

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II: China-Burma-India

Personal Experience

O.H. 1724

DAVID HALL

Interviewed

by

David Glunt

on

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DAVID C. HALL

David Hall was born on March 11, 1924 as the son of Leonard and Marilla Gentry Hall 1924. He has lived life at a high speed. Growing up in Girard, Mr. Hall graduated from Girard High School. Joining the U.S. Army Air Corps in June 1942 before his 20th birthday, he learned to fly a number of aircraft with speed that astonished his instructors. With his assignment to the China-Burma-India Theater his ability to astonish did no cease. One of the youngest men in his outfit and yet driving relentlessly, David became the first pilot and Squadron Commander in an extremely short period of time.

Following his return home and his discharge from the military in January of 1946, David continued his life at high speed. In 1950, after little more than three years of study, he graduated from Youngstown State University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Self-employed since 1960, David travels constantly around the North American continent as both an expert witness in engineering as well as a consultant in engineering.

Not professing any intention of letting up, Mr. Hall still maintains a brutal travel schedule and is rarely at home. When not on the road, however, he resides with his wife of 41 years, Anny Lou, at their home in Girard.

G: This is an interview with David Hall for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Veterans of the CBI, by Dave Glunt, at 500 E. Broadway St., Girard, Ohio, on November 25, at 5:40 p.m.

I was wondering if you would give a brief summary of your childhood so that we know exactly where you are coming from.

H: [I] was born and raised in the city of Girard. [I] graduated from Girard High School in 1942. [I] played varsity football and varsity basketball at Girard High School. I enlisted in the Air Force when I was still in high school. [I] was a senior in high school, enlisted in the Air Force, and went to Cleveland where I took the entrance examination. At that time it was required to have two years of college before you go into the Air Force. I had taken a lot of mathematics, other than the normal math classes that were always easy to me. So, we had this teacher Miss Ebinger, and I used to stay after school to take math courses. So, when I was still a senior in high school, the great white father, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "You could be an aviation cadet." I went to Cleveland while I was still in high school and passed the Air Force entrance exam. June 9, 1942, I was only 18 years old and I was sworn into the Air Force. How did I get into the Air Force? I did not have two years of college, but I passed the entrance exam and I was physically fit. So, I was called into active duty on October of 1942. I went to San Antonio, Texas. Do you want me to keep on going?

G: Yes, please.

H: [At] San Antonio, Texas I went to classification school where you take all these series of tests like square holes and round pegs and all this stuff. You either classify as a pilot, navigator, or bombenier. I was classified as a pilot. I had a letter upstairs from the commanding general to my mother and dad that said, "I would be glad to tell you that your son, well, we hope that he will be a pilot." [I was in] classification school for two and a half months. We went from there to primary school in Stanford, Texas. I had never been in an airplane in my life before I went into the service. I spent two and a half months in Stanford, Texas. [I] went through the primary, went to Enid, Oklahoma, and went through basic, advanced. "I will never forget this," my instructor said, "I have seen a lot of dumb cadets, and you are about the dumbest I have ever seen, but you can fly." And of course, he was trying to wash you out. I went from Enid, Oklahoma to Frederick, Oklahoma, and graduated from twin engine advanced, in the class of 43H. 43H was August of 1943.

G: What aircraft did you graduate in?

H: Well, twin engine. I went to twin engine flying school in advanced. You see when you came out of basic, basic was single engine, you either went to fighter pilots or start looking at bombers. You go to twin engine advanced flying school, which is what they used to do.

I wanted to stay a pilot, so I went to twin engine advanced, flying C-9s and C-17s, twin engine beach crafts. [I] went to advanced school and graduated from Frederick, Oklahoma as a Second Lieutenant. From there I went to Dodge City, Kansas, flying twin engine B26s and bombers. [I] went through that school like a breeze. I had no problems flying airplanes. I had a lot of fun flying B-26s. [I] graduated from Dodge City, Kansas. I could tell you a lot of other stories, but you do not want to hear all those, I could go on for hours.

Dodge City, Kansas was a B-26 medium bomber school. They called them, "Martin Marauders" or "flying coffins". That is what they were nicknamed, why? Because so many guys were killed during training. But anyway, I graduated from there and then I went to Pierre, South Dakota, flying low target outfit for 17s and 24s. From there I spent the winter of 1943 in Casper, Wyoming. Then from Casper, Wyoming they found out we were having such a good time, That they transferred us to Syracuse, New York.

