Stephen Maxner: This is Steve Maxner conducting an oral history interview with Mr. Ray Foley. It is the 4th of May, year 2000 at 5:20 approximately. We are in Las Vegas at the New Frontier Hotel. Mr. Foley, why don’t you begin please by just giving us a brief biographical sketch of your life; where you were born, where you grew up, that kind of stuff.

Ray Foley: I was born in little Washington, Pennsylvania in 1944, September. I was raised in the mountains in Virginia near Roanoke, Virginia. Beautiful place. I went to high school in a place called Woolwine, Virginia, another beautiful place. After high school I entered the service mainly because there wasn’t a lot of jobs around and at the same time I wanted to get my military obligation behind me. During my first couple of years in the service I liked it and I thought about staying in the service and from there until I decided to leave the service in 1968 it wasn’t a bad thing.

SM: When you first enlisted, do you remember where you went to basic training?
RF: It was Fort Gordon, Georgia.
SM: What was that like?
RF: It was a hot place; rolling sand hills and all of that stuff. It was tough training but it was a lot of fun. We had a lot of fun. All the guys really enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. It was hardship but it wasn’t too tough.

SM: What were some of the important things that you learned in basic that helped you later in your military career, if you remember anything?
RF: The main thing, the main thing I think is you learn to be a team with each other. Everything was you depended on each other tremendously and you got fairly tight with each other, I mean right off. After 2 months you were really, really close to each other and I learned that. That’s the biggest thing that I learned.

SM: You went on from basic training to engineering AIT, is that correct?

RF: Yeah, it was, I went to I think a crane and shovel operator’s training place in Missouri, Fort…well I forgot the name of the place now, but it was in Missouri. I spent some time there. They kept me on there for a while as part of an instruction team for other students coming through and then after I suppose a year they sent me to Germany, Hidleburg, Germany where I stayed for about a year and a half.

SM: Do you remember if that was Fort [Lenerwood] Missouri?
RF: Yeah, that was it.

SM: When you went to Germany what was your primary job?
RF: Heavy equipment operator.

SM: And that included?
RF: Bulldozers, cranes, truck cranes and stuff like that. It was mainly, back then it was they were in support of a lot of missile sights and stuff like that. They had huge generators and stuff that we moved around quite often and they really pushed you to be on what they called a chemical/biological/nuclear warfare team. They pushed that big time because of the cold war thing that was going on heavy at that time. So, they kept you pretty busy. Constant training.

SM: Were you in Germany when President Kennedy was assassinated?
RF: Yes.

SM: What was the general attitude among the soldiers that you were serving with when that happened?
RF: When he was killed I was in a theater. They told everybody to leave the theater and then they had this big meeting. Everybody went on alert and I guess they didn’t know what…maybe the military didn’t know what the Russian’s next move was going to happen or whatever. It seemed like everybody was in a high state of alertness there for a couple of days. Of course, we were really devastated because actually I think everybody liked the man. The man was well liked. We thought it was a real tragedy. Actually, a lot of us thought maybe the Cubans had a hand in it or whatever. We didn’t know.
SM: Speaking of the Cubans, do you remember the Cuban missile crisis?
RF: Uh huh.
SM: Were you in the Army at that point?
RF: Uh huh.
SM: What was going on? What happened in your unit when that crisis was occurring?
RF: When that occurred I was at Fort Leavenworth, or Lenerwood, Missouri. Of course we went on alert and they sent everybody down to Florida that they could. They were loading trains and stuff like that, moving a lot of equipment toward Florida I believe. That lasted for 2 or 3 months that kind of stuff and then everything sort of settled down. After that it was on to Germany.
SM: Was it something that you talked about with your fellow soldiers, the cold war, the possibility of nuclear war, things like that?
RF: Oh yeah. That was a constant, that was a constant thing. As a matter of fact, a lot of the training was geared towards nuclear warfare. They trained you hard toward what it was like for atomic blasts; the blinding light, it’s practically over if you don’t hit the ground right then, all of that stuff. It was pretty hard training back then.
SM: In terms of the chemical and biological warfare that they emphasized, were there particular threats that they talked about, particular biological agents or was it just NBC in general, nuclear biological chemical in general?
RF: It was in general. However, they had…their training consisted of they would have different stations set up in the field and you would walk down a trail to give you an example and you’d come across a guy laying in the trail and they would have a little plakert off on the side and it would tell you that this man was gasping for air or convulsing or had huge lesions breaking out on him or whatever and I can’t remember all the things we had to do to them, but you had to get down there. Of course, if it was required you to put on a gas mask or whatever or protective clothing you did that. You jumped down there and tried to save the man or whatever including injecting him. We had to do all of that stuff if you’re familiar with that. We had to go ahead and inject him with this I guess it was sugar water in an antrimene type [secret] thing, you know, you had to jam it in.
SM: You’d actually physically…
RF: Oh yeah, oh yeah. We jammed him right through his pants right into the big thigh muscles and stuff like that and then you would...I mean, this was very unpleasant stuff for me because I don’t like taking shots or giving shots and then you had to lay down and take his place. He got up and continued on to the next station and then the next guy comes along and he does to you what you just did to the first guy and then he lies down to take your place and then you advance out to the second station and treat this guy and it went on through all of these stations and it was very rigorous. I mean, it was tough training. I didn’t like it. Every now and then they speared the bone in your leg with this antramine because it was a spring loaded thing and the guy would just run up there and he would [makes a puncturing noise] and nail your bone in your leg with this dart like needle that would shoot out of this thing. It wasn’t good, it wasn’t good.

SM: How many times did you have to endure that?

RF: If you were on the team, I was on the team, so it was like every month we were going out doing this thing. I remember the first time I had to do it, I had to give myself one. I jammed myself in the leg with the thing. It’s a big, big needle right through my pants and the reflexes I had of this pain, searing pain hit me. I jerked it back out again and of course you had to squeeze the tube of fluid out of it. It was one of those squeeze things. You had to squeeze it out. It wasn’t self-injecting there and then I got this thing out and I haven’t squeezed it yet and the guy looks at me and he said, “Do it again!” [makes injecting noise], I pull jerk it back out again and he says, “Well, you’ll learn sooner or later.” I did this like 3 times and I’d jerk it out 3 times because of the reflex action so then he suggested, “Why don’t you just put it between you fingers,” like that, “And slap yourself really hard with it and maybe you won’t jerk it back out?” So I did that. Well, I’ve got all these holes in my leg and then I squeezed it out but that’s the way it was.

SM: Did you suffer any kind of infections or anything from that?

RF: No, believe it or not, I didn’t. I mean, it was a miracle that I didn’t get hepatitis or something from these things.

SM: Were there ever any instances that soldiers did get sick from that?

RF: Not to my knowledge, not to my knowledge. There were a lot of people that got really angry when somebody stuck them in the thigh bone or something. People got really upset. I think a couple of guys got busted noses and stuff over it.

SM: Like you said, reflex.
RF: Yeah, reflex man. But that was interesting stuff and in Germany that was big, big stuff. They wanted you on that team. They wanted a lot of people on that team. The training was constant in that area. They wanted you to know what to do, especially in the field type situation. Most of the training wasn’t in a classroom. They did a little bit of classroom type stuff and then they sent you out there on Saturdays or whatever day and then you trained all day long going through these courses until you knew it.

SM: So did you spend a lot of time in Germany doing base details and stuff like that or was it pretty much focusing on training in preparation for a potential war with Russia?

RF: No, most of it was I was operating equipment and then but the training was 1 or 2 days a week or something like that you were training. They were working hard at keeping all the missile sights going to the degree where they had generators and stuff in case the power failed whenever they had a lot of missile sights there, and they were constantly moving generators around or equipment around and making sure in case they had a big power failure, maybe a nuclear war broke out, and maybe the Russians knocked out the power then you had generators, diesel powered, big jobs, that would run the missile sights.

SM: Anything else interesting from that first 3 year tour, your first enlistment, that you’d like to talk about?

RF: No, it was fun. I had a good time. It was interesting country.

SM: How did the German people respond to the American soldiers in their country?

RF: They liked us. I went to town and made friends with the girls and stuff. They were friendly. They were, in fact, really nice girls. They were pretty.

SM: So in 1965 you come up for reenlistment and you decided to go from engineering to aviation. What prompted that decision?

RF: I thought it would be, for one thing, the people that I was rubbing shoulders with was not really the caliber of people I wanted to. I was around enough aviation units to see that it was a lot nicer people. It was a lot more interesting type thing, a lot more advanced than the equipment operating type thing was, and I decided I would try to get into Army aviation and my test scores allowed me to get into there. At that time there was a pretty big demand for they call it 67N20’s was the MOS and there was a big demand for crew chief type or mechanic; single rotor, single turbine type helicopters.
SM: So even though the Army had both fixed wing and helicopters, the aviation MOS was focused on support for the helicopters?

RF: At that time it started really big on the Hueys. They wanted, they just couldn’t get enough Huey people at that time and it was easy for me to get in there. They trained you first in the small…first of all they trained you on basic aircraft type maintenance, reciprocating engines and stuff like that, and then they moved you on to single rotor, gasoline powered helicopters and they trained you all the way through that and then if you did well in the school then they moved you on to the gas turbine ones, or the Huey.

SM: This was at Fort Rucker?

RF: Uh huh.

SM: How long did the training at Fort Rucker, Alabama last?

RF: It lasted until I’m guessing, I can’t remember exactly the month, but I think it was October of ’65.

SM: Now by that point things were kind of heating up in Vietnam.

RF: Yeah.

SM: Was there much talk at the school about the role that you’ll be playing as a crew chief in the Vietnam war?

RF: Well at that time we knew that more than likely…there was a few guys in classes ahead of us that were going to Germany and places but the odds were we were going to Vietnam and most of the guys, they accepted it. All of them wanted to go home first. When we finished our school they loaded us up on busses and they took us to headquarters or whatever and they gave us all out shots and gave us…they told us before to pack our bags. Send everything home except for military type issued clothing and the people were civilians at this headquarters type place that was working there, I forgot exactly the right name for these people working there, but anyway they wouldn’t look at us. I kept thinking, “Why won’t they look at us?” and they were doing all the paperwork and shuffling all the paperwork and figuring out where we were going and all of them were just busy and they wouldn’t make eye contact. They would not look at us and we’d start asking, “Why won’t they look at us?” and then somebody said, “They think we’re all dead,” and he was right. These people, they were, “Man, these guys are going to Vietnam,” so I think they wouldn’t look at us because they thought they were maybe sending us to our doom or something, I don’t know. They really would not even look at you, and I guess they
were sending a lot of people there and I guess they were worried about us and they just didn’t
want to know what you look like before you went. I think that might be it. But, when we
finished there that evening, well, it was before dark, they loaded us back on busses and they took
us to an Air Force base in Alabama by bus and it wasn’t… I don’t think it’s far from Florida, I
can’t remember the name of the Air Force base. They unloaded us off the bus and they put us in
a barracks type thing and the one door was locked and the other door was open. There was a
phone inside and they said, “You can call home.” I think it was either 3 or 5 minutes you could
use the phone at their expense. They didn’t care. They said, “In the morning, they’re going to
put us on an airplane and we’re going over,” so of course guys were using up their 3 to 5 minutes
on the phone. I mean, they were calling home and the next morning they had people there to
supervise us all night. Nobody could sleep. Everybody talked. It was before daylight, this
sargent comes in, he asks me because I was E4 at the time, he said, “I need your help to organize
this and you’re going to be in charge of the manifest,” and everything, “You’re the highest
ranking guy here.” So I said, “Oh wow, you’re doing this to me? I don’t want to be the one
watching after all these guys!” There was 50 some of us and…

