossibility of a Link Trainer because bases all over the country had none. Well I need some food stamps, we're civilians, but under the articles of war, you figure that out. Said Price, you send a truck over here once a week and we'll load you down with food without ration stamps. I said, all right, now get us a Link Trainer. So he scratched around and he said, I think I've located one. Three or four days later we went to Lake Charles and he said I think I've located a Link Trainer but I'm having to ship by rail. It probably will have to go through Houston. You'll have to go and pick it up before it arrives in Galveston. A few days later he called me up tearing his hair out. George, this is Sidney, somebody has fouled your Link Trainer up. He said it's headed for the 25th Antisubmarine wing at Galveston. I said I'll tell you what you do. Where is it? He said it's probably going through the Houston freight yard. Give me the whole details on it. We got our old Army truck and grabbed one of our expert con-men. I sent him over with the regular US Army corporal assigned to drive the Army truck and handle our bombs. They went up and

down that Houston freight yard and found the car they were switching around. They talked their way to getting that thing unloaded and put on our truck and hauled it over to our base. You can't believe we actually stole a Link Trainer. When we came into the base with it you ought to have heard the cheer that went up. We gave all our pilots instrument training. That was one of the outstanding experiences of the entire Base 10 history.

H. Going back just a little bit George, into the establishment for Base 10, when did you all decide and how did you go about getting the authority to establish a base at Beaumont? You know some of them had already been established on the east coast.

G. Washington told us (I think it was Col. Blee) we would have one in Corpus, one in Brownsville and one in the Houston, Beaumont, Port Arthur area. They told us to start staffing at the best available location, which was Beaumont.

H. And they just tasked it to you to go ahead and establish one?

G. Wing Headquarters in Dallas was Headquarters for the operation.

H. What went into the decision for Beaumont as opposed to Orange County or someplace like that?

G. There was no Orange County Airport. Our major cadre was in Beaumont. The airport had oyster shell runways and there wasn't any better airport down there than Beaumont Municipal.

Also, the CAA Service Station was there operating on 221 frequency.

H. It was just a real good place to get yourself established. Do you recall when that first decision was made for you all to move in down there?

G. I think it was along in January and February after Pearl Harbor.

H. So how quick did you all get down there after they told you to establish it?

G. I can't answer that. I don't have a diary on that. Try Texas Wing records.

H. The reason I ask is that I have a little conflicting date from talking with Jimmy Marshall in that he said there was some flying off the coast in February and March and the official first patrols didn't occur until July.

G. Jim is right. We flew unofficially at first at the request of the Port Arthur and Galveston Port Captains. We were not armed then but did provide a measure of air coverage over convoys.

H. I figured something like that must have happened.

G. Although we were under 1st Bomber Command (Air Corps) out of Mitchell Field, we worked mostly with local Navy and Coast Guard.

H. Your first official patrols were then recorded as July the 7th.

That was your first official one. Now you were assigned as base commander initially?

G. No. I was down there before July though. The original base commander just didn't work out. I think the boys got up a petition. I'm not sure about that petition but somebody said they petitioned the Wing for a new commander.

H. Then Harold Byrd sent you down there for a limited period of time?

G. Wing Headquarters asked me to take over temporarily.

H. Alright Wing Headquarters for a limited period of time?

G. Ya, I went down there to straighten it out. It was supposed to be in a mess.

H. Then you didn't stay for a limited period of time?

G. I stayed until they mustered us out.

H. So about when did you get down there, do you remember George?

G. I had been down there officially at least a month when my first son was born around August 1942.

H. So, you probably got down there in May or June.

G. Ya. I'm not sure of that, but will look it up.

H. It's not that significant it's just that the general area, the recorded history date of the first flight was in July. You don't, by any chance, recall who made your first official patrol do you?

G. R. L. Bowen made the first flight in the Howard. I made a couple of patrols when we convoyed at the request of the Navy and Coast Guard.

H. I believe you were involved in the last one. I've seen some records indicating that you shared the honors with somebody on that one.

G. R. L. Bowen made that first one in his Howard DGA. R. L. never signed on the base.

H. He just came down to get involved in that particular flight to set the stage.

G. That was before July. Way before July.

H. Okay. Well I would suspect, since Atlantic City had been in operations since April on a 30 day trial basis.

G. You mean officially?

H. Well, officially July was your start date.

G. We probably broke all the rules, we operated without any official designation and free of charge. It didn't cost the government a penny. As you know, the seamen were not going out without air cover. On those early convoy flights they took off their shirts and waved wildly, I suppose as a gesture of gratitude.

H. Well, that was part of the motivation of the time, wasn't it George?

G. Oh ya, we wanted to get into the war. And, of course, you know what the Nazi sinking records were during all those early months after Pearl Harbor. Horrible.

H. Especially down in this part of the country, wasn't it?

G. Ya. We had a shipyard down there in Orange and they ran a ship on its inaugural run and it was sunk 20 miles out. This was one before we were on the "temporary" job. Things like that. They were just like sitting ducks. Off Sabine light the waters were black with oil.

