

ORAL MEMOIRS
OF
GLENN DEEVERS
An interview conducted on
May 15, 2017

Interviewer: Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai

Angelo State University
West Texas Collection
“War Stories: West Texans and the Experience of War, World War I to the Present”

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WONGSRICHANALAI: Alright. Well, this is Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai. And we are here in Abilene, Texas. It's May the 15th, 2017 for a *War Stories* interview. Could we start by you stating your name please?

G. DEEVERS: Glenn Deavers. Grew up in Gainesville, Texas.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And when were you born?

G. DEEVERS: Nineteen . . . June 3rd, 1931.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, and which branch of the military did you serve in? [pause] Which branch of the military did you serve in?

G. DEEVERS: United States Air Force.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, and what were your years of enlistment?

G. DEEVERS: From 1951 to '73.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK, what motivated you to join?

G. DEEVERS: Uh, originally a couple of my friends were about to get drafted and I . . . They talked me into going with them. And then uh, they changed their minds at the last minute and I . . . I went ahead and joined.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

G. DEEVERS: Uh, I went to work. Kinda strange things happening. Like I said, there were so many people enlisting. The uh . . . I got to Waco the morning of the 3rd of January with the recruiter and there were so many people. The recruiting office down there was just swamped and it took until, um, about 11 o'clock, uh, the night of the 4th to get everybody processed and ready to be sworn in. So, it was almost midnight on the 4th. And we . . . They drove us to Lackland on a bus and when we went through the line to get uniforms, the only thing we got was, uh, two pairs those little one-piece fatigues and a field jacket. No caps, no shoes, uh . . . They had all been issued. And, um, they'd issued all the Air Force uniforms and they dug out the Army uniforms before the Air Force became the Air Force and they had issued those and run out of those, so, uh. They, they needed um, help, badly. So, the ones obviously . . . They found out, well, on our records, that we had college. They uh, asked us, if we'd like to stay a Lackland as permanent party. So, I was only in, uh, indoctrinated a week and then I moved to, uh, the permanent barracks. And, uh, went to work in shipping and receiving there at Lackland. And, uh, I . . . I didn't know much about the Air Force. It's just, uh, something to do I guess, because I tried to go college on a football scholarship and, things, uh, kinda didn't work out there. Um, went to work force. Wonderful people. Uh, worked directly for, uh, corporal, a black corporal, I'll never forget him. Corporal Johnny Powell from Arkansas. And just . . . He was just an excellent guy. And his boss was, uh, Master Sergeant Jack Lansinger. The one that talked me into applying for officer training, since I had two years of college. He said that he had, had an

opportunity to get a commission early in his career and he didn't take it. And he had regretted it many times since. So, he kinda got the ball rolling to get me in the officer training. And uh, I've got all the letters and everything in that book down there.

And I was accepted for observer training and pilot training. Our OCA saw all of them. I qualified. But there was a long waiting list for pilot training. And I didn't want to OCS. So, I accepted observer training. I went to Eglin, Ellington, Ellington Air Force Base down between Galveston and Houston. And uh, what, about a 10-month course of training and I got my observers wings and my commission as a second lieutenant in November of '52. I was assigned as a navigator on a B-29 and, and for pipeline status to Korea. But just before we finished the training, our bombardier developed some problems and we lost him. So, they put us in a tanker outfit that didn't require a bombardier. And um, I was stationed at Forbes Air Force Base in Kansas, in the 55th Air Refueling Squadron. Didn't, uh, didn't really enjoy that too much. So, as soon as I found out I could, I applied for pilot training.

And, uh, I was invited to start pilot training on the 9th of November '53, which is a pretty short time since it had . . . I had graduated from observer training less than a year before, before that. And, um, that's when I went to San Angelo. Flew the L-21 and T-6. And, while I was there, the mission of Goodfellow changed and they went to um, basic, from primary training to basic multi-engine training. And a part of my class stayed at Goodfellow for advanced or advanced training and they . . . T-28 and B-25s and the ones I was . . . that qualified went to jet training. Uh, went to, uh, Williams Air Force Base, Arizona. Beautiful place.

Tell, uh, tell you a little story. When I went to pilot training I wasn't too gung-ho. I already had wings, got flying pay. Uh, but I could fly. And the day I got to Williams Air Force Base, out there in the desert . . . I don't know if you've ever been there or not. It's east of Chandler about 9 miles. I stopped at the gate to check, check in with the Air Police. And while I was standing there . . . Beautiful palm trees down through the middle of the base. Grass was green, uh, sky was blue. Wasn't a cloud in the sky and about the time, four T-33s came in and, of course, they were right, right new, at the time. They were in fingertip . . . No, they were echelon formation and as the . . . Each one of them pitched out, the sun was reflecting off of those air planes and the . . . I've told this before, the hair literally stood up on the back of my neck and I knew what I wanted to do. And I . . . There was no way I could be washed out of pilot training after that. I was motivated, uh. It was a great feeling. Just, it was picture. I can still picture it in my mind and, um, anyway I was assigned to flight, uh, my first instructor.