SM: What was your rank at this time?
RF: Pardon?
SM: What was your rank at this time?
RF: E4, I was an E4 and I, “Okay.” Well, the next morning they got us, they brought
breakfast in, and then they load us back on this bus and took us right out to a C-130. We loaded
up on this C-130, this dog airplane, and we roared off. We started landing, I think the first
landing we made was in Hawaii I believe. We landed there for fuel. Everybody had to go to the
bathroom, they said, “Go to the bathroom.” 2 guys didn’t come back and they said, “Hey!” The
pilots wouldn't take off and they said, I said, “What do you want me to do? I can’t make these
guys get on this airplane,” and they said, “Go find them and talk to them.” I went in the
bathroom, I looked under all the doors and I couldn’t find them. They were standing on the
toilets and I finally found 2 locked doors and I told them, “Hey guys, come on out. They’re not
going to take off. They’re going to arrest you. They’re going to put you in jail here. I can’t
make you get on that airplane but do you want to go to jail or do you want to go ahead and make
the best out of this? I don’t know what’s good to you but here we are and what are we going to
do?” So finally they said, “Let’s go,” and they got on the airplane and there we went again. We
got there with everybody and there was 7 of us that, when we got to Saigon, I guess we spent a
day there or something and then there was 7 of us they said, “You’re going to this outfit,” and it
was the 129th. So they loaded us up on this airplane, it was one of those C-123 things, one of
those twin engine jobs, high wing. We blasted off out of there and it lands at Cam Rahn Bay.
Well, Cam Rahn Bay at that time was nothing but a strip. There was nobody there. There
wasn’t a soul there. We landed there and it was a little tin shack with a roof on it right on the
side of the runway. I don’t know who built this runway or nothing. I don’t know where anybody
is, and the 7 of us all off loaded from this airplane and this airplane probably had 25 other people
on it that were going other places and the load master parked, “This is where you’re going,” and
we get off and all of a sudden there’s nobody. “Wait, wait, wait! Don’t close that damn door!
You’re going to leave us here? There’s nobody here. There’s nothing here. There’s nothing
but…there’s some jungle around here and everything. You can’t leave us here! We’re
unarmed.” And he says, “Listen, they’ll be here to get you. I guarantee it.” And I said, “Oh,
yeah,” and they raised the door up and off they went and me and these 7 guys, we’re standing
around there and we’re saying, “Holy cow, man. This isn’t good.” And I guess 30 minutes later
we hear this wop wop sound of this helicopter coming. He comes right in there and lands. We
climb on board and he flies us into this special forces camp called Dong Ba Tin and we land in
the special forces camp and there’s lot of work going on around here. There’s very little room
for the helicopters inside this camp. There’s swamp area and jungle all the way around it. They
were, at that time, starting to clear the jungle back to try to make room for the helicopters and
stuff and I guess they were going to station them there and the first day there and that night, that
night the 7 of us…you go in that tent and they issued us mosquito nets but the mosquito nets had
huge holes in them. So these mosquito nets, I didn’t know what I was getting into. First of all,
they didn’t give us a gun so I go back and talk to the 1st sargent and I said, “Hey, listen, I don’t
feel to comfortable being here without a gun. We’re in the middle of this place.” He said, “You
don’t need a gun.” I insisted on a gun and finally they issued us a weapon.

SM: What did they issue?
RF: I think it was, at that time, an M-14, an old M-14 thing and we went into the tents.
They had tents, but they were the squad sized tents, a rather big tent. We go in there, set up our
cots, little fold up cots, and blow up an air mattress and then put this mosquito net on. Then I
find I had a hole in mine about this long and I’m thinking maybe I can figure out a way, if I get
in this thing tonight, I can seal that hole up or whatever. Well, that night I learned my lesson.
They bit me around my eyes until both of my eyes swelled closed. Those mosquitoes liked the
tender area around your eyes at this place and they would bite you on your lips and around your
eyes. Well, the next morning I get up and I’m eaten alive by these things. I must have had 150
bites and both of my eyes had swelled closed so I had to pry my eyes open to see and I said I’ve
got to get a mosquito net. Finally, after a couple of weeks, I got a mosquito net but I did a lot of
taping and stuff trying to keep them out and you could not keep them out. The only way you
could get them is if you were lucky enough to get a spray bomb of that DDT stuff and the Army
had it. If you could get one of those and hide it, keep it, and horde it and fight for it and threaten
life and limb of anybody who tried to steal it from you, and before you got into that mosquito net
or into that thing…there was so many mosquitoes in this place it was unbelievable, you could
spray the net, the bunk, everything down, jump in, fold it in around you, and then you could not,
if you were arm, while you were sleeping, if your arm went over against that net they would, by
the zillions, they would bite you there on that fleshy area that they could reach and they would
just annihilate your arm. You’d wake up with a huge whelp where they’d chewed on you there
sucking your blood. They were ridiculous, those damn mosquitoes. I remember walking, and
especially right before the sun would set they would start following you, the mosquitoes would
follow you and they would be landing on your back and on your…and you’d turn around and
look and there would be 1,000 mosquitoes following you around, you know, and when it got
dark they knew where you were I guess. It was really, it was like a cloud of insects following
you right before dark. They would try to zoom in on you. So, we sort of survived that and then
the guys started talking, you know. We weren’t fully operational yet but we were flying some
combat missions.
SM: And this was with the 129th?
RF: Yeah, and the 129th, at that time, we were just stationed right there. Then, after a
couple of days, a helicopter came in with 2 or 3 bullet holes in it and everybody gathered around
it and we were looking at the bullet holes and stuff. We were talking to the crew members that
were on it, you know, and we were saying, “Whoa man, this is real. This is going to get real
fast.” At that time, they didn’t have good tactics as far as…well, I’ll give you an example. The
guys were sort of, “What do we do in this situation? What do we do in that situation?” They’d
had no training as far as a crew chief went. They only had mechanics training. They didn’t have
any training, zero training, as far as protecting that aircraft with a machine gun, how to lead a
target, you know, if you were going this way you’d shoot behind it because the bullets went right
in because of the forward motion. A big thing that cost us, oh, it must have cost us 5 men’s lives
was they were talking about, and I remember and I argued with them about it. They were talking
about, “Hey, I’m going to jump out. I’m jumping out.” and I said, “Wait a minute now. What’s
going on?” “If we’re shot down, at the last second I’m jumping out.” so these guys had
themselves convinced. I mean, they were young and knew nothing about anything and pretty
soon a chopper gets shot down and this guy jumps out, goes endo down a ravine, breaks his neck
into some rocks. He’s dead. He would have survived. Everybody else in the aircraft survived.
Then they come back and I know what this guy was talking about jumping out. I know that’s
what he did, and then the other guys tell him, “Man, don’t jump out! Don’t jump out!” “Damn,
I’m not going to stand here and burn alive, I’m jumping out.” So we had about 4 or 5 men that
did that. At the last second, they were going in, they bailed out, they jumped, and every one of
them that I know of that jumped were killed from rotor blades coming down, chopper turning
over, rotor blades killing them, or for whatever reason, doing endos or jumping out too high. All
of them died that jumped out. One guy jumped; the chopper hit and went down in through the
skids and stuff, crushed a fuselage, the fuel cell erupted, the thing catches on fire and he’s laying
there in the fuel where he jumps out and he does endos or whatever. The aircraft slides right up
to him, covers him with fuel, and then the thing lights up. So he died like 30 days later back in
the States but we found out he had died. So, when we first started, until that time, they had no
plan and then they got smart and they came down there. Of course, I was just kind of like
everyone else and I had an opinion. These guys, they believed that their idea of jumping out was
the best way to go. They didn’t listen to me but finally the officers came down there and said,
“Listen, what the hell’s going on here? Why are you guys jumping out?” and then they finally
said, “Hey, we’re jumping out. That’s the thing to do,” and they said, “No, you stay with the
airplane. The airplane will take a shot. Your chances of survival are far greater.” And finally
reason came in and they decided they weren’t going to jump out anymore and everybody then
that stayed…and they were far better off. From that point, the missions got…they became fully
operational after about a month. I mean, slowly they worked us in and then pretty soon we were
flying every day and a lot of the night.

SM: So this was by November of 1965, around?
RF: Yeah.

SM: In the 129th assault helicopter company, what kind of helicopters were you flying? Are these gun ships?

RF: At first I was in...I remember the serial number of the airplane, it’s 622012. It was the oldest bravo model helicopter in Vietnam and we went down to pick it up when I first got there, they didn’t have it up there yet. We flew down to pick it up. We brought it back, and it was in such bad condition they said, “You’ve got a week,” or whatever it was, “We’ve got all these parts, fix this thing.” You know, engine, transmission, 42 degree gear box, 90 degree gear box, everything, everything. Rotor blades, they gave it to me. Mass assembly. Man, I jumped on that thing, me and a couple of guys and I started working on it and it wasn’t long until man, about 3 days we had this baby ready to go. We were test flying it and it was doing real good and they made that the rescue and recovery helicopter. We carried some parts and whenever there was a mission of any size we took off with it and when anybody was shot down, it went in. that was its job. But, in going in, I found it to be extremely dangerous. One time I lost my rifle. I left it in...this aircraft we shot down, it rolls from it side, it kills 2 infantry guys. Well actually they were special forces. Rotor blade killed them. The crew chief’s name was Burnett. He was trying to put the fire out, the thing caught on fire and I went up, ran to the airplane and it wasn’t good. When I lost my rifle they wanted to put me in jail over that but under the circumstances they got over it. So, we got everybody out but one guy had a broken back and the aircraft burned. We get everybody loaded up in mine and we take off. We took them to a special forces camp and then all the special forces guys, they were scared to come to the chopper, they were all ARVN’s and I got all these crippled people in my chopper and I’m running over there and I’m grabbing them, “Bring me a stretcher, bring me a stretcher!” and they kept backing away. They don’t want no part...they think we’re coming in there to take them out. They don’t want to go out there. They ain’t going out there, man, and I’m going nuts. “I got to get these people out of my chopper! I got to get these people off! They’ll all crippled up,” and finally there was an officer, an American officer, and I whistled at him. He was the captain. I whistled at him really loud and he turned and looked at me and I’m going [makes hand gestures] and he’s the special forces person. He turned his back on me because, for what ever reason, I guess he didn’t know what I wanted and so I ran over to him and I grabbed him by the shoulders. By then I was getting really uptight. I grabbed him by the shoulder and spun him around and he looks at me
and I said, “I need a stretcher. I need your men to unload these people who are crippled up in my chopper.” So he grabs a couple of those Vietnamese and they grab some stretchers and they come over and start unloading people and we went back out there to try to get everybody else but it wasn’t a good thing. Later on they said, “Well, we’ve got these shot down choppers out there,” and they said, “We need these parts.” At that time they were running out of parts and especially the tail rotor control chain that controlled the pitch in the tail rotor. There was a real critical shortage of them so they said, “We’re going out there and we’re going to land out there around these shot up choppers and we’re going to go rob them tail rotor control chains off.”

Well the gooks, man, they’d mine the hell out of the thing, booby trap the shit out of these things because, “When the Americans come back, we’re going to blow their butts to the sky,” and the first place they had 2 gun ships covering us. We went out there and landed and if I remember right this was probably January ’66 and when we landed I carried my machine gun out to the tail boom of this aircraft that was shot down and I was walking slow because I was worried about mines, these bouncing Betty things that would pop up and blow your legs off. I was really worried about it. There was a blown out village, I mean, just 50 yards. This thing is near the village. I mean, this place is…as far as I knew at that time I didn’t think anybody was there but there were people there and they weren’t nice guys. The 2 gun ships over head, circling over head sort of watching down for us, all of a sudden they’ve got a hot job somewhere, hot mission. They pulled them off. That left us there, and when they left we had the tail rotor control chain about halfway off. They weren’t out of sight when the bad guys decide to take us. Well, we had to be John Wayne’s to get the hell out of there but we got out of there and then again I thought, “This isn’t a good job,” because I started looking at the gun platoon and I knew the only way I could get into a gun platoon was when one of those guys was killed or gone back to States, and there wasn’t anybody going back to the states for a long time. And again, I kept going out on this thing, and it wasn’t a real good thing, and then a guy…there was several people that were injured and stuff in the gun platoon and then they said, “Well, we’re going to go ahead…” and then I went to the gun platoon at the objections of the maintenance officers and stuff. They wanted to keep me there in that capacity. It wasn’t a good place. The guy that took my place, he lost both legs doing the same thing.

SM: Was it a bouncing Betty that got him?
RF: Yep. They went in. I think they were just trying to get guns and radios off of this airplane. It hadn’t been on the ground long, it was the same day. The crew had been...they had gotten the crew out. There were guns and stuff in there. Either the mine was there before or they had come in there and planted it right away. Anyway, this guy tripped this thing and it took both of his legs. So then...it wasn’t a good job. I was glad to be away.

SM: When you mentioned earlier that aircraft that came in with the rounds that had been through it, what sized caliber rounds?

RF: Most of them were 30 caliber at that time.

SM: 30 calibers?

RF: They were just small arms fire. It was more than likely an AK-47 or something I’m guessing. They were small arms stuff. There wasn’t any big, big stuff yet at that time. When I mentioned earlier that we didn’t have the training as far as what to look for on the ground, what the signs were for enemy on the ground, I mean there was a lot to learn. We had no training. It was really stupid.

SM: So at Fort Rucker, they really didn’t prepare you?

