Richard Verrone: This is Richard Verrone and I’m conducting an oral history interview with Mrs. Frances Hamilton. Today is May 30, 2003; I am in Lubbock, Texas in the Special Collections Library interview room. It is approximately 9:40 AM Central Standard Time and Mrs. Hamilton is in Frisco, Texas. Ma’am, why don’t we start with some basic biographical information on yourself? Could you tell us when and where you were born and a little bit about your childhood?

Frances Hamilton: Okay, I was born in Ocala, Florida June the 8th, 1933, so it was the Depression. My father worked for the Florida Power Corporation his entire life. He attended Clemson and then went to work for them and so our whole life was around that corporation. I was the middle child of two brothers and my mother was a newspaper reporter for the *Tampa Tribune* and the *Clearwater Sun*.

RV: What do you have as far as memories of the Depression?

FH: I have none, really. I must have been a baby but I do know that my grandparents, my mother’s parents had a farm and she had five sisters and one brother and all of them and their families went back to the farm to live during the Depression, my mother being the exception because my father had a job that they really needed with the power company. So he still had a job and we could eat and live but the rest of them [family] couldn’t. I do remember tramps coming to the door and asking for food as a
child and of course we gave it to them as generously as we could but other than that I
don’t, I really wasn’t aware of it.

RV: Okay. Did anyone in your family serve in the military?

FH: Yes, my father’s two youngest brothers were, well actually all through his
family was the military. My father’s grandfather was a captain in the Confederate Army
and his two younger brothers served in World War II, his one brother in the Navy and the
youngest brother who just died this month actually was a Marine in Saipan.

RV: Tell me about growing up in Ocala, what was that like?

FH: Well we didn’t actually stay there very long. We moved to several different
small towns but the first one I remember was called Zephyrhills, Florida. It was a
wonderful town because we could go swimming, we had a lake there, a swimming pool,
we could go anywhere in the whole town and our parents didn’t have to worry about us.
We had total freedom as children, which my children didn’t have and their children can’t
have. We had a wonderful childhood. It was really nice. And then we moved to Tarpon
Springs which was on the Gulf Coast and I still have dear friends there and consider that
my home, that’s my hometown really. So that’s where we ended up, we just made about
four moves.

RV: Okay. What do you remember about your schooling as a youth, were you
good in school, did you enjoy school?

FH: I did. I enjoyed school very much and I was pretty good in school. I was, I
wasn’t really that interested in going on to college though but I did well in school and
later on I did go to college and graduate but right out of high school I didn’t.

RV: What were your favorite subjects?

FH: History and social studies.

RV: Why, did they come naturally to you or?

FH: They were just interesting. I thought it was fascinating. I was a voracious
reader, as was my mother. I learned the love of books from my mother and I just was
interested in reading and history took you back to different times and different places and
really gave you an understanding of the world, I thought.

RV: So you got that from your mother?

FH: Right, I did.
RV: Does that continue today?

FH: Yes, and actually my children, we have two girls and they are both voracious readers. And my mother passed away but I honor her by donating to the Torpan Springs library every year. I give a donation because she loved that library and it meant a lot to her in her life.

RV: Were you close to your brothers; you were in the middle between them?

FH: I was very close to my youngest brother. My older brother was three years older and of course occupied with other things and left home fairly early, he went into the Navy. But my younger brother who has also passed away now, I was very close to him.

RV: What do you remember about World War II?

FH: I remember that we went around our, at that time we lived in Zephyrhills and I remember we went around pulling a little wagon, collecting. We collected anything metal, like old pots and pans. At that time cigarettes were wrapped in foil and we collected all these foil leftover cigarette wrappers and I remember my dad was in charge of- I don’t know what you would call it- he was the warden of the area and we had blackouts and air raid practices and they would go around and make sure all in the houses you couldn’t see light out of the windows. I remember listening to Roosevelt’s speech when Pearl Harbor was attacked. I do remember that and I remember my uncle who was in the Marines and my uncle who was in the Navy were lost for a period of about three or four months and I remember so much because it was the first time I ever saw my dad cry and so that’s been, you know it just stuck in your [my] mind.

RV: Right. They were eventually found, right?

FH: Yes, my uncle who was on Saipan was in a coma. He had to have a plate put in his head and he was in bad shape but my uncle in the Navy at the same time, they just couldn’t tell you where they were, it was like a blackout. I remember people going to war then were gone for like three years and all you could do, you could write, but that’s about all. I remember people in my town, friend’s fathers going away. I remember we were near Tampa and that little town was an Army air base and every Sunday we had servicemen come to eat lunch with us, or Sunday dinner, it was like an afternoon dinner. Sometimes there would be two, sometimes there would be one. I remember those very well.
RV: So your mother would just invite them over?

FH: My mother would invite them, everybody did this in the whole town, everybody invited them to come and they were really nice, nice people. It was nice to get to know people from all over the country. I also remember one other thing: you always stopped for a hitchhiker if they were in uniform. We would go back to South Carolina for vacations and my dad would always stop and we would carry in our little car, I think it was a Ford we had then, with three children my mother and dad and a soldier, so it was crowded.

RV: What a neat memory.

FH: And it was safe to do this. So, I do remember those times.

RV: How much did your experiences as a child during World War II affect your experiences as a spouse in Vietnam?

FH: I think it was totally different, absolutely different. When Dick first went to war, I thought he would be supported like we supported people in World War II but that wasn’t the case.

RV: Okay, we’ll talk a little bit more in detail about that, as we get closer to that time. So when you graduated high school what year was that?

FH: 1951.

RV: And did you go to college then or did you?

FH: No, I didn't. I didn’t go to college until much later but I worked at an insurance office in my hometown and then I went with American Airlines as a flight attendant, stewardess then.

RV: And where were you located?

FH: In San Francisco and Dallas.

RV: Wow, okay. When did you meet your husband?

FH: I met him in 1956 through friends in San Francisco.

RV: In San Francisco, and he was in the military by this time.

FH: Right, yes.

RV: Did you have any aversion or any particular thoughts or ideas about dating a serviceman?