H. Okay, your personal arrangements basically, did you just move lock, stock and barrel or did you commute?

G. No, temporarily I went down and stayed at the hotel. And when it looked like I was going to be there for a longer spell I moved into "Gallinipper Gables", which was a tourist court with lots of mosquitos. I moved my wife and new born in September of '42.

H. What happened to your publishing business meanwhile?

G. I flew to Dallas on leave of absence once a month and helped put the magazine to bed. I had a hell of a good stringer from the Shreveport Journal named Tom Ashley. In those days an aviation magazine covered the whole waterfront because aviation was so small. I think there were 250 airliners in operation at the time the war broke out. We covered the airlines, the military and (Tom Ashley covered the GHQ Air Force over in Barksdale Field which was the center and the Daddy of long range bombardment aviation). Tom was a scholar in military tactics. He moved from Shreveport and became Editor. And a hell of a brilliant man. Great journalist. Because he didn't have a journalism degree, I figure. He came up under a hard city editor, --- the best training, better than journalism schools.

H. You pretty much just moved down there lock, stock and barrel gave up your normal business all for the magnificent amount of $8 a day, I believe.

G. Ya, I think that carried me. Of course, I got a couple hundred dollars a month out of my business.

H. Well, I was just talking from the standpoint of that being a pretty good sacrifice.

G. No. It wasn't easy. It was an education in the school of hard knocks.

H. Your motivation for going down was just to get involved and do something?

G. I really did turn down that Captaincy in the Air Corps because this looked like combat to me.

H. How about your key staff, George you had yourself as CO. Who was your operations man?

G. Gus Whiteman and Les Stringer, I had two or three, they were the two outstanding ones. Gus Whiteman was a lumberman from East Texas, Les Stringer was a cattleman, oilman and a farmer from Wichita Falls.

H. They had a lot of background in aviation apparently.

G. Well, not in aviation but as pilots and airplane owners of some affluence.

H. Well, in those days that was aviation.

G. Ya.

H. How about your intelligence man, who was he?

G. I had several. The first, I had one for one month, was E. B. Germany, who was the founder of the Lone Star Steel Company here in Texas. He was in the process of building that corporation, so he only stayed a short time. Then we had

Bob Wallace, a lawyer from San Antonio who was very good. His wife was great at charting all radio fixes on the charts in our secret room. And looking back, I think he and Germany were the only ones really given that designation.

H. Those were the kind of key people for you as far as record keeper and things like that, weren't they?

G. We had several man and wife teams, a Cory Roden and his wife. She was the bookkeeper. And then the drillmaster was a hair-twister by the name of Charles Didio. And he was absolutely a scholar in military drills, courtesy and discipline.

H. Okay now, was Didio the one that got you a guidon? I've never seen a guidon anyplace except Base 10.

G. That's right.

H. Did you all have that made locally or something like that?

G. Oh, sure.

H. Do you recall, and this is getting real technical, but do you recall if it was black and white or black and gold?

G. Black and gold.

H. Black and gold. I've got mixed stories on it and I can't tell from the black and white photographs. I imagine it was a

standard infantry guidon with the submarine on it. Do you by chance recall what happened to it?

G. No.

H. It went with one of the troops. Too good a souvenir to pass up.

G. The worst thing we lost was our base documentary film that somebody made off with. It disappeared at a convention in Galveston. (We still have reunions). We had real esprit de corps. I don't know whether it was automatic or just luck or what, but we had it. It still exists 40 years later.

H. Well, not that I want to try and inflate your ego George, but esprit de corps usually stems from the attitude of the old man.

G. Maybe.

H. I've been around, I played military for about 37 years myself and I could tell when I was with a unit I had good esprit de corps but when I wasn't with that unit, you know.

G. The only credit I'll take is that I had good luck in picking men like Ashley, my editor, like Fred Stones, my business manager. People say, "How in the hell did you find those guys"? I say, "Well, I hand picked them". They were geniuses. I tried to keep that type. When I found a guy like Wallace or Les Stringer or Gus Whiteman I tried to keep them, and I was fairly successful.

H. Well, that's one of the very strong definitions of leadership.

G. And they were the ones responsible for the esprit de corps. Because they were successful businessmen. A chap we called Trappo was one of my most valuable assets. He was a promoter and a wheeler-dèaler, excellent but careless pilot with lots of crack-up time. He moved his entire fixed base operation to Beaumont with all of his employees.

H. Trappo, that's Jimmy Marshall, huh?

G. We ran out of gas one night in a thunderstorm over "Big Thicket", only time I thought I was going to die. We had an experience I won't ever forget.

H. Jimmy said you were pretty good with the matches that night trying to read the compass.

G. The compass was above and behind your head and you read it through a rear vision mirror. The plane was an ancient Stinson SM 7B with truck tires and wheels our welder hung on it.

