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The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Martin Montemore
Conducted by Richard Burks Verrone, Ph.D.
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Transcribed by Brooke Tomlin

NOTE: Text included in brackets [] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.

1 Richard Verrone: This is Richard Verrone and I am doing an oral history
2 interview with Mr. Martin Montemore. Today is March 27, 2003. I'm in Lubbock, Texas
3 on the campus of Texas Tech University in the Special Collections Library Interview
4 Room. Mr. Montemore is in Kansas City, Missouri. Sir lets start with some basic
5 biographical information, could you tell me when and where you were born and just a
6 little about your childhood?

7 Martin Montemore: I was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, June 16, 1944. I think [it
8 was a] very typical smaller town childhood and environment; went to Catholic grade
9 school, a very ethnic mixed neighborhood and went to a Catholic high school. After that I
10 went away to college.

11 RV: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

12 MM: Two brothers and three sisters.

13 RV: Were they older, younger?

14 MM: All older except one younger sister.

15 RV: How about your parents, what did they do for a living?

16 MM: My father worked blue collar for a meat packing plant and my mother was a
17 housewife.

18 RV: What are your memories of your childhood, did you work when you were
19 young, or was it more play, or was it about school? What are your memories?

1 MM: I mostly I think it would be school and play. I didn't work until I became
2 eligible age wise to work at the packing plant, which is where everybody worked when
3 they became 18. Before that I basically was a school kid and did a lot of neighborhood
4 things with neighbor kids.

5 RV: Tell me about what kind of student you were in grade school and all through
6 high school, what were your favorite subjects?

7 MM: English, Spelling, Math, I was a good student in grade school and top ten in
8 high school, nothing outstanding but it seemed to work. I was motivated to work kind of
9 hard at it.

10 RV: Was that external motivation or internal?

11 MM: I think it was internal; yes it was more internal than anything else. Our
12 family was rather large in the sense that we had older brothers and sisters. There was
13 always a lot of other children around so it was hard for my parents or anyone to give
14 anybody individual motivation, or care, or attention. So it was more of a group thing so I
15 think that my motivation came internally.

16 RV: Did your parents emphasize education to you?

17 MM: Yes they did, neither one of them had a high school education but they were
18 obviously from that generation that was difficult.

19 RV: Did you have any relatives that served in WWII?

20 MM: Yes, well not a lot of relatives but two brothers.

21 RV: Oh, both your brothers?

22 MM: Right.

23 RV: Ok, what did they do in the war?

24 MM: My oldest brother was in the Navy and they had combat, I'm not sure
25 exactly what operations they were, I just knew he was in combat. He was 20 years older
26 than I, and then I had another brother that was 18 years older than I, that was a Marine
27 and also was in combat in WWII in the Pacific, both of them were in the Pacific.

28 RV: Did you talk with them about there experiences?

29 MM: No, never did.

30 RV: Did you get to see them in uniform?

1 MM: Pictures. No I was too young, they were 20 and 18 when I was born so by
2 the time I remembered them they were already out of the service and gone. They went to
3 the service when they were like 17 so I never did talk to them about what they did and
4 they are both deceased now.

5 RV: How about other relatives?

6 MM: Just uncles, and I'm of the age that the people that were a generation ahead
7 of me were all the ones that went to WWII so there was a lot of my real close relatives
8 that went, but then again they were all gone and came back before I was even born or
9 about the time I was born in 1944. So I didn't know anything about it and I really never
10 did talk to anybody much about WWII. It doesn't seem like to me it just never became a
11 topic of conversation, not because it was deliberately avoided but it was just not
12 something that was more important to be talking about baseball or football or something
13 else.

14 RV: Were you into sports as a child?

15 MM: Yes I did, I played football and baseball and then in high school I played
16 football, baseball, and ran track. In junior college I played football and ran track and then
17 I didn't do organized anymore but I still do athletic things by just playing on our firms
18 softball team and working out two or three times a week, but nothing anything high level,
19 just try to stay active is all.

20 RV: What are your memories of high school? You said you were at a private
21 catholic school, is that correct?

22 MM: Right, yes, boy's school. I think there was a lot of camaraderie and my best
23 memories I guess would be those that had to do with athletic events and socializing at
24 various school functions and that sort of thing. I very much enjoyed high school, thought
25 it was a good experience.

26 RV: What year did you graduate?

27 MM: 1962.

28 RV: What are your memories of the Korean War?

29 MM: Boy you know, I don't have any.

30 RV: Really, I know you were young.

1 MM: Yes well ten I guess but you know I don't know, I am sorry I just really
2 don't, I guess I really don't have any memory of it.

3 RV: Do you remember President Kennedy?

4 MM: Oh yes.

5 RV: What are your memories of him, you were in high school when he was
6 elected and the missile crisis happens in the fall after you graduate?

7 MM: Right, all very fond memories. I mean he was a well respected in our
8 community, my local community because of the ethnicity but also because he was a
9 Catholic and came from what everyone considered at the time to be a fine family of
10 brothers that did a lot for America. I think he was probably the most respected and well
11 liked president that I know of, at least in my little circle.

12 RV: When you graduated high school did you have plans to go immediately to
13 college or did you want to work for a while?

14 MM: I did work, but no I had planned to go ahead and go to college.

15 RV: You said you worked at the meat packing factory when you became of age, is
16 that correct?

17 MM: Right.

18 RV: Tell me about that, what was that like?

19 MM: It was good, hard work, very congested, very loud. You had to be physically
20 strong, pretty much had to be mentally strong as well because of the environment of all
21 the noise. Of course there was a lot, obviously a lot of animals being slaughtered. It is not
22 a place for the weak of heart or weak of stomach or whatever, but everybody there, was
23 you know a good hard worker that was trying to eat or raise a family or trying to earn
24 some money to be able to continue their education. I am talking about the people in the
25 summer time that were basically the replacements for people that were going vacation
26 during summertime, and that's what I did was the summer replacement.

27 RV: What were your duties there specifically?

28 MM: I worked in the hog kill, basically working with heads. Splitting hog heads
29 with a machine.

30 RV: Where was the plant located, was it near St. Joseph or was it?

31 MM: Yes it was in St. Joseph.

1 RV: In St. Joseph, ok. So after high school you said you were going to go ahead
2 and go to college, you went to junior college. Where did you go?

3 MM: I went to a small college called Highland Community College; it is a junior
4 college, a two-year college, which is probably 15 or 20 miles west of St. Joseph.

5 RV: What did you study there?

6 MM: Just the basic courses. I basically had I guess it would be called college prep
7 courses type thing where you take those if you were going to continue your education
8 past a two-year level and I took Chemistry and Calculus and those courses, but the basic
9 courses. Junior college you know is not extremely difficult. Yes, the basic courses and a
10 few college types bound, you know if you're going to be college bound.

11 RV: How did you do academically, how did you adapt to college lifestyle?

12 MM: Fine, I mean I am sure, I don't know exactly, but I always had A's or B's so
13 I would say I didn't really change anywhere to either go significantly up or significantly
14 down I think anywhere in my academic career.

15 RV: You were there from '62 to '64?

16 MM: I was there actually just one year and then I; my buddies had finished their
17 second year when I had finished my first year. The school was just too small and with my
18 buddies leaving I jut didn't want to go back. I was playing football and running track at
19 the time so I just didn't show up for football practice and well moved to California with
20 three of my buddies and we just went out there and worked for six months and then I
21 came back.

22 RV: What did you do out in California, in work?

23 MM: We had various jobs, basically we were 18 years old and we would work
24 temporary jobs doing whatever manual labor was around. The biggest job, or the more
25 stable job or the longest job I had was working shipping boxes from a Sears warehouse in
26 Los Angeles.

27 RV: How did your parents feel about you leaving school and going out to
28 California?

29 MM: We never really did discuss it, but I am sure it was not very well looked
30 upon and looking back on it; it was probably a dangerous thing to do.

31 RV: So when you came back after six months what did you do then?

1 MM: Started back at junior college in St. Joseph.
2 RV: This is in 1964?
3 MM: Right.
4 RV: Back at Highland Community College?
5 MM: No, I'm sorry I went to St. Joseph Junior College at the time. St. Jo had it's
6 own community college so I started my second year after that period of time being out
7 back in, not back but started at St. Joseph Junior College and then I spent a year there and
8 finished that program.
9 RV: And then where did you go?
10 MM: Southwest Missouri State University, which is located in Springfield
11 Missouri.
12 RV: Did you end up graduating?
13 MM: Yes.
14 RV: In what year did you graduate?
15 MM: I graduated in 1967.
16 RV: By this time the United States had really become embedded in Vietnam and
17 what was happening there. How much did you follow American foreign policy, what the
18 United States was doing in Southeast Asia, things like that?
19 MM: I was aware of it only because of the media and basically the attention that
20 was given to the daily skirmishes about like what is happening now I guess. So from that
21 aspect I was exposed but I was not learned nor was I curious about it. I wasn't a nation-
22 inquisitive person; I was more of just my local community and circles. I guess my point
23 is I was pretty politically naive, I think, which I would think that if I would look back on
24 it hard enough I would think most of us were as well politically naive, meaning that I
25 don't think I had an opinion as to whether it was right or wrong or good or bad or moral
26 or immoral or whatever. It just didn't really affect me.
27 RV: Were you aware of the draft?
28 MM: Yes, in college that was the thing that everybody was aware of because each
29 local draft board had their own rules and our particular rule was four years deferment for
30 college, eight semesters and then once you pass that then there was no more deferments.
31 So everybody new as soon as they graduated that you know your odds of being drafted

1 were 100% or whatever unless there was some physical or mental reason or whatever that
2 you couldn't serve.