RF: You weren't prepared at all as far as a crew chief type door gunner thing. There was nothing. Zero. Actually, I took gunners out who had never even flown in a helicopter before. Never even flown in one before! It was his first mission. He was so scared he wouldn’t fire. I’m not going to mention his name here. He became a tremendous gunner, one of the best gunners. He was a career soldier. He was a staff sargent. He was from Mississippi or Alabama, one of those places. Real nice guy. After the mission we were escorting one of these teams in that goes in right at dark, LRRP teams they called them. So we had 2 gun ships that were following them and it was going to be a cold mission. They’re going to drop these guys in real fast, they’re going to come flying out. We were right beside them, and these guys were going to sneak around in there and get information on the enemy and stuff. Well, they got in the LZ and it just so happened that my ship...I had a little bit of experience at that time. They were on our right side and there were enemy there and they opened up on the ship on the ground and they’re...I mean, you only had seconds to react and when they started receiving fire, of course, the pilot screamed, “Receiving fire!” and instantly we had to shoot around them to get them down so they could get out of there. Well, they, this guy, he was so terrified. He was in that door, he had never rode in one of these things before, we go blazing through there, you know,
it's his job on that side. He never fired. They got out of there, they made it out of there,
everybody survived, but the pilots that I had were very angry. They were so...by then I had
some credibility as a crew chief. They respected me somewhat and when we landed they called
me away from the aircraft and their exact words, “Get rid of that son of a bitch,” and I said,
“Man, what are you talking about? Where are we going here? What are we doing?” and they
said, “You get rid of that son of a bitch, Foley. He’s not going out with us anymore. Get rid of
him,” and they were talking about whatever I had to do to say, “Hey, you’re not going out with
us anymore,” and using whatever influence I had to get somebody else or whatever and I told
him, I said, “Listen. This guy’s a soldier, man. He’ll make us a good gunner.” They said, “No.
No.” and I said, “Yes. Give us a chance. Let me have a chance with him. Let’s take off and fly
tomorrow. Let’s let him do some shooting. Let’s let him get wired in a little bit. You can’t just
throw a guy out like this, not like this.” So they agreed finally. They said, “Okay, but it’s your
ass.” They put a lot of pressure on me. They thought this wasn’t going to work. They thought
this was not going to work. Of course, they were ultimately concerned, too, about their own ass
when you’re in that situation and I can understand that. So, I started working with this guy and
he became totally, totally one of the finest gunners that I ever worked with. And the day...he
stayed there until I transferred to the 71st and when I was, when I transferred, he quit flying. He
refused to fly with anybody else. He says, “We’re a team. Me and you. We survived by keeping
these guns going,” and that’s how he put it. He said, “We survived by keeping these guns hot.”
He said, “I don’t know these other guys, and I can’t go with them.” So he quit flying and at that
time the Army, if you were in that capacity, you just didn’t quit. You could, your ass could go to
jail or a big disciplinary thing’s going to happen to you. But, he quit and he wrote me a letter
later on and told me he had quit and the guy that had taken my place ends up getting shot and he
blames it because the guy and his gunner weren’t skilled enough to keep him down and keep
them off of him. But, true or not, I don’t know. I know the guy was shot. A lot of it had to do
with learning quickly and you had to learn on your own and if you’re seeing things like the one
mission we had, this...we were dropping in a big, big...they must have been dropping a couple
of companies into this place and it was a big airlift thing. So they told us to go ahead and hit the
LZ or hit the tree lines on both sides. This thing’s way out there in boony land. It’s just a little
clearing maybe 2 or 3 acres in the jungle there. Well, we go in there and we blast the place, but I
noticed that we didn’t hit one area of the tree line and as we were bringing the slicks in, we
would go in beside the slicks. Slicks would go and land and we would zoom in right beside
them. Well, when they were bringing the slicks in they said, “Cold, it’s going to be cold. We
don’t think anybody’s there. No more shooting.” Well, as we came in all of a sudden I realized,
“Hey, we haven’t hit this one area,” so as we were coming in I just gave it everything. The pilots
were yelling because all of a sudden me shooting is upsetting the other aircraft that are landing.
All of a sudden they hear this fire and they don’t know if it’s enemy or whatever and I blast this
area really good and then I hit my mic and I told the aircraft commander, “Listen,” he was
ordering me to cease fire. I hit it and I said, “Listen, I’m sorry, but we didn’t hit that area and I
was concerned about it. I wanted to shoot it up. I’ll take the heat for it.” And he told me, “You
damn sure will take the heat for it because you disobeyed an order,” so I said, “Okay.” So we go
in, we land at Pham Rang and he was real angry about it because I didn’t stop when he was
ordering me to, so he goes to a briefing, they go to a briefing, and I’m thinking, “Oh shit, I’m in
trouble. They’re going to bust me. They’re going to throw me off. They’re going to make me
quit.” I’m trying to think how bad, how severe this thing was, disobeying a direct order from an
officer. It’s a pretty serious offense in the military, I mean pretty bad. Anyways, he comes back
and said, “Hey, I want to talk to you,” so I went over there with him. He was a tall lanky guy
and we went over by these sandbags away from everybody and he says, “Listen.” He said, “You
screwed up big time.” He said, “You shot the hell out of that place,” and he says, “The ground
troops found a machine gun in there and 2 enemy in there and if it wasn’t for that, your ass
would be grass.” He said, “Don’t ever do it again.” And I thought to myself, “I’ll do it next
time.” But that was what happened. So they pretty much got, again, I gained some credibility
again and it was very important, this is more important than you would ever believe. They
needed to trust you as a gunner. They wanted to trust you but they needed to know that you
could perform and the gunner could perform. If you were a good performer and you did a real
good job and you were accurate and you were savvy and you were quick, then all of a sudden
you found yourself drawing all the really important missions, the hot missions. They would grab
you. They’d say, “Hey, that’s the man we need, that’s the aircraft we want right there,” so and
that put more demand on you because they had a lot of guys that, you know, they didn’t learn
very fast. Like I say, some of them never learned. They were in over their head and they had
difficulty. There was these guys over there right now that got booted right out of the gun
platoon. They made big mistakes and but a lot of it was judgement calls because you just had to
go with what you were seeing, and what you were seeing quite often wasn’t’ the way it was.
You might be what you were seeing, and the enemy was so good at camouflaging themselves
and making themselves look like farmers. We caught one guy one time walking along and he
wasn’t moving his arms and this gunner I had, his name was Holloway, we were up around
Pleiku, he was running down a trail, just sloping along there, and the guy, I said, “What does he
have in his hand?” because we were flying across this way and he was going this way and he
wasn’t swinging his arms like somebody walking. He was holding his arms straight down by his
side. “What does he have in his hand,” and the pilot says, “I don’t know,” and I said, “Let’s go
around,” so we went around and he would turn. He had a weapon in his hand and just noticing
that he wasn’t swinging his arms. Somebody would think, “Well, that guy’s not swinging his
arms,” but you had to, I mean, and there was a zillion tell tale things like that. There was a
billion of them. You could be flying by over a road and looking for mines in a road and you
would see a tiny little mark in the road that was a different color and that would be where they
dug the dirt out and the dirt would be just a tiny bit different shade and they’d plant their mine
there. They were big time in that, we found a lot of them like that. Just a little difference in the
color. If you were going down, flying along the river, and all of a sudden you saw red dirt
floating down the river, red…you seen the rivers, there’s a lot of red clay floating down the river.
Well, if you seen an area where, “Hey, where is this stuff coming from?” It’s where they were
digging their bunkers near the river’s edge and they’d dump their dirt in the river and the stuff
would go down the river and it would show up ahead they’re digging in up there and they would
hide their dirt. That’s one of the things that they did.

SM: But not as effectively as they thought?
RF: If you were savvy enough to recognize it. But there was all of that stuff you had to
learn, and they would…a lot of the things we had to deal with, when they called you, we would
scramble, what we would call scramble. I mean you literally, man, you jumped in that aircraft.
You grabbed the blade, you swung the blade as the pilot was hitting the starter. I’m telling you,
you were plugging rockets in, everybody was gearing up and out you went because they needed
you right then. They would hit, they would hit infantry and then they would try to withdraw real
fast before you could get there so when you got there, quite often, they would be leaving and
what they would do is they would hide their, after a while, they’d start hiding their weapons and
they’d hide their weapons in places and then they would try to withdraw out the back. You
would get there and you’d see these gooks leaving and a lot of guys didn’t know what they were
seeing. They, “What’s going on? Where did they go? Look at all these farmers leaving the
area!” Yeah, that happened a lot. I made the mistake… I didn’t make the mistake one time. I
shot some of these people that were doing that and they got very angry about it. They said that I
was shooting unarmed civilians. Well the 101st airborne company had been ambushed and they
went in there, they found the weapons and then my company was giving me a hard time. The
battalion commander came down there and straightened it. He says, “the only enemy that was
captured,” was leaving the back and this man did good and again that helped my credibility and it
kept me out of trouble with them. It was so easy to get into trouble. Also the pilots could get
into trouble really easy. If they made a mistake and they hit, and we had a lieutenant named
Dunn, he was very aggressive, very aggressive. Good man. Verbally I had to talk to him a
couple of times pretty strong because he would, when we would land and rearm and stuff we had
to rearm in a hurry; shove rockets in, put in new door gun or new mini gun or whatever ammo
and that took 45 minutes. You just didn’t do it, and I mean that was scrambling. That was going
fast. And you had to check the fluid levels of the airplane, see if there was any battle damage
done, and then you were ready. Of course you’d fuel it too. This guy, they would go eat
breakfast or when you would land. Well you didn’t have any breakfast either and you were
hungry too and you’re out there rearming and everything and then he’d eat breakfast and in 20
minutes he’d come charging back out there, “Why isn’t this damn thing ready to go yet?” and
then I told him, “You son of a bitch, you come out here, you help me rearm this thing, and then
we’ll all go to breakfast.” So after we came to an understanding he was much nicer to me. But
he, he had a colonel I think for a father. He made a mistake, he thought enemy troops… they
called him. He thought it was an enemy position. He put that gun ship on it, and it was 101st
airborne position. He killed some of the men. Instantly, instantly, he was gone. That hour they
pulled him out of there. I don’t know where they sent him, but that’s what they did. If you made
a big mistake like that, [noise], they pulled you out. You were gone. I don’t know if they put
you in a different job or a different place or what they did to you. I don’t know what they did to
you because we never knew what happened to him. And actually, the guy was a good guy. He
was very aggressive, he did a good job. And the whole thing, we talked about the tactic… a little
bit about… they were trying to kill as many of you to force us out and we were trying to kill as
many of them to punish them into quitting fighting. That was the whole thing. From what I saw,
of course in gun ships and stuff, you were killing a lot more of them than they were killing of
you because they didn’t value their personnel as much as we valued our personnel. It had more
of an impact on us. They didn’t care I don’t think how many they lost. I don’t think that was a
factor with them. It wasn’t a factor.
SM: This all took place with the 71st attack helicopter company?
RF: No, this is in the 129th.
SM: Oh, this is all still in the 129th? Okay. So the gentleman who, this is Lt. Dunn, is
that right, Dunn? Were you on that mission when he killed the guys in the 101st?
RF: No, no I wasn’t on the mission. I flew him a lot but I didn’t get that mission. I’m
glad I didn’t. I may have been firing into that same position, I don’t know. That was what he
thought and what he thought was the aircraft commander called the shots. “Hey, that’s the
position there. Okay boys, we’re rolling in on it,” and no doubt if he had told me that’s the
position, that’s where the friendlies are right there, the enemy’s right out over here, they’ve got
the smoke marking it, we’d go at it. I don’t know how it happened with him, but he ended up on
the 101st airborne troop.
SM: Were there any other friendly fire incidents?
RF: They, I landed at Dak To one time to refuel and I had the fuel nozzle in the tank,
chopper’s running wide idle. We had a heavy fire tank, 3 guns. Sgt. comes running over to me,
special forces guy, he says, “I got a mission for you.” He says, “I want you to go over there,”
and he says, “You see over there,” and about 2 miles away, you could barely see, it was a
column of troops coming down the side of a hill, a rolling hill over there. He says, “Those are
enemy troops.” He says, “I want you to go over there and kill them,” and I said, “Okay, enemy
troops just don’t come out in the open like this,” and I’m thinking, “What’s going on here?” I
said, “Tell the pilot. Tell the aircraft commander,” so he’s up there yelling in the door talking to
him. I finished fueling. We put the nozzle down and we jumped in, buckled up, and the pilot
says, “We got a mission.” He says, “There’s the enemy troops over there on the side of that hill
and we’re going to go get them.” I said, “Hey, I’ve never seen enemy troops in the open like
that, I mean there’s 80 men over there coming down the side of that hill.” We take off, here we
go and I says, “Hey, I don’t know about this. I don’t know if these are enemy troops,” and the
aircraft commander, or the flight leader; I was on a flight leader’s helicopter. That’s the lead
helicopter. He said, “Let’s look at them,” so he goes over there man and I mean we went by
them sort of and we rolled in on them and they did look like enemy troops. They looked like
every troops and I mean we were baring our teeth. We were ready to go at them, you know
what I mean? But, they weren't scattering and he says, “Hold up.” And we looked down and we
zoomed in there really close and they were ARVN troopers. If it had been another outfit, they
may have been too quick on the trigger. But, these guys were lost and they ended up being 4 or
5 miles out of position and they had a figure that they were enemy troops up there and there was
a lot of enemy up there but one thing that…the little thing that threw the flag up was I’ve never
seen this many in the open number one, and then when they didn’t, when we came over there
near them, they didn’t make a move as far as leaving. Later on they did that kind of thing. They
didn’t leave, they’d fight you in some situations but at that time they would try to hide. They’d
try to get away, and that’s the only time other than, you know, I took a lot of heat in that one deal
where the enemy was leaving, was escaping out the back door. I told you about that I think. It
was a round, wooded area. They had ambushed 101st airborne in the rice paddies and then they
were trying to come across rice paddies out the back into a huge jungle area. Well, they had
trapped themselves. We had got there too quick for them when we rolled in and we knocked
some of them out but there was no doubt in my mind what they were and they would quite
often…you had to be…you couldn’t be Mr. Nice guy in that door. They would throw that gun
down in a heartbeat and you couldn’t land down there and pick them up and you couldn’t let him
go because tomorrow he’s going to kill your buddy. So, you did your duty. I mean, gun ships
was a dirty job. It wasn’t an out there you shooting at this guy and he’s shooting at you. Quite
often you caught them with their pants down and you lowered the boom on them. I mean, that’s a
cold hard fact.