FH: Not at all, no.
RV: How long until you guys got married?
FH: Oh, let’s see. About two years. We were engaged for one full year.
RV: Okay, so and I’m looking at his record here, he was based in Laredo, Texas is that correct?
FH: Yes.
RV: And when you got married you lived, you first started in Laredo, is that correct?
FH: No, we were married at Hamilton Air Force Base, right outside of San Francisco.
RV: And where was he first stationed then, when you were first married?
FH: Well, he got out of the service and we went to Fresno, California.
RV: That’s right; he joined the Air National Guard.
FH: Right, and he worked for Proctor and Gamble.
RV: Did you think, or did you try to talk to him about not going back in the service, or were you open to him going back in the service?
FH: You know, at that time the Berlin Wall was being built and so it was a crisis and I knew it was a world crisis and he felt that this was what he had to do and I didn’t really object. Of course I had nothing to base it on, I didn’t know how difficult it would be or how easy it would be or actually what it would be but I did feel that he had to follow his heart and do what he thought he had to do, so I didn’t object to it, no.
RV: Okay, so he got back in, in 1962 and where did he go from there?
FH: We went to Tampa.
RV: So back home for you basically?
FH: Right, it was good in a way because, but it was just in time for the Cuban crisis.
RV: Yes, ma’am, what do you remember about that?
FH: I remember that a lot of companies took advantage and would advertise their food products for you to take into bomb shelters. It was kind of a frightening time because Dick was gone constantly. I mean he was never at home and I was left with a baby and a little toddler and I had to really think about what I would do if we were invaded or bombed, so it was a little scary.
RV: Was this your first experience of having to deal with these kind of thoughts and ideas?

FH: Yes, that was, and the fact that he was never there was nerve racking too.

RV: Right. What kind of plans did you all have if something might have happened to him?

FH: Well, I thought of getting to my parents who lived in Tarpon Springs and I thought that would be the best thing for my children and I. We were alone all the time so I really didn't have to think about him, he was just gone and I knew he would be doing his job. But there were people there who said they had gotten guns and things to protect themselves and at that time I didn’t, well I still don’t know anything about guns. I didn’t want to get a gun and I felt the concern of protecting my two little children. From that standpoint it was not a good time.

RV: How did you deal with his absence?

FH: Well I just did what was necessary. I didn’t, I knew he was doing his job so I didn’t worry about him so much. I just took care of my children, that was my main concern.

RV: How supportive was the military for the wives who were left behind when the men were off on station?

FH: Well, we were new there so we were in the 47th Squadron and the squadron members supported themselves. You know, we each kind of supported each other but as far as the military supporting us there really wasn’t much of anything.

RV: Did you have any problems, say, receiving paychecks or getting on base when you needed to get on base or going to the PX?

FH: I didn’t have any problems getting on base but we had one month when Dick had come back in the service there was a mix-up with his rank and so the first January after we came back into the military we got $200 paycheck because they were making, I can’t remember the exact details, they had overpaid him somehow and took it all out at one time and if it hadn’t been for my parents we would not have paid the rent that month. I remember that very well.

RV: How long were you all in, were you in Tampa actually?
FH: We were there six years because from, because let’s see this was from ’62, ’64 they transitioned into the F-4 and we built a home there and then he went to Vietnam in ’65 and when he came back he had another tour in that squadron, so we were able to stay there.

RV: Why don’t we talk about 1965, when actually he was sent into a war zone? How did you feel about that, when you first heard that he would be stationed, I think he was stationed over at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand?

FH: Right. It, well prior to that we had just had the election you know with Goldwater and Johnson. Johnson of course won the election and when he won that election I knew that Dick would go to war and so I was sort of prepared for it. Even though I had other friends who cried, had tantrums because their husbands were going to war and Johnson promised in his speeches that we would not go to war but, so I was somewhat prepared because I had the feeling that he would have to go but I had nothing to base it on. I didn’t know what our experiences would be and I wasn’t prepared for what we went through. Because we were told by the military, “Don’t say a word.”

RV: To not say a word?

FH: Do not say where your husband is, do not say what he is doing, do not talk to anyone about the war. They were the very first F-4 squadron in Vietnam and the only other ones were offshore on a ship, were the Navy F-4s.

RV: Did they tell you why that you couldn’t talk about these things?

FH: No, they just sort of threatened us, “Don’t talk about it.”

RV: So you felt like it was more of a threat than it was a request?

FH: Yes, all the wives in the squadron were terrified to say anything to the wrong person because they didn’t want harm to come to their husbands. It was more or less we don’t want the enemy to know where your husband is and what he’s doing, which was of course ridiculous.

RV: Right. Did you talk to your parents about it or were you able to confide in the other wives?

FH: Oh, yes the other wives in our squadron we all held on to one another. My husband’s backseater’s wife was pregnant. My best friends, whose husband went too,
was pregnant, so I felt like I was taking care of them and my two children and we just, we
all helped each other.

RV: Did you have an official support group or was it more informal?
FH: It was very informal because we weren’t to even admit they were gone, so
there was no official support at all.

RV: What kind of things would you do for each other?
FH: We would go to church; we would pray for each other; we would go to lunch;
we would talk about whatever problems the children were having; how to help each
other. My, I had a two year old, let’s see, I had a five year old and a three year old and the
five year old was in parochial school so that helped us a lot because the church, our priest
had been in World War II as a chaplain so I did have someone I could go to and talk to
about my fears.

RV: And that helped I assume.
FH: That helped a tremendous amount, it really helped a lot. And so I just tried to
help other people in turn. But one hard part of that is every morning on the radio they
would tell you so many F-4s shot down.

RV: Wow, on the national news radio?
FH: On the national news, the radio. They wouldn’t say if it was a Navy F-4 or an
Air Force F-4 so you had to wait until like five o’clock in the afternoon to see if they
would come knock on your door and that was hard. That was difficult, very difficult and
finally my next door neighbor who was also in the Air Force said, “I can’t stand this any
longer Fran, I’m going to come tell you” because they would find out everyday who was
shot down and who wasn’t and they would come tell you. I mean my next door neighbor
would come tell me, “Fran, so and so got shot down today,” which was in our squadron
we were all close friends, we were very good friends. So you knew and then we would go
over to their house and try to help them.

RV: How would, would she know the information before everyone else?
FH: He.

RV: Oh, he, it was a he, I’m sorry.
FH: When he came home from work, from being at MacDill Air Force Base he
would come over and tell me as quickly as he could because nobody was supposed to talk
about it. No one was supposed to say a word, nothing and that was hard I think probably one of the hardest parts of that, the secrecy. You were so afraid that you would say something wrong and hurt your husband.

RV: Were you ever able to voice your complaints about this to the military?
FH: I never did. I mean after it was over we were all so grateful the ones who lived, we lost a lot of men in our squadron, we never did, no one ever asked us for our opinion and we never gave it.