3 RV: How did you feel about that?

4 MM: I don't think I had a feeling, I didn't want to go because I mean not for any
5 reason it's that everybody didn't want to go, I think. That was just a general consensus. I
6 didn't feel like it was dangerous, immoral, or illegal I just didn't. The military was
7 foreign to me, either I really had nobody close to me personally that was involved with
8 any military or war, except my brothers and they were in and out before I even knew that
9 they were in. Anyway, I guess my point is I really didn't have a strong opinion just
10 except that everybody basically would want to do something else other than that if they
11 could, but everybody knew that was coming.

12 RV: So you knew when you graduated in 1967 that most likely you were going to
13 be drafted?

14 MM: Yes most likely and then I started school, graduate because I heard a rumor
15 that they were going to allow some people to go ahead and continue schooling as long as
16 they were doing well and didn't have a break and that sort of thing. So I enrolled in
17 graduate school and worked for about two months and then I got my draft notice.

18 RV: So the rumors proved to not be true?

19 MM: Right, they did not, right.

20 RV: This was the fall of '67?

21 MM: Let's see; yes the fall of '67.

22 RV: How did you feel when you got your draft notice?

23 MM: Well it was inevitable, most people were looking for alternatives and so I
24 can't remember if I, seems like to me that I may have tried to join National Guard unit or
25 yeah National Guard unit. Well actually I think I heard that they weren't taking anybody
26 so I didn't really try. But somehow or another I got a word about contact from some
27 recruiter saying that if you were a college graduate and if you qualified that you could go
28 to Air Force pilot training but you had to pass a couple of tests. So I don't recall the
29 exact contact I made, but I do recall taking what they call the Air Force Officers
30 Qualifying test, the AFOQT and then they had a UPT, undergraduate pilot training
31 aptitude test and navigator aptitude test. So you took those three tests and I remember

1 taking those three tests. Very shortly after I got my draft notice I think within a week I
2 had a physical, a basic physical that may have been from my own doctor or from a doctor
3 that was not military at the time. And with that I qualified and so I joined in between the
4 time that I got my draft notice and the time I would have been sworn in and left was, I
5 can't remember if it was a two week period or a three week period or whatever it was in
6 between that time. I was fortunate enough to qualify so I accepted and went to the Air
7 Force instead.

8 RV: Why the Air Force?

9 MM: That's who was accepting but the Air Force I don't know that seems to me
10 the higher, the more professional, oh I don't know the classier service of all. It seemed to
11 me that they had the best jobs and best profession.

12 RV: How did you do on the test?

13 MM: I barely qualified, I did well on the academic part, the pilot aptitude and the
14 navigator aptitude were slanted more towards somebody that had ever flown before and I
15 had never flown in an airplane before.

16 RV: That's interesting you joining the Air Force and you have never been.

17 MM: Yes I had never flown an airplane but I've never flown in one either so I'd
18 never been a passenger on an airplane. I have a tendency to think, I don't remember exact
19 questions, I have a tendency to think that they were slightly looking for people that had
20 some either high aptitude or some exposure or experience around airplanes and I didn't
21 have any of that so I barely made, I think I barely made the pilot. I did better on the
22 navigator because it was more mathematic oriented as opposed to pilot aptitude so I know
23 I barely passed the pilot and did better on the navigator.

24 RV: Tell me about going to basic.

25 MM: Pretty uneventful, it was at Lackland. It was officer's training, what they
26 call OTS, Officers Training School, six weeks I think, maybe eight weeks. Very fast, I
27 was thrown in with people from obviously from all across the United States and whether
28 it was from New York or North Dakota, very regimented, very strict, and very fast.

29 RV: How did you adapt to the military lifestyle?

30 MM: I think I adapted well and probably because at that age I was very adaptable,
31 I didn't question anything. So if it was time to get up at 5:30 I just tried to figure out how

1 to get up at 5:30, I didn't try to figure out why I should get up at 5:30. I mean somebody
2 told me to do it so I did it.

3 RV: When you think back about your basic what do you see in your mind?

4 MM: Again I think I see the people I was with; I don't recall any of their names. I
5 do know they were from all walks of life and all different colleges and everybody there
6 was a college graduate so it was a very different exposure to me to be in that type of
7 environment without close friends support group type thing, but I adapted very quickly
8 and they became, I guess, my support group. When I think back that is probably what I
9 recall the most is again probably the feeling of having a job to do and trying to get
10 through it together that being graduated.

11 RV: What do you think was the most challenging aspect of that training?

12 MM: Well I didn't think anything of it. I mean I was highly regulated and of
13 course there was a lot of physical things to that but I was used to that and so I really
14 didn't have any problems with the physical part of it or the mental part of it or the
15 academics part of it. I mean I guess being so regimented it was a disadvantage but also
16 an advantage to somebody like me because I could adapt to that. The challenge was just
17 to finish; I don't think anything about it in particular that I am looking back on it was
18 particularly difficult for me.

19 RV: How would you rate the training you received?

20 MM: The training in officers training school was oh I think it was fine I mean I
21 don't know what else I would have said that we should do more of. I mean I think that
22 they have to impart a certain amount of, I guess, military tradition and custom and
23 practice and even things like how to march, how to salute, or to do military things. I think
24 ours you know because it's a military organization I think those are probably important
25 things to do. Going through it you don't think that, it just seems kind of Micky Mouse
26 and you don't feel why you need to know this or why you need to learn this or that,
27 whether it's marching or how to salute, or how to wear your insignia or whatever. I
28 thought it was adequate for what we needed and it was just I don't remember having any
29 rest I mean there was no time that we were not doing something so I think they stuck two
30 or three months worth of stuff in six weeks or whatever.

1 RV: Do you remember if any of your instructors had experience over in Southeast
2 Asia?

3 MM: I only remember one and no he had not. I don't recall, but I think that
4 person stayed with us the whole time by that meaning he was a military officer who had
5 certain whatever it is, student squadrons attached and he stayed with our student squadron
6 the whole time and no he was not a Vietnam Veteran.

7 RV: Now did you have aspirations to be a pilot or where you looking at some
8 other avenue of career in the Air Force or not career just another job?

9 MM: No to be a pilot. When we went in, most of us, well I don't know if they did
10 come to the looks at it but think about it they may have done that on purpose. I don't
11 know, it seems to me that all of my roommates, no that's not true I guess. Most of the
12 people that I was with were pilot bound, were pilot training bound but come to think of it
13 there were some that were not. So I thought maybe they segregated them by career fields
14 but I don't think they did. They needed a lot of pilots at that time so that's why they took
15 this whatever it was this three month program and set it down to six weeks was to be able
16 to rush it through so that you know they could have a pipe line of people that they needed
17 to source out Southeast Asia.

18 RV: Did they tell you that you are probably going to end up in Southeast Asia or
19 was it?

20 MM: No I think it was kind of generally understood but it was so far away that it
21 didn't matter I mean it was so far, so into the future. I mean you wake up and you've got
22 to do whatever it is that day, Calisthenics or you've got to do marching or you got to do
23 whatever academics or whatever it is, it all is every second so you don't even think about
24 tomorrow much less you know a year from now.

25 RV: Let me ask you about your parents, how did they feel about you being in the
26 military?

27 MM: I think that they were probably fairly proud of it. I don't know that again,
28 they had a lot of time to be thinking about individual people, not that they didn't think
29 about me but I am saying that. I have just one child so it's easy for me to devote all my
30 free time to the one child. They didn't have that luxury and so I don't recall them
31 encouraging me or discouraging me or saying that it's good or that it's bad. I think it was

1 a normal course and they had of course two other sons that did exactly the same thing in
2 terms of going into the military during a time when the military was at work, and so I
3 don't think it was a new and foreign thing to them. I think they were fine with it but I
4 never did ask them or tell them how I felt or asked them how they felt, it was not really a
5 topic.

6 RV: So when you finished at Lackland where did you go from there?

7 MM: Went to undergraduate pilot training at Vance Air Force Base in Enid,
8 Oklahoma.

9 RV: What was that like?

10 MM: Very good, very regimented. Very standardized, everybody did the same
11 thing at the same time or wore the same clothes and took the same courses and did the
12 same things. Very packed with high speed academics, high speed pilot training
13 techniques and flying and all of those things, I mean we were doing that for probably 10
14 or 12 hours a day everyday. So yes that was probably a good description of, you have it,
15 have plenty of things to do and not enough time to do it,

16 RV: How long did this training last?

17 MM: One year.

18 RV: Had you been in an airplane before going to Vance and at Lackland did you
19 actually get up in the air?

20 MM: No.

21 RV: So the first time you were ever in an airplane was?

22 MM: Was rolling down the runway at undergraduate pilot training in the left seat
23 of a T-41. When you start it said 'your airplane' as your rolling down the runway. So that
24 was the first time that I had ever been in an airplane, I flew it.

25 RV: How was that feeling for you?

26 MM: It was a good feeling, there again it was, for me it was just a goal I mean it
27 wasn't exhilarating and it wasn't fulfilling. It was that was what you were supposed to do
28 at that time so I was becoming to, I mean like everyone else to do that I didn't have a,
29 looking back on it I think that it was probably a pretty good accomplishment by the
30 system to be able to take somebody who has never flown in an airplane to fly in a
31 airplane probably in about a two week period of time. When we first went to

1 undergraduate pilot training the initial thing that you do is that you check in and that you
2 get your place where you stay and you get a bunch of things that you know, your medical
3 records and do all the administrative stuff for two or three days and then you start with
4 your classes. Probably had a week of academics and then we started our flying, probably
5 in a week with their program. You know you've got an instructor with you of course. I
6 think that probably goes to show that they had that pretty well down by the time I went.