H. Okay, your commo officer was a radio amateur who went down there and built everything, wasn't he?

G. No. Jimmy Marshall had electrical engineering background. He was a master, we called him the "wire twister". He knew a Ham operator named Armstrong. A native of Beaumont who gave us his entire Ham radio and went off to war somewhere else.

H. Ya.

G. Gave us that thing. With Red Walden and Armstrong helping Trappo they erected that thing and made it work. Nobody from RCA could make it work. These three guys made it work - Trappo, Armstrong and Red Walden.

H. So it was pretty much a hand built operation.

G. Oh ya, everything. Of course, later on we got to using the CAA radio on 221 MH_z.

H. CAA frequency, but this little initial one was a low frequency they had built up. How about your aerodrome officer, the guy who was pretty responsible for keeping your airplanes flying and your quarters cleaned up.

G. Originally Jimmy Marshall was the Engineering Officer and later Del Gallier who handled all the maintenance and we had some damn fine mechanics. We had two brothers that Les Stringer from Wichita Falls sent me, two professional gamblers. I had to watch them like a hawk, but they sure did manage our inventory and they kept perfect records. No one could steal from those two. That variety of characters we enlisted was unbelievable. The only place I ever saw it equaled was when I was on the bum coming back home from that trip to San Francisco. Everytime I'd get a job on a ship it would go the bone yard. I was trying so hard to get to China. Well, I came home and in Los Angeles this boy and I pearl dived in the largest Methodist church in the world. The Hope Street Methodist Church.

We'd eat, my goodness how we ate and we went down to the WPA one day and what they were doing, and I later read this story, and it was by Eric Hoffer. Did you ever hear of Eric Hoffer?

H. No, afraid not.

G. Well, for goodness sake, go get some of his paperbound books. He was born blind, or became blind in his youth. He was of German extraction and some lady raised him and she kept teaching and teaching him and finally he gets part of his eyesight back and goes to California and works like the Mexicans do picking fruit and everything. He ends up on the docks of San Francisco as a stevedore and every night in every town he was in when he was fruit and vegetable picking he would go to the Public Library and read. He's probably one of the best educated men in America today and one of the great writers. At the WPA work office they'd come in there with a truck, and here would be this mass of unemployed men, WPA would holler for two carpenters, or two plumbers or eight laborers. It was just like the shipping board in New Orleans, where we'd just sit there and wait for the old captain to yell out, "two cooks, two ordinaries, five AB's, one bosun, two blackgang". Well that's the way the WPA did. And pretty soon they'd have a truck full of men. They were building a road up around Pasadena somewhere, they'd put up a camp, build a shower with a 55 gallon drum, put water in it, build privies, they had a mess hall, they had tents and they were in business. And that's where I found out, that's where Eric Hoffer wrote this far better than I can tell: - you can get a bunch of Americans, and you get more than 20 or 30 in one gang

you're going to find somebody that can do anything. They're the ones who win wars.

H. Eric Hoffer. I'll have to follow up on that.

G. He said if they wanted a person to write a new constitution there would be a man there that could do it. You go out there today to the unemployment lines and you get 20 or 30 people together, you're going to find somebody that can do anything. Fix things, make things work, volunteer to do anything. Run a tractor, build a house, repair an auto.

H. In proper light, that your main function down there was to keep things going and not necessarily be an aviator. Did you get involved in any flying duties at all?

G. I went on check rides occasionally. I knew my men were accomplished pilots and observers, but every now and then I'd ride in the back seat just to let them know I was taking the risk too. And, I also checked on their reporting procedures, condition of equipment and got their complaints and suggestions.

H. What was your first impression when you got 40 or 50 miles out in a single engine airplane?

G. That engine ran awful rough.

H. Rough, huh. I've discussed that subject with some rather hairy people in their own right. Some combat fighter pilots and things of that nature, and they tell me to a man that they didn't have

enough nerve to do what you all did.

G. I've heard that too. But of course, they would have if they'd been there. You know, I don't believe that story. Most of my men were kind of like Ken Carter, cool people. Usually those kind of guys came up the hard way. I found out that the best pilots and the best men I had down there were not millionaires, in fact, the millionaires didn't stay long. The best men I had were guys who came up the hard way and had worked all their lives. The Carters were a family of twelve and they maintained their mother who took in washing. Four of Carter's brothers were firemen. He was the entrepreneur of the family. He had a hard life, but he didn't know it, he overcame obstacles. Life was a series of overcoming obstacles. It feed into the whole motivation of the operation.

H. Your base did a couple of things. It did patrol duty and convoy duty. What do you think was the mix, you did half and half, half the time you were patroling, half the time you were doing convoy duty, or what?

G. No. In the beginning it was practically all convoy duty, because the Nazis were out there then. They didn't leave until we got bombs. The last ship sunk in our area was an onion boat, then there was a rubber boat that everyone got in on the loot that washed ashore. Those were the last two that we knew of. We didn't get all of the intelligence on that open field teletype system. We did get a lot of hearsay.