I should've said something about my instructor at Goodfellow. If you stick that in, he was a former, um, during World War II, he flew P-47s, and he was a great pilot. He was almost an alcoholic but he was a great pilot. And, uh, so I owe a lot to him. He was . . . He believed in, uh, letting you experiment, you know. And anyway, my instructor at Williams was um, a Captain Roberts. One of my best friends who was from Georgia, we were standing there around the wall while they were making assignments. And uh, Major Bowser was, uh, the flight commander and Captain Roberts was the assistant. And Captain Roberts was a black man. Well, me being from Texas and Larry from Georgia, I nudged him, and I said, "There's our instructor." Uh, you know, there were very few black officers in the Air Force at that time. And um, they called it, sure enough, "Lieutenant Aferson and Lieutenant Deavers, you're assigned to Captain Roberts." And he was one of the nicest guys I've ever known in my life. And he . . . You'd get him in the back seat, flying and you didn't know what color he was, he was just calm. And unfortunately, he transferred shortly after we started our training.

We started out in the T-28, that was the plebeian for jet training. It was a prop, prop-driven airplane. Good, good airplane itself. And, after we . . . I think 120 hours in the airplane and then we transitioned to the T-33. And my instructor was, uh, Captain Jack Hayes. And I mean, everybody just was square shooters. They, uh . . . He told me one time, he said, "Deavers, I think you can see airplanes when they're not there." I had 20/15 vision, so I, I couldn't see. And, um, you had to have three ride duo before you could solo. And, supposed to have 4.5 hours. But I didn't have but about 4 hours on three short flight and, uh, the first day we took off. Of course, I had that simulator experience. And he said, "Deavers, I've never done this before." So, I got my arms up on the canopy rail. He was that confident that I could fly. And, uh, it just . . . Things just got better and better. I had, uh, my 50-hour check, Major Bowser, the flight commander flew with me. And, um, you could do spins in the T-33 but the training command, uh, didn't . . . They had a rule against doing spins and, and everything was going real good and he said, "Lieutenant Deavers, would you like to see a spin?" "Yes, sir." So, he pulled it up and did a spin and recovered. He said, "Would you like to do one?" [laughs]. I thought that was amazing and so, I did a spin on my 50-hour check.

And we, uh, graduated the 27th October. And it was kinda funny time again. The ones of us that we previously rated . . . There were about 5 of us in the class that had be in the service. And the aviation cadets had a commitment to the Air Force. So, we all got assignments right away. But the uh, second lieutenants that had gone through ROTC, somehow it slipped through. The Air Force didn't have a commitment on them. So, most of them got ground-type assignments. Um, I got . . . My instructor and flight commander encouraged me to accept an instructors assignment. Went to Craig Air Force Base in . . . Went through instructor school, came back to Williams and was assigned my first class that I had 4 cadets in my first class. And you don't have to write their names down but they were Highskull . . . Harvey, Highskull, Hineboy, and Horton. They were alphabetical. And, uh, a couple of them were fine pilots and one was a little, little slow. But, he . . . All of them got through. And the slowest one got a multi-engine assignment. He spent 20 years in the Air Force and retired. So, um, I was glad of that. Then I got my second class. We take them through the T-28 first and then the T-33. I got my second class on the 5th of July, uh, 1955. And, uh, it . . . They were almost as bad. I was originally assigned 5 students. And I had Anthony, Brandon, Chriswol, Dutcher and Grove. And then another instructor came in so they took my fifth student away and, um, that, that class, they were, I had 4 good, good students. One of them, uh, Highskull, no Dutcher won the, um, Daughter of the American Revolution Award for the outstanding student in the entire Air Force in, for that class. I was, I was proud of him.

We did have a little mishap. Um, we were flying 4 ship formation. And Dutcher of all things, got in a little too close and he hit my horizontal stabilizer with his wing tank and then backed away and hit his horizontal stabilizer on the number 4 wing tank. So, we all had a little bit of damage but we landed OK and so nothing, nothing come of that. Um, in about that time, the Air Force changed missions. I was off again. Um, went to Lackland, Del Rio, and instructed a class. There and then I was assigned as an assistant operation manager. And then, changed mission again and SAC took over and made it a U-2 training base. And, I was transferred to Sheppard instructing in senior officer jet indoctrination program. For some rejects that had flown over sips, reciprocating engine airplane that hadn't flown jets, so we checked those out. And low and behold about 9 months or so, they, uh, decided to close that mission and I got assignment to F-86 that Moody Air Force Base in Georgia. F-86-D is the interceptor version. And graduated

without any problems there. And I went through survival school in January of '59 and Stead Air Force Base in the Sierra Nevadas.

