

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Air Force Reserve Project

Air Force Reserve History

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WILLIAM G. ADDINGTON

Interviewed

by

David S. Arms

on

March 6, 1976

WILLIAM G. ADDINGTON

William G. Addington was born in Griffin, Georgia on April 10, 1921, the son of William G., Sr., and Grace Anderson Addington.

The family moved to Youngstown in 1935, during the Depression. William received his formal education at South High School, graduating in 1939, at which time he also first became interested in flying. Addington would spend weekends doing all sorts of odd jobs at the Seidner Airport, where he would eventually receive his license after four hours solo time.

On January 26, 1941, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, in Columbus, Ohio and was sent to Shepherd Field, Texas, where he was processed for flight school. This would later lead to an assignment to the 308th Heavy Bombardment Group in the China Theater under General Claire Lee Chennault of the Flying Tigers, one of the country's outstanding leaders during World War II. He served until August 31, 1945 with much of this time spent in China. From October 15, 1945 to January 14, 1961, he served in the U. S. Air Force, being active in the Youngstown Reserve Air Force Base for five years and eighteen months recall for the Korean War.

Mr. Addington is currently employed by the Commercial Union Insurance Company, out of London, England, supervising

the claim office in Youngstown, Ohio.

He married the former Mary Kay Binsley on January 6, 1943, and they are the parents of William G. Addington, III, Jane A. Larson, and Jean A. Countryman. He is a member of Christ Church, United Presbyterian in Youngstown.

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INTERVIEWEE: WILLIAM G. ADDINGTON
INTERVIEWER: David S. Arms
SUBJECT: Air Force Reserve History
DATE: March 6, 1976

DA: This is an interview with Mr. William G. Addington for the Youngstown State University, Air Force Reserve Project by David Arms at Mr. Addington's office, 30 South Main Street, Poland, Ohio, at approximately 7:15 p.m. on March 6, 1976.

Mr. Addington, could we start this interview with you giving me a little bit of a background of your personal history?

WA: For the military?

DA: No, your personal, where you were born, brought up, where, when, how.

WA: I was born in Griffin, Georgia on April 10, 1921. We came to Youngstown in 1935. In the midst of the Depression we came up here looking for work in the north because the Depression had wiped out my father's business in his family's knitting mill. I enrolled in the ninth grade at the Princeton Junior High School and went to South High School, graduating in June of 1939. Part of that time I became interested in flying. I spent my weekends up at the Seidner Airport on the old Glenwood Avenue Extension. I would wipe off airplanes and do all sorts of odd jobs for nothing to get a free ride now and then. In due time, I was given the honor of flying in a Ford trimotor with Clarence Chamberlin. He was here with a barnstorming group. The bug became worse and I spent more time at

Seidner Airport, eventually getting my license there after four hours solo time. In 1941, I enlisted into the Army Air Corps in Columbus, Ohio. I was sent to Shepherd Field, Texas where I was processed for flight school. I wound up at Las Vegas, Nevada; Tucson, Arizona; Salt Lake City, and Pueblo, Colorado. In Pueblo, Colorado, I was assigned to the 308 Bombardment Group, Heavy, which was a B-24 bomber outfit. We departed in 1943 for an unknown destination which in thirty days time wound up to be the Theater of China.

DA: How did you get there?

WA: We had our planes flown over by the ferry command, we went by the USS West Point. The reason that was: It was supposed to be a top secret operation. They didn't want the Japs to know that we were coming so they took our planes over by way of Africa, and we went over by way of the Pacific Ocean up through India, Burma, and into China. We were the only heavy bomber outfit in the China Theater because General Chennault was strictly a fighter man.

The bulk of our job was sea-sweeps over the South China Sea, bombing the Jap troops in Burma, hitting Jap air bases and principally the Jap Navy.

DA: Where were you stationed there? What was your airport there?

WA: Our main base was at Kunming, China, which was General Chennault's main headquarters. We operated from many forward bases because of the supply problem.

DA: How about your family life. Were you married at the time?