The B26s, which have a landing speed and final approach of 150 miles per hour, to a combat cargo outfit in Syracuse, New York with the old DC-3. The DC-3 only cruised at about 165. Anyway, in about three or four hours, I checked out of the DC-3, the old C-47 in Syracuse, New York. Syracuse, New York is where the Fourth Combat Cargo Unit was originated. In the Fourth Combat Cargo Unit, I was assigned to the 14th combat squadron. Bear in mind, I was still 18 years old and I had just turned 19 when we moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and the group was getting ready to go over seas and we checked out in C-46s, the Curtis Commando. For the three or four hour trip, I checked out that thing.

I made it to First Lieutenant when I was 19 years of age. We spent some time in Louisville, Kentucky, and between the fast horses and the slow women, you kind of get tired of Louisville, Kentucky. I will tell you this story. [I was] a First Lieutenant in the Air Force, fairly well paid, but I sent it home to my dad, I was making more than my father was. I ran out of money because we used to run out to Churchill Downs, and fast women. From there a group was formed, towing gliders.

From there we went to Fort Wayne, Indiana. Everybody picked up a brand new airplane. I was 19 years old, a First Lieutenant. [I] had a lot of flying time, and I got a brand new C-46, Curtis Commando. There was 100 in a group that started to India. From Fort Wayne, Indiana we flew to West Palm Beach. From West Palm Beach to Puerto Rico, from Puerto Rico to an Achinson field, which at the time they called it British Guiana, and from British Guiana to Netal. At Netal we would jump off to the Ascension Island. From the Ascension Island we flew to the Gold Coast in Africa. From the Gold Coast we flew to Kano, Nigeria. From Africa to Kartowa. From Kartowa to Adey, Arabia, and then to Karachia, India.

We started out from Fort Wayne with 100 airplanes. We ended up in Karachia with 91 or 92. They lost them on the way. For example, taking off from Aden, Arabia, we took off real early in the morning, so a few guys came back and landed. So, we lost six or seven planes from Fort Wayne, Indiana to Karachia, India. From Darachi we flew to Syhlet, which was in the eastern end of India, at that time. It was a combat cargo outfit

attached to the British 10th Army. From there we flew to Argatala. We finally would down at Chittigong. Chittigong is on the coast. We supplied the British 10th Army on the run down supplying them with paratroop, and supplies the British 10th Army on the run down the Rangoon.

G: What kind of supplies did you drop?

H: Basically ammunition, food and supplies that an Army would use. We would fly them into them, either dropping them to them, or the British would stake out a field, and we would go in there and land. When we were in Eastern India, there was a couple times when we picked up some of Merrill's Marauders. Of course they went in, but some of them we picked up and hauled them back out again. We worked with the British and the Americans with the C-46s.

G: When you were dropping supplies to the British, would you use British supplies, meaning they were being manufactured in Britain, or would you use American?

H: They all came from America. They would lease to you. They brought them all into Chittigong, which is a port. This even irritated me at that time, but we were supplying everything to the British. Except the beer, they are used to British beer so we used to scrounge some of the British beer. Anyway, basically all American supplies were lend-lease. We were picking them up at the Port Chittigong. As the British Army kept moving down the Irrawaddy River, either to Salween and different towns, we would also move. They were going into Mandalay, places like that, that I recall. I could tell you on a day to day basis but you do not want to hear that. It is in my log book. I could tell you every day what we did.

We would supply as much as 14 and 15 hours a day in the air. In fact, I remember in Chittigong, in a matter of one month, we had more traffic in and out of Chittigong than any airport in the world because of traffic. We were going basically seven days a week almost 18 hours a day, with these 90 some planes just going in and out. Like I said, in my log book it shows that I said sometimes like 14 to 15 hours a day up in the air, getting ready, flying time. I built up a lot of twin engine time.

Then when the British took Rangoon, we moved from there to Myitnaw, which is up in the central part of Burma. By that time Stillwell had the ground forces in Myitnaw. We had been going into Myitnaw and captured it from the Japanese, so we were able to go in and land. There was still some skirmishing basically around Myitnaw. And Myitnaw, if you are familiar with that area, is only about 30 miles from Mogoke ruby mines. Ever hear of that?