And was . . . Went directly from the Sierra Nevadas to the desert of Morocco. And that turned out to be a good, good tour. But again. The Moroccans decided to kick us out and invite the Russians in, so we had to leave. And, our airplanes went to the boneyard, like I said. And the stick, unscrew the stick-on tacks in the end up there and, um, and then I was transferred up to Germany. Back to instructing and running the instrument section.

And while I was in Germany—a beautiful place—uh, in that book that I gave you there's a clipping in German, out of a newspaper. I gave, uh, a good will ride to radio announcer from, uh, over at Wiesbaden. And I couldn't speak German, he couldn't speak English, so it was, uh, kinda a fun trip. After we got back, he told the interpreter that he . . . I pulled it got pretty good speed and pulled it straight and I did three rolls. And then, he told the interpreter that he lost count after 4 rolls. So, he had lost count before then. So, it was fun and then they invited me over to Wiesbaden to go through the radio station and . . . which is very nice.

And then I got . . . I'd been going to high school all the time I was in the Air Force. And I finally got qualified for the Air Force Institute of Technology. And I had three choices of where I wanted to go to school. And I chose A&M first because of its engineering program. University of Texas second. Uh, because I figured I'd stay in Texas when I retired. And then my third choice was Georgia Tech because I have a brother that played football at the University of Georgia and lived down there and . . . And I got my first choice, I got A&M.

Um, I had to . . . It was, it was a grind. Been out of official school twelve years and step into A&M at the junior level, after 12 years. Freshman had a better background in math and science than I did. So, it . . . So, it was a hard job. Plus I had to drive to Waco to James Connally to fly. One night a week. To keep up flying and one weekend a month. Had to spend up there. So, carried a full load at A&M and spending that time on the road and flying. It was . . . My plate was full. Uh, by the second semester when the Cuban Missile Crisis hit, bunch of us guys—the Air Force had about 250 officers going in training, go in school down there—and bunch of us would meet over at the MS, Memorial Student Center, uh, at our break every morning and talk about how can we get out of here. I'd go home at night and get out my oxygen mask and I'd blow through it just anyway I could get out gracefully I would, I would have done it.

But, fortunately, I wasn't offered an opportunity to get out. I was wanting to be recalled back to active duty and get in on whatever happened. So, um, after about the first semester, things finally settled down and developed a pretty good routine, uh, family . . . My first wife and I adopted two children, two babies while we were going through A&M and that kinda added to the load. Um, and then when I graduated from A&M, I was expecting to probably be assigned as a civil engineer, uh, designing latrines or something, and when I got my assignment, I think everybody in Brian-College Station could hear me. I got assigned to Perrin Air Force Base to fly F-102s. That was the "Delta Dagger" and, um, that was . . . It was an excellent program. Just, uh, just a great program. We had, uh, the last, uh, month of our training, we flew out of the alert hanger just like we were setting alerts. And then students and instructors had a contest. On the first intercept and uh, which team lost had to foot the bill for a party for the rest of them. And well, I'm gonna brag a little bit but I had the best score of the students or instructors and I got the Top Gun Award for the class. And they selected the top man in the class to go F-106s. The F-106 was a follow on for the F-102. It was the "Delta Dart." It was a mock tow interceptor. So, it, the F-86D was the first one I had flown in. And, uh, the F-106 was, like I said, was a F-102 was a mock tow airplane. And that was at McGurk, Washington. Beautiful, beautiful place. All those

evergreen trees. And only drawback, the weather was, could be somewhat bad but . . . You know, we had been through instrument training and it was alright. Setting alert with Nuclear weapons. So, you know, it was pretty intense.

And, uh, of course, the Vietnam War was cranking up. And, I was getting pretty close to uh, going and I really didn't want to fly F-105, uh, "Thunder Chief." It was a good airplane. It was the primary bomber up that area. So, I volunteered for F-4s. And I went to MacDill for F-4 training. And, uh, had a serious mishap down there. When I crewed up, we had a back seater, had a young pilot in the backseat. And mine, we called him GIBs, "guy in back" is what he affectionately became. And mine, was name Roland McDonald. The day we crewed up, talk to him. I said, "I never really like to fly with anybody else but now that you've been issued to me, I'm gonna work ya, and I want to come to an understanding. If I ever tell ya to eject, and you wait for me to tell you twice, you're gonna be solo." And he laughed and said, "Well, sir, if you tell me twice, you're gonna be solo the second time." So, we came to that agreement.