7 RV: How was your instructor?

8 MM: Good, I mean each airplane had a different instructor but looking back on it
9 I would say generally that they were extremely well motivated with a lot of experience
10 and a lot of I guess ability to communicate. There all pretty young, most of them had com
11 back from flying in country so the instructors were very confident and very professional I
12 thought.

13 RV: What kind of planes did you train in?

14 MM: The first one is a T-41, which is the same as a Cessna 172, a single engine
15 prop reciprocal engine airplane, then we went to a T-37 which is a twin engine subsonic
16 jet made by Cessna and then we went to the T-38 which is a twin engine super sonic jet.
17 Actually those air forces use those airplanes today. They're using some other ones too but
18 there still using those airplanes for certain people. Now they put people that are going to
19 cargo or transport airplanes in big, bigger airplanes in pilot training rather than a T-38
20 which is the one that people that are going to go to fighters go through which makes more
21 sense in a sense that you know how to fly a twin engine jet super sonic and then you end
22 up going in a B-52 or C-130 or a 141, that's a pretty big transition. So now they're having
23 an interim airplane being a twin engine larger jet for pilot training now.

24 RV: How did you do personally in flying, did it come natural to you or was it
25 difficult?

26 MM: I think it came with some work. There were those in my class that were I
27 would think what you would call naturals that appeared like they just didn't have to work
28 very hard and I had to work pretty hard, but on the other hand, having some athletic
29 background and probably more athletic background than most of my peers made a lot of
30 the things I did easier even though I had to work hard to get the concept or to get the feel.
31 Once I got it, it seemed like I didn't have much of a problem.

1 RV: Did your instructors tell you what they did in Vietnam, talk to you about
2 Southeast Asia, the flying there?

3 MM: No.

4 RV: Really? Even though all you guys were probably going to end up over there.

5 MM: Right.

6 RV: Why do you think that was?

7 MM: Well I think it was more lack of social contact with them. Every minute that
8 you were with them was you know devoted to flying and talking about flying and you
9 know learning how to fly not what somebody else did. I never had any what I would
10 consider to be buddies as instructors. They were all First Lieutenants or Captains and
11 they had their own social circles. Basically the students didn't mix with the instructors on
12 that level so we really didn't have much of a conversation.

13 RV: Did your instructor in there for this year at Vance, did it help you when you
14 got to Southeast Asia, I mean obviously this is your learning how to fly so how much did
15 that help you in Southeast Asia or was it more of your advanced pilot training that's been
16 more significant for you?

17 MM: I think it was probably the advanced pilot training because I switched from a
18 twin-engine jet, which is very small to a four-engine turbo prop jet cargo carrier, it was a
19 big transition for me to get into an airplane that you could walk around in. It was just so
20 different than what I did before that, yes that transition there is what really got us to the
21 level that we needed to be to be able to fly in country.

22 RV: Did you make this transition at Vance or was it after?

23 MM: It was after.

24 RV: Before we leave your training at Vance are there any particular incidents that
25 come to mind about your training there that you remember?

26 MM: I think, looking back well not looking back on it, yes looking back on it and
27 even at the time I think it was a quite a thrill to fly the four ship formations with the other
28 students flying by ourselves at 30,000 40,000 feet or whatever at very high speed, wings
29 overlapping and three feet apart and all that stuff. Everybody did it; everybody had to do
30 the same thing. That was an exhilarating experience. For the first time I really got the
31 feeling of flying and it was rewarding in and of itself as opposed to just to being another

1 step along the way so that is really what I probably remember and there again you got a
2 lot of camaraderie. I am sure you hear that word all the time, that's what happens when
3 you get into organizations that are basically closed society. We lived together, we worked
4 together, we eat together, and we sleep together, we fly together I mean it's just natural
5 that you get close to the people that are in your class so I guess that is probably the
6 biggest general feeling and specifically I think the T-38 was a lot of fun.

7 RV: Now your ranking in that graduating class, did that determine whether you
8 would go to fighters or to the four engine transports?

9 MM: Right and the macho thing at that time was to go to fighters, probably still is
10 and it varies by class. Our class was mostly cargo bound, I think we had two fighters out
11 of I want to say like 65. I wasn't close to that, I think I graduated probably in the top 1/3
12 but not even close enough to think about a fighter so my first choice was a C-130 because
13 realistically they told you what airplanes were available. I guess the way they did that is
14 whoever graduated first, whoever was first in the class would then pick that airplane and
15 then whoever was second in the class would see what's left and pick the next airplane and
16 you went down the line like that so by the time you got to be number 15 or 18 or
17 whatever the C-130 was the best airplane left. So that 's how I got a C-130 and they had
18 some airplanes that were not so desirable to be flying that ended up at the people at the
19 lower end of the class and got having.

20 RV: What were those airplanes?

21 MM: What they call a C-123, that's one of them; let me see there at the time a
22 B-52 was looked down upon as an aircraft to get. There were a lot of FACs what they call
23 Forward Air Control Airplanes and I don't even know those designations, O-1, O-2, the
24 single engine, little Cessna's that people flew to basically guide the fighters in. They flew
25 over the jungle and looked for any movements or whatever. So those airplanes that were I
26 guess, less sophisticated except for the B-52, which is a pretty sophisticated airplane but
27 the problem with the B-52 at the time was that you sat as a co-pilot, or at least that is
28 what everybody told us, and I think it is true, you sat as a co-pilot for three or four years
29 and you never got to fly the airplane. So after three or four years you know if you got out
30 that was it you never did fly the airplane or if you stayed in then they would train you to
31 get into the left seat as the aircraft commander. Everybody else already had their own

1 airplane as an aircraft commander way way before that so that's probably why those
2 airplanes were at the bottom.

3 RV: Where did you go for you C-130 training?

4 MM: Nashville, Tennessee. That was at Smyrna Air Force Base. No, it was
5 Smyrna, Tennessee actually, little town outside of Nashville. We were there and I can't
6 remember the name of the base. It is closed now.

7 RV: Seward?

8 MM: Yeah right, Seward Air Force Base right. From there, I went over there for I
9 don't know what, probably two to three months.

10 RV: Is this in 1969?

11 MM: Yes, because they go by numbers, designation of my class was 69-01, which
12 meant that I was the first class that graduated in the fiscal year, 1969, which started, I
13 believe in August at that time. Well August one of 1968, I graduated I think August two,
14 1968. By the time I had leave and the two or three months of training that I left for South
15 East Asia in January I think of 1970. January or February because we had I forgot about
16 that, we had survival school to go to first.

17 RV: After Seward?

18 MM: Right, after Seward.

19 RV: So you ended up going to Southeast Asia January you said '70, is it 1969?

20 MM: '69, I'm sorry. Yes

21 RV: 1969 ok, tell me about the C-130. What kind of transition was that for you,
22 and tell me about the aircraft itself.

23 MM: Well the aircraft is extremely large when you come from a twin-engine jet
24 like that. It feels so large, cumbersome, non responsive in the sense of anything I had to
25 compare it to. Now that I compare it to other bigger airplanes, it's actually a very good
26 airplane; very responsive, very forgiving. It can fly slow and it can fly low and it can fly
27 fast and it can fly high, it can do a lot of things well. It doesn't do anything best but it
28 does every thing pretty well. And so the transition for me was difficult for me at first, but
29 it would be for anybody coming from pilot training but it was pretty quick. You had to go
30 through academics for six weeks or whatever it was then you flew the airplane as a
31 copilot a few times. But they knew basically that you weren't going to be doing a lot of

1 flying right off anyway so you were going to get all of your experience on the job so they
2 gave us adequate training but not a quantitative large amount and then sent us off.

3 RV: Did you like the C-130?

4 MM: Yes, very much.

5 RV: I've heard it's a very forgiving aircraft.

6 MM: Very forgiving, yes, there is a lot you can do; misuse it, abuse it, or
7 whatever and generally speaking it is one that will ride itself, fly itself, help itself out of
8 situations.

9 RV: What was survival training like, where did this take place for you?

10 MM: It took place in Fairchild and you know I'm getting a bunch of looks in here
11 that people give to me, I was wondering Richard if I could set up, I was looking for a
12 break point.

13 RV: Why don't we do that right now?

14 MM: Is that ok, because it seems the subject is changing to the... which is very
15 interesting place if you have never been, survival training is. I was very much impressed
16 by it and I would like not to have to be in a rush and I've had two or three of the other
17 attorneys come in and give me the sign. Is it a long one or a short one and I've told them
18 that I would be getting to them here in a minute or so. If it's not, I'm very interested in it,
19 I've got some other appointments and I was out all day in deposition so I am apologizing.

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The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Martin Montemore
Conducted by Richard Burks Verrone, Ph.D.
May 15, 2003
Transcribed by Brooke Tomlin

1 Richard Verrone: This is Richard Verrone and I am continuing my oral history
2 interview with Mr. Martin Montemore. Today is May 15, 2003. I am in Lubbock Texas in
3 the interview room on the special collections library on the campus of Texas Tech
4 University and Mr. Montemore is in Kansas City, Missouri. Sir we left off late '68
5 early '69 with your getting ready to go Vietnam and you went to Survival School and you
6 wanted to talk about your experience there and I would like to hear about it.