WA: Yes, I had been married three days when I got my orders to return back to base. We had been alerted for overseas shipment.

DA: So you ended up in China. What was the time frame there?

WA: We were there from early 1943 till September of 1945. We volunteered for a six-month tour.

DA: How did they extend it? Did they just say that you were extended and that is it?

- WA: Well, we went over to open an air route between India and China. Burma had been taken over by the Japs. This was strictly a volunteer outfit. Every man there was a volunteer. They were all regular army personnel. They were selected by Colonel Eugene Beebe through interviews based on background, education, anything that was "gung-ho" about them. Every one of our squadron CO's was a West Point graduate. It was strictly a first rate military organization. When we got over there, the Japs had closed Burma, and the Air Corps decided there was no chance for us to come back on time leave. We couldn't get replacements so we were stuck.
- DA: I see. Now, could you just give me an idea of what the living conditions were in China at the time for you people?
- WA: Very poor. When I left India and flew over the Hump, our first flight into China was like going back two thousand years in a time capsule. The base was a huge, grassy field--there was no runway. There were no lights, no sewers, no roads. People there were still using water buffaloes and homemade wooden carts. We lived in tents for quite a while. Then the Chinese began building mud brick huts with thatched roofs. That was the basis of our living quarters. Food consisted mostly of plenty of fresh eggs, water buffalo, cabbage, cauliflower, rice and anything else they could bring in. "Spam" was a delicacy over there in the China Theater, believe it or not. And we got Spam usually for Thanksgiving.
- DA: That made a nice Thanksgiving! Now, what kind of a plane did you fly out there in?
- WA: This was the Consolidated B-24 Liberator. Four engines, it carried a crew of ten. It was the number one Air Corps bomber next to the B-17 Flying Fortress.
- DA: So, even though you were in the United States Air Force, you basically flew out of China?
- WA: When we first got there, we were not even considered United States Air Force. We were known as the China Air Task Force. We were under the command of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. We even had Chinese markings on our planes at that time.
- DA: But you were still officially in the United States Air Force?

WA: Yes, Army Air Corps at that time.

DA: When this was over in 1945, what happened to you then?

WA: When the war was over I was recuperating from a very bad attack of my third attack of malaria. My outfit had left Kunming, China, and went up to Chungking. At that time, I was left back in a field hospital to recuperate. And I was the first man from my outfit to be rotated back to the States because I was in Kunming at that time. I was sick, so I was the first man to come back. I flew to India with the British, by the way, in a Lancaster bomber, and I spent thirty days in India waiting for another plane back to the States. So, I was the first man to leave my outfit to come back home, on "rotation," that is.

DA: You mentioned flying over the Hump. Could you explain what the Hump is?

WA: One word: "Terrifying!" I would rather fly ten combat missions than one trip over the Hump. Probably the worst flying weather in the world. The weather office could never give you a weather pattern at any one time that you knew you were going to be safe. I have seen Air Transport Command planes come into our base at Kunming with their wings actually twisted from the elements, and violent winds and turbulence.

DA: Where is the Hump?

WA: The Hump is the Himalaya mountains between China, India, Burma, and Nepal.

DA: A high mountain range?

WA: Yes. We lost many planes over the Hump. In fact, it was called "the aluminum alley"--we had lost so many planes over there. They never found the planes or the crews. We sent five of our bombers home on a bond tour with fifty men. They took off from Kunming, China, started across, disappeared and we never found them. No word of them, they just disappeared.

DA: What is it, just the high altitude?

WA: High altitude, bad weather, tremendous winds, updrafts,

down drafts. The turbulence was just unbelievable.

DA: Why did you fly over this particular area?

WA: We had a supply problem. With the closing of the Burma Road and the building of the Ledo Road, we had to depend solely upon aircraft to bring our supplies in from India. And the supplies were limited strictly to war materials. So we had to live off the land as far as food went. We were on the reverse lend-lease program. That is why we developed the taste for rice, cabbage, cauliflower, and water buffalo.