RV: What would you all do when you found out that someone in your squadron had been shot down?
FH: We would go to their house. It meant two men, it meant two people. We would go to their house and try to help them take care of their children, bring food, you know try to help them that way. I actually do know of, there was only one person I know of who wouldn’t admit it or talk about it and her husband was taken prisoner and she would not even admit it. She was so scared to do something wrong she wouldn’t say a word but everybody else, we had like squadron we would play bridge together, we would go to lunch together and those whose husbands were shot down and who were either missing or prisoners of war, they would talk about it there, but nowhere else.

RV: What would they say?
FH: How worried they were, how afraid they were. One of our friends was Dick Kearn who they marched him through a village and he was on the cover of like Newsweek I think and it showed him all bandaged and obviously hurt very badly and the Air Force was having a hard time identifying him and his wife said, “I know it’s him because I can see his hand, I know his hand and that’s Dick” and it was him.

RV: Is that how she found out it was him?
FH: They told her he was shot down, they didn't know anything else.

RV: Wow and then the cover of Newsweek. Tell me how you dealt with your children. What did you tell them about their father being off at war?
FH: Well, I told them their daddy had gone to work. They knew that all their friends’ fathers were gone too, so they knew. I didn't tell them he had gone to war. I didn’t tell them anything about the war. They were five and three so I didn't tell them anything about that. But one time, I would go to my parents’ house often and on one
weekend my five year old said to my dad, “Pappa, do you have a job?” And he said, “Well, yes certainly I do” and she said, “Well, where is your flight suit?” Because she thought all dads flew airplanes.

RV: So they were aware that their father was a pilot.
FH: Yes, very much and most of their friends were too, so it was just a natural thing for them to be gone. Before the war they were gone a lot anyway, so it wasn’t anything different for them, fortunately. For me it was different, but not for them.

RV: Of course, of course. Did the military have any kind of formal organization or any kind of support at all or communication with the wives while the husbands were gone?

FH: No, neither time my husband went to Vietnam, they had nothing for us.

RV: Why do you think that is?
FH: I don’t know. I think they were struggling with just handling the war. I think that they just didn’t think of it. They didn’t realize the need of it.

RV: And has that changed today, do you know or did it change over the years?
FH: I really don’t, no it didn’t change over the years. Individual people in the military were very helpful and they would help you but the official Air Force wasn’t very helpful at all. The only, one thing they did do was they gave the missing men’s wives their paychecks, even though they felt they were dead, they still gave them the income until they found out for sure, which I thought was a good thing. I think they did try to help but it was a big job. How do you help someone you’re not supposed to talk about or anything?

RV: You said individuals helped you. How would these individuals help you?
FH: Well they would just, we would be friends, we would do things together, we would tell each other it was going to be okay and when we would get letters we would share the letters from Vietnam with each other. My husband wasn’t even able to tell me who was shot down, so this secrecy was a difficult, hard part of it.

RV: Did that go on for both tours when he was gone or was that just the first one?
FH: It was mostly the first one, but on the second one we then, from MacDill we then went to Libya and we were there when Quadafi took over the country. From there Dick went back to Vietnam and I was, I went back to Tampa and put my children back in
the parochial school that they knew but we weren’t part of the squadron so we were just
on our own really. I had my parents and some friends who had stayed there, but we had
no official help or anything.

RV: How different was it then, being more on your own versus part of a
squadron?

FH: It was, well it wasn’t so bad because we weren’t losing planes every day in
the second time Dick went, we didn't lost nearly as many people.

RV: This is in 1970?

FH: Yes, so it wasn't so terrifying and in 1965 it was hard because when I went to
bed every night I didn't know if my husband really would be dead or alive the next day
and I had, we had a brand new house, I didn’t have a college education, that’s when it
came home to me, I would have to support those children if something happened to him
because the Air Force at that time gave us ten thousand dollars worth of insurance and we
had a private insurance that we paid for on our own but I think we had seventy thousand
dollars worth of insurance but I could have paid for my house and gone to school and
gotten a job and educated my children, you know taken care of my children. But I had to
be cognizant of that all the time. It was a big responsibility.

RV: Did the other wives, were they as prepared as you were, or cognizant of that
responsibility?

FH: Yes, I think so. I think we all were because you know it was on our
shoulders and some had extra insurance and some didn't and if they didn't we didn’t
discuss it because you didn't want to add to their burden and make them more fearful. So
it was, it was always there. First you worried about your husband and then you worried
about what you would do if something happened to him?

RV: Did you ever get used to that?

FH: No, never but certain things did change as the men were shot down in our
squadron, the wives were left, if they owned a house, they couldn’t sell the house, if they
had a car, they couldn’t sell the car because of the Florida laws. My next door neighbor
who was also in the Air Force deeded his house to his wife before he went and did other
things to make preparations because we were sort of the guinea pigs and a lot of women
in our squadron were left in really bad positions. They were stuck, if their parents were
across the country they couldn’t pick up and go there because they had to pay the mortgage, keep the house, keep the car, you know they couldn’t really do anything, they were stuck.

RV: What was that law; tell me what the Florida law was.

FH: It was that if you owned a car or house it had to be in both names. As a wife you couldn’t have a car in just your name so you couldn't sell the car if your husband didn’t sign the paper and if he was missing or a POW he couldn’t sign. So he couldn’t sign the deed for the house, you were, even if you had a Power of Attorney which most all of us had, it wasn't good enough. I think we learned from that, everybody did and I think they even changed the law in Florida but it just made things more difficult for those who really needed it.

RV: What kind of preparations did you and your husband make specifically before, you mentioned the extra insurance, what else did you do, or did you do anything?

FH: Well, we talked about taking care of the house, mowing the lawn; I had to do all of that. We had to make sure it could be done. We had a child who was ill so we used an outside doctor, not a base doctor and we had to just make sure that we had enough money every month to cover that. It was a little bit difficult from that standpoint because we didn’t know how much money he would be spending and how much money, we knew how much money it would take the run the house and the children to school and all that, so we had to just be very careful and while that wasn’t a burden, it was just another worry. I don’t know if I’m making sense.

RV: Absolutely, yes ma’am of course you are. Was the fact that you now had to run the entire household yourself, mow the lawn, do all those things, was that empowering to you or how did you feel about that?