Well, about halfway through the program, we came into the traffic pattern one morning, after being out on the bomb range. And, when I turn, started to turn down wind, and then I started to roll out for . . . airplane wouldn't roll. In fact, it just, the roll increased a little bit instead of being able to pull it out. And then those drop and, uh, Mack was writing down inertia coordinates in the back. He didn't know I had a problem. But, at the last instant, estimate 500-600 feet above the ground, 45 degrees nose down with a 90-degree bank, in this position, I run out ideas, about to run out of altitude. And I said, "Mack, eject, eject!" I told him twice and, low and behold, he heard me both times. He was out. But I pulled the handle . . . F-4 was down here, well, there was another one here that the navy used. That curtain they'd pull down over the . . . But the Air Force is used to one in the seat. And, uh, I saw the airplane hit before my chute opened. And, uh, I didn't . . . I didn't think I was going to make it. Well, about that time I hit the ground like a ton of bricks. I still had a 55-pound seat kit survival stuff that you're supposed to deploy and it'll . . . But it was still strapped to me and, um, I was in serious pain. Couple of guys from the radar shack got over there to me and, um, I asked . . . I didn't know if my back seater got out or not. Uh, I asked them if my back seater got out and they said, "Yes, sir, he's over there standing up." Taking his parachute harness off. So, I assumed he was in good shape, since he was standing up. And I asked them if the airplane hit anybody. No, it landed in the swamp. So, uh, I just tried to relax, and I thought I'd broken some ribs.

But after that helicopter lifted me to the hospital, X-rays showed that I had compressed, 25% compressed sitting on two vertebrae, the thorax region, and the pain was radiating around my chest, made me think I'd broken ribs. Uh, the, middle gymnast on the accident investigation team, estimated that my margin of survival was 8/10ths of a second. Uh, if I'd waited any longer, if I'd told him 3 times to eject, I wouldn't have made it. Neither would he. Estimates were that from people on the ground and my friends that were following me around that, uh, that we ejected just about the same time. And, uh, like I said, he was unhurt. I guess a little more flexible than I was and I was 36 and he was 24 so he came through it a little better. I was off flying status about 3 months. And resumed training with the following class. And, uh, my back was pretty good shape and I got . . .

When I went to MacDill, I was in pipeline status to Vietnam. But then the pipeline had kinda filled up a little bit and I got an assignment to Japan to fly F-4 as interceptor version, air defense. And, um, I'm trying to shorten this up but I kinda thought I wanted to go to war and I was out mowing my yard for the last time and got a call from sargent personnel. He said, "We've just had some assignments come in to South East Asia. Do you want one of those instead of

Japan?" Well, that was a pretty hard choice to make, you know, with wife and 2 kids. I thought for my career I'd . . . I need to go to war. I went back out and started mowing and asked him how long he had. He said, "We've got," uh, he said, "I'll give you 30 minutes and then we have to go down the line." And so, I went back out and my first wife came out and got me and said, "That sergeant's on the phone again." Said, "What are you gonna tell him?" I said, "I don't know." And when I got on the phone, he said, "Well, Major Deavers, what are you gonna do?" I said, "I want the southeast assignments." Of course, I could hear her [sigh] suck air when I said that.

But anyway, uh, I moved her and the kids back to San Angelo and I was assigned to Cameron Bay. went over in March of '68. And uh, had, had a good tour. When I went over, I had 3 goals: I wanted to be promoted to lieutenant colonel. And I had never gotten a regular Air Force commission. I wanted to make regular and I wanted to get a silver star. Uh, I got promoted, I got a regular commission, and my squadron commander put me in for a silver star and it was downgraded to a DFC and 7th Air Force. So, I came pretty close to meeting all my goals.

I flew 212 missions. I . . . We had a big turn over in March, when I got there. And I was one of the more experienced new pilots. So, I started pulling night alert right early. And, uh, became a flight leader right quick, and then upgrade to an instructor status before long. And consequently, I checked a few of an incoming air craft commander, checked, checked them out of combat. One of the guys that I checked out had been my instructor at MacDill in the F-4. He had never been to Vietnam. But, uh, anyway, he got assigned to my squadron and I got to reverse the process. I got to check him out, uh, as an instructor over there. And, um, I showed him things were different. Me and the Viet Cong showed him things were different the first day. He had, made a nice easy roll in like the bombing range in Florida, Avon Park. And I grabbed the stick and I told him "Walt, this isn't Avon Park." I said, "They shooting at us down there?" He said, "I don't see any." I said, "Well, trust me, they are." Well when we got back that day, we had two 30-caliber slugs in the radon. So, he believed. Uh, certainly made him a better combat pilot.

Uh, I'd been there about 4 months and a special assignment came up to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and they selected two aircraft commanders from each one of the three squadrons and Danang, and we came back to Eglin to evaluate, um, whether it was better to have navigators or, or pilots in the back seat. And, uh, in conclusion, the pros and cons just about broke even. You know, if . . . If you're ever incapacitated in the front seat and had a pilot in the back seat, if the airplane wasn't shot up to bad, at least he could land ya. Uh, on the other hand, those old navigators were very proficient on the electronics and navigation equipment. So, kinda a tossup. I was back in the States a month. That's a pretty good way to go. But I still managed to fly 212 missions while I was there.