DA: I see. Did you know anybody from around the Youngstown area that was over there at the same time?

WA: There was a young man from Youngstown whose name was Frank Sole. Frank is now with the postal department, and he was a control tower operator. But everybody else was from all over the country.

DA: You came back to the United States via India and you finally got back here. Could you tell me just what happened then?

WA: Well, we left Calcutta, India in a C-54. There were thirty of us on board the plane. We went to Abadan, Iran; into Egypt, the Azores, Newfoundland, and then back into LaGuardia Field, New York.

DA: On the same plane?

WA: The same plane.

DA: How long did that take?

WA: It took us five days.

DA: I see. Did you stay overnight?

WA: We stayed overnight at Cairo, Egypt, and up at Goose Bay, Labrador. We stayed over one night at New York, and went up into Indiana where we disembarked and were reassigned there for stateside duty.

DA: What did you do for entertainment overseas?

WA: Well, we played volleyball, softball, cards; we fought. A lot of the guys took up drinking for a

hobby. There was nothing to do. You would devise your own entertainment. Boredom was our greatest enemy.

DA: Did you have regular mail from the States, or did you have any mail?

WA: Mail was terrible. You might go for weeks and never get a letter, then it might come in all at one time. Our biggest gripe was the v-mail. My wife, who writes small normally, would write the v-mail letter. It would be cut down to the v-mail size. I would take it down to the Intelligence Department, put it under the magnifying glass in order to read her letter. The mail was very poor. Christmas packages were very poor, very undependable. We would never get stuff sometimes for weeks and weeks at a time.

DA: How was morale overall?

WA: The morale was excellent. I am real proud of the American airman; the American soldier, in fact. They had a knack for good humor. They kept things alive. To me, they were tremendous people.

DA: Did you really feel like you were doing something when you were over there?

WA: Yes, very much so. We knew who we were with. We were with General Chennault of the Flying Tigers, who to me was probably one of the most outstanding leaders of World War II. A tremendous man, a great leader. He was not a spit and polish officer, but the kind that you would go to hell for. A real gentleman, tough, a very talented strategist, and really adored by the Chinese people. So, we knew what we were fighting there for because we were all aware of Pearl Harbor. I was in Sunday school when the Pearl Harbor attack took place. We knew that it was a matter right now of sink or swim. But we knew why we were there.

DA: I see. Now you did fly in actual combat, is that correct?

WA: Yes.

DA: Did you ever get shot at?

WA: Oh, yes. We were outnumbered as a rule, ten to one

over there. At that time, the Japanese Air Force was really supreme in the China Theater. They had been there since 1935. They were very skilled. Mostly the Japanese Navy pilots were stationed there. They were very fine. They flew the Japanese Zero, which was a superb aircraft; I think one of the finest aircrafts in the world.

DA: Did you notice a change in the Japanese pilots as the war went on?

WA: For the first year, they were strictly of the samurai type, dedicated, tough and loyal. But then when our air power began picking up, we started hitting the sea-lanes and cutting off their navy and aircraft carriers. There was a deterioration in the number of planes coming over. They would come over sometimes at the beginning of the war with maybe sixty bombers and one hundred fighter planes for cover. And as the war went on, sometimes we would get an air raid alert and there would be one bomber with two fighters coming into our base. This was just more or less harassment tactics.

DA: So you came back to the States and you landed in Indiana. What was your assignment then?

WA: Well, we came home for thirty days, delay en route, and then I reported back to Chanute Field in Rantoul, Illinois. I was sent up there to the Technical School Secretaries Office. My job there was processing officers coming back to the States to various jobs at the school or elsewhere in the country.

DA: How long did you remain there?

WA: I was at Chanute I would say about three months, and I was released from the service there.

DA: What did you do?

WA: I came home. I was out of uniform for just about six months when I heard rumors that they were going to organize a reserve base up at Vienna Airport. I looked into the matter and got active in the Youngstown Reserve Air Force Base.

DA: I see. Could you just give me some details of how that came about?