FH: That’s an interesting question because actually, as my husband was gone so much, I was able to do that. Every time he would be gone like thirty, ninety days, I would do that. I would mow the lawn; I would take care of the yard. I would do all the stuff he did when he was home plus what I did but then when he came home and we would think about putting drapes in the window and he would say, “Well, I like brown” and I would think well, you know I don’t like brown and why are you even voicing your opinion. I’m the one who decides all of this, you don’t have any say. You know I can
really see how that caused problems across the board for military families. It’s hard to
switch roles. Suddenly you’re a part of a pair that’s working together and then you’re
alone, then you come back you’re a pair, then you’re alone and it goes back and forth and
you switch roles and that’s hard. That’s very hard.

RV: I can imagine. How hard was it emotionally to kind of check back in again
and okay; now the person is right there with you and they’ll be gone again for ninety days
in?

FH: It was hard because I resisted it. It was like you don’t have any say about this
and that’s not, that wasn’t good. It wasn't cooperating but it was difficult. I think it was
probably more difficult for the wives than for the husbands. It wasn't, I wouldn’t say that
was a big part of it, but it just was a part of it.

RV: Was that typical, your experience would you say?

FH: Yes, I think so, yes.

RV: Okay. Tell me about communication with your husband when he was away
and especially when he was in Thailand and again in 1970 when he was actually
stationed at Phu Kat. How much did you write, telephone calls, anything liked that?

FH: I wrote him everyday. He couldn’t call and I couldn’t call, there were no
phone calls but it took about, our letters would pass and it would be like a week late. So
since he couldn’t tell me anything that was really going on it was just personal things.

RV: What would you say to him in your letters, what would you write about?

FH: Oh, I’d write about what the children were doing and the changes in them,
you know how they were making strides, just about their lives and our lives, and our
friends, the wives of people in the squadron who were left behind, what we did, where we
went to lunch, when we played bridge, you know things like that.

RV: And what would he be writing to you, what would he say in his letters?

FH: Well he would just, he would tell me, he wouldn’t tell me anything about
who was shot down and who did what or any of the missions. He and our good friend,
our best friend at that time, they would go around taking pictures of all these things in
this little small Thai village, Ubon. And he would send me the pictures and tell me about
the food they were eating in this Indian restaurant. He would tell me all good things,
about his backseater, how he was doing good. He wouldn’t tell me anything bad, or
anything worrisome.

RV: Did you know that he wasn’t telling you anything and or worrisome?

FH: One of our backseaters came back home because he, they were shot down
and he broke his back and he had to come back to recuperate at MacDill. Then he told me
what was going on, how much problems they were having and all of that and then I knew
how really bad it was. That was devastating to me to hear.

RV: Do you remember what he told you?

FH: He told me about the operations officer and the squadron commander and the
things they were doing and it was bad, so yes I do remember a lot of what he told me.

RV: Can you elaborate or would you rather not?

FH: Oh, I don’t mind no. Well, they’re both dead now so I guess it doesn’t
matter. But the squadron commander had been a Thunderbird and he was one of these hot
shots but he was not a good commander. He was not good to his men and he often went
to Saigon to party and left the men to do their own thing and the men sort of formed their
own flights, who would fly together, who wouldn’t fly together and they did their own
thing. Like my husband and some of the others who were really good pilots would all fly
together and they would, they were protecting each other as much as possible. They
weren’t insubordinate but they said this is the way we want to do it. And when possible
they would go together with good pilots that they knew to protect each other. It wasn’t
always possible but when it was that’s what they did. And I just felt sure that they would
take care of themselves. I will tell you though, when one good friend got killed it really
scared me because he was such a nice guy, such a funny guy, such a wonderful human
being and that’s when it hit me. I thought if he can get killed, Dick can get killed and it
really scared me.

RV: When was this?

FH: This was in October of 1965.

RV: How did you deal with that?

FH: Prayed a lot. I prayed a lot but it made it more difficult you know because
just, like some people you just think are charmed and nothing can happen to them. Well,
this, he was such a funny guy that you just never thought about him dying and when he
did it was really hard and as a matter of fact his wife was driving down the street and she,
one of our other wives in our squadron was out watering her lawn and she stopped and
she said, the wife watering the lawn said, “Oh, I heard someone got shot down, today”
and she said, “Yes, it was my husband.” And that was hard.

RV: She didn’t know at the time if he was dead or alive?
FH: Nope, see that was part of, nobody knew but the way they said pretty much
he was dead, but they kept him in [listed as] missing. And his backseater’s wife had two
little children, a brand new baby and she was, they were very young and so everybody
just tried to take care of them and it was hard.

RV: How long would it take for them to actually find out the status of someone
who was shot down?
FH: Years, years later.
RV: Really?
FH: Yes.
RV: So if you were notified that okay, Dick had been shot down it could be.
FH: It could be years. As a matter of fact I think, I don’t know if I should say
names or not but this particular person, I think it was like twenty years later they brought
his remains home and he was missing that whole time.

RV: I guess after awhile.
FH: You’d know.
RV: You could safely guess.
FH: After the war is over and they’re not found you pretty much know and also
the men who saw it happen knew, and they came home and told his wife but the Air
Force, the official policy was that he was still missing which was good because it gave
her a paycheck and she had three little children to raise.

RV: That’s right. How much of this and your fears and your problems that you
were encountering, how much did you communicate that to him in your letters, you said
he was not telling you his dangers, were you telling him of your dangers?
FH: No, no, no. He didn’t tell me of his dangers. He would just tell me how good
they were doing. No, I didn’t give any.

RV: Why not?
FH: I didn’t want to worry him; I didn’t want him to think about anything but that
we were all right and that we were going to be all right. I did not want him to take that
into battle or to think, I wanted him to concentrate on his job and get home.
RV: That’s almost the same thing that he was doing with you.
FH: Yes. Well, you protect each other, you love each other and you protect each
other and that’s what we did. And he pretty much knew I would be all right.
RV: Did you ever find yourself really wanting to know what was going on behind
the scenes or were you fine with not knowing?
FH: No, I wanted to know. It would have been easier to cope had I known but
only military people would talk about it. Some of the men and all of the wives in our
group would talk about, but some of my other neighbors were other Air Force men and
they would talk about it to you but not for the public.
RV: What kind of things did you send him, you sent him letters, and did you send
him care packages or anything like that?
FH: I’m trying to remember.
RV: Were you able to?
FH: I sent him, well this is kind of sad but one of my neighbors, they were in our
squadron too and he cut his foot mowing his lawn and he couldn’t go with the rest of the
men, so he had to wait until he was well and go, and I sent Dick some candy with him,
because we couldn’t send packages really back and forth. He went to survival camp in the
Philippines on the way and then when he got there, the candy was full of ants. The sad
thing is he was killed on his very first flight out of there, so it was really; it was hard, you
know, it was not an easy time for us, any of us, the men included.
RV: How did your feelings about the country, the United States, evolve and
change going through this very difficult time, or did they change at all?
FH: Well, I love my country but we, that’s a really hard question. At the time, at
some functions I had one woman say to me, she was a lawyer’s wife and she said to me,
“Oh, your husband is in the Air Force” and I said, “Yes, he’s away.” And she said, “Oh,
well he volunteered” because you know when you say they’re away, you know
immediately where they were, “Oh, well he volunteered for this” and I just turned around
and walked away. And I thought what an inhuman, strange attitude because it had been
RV: So it did not affect your faith in our government or what we were doing.