H. You say onion boat and rubber boat, when was that? In the fall of '42 or winter?

G. I think so.

H. Do you have any idea, September or October?

G. Ya along in the fall. But I'd say that in the beginning when we were official we did a lot of convoy work. Sometimes just one airplane, sometimes two airplanes. I would go down to the Port Captain meetings held in Galveston. Captain Hambsch set them up and all. The skippers on the ships that were going to be convoyed were there. We went through the whole routine, everything was verbal, there were no written orders, highly secret. When they were going to take off from the Galveston and Houston ship channels, when they would be at Sabine light, when they were going to be off Grand Isle and so on. We furnished daylight convoy from Galveston all the way to Grand Isle or off of Cameron, where we turned back.

H. Wherever your split line was. How about miscellaneous operations, did you all do anything down there besides patrol and convoy duty? Things like letting people play like they were shooting at you over around Orange and that sort of thing.

G. Yes, we were called to escort launchings of new ships. We didn't have any war games. We did teach our crews how to drop depth charges and 250 pound demos. We had a lot of instructional training at night and sometimes skill practice when the crews were off

duty, especially when we got the Link Trainer. We were hell bent on excellent navigation. We were awful heavy on that. That's how come so many of my men ended up as navigators in the Army in the South Pacific.

H. Worked out pretty good for them then. Well, I was thinking in terms that one of your pilots mentioned the fact that he got involved in going over to Orange and flying right off the deck and letting the gun crews play like they're shooting at you.

G. Oh ya. I remember that, sure. We followed through on a lot of those special requests.

H. Somebody just asked you to do it?

G. And search and rescue, a couple of times we got called in. One of the worst things that happened to us concerned a hurricane. We had a very fine hurricane dispersal system. We were going to put so many planes at Lufkin, so many at Gregg County, so many at Jacksonville, so many at Dallas. Those that were unflyable would stay at Beaumont and we'd tie them down or put them in the hangar. When the hurricane came, they told us to abandon the dispersal plan - everything goes to San Antonio. The hurricane hit San Antonio and tore up a bunch of our airplanes. That was some fool mistake by the Air Corps.

H. Actually your's and Brownsville's dispersal maps are the only two I've been able to locate. I've got some maps that indicate your patrol area and things of that nature, and you had a formal dispersal plan.

G. Ya, a real good one.

H. I'm going to transition a little bit from the general to the more specific so help me, George, if you can. And some of them are going to be impressions and some of them are going to be factual. On November 11 of 1942 you had the tragedy of Koym and Taylor crash at sea, what, how did you get personally involved in that thing? Did you run the search or was there much of a search involved for them?

G. When they hollered Mayday, of course, we went into action. We cranked up the duck, the Old Sikorsky Flying boat, and I had two of the best pilots, J. K. West and Wimpy Neel in that duck in nothing flat. Everybody wanted to go out, but they were the only ones sent.

H. His cover plane, Koym and Taylor's cover plan stayed with them, right?

G. Oh hell yes, circling around. Koym and Taylor died of exposure. It was a very high North wind, low skud clouds and one of those awful northers. Autopsy showed they died of exposure from the cold wind blowing the water in their faces.

H. We didn't know as much about hypothermia in 1942 as we do these days.

G. And we didn't have good survival equipment.

H. You said you had a good northerly and it was pretty bad.

G. It was a terrible day. However, the visibility wasn't too bad, maybe four or five miles in mist. They were pretty far out. They were about to the extent of their pattern. And, of course, we sent the Coast Guard out, and stayed in constant radio contact with their companion plane. Now, when the boys landed the duck, they got a wing down, and shipped a little water but it came back up. Then they couldn't restart the engine, so there we had four men down. We had no other amphibian that was flyable. If the Fleetwings were flyable I doubt if I would have sent it out into those mountainous waves. I think I was glad that the Fleetwing was not flyable.

H. You would have probably had two cracked up amphibians from the stories I've heard.

G. Now the lessons we learned from that we should have learned before, or we should have had some guidance from the Headquarters or the Air Force or the Navy or somebody. We should have been equipped with rubber boats. And we could have hung a rubber boat, on say that big Stinson, and dropped that thing right in their lap. This was the great tragedy of that tragedy, not prepared because no life rafts were available anywhere.

H. Now, how about support from the Navy at Corpus or someplace like that.

G. They sent out a PBY, but it was too late. I don't think those

boys lasted over an hour. When the duck got a wing down in those waves, it was being pummeled. You know the power of storm water, I don't have to tell you that. We feared it was going to go down. The Coast Guard had rough going too. They picked up the bodies and then headed for the Sikorsky. They hooked onto the duck and they started in with it. On the way in, whoosh it just took a dive and they cut it loose as it went to Davy Jones's Locker.