7 Martin Montemore: Well I think probably Survival School was probably the first
8 real experience that made it an actual feeling that you were going to go to a hostile
9 environment. Before, I think most of us felt the same way, going through pilot training
10 was our principle objective and solely thought about how to pass the academics and the
11 flying part of that and how to do as well as you could possibly do. It was more or less a
12 non-reality in the sense that it was almost like going to college where you just kind of
13 made strides to do as best as you could, and more or less the rest of it was kind of fun and
14 games. But then when all of us went from that environment to going to Survival School
15 which everybody went to in Spokane Washington, it became less of a fun and games
16 aspect and more of a reality that we were going to a situation in which we would be in
17 harms way and certainly there was the possibility that you would be shot down and
18 captured. So the principle focus of that school was to prepare you for that eventuality. I
19 think most of us really hit us for the first time that what we were in for was not fun and
20 games and flying airplanes for fun anymore. But the reality that there were people that
21 were on the ground that did not appreciate us being there, did not want us to be there and

1 were certainly doing their best to, I guess, lessen our numbers of people that would be
2 flying missions over there. It was I guess, a bitter sweet experience. I think that they did
3 impart upon us the thought that even if you are shot down which you are probably not
4 going to be, which is certainly accurate, but even if you do your odds of surviving are
5 good and going through this school would make them even better. They had a part of that
6 school that did treat the pilot, the crew members, as if they had been shot down and had
7 been captured and so there was about a three day stint there in which you were prisoner
8 of war. And that really was a harsh reality as to what kind of treatment you could expect
9 and they did a excellent job of making it very realistic, and even though in the back of
10 your mind you knew that you were still in the United States of America and these people
11 that had you were fellow Americans and probably members of the same military as you
12 were. It was not conveyed in any manner expressly or impliedly or any other way that it
13 was anything other than real.

14 RV: What do they do to you?

15 MM: They did a lot to humiliate individuals and they controlled the group by,
16 well a couple of different ways. One is that they put everybody through certain things like
17 putting you in a very small box in which you could not stand up, sit up, you could not do
18 anything but fold in a ball. You're blindfolded and I think handcuffed but in any event
19 you are put in this black box with nothing in it and roll in a ball, which is the only way
20 you could get in it. Then they lock the door behind you and you were in like a storage
21 cabinet except it was only about two feet high and two feet wide. They put everybody
22 through that; they put everybody through being blindfolded and naked. They took off all
23 your clothes and put you in the middle of a room then made you stand there and half sit
24 down with your arms out while they played Joan Baez and other music, protest music, to
25 you. Obviously to break you physically or mentally and they put everybody through that.
26 They put everybody through a cell and I think almost more importantly to me because
27 that was kind of a group effort, you knew every body was going through that, and you
28 had that still, 'I am the best in the world pilot and I am certainly young and strong and I
29 can get through this easily.'

30 RV: This is what you were telling yourself?

1 MM: Right, right, that was the attitude I think that probably all of us had, but one
2 of the things that struck me was that they would pick the I guess what you would call the
3 leader of a group. There's may be six or eight of us that were in one group that were
4 captured at the same time and there may be three or four of these same groups going
5 through at the same time. They would pick the best one, like in your class they picked the
6 major who was an Italian guy, and I remember him being what I thought to be very all
7 American personality, very outgoing, very good looking guy with a good build and
8 certainly physically strong, mentally strong, a leader type and that's who they went after.
9 When they went after that guy the rest of us, as an example, would all be in a bunker or
10 something and they would pull him out and make him do things in front of us and make
11 him do extra work. Then they would put leg irons on him, handcuffs on him and the rest
12 of us did not have those, and that was our example. If we got out of line or tried to
13 escape they accused him of trying to escape and he kept saying 'I didn't try to escape'
14 and he didn't, but that didn't matter, of course, that was what their point was. 'Yes, you
15 are thinking that, we know you were plotting and we have somebody here in your group
16 that told us this. There is somebody in this group that is reporting everything to us and
17 you're the one that is trying to do this and we're going to make an example out of you,'
18 and they did. It was remarkable to me that within a very short space of time, maybe one
19 day, that they had actually broken his spirit and it broke mine a bit to see that a guy that I
20 thought was a little older, well he was, he was older, more mature, to me physically and
21 mentally strong, emotionally strong, psychologically strong, a natural leader. I think most
22 of us were natural leaders but he was the leader of the leaders and they broke him and
23 they broke his spirit.

24 RV: Do you remember what happened to him and how you knew he was broken?

25 MM: He would no longer look up, he would no longer stare you in the face, he
26 would no longer initiate conversations, and he wasn't social anymore with us. He tried
27 to, which they tell us to do, they tell you how to try to deal with it, and one of the ways is
28 to keep a low profile.

29 RV: Did they tell you this before the school started or during the school, was that
30 part of training?

1 MM: It was part of the training, was a classroom academic thing for a day or so
2 and they taught at how to kill a rabbit and how to eat a rabbit if you're 'E and E-ing,'
3 which is Escape and Evading and how to live while you're on the lamb or so to speak,
4 trying to avoid capture. And then they also told you in general how to deal with a POW
5 situation in a sense, that in general you want to keep a low profile, you want to not stick
6 out, you want to not do anything that would be extraverted. You want to complain, fake
7 illness, fake injury, any of those things to try to curry some kind of treatment that would
8 not be harmful to you physically yet all the while it is only name, rank, and serial
9 number. You're not allowed to curry favor by any remarks that could be considered
10 derogatory or detrimental to the United States, and giving them any information and all
11 that stuff, which I thought was, looking back on it, which I thought was really, and still is,
12 extremely wrong. I think they should tell everybody that if you get shot down, you spill
13 your guts, you tell them everything they want to hear, you tell them that United States is
14 bad, you tell them that you're bad, you tell them that we shouldn't be there. And then we
15 will tell the world that we told you to say all of that, instead of breaking you to get you to
16 say what you're basically going to say anyway or die, I think it is better handled in that
17 way. But in any event I guess that is not the issue. It is just at that time there was no
18 fraternizing and anybody that did was really looked down on, even though McCain and
19 others spent three four or five years there while they were giving their interviews to the
20 press and talking about how the United States should not be there and it was a mistake
21 and all that stuff. Going through all of that and then saying those words, and I think they
22 were pretty much very much looked down upon by the other military that were not
23 prisoners of war. They would actually go so far as to say those things that were
24 derogatory about the United States and about themselves and their part in the war but I
25 guess that all came from Survival School. Them instilling upon you that it is your job to
26 try to stay alive but you still had these rules and these rules are in effect no matter what.
27 So, I guess from that aspect it was striking to me. Number one, it was a wake up call that
28 where we're going is real and there is this possibility that may happen to you and here's a
29 little bit of a taste of it and a little bit of how you might deal with it, and to see the various
30 experiences that I felt and saw in others for a guy out of Saint Joseph, Missouri that had
31 never been anywhere except college and pilot training, was really a mind awakening

1 experience. I think it was a good experience in that respect. It is harder to describe to
2 anybody that hasn't been through it, it wasn't unique because we all went through it. So it
3 wasn't just ten of us that, you know that may get into an astronaut program or get into
4 something, it was everybody that went, went through survival school.

5 RV: How long did it last?

6 MM: I want to say probably a week, there may have been a day of academics and
7 I think then there was three days of being out in the, they simulate being shot down and
8 then you're hiding and evading and trying to survive out in the mountains of Spokane,
9 Washington while they're looking for you. Then everybody gets captured on the third day
10 or on the fourth day, everybody gets captured in the mean time and some people did but
11 at the very end of those three days you had to go to a point, a certain point on your map
12 and that ended that part of the exercise but it started the new point, which was at that
13 point you became a prisoner of war and you were there for three days.

14 RV: Did you get captured in that initial few days or did you get to actually report
15 unscathed?

16 MM: I got to the end. The area that we were in was rather large, but of the
17 hundreds and maybe even thousands of people that had been through that training and the
18 people that are looking for you know every inch of that of that land and there were times
19 when I would be hiding in a ditch and a couple of guards would walk by within five feet
20 of me while I had my head down in the ditch, barely covered by much because there just
21 wasn't much to cover you. As long as you were doing that, they wouldn't capture you.

22 RV: You think they probably knew you were there?

23 MM: Oh yes. Looking back on it, there is no way. I mean I could hear them
24 talking as they walked by me within a few feet and I am just laying there in a ditch sort of
25 out in the open but I've got my head down and crouched and attempting to play the game.
26 I mean it is not a game, it is a game but it's not, I mean you r really doing it. I think if you
27 coughed or if you made a break for it or something that would be stupid, I think then they
28 would say ok you're caught.

29 RV: Those who were caught, did they start the POW experience earlier and have
30 it longer than the rest of you?

1 MM: Yes, they did. I don't know if they took them to a holding camp or what.
2 They actually didn't start the POW camp early because we all started it at the same time
3 but there were people that were already there when we got there and I think they just put
4 them in a holding camp, waiting for the time to expire and they certainly didn't catch
5 anybody on the first day or whatever. They wanted people to get the experience of
6 evading capture. I don't know of anybody that didn't attempt to do exactly what they
7 were supposed to do, so I think there were a few people that were caught but I think it
8 was basically because they did something rather silly or stupid that made it so obvious
9 that they had to do something and so they would capture them and put them in a holding
10 camp to wait for the rest of us.

11 RV: Over all, how do you think you did with the survival training personally?

12 MM: I think I did a good job. I kept a low profile, I was a Second Lieutenant, I
13 was not particularly tall or heavy or old or wasn't a major or I didn't have any features
14 that would make me stand out. So I think I was able to blend in with the non-observables
15 and so I did not receive any treatment that was any worse than anybody else although
16 some did. Normally it was the people that for whatever reason you felt were the best of
17 the group or the leaders of the group or potentially leaders of the group. Those that were
18 obstinate, stubborn and wouldn't do it if they said, 'Stand up' as an example, and
19 somebody would sit down just to defy them, those are the people that received extra
20 treatment and so you learned pretty quick to do what they say and to keep a low profile.