And, uh, I got . . . was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster. The medal with oak leaf clusters. I won that and then several more lesser awards, but I want to say something. My . . . My combat tour was not sterile but compared to F-105s going to Hanoi area, it was uneventful. So, I in no way want to compare my tour to a F-105 pilot's tour, Hanoi area. They had it rough. Most of the time I was there, we were shut down at this DMZ or the 20th Parallel. That was McNamara's and Johnson's game, games they were playing. We had a lot of poor targets. And, um, I had a good friend that flying 105s. He and some of his comrades got together and they made a list of what they felt were the 200 most important targets, that we should be striking. And it got all the to the Pentagon. McNamara reviewed it and he came back. Their list was approved. From the bottom up, starting with number 200 first. So that's, you know, that's the bad part the war. We were doing the best we could for what our government

sent us there to do. But we were sent there to do the wrong thing a lot of times. We could have ended the war in a week without using nuclear weapons if we had been allowed to. Instead of coming out like whipped puppies, we could have won the war. Same thing's happening today. In the other side of the world. Uh, I don't know anything that I've told you that you, that you take it all in. [Laughing] You have any questions, sir?

WONGSRICHANALAI: I do, but you went on . . . You, you covered a lot of the questions I would have ask. Tell me, so when did you . . . You left the Air Force in 1973?

G. DEEVERS: Yes.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And what did you do after that?

G. DEEVERS: I, uh, moved to the metroplex area in, uh . . . First I, I tried dabbling in real estate. And then when the oil crunch hit in '74, the bottom fell out of the real estate market. And I went out to, um, LTV, L&T Valdel and applied for a job as an industrial engineer. That has been my education at A&M. And they hired me and, um, I stayed for about 4 and half years. No about 3 years the first time. And, uh, I got a call from a headhunter, looking for, uh, somebody with aircraft experience, engine experience and it was Cooper Automotive. I had, uh, three engine overhaul shops. The big C-up, 6 engine there at Love Field and smaller engines down at Forest Park. And then uh, smaller reciprocating shop at Corpus Christi, at Harlington, Harlington. So any, I went to work for them as an industrial engineer. Not, uh, at Vault but, uh, I went to work with Cooper. Good job but I just didn't fit the mold quite. So, I got a call from, uh, General Dynamics, wanted me to come for an interview. Uh, you know several of the years that I was in the Air Force, we didn't get paid very well. And um, so I made my mind, when I went to work in the aerospace industry. Excuse me, I said, I was gonna be like a prostitute. I was gonna get in the bed that paid me the most money. And I said, "I'll, who or where I work for, I'll give them my best days work but if I feel like I'm not being adequately compensated with money or recognition of whatever, I'll find somebody who will. Well, fortunately they usually found me. So, I went to work with General Dynamics and I didn't like it as well as LTV. My old boss from LTV called me and wanted me to come back. So, I did and that time I stayed 4 and half years. He was wanting me to understudy the manager and things just didn't materialize as fast as I thought they should. And so, I called my old boss at General Dynamics, asked him if he had a place for me. Sure, you know. So, I went back and stayed three years that time. And I found out I could retire at age 55 regardless of how little service I had with them. So, I retired, called my boss back LTV, for the third time, and went back over there and I finished out 15, 15 years. So, I put twenty years in the aerospace industry. And I retired in '94. And then '98, uh, I talked to some of the guys who still worked there, met some of them for lunch one day and they were sending people to the little plant down in Perry, Georgia, where they built the ribs for the 747. And they, um, were having trouble so they were sending industrial engineers. A lot of the guys weren't wanting to go and one of them said, "Why don't you go?" Talking to me. Why not? So, I, I went back working to LTV the 4th time. Went to Georgia, stayed 6 months. Uh, making a lot of money, having to give up a lot of money to social security. So, um, but I worked myself down . . . It was a tough job. They got their money's worth. And since then, I've lived the good life. I married my childhood sweetheart and I moved to the country. I bought a little land in Comanche

County, built a house on it, barn, fenced it, and we raised horses and cattle. And killed rattle snakes.

CORLEY: Dead rocks.

G. DEEVERS: Until I had the stroke. And I had the stroke in 2013. And uh, really couldn't keep the place up anymore. And Cindy and the kids had moved to Abilene here. Cindy and Rick, her husband, are here and both their daughters and son-in-laws and their families live here. So anyway, they've been talking to us about . . . And maybe daughter lives in Brownwood. Talking to us about moving up here and I didn't think much of it until I had the stroke and then, uh, I realized we needed some help. Which we've had plenty. They've been wonderful. We hated to give up the little place. The people bought it. The lady and Madeline are good friends, they still communicate and they . . . They're proud of the place, love it. We haven't had the nerve to go back. Just about . . . Just sad. Sad day when we had to leave. It was kinda a sad day when I left the Air Force. Um, is my time up?

CORLEY: You left out one thing I want you to tell him.