FH: Well, I knew that things were not going well in the war and I didn't believe that it was being run right. I didn’t believe they were out to win and it made me mad at the government, but that didn’t affect how I felt about my country you know. It did, it made me realize that it makes a big difference whose running the government and who isn’t and that you’d better vote because your vote counts and it does matter. I have never, ever missed an election, ever local or national since then. But during the time he was gone then, we had the riots in Watts. We had Johnson, President Johnson telling them they had a right to riot, I just didn’t understand that. I was just floored. We had riots in Tampa and it just, I just didn’t understand what they were doing at a time when we were at war having all these local riots. I didn’t know how far they would go, if everything would disrupt, if our whole country would turn into riots or what would actually happen. So it was kind of unnerving because people were hurt in Tampa from the riots, not as bad as Watts but it wasn’t pleasant or pretty. So it just added another fear to my world because I didn’t know how it would end up.

RV: Ma’am why don’t we take a break just for a moment.

FH: Sure.

RV: Okay, let me ask you a couple questions about the differences in the two time periods. Dick went over in ’65 and then he goes over in 1970. What was different, in your mind thinking back today, what was the main difference between those two time periods for you here at home?

FH: It was entirely different. I knew what Dick had been through. I knew that he was a highly skilled pilot and even though I realized after each person was shot down in ’65 in the squadron the men would come back and I learned this after, they would come back and they would talk to each other and they would say well, so and so did this, I’ll never do that, so I’ll live through it. I’ll not make that mistake, he made a mistake. It
wasn’t condemning them but it was trying to learn from them and just telling yourself you wouldn’t make that mistake. So when he went back the second time I felt he’d been through really a bad time and he would know what he was doing, it would be much easier. He would know what he was facing and it was a lot different and a lot easier for him so, those were entirely different times but already you know Jane Fonda was really hot in the press and all of that which it made me really angry.

RV: Well, let’s talk about that; tell me how did you feel about that?

FH: I felt really angry about that. I felt very bad about that. I happened to have known Henry Fonda’s last wife very well and I knew he wasn’t a communist or communist leaning or anything like that. For this women to have been brought up in all of this wealth and money and then to do the things she did to our POWs. At that time I went right to work trying to help our POWs children in selling the bracelets and doing things to help them and here was this woman over here turning them in, causing them to be punished and beaten and I was, to this day, I am not an angry person but I am angry about that. I feel, you know for anyone to hurt our friends who were living such hellish lives in those prisoner of war camps, it was wrong, very wrong.

RV: What did you think about the anti-war movement?

FH: I thought they were stupid, dumb. I thought they were uninformed and I thought that there is a time and place for it but it’s not when you are at war, it’s before or after but also at that time a lot of people were running to Canada. They were cowards and I guess it was being married to someone who loved his country and felt duty bound to serve his country however they asked of him, I just felt like I was way over, the pendulum had swung somewhere over that I couldn’t really see what they were, I couldn’t understand them.

RV: Did you ever witness one of the demonstrations firsthand?

FH: No, but I had friends who came back, pilots who came back and the service sent them on to colleges, one University of Colorado and they spit on him and that made me furious. And then you know as I just thought, I knew we were right and I didn’t care what anybody else thought frankly. But it made me angry to see them do the things they did. I think there is a way to demonstrate and there is a way not to demonstrate.
RV: Right. Can you compare it to what you witnessed recently with the Iraqi war?
Were these demonstrations better conducted in your view?
FH: No, I think is the same old rhetoric, the same old thing and quite frankly I am very thankful that George Bush is our president now because I think our country has a terrible, terrible problem with these terrorists and unless we can do something about the problems in the Middle East we’re going to have more September 11ths and it terrifies me for my children and my grandchildren and I want to get this settled. It’s very complicated, it’s going to take a long time but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try to do it and I just think a lot of these people have a set agenda. A lot of them are socialists, wannabe communists, a lot of them just are Democrats who only believe in Democrats and I think it’s a shame that they can’t see the big picture.

RV: Tell me what you thought of the media coverage of the Vietnam War and what you saw on TV day to day, especially during those times when Dick was gone.
FH: Well I, you know, it was scary. I saw of course every night if you turned on the evening news you saw people, Americans being killed or Americans being paraded through the streets as POWs, which I knew a lot of those POWs. I was very fearful for what would happen to them. I think now Walter Cronkite tells us he’s very anti-war and very liberal and I think, “Now you say that,” instead of giving us the liberal slant and trying to pretend that it was an honest view, I thought it was wrong. Now that I look back I think it’s even worse.

RV: So you don’t think there was a balanced reporting of the war?
FH: No, no, not at all.
RV: What would you say was the overall morale of America in 1965 to ’70?
FH: The overall morale.
RV: Because you were in a community where you were with the wives, a tighter community but just watching TV, looking at the progress of the war, or the lack thereof, how would you judge the morale of the country?
FH: I think it was pretty low. I think we were, opinions were scattered, we didn't have the information about how the war was run at that time. We didn’t have a lot of information and I think the morale was very low, especially during the time of the riots. There was a lot of unhappiness and disruption and complaints and then there were the
people who felt it was the right thing to do, or since we’ve been sent to do it, do it the
right way. There were a lot of people like me who weren’t in, you know they just, they
talked among themselves. My parents for instance felt since we had been sent to war then
do it correctly but they weren’t necessarily, they didn’t necessarily believe that the
military was right but they felt that since we’d been committed then back the military up.
The time to look into all this would be after it’s over, you know. And it was very
complicated. I did try to follow as much as I could about the Paris Peace Talks and what
the French had done and how we led up to this through Eisenhower and Kennedy and
then Johnson but from what you got out of the newspaper it wasn’t enough to really
know.