H: Yes, they are quite big.

G: So sometimes we used to grab a jeep and I have a bunch of glass, which is what I think we used to pick up. The Burmese knew that the Americans had money, so some of the

things they sold us we found out were just glass. There might have been somebody that got a real ruby, but most of it was glass. We were about 30 miles from the Mogock ruby mines. I remember going on a couple trips down there, and I still have some of the glass that I just kept.

Anyway, we flew out of Mytinaw to Kuhnming, China, flying basically gasoline and some supplies to the 14th Air Force. This was the latter 1944 and 1945. I will tell you this story so I will back up a little bit. When we were flying out of Chittigong, either we flew into Prome or Pegu, I think that was the name of the towns. Anyway, we were supposed to get British fighter cover. We were Americans working for the British, hauling American food for the British Army. So, the British were supposed to give us fighter cover, right? Sometimes we would see them. Sometimes we would not see them. But one day the sky just came open, it was like black birds with hawk fighter planes, spit fires, and who comes floating in on a DC-3, is Lord Louis Mountbatten. Lord Louis Mountbatten was reviewing the troops, so we got the word and we all lined up, and of course, we did not have uniforms. I had a hat and a T-shirt on. I stood there and saluted him. I was about as close to you as I was to Lord Louis. I did not shake his hand, but I did salute him. Of course he was reviewing the troops, so when he left, the fighter planes left and we did not see any more for a week after that. But anyway, that is kind of backing up.

For the mission, we started flying to China. At Kuhnming we were basically hauling high octane fuel to the 14th Air Force. Now, the problem there being, we were flying C-46s, the Curtis Commando, which had the two Pratt & Whitney R2800s engines on them. There were some other bases around us flying the DC-3, which had the Wright 1300 horse power, ours was 2000 horse power. But we were able to go over, loaded about 15,500 ft. The DC-3, the problem with flying the DC-3 over was loaded, they only had a surface ceiling in which they might be able to push it to 13,500-13,800 feet at the most. The Baker Jig Unanny was about one of the high points, the hump, which about 15,200 or 15,300. So Baker Jig Unanny, at one count they had 52 or 55 DC-3s that had flown into the mountain. We would fly above it in the C-46. Then of course, coming back empty with gasoline jugs from China to Mytinaw, we came back at 20, or 21,000 feet.

- G: Were there any restrictions on the DC-3s as far as to they could only fly during the day?
- H: Oh, no. Everybody flew. We lost almost 50% of our outfit, the 4th Combat Cargo group, basically because of the weather flying. Once we started flying from Myitkyina to China, over the hump. So anyway, that is where we lost our planes when we moved into Myitkyina flying up to China, basically because of the weather. We did not worry about the Japanese that were around. One time we went into pick up Merrils Maraudors some place up in Burma and I said, "Let's get the hell out of here." So I got out and just dumped the load out on the ground. I do not know where the guy was that was supposed to go back with us, but I was not waiting on him. We got out, and of course, the Japanese caught some of the guys on the ground. I mean, the Japanese planes came in.

Anyway, we lost most of our pilots and crews from the weather flying in the monsoons. At that time they did not have the radio navigation and the radar that you have today. Anyway, we flew up to China, and of course, flew back to Myitkyina. We did that until after V.J. Day. Even after V.J. Day we were flying. In the inner period somewhere along the line, I was a First Lieutenant before I left the States and I was only 19 years old. In fact of the matter, I am kind of going back, my immediate superior was Captain Rooney, in Akron.

G: I am talking to him tomorrow.

H: Are you?

G: Yes, I am.

H: Now Rooney put my name in for promotion. From a First Lieutenant to a Captain. Because Rooney was who he was, I was a flight commander and he was a squadron commander, he put my name in for promotion. So when it got to Ed Hatch, the group commander, who of course, might be a buddy of mine said, "No, he is too young. He is only 20 years old." I had the flying time, I was a flight commander, and George Rooney, this is what I recall, put me in for promotion because I had a lot of experience. Even though I was young, I went over as a first pilot and they made me flight commander very shortly after that. Rooney knew this, so I think when we moved into Chittigong, George Rooney put me in for promotion, but when it got to Ed Hatch, he said, "This kid is only 19 years old. I am not going to make him a Captain." I guess I was 20 then. If I recall, I knew it had gone in and when they threw it back, I said to George, "What the hell is this George?" He said, "Dave, I put you in for promotion, but Hatch will not pass it onto the Colonel Baird. Colonel Baird was the group commander. But Ed Hatch I guess thought I was too young. So anyway, Ed Hatch was finally transferred back to the United States and before I came back from overseas I made Captain. Rooney was a Captain, I think he made Major before he came back, or something like that. But anyway, instead of being a Captain when I was 20 years old, I had to wait until I was 21 years old.