21 RV: Now this is on eve of you reporting over to Vietnam?

22 MM: Right. I think I want to say it was November and I went to Vietnam in
23 January.

24 RV: What did you do in the intervening time there between going over seas?

25 MM: They gave us leave, I think I might have had a 15 or 20 day leave back in
26 my hometown in Saint Joseph, Missouri and it was like ok again. You know it was just
27 an experience after you went through it. I think most of us, we just had our pilot training
28 reunion, our 35th pilot training reunion last week in Scottsdale and people still talk about
29 that experience. It was just a week, but I don't know of anybody that doesn't have several
30 stories about it that they recall even though pilot training more or less seems like a blur.
31 But it was a year and Survival School was only a week, but I certainly recall more of that.

1 RV: How did your parents feel, your family feel about you going to Vietnam,
2 when they knew your orders are cut and you had just a leave here and then your going
3 over. How did they feel about that?

4 MM: You know I've actually thought about that because now I actually have my
5 own child and because I started late in life, he is young but someday he may have that
6 same situation. Nobody said anything to me about it, my father or my mother either one, I
7 had two older brothers that were in WWII, I think it was more or less expected. I don't
8 think it was it just wasn't broached, the subject wasn't broached. We didn't talk about it,
9 nobody told me, of course they said 'be careful'. But nobody said, 'Well, this is war and
10 this is Vietnam' and wow whatever. I think it was just, oh ok, the next step, and didn't
11 have the communications you had then and that sort of stuff, so there was not much
12 interaction after you left. So, before I left I think it was, looking back on it, it had to have
13 been traumatic for my parents but they didn't let on and if it was, they didn't tell me that.
14 It certainly wasn't traumatic for me. It was just the next step.

15 RV: How did you feel personally about getting ready to ship off to go to war?

16 MM: I thought it was exactly what was supposed to happen. We had gone to pilot
17 training and everybody knew what was going to be the final result of that, which is
18 probably, out of 55 of us probably 52, maybe even 53 went to Vietnam. That was not a
19 unique experience, a pleasant; none of us were singled out for that. It was pretty much
20 understood before you went in there. Although the main job was to get through it and not
21 to think about what happened afterwards, but we all knew that that was going to be it. I
22 think that I looked upon it with great anticipation as kind of a new adventure. I think I
23 had a friend that was going over with me on the same airplane that we went to Taiwan in
24 and I remember him saying on the way over there that he was not going to like this. It
25 was just not going to be fun and he was right for him because he already had his mind
26 made up. Whereas I went and looked upon it as something wide-eyed and new and it was
27 a 13 month tour and I extended twice. So I actually stayed two extra six months tours so I
28 was there for two years just because I was a bachelor and I had my own airplane basically
29 and we flew all over the world to places that nobody would ever dream of going. Hong
30 Kong, and Bangkok, and Tokyo, and Jakarta, Indonesia, Katmandu, Nepal, Calcutta,
31 India, and Guam, Wake, and Midway, and Hawaii. Places that I never think about going

1 and I was able to fly my own airplane there. So I guess my point is the way I felt about
2 it. I think I had an open and a good attitude and it worked for me.

3 RV: What did you know or understand of why the United States was in Southeast
4 Asia in the first place?

5 MM: I don't think any of us knew. I guess none of us ever talked about the
6 politics that I know I mean I never talked to any of the pilots about whether we should be
7 here or not be here or whatever. I think most of us thought that this was just a job, not a
8 job, but it was our job, our duty, and so we really didn't broach the issue. Couldn't
9 understand why people at as an example KU or any campus or whatever, would
10 demonstrate against United States Air Force pilots. I mean, I am thinking, well, that is
11 me, what the hell are they talking about? Why would they protest against me, I am just
12 Martin Montemore from Saint Jo, Missouri and I am doing what I am told and not my
13 choice I mean it's not my idea. They told me to come here and of course I am willing to
14 come here and do what they tell me to do and I don't know. I didn't have any moral
15 judgments. I guess I was just surprised that there was this demonstration, I kind of took it
16 personally a little bit because I happened to be the baby killer or whatever they called
17 everybody at the time. I think looking back on it and looking at this latest few years that
18 we've had, I think people don't dis-appreciate the military anymore, they may not be in
19 agreement with the government decisions, but they don't take it out personally on the
20 military, which they did in Vietnam.

21 RV: Well looking back, go ahead.

22 MM: I was going to say, so that's changed, I believe.

23 RV: Looking back on the anti war movement, has your opinion changed at all?

24 MM: I still feel somewhat offended that they would demonstrate and express
25 displeasure over me personally, meaning Air Force pilots, of which I was that group.
26 There were other people that they were displeased with too but that somehow or
27 another seemed to be a recurring theme and maybe only because I was in that group that I
28 paid more attention to it as opposed to Special Forces or paratroopers, or tank people or
29 whatever. I still have a hang up, a memory of not understanding why that would be and
30 some resentment I guess. I mean I am not going to go out and do anything but that's
31 changed from what it was back then and I think probably for the better and certainly there

1 were a lot of very, very good people here that protested the war and I think protesting the
2 war was different than protesting the military. Some did not have a bright line; they
3 became blurry so they protested the military thinking that they were protesting the war, I
4 guess. Then, I think there was a lot of that that was just because we were on campus and
5 a thousand people are getting together to have a deal, I think I will just join that and have
6 some fun. So, I don't know if they knew about the politics of the situation, I certainly
7 didn't. I had no opinion and I mean I didn't, it wasn't for me to question or know about
8 and I just basically did like everybody else, which is just to do what you're told and that
9 is fine.

10 RV: Did anybody in your unit ever talk about what was going on back home
11 while you were over in Southeast Asia?

12 MM: You know, no, you get so isolated over there and you're pretty busy and get
13 to doing stuff and when your not doing stuff you're relaxing, you're letting your hair
14 down. You're not just sitting around; there is no sitting around talking about politics for
15 an hour or whatever. I remember seeing TV maybe ten times in two years at the Officers
16 Club, occasionally somebody would mention there being a demonstration or something
17 and you maybe watch ten minutes of it. Otherwise you're drinking or playing cards and
18 socializing and whatever and the rest of the time you're flying and sleeping and eating.
19 It's just that's more intellectualizing or watching TV or anything, they just didn't have
20 them much.

21 RV: Let's talk about getting over there to Southeast Asia. You went to CCK in
22 Taiwan, how did you actually get over?

23 MM: They had a charter airplane a DC-8 that I think we all made our way to
24 SEATAC, Seattle-Tacoma, and then maybe they had one or two flights maybe a day, I
25 don't know, that would go to. I think we went to Korea and then to Japan and then to
26 Taiwan and maybe then to the Philippines and then all along that way they would drop
27 whoever was assigned to Korea or Japan or Taiwan or to the Philippines and it was just a
28 regular Continental, or United, or whoever it was airplane that they chartered. It was full
29 just of military people all the way from clerks, all the way to enlisted people that were,
30 you know, just doing office work. All the way to fighter pilots or whatever job at
31 whatever base and it was just strictly transportation. It wasn't very luxurious or anything

1 but it was nice airplane and I don't know it seemed like it took 14 or 15 hours to get
2 there.

3 RV: What was the mood on the plane like, do you remember?

4 MM: Yes I think it was fairly quiet, it was not somber, it was not dread. It was
5 just wow, I wonder what we are getting into now, I want to know what's next.

6 RV: How did you feel?

7 MM: I think I recall thinking that same thing, that yes, I just wonder what's next.

8 RV: So you arrived in Taiwan that is where you were dropped off?

9 MM: In Taipei and...

10 RV: What were your first impressions of getting off the plane and coming into
11 Taiwan?

12 MM: Well I had never been to a foreign country so it was quite an experience. It's
13 almost like it is a movie set, you know you wonder if it is really real and it is. It is not
14 there for you to see. I mean it is there for the country and it's not a Disneyland or
15 whatever that you go to look at it, then you leave and you see the rest of it. It is just like
16 the rest of them, just like where you're from, and that wasn't accurate. So I think I was a
17 little taken aback, not having been exposed to foreign countries, foreign cultures, foreign
18 race and yet there was nothing scary or ominous or anything else. I thought that
19 everybody was respectful, almost accommodating, at the worst they would ignore but
20 nothing that would make you feel like they were hostile.

21 RV: Talking about the Taiwanese?

22 MM: Taiwanese yes, there was nothing that was bad. Nothing that was ominous
23 about it, it was great.

24 RV: What were the first few days like, what did you do?

25 MM: Got used to the base. I think they had a base orientation and then they kind
26 of just showed you where you lived and where the Officers Club was, and where the
27 athletic fields were and the BOQ and the BX. Then you had to sign in, you had to sign
28 like 50 different things and get issued stuff and whatever; all the things that you needed
29 to fly with because you went over there with just a few clothes and really nothing else to
30 take.

31 RV: Were you welcomed into the unit?

1 MM: Yes they had one, what they called a sponsor or something. So you met
2 somebody or they met you and they would take you around that first day and kind of
3 show you where to go and what to do and that sort of thing. Then there were so many
4 people that came in every day and left everyday that it was, I mean it wasn't a personal
5 private deal. There were just so many people coming and going, that they did their best
6 to try to make it something personal but it was more of, you know here's the things you
7 need to know and unless you got any further questions, I will see you later.