G. DEEVERS: What's that?

M. DEEVERS: You left out one thing I want you to tell him, about Christmas Eve in Vietnam.

G. DEEVERS: About the what?

M. DEEVERS: Christmas Eve in Vietnam.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Christmas Eve in Vietnam.

M. DEEVERS: Christmas Eve in Vietnam. Cindy, see if you can make him understand.

CORLEY: Christmas Eve in Vietnam.

G. DEEVERS: You mean by pulling alert.

M. DEEVERS: Yes.

G. DEEVERS: Well, OK. Backtrack a little bit. Christmas, Christmas of '68. Of course, we were expecting the Vietnamese, Viet Cong, North Vietnamese to make a big push on Christmas, thinking that we would be celebrating. So, we decided we'd better not celebrate and we pull cockpit alert, get everything set up, ready to go, so we could scramble in an instant. Uh, my flight . . . I got . . . We pulled a 12 o'clock midnight till 4 o'clock shift, sitting there. And uh, the story that made it nice to hear . . . I was sitting there in the cockpit, somewhere between midnight and 4 o'clock in the morning, I got to thinking about here I am 10,000 miles from home, wife and two little kids, getting ready for Christmas, expecting me to be there, kinda just wondered what I was doing there. And I just happened to look up toward wing headquarters and I saw the American flag, flying up there in the breeze. I knew, I just, sometimes your life, you have a

feeling about something. I've had two or three times, serious feelings. That time at Williams. This time I saw the American flag, and I knew what I was doing there. Maybe not doing exactly what I wanted to do or thought I should do but I was, I was doing well at what I was tasked to do. Um, another incident in my life. I know our preacher doesn't believe in reincarnation. I'm . . . I don't know. But when I transferred from Morocco to Germany, I took about 30 days to make the trip, went through 22 countries, had a new Volkswagen, way to go. And I got to Rome, and I walked in the Colosseum. And again, the hair stood up on the back of my neck. I'd been there. Uh, when that movie *Patton* came out, it was kinda like the way George Scott said he felt. I don't know what capacity. I may have been a lion. I might have been a Christian. I don't know. But I . . . I sincerely believe that I was there. Uh, it couldn't have been something that I had built up in my mind because I didn't know that much about the Colosseum.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Tell me about these two pieces real quick. So, how did you get this piece of shrapnel?

G. DEEVERS: Uh, they dug it out of the bottom of the airplane after I landed.

WONGSRICHANALAI: OK.

G. DEEVERS: Uh, as I told ya, a lot of the pilots, as they get close to the end of the tour, they seem to just, raise their release altitudes a little bit, especially on the hydra-bombs that we brought on the deck. And I was determined I wasn't gonna do that. So, I might have pressed it little bit and had the new squadron commander on my wing and I told him, briefed him that when we got back, we'd check one over, see if we had any battle damage, um, then we'd get back in formation and I'd call the tower and ask them how was the traffic, and since it's my last mission, if it was OK, I was gonna get down pretty low and then pull up the downwind and land with him following. He said, "You are asking for it aren't ya?" I said, "What can they do to me, send me home?" Anyway, he didn't catch that. He didn't catch the damage that I had. And, uh, I made the blow past, and pulled up the downwind and when I put the landing gear down, the utility hydraulic pressure went to zero. And, uh, utility hydraulic pressure operated the landing gear and your brakes. So, um, I knew I wasn't gonna have anything except one-shot air-brakes on landing. So, I took the approach in barrier. Which is . . . was a B-52 brake drum. Easiest, nice way to land. And uh, it also, the utility pressure, also operated their bypass system around the engines. And sometimes, if you lost that pressure, the engines had a tendency to run away, literally. So, I got the de-arming area, and the left engine started winding up, even though the throttle was back in idle. So, I cut it off. And then the right one started the same thing. So, I had to shut it down. And I didn't want to get pulled in by tug for my last mission. For the champagne and all. So, I motioned to the new squadron commander, who had thrown a wing, I said I had to shut down and pointed at the left engine. And, uh, first he didn't know what was going on but he figured it out, you know, that I was on the ground. I motioned for him to get out. He got out and I got in his airplane. It worked out good, because the guy that was in his backseat was pulling back seaters in my flight and it was also his last mission. So, kinda raised some eyebrows when we had taken off with my regular back seater in there and uh, when we taxied in, well, I had another back seater. [laughs] Oh. But anyway, that caused the problem, crimped the hydraulic line just enough that when the gear came down, it blew it, blew the line, but it came all the way down, I had good landing gear. Uh.

WONGSRICHANALAI: So that was your final flight.

G. DEEVERS: Yeah, that was my last flight.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Do you remember the date?

G. DEEVERS: What's that?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Do you remember the date?

M. DEEVERS: The date, honey.

CORLEY: The date of your last flight.

G. DEEVERS: Yeah, yeah. Oh, the date.

M. DEEVERS: Uh-huh.

CORLEY: Yes.