H. Well, the Navy PBY was just a little late then.

G. Ya, but it wasn't the Navy's fault.

H. No, okay. I've got some records from the 26th Wing that indicate there was a pretty extensive investigation within the military channels about the thing.

G. And there was no fault found, except lack of flotation gear other than Mae Wests, despite all our efforts.

H. And there was no fault found. They came out clean.

G. The only fault was that we didn't have a rubber life raft, and the next day, of course, we stole one. Did you know that story?

H. That was the way you all had to get it in those days.

G. The Army had two large rafts at the 25th Wing in Galveston.

Randall Dulver and I got into his SM8A about 11:30 one morning. We already observed during a surveillance flight that everyone left the hangar at lunchtime. One of our lads who had picked up some parts saw the rafts and drew us a picture of the layout. Well, you couldn't get anything unless you had a Sidney Price who steered us to the Link Trainer. So, it's not what you know in a case like that it's who you know, otherwise you have to steal. Well, anyway we got this layout and old Culver and I went over there and waited till noon right outside the hangar door. We had official access to the base. It was the old Galveston Municipal Airport. The boats were there and our mouths were watering. They weren't inflated, of course. There is a guy in the hangar that ain't going to lunch, he's in the back of the hangar making jewelry on his off time, a hobbyist. Here it is 12:30 and they'll be coming back from lunch before too long and we'll be SOL. I walked over and got this guy's attention while Culver loaded the boat. I told the jewelry maker we had a little engine trouble and that's why we're here. Culver cranked up the motor and yelled to me that the engine was fixed. Out I ran and Culver took off on the ramp. Do you know they never did miss that boat? The whole base knew what we were doing, and they were all out on the CAP ramp when we came back. We threw the boat out, and what a noisy welcome! They threw up the biggest yell you ever heard. We rigged that thing up on a bomb rack so we could drop it in a downed crew's lap. It boosted the morale of that place a thousand percent. Just one little old rubber life raft.

H. Ya, that's some interesting stories about what everybody had to

survive in those days.

G. And we trained with those. We'd put flight crews in the water just off the shore and we'd put that thing right in their lap, they'd swim out and climb in. We had some brandy, some fishing gear and some SPAM and different kinds of rations, emergency stuff and we had sun cream lotion. And everytime we'd practice, every crew had to practice, we'd drop that boat right in their laps. The first thing they'd do was drink up the brandy. The brandy bill was paid out of my own pocket, but I insisted that they have brandy in the boat.

H. That was a real bad time I'm sure for the morale of the base and you as a commander losing your first two people like that. Then followed about five days later, you had another situation with Dean, Ward and Gallier, right?

G. I've given you that.

H. Ya, basically that was a pilot disorientation problem or something of that nature.

G. Dean was flying the Rearwin and was shooting the water tank at Mexia to get oriented.

H. Now they were going home on leave or something.

G. He was going to drop these two boys off in Dallas, then on to Fort Worth and then he was going to Washington.

H. To do some politicking or something. What kind of effect did this have on the morale of the base. Pretty bad?

G. No, no. It was the Koym-Taylor thing that was bad, because their accident happened over the water and that's where everybody had the fear.

H. It was spooky to start off with.

G. But you take a bunch of old pilots, and this is off the record, who sit around when the weather is bad and nobody is taking off and they have been based on a place more than three to six or eight months, home port or anything they usually know all the pilots on the field. Those old-timers can tell you who's going to get it. And, frankly, Dean was not a good enough pilot to make right turns close to the ground. He spun in.

H. This is the kind of story I got on that particular thing.

G. So, that's why the morale wasn't shot to hell. They knew what happened.

H. Pilots seem to know each other pretty well. They don't write down an evaluation but they write down who the good ones are. Back then, it is not necessarily a finite thing, but either Koym or Taylor was apprehensive about the flight that day.

G. I heard a lot about that, but that I can't verify. I do know that if I had known Koym couldn't swim I wouldn't have had him

in an airplane. So we never did ask that, can you swim? Every damn boy I ever saw could swim. And it was just a false assumption.

H. Not to continue along a morbid line, but there are some things I'm trying to establish records on, safety records and records of all crashes and things like that. I can't really seem to get to the bottom of one that I have the details on of a crash that occurred February 26 of '43 of the airplane 10-23. I haven't been able to trace down which was 10-23. Apparently you were on a search mission down around Cameron someplace for a bomber and this airplane went in, spotted a bomber and decided to land on the beach to see what he could do and flipped and burned. Do you recall anything about that instance? Who was that?

G. I'd have to look at the records.

H. You mention records, do you have any records like that?

G. I did have, but I sure as hell don't know where to look. First of all, all of the records I had I brought back home with me and put them in the Flight Magazine files and all the Flight Magazine files are out there at the University of Texas Library.

H. Outstanding. You mean there's a possibility the Base 10 records are out there.

G. I'll see if I can find them. I'll look for them.

H. I'd sure appreciate it. What I'm having to work for, the official disposition of records when one of the bases closed down was to ship them to National. Fortunately several bases didn't, because the stuff that got shipped to National is non-existent.