8 RV: How did you find the morale overall when you first arrived?

9 MM: Good, yes it was good, it was fine. I think you had the people that were old
10 heads, the people that were experienced, been there for a couple three months or more
11 and you just wonder if you'll ever be like that. Wonder if I will be that good or that
12 experienced or feel that comfortable because they kind of have an attitude about them
13 that was good.

14 RV: You want to take a break? It's about that time.

15 MM: Yes it is unfortunately.

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The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Martin Montemore
Conducted by Richard Burks Verrone, Ph.D.
July 10, 2003
Transcribed by Brooke Tomlin

1 Richard Verrone: This is Richard Verrone and I am continuing my oral history
2 interview with Mr. Martin Montemore. Today is July 10, 2003. I'm in Lubbock Texas in
3 the Special Collections Library Interview Room on the campus of Texas Tech University.
4 Mr. Montemore is in Kansas City, Missouri. Sir, we left off with your arrival at CCK and
5 Taiwan and this is January 1969, wonder if you could kind of give me a description of the
6 base itself and where you lived, what your quarters were like?

7 Martin Montemore: Sure. I think I was surprised by the magnitude of the base. It
8 was a very large base with a lot of acreage, a lot of space in between buildings and in
9 between facilities, something that we don't have as much of at the bases I was before. It
10 was not only a large base in acreage but it was very large base in quantity of people.
11 There was, oh I don't know, just seemed like row after row after row of C-130's. I
12 remember looking out over the flight line as I pulled up in the bus that they sent to pick
13 us up at Taipei. It's about an hour south of Taipei to get to Taichung, which is where
14 Ching Chuan Kong Air Base is, commonly called CCK. In any event I was very
15 impressed with the newness of it, and the largeness of it. The quarters themselves were
16 about what I expected, fairly I don't know, I guess not luxurious, fairly simple, a bed and
17 I think we might have had a radio and a window and maybe a dresser and access to a
18 lavatory and a shower and that was about it. But we spent no time, zero time at CCK
19 basically. We were always gone so it was very much more adequate for what we used it
20 for.

1 RV: Would you go into country for a certain amount of time, fly around and then
2 come back to CCK?

3 MM: Exactly, the way they worked it, and I think the reason, and not only
4 because of security, but also because they were limited in the amount of people that they
5 could have actually stationed in Vietnam so that if they had bases, which they did, had
6 bases in Taiwan, in Okinawa, and in Japan, and Philippines and other places-Guam, those
7 people didn't count as being stationed in Vietnam. I would assume that there were more
8 people outside of Vietnam than there were inside Vietnam and they kept numbers on
9 those that were stationed in Vietnam. Of course, by far, the largest majority of people that
10 were stationed in Vietnam were Army infantry whereas the people that were stationed
11 outside were Air Force and Navy, by far. For all those airplanes, obviously, you need a
12 large support staff, which included not only people that work on the airplanes, that sort of
13 thing, but also the people that order supplies and people that are veterinarians or doctors
14 or dentists or whatever so you have basically a city that is self contained, with recreation
15 and medical facilities, and food and restaurants, and whatever else you need to keep a
16 city going. So that basically was it. It was so they were large bases with large amounts of
17 people and they were outside of Vietnam. What we would do is, I am sure others have
18 told you, we would go from these outlying bases into country and we would spend
19 anywhere from 25 to 30 days at a time. Then come back out for two or three days and
20 then turn around and go back.

21 RV: When you would come out for this two or three days, you would go back to
22 CCK, is that right?

23 MM: Yes, and then from there it wasn't always go back in country because there
24 were other places that they sent airplanes. So we had the ability at that time to go to many
25 places, many, many places, that the average person will never get a chance to go to;
26 meaning we had trips that went to Hawaii. We had trips that went to Hong Kong, and
27 Bangkok, and Tokyo. I even went to Calcutta, India, Jakarta Indonesia, and Katmandu,
28 Nepal. And so if you got lucky enough to be on a rotation and come out of country just
29 when they were having a trip to go somewhere else, then you would be eligible to go on
30 that.

31 RV: Why do you say lucky enough to be doing that?

1 MM: Well because it was random. You never knew when a good trip to a place
2 like that would come up. So if you were lucky enough to hit the rotation so that it
3 happened to be the three or four days that you were coming back that that trip was
4 scheduled to leave, then your odds were great of getting it because there were not very
5 many people back at CCK compared to those that were in country because you spend 30
6 days in country and three days out and everybody did that. So if that trip obviously
7 scheduled to leave at a time when you were already gone, you weren't going to be lucky
8 enough to get on that one. That is what I mean, I got lucky on a couple of them, and my
9 rotations came back basically at the time that they needed somebody to leave.

10 RV: And these trips outside, going to other places in Asia, these were desirable I
11 guess?

12 MM: Yes.

13 RV: Versus flying in South Vietnam?

14 MM: Well, yes, and it's not, well I guess it's just because, well I mean that was a
15 personal thing I guess. I very much looked forward to it and very much enjoyed it but of
16 course I was fairly young and I was single and I wanted to see places and go and visit
17 places that I had never been. And so for me it was that. It wasn't so much that I didn't
18 want to go back to Vietnam because I never thought about that one way or the other. But
19 it was nice to be able to go to some places that probably I will never get to again and
20 never have been before or since.

21 RV: What kind of things would you haul around to these other stations outside of
22 South Vietnam?

23 MM: They had what they call embassy runs, a lot of times you would pick up
24 supplies, meaning things as minor as food. Maybe household supplies, even mail and
25 sometimes furniture and evidently they had not much support or an ability to get
26 American products or get American supplies or whatever to some of these countries. So
27 they would dedicate a C-130 about once a month to go to the Philippines or someplace
28 and deliver things. Much of the time the airplanes were not full by any because a C-130 is
29 huge and carries a lot of stuff. It was kind of a regular route that they would fly around to
30 the various United States embassies in these countries and kind of bring a piece of home
31 to them. And when they rotated back, I guess rather than pay freight or whatever

1 sometimes the 130's would go up and pick up all their furnishings and clothes and
2 whatever they were shipping back from Indonesia or wherever and deliver them back to
3 someplace, where they would put them on a ship. The one time that I went to Katmandu,
4 Nepal was when we took an advance party because I think it was Nixon was meeting
5 with Kei or Tu or somebody and they had a kind of a, guess you call it a summit meeting
6 or whatever. And I wasn't involved in the politics and I don't remember all the things
7 and I didn't care to know all the things, it didn't matter to me anyway, but it happened to
8 be that's that what it chose to meet was in Katmandu. So I think we took a small cadre of
9 security people. I think it was a few people that did kind of route searches and to see
10 where secure places were, to see if there was any weak area where there could be some
11 physical violence or some sort of an attempt to kidnap or assassinate or whatever and so
12 they have these forward parties that go out.

13 RV: These advance teams.

14 MM: Advance teams, exactly, that's the term I was looking for and so we did that
15 and I think. We had one guy on there that was, I think he was, so is a student at like
16 Southern Illinois University and he was the head of the Young Republicans or whatever,
17 and somehow or another he got chosen, by lot or lottery or design I don't know, as a
18 reward for his hard work or whatever; sent him over there to witness, I guess, this
19 meeting. I thought it was kind of funny, here we were with a C-130 and this huge
20 airplane with this combat crew coming out of Vietnam and taking this airplane and taking
21 him and a couple of other people and their suitcases from Manila to, why we went
22 through I don't know, we went to Calcutta and then to Jakarta, Indonesia, then to Calcutta
23 and then to Katmandu. Why we did that I don't know, maybe that was because of fuel or
24 because we were picking something else up or dropping something off, I don't
25 remember.

26 RV: But you remember this kid?

27 MM: Yes, he was like a 19 year old kid; he had his own airplane, his own C-130.

28 RV: Where was the most interesting place that you went?

29 MM: I think probably Katmandu.

30 RV: Really, why?

1 MM: Well just because it is so very close to the Himalayas, it's in the Himalayas
2 and so very close to Mt. Everest. The day we went there it was a bright clear day,
3 beautiful weather. So were able to fly right up to Mt. Everest at 15,000 feet. We were
4 what they call VFR at 15,000 feet flying towards Mt. Everest probably about 30 miles
5 away before we turned around but at 15,000 feet you're pretty high up there. I remember
6 thinking, well if we went straight ahead for another five minutes we would hit that
7 mountain about half way up because it is 29,026 feet high and so it's an unbelievable
8 sight. Then when we landed, of course having a C-130 come into a small airport in...
9 Katmandu is very small town, very small village, I assume that it probably still is, very
10 devoid of the luxuries and modern conveniences and that sort of thing, so there was quite
11 a site. I think we probably brought out the whole town to see the C-130 and we got
12 pictures of them crowding around us, and it was just quite an experience to be there. We
13 were only there for one night but it was an extremely interesting place, both physically
14 and culturally.

15 RV: Let's talk about when you would fly in country in South Vietnam. First of
16 all, about your airplane about the C-130, how did you think it performed while you were
17 there flying in a war zone?

18 MM: The C-130, I think most people would tell you, is an extremely capable
19 airplane. It really does more than what they advertise it to do. You hate to ask for it to do
20 more than it's advertised to do but sometimes you inadvertently get into a situation that
21 requires the airplane to do a little bit more, carry a little bit more, get off in a little shorter
22 field or land in a shorter field than you anticipated because your weights or whatever else
23 or your distribution or your load is off, and you don't know that. There is no way to know
24 how much something weighs because somebody else weighs it and they tell you that and
25 they put it on a pallet and they put it on your airplane. Does it really weigh 3,000 pounds
26 or does it weigh 4,000 pounds? I mean some kid is doing that and he writes a four instead
27 of a three or they don't even weigh it or they guess or you don't know; there is no way to
28 know. But the airplane itself, I think we would call it a workhorse, very forgiving
29 airplane. You can do a lot with it without it punishing you, as opposed to single seat,
30 supersonic jet fighters have got a low threshold for error and a low threshold for
31 deviation. Once they get to that point, the airplane will not forgive you or itself, and so I

1 guess I am trying to compare the 130 to other aircraft. It was well; I would say probably
2 the safest airplane you could have flown in Vietnam.