SM: These gun ships, these were armed with the two door gunners, the M-60s, and you
had the rockets? These are 2.75 inch rockets?
RF: Uh huh.
SM: And mini guns as well?
RF: On the one I flew on I believe it was an M-5 or something or another. It had a .40
millimeter nose gun. I crewed that, and in the 129th I crewed that almost exclusively, the .40
millimeter system. We had 38 rockets, 2 door guns, and a 40 mm.

SM: Wow. And the 40 mm ammo, that would be a mixture of HE, [flachets], stuff like
that, or would it be pretty much exclusively HE?
RF: I believe it was all HE, I believe. They hit the ground and exploded. I don’t believe there was any [flachets]. I don’t think so. Not to my knowledge. They were very effective. The .40 millimeter was the best gun but you had to get in close. You had to get in close and as far as…it was my favorite system because I mean you could cover a lot of ground with it really quick. You could get in there, that thing, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom! Up front it’s chunking them out. But, you couldn’t go real fast. It seemed like you needed…most of the pilots slowed it down a little bit. It flew real nose down and it was a very effective thing, very effective thing. But the pilots didn’t like it. Most pilots didn’t like to fly it because the CG was way off on it. It was way nose down. Quite often they’d run out of cyclic trying to get it into a revetment or something and park it and they just ran out. I flew, I did real good in the 129th. I had no problems there and they wanted to promote me to the platoon sargent of the gun platoon and I ran into difficulty there. They sent me to the promotion board in Na Trang. I went down there and partied instead. I went back and they said, “How’d you do?” and I said, “Great, great.” I went back to flying and they came back and said, “You didn’t show up to the promotion board, did you?” and I said, “Well, no, they must have lost the paper,” and they said, “Well, you’re going down again and you can’t avoid this. We’re going to make you the platoon sargent of the gun platoon,” because they had a lot of respect with them and then I said, “Nope, I’m going to extend my tour and I’m going to another outfit.” Well, they said, “Man, all we want you to do is be a platoon sargent,” and I said, “I’m out of here. I can’t do it, I can’t do it. You can’t let up, I can’t do it.” So I extended and went to the 71st.

SM: And what about the platoon sergeant’s position didn’t you like?

RF: You had to send people out and I couldn’t do that. I mean, you couldn’t send all these guys out if you couldn’t go. I told them I’d do it if I could continue to crew, as long as I got to go out, but they wouldn’t allow that. They said, “You’re going to be the platoon sargent and no, you won’t be flying anymore,” and that was the end of that.

SM: Okay, so you went to the 71st attack helicopter company. This was in 1967?

RF: Uh huh.

SM: What was your first impression of that unit?

RF: When I got there they told me, “You’re going to the gun platoon.” I told them I wanted to be in the slicks because I was getting pretty burned out on all the heavy duty fighting in the gun platoon and they said, “No, you’re going to the gun platoon.” So, in the first I didn’t
realize that there was not only maybe a discipline problem with the outfit but maybe also poor leadership. When I walked into the hooch where I was going to be living, I hadn’t slept in 2 days and 2 nights and I was very tired. When I walked in there was 5 guys in there and I spoke to them. I said, “Hey, how are y’all doing,” trying to break the ice a little bit and they just glared at me and so I said, “Well, okay, maybe somebody’s in a bad mood.” I went ahead and made up my cot and I laid down on my cot and I fell asleep instantly. I was exhausted. After 2 nights and 2 days, you get very tired. One of those men came over and kicked my cot by my head. He kicked it very violently. I raised up, of course it woke me up, I raised up and I said, “What the hell’s going on here?” so I laid back down and I couldn’t believe it, maybe I’ll deal with this tomorrow, and I fell asleep again. This huge kick happened again that woke me again. I raised up and I said, “Don’t do it again!” and I took my 38 pistol, it was an issued weapon for crew members and I laid it over by my pillow and I warned him, I said, “Don’t do this again,” and this time I didn’t go to sleep. I stayed awake and I waited and I could hear him walking and he walked down and when he quit walking I knew he was kicking so I snatched my pistol, I lunged upward leaning upward as I slung and I really… I was just trying to get him out of my face, but the pistol connected with the side of his head over his ear in a full swing. It was a miracle it did not kill him. He hit the floor totally unconscious and his buddies ran down. At that point I acted very violent. I pointed the gun at them and I said, “Which one of you are next?” and they were, “Hey, we just want to get our buddy.” I said, “Take the scum bag and get out of my sight.” They got him out of there. I think I probably… I didn’t know the situation there, I think it was because of leadership, but that individual they had to shave half his head and it took 13 stitches to put his skin back to together up there and no doubt he had a headache for a couple of weeks and maybe still got a headache from it, I don’t know. The next day I went to the flight line. They assigned me an aircraft. The other guys in the platoon were…the word had got around. They didn’t like me too much. I said, “Well,” they weren’t talking to me. One of them walked down the flight line. He approached me. I stood my ground. He was a big guy. When he quit walking, my nose was touching his chest and I was looking up at him, he’s glaring down at me, and I’m not backing up and he finally backed up a step and stuck his hand out and shook my hand and said, “If you need anything, give me a…” you know, and I said, “Okay, I appreciate it.” So then we started flying. I got a gunner named Jack Sep who turned out to be one of the finest gunners. If you talk to him, tremendous person, tremendous person. Great, brave young man he
was and no doubt he still is. I wouldn't want to cross this guy. They had been really mistreating
this person also tremendously there and me and him got along really well together and it didn’t
take long until a lot of the pilots realized that we were really a good crew to be with and so they
started demanding for us on missions and of course the best pilots seemed to be getting us quite
often and we kept flying a lot. We had a forward area where we flew out of called Hill 35 and at
35 they had a tent set up for us, ammo, no food. We had a box of C rations on the chopper but
they had a mess hall up there that we could go to and get food every now and then. When we
went up there usually they would rotate. You’d stay up there maybe a couple of days and then
you’d rotate back to Chu Lai, get a shower and everything, and then somebody’d take your
place, stay up there a couple of days, and then back up you would go. But then all of a sudden
when we’d go back to Chu Lai and if you flew out of Chu Lai, like they had missions going out
of there also around Tam Ky and Sau,, if you flew out of there then you were subjected to a lot
of abuse from the NCOs and the company. It wasn’t Army type stuff. It was almost like, well
I’ll give you a good example. When you’d come in late off of a mission, you haven’t eaten,
you’re hungry, you’re tired. Maybe you’ve flown half the night. Maybe it’s a big fight. Maybe
you were really afraid for your life a lot and that was quite often. Anybody that wasn’t scared
there is full of bull shit. When you’re meeting machine guns against machine guns, it’s a
terrifying experience especially when you can hear their guns above your guns. It’s real scary,
but sometimes that’s the way it was. At any rate, I’ll give you an example. We were coming
back in sometimes and we would have to rearm, refuel, and clean all the spent brass off, check
the airplane over, check the fluid level, and then we could go eat and quite often we’d get up
there and we’d be 5-10 minutes late for the meal. We’d go in the mess hall as fast as we could
get there and the cook would tell you, “Hey, you’re too late.” And of course we’d say, “Wait a
minute man, we been out all night. We’re tired, we’re really hungry, really hungry, can’t you
just feed us?” and we would…it started getting, “Get the fuck out of here!” and so we, one of the
worst times, somebody yelled. We were going to pull guns. Somebody said, “Better get an off!”
They went and got this warrant officer and he orders the guy, “You’ll feed these men. These
men have been out fighting. You will feed these men.” So finally, they did and it wasn’t there
long after we came back, same kind of situation. They refused to feed us. I pulled a gun and the
cook, now I’ve got the cook at gun point, somebody yells, “Get an officer, get an officer, bring
an officer in!” and all this shit was unnecessary. It was terrible. It was downright terrible, and
then it got to the degree where when you came back in, if you came in off a mission like my
gunner, they would grab him, “Hey, you got detail.” I mean, here’s a guy that was exhausted;
not only physically exhausted and tired, but also mentally exhausted and tired because you
needed a little chance to recoup every now and then. This is a very stressful, stressful type thing.
I can describe it, but you can’t possibly get the feeling. So we said, “Hey. Down here’s not the
place for us.” The 1st sargent was very mean to us, said we were going to go up to the hill and
live at the hill as much as we can, fly straight out of there, only come back to Chu Lai when we
got to. I mean, after a week you had to get a bath. So we started coming up whenever we had to
and then when we’d get back down there they would fly me back down sometimes to pull guard
duty for them back there. I’m flying combat missions against the communists back there, and
they would fly me back there to a secure area to pull guard duty for them, so I mean this isn’t
good. So time went on. The platoon was very proud, the enlisted men in the platoon were very
proud. The officers, they weren’t as tight with the men as they needed to be. You needed to be a
close knit crew. You needed to feel free to talk to each other and to be part of a team. It wasn’t
that way. You weren’t part of a team. They didn’t brief you. The gunner and the crew chief
didn’t get briefed a lot. Very seldom you got briefed. You were going out there and when you
got out there to the target area that’s when maybe you got a basic briefing, but besides that fact
and staying at the hill, this one particular time we went back to Chu Lai. When we went back
there, they had a platoon meeting the 1st sargent. We didn’t know what’s going on here. There’s
a platoon sargent, we just seemed to be in real bad condition as far as discipline went and I didn’t
know why this…I had the altercation with this guy but no doubt it was because of discipline. No
doubt the whole thing was falling apart on them. The 1st sargent, he approaches the platoon. He
comes out there, 1st sergeant’s got us in ranks, and the first thing he calls…our call sign was
Firebirds and we were proud members of that team and the first thing he says, “You shit birds!”
Well, you don’t do that to these men who are going out and doing this duty, so I said, his name
was Hillhouse, and I said, “Is this coming from the shithouse?” and from there things went
downhill so he had it in for me big time. So, instead of fighting with him, I’m staying on the hill
because this guy is very, very vindictive, very mean, so what he was doing, and I didn’t find this
out until later, any awards and decorations that we were putting in for by whoever he was
destroying the paperwork. So as far as air medals go and stuff like that, me and Jack, we flew
for almost a full year in this outfit. We never received one air medal. Jack got decorated for
heroism on the 5th of January, ’68. When Jack left to go home, he ripped up his…Hillhouse ripped up his awards and decorations in front of him. But, this is the kind of man that we were under and this is what we had to deal with and we were somewhat…I’ll give you another example, a good example. On the 5th of January, ’68 there was a gunner named Pfister. They took us to the hill that day and somehow or another we got swapped over, crews got swapped over, and I ended up with an aircraft commander named McCall, he was also the flight leader. Big battles in the valley, big battles going on. They’d moved in God knows how much anti-aircraft, 12…

SM: This is CD 2 of the interview with Mr. Ray Foley. Okay Mr. Foley, would you continue with that story, please, about Mr. Pfister, is that right?