G. DEEVERS: Oh, February the 28th I believe.

M. DEEVERS: Nineteen sixty-eight.

G. DEEVERS: I think so.

M. DEEVERS: Nineteen sixty-nine.

G. DEEVERS: Huh.

M. DEEVERS: Nineteen sixty-nine.

G. DEEVERS: Yeah, yeah, 1969.

WONGSRICHANALAI: And then, what kind of plane did this come from?

G. DEEVERS: What's that?

WONGSRICHANALAI: What kind of plane did this come from?

G. DEEVERS: Well, this was standard stick grip for all the F-4 had it, the F-86. The T-33. Uh, the F-106 had two. The F-106 had a yoke to come up and then it branched out and, uh, flight control was in this hand and the radar control was a very similar set up for, that you operated with the left hand. You were busy as a one-armed pecker while flying the 106.

M. DEEVERS: But that was from the F-86.

G. DEEVERS: Huh.

M. DEEVERS: But this one was from the F-86.

G. DEEVERS: F-86. Had different airplanes, they were wired differently. You know, depending on what ordinance you carried. For the F-4, that was the Gatling gun. You kept a little, safety pin in there until you were ready to use it. Uh, of course this is the trim to make the airplane fly straight and level without having to fight it all the time. Up, down, sideways. And that was to fire the rockets. This, this one was to drop the bombs and that was for nose wheel steering on the ground. So, you could drive it around. [Drops piece].

M. DEEVERS: A lot to remember.

WONGSRICHANALAI: That . . . That is a lot. It's very impressive.

M. DEEVERS: He was a good pilot.

G. DEEVERS: I was trying to think of something that, uh . . . Well I, I say a little about the people. Uh, 23 years in the Air Force. You know, we talked about some of the neighbors we have and how much trouble we have with the neighbors for no apparent reason a lot of times. And um, out of 23 years, I can only think of about two minor incidents that somebody caused me any trouble, any problem intentionally. And everybody else bent over backwards to help one another. It was, uh, it was a close-knit group.

Something else I was gonna tell ya that I was, one of things that I'm extremely proud of, um, when I got Vietnam, and I got an airplane assigned to me, I decided to name it the *Cleaver*. Because it rhymed with Deavers. And um, so everybody picked up on it pretty good. And uh, the first year I was there, took the squadron picture, the airplane we were all sitting on is kinda grungy looking. The next year, my airplane was the best looking in the wing, when I wasn't working something else, I'd grab my back seater and we'd go out to the flight line, hob nob with the ground crew. Talk to 'em. My airplane was the only airplane in the wing that the eyelids around the after burner. Stanley steel eyelids, were polished. The rest of them were black. OK, when the wing commander's ground crew transferred back to the states, I was a good friend with our maintenance officer. Uh, he, he knew about my airplane, so, he pulled my ground crew off and put them on the wing commander's airplane. But what I started to tell . . . Everybody picked up on the Deavers/Cleavers. I kindly acquired two nicknames. Socially, I, I grown a big handle bar yellow, yellow mustache. And kindly, people called me "the Golden Bear," because it kinda felt like a bear. And uh, but officially, I was, the *Cleaver*. And one afternoon, I'd flown a mission that morning. And we had a meeting of some kind, safety meeting or something scheduled that night. And I was back in my hooch sleeping. And one of the back seaters came in and said where's your flying suit, woke me. I said, oh it's hanging there on the door. He got it and left, I didn't know what was going on. And when I woke up, my flying suit was hanging back there on the door with a personal flight patch. There's a copy of it in that book. Where they designed it, but the guys in my flight had got together and designed a Deavers/Cleavers patch. Only flight in the wing that had one, everybody else was jealous. Had Velcro sewed on and we'd take those

patches off when we flew a mission. You know so that if we got shot down, they couldn't give too much away of what squadron and so forth. But anyway, when I got up and started putting my flying suit on to go to that meeting, there was that Deavers/Cleaver patch, with a name, mine was boss under, underneath it. And uh, I'm uh, freak I guess, but something like that just does me in. And uh, everybody else, the other three flight commanders that evening, you could tell they, they were all making snide remarks, but you could tell it was out of jealousy.

M. DEAVERS: Yeah uh, huh.

G. DEAVERS: So, uh, I got interrupted about the picture. The next year, our squadron people were lined up on my airplane. There's picture of it in that book too. Because it was the best-looking airplane in the wing. With the *Cleaver* emblazoned on it.

WONGSRICHANALAI: We'll make sure they . . . We'll go upstairs that they took a copy. They got a copy of that. So. Well, thank you very much for your time.

G. DEAVERS: What's that?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Thank you very much for your time.

G. DEAVERS: Well, I was happy to do it. Uh, I don't get to tell my war stories too often.
[Laughing]

G. DEAVERS: I'm going to share one more. Uh, you've never heard it.

CORLEY: OK.