WA: Yes. In 1946, the Reserve Officer's Association in Youngstown decided that Youngstown was an ideal spot for a Reserve Air Force Base. So they sent a letter to Congressman Michael Kirwan asking for some political assistance to get this base organized. Of course, Michael Kirwan was a very well known, prominent politician here and he generally got what he wanted. So, through Mr. Kirwan's efforts, the base was activated on January 1, 1947. At that time it was named the 59th Troop Carrier Squadron. Operations at that time were set up in a tent; a typical military tent. It was cold; it had a grassy runway; very inconvenient. A Captain Jack Barnhart, who was quite active in the Reserve Officer's Association, was named coordinator of the recruitment program. At that time, we had some twelve hundred flying and ground crew personnel in our area and Captain Barnhart undertook the job of getting these men interested in the reserve base. At that time, a Major General Thomas G. Hanley, who was the commanding general of the 11th Air Force in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, came to Youngstown and set up the entire plans for the base with the Reserve Officer's Association and the Chamber of Commerce. The men that Captain Barnhart had contacted came in from Youngstown, Warren, Salem, Kinsman, Alliance, Poland and Girard, Ohio. And they came in from New Wilmington, New Castle, Sharon, Sharpsville, Erie and Grove City, Pennsylvania.

So you can see these men were here every weekend from all over the tri-state area practically. A Colonel Charles Bass, who was a commanding officer of the air base in Cleveland, Ohio, came to Youngstown, looked over the situation and let us have six of his AT-6 aircraft--which were advance trainers--for weekend use at the base. Later on, he let us have two AT-11s--which were twin-engine trainers--which we also used for weekends. The unit there set up one of the finest safety records of any reserve outfit in the country at that time. It was strictly a weekend activity. You were there on Saturday and Sunday. You were home at night. It was just a matter of getting back with the boys for weekend flying, having a good time, and fighting the war over again. Our first commanding officer was a Lieutenant Colonel James E. Pierce, an air force veteran from Europe. A fantastic flying ace, who was from Irwin, Pennsylvania, which is near Pittsburgh, he was our first active commanding officer. This man had a face like a bulldog and yet behind all of that facade, he was an accomplished church organist and

pianist. We never knew this until he left the area. He was ashamed to admit it, I think, to the wartime veterans. The unit was officially activated in June of 1947, and was renamed then the 58th Troop Carrier Squadron of the Eleventh Air Force.

DA: Now, this was at the Vienna Municipal Airport?

WA: Vienna Municipal Airport, yes. A Major Leo McCarthy, who was then president of the Reserve Officer's Association; a Lieutenant Colonel Roberts, and a Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hamand, both who are now practicing lawyers in Youngstown, were the officials of the Reserve Officer's Association who opened up the program for the activation of the 58th Troop Carrier Squadron. This was done on the back of a flatbed trailer. That is how crude we were at that time. We had much assistance from the 444th Unit from Coraopolis, Pennsylvania of the Greater Pittsburgh Airport. They brought in a lot of their equipment to set up with. So we actually started with practically nothing. But the Air Corps was fantastic. The guys were tremendous and we grew. You can see what we have today up here. It is one of the finest bases, I think, in the country for its size. In 1950 some of our units at the base were assigned to the 75th Troop Carrier Squadron at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport. We were activated on October 30, 1950 for Korean duty. At that time, we were then known as the 75th Troop Carrier Squadron Flying Fairchild C-82 Boxcars.

DA: How many years was that?

WA: I had four years in World War II, I had five years active duty with the reserve unit, and eighteen months of recall for the Korean War.

DA: Could you tell me more about Korea? What did you do in the Korean conflict?

WA: This was kind of a sad thing. They took our outfit to Greenville, South Carolina.

DA: Now this was when?

WA: This was in 1950.

DA: And you were called back to duty?