G. We complied with that request to send it in.

H. But a lot of people had second copies, personal notes and things of that nature. The only thing I can really work with, and I need to get a little better understanding of the setup, is you consistently refer to the 25th Wing being at Galveston.

G. That was the Army Air Corps.

H. Are you sure it wasn't the 26th?

G. No, I'm not. Now, I think it may have been the 26th.

H. Okay, fine, that straightens that out.

G. We were under the 25th antisubmarine wing.

H. No.

G. We were.

H. Oh, you were?

G. But it was the 26th. I'm pretty sure.

H. Cause basically, the antisubmarine command is the old bomber command.

G. Ya, that's where I used to go.

H. Ya, in New York, Mitchell Field.

G. Twice I went for briefings.

H. They had the 25th Wing and the 26th Wing. The 25th Wing had the responsibility of the East Coast and the 26th the Gulf. I got into the hierarchy that explained the only records I had available to me, and they're real fine records if I was doing a research project on the 26th Wing, all the records of the Air Traffic Controllers, the A2 Journals, the G2 Journals, the A3 Report the whole nine yards of the 26th Wing. But, they were not primarily interested in CAP.

G. No, we had very little to do with them.

H. There was random stuff.

G. The only thing we did was steal from them.

H. There were random entries like this crash that I can't pin down. Definitely I know a crash occurred because it was described what happened to the point where they said it was

airplane 10-23.

G. Now, somewhere I have those records.

H. Nobody I've talked to so far, George, has recollected it. They all recollect the guy who went down and landed on the beach to pick up the bales of rubber and over grossed himself you know, put a wing in the water, as a result of it.

G. Did it all wrong, they remember? Toad Fitch was the pilot.

H. Ya, they remember those things. Talking again down the line of some specifics, you had six, eight, ten people who joined the thing called the "Duck Club", you know crashing and surviving at sea. Did you all have some kind of award ceremony when a guy did that?

G. Uh uh.

H. What did you do?

G. Well, the first thing we did, these guys would come in and we'd put them in warm clothes. Then we'd debrief them right there. We'd ask questions and everything about it, and then we'd have a little party. I don't know, I think we gave them some kind of a certificate.

H. The Duck Club initiation, you know, dried off, debriefed them had a little party for them.

G. Honored them, in the Koym-Taylor Hall.

H. Koym-Taylor Hall. Is that what you named your officers club?

G. Well, it was the base recreation hall. We had no officers, enlisted men, they were all one. We did have rank but we didn't pay any attention to it.

H. Didn't pay any attention to it. Most people didn't. At that time did you give them the little red duck on a cloth patch?

G. I don't think so.

H. Or did they ever get you any cloth patches?

G. No, I don't think, whatever we had we made ourselves.

H. Well, there was an official emblem, I've actually only seen one. There's a guy who ducked in out of Base 3 on the east coast, who sent me a picture of his. There was also supposed to have been a metallic device that I have never been able to locate. There's a lot of CAP stuff I think we had good intentions to issue and never did get produced in those periods of time, primarily because they just couldn't get it done. But do you know the location of any of these guys, any of those still around that were Duck Club members, because from your papers I've been able to get a list of them.

G. Three of them I know are dead: Dr. Tom Connor from Dallas, Winfield from Forest, Arkansas, also of Dallas Koym and Taylor posthumously. We had a very impressive memorial service for them. Earl Johnson came down and dedicated the hall with a Colonel Harry Blee.

H. Harry Blee was my hero in CAP, because I'm an operations type and Harry was the operations man for CAP.

G. He went right down the line and I really appreciated it, that's one reason why I had military discipline.

H. He was a pro, I can see from his papers and the way he put his operation together that he knew his job.

G. Now let me think about

H. Well, that was a question, I got a list of them thanks to your people. I just wandered if any of them were still floating around.

G. The three Duck Club members that I recall are dead.

H. The next one is air medals. What was the criteria for air medals at that time? I know the Army had a criteria that was considerably more liberal.

G. We kept very accurate records. Air medals came from 300 hours over the drink.

H. Over the drink.

G. That was our requirement. We had one and that was 290 something and, this is off the record, I ran him up to 300. That was a big gap between the 200 and the 300 hour pilots, and this guy was really crying.

H. How many did you award?

G. We must have had 30, I'm not sure. We must have had 20 or 30.

H. I've seen varying accounts. I saw a picture of the plaque of your 300 club.

G. I've got one in my briefcase.

H. It listed about 30 of them or so, and I've heard different accounts. Anywhere from 20 to 50.

G. I don't know. I'd have to again go to the records.

H. Do you remember when those were actually awarded? A year or so later? Right away?

G. It was some time later, a year or so later.

H. Was that done locally, or did you go to Houston?

G. Three places I think, Beaumont and Galveston I remember. We

had ceremonies, and some here at Hensley Field. I attended all three.