RF: Yeah. Jim Pfister, he should be here at this reunion. He hadn’t been in the Firebirds very long and since this is not going any further, I hope, I feel like he was probably not as experienced as he should have been in that position. He approached me to borrow…I had 2 M-60 machine guns, I had a spare gun, and like I say the fighting was big time fighting, big time fighting and during that day he approached me to borrow my spare gun and both of the guns were perfect. They were very fast shooters. We would phase them up so they would shoot much faster than the stock M-60s that would fire 550 to 650 or something. Ours would probably turn up maybe 1000, 1200 rounds a minute. I mean, they would top. There was ways that we did to make that happen. We needed the fire power and we made it work. We would beef up the buffer in the back and drill out the gas cylinder port and a couple of other tricks to make the gun really…it would operate twice as fast, but anyway. I didn’t want to loan Pfister my gun because I knew I might need it, but I didn’t have any other choice so I told him, “You can use my gun, you can take it, but I want it back clean.” That’s my last words to him. We were scrambled out a little bit later. Infantry troop was overrun. It was bad.

SM: Do you want to pause for a minute?

RF: Yeah, give me a minute.

SM: Go ahead.

RF: Well Jim, I loaned the gun to him, I told him I wanted it back clean. We go out there, this regimen of bad ass North Vietnamese had just jumped all over a company of 196 and I think they probably killed 20 men. We tried to help them. There’s reported that like 1650 or 12.7 aircraft positions around that battle. They were waiting for us, and they shot us up. On the
first pass through there, Jack was…a lot of the fire was coming from his side. He’s burning
ammo up trying to get them off. The aircraft commander was screaming, “Get them off us, Jack,
get them off us!” I mean, that’s the way it was going. It wasn’t’ good. The next thing I hear is
Frank Anton in the wing, he says, “I’m hit really bad,” and he says, “We got to land. We got to
find a place to put it down,” and all of a sudden he says, “I’m real bad. It’s too late. Wherever I
hit, I hit,” so it had locked up. His hydraulics were shot out. In a Charlie model, you couldn’t
fly it without hydraulics. It wouldn’t work. You had to be on the ground before the hydraulics
quit, to the degree where they put an accumulator in there to allow…it had a giant spring in it
and hydraulic fluid would compress that spring and then if you lost the 2 hydraulic systems, you
could flip this switch and it would allow a little bit of hydraulic pressure to come in there and let
you move the controls again and you could try to get it on the ground like that. Well, he didn’t
have anything. He was locked up in a circle above the battle, in a big circle, and the aircraft was
trying to roll upside down. They were fighting the airplane trying to keep it upright so finally he
backed off on the throttle and that started descending, the airplane started descending because the
rotor RPM slowed and down they…they started down in a big circle, and where they hit the
ground, they…we were coming down behind them and my view was blocked when they hit but I
understand that they bounced like 40, 50 feet in the air and come down sideways, somewhat
sideways, and the airplane ends up on it’s right hand side. The landing light is shining across the
rice paddy, they were on a rice paddy. As we descended down beside them we were still taking
heavy fire. One of the rounds hit, blew something up up front. One hit behind me and blew
something up and then a small round hit and at that time I didn’t know we had fuel leaking
badly. We had the pedal shot out from underneath the aircraft commander’s feet. This
airplane’s not going to stay in the air very much longer. We had to pull up and out and we had to
leave out buddies in there. Well, we get back to 35, we sit down. Jack said that we had 64 bullet
holes and I don’t know how many we had. I think the fuel cell behind me was blown, had a big
gaping hole in it, a lot of other damage. Those guys, there wasn’t any way to get them out. They
were captured the next…3 of them were captured, one of them escaped. I think because of the
training, those new gunners and new crew chief didn’t have proper training. When they exit the
airplane, of course you’re not going to stay in the airplane any longer than you have to, but
you’ve got to come out with your guns. Somebody’s got to come out with a gun. They didn’t
come out with any guns. Everybody’s gun had gotten torn away from them but you have to find
the gun and they didn’t find the gun. They stayed fairly close to the airplane. There was enemy
activity all around them. They came out there, they were hiding of course and the enemy moved
all around the aircraft and then they moved on. One of the people escaped. His name was Frank
Carson. He ended up getting away from them. They chased him for a long time, tried to kill
him, but he managed to elude them. Sometime later, well actually around 3 months later, MPs
came up to the hill and they wanted to know where I was and, “Right there.” They told me, they
asked me if I was armed. I had a 38 right there. They said, “Let’s see the 38.” I handed it to
them and then they got real nasty. They told me, “Let’s go get in the airplane.” I said, “Where
are we going?” and then they threatened me. They said, “Listen, if you say another word, we
will put you unconscious and we’ll load you in the airplane.” They loaded me up in the airplane,
they flew me south to Chu Lai and I couldn’t talk. I couldn’t ask, “Why are we doing this?
What are you doing? What have you done? What have I done?” We get down there, they take
me to the company area and they took me into the orderly room and I asked the clerk on the way
in, I figured they couldn’t beat you to death in front of everybody, so I asked the clerk, “What
have I done?” and he turned his back to me. He couldn’t say anything to me. They took him in
the back, they took me to the back and there was 8 officers in there, a couple of civilians, and
they set me down in the middle and they started asking me about my girlfriend over there. I said,
“I just fly combat missions, I don’t have a girlfriend.” They said, “Well, you got friends over
here.” I said, “No, I ain’t got no friends over here. I got all the buddies I fly with. That’s all the
friends I got.” So this went on for half an hour and I didn’t know what in the hell they were
going to. I didn’t have the faintest idea. They treated me really bad. They didn’t know me at
all. They didn’t know how proud I was. They didn’t know what I was doing everyday, but they
wanted to hang me with something and I didn’t know what it was. I didn’t know how to defend
myself. Nobody was taking my side. All of a sudden one of them throws a paper down in front
of me and he calls me a son of a bitch, “You sold it to them, you son of a bitch,” and I said,
“Sold what?” and he said, “That.” And my signature was on a form where I’d signed for an M-
60 machine gun and I said, “I signed for that gun. It’s one that I had. I don’t know which one it
is because I signed for a lot of guns and I can’t remember all these numbers.” They said,
“Well?” and I said, “I think that’s the gun that I loaned to Pfister 3 months ago and he was shot
down and captured and I told the supply sargent that that gun was in enemy hands and he said he
had processed the paper work,” and they said, “Somebody go get him!” and they sent somebody
to go get that supply sargent. He came in, and he looked at me when he came in and I looked at him and I could see in his eyes he didn’t like what he was getting into and I’m thinking, “Man, you better tell the truth because this is serious.” They were getting ready to do something with me I didn’t want done. So they ask him and he told them the truth. He said, “He told me that gun was down and I forgot to process the paperwork,” and I mean, he was a career man at that time. We were at war with rear echelon. We were not only at war with the communists. When we came back in, these people didn’t know how to treat us. They didn’t, at that point in time, this outfit didn’t know how to treat its fighting men. They didn’t know, they didn’t have a clue, and they didn’t care. In the end, they wanted to be nice to me but it was too late. The gun was there leaning up against the wall and I said, “Is that the gun?” and they said, “Yes,” so they all jumped up and wanted to slap me on the back and everything. I grabbed the gun and I said, “Don’t touch me.” I said, “Get out of my way,” and I walked out of there, and when I walked out of the room I said, “I’m leaving Vietnam just as soon as my time’s up and I’m getting out of the service. I don’t like this kind of thing.” So that’s what I did. I ended my career after that.

But the difference between the 129th and the 71st, in the 129th a lot of times when you got off those missions, there wasn’t anything to see the 1st sargent down there. He would be down there. He’s helped me load rockets. He would help me. He would be down there. He would ask you, “Hey, what can we do? How can we help you? Do you need anything? There’s R&R coming up, how would you like to go on it?” anything, anything. The CO would come down there, the platoon leader was always nice to you, “Hey, how you guys doing?” The platoon leader, I’ve flown his aircraft in the 129th quite often. When we would land, he would apologize. He’d say, “Hey, I’m sorry to take you guys out there. You have no armor plating. We have armored plates up front, you guys have nothing.” He would apologize. He’d say, “Man, I’m really…I hate to take you out there like that,” and that meant so much to us. Now the officers, the flying warrant officers and stuff was catching hell also in the 71st but we didn’t know that. All we knew was our situation. We were sort of separate, the warrant officers, the pilot’s warrant officers, and then the enlisted crew members, the gunners and the crew chief. We were all by ourselves. Then, after March I think it was, we didn’t have a platoon sargent. So we were just trying to survive. We were flying combat missions every day, coming back. We were at their mercy. We would much rather face the enemy than go back there and face them. That’s a fact.

SM: That was a consensus between you and your fellow…
RF: Oh yeah. If you have a chance, talk to Jack Sep. He’s a real nice guy. He’s a real, real nice guy. He’s the one that they tore his medal up in front of him. When I left, I was awarded a purple heart there. I wouldn’t have been awarded a purple heart, but I was wounded in a place called, no, I was at 35. I was flying out of there. I was hit in the knee. I continued to fly for 2 days. It wasn’t a real bad wound. A piece of metal had hit me in the knee really hard and it drove up underneath my kneecap and the hole, they field dressed it there. Those medics put me in for a purple heart, and that bypassed my outfit, see? So I got the purple heart and there wasn’t nothing the 1st sargent could do about it or I’d have never got it. But, 2 days later, my knee got infected. I had to go back to…and when I went back, oh man, they treated me bad again.

SM: Were you the one who was threatened…the surgeon threatened to court marshal you and cut off your leg at the knee?

RF: It had gotten infected and he said, “I may take your leg,” and I told him, “You won’t take my leg,” and then he gouged a pair of…no anesthesia, man, these guys were tough. He had a guy holding me down and he rimmed up this device trying to find the shrapnel in my leg and he was hurting me bad and finally I said, “See, don’t do that no more.” He said, “What are you going to do?” I said, “I got one good leg. I’m going to kick the dog shit out of you.” So he got mad. But, like I say, we were fighting the rear. They weren’t supporting us. So then, it was so crazy, they just didn’t have competent people back there saying, “Your front line of our guys here, how can we help you?” Instead it was how they could be mean to us, and we didn’t have the tolerance to put up with a lot of it so we reacted when they treated us bad. I mean, in the mess hall, you wanted to pull a gun and get some food, you know? But acting nice to them wasn’t getting us anywhere. When I left, I think they say probably I had like 800 missions in that outfit and maybe 1200 combat assault hours and I never got one air medal and my gunner, he had nearly as much time and he never got one air medal. A lot of the guys, they got theirs, but they made sure that the ones that said anything or they didn’t like, they didn’t get anything. So, it was really, really a nasty…the main person that probably gave us the most grief was our head NCO and our commanding officer. He should have been on top of it, but he wasn’t.

SM: Who was the commander?

RF: Major Bell was the commander.