WA: Yes. I got a telegram one evening at ten o'clock

giving me fifteen days to clear up all of my outside civilian duties and to report to the Greater Pittsburgh Airport for active duty with the Air Force. At that time, I was up at the Youngstown College Law School, I had just bought a new home, I had a wife, I had three children--a boy four, and twin daughters who were six months. The telegram indicated there was no basis for an appeal. You had to report for duty, be there and don't be late. The orders were signed by a Colonel Graham Montaine, who was the Commanding Officer of the Pittsburgh Air Base at this time.

We were in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania for about four days. We were sent to Greenville, South Carolina to the Donaldson Air Force Base there which had been closed at the end of World War II. So we moved in, the first troops in, we opened the base; and we were there for just about six months getting the base in operational condition. We were driving our own cars, we had no jeeps, no military vehicles, we had one C-82 Flying Boxcar plane. We had one tool box. We had no mess hall. We were eating in town. It was a mess, believe me. So then, when the organization got activated a Cleveland Troop Carrier Group came in who had a little bit more clout in the Pentagon. They gobbled up most of our people. The 75th Troop Carrier was pretty well decimated at that point. They were sent to Japan, to Korea. I was very fortunate, I didn't get much of a tour. I spent most of my time in the States.

- DA: I see. Now you went down there as a unit, as a reserve unit?
- WA: A reserve unit, yes.
- DA: Out of Pittsburgh?
- WA: Yes.
- DA: I see. Now you say that you didn't go to Japan? You didn't go to Japan at all?
- WA: No, I missed that tour. I was very fortunate that way.
- DA: What did you do here in the States?
- WA: We were processing very badly beat up C-82 Flying Boxcars, getting them ready for crews that were

going overseas.

DA: The people in the unit did get sent to Japan?

WA: Yes, some of them got picked for the tour in Japan and also into Korea.

DA: What did they do over there?

WA: They were flying in supplies, or parachuting supplies to the armed forces, the marines who were fighting the battle as well as dropping paratroopers in certain areas. And then they were shuttling troops back and forth between the States and Japan and Korea.

DA: So you returned basically back to Youngstown at the conclusion of your tour?

WA: Yes.

DA: Did your family stay right here in Youngstown?

WA: They stayed. I have never had my family with me in the military because it was always too uncertain. I only had them with me once when I stayed at Rantoul, Illinois, and we were only there for three months and we came home.

DA: I see. Could you just give me a little bit more background on some of the happenings, the day by day events of your training here at Youngstown when the unit flew out of the Municipal Airport before there was any real Air Force Base up there? What did you do when you went to drills? And how often?

WA: We were very fortunate. We had a man up there by the name of Major Altere. Major Altere was a P-40 pilot in China and he flew fighter cover for my outfit when I was over there. I knew Major Altere quite well. He was a career flying officer. A fantastic command officer. He took over up at the base--he and Captain Barnhart--and they ran a pretty tight ship. It was strictly like being back in the service for one weekend. You reported there in full uniform. You had drills. Basically, our main activity was flying; keeping the airplanes going. They would have cross-country flights. They would put on exhibition flights for the people here. The mechanics working the planes kept the planes flying, kept them clean. It was really just like being back

on active duty for a weekend.

DA: Did you stay up there overnight?

WA: No, we came home because they had no facilities there.

DA: Where did you eat?

WA: Anywhere you could find a restaurant. They had no mess facilities there at the time. A lot of times the fellows would carry their lunches up there to be there for the whole day.

DA: Did you get paid for this?

WA: Yes, we got paid. I forget what it amounted to over a years time. But when we were recalled to Korea, we were told, "Hey, you knew what you were getting into. You were being paid for it, you asked for it, so take your pill and swallow it and go off to war." It was as simple as that. And it was true.

DA: Now, you were studying at Youngstown College at the time?

WA: Yes.

DA: You were going to be a lawyer?

WA: I had hoped to become a lawyer but I got pulled away for eighteen months and I broke up the continuity of school. I came home and got a job with the company for whom I am now working, and I have been able to study on the side, taking case-law work here in my work with the insurance company.

DA: Who do you work for now?