H. Is that when you got your distinguished service cross? Was it in connection with that or what?

G. It was the distinguished service medal, it wasn't a cross.

H. The DSM, okay. (Subsequent review showed this to be the exceptional civilian service medal.)

G. I got that from the War Department. The only thing I've got on my wall, I've lost my medals I gave them to my son. It was a beautiful medal, blue and gold. The only thing I've got on the wall with my medal is a placard that says I was a "belligerent".

H. That's a very interesting thing.

G. That's the only thing I saved.

H. Okay, Wiley Reynolds from Panama City sent me a photostat of his belligerency certificate. I had never seen one before that.

G. You won't need mine then.

H. I found it rather amusing, we all carried in the active military a Geneva convention card. That wasn't really worth a hoot anyway. Then it was a distinguished service medal and

it was for your performance down there at Beaumont.

G. Well, I think whoever nominated me was partly due to the CPT program. I don't know if the citation had anything to do with that, I think it did. There was a publication in Washington that had a hell of a lot of political clout named American Aviation. The editor came out in print calling the CPT program a boondoggle.

H. Oh, gosh.

G. Man, I hit this idea in my paper, in the public prints and in the halls of Congress, and I don't know but what it had a lot of affect in stopping that kind of talk about the Civil Pilot Training program. And, of course, I helped set up one of the first nine programs. We got some money from the National Youth Administration, WPA or something for these nine experimental programs.

H. DSM was for both CPT and CAP duty? One of the reasons I ask about this specific area is that some of us later people are pretty much disgruntled that you all did not receive the recognition you should have.

G. We didn't have time. Later, ya. There was a move on foot to become CAP veterans and to get veterans benefits. I didn't fight it, but I wasn't for it. We went down there to give and not to take. Survivors of those who gave their lives should have had pensions.

H. George, I'm so glad to hear you say that, because there is a situation right now on the committee, I'm the lone voice in the back that says I don't want to insult those people by fighting for veterans benefits.

G. There was a lot of pressure put on me when I came back and started publishing my magazine again, and I said no way. We went in there to serve our country, period, and there was no self interest at all. Most of my men felt that way about it.

H. Well, there is a current parallel, I'm one of the voices in the dark opposed to full payment by the Air Force for search missions. Fine, I'll relax if you want to pay me for my gas and maintenance, that's good, but you're not going to pay me a per diem to do Civic duty. And that's not real popular, by the way.

G. Well, then too the WASPS finally after four years got veterans status. Better late than never. But that was a different operation.

H. That happens to be another one of my sidelight interests. When we get off tape I'm going to pick your brains about WASPS. I'm going to stick with CAP right now. Okay, you say your passing in review movies disappeared at one of the reunions. It would be a real boon if we could find who disappeared it.

G. Let's be honest about it. They brought it over (we kept it in

Beaumont). Dub Jackson brought it over from Beaumont, we showed it at the reunion and frankly we threw some pretty good parties at these reunions. We probably went home and left it in the machine or took it off and left it there in the hotel room. Some cleaner could have thrown it away. It was carelessness.

H. There was very little if any contemporary film.

G. Suspicion is a terrible thing. Everybody was suspicious of one guy but nobody could prove it. He lived in Galveston and was the one that wanted me to pad his time. He was that type of guy. He was a County Commissioner and all that, you know the type. Size 3 head and Size 42 jumper. Ha! Ha! Anyhow, we suspicioned him, but, I put him in charge of a committee to find it.

H. He didn't find it?

G. I figure it was thrown away.

H. It's a shame because there is only one other piece of contemporary film that I've heard of.

G. This was in color.

H. Oh, gosh. Oh, that would have been great. Stuff that I've got a lead on was in Manteo in North Carolina, and I've been promised that the guy is going to come with several thousand

feet of film that he shot during that period of time. That will be a real find for us if we can ever get that. One of my many programs, and I don't want to get off on tangents, is trying to get film of the period. I noticed in these reunions that you had in 1959 you had a sign with some type of logo on it. I don't know if it was Louisiana, I'd call it a flying crawfish.

G. We had a flying longhorn and I've still got one of those somewhere.

H. Now, did you use that on Base 10, because

G. Base 10.

H. Base 10, I mean.

G. It was on every airplane. A decal.

H. That's fine. One of the things I'm trying to do is to get established some of the old patches and things.

G. Do you want one of those?

H. I would love a copy.

G. We had them made here in Dallas. Great big thing. I got one out there at the library somewhere.

H. Well, if I can get a copy of it or anything else.

G. It was a decal.

H. Oh, it's a decal? That would be interesting.

G. It's a steer diving on a Nazi submarine with smoke coming out of it's nostrils.

H. If you can find that I'd really love to see it, because I could have it redrawn that's no problem. Talking about logos and things of that nature did you have any base publications, you know, like a newspaper or anything like that. This boy Fisher that was down there, he kind of kept up with what you did quite a bit, didn't he? Photographically anyway.