RV: How much did the anti-war movement, the riots, the discontent that you
described here in America, how much did that effect you personally as the spouse of a
veteran and a spouse of someone who is on active duty actually participating in the
conflict?

FH: It worried me because I didn’t want harm to come to my children. I felt very
protective; actually my children were the main things. I knew my husband could take
care of himself but I was concerned for the future of our country, with the riots I didn’t
know how far they would go. I was concerned about anarchy in our country. Those were
scary times.

RV: Right, you saw that as a real possibility?

FH: Yes, I did.

RV: Tell me what your impressions were of the presidents who had us involved in
Vietnam starting with Eisenhower.

FH: I don’t think Eisenhower’s intent was to go to war but this policy just seemed
to evolve. I think he thought he could send people over there to help but they wouldn’t be
involved in the war and I think that’s what Kennedy thought too. I think when he sent
more military men over there, he had no intention of going to war and I think that it just,
it just happened, I mean it just escalated. I think McNamara was wrong and I think he
was behind a lot of this. His policy was wrong and perhaps if Kennedy had lived it would
have been a different outcome. But I feel very badly. I think it was a wrong war, I don’t
think we should have gone to the war but I don’t think that the dissidents were right. I
don’t think that they really, this was why they were protesting I think, they were
protesting for other reasons unfortunately.

RV: Did you feel at the time it was the wrong war?

FH: No, I was so consumed with my husband being at war that I really didn’t
think about the rest of it. All I wanted was him to get home.

RV: Was that the same in 1970?

FH: Yes. In 1970 I knew he had to go. I will tell you we had a lot of arguments
about it because I wanted him to get out of the military and go to the airlines and he
wouldn’t do it. Flying fighters was his life and I must say that you know I was not as
supportive and receptive because of what we’d been through, not knowing of course that
the second time would be different, but I still felt that the military had not supported us at
all really and I wanted to get out and he didn’t, so that’s pretty much it.

RV: But he did shortly thereafter didn’t he?

FH: Pardon.

RV: He did shortly thereafter get out.

FH: No, he was in the service for thirty-three years. He got out prior and came
back in, in ’61, right at ’62.

RV: Right. My notes stopped at November 1970 so that’s obviously not the end
of his career. What was your impression of Vietnam the country? Did you form an
impression of it?

FH: You know I didn’t really know much about it. You’re talking about the time
when he went to war?

RV: Yes, ma’am.

FH: I didn’t really know much about it and even now I will not support things,items made in Vietnam.

RV: Really, why not?

FH: Because I think that, it’s a communist country and we believe in democracy
and even though there’s no war, they’re still communist and I don’t want to support them.

RV: Do you agree with the United States kind of opening back up to Vietnam,
starting in ’95 and continuing through today?
FH: No, but I could be wrong. I just personally I wouldn’t do it but I’ve been wrong before.

RV: Did you think, did you have any opinion at the time, ’65 to ’70 of the capabilities of South Vietnam defending itself against North Vietnam without the help of the United States?

FH: I didn’t think that they could do it. I didn’t think they could do it but after the assassination of the South Vietnamese president I had very little hope that anything could be salvaged in that country because I knew something was wrong with the people running the war. I knew that this isn’t right and I knew that we had a hand in that somehow and it didn’t, it was just not a good feeling.

RV: Right. What did you think of Richard Nixon as president, him coming in saying okay, I have a plan to end the war and what happened with his administration and eventually actually getting out of Vietnam?

FH: Well, I think, when he was elected and we have to go back, when he was elected I thought he would be a good president and I think he did do many things like in China and things that were good, but I was disappointed in the way we left Vietnam, I thought it was wrong, I thought we could have done it a lot differently. I thought that Kissinger was just getting too involved in Paris, they weren’t making any headway, it was just futile. I was very disappointed in the way things turned out. It was sad, really.

RV: Do you think the United States achieved “peace with honor”?

FH: No, no.

RV: Why not?

FH: I think we ran. I think we ran, we left the people in the south to fend for themselves and I think we just got out because of the TV coverage, the American people said the price was too high. We weren’t fighting the war the right way, we weren’t fighting to win and therefore we couldn’t win so I think we just turned tail and ran.

RV: Do you remember how you felt in April 1975 when Saigon and South Vietnam fell?

FH: I felt very say, I felt very sad and I felt very scared for the POWs because I didn’t know if they would kill them then or not and I just felt very sad and almost heartbroken at the way it happened and the people who were hurt when it happened and
the people in the South who’d befriended us and who were left on their own, I thought it was terrible.

RV: When your husband came back in 1970 and was done with Vietnam for the remainder of his career and then moving through the ‘70s and the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, how much do you all talk to other people about Vietnam and the Vietnam experience that he had had, and what you guys had been through?

FH: Not much. We talked only with those squadron members who had been in that squadron who had experienced it and other people we didn't talk very much about it at all. In fact we didn’t talk about it but as the POWs came home we talked about it to them. As a matter of fact I gave one his very first meal in somebody’s home and he had been about, I think six and a half years a prisoner and he kept, he would just every once in a while go open the refrigerator and look at the food in my refrigerator and say, “It is so wonderful to be home and see this food.” But you just didn’t talk to other people about it because first of all they didn’t understand our experience and second of all you didn’t want to, you know go there.

RV: Do you feel like there was a stigma, a negative stigma attached?

FH: I think they tried to but I felt a lot of pride in the way my husband fulfilled his duty and the way our friends fulfilled their duties and the way they, you know, I know that they were honorable men and I know that they were the cream of the crop of our country and I know how they felt about doing the right thing and I know they weren’t warmongers or people bloodthirsty, in fact nobody hates war more than the military people because they have to fight it and if you know what war is, its not pleasant.

RV: You’ve mentioned some things about POWs, how much contact did you have with them when they came back?

FH: A lot, a lot. Those in our squadron we kept in touch with, you know, let’s see. Well, I can mention Dick Kearn; I talked to him just three months before he died. He called us right when he got back. He called us periodically we would just talk to him, you know and we all drew together in that 47th Squadron. We were all, we all just bonded together as friends and we can see one of them today and it’s just like forty years ago, you know. I don’t know how to explain that kind of a bonding but I saw a lot of them.

As a matter of fact, I ran a POW office in San Bernardino, California in ’73 when the war
ended and a lot of them came to use our office for their office and so I got to know quite
a few others that I hadn’t known before that were shot down and I know some of them
were going through difficult hard times and it was an adjustment for all of them, it was
difficult for them.