WA: I work for the Commercial Union Insurance Company. It is a British-based insurance company out of London, England. We have the largest insurance company in the world. I supervise the claim office here in Youngstown territory for that company.

DA: Why do you hold a fondness for the military or your desire to serve active duty time?

WA: Well, I think it's not a duty. It's an honor to serve in the military. I think I got this bug when

I was in high school, at South High School, here in Youngstown. I had a history teacher whose name was Miss Jean Fry. She was president at that time of the D. A. R. I had her in my senior year for American History. She made me feel proud to be an American; she made me feel proud to be here, and have all of these benefits. She made me realize that this country was something that wasn't given to you on a platter. You had to make sacrifices to protect what you had. So when I got out of high school I was just so thrilled with this military thing that when the first chance came, I went into it. I think the military man, in my estimation is a tremendous guy. His dedication, his honesty, in my estimation is important to the country. I am proud to be a part of it.

DA: You mentioned the comradeship and the friendship. You don't think that there are any other organizations or anything in America that could rival the military establishment?

WA: Not in my estimation, I don't think there are. I have been in a lot of organizations in my lifetime. I have been active in many, many things, but I still keep coming back to the military. That is why I am active in the Coast Guard program now. I was out of the Air Force for a few years and I had a chance to get into the Coast Guard program ten years ago. I got into it, and I am still in it and I love it.

DA: What do you do in the Coast Guard now?

WA: Well, right now, I am attached here in Youngstown with the Coast Guard Auxiliary, which is a civilian component of the Coast Guard. We spend our summers on the local inland lakes and on the Great Lakes checking boats for safety, licensing, enforcing the requirements of the boating equipment. In winter-time we conduct classes for the public. We put on talks for different groups, boy scouts. Basically, our whole program is safe boating for the pleasure boaters.

DA: Getting back to the reserve in Vienna, you say that you didn't use any runways. What was the runway situation up there?

WA: We had a big grassy field up there that we were allowed to use. The runway was strictly, at that time for the commercial planes. We used the grass

runway right opposite our tent which was the headquarters at that time. Later on we were able to move into one room inside the old established terminal at the time. One room, one desk, one chair for the Colonel and that was about the extent of our operation at the time.

DA: Everybody else had to stand up?

WA: Stand around and talk.

DA: What type of plane? Would you go over that element a little bit for me?

WA: They had what was known then as the North American Texan AT-6, an advance trainer, which was probably one of the finest airplanes ever made. It was strictly a two-seater plane, single engine, retractable landing gears. It had all the capability of a fighter plane.

DA: Now did you fit into this?

WA: Real easy, because you go through these single-engine crafts before you go into the multi-engine airplane. You work up to it. So it wasn't much of a transition back to smaller planes.

DA: So really while you were here and going back to Pittsburgh that is all you did--fly?

WA: Yes.

DA: Now, when you returned to Pittsburgh, was this established up here?

WA: No, it wasn't this established, it was broken up into smaller units. So they sent part of our unit down to the Greater Pittsburgh Airport, and the rest of us stayed up here. They are the ones who are the nucleus of the present base at this time.

DA: Why did you go particularly back down to Pittsburgh?

WA: I was just asked by Major Altere one time if I would like to go. And I said yes, and I never questioned it. Being a military man, you never question an order or request, which many times is an order. So, I took the chance because Pittsburgh was bigger, they had a huge National Guard Air Force outfit out there at the time. They had much more in

the way of facilities, and they were building the Greater Pittsburgh Airport, which is now the Pittsburgh Airport. There was much more to do there. They had much more facilities, they had mess halls, they had more airplanes, more mechanics, more everything.

DA: Down there you say you flew the C-82?

WA: C-82 Fairchild Flying Boxcar.

DA: Did this take any retraining for you at all, or did you just fit into that one too?

WA: These guys, the American pilot, or any of the American military men in my estimation can step in anywhere and take over anything with not much training. To me, they are just tremendous.

DA: There wasn't any training program for it?

WA: Oh, yes. Oh, it was all training, everything there was training.