SM: And this was 1st sargent…what was his name?
RF: Hillhouse.
SM: Hillhouse, Hillhouse.
RF: I’ll give you a good example of another example. One time we had an aircraft that was due maintenance and we would have to fly it back to Chu Lai and they had scheduled maintenance like 25 hours, 50 hours, 75 hours, 100 hour maintenances and 100 hour maintenance was a big maintenance. Well they wanted aircraft availability. They wanted to get the airplane back. We had jerked the guns off, cleaned all the brass out and everything, and they would take the aircraft down to maintenance and most of the time, the next day, it would be back down there. We’d put the guns on it and everything and it’d be back out flying combat missions. They needed them and because we had so many shot down, we just couldn’t keep enough airplanes. We brought this airplane back. We had been flying bad missions, bad, hard missions. We landed back at Chu Lai. Me and Jack were scrambling. You had to clean all up...sometimes you’d have heaped in the floor spent shell casings and belt links, you know, the metal clips that hold the belts together? They’d be this high in the floor and as you were coming back, a lot of times, you were cleaning this stuff out, just throwing it out of the airplane so that when you got back you could do other things because you had other things you had to do. So, we had to unbolt those mini guns and take the rocket tubes off and clean all of this brass and stuff off and a tech inspector from the maintenance area, he comes down, and we were cleaning all this stuff out and he grabs my log book. Well the crew chief takes care of the aircraft log book. He’s writing something in my log book and I’m cleaning all this stuff out and I go over there, “Hey, what’s going on?” His name was Harlan and he says, “I’m just observing this aircraft.” And I said, “What are you doing in my logbook there, man? What are you putting in my logbook?” and he says, “I’m writing up all the stuff here that I’m finding in this airplane.” I said, “What are you writing up,” and I took the logbook and he’s writing up, “Spent shell casings and brass throughout the airplane, aircraft is filthy, forms aren’t made out,” I mean, we had just landed, we’re doing this stuff, and I said, “Hey, listen. I’m doing this stuff. You’re ruining my log book. You’re making entries that make me look like a dog, make me look bad,” and he said, “Well next time you’ll be a little faster.” He was an E6 and I says, “Well wait a minute, I got a solution to this problem.” I said, “There’s a tent right there. Let’s me and you meet behind it, and then we will square this thing away. We’ll roll around in the sand and I’m going to beat your damn teeth out,” and so he throws the logbook back inside and he hauls ass down to the
major. So what he tells the major, I don’t know, but they call me in and the major says, “Okay, I want you to stand there and keep your mouth shut.” So he says, “If you ever, ever again say one thing to the tech inspector, then we will fire you from the crew chief position. You won’t be flying anymore,” and I waited until he got through and I says, “Now, can you shut your mouth and don’t say another word, or it’s over for you,” so I walked out and I said, “Okay,” the last 2 years ago at the reunion I found the maintenance officer at the reunion. He’s at this one too. I walked up and talked to him and I said, “Say, you know, over these years I’ve got a real problem, you know, back from when I was in Vietnam,” and he said, “What is it?” and I said, “You treated me like a damn dog, and you never allowed me to tell you what happened,” and he said, “Okay, tell me,” and I told him and he said, he apologized, and he said this person had caused him a lot of grief, that he had done this to other people and later on they found out what he was doing, he was a bad person, and they had to relieve him of the job that he had. But, it was just another bad person back there that was causing us a lot of grief that was trying to fight the war. So, that was the way it was. It was hard, it was hard, it was hard. You really… I had more respect for the guys that were shooting at me than I had for the guys that I had to work for. Tremendously hard, in comparison to the 129th who had good officers and good leadership, it was so obvious. They made you, in the way they worked with you, it made you want to do well, do good. Made you really appreciate them. We’d have gone anywhere for them, we’d have done anything. I can tell you a zillion stories of things that we did and how crazy and how risky it was and we managed to survive, but in the 71st we were just trying to survive. The men that flew together. A lot of good men that hung together and there was one guy, his name is Roger Hall, you may have seen that great big huge guy there? This man, this man who very seldom ever flew with me, and when Jack rotated to the States Roger was also getting ready to go home in March of ’68. They assigned a new gunner with me who had never been in an aircraft. Never shot a gun before I don’t think. This guy had never shot anything, maybe basic training, and I appealed to the aircraft commander, “Don’t take us out with this guy! This guy don’t have the experience. Man, he’s going to get himself, us killed, and the airplane destroyed.” So the aircraft flight leader, he assured me, “Listen, I’ll keep us out of trouble. I won’t take us in a place.” Sure as shit, that’s the first place they went. They blew holes in my airplane this big around. You could have thrown footballs, I mean basketballs, through them.

SM: What were they firing at you to make holes that large?
RF: Armor piercing, incinerator type rounds from a 127 millimeter. They would explode when they hit. They blow big holes, blow big holes, make big explosion, boom. We landed, we flew the airplane back with electrical smoke throughout the airplane. We made it back. When we got to Chu Lai I jumped out and there was a ¾ ton truck there. I said, I told the aircraft commander, I said, “I’ve got to go find a gunner, an experienced man.” I roared to the company area, and I drove up there a little fast. I mean, I was desperate. I was in a hurry. I needed a gunner. They were going to have this airplane going again and I had to be back down there. I slid in in a cloud of dust, I swear I did, and this 1st sargent came running out there. He confronted me and I plowed him. I plowed through him. I was angry. He was in my way. I had a mission. I shouldered him as I went by him. He went back into the orderly room yelling and cursing and I went through the hooches trying to find a gunner, experienced man and before I plowed him I told him, “I’m here, I have to find a gunner,” and he started yelling at me about the dust and I told him, “I have to find a gunner, man. There’s a war going on,” and he blocked me, he blocked me and I rammed him with my shoulder and went on by and I was in real good shape.

SM: This was 1st sargent Hillhouse?

RF: Yeah. So I went, I located this…I ran into Roger Hall and he’d seen me and he said, “Foley, what is wrong with you?” I mean, I was distressed. I mean, I’m running into too many obstacles and I said, “I’ve got to find a gunner.” I said, “I’ve got a new man who won’t shoot. He’s getting us killed. He has no training. I must find a gunner,” and he says, “I turned in my gear Ray. I’m going home tomorrow,” and I said, “Well, I’ve got to find a gunner,” and I went on by him to continue searching and there was no more. I knew there was no more, and he said behind me, he said, “If somebody…if there’s some gear, I’ve turned in my gear,” and I said, “I’ve got the gear of the guy who is afraid to shoot in the aircraft,” and he said, “Let’s go.” He was going home the following morning. Roger was wounded that night. They raised all kinds of hell with him the next day. I mean, they raised hell with him because he went and all night long it was probably the biggest battle that we fought.

SM: Where was this?

RF: It was in the Que Son Valley near the Heip Duc Valley. If I remember right there were like 4 or 5 cavalry gun ships shot down that day and there were crews on the ground. We were trying to get them out. We were trying to find them, locate them. Darkness caught us, we couldn’t’ find them. We were all night long trying to locate them. We were going in slow.
There were enemy...they would...it was really amazing because the enemy would open up on
the right hand side, Roger would react to them and put them down, and it seemed like instantly
they would open up on me. I would cut loose back, stop them, and then back on his side and it
was so smooth. I've never seen it like that. Boom, he would shoot back, [machine gun noise], I
would shoot back, [machine gun noise] he's over there working out, stopping them over there,
back there, I mean it was just one of them things. I mean, it was so awesome. It was so
awesome. But, I let one guy shoot up the airplane. I thought it was one of the cav guys. He,
from about as far as me to that corner we were down in there rooting around trying to find this
aircraft in the darkness and this M-16 opened up on us and I could see the end of the barrel and
the flash opener. He was on fully automatic and it looked like he was shooting maybe under
us, I couldn’t tell. I jerked the gun up on him and I started to pull down and I said, “It may be
one of those pilots trying to signal me with an M-16,” so I didn’t pull the trigger. He riddled my
airplane behind me. He shot the shit out of us and I kicked myself in the ass for not getting that
guy. Damn, I didn’t get him. Every since then I really...but that was...

SM: But it was a judgement call.

RF: It was. I had to make that decision.

SM: You had to make that decision.

RF: Split decision. That quick.

SM: Right. That 16 could have been in the hands of a pilot.

RF: I thought it was a pilot.

SM: And imagine how you would feel if you had killed a pilot.

RF: Yep. Or one of the crew chiefs or the gunners on one of those other airplanes. But
that was, in a quick think, that’s the way it was.

SM: Well then you made the right decision.

RF: When I went to...I knew I was getting close, I knew it was time for me to go home.
It was, I think, July the 29th I was supposed to go home I think on the 30th or something. You
lose all track of time over there. I knew it was July sometime. I just kept flying missions, flying
missions, flying missions, go back, take a shower, try to get back to the hill and fly more
missions. All of a sudden a chopper flies up there and they come and they get me and they say,
“You’re going home tomorrow,” so they couldn’t fuck with me anymore. Hillhouse was over.
The madhouse was over. But, he succeeded in harassing a lot of people and being mean to a lot
of people. A lot of people look at it like, “What’s an air medal?” For every 25 combat hours
that you put in, you remember those hours, you remember the things that went on and those
medals represent those hours and he deprived us of those. He’s dead now, he died of a heart
attack. But, that’s the kind of leadership that we had there. It was poor, very, very poor.
SM: Question about the transition from the 129th to the 71st; did you also notice a change
in the enemy that you were encountering? For instance, when you were in the 71st, this was
during and after Tet of ’68.
RF: Yeah, this is before and after.
SM: Yeah, so of course one of the things about Tet ’68 is prior to Tet ’65 to ’68, a lot of
Viet Cong activity throughout South Vietnam. But, after Tet, most of the action was US against
PAVN, NVA, leaders from North Vietnam. Was that the case with your unit? Could you tell the
difference?
RF: You could tell a big difference between NVA and VC. Big difference, big
difference.
SM: What were the differences?
RF: When you went against the NVA, they’d shoot you down. They didn’t miss.
They’d shoot you down.
SM: They were better trained?
RF: Oh yeah. If you didn’t, when they opened up on you, you better be ready to do
something about it. They’d shoot you down. The VC, we used to laugh sometimes. I mean, it’s
funny. I mean, it’s comical. They couldn’t hit the side of a barn. But then there were people
that could, but most of them couldn’t. With the 101st airborne, I was used to the NVA because
they were throwing the 101st airborne at the NVA. So in the 129th, there was like the Battle of
Doc To up there, Carpenter was up there. He was awarded the congressional medal of honor up
there in that battle. He called napalm in on his own men, 2nd of the 5-0 101st airborne. We were
supporting all that. All that was…we lost people, we lost choppers. 101st at…I can’t think of the
name of that place now, but they…101st airborne at that time, they were using them like they
were using us. Wherever the NVA popped up, they were throwing the 101st airborne at them for
about a year there if I remember right and that time frame I can’t remember exactly the months.
SM: Was it the ’66-’67 time frame?
RF: Yeah. Well, it was '67. 101st, we spent a lot of time in the highlands up in there, up and around Doc Tho, Kontun, Pleiku, up in there. So the 129th was a fighting outfit. Actually, the 129th lost a lot of men. They lost a good deal of men in my platoon. Guys from the 129th, they told me I was going on a recon one time for 2 days, 2 or 3 days, and to pack some gear. I loaded my airplane, go down there and I wait on the pilots and they come out there and say, “Hey, this one’s not going. You’re too close to maintenance,” so they sent the other aircraft and we lost all 4 of those guys. I really felt bad about that because I always thought, “Hey, they wouldn’t have got me,” but we were young. That’s the way you thought; you were better. You would have stopped them. The South Vietnamese, they were some real good troops there. We saved a bunch of them one time. They gave me a Vietnamese cross of gallantry, a personal one. Real high medal in their thing.

SM: This is, you’re talking about ARVN? The ARVN troops? Yes.

RF: Uh huh, the special forces ARVN troops.

SM: Okay.

RF: On a mission where they were they were pretty well being killed off and we arrived on the scene and I rigged up twin M-60s on my door and they were bad, man. They were bad. They did a good job. But, it was really different flying in the 71st, it was really different. I think if we would have had a good platoon sargent that would have fought for our interests and our…we would have been okay, but we didn’t have that. We didn’t have…

SM: No one would stand up to Hillhouse?

RF: Nobody. We didn’t even have a platoon sargent, he made sure of that. He wouldn’t assign one at the last. They had one, an infantry guy named Boucher and he was, he only stayed there a couple of months. He bailed out. He never told us why he was leaving but after a while it became apparent; Hillhouse probably drove him. He went back to the infantry. I mean, there’s, you know, it’s too bad they didn’t have good leadership. They could have been a lot better outfit, a better fighting outfit, and they would split crews up and you needed to bond with a crew. That guy beside you, you needed to have him there. You need to know him. You need to know how he thinks. You need to know how that copilot thinks, how that aircraft commander thinks. You need to work as a team. When you’re throwing different people in there all day long it’s almost like you’re pulling in a different
direction and a lot of times when you need to make split decisions you can’t do it. It don’t happen. All of a sudden they have…you’re not thinking on the same time frame they are.

SM: Have you read Chuck Carlock’s book, Firebirds?
RF: Uh huh. My picture’s in there.
SM: Yeah, I saw it. I’m in the middle of reading it. But, one of the things that struck me as being rather disturbing was there seemed to be, at times, a conflict between the crew chief and door gunner and pilot and copilot and for instance he describes one instance where it was a joke played on I guess new pilots where the gunners would intentionally…
RF: He said I did that…put brass on them?
SM: Yeah, put brass on the back of their necks!
RF: I got onto Chuck about that. He says I did that, but I didn’t do that. I put brass on a lot of pilots, but I didn’t…
SM: On purpose?
RF: …in the heat of the battle, I didn’t worry about where that brass hit.
SM: I was just going to say, I mean, you could understand where you’re in conflict, you’re actually engaging enemy, where the brass goes is who cares. But if someone were to do it…
RF: I put brass on Frank Carson who’s a real nice guy. We got back in and I mean [clicking noise], they were stuck to his neck all over the damn place and he gets out of the airplane, he looks at me and I seen him, I said, “Oh man!” He’s jerking them off. I didn’t mean to do that. I never meant to do that to anybody. But, they thought, I think they thought at times that we did.
SM: Did you know of anybody who did do something like that intentionally?
RF: Yeah, I knew of some. I knew of some that had mean pilots that treated them bad.
SM: Okay, so they retaliated?
RF: So they retaliated. I retaliated on pilots before by making a lot of noise back there. We had these pilots who would overlap rotor blades. God, they’d scare the shit out of me. We’d be flying formation real close, damn rotor blade’s coming right by my door, [makes swooshing noises] right by my face.
SM: Man, that’s messed up.
RF: I’m going, “You son of a bitches are too close!” and they’d think it was funny. I mean, they were brazen bastards, you know? I mean, they were really gutsy. Then, it would overlap the blades.