Shortly after, I will tell you this story. V.J. Day, we were still flying up into China, when the war was over so we got our orders to come back. Several of us did. I was assistant engineer officer. Even at that time I was not an engineer, but I have kind of a knack for engineering and that. So I was made assisting engineer officer. So, the plane that I took over #1174 that had flown over was still flying but it was on what we call a red cross. A red cross was something that you carry around with you.

We got that fixed on a group of us "hot shots" so we decided instead of going back, that the war was over with and we were going to fly back. So, a bunch of us got in this plane, and took it to Calcutta. Then from Calcutta we went to Bombay. We stayed there a few days, goofing off. Then we went to Karachi. When we landed in Karachi, the British military was waiting for us. The war was over with and that airplane was assigned to the British. The British gave them to the Chinese National Air Force, and

they were supposed to take it up to China. I said, "Wait a minute. This airplane is mine. I got it when it was brand new from Fort Wayne, Indiana."

They would all see that it was assigned to me. I said, "You see this watch? This watch was a part of the airplane." I am wearing it today. That watch was the watch that came with my airplane, #1174 from Fort Wayne, Indiana. That is an Elgin, I think. I still wear it today. But anyway, when you get an airplane you get the watch. The plane is worth a quarter of a million dollars, or something like that. But there was a watch for the pilot and co-pilot. I was the pilot and this is the watch that I got. But anyway, we got to Karachi and the British MPs came out, "Hey, who is in charge of this plane? There was a couple of guys I do not know, but that guy over there said his name was Captain David C. Hall." I said, "Yes, we are taking this home because we were going to go from Karachi to Abadam, then the Middle East, then back through Europe, and we were just going to monkey around flying. But anyway, the British MPs came out and they had orders, "You cannot take this plane. You should have left it in Mytinaw. This now belongs to the British, and they assigned it to the Chinese, or something like that." You could see we were getting no place with them. I said, "Well, what did we do? I am leaving here in Karachi because the war is over with." He said, "We will get you on a troop ship."

So, big deal, they got us a State room on a troop ship from Karachi. Nineteen days I had to spend in the water to get back to New York City. Then of course, I came back and was assigned 100 enlisted men. I came back to New York on November 11, 1945. Then from there I had to take this bunch back to Louisville, Kentucky. I was debating whether I was going to stay in or not, because if I stayed in I had enough time and I could have been promoted to Major. I was still only 21 years of age. I never really cared for military, but I did enjoy it.

I remember even when I was a kid, and since I have been out really kind of freelance, self-employed, I would have never had become a Captain if I could not take any orders, particularly in cadet training. I mean, cadet training was similar to West Point. I decided that after I got back to Louisville, Kentucky, to see Hatch who would not let me get promoted, [he] was an ex-airline pilot. So, I got a hold of him, he said, "Dave, American Airlines, Capital Airlines are hiring guys." He said he came back and he was flying again. He said, "You go to New York and go to this employment agency."

Well, Capital Airlines was a predecessor of United, at that time. I found out where he was, and despite the fact that he would not let me get promoted, I got promoted eventually. But anyway, Ed Hatch said go in and tell them that I recommended you, and you can go ahead and get on the airlines. So, I went to New York, and they said, "Oh yes." In fact, Ed Hatch had written a letter, because he was a former airline pilot before the war, he was in the war, and then naturally went right back. But he did, and I used his name as a reference, and as I recall, he wrote a letter and recommended that they hire me.