DA: I mean there wasn't any formal school you went to?

WA: No. They had classroom sessions, "skull sessions" down there, and you could sit around talking. But a lot of the fellows who had been out of the service for a short while were still very capable fliers.

DA: The training that you did receive, in other words, were you supposed to be combat, ready to go?

WA: Oh, yes. The Air Force is always combat ready. In fact, we were the only activated reserve outfit in the country when the Korean War broke. That is why we were grabbed up so quickly. We were combat ready right then.

DA: How did you maintain your qualifications? Did you have to fly so many hours?

WA: Well, we flew many hours. In fact, a flier will fly any chance he gets. They are kind of crazy people. But you had to be out there every weekend, that was a requirement, you didn't miss your weekends. You had your drill sessions to be there and you better have a good excuse why you couldn't be there or there would be someone knocking on your door.

DA: Now, that was one weekend a month?

WA: One weekend a month, yes. But I was out there, most of the fellows were out there every weekend, just the idea of having someplace to go, being back around the planes, being with your buddies again. It wasn't a matter of begging guys to come out or fighting because they were there. There were always men out there, and an overabundance, every Sunday and every Saturday.

DA: I am sure this didn't interfere with your families either.

WA: No, I had lunch with Captain Barnhart, Wednesday of this past week. When he was coming out of the service in World War II, he applied for a job with United Airlines. He was in Colorado at the time, his wife was in Florida. He sent her a letter saying that he was coming out of the service but he had this job with United Airlines and he was going to take this job. It was four hundred fifty dollars a month in those days, which was big money for anybody. He got a letter back from his wife saying, "Dear Jack, you have your choice, them or us." Signed, Love and his wife's name. So he went back to Florida and gave up his job flying with the airline.

DA: When everybody was called back, the Korean situation, was there much hard feeling about going back?

WA: Yes, there was. Actually, those of us who got called back were fellows who were in school getting their education or getting started in a new job, or getting started in the job that you left. They had new wives, young families. We were down in Greenville, South Carolina, with our wives and kids back home. We would see these other high school kids and college kids with their convertibles and their girl friends running around having a ball. We were sitting down here in this Donaldson Air Force Base, which was really a dump at the time. At that time, we were thinking it was more of a war of economics, to keep our economics up, than really a war of necessity. And then when they stopped MacArthur at the 38th parallel, then we really were mad. We felt that we were moving, and we felt that we should have went all the way up to Manchuria.

DA: Do you think that your being assigned down there at

Donaldson didn't help any? In other words, if you had been sent to combat?

WA: Yes, I think so. Practically all of the men there were combat veterans. In fact, on our first day, we had a big parade for a visiting general. When these men walked down this ramp with a new Air Force blue uniform on and all the ribbons, it was amazing with the number of men there, there wasn't one man there who didn't have at least two rows of ribbons on his tunic. These were combat veterans. And I think if they could have all gone over as a unit to Korea--as one unit--I think there would have been a much more higher morale.

DA: Definitely there wasn't?

WA: No, the morale was relatively low, I found. There was a lot of griping, a lot of complaining. Fellows didn't know why they had to be there. They felt that Korea was, I suppose, comparable to what Viet Nam was to this generation.

DA: In your experience with the reserves here in Youngstown do you think they foresaw something like this? If they would have been able to foresee a call-up or something, they would have been so anxious to participate?

WA: This was what was amazing. This was a good question because every guy out there who went into the reserve program has been anywhere from four to five years in World War II. Looking back over history, we all figured, well, there won't be another war for twenty years so we will stay in, keep our rank, get our pay, get our flying in, have our weekends with the fellows. We never anticipated that almost five years later we would be back into another world conflict. I think we were all shocked by the fact that we could be into a war that quick. I know I was. I was amazed because I thought, "Well, there won't be another war for at least twenty years." I think that is what kind of shock the fellows up. They were more or less in a sense of false security thinking, "Well, now we have it made, we have been through one war. Now we can stay in the reserves, build up our ratings, our ranks, our time, and then look forward to a retirement program." I know a lot of the fellows, when they did come back from the Korean service quit the reserve program. They were very disgruntled.