SM: That is stupid!

RF: I guess the blades are missing each other maybe this far. But it’s just too close. So, I appeal to these pilots. They don’t do that, now! “You’re going to get us killed man! They hit, it’s over!” Oh boy, they thought it was funny. “We done scared the shit out of Foley again! Oh okay!” “You sons of bitches, I’m going to get even!” So we go out in a bad area where there’s a lot of 50s and stuff and I’d take my damn ball ping and I’d take that damn ball ping and they’re of course looking forward, I hold it up in the air and I drop that son of a bitch on the floor, boom! God dog it, man, they went through the roof. I did that about 3 or 4 times to them. I’d done shot their nerves. They don’t know what happened. Finally, they figured it out and they confronted me. They said, “Foley, you dropping that damn hammer back there, aren’t you?” and I said, “I don’t know, something happened.” And so we get out of the airplane and they come back and they talk to me and they said, “What are you doing dropping that hammer back there?” and I said, “I don’t know. Something happened back there, but what are you guys doing overlapping those damn rotor blades?” so they made a deal with me. “We won’t overlap, you don’t drop the hammer.” So I said, “Good deal man. Here we go.” So I did shit like that to them.

SM: Well, that’s understandable.

RF: I went on a mission one time, I got to tell you about this. We landed on top of a mountain in the 129th. They said, “We got a wounded individual, we need somebody to pick them up.”

SM: What time frame is this?

RF: This was in ’66, so there was a bunch of fighting then going on up there, so we dropped in there. We were going to Na Trang and it was a high peak and there was a small landing place up there and we got in there with a gun ship and they bring this woman over and they loaded her on my airplane. She was on a stretcher. They loaded her on there and this guy, aircraft’s running now, both pilots were in, me and the gunner load her on. This guy’s helping here, he says, “Listen,” he said, “Chief, that is one mean bitch. Don’t take your eyes off of her!” I said, “Okay.” He said, “She is shot…” I forgot who or what, “But she is the enemy.” Good looking girl. So, I get in the airplane and I take off and my pilots, man, they see this good
looking girl back there and they’re [makes noises] yeah, yeah, yeah. She’s shot through the leg, clean shot through the muscular part of her leg, and we’re going along there and I had my dark visor down. You had a dark visor in your helmet and I had it slid down and I’m doing my duty out the door but I’m watching her and one of the pilots had a .45 hanging off the back of his seat and you know, all of a sudden I realized, “Damn, they don’t know,” and this .45’s hanging back there and I’m watching her out of the corner of my eye and she looked at me ever so gently and smooth, she looks at me and then she looks at the pilot and you wouldn’t even notice what she was doing if you weren’t aware, and then she looked at the other gunner and then she looked at this .45. Then she started moving her body. She moved her body real subtly until she was in arm with this .45 and I’m watching this, you know, and slowly, slowly, she’s maneuvering herself into position and then she looked back at me one last time and she studies me for a minute and I know she can’t see my eyes through the dark visor and I’m pretending I’m looking away and I’m watching her. Then she turns around and as she starts to move toward that gun in that buttoned up holster I reached down and grabbed my ball pin hammer that was laying by my seat and I smashed her in the knee with it. I smashed her a good one, pow! Well the pilots, they turn around and they see this and they say, “Damn, Foley, what the hell are you doing you idiot!” and I said, “This woman’s going for your pistol.” If she’d have got her hands on that pistol, there’d have been 4 more dead crew members smashing into the earth. She’d have killed all of us, there’s no doubt in my mind about it. That was one mean woman. But, it was just another example of how you had to be…you had to watch out all the time. If that guy hadn’t warned me, perhaps I’d have had my guard down, too. Such as it was.

SM: Did you ferry a lot of prisoners back?

RF: No, that’s the only time I ever did that. The only time. We were going in that direction and they said we could carry her. We were going to land at Na Trang, they had a hospital in Na Trang and they were taking her there. But, that was…man, that was one mean woman.

SM: What about other ARVN units, soldiers? How much support did you provide for ARVN?

RF: When we were supporting special forces in the 129th, we supported the ARVN a good bit. Other than that, we worked with them a little in the 71st, but not a lot. They were good ARVN units and then there were bad ARVN units. I mean, it was maybe like the 71st in a way.
You had a lot of good people in the 71st but you just didn’t have the support. The officers were insulated from us and we were under direct control of a maniac who shouldn’t have been in that position. The Army should have been…the officers should have been monitoring what was going on from this individual. It wasn’t happening. We’re now trying to get our air medals, but we can forget it.

SM: Why?

RF: Whatever he did, he must have…and we talked to the company clerk, they say that he was the one that checked all the forms going in for the air medals and everything, that he was controlling that and he must have just deleted us from it entirely so we think that happened.

SM: Yeah, but obviously your records show that you have this many hours of combat time in the air.

RF: The only record we kept was a dash 12; 2404-12 or something. It was a crew aircraft crewman form and log book, and we filled that out in pencil. Every hour that we flew we turned that in as a daily thing. That was a daily form that went in. From there, I don’t know where they went. But, I was told by the company clerk that he ultimately was doing all the awards that had to go through him.

SM: And so the record of your air time isn’t even complete?

RF: No, we don’t have it. Jack kept his in a diary, but the diary was…somebody broke into his house in California after he got out and took all of his stuff. The diary was part of it. He never got it back. I didn’t keep a record, separate record, of mine. So, we just…we were talking to some people trying to get it done, trying to get something done but there’s no record anymore so that’s the way it is.

SM: Did you ever work in conjunction with the 17th cav?

RF: Yeah, we worked with a cav but I don’t’ know what outfit it was. We worked with them before. They were a tough outfit if that was the same cav that I’m thinking about.

SM: I’m sorry, what?

RF: The cav was…they were pretty aggressive. They were tough, they were tough. I seen a cav gun ship get shot down one time and I swear I believe that they didn’t check the bodies. They put an air strike in on it. I really believe that nobody…I believe they knew that everybody was dead and there was enemy there and they…I really believe they did that.
SM: Speaking of bodies, how would that factor into your reporting once you would return from a mission in terms of body counts and stuff like that?

RF: The pilots did all of that. We, of course when you killed somebody you knew you killed somebody. Most of the time, when I shot somebody, they knew it. They knew about how many we killed a day or whatever we were going up against; what we saw, what we did. I’ve heard all kinds of inflated stuff and everything. As a matter of fact, early on we used to paint little hats on the side of the chopper for everybody we killed. After a while the whole side of the chopper was covered with hats so we had to quit that. But, the pilots made those reports. I guess the flight leader did, I don’t know how they did that. I don’t think they…I’ve heard of all kinds of inflated stuff. I think that they were wanting body count. That was the big thing, and of course that’s what the gun ships were out there for was to kill as many of them as we could.

SM: In either the 129th or the 71st, was there ever any pressure put on you as a gunner or as a crew chief, and your aircraft as an entity, was there pressure put on you, “Yeah, you’ve got to produce some bodies for this mission. You’ve got to produce some numbers,”?

RF: No, no. I think that would have made everybody…I don’t think they would have reacted to that kind of pressure first of all. As a matter of fact there was a lot of enemy troops that I wanted to shoot that they said, “No,” a lot. I would have shot them. I knew they were enemy. They were anywhere from reconing American troops…I’ll give you an example. There was a clearing in the middle of a jungle, maybe a 5 acre clearing, there was an infantry company in the jungle moving in that direction. We just happened to fly over. This big Vietnamese, he’s lying down in the grass trying to hide. He’s spying on this infantry outfit. I mean, this was way out in no man’s land. Everybody out there, man, it’s his ass and I knew what he was doing. He was the man that was watching them so they could maneuver and get and ambush on these guys. That’s his mission and my aircraft commander, I spotted him, I said, “Hey, this guy’s spying on those boys! They’re going to set an ambush on them guys. They’re going to cut them off in the direction that they’re heading, they’re going to set up on them,” and he radioed the ground troops and he says, “Hey, we got a guy here in this clearing laying in the grass trying to hide from us,” and they said, “Well, we want to shoot him,” and they said, “No, we’ll capture him.” Well, every time we would roar past him, he would jump up and get closer to the tree line and I kept saying, “He’s getting away, he’s getting away,” and they said, “No, don’t do it, Foley! Don’t do it,” and he got away. Another time they scrambled us out. We were heading south around My
Lai, it was not far from where that thing happened at My Lai. We were heading down there, all of a sudden we come across this guy. I’m reconing all the time. We come across this guy and he’s got a Browning automatic rifle, a World War II Browning automatic rifle over his shoulder, black pajamas. He’s running, he’s running!

SM: VC.

RF: VC baby, I mean this is an easy one here, you know? So I jerk the gun over and I keyed the mic and I told my pilot, “We got a VC with a Browning automatic rifle right under me, I’m going to get him,” and he said, “Hold on, hold on,” so he radios the ground who is near there, the ground command, and they say, “Hold on, don’t shoot him yet, don’t shoot him yet!” Well he escapes! This guy gets in a damn hole and I’m watching him get in a damn hole and then all of a sudden they radio back and say, “Kill him. He’s the guy who just killed a commanding officer down here!” 2 weeks later, 2 weeks later, the guy with the Browning automatic rifle shoots one of our crew members in the head and kills him. Same place. I can tell you thousands of stories like this. As a crew member with experience, you knew. But, they gave them the benefit of the doubt. You knew what they were. I mean, with savvy and experience you learned and you knew. But they would hesitate and hold off and they wouldn’t allow you to do it and then all of a sudden, 2 weeks later, one of your buddies’ head is half blown off with a damn Browning automatic rifle. I mean, that’s the way it was. If you didn’t react when you knew, you had to know, and then you had to do it. Like I say, it was a tough place.

SM: That’s an interesting perspective as far as rules of engagement and limiting your actions. That’s local, that’s your pilot? That’s the ground commander?

RF: Yeah.

SM: Those are decisions being made on the lowest echelon possible. What about rules of engagement from up high, telling you, “You go into this area, you can’t fire on this particular village, you can’t fire on this until fired upon,” these types of things?

RF: I’ve flown over enemy troops with AK-47s, pit helmets, full uniforms, red stars on their helmets, getting in sand pans, and jerked my gun on them and they said, “Don’t do it, Foley! It’s a no fire zone.” I’ve done it, I’ve done it, I’ve been there. I’ve done it I don’t know how many times. You cannot do it. You cannot do it. I’ve killed enemy troops right beside infantry troops, but in other times clearly I could get the shot, make the shot, “Don’t do it, don’t do it, don’t do it.” And you’re hanging them guys’ ass up by not doing it. Other times I’ve flown
over fire support base, it had been abandoned, American fire support base. 40 enemy troops were there scrounging getting what was left there and stuff, “Don’t do it. You can’t do it.”

SM: And these were orders from up high? These were…or these are pilots saying, “Don’t do it.”?

RF: I don’t know where they came from in that particular case, but they ordered me not to. They were…the main thing’s you had to be quick and if you had to radio back and get some kind of permission, it was over. They were gone. It only lasted a couple of seconds. Everything went so fast.

SM: What was the weapon feared most? What enemy weapon did American helicopter crews…

RF: 127.

SM: 127? Wasn’t a quad 50 or something like that?

RF: We never ran across quad 50s. We ran across something that shot down a phantom one day and we rolled in and they shot us down on the first pass. I heard something going in my headset, it went this sound [makes sound] and supposedly later on they tell me that was the radar that the North Vietnamese had that would bleed into your avionics. I think that’s what shot the phantom down. They shot us down. They shot us down on the first pass. The pilot auto rotated and we were going down in brush that was 20-30 feet high. We flared out in the brush. I heard the engine was still running, I know the engine was running. I glanced forward, the oil temperature, or the oil pressure in the transmission was just zero so I knew they had hit the transmission. As we were flaring out to try to land in this place about 20 guns opened up on us, 20 automatic weapons. At least 20. I knew we were all dead. I screamed, “Pull up, it’ll fly, it’ll fly!” He pulled up, it flew and made it out. Made it a little ways.