So, I was in. [I] could have had a job with Capital Airlines, and I said I wanted to be a pilot. They said, "No way, you start in the right seat." I said, "Wait a minute. I am a Captain and I have been flying first pilot." I remember this interview, and the fellow



said, "Well, you have to start out on the right seat." You know the pilot sits on the left seat. I said, "Well, how long do I have to stay there, because doing my military service, I have flown eight different airplanes. I could jump in a plane and in four or five hours fly the thing." The B26 was a hot plane. I do not know if you ever read about it, the Martin Marauder. I said, "What am I going to stay in this right seat for a month or so?" He said, "After you sit there for a couple of years." I said, "What!?" I said, "I could see that as a mistake I could have made, one of the many mistakes I have made." He said, "Well, at the least two years in the right seat, but we will hire you. You could start next week if you want." The pay was not bad. I came back and said I am going to go to Youngstown and be an engineer, you know with the GI bill of rights.

So, I came back and started school in January of 1946, went through the engineering school in three and a half years. I started in 1946 and finished in three and a half years. But anyway, quite a number of these fellows I knew went with the airlines. They sat in the right seat a couple of years. All of them that I knew like George Tesky, George Rooney and Ed Hatch know him. Those guys went with the airlines and they wound up flying jets. They wound up first pilots within a couple of years. In two or three years they became a first pilot making \$150-175,000 a year. I ran into George Tesky going to New York one time. He had the milk run from New York to Rome. He was first pilot on with TWA, and that is what Ed Hatch wound up as Captain on a 747 from New York to LA. I went to Youngstown and graduated as a mechanical engineer, and well, you do not want to hear that story. That is my Air Force dissertation. Let me get this magazine for you. I think it might be interesting.

G: I was just wondering, what exactly was the food like?

H: Lousy.

G: Really?

H: Well, K and C rations. They are really not that bad. I mean everybody beefed about it, but you have heard of them, the K and C rations. When we first hit India, we tried and we were assigned to the British. The food was in the mess hall, but we could not live with the British.

G: What kind of things were they serving?

H: Well, I do not recall now, but you know we all wound up in the slit trenches with dysentery. Because the British had been there for years and years, and their troops had been there, the natives knew how to handle their food, and we as Americans could not. We had been completely isolated and as soon as we hit India, we had to isolate ourselves from the British because everybody was sitting on the slit trenches because of dysentery and diarrhea. So we had to isolate ourselves, then of course, we started eating K and C rations. You could not eat their food. It did not bother the British.

G: Was there any way that you personalized your aircraft, aside from Noah's Ark, was there anything that if I were to walk into your aircraft I would know?

H: On the outside there was.

G: What about on the interior?

H: Not on the interior, on the exterior. Everybody knew my plane. It was the "Shack Rat". In Louisville, they called me the "Shack Rat" because I liked shacking up with all the girls. "Shack Rat" was the name of my plane. I did not miss too many nice girls. The interior of my plane was basically no different. On the outside, we all put our names on it. I do not know if I showed it to you, but they called me the "Shack Rat". Do you know what a "Shack Rat" is?

G: Partially, yes.

H: Shacking up with girls because I was single. What else?

G: The military, where you were supposed to be?

H: Well, of course we lived in tents and cots. In India we had a bashaboy, you have heard of bashaboys that sweep and do our laundry and stuff like that. And of course, that was their job. We paid them a couple of rupy's a month and they would take care of our living quarters living. We basically lived in tents, although in Chittigong we were in these grass huts. In Mytkyina we had tents, so we isolated ourselves from the British there.

G: What about your daily routine? What did it consist of?

H: Well, we got up at about 4:30 in the morning, went to a briefing, then we would start flying, and fly to wherever. Paradrropping food to the troops, bailie bridging, combat cargo. Whatever they loaded the plane up with the night before is what we delivered.

G: So, you did not necessarily know what you were carrying before the drop?

H: Other than the fact that my co-pilot, Pop Reynolds, you see I was the youngest guy in the outfit, and my co-pilot was the oldest guy in the outfit. Pop Reynolds was 27 years old. I was 19, and he was an old man. He was my co-pilot and was very meticulous. You check the weights, and the manifest, and check the weights to make sure you were not over weight or over loaded. He did that very religiously, that is why I am here today. I had a good co-pilot. A good crew chief named Baldwin from Toledo. I had a good radio operator, and I had a good crew. I told them, "Your asses are up here as high as mine. If

we fall and you screw up, you are going to fall just as far as I am." I had a good crew, a good crew chief, and a good radio operator, and I am still in touch with my co-pilot.