DA: Looking back on it now, do you think you could have possibly stayed in the reserve program?

WA: This is the thing about history I always admire. You could look back on things when they are over and you can see all the good things and all the bad things about it. Since I have come out of the service, I have spent all of this time researching the entire war in the Pacific. And when you put it all together in one big picture it looks real nice. I think now as I look back on Korea, I know why we were there; I think I know why we had to be there; I don't know why we were stopped at the 38th parallel. There was a political motivation. But I think now, as I look back over it, if I could do it again, I would have probably stayed. I see now since the Communist threat is so great, I think more than ever our military should be built up. It should be strong.

DA: What do you perceive for the Air Force Reserve in the future?

WA: After having read the World War II naval history in the Pacific, that changed a lot of thinking. I have swung over heavily to the naval concept of it. I think the Navy is really our front line of defense. I think we need a strong Navy, I think we need a big Navy. We need a modern Navy. I am sure that that is where the bulk of the battle will be fought next time--on the water.

DA: Do you think the Air Force plays a role?

WA: Oh, yes. I think the Air Force now plays a big role. But I still think the Navy is, in my estimation, the number one thing today.

DA: Do you think that there is any chance of a conflict between the super powers?

WA: I think it is possible, I think it is quite possible. I think they will hold off as long as they can. But I think if the wrong person gets panicky and pushes the wrong button, I think we are going to be in big trouble. I know recently Nixon made the remark to somebody that he had power. He could walk into a room and push the button and have the whole world under his thumb. He is right. So, if you get a man in there with a sick mind who is going to push that button, why we could be in real big trouble.

DA: Is there anything that I haven't asked you?

WA: No, I think you have done a good interview.

DA: We always try to get views and opinions on the world situation in our interviews.

WA: I do think one thing; the American nation, of course, is not a military nation, that is something we have to understand. I am a unique person, I think military all the time. I don't know why I grew up with it in such a way. I have adapted to it quite well. But I think this nation has the wrong outlook on the military. I don't think we give them enough of the moral support that they should have. I think that the people as a whole don't even consider the military as being a part of our way of life. I think it is. I would like to see a compulsory military program in our high school, even in our colleges. Not to be a dictatorial-type person I think a strong nation is one that Russia will look at twice before she makes a move on.

DA: There is one last question I wanted to ask you before we stop the tape. Have you had any special story that most guys in the military have, a sea story, a story of such nature that they would kind of like to relate? If you would like to put one down for posterity sake?

WA: One of my favorite stories: I still correspond with Madame Chiang Kai-shek, a very dear friend of mine, and a very dear lady, a very gracious lady. In fact, I would call her a great lady. We had arrived in China with our planes. We were down on the line checking with our Chinese mechanics and our American mechanics there. I was standing with a couple other fellows and I saw this beautiful woman walking down the line looking at the airplanes. Being a typical young smart American GI, I said, "My God, look at that good-looking Chinese broad coming down here." And she was beautiful. She had on one of these high-neck black satin Chinese gowns with a split side on them. A very lovely lady. She walked by and smiled, nodded, and kept on going. Well, that night, the Generalissimo had a banquet to welcome us to China and make us feel at home. Sitting up on the podium next to the Generalissimo was this good-looking Chinese "broad" that I made the pun about. So she gets up to make her welcoming speech

and I begin sliding down in my chair, embarrassed, thinking, "Well, here comes the ax." And she said, "Gentlemen, today I had one of the finest compliments ever paid a Chinese woman. One of your group called me a 'good-looking Chinese broad.'" So, everyone applauded. And she says, "In China, men don't tell their women that. I was delighted and honored, and it was the biggest day of my life." I thought, "Well, gee, that wasn't so stupid after all!"

DA: Thank you, Mr. Addington, for the interview.

WA: It was my pleasure. It was fun.

END OF INTERVIEW