SM: Far enough so that you weren’t killed?

RF: Well, the transmission…he wouldn’t land. I told him the transmission in helicopter maintenance school, they told us 8 minutes max with no transmission oil pressure. He wouldn’t set it down. We continue going. I told him to get it low to the ground and get it slow to the ground because this thing’s going to lock up. He did do that. He wanted to make the coast that was 20 minutes. I knew 8 minutes was max. At about 9 ½ minutes I climbed up in my seat and climbed up over the top of the airplane, hugged the top of the airplane over the top and I was looking at where the transmission, the front of the transmission, the paint was on fire. I jumped
back down inside the airplane, I hooked up, and I said, “He won’t land. I’m going to pull my
pistol, put it to his head, and order it to the ground,” and right about the time I said, “They’re
going to put me in jail forever for doing a mutiny,” mutiny type thing in the Army, pulling a gun
on an officer and ordering him to the ground, I mean, where would that get me? But, I was at
that point, at that point the airplane [makes noise], it spun 45 degrees to the right like that. The
tail almost went around. The gas turbine went [makes noise] like that. The whole airplane
shuddered and we hit the ground sideways and skidded along the ground. We all got out. It’s a
good thing we were low to the ground. He did that. I wrote a report on what he did. He
wouldn’t do what I told him he needed to do. They investigated it; he was relieved. I felt like I
had to do it because the next time around…

SM: He put your lives in jeopardy.
RF: He put us all in jeopardy. He almost got us all killed. I talked to our Bell helicopter
engineer and he said he never knew of one when it started to lock that it released and got it on
the ground, so we lucked out on that one. But I’m spending too much of your time.

SM: No, no, nope!
RF: I got to get out of here. I’m telling you about a lot of war stories here, you know?
SM: Let me finish up by asking you a couple of last questions real quick about how the
war’s affected you. What is the most important thing about the Vietnam war as an experience
for you personally?

RF: I don’t regret any of it. I have a lot more compassion for people than I ever had
before. I have no tolerance. People treat me bad, and I react badly. I contribute that to the war.
All of us are like that. I dream about it, frustrating dreams. In my dreams I argue that it’s not
real, but then the heat of what I’m dreaming is so real that it overpowers me and I tell myself, “It
is real, it is real.” It’s really strange. I have dreams that are like a nightmare but I react when I
wake up. It carries over into the conscious state. You dream it, but when I wake up I think it’s
still going on, and it’s not. It’s all a dream. It’s really funny, strange stuff like that. I think
when we came back they should have had some kind of debriefing for a serious winding us
down. When I came back I ran into a lot of trouble. I had a little time left in the service to do.
When I came back, they…when I drove onto Fort Eustice, Virginia, I didn’t have a hat for my
dress clothes. I lost everything in Vietnam and they issued me a bunch in the States but they
didn’t have a hat for me so, “Well I’ll get on the base and buy a hat,” and they, “Get out of here,”
so when I got on the base I got out of my car and I was trying to find out where I was supposed to report in. I went over to these 2 story barracks. There was an officer up on the 2nd floor and he looks out and he sees that I didn’t have a hat on and he screams at me, he says, “Wear your hat down there!” and all this shit, you know? And I looked up him, I said, “Fuck you!” and I wasn’t in a frame of mind for it. I needed help to get over that thing, and so I said, “Whoa!” I stepped back in the car and backed out and left. Next I ran into this black sargent in the company area and he unloads on me too and when he unloaded on me I threw my bags on the ground and I tried to grab him. I tried to punch him in the face and he said, “Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!” I said, “Listen, don’t give me any shit,” because that’s the way we had become. We became really hard and we weren’t, I mean, you couldn’t tolerate it. And loud noises, somebody’d make a loud noise behind me and if I had a gun I’d shoot them. I mean, I react that way. I’ve heard 2 people make loud noises. One of them did it deliberately. He hit a steel table with a sledgehammer behind me. I had this metal thing in my hand and I slammed him with it. It’s all part of it, I think. I wasn’t like that when I went there. Sharp, loud noise…I bet you every one of them guys over there’s like that. But, the Army should have debriefed us and got us help when we came back; tried to get us wound down out of that and explained, “Hey, listen.” They didn’t train us right when they sent us over. They threw us into that situation. A lot of people got killed because they just didn’t have the training, and then we were under people like that 1st sergeant and everything.

SM: You mention a black sergeant. Were there many racial problems in the units in Vietnam, in the 129th?

RF: Yeah, the blacks, they didn’t mix well with us and it wasn’t the whites. The whites weren’t bothering them. There weren’t many blacks in aviation companies, I think because mechanically they’re not…they didn’t qualify to go to the maintenance schools and stuff like that. But, we drew some gunners. I drew a gunner, he got on drugs. Me and him got in a couple of fights and then finally they moved him back to the infantry.

SM: Was that also a problem, drug use?

RF: There was a little bit of marijuana. I mean, in an aviation company you just couldn’t do that. It was too demanding. You couldn’t do it. I mean, it was crazy. It’s like, “I’m going to get drunk, go fly!” You can’t do it. You couldn’t smoke pot. You couldn’t do heroin or anything. I mean, that would be suicide. It was too demanding. The black thing, the worst thing
was when the blacks would separate themselves into groups and then all of a sudden, you know, they started that thing. 101, you got along with them fine, but if they got in a group... when I was walking, I went on R&R, I was walking back to Chu Lai from the flight when I got off the airplane and I was unarmed. I had a little ditty-bag in my hand, my khaki uniform on, I had my purple heart on, my ribbon where I’d been wounded. These 5 black guys coming down the road and as they approach me up ahead I heard them, they crossed over to my side of the road and I heard them say, “Let’s fuck this guy up.” And I’m going, “Oh shit. They’re armed with M-16s and I have nothing. They’re going to beat my damn eyes out.” and as close as from me to your bed there, at the last second one of them says, “Let him go. He’s got a heart.” They seen the purple heart. They let me go. That’s the way it was. In the outfit, in the 71st they separated themselves. They went down and they slept in one tent down there. That’s the worst thing they could have done. So then, all of a sudden, I think they were pumping each other up and then pretty soon... they were...it wasn’t good. Smith the black guy who I had the trouble with. He kept falling asleep in the helicopter and we had shot down people on the ground and my aircraft commander tells me, he says, when we landed to refuel, he says, “What are you going to do about that?” and that was Will Lattimer, he was killed over there later. Bravest man I ever knew. I said, “I’ll take care of it.” Will Lattimer was the bravest man who ever got in an aircraft. T-T-I-M-E-R. I walked around to his side of the airplane, the door was open of course. I look at his face, he’s asleep. I didn’t know that he was doing drugs. I didn’t know, I didn’t know what he was doing. Other people suspected it later and told me later and I just didn’t see the signs. I reached in and grabbed him by his lapels on his flack jacket. I brought him out of the airplane head first and I knee’d him in the face as he came out of the airplane as hard as I could. I rolled him out on the ground. I slid his door to and opened the fuel nozzle and I filled up the airplane with fuel. He finally gets up off the ground and he looks at me and he’s figuring out what happened to him. He gets back in the airplane, we go on the mission, we fire all our rockets and all our ammunition. We landed at 35. He was coming out of the bunker where we had the rockets. I was going in to get more rockets. He threw his rockets down on the ground and we went at it. Will Lattimer comes in behind me, I’m on top of him. We’re really going at it, and Will Lattimer’s trying to drag me off and when he’s dragging me off he’s messing me up for my shots, you know what I mean? He cost me to take a shot or two and I wasn’t liking it. Well he finally gets me out of there. Will had his gun out and was pulling me with one hand and then he
tells Smith, he says, “Come out!” Smith came out. He ordered him over and they flew a new
gunner in there and flew him out. Right after that he got into trouble again, racial trouble. He
was going to kill one of the other gunners. Roger Hall, he went up there with an M-60 machine
gun and was going to kill Roger. Roger, he yelled at Roger inside of the hooch, “I’m coming to
kill you!” and Roger was laying on his bunk. So Roger got up, he’s coming in the door of the
hooch with his M-60 and Roger was in special forces and could fight pretty good. Back then he
was in good shape. He lunged at him and kicked at him and when he kicked at him he caught
him full in the chest and knocked him back out the door. Roger’s a big man, he started beating
him up out there and then they come in, they break it up, and then they take him and reassign
him to an infantry outfit. I’m going onto other stories!

SM: One last question; what lessons should we take away from the Vietnam war? What
lesson?

RF: What lesson? If they want to be communists, let them be. It’s…you can, like the
guerillas, you can go in and occupy all the cities and everything. Them people out in the
country, they’re not too smart. They don’t care how many of them die. They’ll fight you to the
end. Those people in the cities, they’re educated and they’re pretty smart and they want to be
with you but if you don’t control the hillside, buddy, you’re in trouble. There was a lot of stuff
that they did that was effective and there was a lot of stuff that we did that wasn’t. One of the
best things that we ever did, we had doctors and stuff and medics and stuff that was treating
those people outside. That was the best thing that they could have done. They were taking
livestock out there and things like that, teaching the farmers. But then we had another problem;
we had the communists coming in and they were killing some of these people who were trying to
go with us because it was not a good situation.

SM: What did they do that was effective; the communists, the Viet Cong, PAVN?

RF: I’d seen them come into villages before that weren’t, they weren’t hostile when they
came in. but, other times, we found people that they had killed as a lesson to the rest of them
like the village chief or the village chief’s son. They didn’t do what they wanted him to do,
they’d kill his son or whatever and that forced them into doing what they wanted them to do;
supply them rice or whatever, young soldiers or whatever. Other times, we flew into places and I
actually seen them. They were visiting the village chief like a Sunday school walk. Of course
we were coming in and all of a sudden they’d scatter, you know? I think what they were doing
to the village people and stuff, and to those...they had propaganda that was so strong. I mean, those poor, silly people. They didn’t know how well they could have it under a different system and you can’t force them to have that different system. They’ve got to grow into that system. You can’t force it. It won’t happen. They all of a sudden will end up fighting you, or the people that you actually got coming your way, they go killed them. That’s their enemy. They don’t want them going your way, they want it to go their way. I knew of a...they would kill the smart ones in a village, too, the educated ones. That’s what...that was sad. I’ve seen a lot of people in the cities. They loved the hell out of us and everything but when you got way out in the boonies and all of a sudden, you know, that’s the people that they controlled, and of course they control some in the cities. They were very well hidden. They were very, very, I don’t know if sneaky is the right word, but they were; tremendously. You didn’t know. You seen people who looked at you and you wondered about them. I seen a guy that was working at Chu Lai and he was walking near our bunkers where we had our rockets for the helicopters and he was doing this and I seen his eyes an I watched him. He walked by and he didn’t know I was watching him. He was checking out where we stored our rockets and stuff. I knew he was one of them. There was a lot of them like that. They were...in at Kontum. I’m convinced a boy named Bao who was...B-O-W I think it was, or B-O-U, one or the other, we took him in as a friend, a little bitty orphan kid who had...the 129th, we wrote home, got him all kinds of clothes and shoes and stuff, we dressed him all out, got him a haircut, cleaned him all up, nice looking kid. Then, all of a sudden, he started acting really funny and he took his shoes and threw them away. He was actually sleeping on the compound there with us and all of a sudden they moved us to a different area and right after they moved us the outfit that went in there and took our place, it wasn’t a month later until a North Vietnamese snuck into the camp and I know that kid, I believe that kid let them in there, told them how to come in. They machine gunned a lot of the crew members in their beds, in their tents. AK’ed them. In my heart I know it was that boy.

SM: Is there anything else you’d like to add?

RF: I went down to the...I took that boy down to the river one time. I forgot what was going on but we had to go down and get some sand or something. I was going down there, me and another guy and we took him with us and we get down there to the river and he started picking up rocks. He had a slingshot, man, that kid could shoot some rocks, and then all of a sudden he started aiming that slingshot at me and I said, he let go of one. When I seen him let go
I ducked and that thing just barely missed my head and I said, “Put that sling shot away or I’m going to kick your ass!” And he looked at me and it made me think something funny was going on. I really believed he cost some American their life. You can’t trust these people in that situation. Whatever we did wasn’t good enough. Whatever influence they had over him was too great. That's all.

SM: Alright. Well then this ends the interview with Ray Foley. Thank you very much.