3 RV: Tell me about your missions and what kind of things you were taking in and
4 out of country.

5 MM: Well in and out of country, wasn't a lot. Occasionally we would pick up
6 ordines or people that would be in other countries like in Japan, or Okinawa. A lot of
7 times we would stop on our way in country and go through the Philippines or through
8 Okinawa and pick up a load of something that was going to Vietnam. Most of the stuff
9 that I think went by other aircraft to the big bases at Tan Son Nhut, Cam Ranh Bay and
10 Da Nang, and then we would pick up our, whatever it was. A lot of times it was food, and
11 a lot of times it was ammunition. A lot of times it was people that were going from or
12 landed at Da Nang say, and they were going to Pleiku or some other base in Vietnam, and
13 that was the way they got there. They would land 141 or 707 or whatever in Da Nang or
14 Saigon, then we would pick them up there and take them to their final destination in
15 Vietnam.

16 RV: What were those typical things that you would carry in country from base to
17 base?

18 MM: From place to place in country we were always loaded. There was always a
19 full airplane, almost always. The C-130 actually carried, they did a lot of missions, but
20 my missions were transport. It also could drop bombs and also was a gun ship and there
21 are a lot of people that flew those aircraft in Vietnam that did different things than I did.
22 All I did was carry people and supplies and a lot of times it was what they call Class A,
23 meaning ammunition and bombs from the bigger bases to the bases that needed the
24 ordines for their aircraft or for the Army. A lot of times we would take food, a lot of
25 times we would take mail, a lot of times we would take people. There was also a mission
26 in which we would go to the smaller missions to pick up bodies and we would go to four
27 or five different small places and pick up body bags and anywhere from usually four or
28 five up to 30 or 40, and then bring them back to the bigger bases for shipment back to
29 the United States.

30 RV: How did you deal with that, how did you handle carrying dead Americans or
31 South Vietnamese?

1 MM: Well I didn't do that very well. I mean I didn't handle that very well. I was
2 young, foot loose, and fancy free, and care free and I thought that, I guess, it was kind of
3 a big joke or a game just to even be there. Didn't faze me that much, but whenever I had
4 one of those runs, which was fairly often, once a month maybe, and I was there for two
5 years. Whenever you had one of those runs it brought the reality of it all back and when
6 occasionally when I, oh if we were at altitude or not, a pilot or sometimes on the ground,
7 when we were waiting for people to load the body bags, there were other body bags on
8 there and you just go around and they had a little tag on them that was written. The
9 person's name and their hometown and their age and I remember seeing John Smith,
10 whatever, age 17 or age 19 or whatever and I am thinking this kid ought to be, and I was
11 fairly young myself, but not that young, already 25 or 24. I'm thinking this kid here ought
12 to be at the drugstore, you know, playing the pin ball machine and here he is, we're
13 shipping him home in a body bag. That would bring the reality of it all back to me for
14 some time until it went away again.

15 RV: Did you ever pick up wounded?

16 MM: Yes we did. Actually, they had C-130's that actually did that for a living. I
17 mean did that, they're called Medevac, Medical Evacuation Flights. Occasionally we
18 would be somewhere and somebody would be wounded and they didn't have time to wait
19 for a Medevac Flight or they wanted to get them to immediate medical attention that
20 wasn't available wherever they were. But it was never scheduled that way of course,
21 because you never knew when that was going to happen. The medical evacuation is a
22 regular route that would go around for people that would receive first aid and be
23 stabilized in the field. They may have to wait a day or two but they would be stabilized
24 and then taken to Cam Ranh Bay or Da Nang or someplace where they had a large
25 hospital and medical facilities and doctors and all that stuff, much more equipment and
26 people than they may had wherever they were coming from obviously. So yes, we did
27 bring wounded back but it was not wholesale, nor was it a regular thing because that was
28 not, I just didn't fly the airplanes that had that as a job. The ones that did the Medevac
29 flights were set up with litters in the back, stanchions, and they had a full crew of flight
30 nurses and a doctor and paramedics. They would have a crew of six or eight of medical

1 people, besides the flying people that would go around and pick up the ones that needed
2 the medical attention elsewhere.

3 RV: Did you ever interact with the wounded that you did carry on those few
4 occasions?

5 MM: No, no I really didn't. Normally speaking it was a very quick thing. They
6 would just say we've got a wounded, I mean sometimes I wouldn't even see the person. I
7 would be on the flight deck and a lot of times we don't shut down our engines when
8 we're into a place that is hostile, we keep our engines running. The C-130 is called the
9 mortar magnet. I don't know if you've ever heard that term but there are other airplanes
10 that are also nick-named that but it's kind of hard. The C-130 is a big target and it's fairly
11 slow but still when it's flying, it's a target that is at least moving. When you get a C-130
12 on the ground, you've got a great opportunity there. Somebody with a little grenade could
13 take out a C-130 while set on the ground, much much easier than trying to get one in the
14 air. So whenever a C-130 was on the ground more than three or four or five minutes,
15 that's when they would lob in the mortars or the grenades or whatever they had because
16 the C-130 sitting on the ground is a tempting target.

17 RV: Did that ever happen to you with your plane?

18 MM: Yes, we were under attack; we got lobbed at while we were on the ground.
19 I never got hit. I got with small arm's fire both flying and on the ground but if you had
20 small arm's fire a C-130 happens to be an airplane with a lot of wing, a lot of tail, a lot of
21 fuselage and unless you happen to hit the oil line or the fuel line or the hot air valve or the
22 line that supplies the hot air; unless you hit something like that, the hydraulic
23 line or something, you're not going to hurt a C-130. It's going to go in the skin and come
24 back out the other side. There is a lot of space there, where there is nothing. There's no
25 fuel, there's no line, there's no nothing; so basically small arm's fire was fairly innocuous
26 in terms of a danger to a C-130 just because there is a lot of space where it's not going to
27 hurt you. So we would come home sometimes and look around the airplane and you
28 would see a few holes in it and you would say, 'Well, it looks like we took some small
29 arms fire.' And we may have seen it even. Sometimes you don't see it, it just happens.
30 Especially in the daylight, you can't see small arms fire. I guess this all goes back to the
31 point that when you're on the ground you're a much more tempting target. So for the air

1 crews that do not want to be a target and for the people that are on the ground receiving
2 your supplies or giving you the people or whatever it is that they need to have taken out
3 of there, don't want you on the ground because it is fairly peaceful for them otherwise.
4 Until you get a C-130 or any other aircraft on the ground then it becomes lively for them.
5 So they want you to be there a very short period of time and you only want to be there for
6 a short period of time. So we are both happy to get down, get loaded, or unloaded, or
7 unloaded then loaded, if we got something coming and going and to leave. So I guess my
8 point is the aircrew very seldom leaves the airplane. The aircraft commander, meaning
9 me, the pilot, very seldom leaves the seat when we're on the ground because we've got
10 four engines running and we're ready to go within 15 seconds if we need to. And while
11 we are loading, a lot of times I don't know what it is they're loading, and all I want to do
12 is do it fast. Yes they could come on and say, 'Lieutenant, we got two wounded, they're
13 going to Cam Ranh and we're ready to go sir.' So that would be it. I may not even see
14 them, and then we may have been going to somewhere else but if we got a couple of
15 wounded we just picked up and they need to go to Cam Ranh, then we would obviously
16 take off and instead of going to Bien Hoa or going to Pleiku or someplace where we were
17 supposed to go to we would go to Cam Ranh, drop them off, and then go on with our
18 mission. I may not ever even see the person or persons or things that we pick up because
19 that is not my you know, my job is to get us off the ground as fast as we can.

20 RV: I know this will depend on whether or not the landing zone was hot or cold
21 but what do you think was the average amount of time you would spend actually on the
22 ground?

23 MM: Wow, no more than ten minutes, sometimes less; sometimes less than that.
24 I mean sometimes two or three minutes. I didn't time it. We knew when it was a little too
25 long, you could tell when it was too long, you get antsy and think, well, this is longer
26 then it is supposed to be. So, I would say yes, ten minutes maximum and probably three
27 to five minutes would probably be an average and that's being on the ground and getting
28 stopped and getting to where you're supposed to go and you already got your ramp and
29 door open and then you'll start kicking things off, literally kick things off the airplane.
30 Or as you're rolling to a stop, they are throwing things on or whatever it is and people are

1 getting on. Then you start taxiing again and you're buttoning it up about the time that
2 you're giving full power and you're gone again.

3 RV: Do you remember the first time you were shot at? When you first
4 experienced the...

5 MM: Yes I do, actually I do. It wasn't the first time I was shot at but it was the
6 first time that the reality I guess sunk in and it really wasn't a very hostile situation. We
7 were at, we were coming in I think through the end of Tan Son Nhut but in the, you
8 know, a fairly secure area but it happened to be at night and it was a very clear night, a
9 very dark night and I started seeing tracers below us and I just kind of looked at it.