G: What contacts did you have with the Chinese?

H: Very little with the Chinese. [We were] flying up into China, and basically they unloaded the plane and we would barter with them. I have some pictures with them, the liquor that we had, and I have some souvenirs from them that we used to pick out. There was very little personal contact. The contact with the Chinese was the same with the Burmese, other than a few trips down to the Moganug Ruby Mines trying to negotiate. We stayed away from the natives primarily because of health reasons. We did not have the time because we were too busy.

G: I find it kind of strange, whenever you were talking about meeting Lord Louis, you said you were dressed in a T-shirt?

H: A T-shirt and a cap that had my bars on it. We were very casual. We were working.

G: Was that usually the uniform?

H: Oh yes, that is the uniform. We did not care. We were not dressed up in a uniform or a flying suit on that particular day. I know I had my khakis on, a T-shirt, and of course, my cap with my Captain bars on it. That was May 13, 1950. Better of a branch, U. S. Air Force I guess. What else?

G: How much was the military presence felt? Was discipline strict? Or was there military discipline at all?

H: We had very strict military discipline. That is why I am here today, because there was none of the stuff you see in the movies. We had very strict military discipline. They were not over bearing. George Rooney was not over bearing, but you did obey your orders and there was a purpose for the discipline. That is why we did it.

G: What about officer-enlisted relationships?

H: We had a very close relationship. They might have been across the street, but they did not live in the same tent as we did. We ate in the same mess hall, and they were with us day in and day out. We had a very close relationship with our enlisted personnel. I mean, we have the ground crews and the mechanics who repaired the planes. They are the ones that kept us flying. So, we had a good, close relationship.

G: What about the supplies that came into your unit, not supplies to be delivered, but supplies for your unit itself?

H: Unfortunately, a lot of them came from the British. That was where we had the problem. Now the supplies, parts for the airplane, and stuff like that, that is why we tried very strongly to pick up supplies and come into Chittagong and get the American supplies, but quite a number of them had to go through the British first. We got them from the British. Sometimes we would intercept some of them.

G: Like what?

H: Well, when they were hauling from the British to their Army, we would take one item of beer. You see the American beer would go to the British, and we just happen to pick up some of it.

G: Do you remember the brand name of it?

H: No, I do not remember what it was. It just irritated us that the British were getting American beer, and we were not getting it. But we got enough of it.

G: How would you rate the C-46 and the C-47?

H: The C-47 you could fly, because it was one of the easiest planes. It was very forgiving. If you made a mistake it would forgive you, it was a slow wing bird. The C-46 was not quite as forgiving as the C-47. The C-46 had larger engines, [it was a] faster plane, 15 miles of hydraulic fuel lines. It was not quite as forgiving as the C-47 was. I only had maybe one hundred hours on the C-47, sixteen hundred hours on the C-46 which is all of my combat time. The C-46 was a good airplane, just not as forgiving. The B-26 was not forgiving at all. You made a mistake and it was not forgiving at all. You could not make a mistake in that. The C-47, I could teach you how to fly that. A lot of our flying was on instruments. The C-46 was a good instrument plane, but not as well as the C-47. They have a lot of C-47s still flying today, right?

G: Whenever you were not flying, what did you do for recreation? What did you generally do in down time?

H: Well, we used to be allowed to go down to the ocean and go swimming or something like that. We had picked up some motorcycles from the British. We would kind of pick them up here and there, and we would go into town and ride the motorcycles. Until one of the British commanders said they were short of motorbikes and so we had to give them all back. But that was some of our recreation. I never did play cards. That was quite an advocacy of a lot of them, but I did not get into that. I used to watch them play poker, but I really did not have a lot of time for recreation, but we used to have some. That is when we were over seas.

G: What about when you were flying, what was a typical flight like? Were you constantly concerned with your plane or did you more or less have time to kick back and let your co-pilot take over?

H: Well, yes. Of course, it was a great tendency to let my co-pilot or whoever was flying with me to let them fly. The only way to learn is by doing it. So, my co-pilot was Pop Reynolds, with me it was tremendous. I used to go back and sleep and let him fly, and I would say to George Rooney, "Dick [Pop] is ready to be checked out into his own plane." George Rooney would take him up for a check ride and he would flunk every time. George would come back and say, "Dave, I thought you said Pop was ready." What happens is, you get your own plane and your own crew and then he starts flying. I said "George, I can go in the back and sleep. Pop knows how to fly a plane, but when he was with someone else he would just kind of fall apart."