RV: What did you do at the POW office?

FH: We sold POW bracelets to make money for the sons and daughters of those
killed so they could have college educations. I raised forty thousand dollars, which was a
lot of money, I was very proud of that, to help the scholarship fund.

RV: And you were able to meet with the families?

FH: Yes.

RV: What was their reaction to what you were doing?

FH: They were grateful and happy. I mean it was just part of the continuation of
the supporting each other that we did in ’65. It was just a continuation of that, that you
knew if you were military you helped other military. There was no question.

RV: Was this particular to the 47th or was this just in general?

FH: No this was the whole military, not just the 47th.

RV: What do you think was the most significant thing that you learned personally
by going through those times?

FH: I learned that no matter how hard it is, you persevere, that you just suck your
breath in and you go forward and you do what you have to do, no matter how scared you
are, no matter how worried you are, you can do it. That’s what I learned.

RV: Is there anything that you would change about your experience now, looking
back?

FH: Now I might demand more from the military but at that time I demanded
nothing. I just kept my mouth shut but I might demand more support than we got.

RV: Do you think you would have gotten it?

FH: That’s a good question. I don’t know. I think, we got a lot of support from
each other and we got as much support as was available for us but other than that, I don’t,
I’m not sure about that question because a lot of this came from Washington and you
know how that it is. You’re far away and you’re not a part of it, so I don’t know.

RV: Do you harbor any resentment toward the military today, because of that?
FH: No, no I don’t.

RV: How do you think the Vietnam War had most affected your life, for all the things that you went through with it?

FH: Wow, that’s really a good question, that’s a deep question.

RV: Take your time.

FH: I think that it actually affected the psyche of our country because it, it was just right in your face that we lost that war and all those really good men died. I really feel they should not have died, that we didn’t really gain much for us or for the world by that war.

RV: How about you personally?

FH: I learned that I’m strong, that I’m a strong person and even though something hurts you badly you just keep going. That’s the only, you never quite and you never give up, that’s what I learned. I was very young then. I was thirty-three years old and I do think that it, I’ve had some really sad things happen since then and I learn you just persevere, you go on. You don’t let it break you.

RV: Do you think the United States learned any lessons from the war?

FH: No, because they’re still debating it. You know they’re still debating it and there’s still the same old rhetoric. It’s like, I’m disappointed because in the war in Iraq people either don’t want to or can’t see how complicated the question is and how we must do something because we are the only superpower. I don’t like that word, but we’re the strongest country in the world and if we don’t do anything we’re going to be in real trouble for our future. It’s disappointing although I know a lot of people have their own political ax to grind and would not want to look at it a different way. It’s disappointing to me personally that people don’t really go study it, that you don’t read everything you can find, that you don’t go to the library, that you don’t go to classes and you find out about Moslems and the Koran and what they believe and how it might affect us and the few fanatics that can do a lot of destruction. And I personally have gone back to 1945 and studied the history of Israel being established again, just to try to understand the roots of all of this and to understand really what is going on and what is driving these people. I think that from that I understand its despair and we must do something to help them, to give them a future to stop it.
RV: Is that akin to the United States stepping in, in South Vietnam, trying to give them a future, help them?

FH: I think our intentions were good but I think the way we went about it was wrong. I think the people who ran the war were wrong. I lay a lot of that at McNamara’s feet. I just think we didn’t go in there to win, because we had one young man in our squadron who bombed a boat on a river and it blew up because it was an ammunition boat and they were thinking of prosecuting him for blowing up this boat on the river and this was war. The restrictions they would place their guns in small villages but you couldn’t bomb that village so you just had to go in there, hit your target when they knew you were coming, have them shoot at you out of these villages and hope you lived. That was wrong I think, the whole thing, the whole war plan was wrong, the whole way we went about it was wrong and a lot of people paid a terrible price for that.

RV: What would have been better, what could have been done differently?

FH: I think if we were going to go to war, you go to war to win. We should have blown up their water supplies, we should have blown up their power plants, we should have blown up anywhere they put artillery we should have blown it up, that’s what you do in a war. We should have blown up their dams and flooded their land so that they couldn’t operate, but we didn’t do any of that, we weren’t allowed to do any of that. It was like we were stalemating the war, trying to hold on without really fighting the war but that’s just my opinion on it.

RV: Well, that’s what this is about. Tell me what you told your daughters about your husband’s military experience, especially in Vietnam.

FH: Well I told them just what I told you I think that it was a wrong war, that I think their father was right to go and do his duty. I mean, he was duty bound. He swore an allegiance to do what was asked of him and he did it honorably and they both believe that too. They understand the difference between doing your duty and saying you won’t do it because of this or that or they understand that the war probably wasn’t, I won’t say it wasn't justified but it wasn’t fought correctly.

RV: Does your husband discuss the war with them?

FH: No. He did not for a long time, no. They were children, they were small children. It was hard enough for them to accept that a lot of their friends’ fathers died and
just accepting that was hard enough for them so no he didn’t talk about it a lot at all
actually.

RV: Did you talk to them about it or did you wait for him to kind of start opening
up?

FH: I waited. I talked to them later. I just told them that he was away and as they
grew older they learned about war and I didn't tell them, we didn’t dwell on it no, but I
told them to be proud of their father and of all their friend’s fathers and all of the military
men, to be very proud and they are to this day.

RV: How much contact have you had with Vietnamese here in the United States?

FH: Very little, very little.

RV: Is that by choice or just by happenstance?

FH: No, it’s just by happenstance. They live in their own communities and like
there’s a couple of tailors and just when you run into them. I don’t hold any animosity
towards them because I don’t know what their personal history is and actually they could
have died [suffered] for our military [and tried] to help us and you don’t know that, so
you don’t take that judgment with you, I don’t know. But the country itself now, I will
not buy Vietnamese goods.

RV: I assume by that, that you would not want to go visit.

FH: I would never go. I would never go.

RV: Even if, would you go back to Ubon?

FH: I never went there, no, I wouldn’t. I have no interest in; I’m going forward,
not backwards.

RV: Tell me about the movies on Vietnam and books written on Vietnam, what is
your opinion of the ones with which you’ve been familiar?