10 RV: They were coming up to you?

11 MM: Well, they were coming up below me and so I kind of turned to the right so
12 the tracers turned to follow me and then it hit me, 'you know, that guy is trying to shoot
13 us down. Why would he want to do that? I'm just me, I'm not trying to hurt him. I don't
14 know why he would want to try to shoot me down'. But yes, I remember seeing like a
15 river, little stream of red, it was very pretty, but I remember thinking, 'wow I wonder
16 why that guy wants to see me down there in the jungle, you know with a crashed
17 airplane'. I remember thinking about that. Anyway, I didn't get it at the time as to why
18 they would have a hostile attitude toward us. But I felt like I had nothing personally
19 against whoever was down there shooting. And so yes, I do remember that. I don't know
20 if that was the first time but I remember it was the most memorable time anyway.

21 RV: What would you say was or how would you describe your most perilous
22 mission that you flew there, or a few of them?

23 MM: Well I don't think that any of the missions were to the point where, well of
24 course any mission something could happen. I think probably the hardest thing we did
25 was, regardless of there being any exposure to ordnance, or small arms fire or mortars or
26 whatever. The hardest thing we did or the most dangerous thing we did was to land in
27 very, very short fields and they were just gravel, and they would cut down a few trees in
28 the jungle. So your landing over very high trees in the middle of the jungle with 110
29 degrees and very narrow and very short, very unprepared fields. So you don't really have
30 much margin for error. If you land too fast or if you land too long I mean you're just
31 going to go off the other end and there is nothing you can do about it. I mean, you're

1 going to go into the jungle. I remember I ended up getting a Distinguished Flying Cross
2 for a mission in, which we had that, but it was also under attack at the time. The forward
3 operating base that we were going into evidently had been under attack for about a day
4 and they had mobilized, I don't know how many helicopters, but more than you can
5 count. Gunships were surrounding the forward operating base, around the perimeter and
6 there must have been, I don't know, 50 or 100, maybe more than that. Helicopters were
7 flying along and I remember as we were coming in we had to fly through these
8 helicopters. And that, I thought was probably one of the most dangerous things we had
9 done because the helicopters themselves are firing. So, they are focusing on what they're
10 firing at and then they're being fired at and then they've got other helicopters to worry
11 about, and then here comes the big C-130 through the middle of them.

12 RV: Were you talking with them?

13 MM: No, no very little communication between Air Force airplanes and Army
14 helicopters. We could talk to Army sometimes on the ground through fox mike radio,
15 FM radio, but we never knew what frequency they were on. And I don't even know if
16 they were on a radio or not on a radio. We all had different kinds of radios and whatever.
17 It was a matter of see and be seen. So you come down, you are just looking and saying,
18 'I wonder if these four helicopters see me or not.' And they would cross in front of us,
19 below us, or whatever and occasionally you would see that anyone that was getting very
20 close to you would then move, would stop or back up or turn right or left or whatever it
21 needed to do to get out of your way. But of course, every second of the way as you're
22 making your approach into the little field, you're ready to take evasive maneuver in case
23 whoever is flying that airplane doesn't happen to see you or is too focused on something
24 else that he's not altering his flight path or whatever. So, we delivered ammunition there
25 and we got down on the ground and it was very exciting of course and got off the ground
26 very quickly and did what they call a combat off load. Where what you do is you pull
27 over and get off to the side and just open up the back end and you just run your engines to
28 full power and then you release the brakes. And the pallets themselves are unlocked
29 before that and then they just slide off your airplane through momentum. You're actually
30 taking the airplane and kind of skidding. The pallets are still there and you're kind of
31 taking the airplane and going forward and taking the airplane from beneath it and it flies

1 out the back end and then you close up and you're gone. So you didn't even take time to
2 throw anything off, everything just flies off your airplane. That's what they call a combat
3 off load, we did that probably when it was the hottest combat wise and that was the time
4 that our crew got the Distinguished Flying Cross.

5 RV: Where was this FOB, do you remember?

6 MM: Hold on, sorry. It's called Bu Dop.

7 RV: You described it as exciting; you said it was 'Exciting of course.' Now
8 people who have never been in combat or has never experienced anything close to this,
9 how could you explain to them what you meant by that?

10 MM: Well by that I mean there are times when you can actually fly around
11 Vietnam or other places fairly routine and especially if you're going into the bigger bases
12 and sometimes at night there is not much activity. Even in the daytime, sometimes there
13 is not a lot of activity. Fairly routine and regular, but when you get into something like
14 this which happens not that often, maybe once or twice a month, now you get a very
15 much heightened sense of alertness. Your adrenaline is very high, your senses are very
16 keen, you can see and hear everything, and you're mentally and emotionally, and
17 physically at your absolute peak. That is what I meant by exciting, is that your energy
18 level and your emotions, and your adrenaline is so high that it's just an exciting time. As
19 opposed to anything that is regular or routine. That's what I was referring to.

20 RV: So you made this combat drop and you took off and you were taking fire on
21 the ground?

22 MM: They were firing on the ground. I don't think we got hit, I don't remember
23 that particular time coming home and saying, 'Well, we got hit while we were on the
24 ground or in the air,' but yes we did take fire. Well helicopters did too, everybody did.

25 RV: Did you ever experience fear? Were you conscious of that?

26 MM: No I don't think so. I think I experienced wonder as to why they wanted to
27 do something. I don't think I ever had that. I mean you get excitement in the sense you
28 got some preservation going, but I don't ever recall thinking that this is it or having a
29 conscious feeling or thought that I'm fearful of going into this situation. I think a lot of it
30 had to do with our age and there were a lot of people that were flying 130's that were
31 older than I that had families and had children and I don't know what they did. I mean I

1 would never do that again with a family and being 35 years old, you're more mature, you
2 understand. You don't feel like you're impenetrable, you don't feel like you're
3 invulnerable, you don't feel like you're immortal, but when you're younger and you just
4 come out of pilot training you don't experience fear, I don't think. I don't think, I don't
5 remember it because they instill upon you that you're the world's best pilot and
6 something may happen to somebody else but nothing is going to happen to you.

7 RV: Tell me how you would approach landing strips.

8 MM: Well after while it got to be a real science, an art and a science but when
9 you first start out you have to do it fairly mechanically meaning that you have to know
10 what your altitude is, what your airspeed is. You're constantly looking at items or
11 buildings or whatever it is on the ground or the trees or whatever. You're doing things
12 sort of by the book and the way they tell you to do it whereas as you get more experience,
13 the way you approach a landing zone is really by feel. You do it so often and so much
14 that it's I can feel that I am going the right speed or one or two knots too fast or one or
15 two knots too slow. I don't have to look at my airspeed indicator, I already know. I don't
16 have to know what my altitude is, I don't have to look down on my altimeter to see
17 because I can tell that I am in the right spot or a little high or a little low or whatever. I
18 mean it's just anybody would, anybody that would do that often enough gets to be so
19 good at it, that's it's a feel thing.

20 RV: How long did it take you to develop that kind of feel?

21 MM: It takes a little while; I mean I would probably say a month. It probably
22 takes 10 or 12 or 15 missions, where you do that seven or eight times each mission.
23 Meaning you might take off at 6 o'clock in the morning and you will fly till 3 o'clock in
24 the afternoon. You may make seven or eight or ten landings in those hours. Sometimes
25 the flights are an hour and a half and sometimes the flights are ten minutes depending on
26 what your mission is. But yes, I would say probably you do that for 15 or 20 times over a
27 30 day period and you do that six or seven times a day by then you're pretty good.

28 RV: What altitude would you be, what angle of descent would you have?

29 MM: Generally speaking, what you want, the higher the altitude and the bigger
30 the sink rate, the better. And of course, the reason for that is if you're low and slow and
31 dragging over the trees, you give yourself more exposure. If you're higher and you can

1 get your airspeed down to, you know, practically nothing and then bring it straight down
2 to the end of the runway and break your descent exactly in the right spot and hit the LZ in
3 the shortest spot possible without being short and hitting the trees the better off you are.
4 So I don't know that there was, I don't remember that if there was an angle that they told
5 us to do it at or whether it was a taught thing by being in the airplane. Of course, you
6 would have parameters; you never wanted to be more than 500 to 600 feet per minute rate
7 of descent because it is hard to break that. You never wanted to be below your threshold
8 landing speed because you don't have any margin for error for stall and stuff like that.
9 Yes we had parameters, but I don't think we had absolutes, they were just targets.

10 RV: I have interviewed quite a few individuals who were passengers on C-130's
11 and they said the descent would just scare the hell out of them.

12 MM: Yes, for the reason I just said, if you can take it at a steep descent that would
13 give you the best; the shortest exposure time than if you did like an airliner coming out
14 from ten miles away gradually starting a descent, you know, that is no good. Of course
15 what these people are maybe talking about too is the way you did it from base to base is
16 that you took off from one base and you climb straight up to 10,000 feet or whatever.
17 Then you go what is called feet wet, to the coast, fly up the coast or down the coast and
18 then you come back in to where you are going and then at 10,000 feet you circle straight
19 down over the top because that is your cone of best security. So you don't gradually start
20 from way back. So it's not just the approach but they're probably talking about from
21 altitude where you just dump full flaps and all four engines flight idle and then from
22 10,000 feet you spiral straight down then that's not just the approach in the last 1,000 feet
23 to the touchdown, but from 10,000 feet yes that is pretty scary. From the back it really
24 looks scary, from the front it doesn't look so scary, but from the back, I've done it myself
25 in the back and I am thinking, 'Wow, this is what it looks like from the back, huh.' It is
26 pretty scary looking.

27 RV: Plus you're in control up front.

28 MM: Yes, plus we're in control and we're, you know, we've got full vision, we
29 can see, we are doing it, it is a lot different, you're right, absolutely.

30 RV: Well we are out of time here for today why don't we go ahead and take a
31 break?

1 MM: Ok, that sounds great.