I was not trying to get rid of him, he is a friend of mine, but I was trying to get him on his own. It really was just great because for the last part of the war he was able to go on his own. I mean I would say, "George, he is ready." George would take him on a check ride. Invariably he would fail about every time. He would screw up or do something. He knew with me that I was not going to let him get into any trouble, and he was comfortable with me. I know George gave him several check rides and had to disqualify him.

G: Now whenever you were up and flying and you flew into an air base, perhaps at Chittagong, could you describe for us the general layout of the positions which you flew into, base wise?

H: Most of them were lousy. Very limited facilities, particularly up in China. For example, I flew to Accra, where the Taj Mahal is, I hit a buzzard and it smashed the windshield on the plane. We got two or three days where we had to fly like from here to Chicago to a depot which was great. We got way back up and got to see the Taj Mahal and places like that. Normally, the facilities were very inadequate, very crude.

G: In what ways?

H: Well, it was just very poor facility. Very crude and very limited facilities. That is why we would want to fly to the places where we could get there and then get back. After we had that grand place to sleep in, we went back to our own place.

G: How did you receive word of how the war was going? Did you receive mail a great deal?

H: Yes, we used to get mail quite regularly.

G: What concerns did people primarily have?

H: Getting enough to eat, my mother particularly always asked how my health was.

G: What about the pilots? What did they basically talk about? What filled up their conversations?

H: We want to get this war over and get home.

G: What about whenever it did occur, how did you find out about it, through paper?

H: We had a radio reception, and we could pickup broadcasts with the airplane. When we were flying, we could occasionally pick up WLW Cincinnati or WGN Boston or something like that.

G: Really?

H: Yes, we could get, you know this is Loran, it is all over the world, we could get them. And of course, flying 20,000 feet up in the air with the Loran receiver, a good radio receiver could pick up WLW Cincinnati or WGN Boston or something like that. We were on the other side of the world, but we could pick up some news from back in the States.

G: I think that basically covers what my interests were, is there anything that you think is important or you would like to add?

H: Not really, I thoroughly enjoyed it, but as I said before Dave, this co-pilot of mine reenlisted. For example, when the Korean War started, I got a letter from some Brigadier General and I just had finished college in 1950. The Korean War started in what, 1950 something. In fact, all the time I was going to Youngstown, I flew out here in Youngstown Air Base in reserve. I finish with class, then go out and jump in an airplane and buzz around. They had planes out here then, so when I was going to school, I would jump in a plane and fly around, so I stayed in the reserves. You can only stay in for five years anyway. Then the Korean War had come along. I just had graduated and gotten married when I got a letter from some Air Force General who was first in command of the Air Force something in New York, and he said something. They have my record, I had a good record and I had a lot of flying time on the twin engines. The letter said, "The Korean War started and we need your services again. If you will sign these papers and return them to us, you will automatically go in as a Major in the United States Air Force, and we will leave you on flight pay which is another incentive." I said phhh, and I threw it away.

Then about a month or so later, I got a registered letter from this commanding general's office and it said something about reminding me of all the money they spent teaching me how to fly, and my record, and I had served for the United States Air Force, and reminded me of how much they had done for me. If I did not sign to be reenlisted or

come back again, I would lose all my rights and privileges as an officer of the United States Air Force. So, I was tempted to put bull crap on it and send it back, but I did not sign it or send it back, and that was in May 19, 1951 and I have not heard from them since. So, I gave up all my rights and privileges as a commissioned officer in the United States Air Force. It was all because I refused to go into the Korean War. I thought I did enough for them. I did know several fellows that I went to school with who were out of school, one was made a Major, one was made a Lieutenant Colonel, but two of them were laying over in Korea some place, too. I felt that maybe they could have forced me, I do not know, but they did not. Like I said, I finally got a registered letter and it reminded me of how much money the United States Government had paid to teach me how to become a pilot. I did not spend a lot of time dwelling on it. I have not heard from them since. Anyway, I enjoyed it. It was great.

G: Well, thank you for your time.

H: You are welcome.

End Of Interview