FH: Well, the most of the books I’ve read were written by people who went there
with the exception of Dereliction of Duty but I’ve tried to read more of the history books
about it and also our friends who wrote books and just from that. But I belong to just a
very loose knit military wives group and we do talk about it. We talk about our
experiences, the people who died that we, you know, really cared about and we reminisce
and talk about it a lot more than, my husband and I don’t talk about it very much unless
we’re discussing a book or history or something.
RV: I was going to ask you that, how much do you talk with him about it?

FH: When he talks to his friends on, through email we discuss it. We discuss it when we’re reading books but other than that it’s not, you know it’s not something that looms large in our lives, other than the friends that we lost.

RV: Is this group a support group of military wives or just friends, friends that get together?

FH: Actually, it’s really kind of funny. It was formed by this one woman who was a military wife and she had moved to this community about three years ago, this has been about fifteen years ago, she said if I died tomorrow, I wouldn’t know anybody to come to my funeral. So she wanted to from this group and anybody who’s been in the military knows that military people bond, so she put this little notice in the paper and we started this little group and we do it just to be social. We go to lunch, we don’t do charity things in this group, we just are there in friendship and we bond with one another. When we’re sick we help each other, some of us have died, so it’s just a community thing.

RV: It sounds like the bond amongst military wives is similar to that amongst military men.

FH: You know I think it is probably as close as anything can be that’s not identical. We didn’t get in the airplane and go do the job but we were there and lived it through them and I think still do. I think military families who continue to be families and love one another do this; it’s a normal thing. As a matter of fact, when we lived in Portugal, a Portuguese general told us he had come over here in an exchange with his family and he was on a military base and he said people from the base came over and offered to help him move in his refrigerator, hang his drapes and do things like that and he said, “You know in my country, you would only ask your brother to help you do that” and he said, “I understood immediately Americans bond together” and he has sent every one of his four children over on the exchange program to go to high school in the United States. And I thought what a wonderful thing, even he understood it was just military but he still thought this was a wonderful way to look at things and it made such an impression on him. It made an impression on me too because I’d always took it for granted and he didn’t, so I thought that was interesting.

RV: Do you think the U.S. government has taken care of its Vietnam veterans?
FH: No.
RV: Why?
FH: Well, they subtract my husband’s social security from his retirement for one, which would give us a few hundred more dollars a month, which would make a big difference to us. I think that he doesn’t get the, although I think they’re making great strides and doing a lot better, the VA is sorely lacking in the care it gives veterans, although I think its changing and they are doing better. It concerns me. I think, and they told us always that we would have health care for life and when we turned sixty-five they threw us under the Medicare program which is not complete medical care for life and I feel like we made a lot of sacrifices and they should have kept their word and they didn’t.

RV: What do you think are the myths or misperceptions that the American people, or in general have about the American soldier in Vietnam?
FH: I think one of the misconceptions is that they were just drugged out all the time on marijuana because we heard a lot about that. I think they don't understand that the majority of them were just kids doing a terrible, dirty job and I just think they had no comprehension of what it was like.

RV: Who are they?
FH: You said the American people?
RV: Yes, just in general the American people?
FH: In general, yes.
RV: Have you ever been to the memorial in Washington?
FH: Yes, I have.
RV: What has been your experience there?
FH: Well, I went and touched the names of those men in our squadron that we lost and our one dear friend and it was sad. It was like visiting a grave and that was before they had found his bones and interestingly enough he had two sons and the one son went in the National Guard in Houston and flew some of the very same airplanes that his dad had flown. But it was sad to go there, it was somber, it was a beautiful wall and I thought it was a very apt memorial but I felt sad.

RV: Did you go one time or have you been more than once?
FH: I’ve been more than one time.
RV: Has it changed over the years for you?
FH: No, because it’s like visiting a grave. I still feel the same way every time I go there. I feel somber and sad. I feel more sad because a lot of good men lost their lives which means they didn’t get to live out their lives and see their children grow up and the war I think was wrong. It was not really just and I fight from saying that they lost their lives for nothing because I don’t really believe that but I still think what a waste and that’s what strikes me when I go there.

RV: What have you witnessed other veteran’s spouses doing there, have you been able to identify them or talk with any of them?
FH: Oh, yes. When you go there you usually take flowers and you always see people there crying and just being very somber, but it’s just like visiting a graveyard I think. We all want to do it because it’s a memorial to our friends.

RV: What advice would you give other military wives?
FH: In what respect?
RV: Well, of how to deal with the absences of their husbands, how to deal with potential death and war, how to deal with controversy at home during war?
FH: I would say read all you can, learn about the war, whichever war it is, whatever war it is. I would say continue your education, educate yourself. Think of the way that you would raise your children if your husband died and I would support him in every way you can. Now it’s a lot easier, they have email and all the communication. I would say just strive to be as strong and independent as you can be and still support them and love them, be it your wife or husband, whatever, but don’t add to their burden by telling them your problems.

RV: And one other question that I have, what role did the church play in your life as far as dealing with your husband’s military service?
FH: My particular church was wonderful. As I said before our priest had been a chaplain and he was wonderful. It was very influential and I knew my children were safe in that school and I knew I had someplace I could go and talk and as a matter of fact a member of our church was one of the first captured and he was a FAC and he was captured and after the war we found out that they beheaded him. But while he was missing we all just, the church, we did charity things for the church together and we
would talk together and try to just help each other go on but my church, that particular
curch, were Episcopalian was very influential in helping us as a family. Later on the
 Episcopal Church became so political my husband left it but this particular priest he loves
and also this particular church we loved and I also go to church here, Episcopal Church
and I found them to be very loving and caring and they’re trying so hard to do it right this
time. And our church, we parade the American flag and then the Texas flag goes down
our aisle every Sunday and we, you know we love our country and we pray for all the
men from our church who are in harm’s way now and all others and try to support them
by sending care packages to them and I have found this church here to be very loving and
supportive too. We’ve already lost one young man out of church in Afghanistan. So I
think that while this church on the whole is more passive they understand that you can’t
take that role, they understand they made big mistakes in Vietnam when they didn’t
support the men and families and they’re trying so hard not to repeat that, no matter how
they feel about any war and I respect them for that.

RV: Mrs. Hamilton, is there anything else that you’d like to talk about or add to
our discussion today?

FH: I don’t know, I’ll probably think of something the minute I hang up.

RV: Well if you do so then you can add it to the interview when you get it on
hand.

FH: Okay, I hope I haven’t rambled too much.

RV: No, ma’am, no ma’am you have not. Let me go ahead and officially sign off.

This will officially end the oral history interview with Mrs. Frances Hamilton, thank you
very much ma’am.

FH: Thank you.