G. Lary Fisher was an interesting fellow. He was a very strange guy, but was thoroughly dedicated to photography and writing. We can thank him for a lot of our records.

H. The reason I ask, I didn't know of his existence until Bob Neprud. I may have mentioned him to you the other day. He donated his manuscript material to us about a month ago, and he's sending it to me in installments so he doesn't overload my little peanut brain. And the only material on Base 10 is written by Fisher, and correspondence with him, so you must have turned it over to Fisher when Neprud wrote the inquiries out. And possibly you sent him out some too but it just wasn't in the batch I got. He has some interesting little anecdotes,

that's where I found out about "Dead Dog" Long and a few other pet nicknames. Ha! Ha! It was real interesting.

G. But those pictures were done by Fisher. All that whole album, of course, mine has been used so many times it's no longer in album form. We didn't have time for those kind of things. We were too busy to keep historical files, damn it.

H. Wasn't much recreation time.

G. No, no, except for the off duty pilots. They had a ball over in Koym-Taylor Hall. The good ladies of Beaumont furnished it completely. We held church services in it.

H. Well, that goes with the turf for airplane drivers, doesn't it? When they're not flying, they're boozing.

G. Well, no they didn't, we didn't allow that over there but they played a lot of cards. We let them gamble all they wanted.

H. You were, if you will, responsible for closing the thing up and I've seen in some records that you were the liquidation officer and all those fancy titles. How long did you all stay down there after the last flight on August 31 of 1943?

G. About three weeks.

H. Three weeks. To close it up?

G. Most of the boys that wanted to stay in, I sent them out to California on tow target.

H. Tow target 7, uh?

G. Ya, I sent one up to Forest Service, Forest Patrol.

H. You apparently had some advance notice about shutdown and had made some special arrangements for some of your people.

G. Well, we wanted as many could pass muster and go on to other forms of military service. A lot of them went to ATC, and then that navigation school that we started down in New Orleans. We got them trained and Ken Carter got them out to the South Pacific.

H. I'm losing names now too. We met him down at Beaumont went on over to Europe with that Army transportation thing. Jack Shell. You got some of them placed over there and you got some placed at Base 7. And the rest of them probably went military like you say in ATC and things like that.

G. Those that could pass the physical. I had a lot of physically handicapped and aged too. They referred to me as young. I wasn't, just look and act young.

H. Ya, we met the pink cheeked young kid the other day over there in Beaumont.

G. Poeple still don't believe I'm 74 years old. I kind of resent it.

H. Well, I don't know. When I make 74 I'm going to be proud of it, I'm not going to resent it if they think I'm younger.

G. Okay, what's the next question.

H. That's kind of the core. Well, I guess the best way to close one of these things off is to get sort of a philosophical statement from you as to relative worth of what you did down there in that period.

G. Well, I haven't given that much thought in the later days, but we knew that the end was coming because there weren't any submarines in the Gulf. We were all ready to go do something else. We did not think the blimps could handle it as well as we did, because they're such big targets themselves. We were disappointed that the Air Corps didn't take more of our men into the antisubmarine service, but they looked down upon us a little bit. As far as the assessment of the value, the national defense value, I am convinced Les, that it was the only way we could have minimized the effect of submarines under the conditions of the times.

H. I'm convinced of that fact.

G. Somebody had enough faith and confidence in the civilian aviation to turn the job over to them and it was a loose operation, but you have to put it in the context of the time. We couldn't fight our way out of a wet paper sack. I couldn't

get guns to train my men in the local squadron. We used wooden guns. We had a hell of a time with paperwork we had to fill out. We had a hell of a time with no pay, they were always late in their pay and most of my people had to live on their $8 per diem. I'd say at least half of them had to have it to sustain them, so we went to the bank and borrowed money. R. L. Bowen came down and he and I and Harold signed the notes. But those kind of things merely reflect that as tough as things were, and as difficult as the operations were, and as bad as our airplanes were and our engines and our sorry radio communications, we still had a tremendous effect on submarines along our coastal waters.

H. That's statistically a fact.

G. So, nobody is ever going to take that away from us. Now as far as our effectiveness goes later on, after our military buildup, remember we were thrown in the breach and like the boy that stuck his finger in the Dike in Holland, we did that. Under very difficult circumstances as you know.

H. Now from your own personal viewpoint, after you closed down Base 10, did you pretty much disassociate yourself with the CAP program.

G. Yes, I was almost broke financially. What happened was they put on rationing of printing paper and these big corporations and octopus publishing houses killed off their sex magazines

and their movie magazines and took that paper quota and threw it into the trade magazines. But they cut me, I had one magazine, they gave me the 30% cut. I had to go to Washington and fight like hell for my existence for two months before the war production board to get enough paper, and there again I ran into an old pilot buddy, Jack Mitchiner, and he took me to the right places and they finally saw this was a clear case of discrimination. I got my quota and avoided bankruptcy.