G. DEAVERS: The day I was departing Vietnam, we had a special little lounge for our squadron, and we all were in there and everybody's telling me goodbye and um, all of a sudden looked around and there wasn't anybody left, except my back seater. And he went by me, took me by my quarters and got my bag, and we went around to the terminal. The uh, civilian terminal was on the other side of the base. And when I got over there, one guy said, "Let me have your, uh, scrip." OK, he took off the change, hit the green and, uh, somebody says, "Give me your boarding pass to get, handle that." The rest of them said, "Come with me." They had, everyone around there, everybody had left early, so they could be around there, when I got there. Had the alert truck with a bar set up in the back. [laughing] And proceeded to get pretty mellow. And, uh, ran out of booze, they called the tower, got them to let the truck go across the runway to our hooch, come back with more booze. My airplane was delayed so that the party went on. And finally, it came time to go. And the people departing. I was still a major, hadn't put on my silver oak leaves. There was one bird colonel, two lieutenant colonel, me a major, and then several other people on the bus going out to the airplane. Before I got to the airplane, the uh, escort went to the front of the bus and said Major Deavers, front and center. Left those three colonel stand . . . sitting there. And they had me to board pack first. And when I got off the bus, everybody in my squadron and half the other people from the other two squadrons were lined up on both sides of the ramp.

CORLEY: Oh, wow.

G. DEEVERS: Saluted me when I up the ramp. I know, it sounds hokey. But it's something I'll remember the rest of my life. I was crying like a baby. Uh, if hadn't been for my family, I'd stay for another tour, that's how important it was. Anyway, we got airborne, got halfway to Japan, I finally composed myself a little bit and uh, captain came over the speaker and said, "I've just received a message from Cameron Bay. And the Billie goats wish 'Sayonara' said the golden bear." [Laughing.] Broke me up again. Just, you know those and, that never happened before. One of my best friends is retired down in San Antonio. He was a party to all this, he was my assistant flight commander. Um, I got a picture, I took it out of the frame this morning and put it in that book of me and my flight members. All except two, two of them were on the shore of Bangkok. I had had seven crews, 14 people in my flight. And uh, like I said, I was still a reserve officer. But every time we'd get an Air Force Academy grad, for some reason they would assign him to my flight. Even though I was a Texas Aggie, at one time I had 5 Air Force Academy grads in my flight. One of them retired as a medical retirement, as a brigadier general, he passed away a couple of years ago. One of the guys that was a back seater, retired as a lieutenant general. One of the back seater retired, you met, Gub Sir in Colorado Springs retired as a full colonel. And uh, ok, Larry Lynn, kinda lost track of him, I don't know what happened to him. But Al Galgliadri and Larry Lynn were aircraft commanders. And um, the other guys were new, newly grads, they were back seaters. I thought it was kinda funny. Didn't have any Aggies in my flight, but I had four Air Force Academy grads.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Well thank y. . .

G. DEEVERS: One thing I might add, I didn't lose anybody out of my flight, while I was there. We lost several crews. Uh, one of the aggies that I talked about was flying in the back seat with one of my best friends that got shot down. One of the other flight commanders, Bob Camron was an, uh, Naval Academy graduate. He and his back seater crashed on the takeoff. And uh, a couple more, now one of, one of my guys, not too long after I left got killed. Uh, good kid. His uh, cluster bomb units failed. And um, no, a bomb, wasn't supposed to be high drag, it went slick, is what we called it. You know, the high drags, you'd drop them low level and those big fins would come out and make them go down pretty early and you could avoid the blast. But the fins didn't open on this one and it just continued to fly formation with him and uh, blew up and killed he and his back seater. We had uh, all, quite a celebrity there in our wing. Colonel Robert Rushworth. He had astronaut's wings, and at that time, he had more time in space than any living person. And he was just a fine gentleman. He loved to fly with my back seater, because my back seater was so efficient and thorough. And uh, we got written up a couple times, in stars and stripes, and a couple times it said Major Deavers and his Gibb did so and so. And Mike, kinda comical. He went to the parachute shop and had him a name tag made. Major Deavers' Gibb. Instead of Mike Rower. And a few days later he had that name tag on and he was flying with Colonel Rushworth. And the back seaters would get the briefing set up for the aircraft commander to give the briefing. And they said they were sitting there that morning, 4 people around the table, you know Colonel Rushworth and Mike and the other crew. And Colonel Rushworth read that name tag, he said, "What in the hell is that?" [Laughing]

M. DEEVERS: Oh, dear. [Laughs]

G. DEEVERS: So, I have, I had a lot of fun. Um, serious business, but you gotta have fun.

WONGSRICHANALAI: Thanks for taking the time to share with us.

G. DEEVERS: What's that?

WONGSRICHANALAI: Thank you for taking the time to share with us.

G. DEEVERS: Well, some of those side stories, of course, I just love.