

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
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AN INTERVIEW WITH LONAS TARR

FOR THE
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zKURT PIEHLER: This begins an interview with Lonas...

LONAS TARR: That's it. My momma did that to me. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: I want to make sure I spell it—say it correctly—Lonas Tarr.

TARR: That was my grandmother's maiden name.

PIEHLER: On March 7th, 2003. At the University of Tennessee, in Knoxville with Kurt Piehler and...

KATIE O'DONNELL: Katie O'Donnell

PIEHLER: And, I guess maybe I should ask you because you even mentioned before we begin, about your name and how you got Lonas...

TARR: Lonas.

PIEHLER: ... Lonas as a name which I said correctly the first time.

TARR: Yeah, that was my grandmother's maiden name. And that's—my mother named me for her you see. You know how mothers are. "Aw, that'd be such a nice name for that there boy." (Laughter)

PIEHLER: How did kids in the school yard feel about that?

TARR: Well now, I won't get into that. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: (Laughs) Well, could you maybe talk a little bit about your parents? And they were Mable and, and how do you pronounce your fathers name, Hu-rd?

TARR: Hurd Wallace.

PIEHLER: Hurd?

TARR: Yes, I'm a junior. But, I don't put the junior on my name, ever. My mother was... a Lewallen. She was from Clinton, Tennessee. My father was a native of Jefferson County—Jefferson City. He both—they both went to Carson Newman College. My daddy, he started in 1899 and graduated in '03, and [he] went on to med school in '07. He's a doctor in Jefferson City for 45 years, and delivered about 4,000 babies—all in the home, practically all of them in the home. That was back in the days when you didn't have hospital delivery, you know. They met at Carson Newman and later married, so.

PIEHLER: Do you know how they met? Did they meet in class, or...?

TARR: Her brother went to Carson Newman also and became friends with my father and that's ...

PIEHLER: So, they were sort of introduced?

TARR: Yeah, yeah. You know how that works.

PIEHLER: Your father as a doctor, um, you mentioned he delivered a lot of babies. It sounds like he also did a lot of other things.

TARR: He did everything. A doctor back in those days did everything. You know they didn't have specialists for this, that, and the other. In fact they didn't even have a hospital in Jefferson City then, when he started practicing.

PIEHLER: And would he do operations to?

TARR: No, he didn't do operations.

PIEHLER: He didn't do operations, but he did deliver his share of babies?

TARR: Yeah, he did. He did deliveries and all that kind of thing.

PIEHLER: ... I've gotten the sense from a lot of—I've interviewed a lot of doctors from the 1930's, 40's and 50's. One thing that struck me is, one, they made a lot of house calls, and two, it wasn't always the most reliable, where you might be paid in very odd ways. Did your father have some of those experiences?

TARR: Oh, yes, yes, definitely. People, you know, back in the teens and that period of time didn't have much money. And, they were good people, but they needed medical care just like everyone else did when they got sick. They, many, many times of course needed to get paid. They would bring him chickens, maybe a half bushel of potatoes, and in kind things, you know, of this sort. All through the years, I remember growing up that we would—we always ate well because of this, but very little money. That's just the way it was.

PIEHLER: Do you know why your father decided to practice in Jefferson City?

TARR: Well, that was his home. And, I suppose he felt more comfortable there, than anywhere else. He went to the University of Tennessee med school. You, which you may not know this—it was in Knoxville then.

PIEHLER: Okay, because now it's in Memphis.

TARR: Yeah, see it was in Knoxville until after World War II.

PIEHLER: Okay, that's when the big move took...

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: ... took place.

TARR: Yeah, that's right. Did you know that Katie?

O'DONNELL: (Shakes head affirmatively)

TARR: Did you? Sure enough. Boy, this gal's sharp!

PIEHLER: What did your—because you would also go to Carson Newman, I have a feeling there was some parental encouragement. Would that be a correct?

TARR: Well, I guess ...It didn't take a whole lot of encouragement, though, because I grew up there and knew everybody, and liked the school, played football, so forth and so on, you know. But ... I took pre-med also. I thought I was going to be a doctor. I worked in my dad's office, growing up, of course, and probably would have been if the war hadn't come along.

PIEHLER: Really, that's where you thought you were headed to?

TARR: Yeah, I was, I was hopefully going to med school that fall. Fall of my senior year and, uh, at that time it looked like without a doubt we were going to be in the war very shortly. So, I wanted to get into the branch that I wanted in. So, I went ahead and volunteered for the Air Force. And uh, November of '41, they said, "Son you go on home. In all probability [it will be] several months before we get an opening," excuse me, "for flight training. It's all full now for a good while." And of course in about a month's time, well, maybe a little less than a month, Pearl Harbor hit. And all of a sudden, they couldn't do without me. (Laughter) They found openings right away for me. I was in, now of course—I was for until 46', almost four and a half years, all during the war. So, that's the way it happened.

PIEHLER: Before we talk about the war, I wanted to ask a little bit about growing up in Jefferson City. Could you talk a little bit about, about sort of your memories—your earliest memories of growing up? I mean, you would grow up in Jefferson City, and then make your career in Jefferson City.

TARR: Yeah, well, of course Jefferson City is a real easy town to grow up in. The people are really friendly, very kind. They help each other in most any way that they can. And, of course, my dad being a doctor there, everybody knew me. So, it was just a natural evolution, I guess you'd say. But, no it was very, very easy to grow up there.

PIEHLER: Growing up, what would you do for fun?

TARR: What would I do for fun? You'd ask that with girls around? (Laughter) Goodness sakes alive. We—I was—I loved sports, and I was involved in just about everything: baseball, basketball, football, tennis, all of it.

PIEHLER: You played a lot of sports?

TARR: Played quite a few sports, yes sir. I played mainly I guess mainly baseball, tennis, and football.

PIEHLER: You mentioned you played football at Carson Newman. I figured you played in high school football.

TARR: Yes, sir. Yes, Sir.

PIEHLER: What about—were you a boy scout?

TARR: Yes, sir.

PIEHLER: What rank did you make?

TARR: Oh Gosh, we were the first troop they ever had in Jefferson City ... Troop 76 and uh...(pause)

PIEHLER: Were you a first class scout?

TARR: Yeah first class, and then I think that was just about the tops then. Nobody...

PIEHLER: No one made Eagle?

TARR: Nope, no. Nobody got that far then. (Laughter) The Scout Master was a fellow by the name of J.D. Ives. He was a college professor. He was a biology professor at Carson Newman. He was the scoutmaster. But, I don't think anybody had any rank much I guess. It was a fresh troop but we had a good time.

O'DONNELL: So did you go on a lot of those trips with them? Did you go on a lot of camp outs and things like that?

TARR: Oh yeah sure, we camped out a lot. Yeah, yes sir.

O'DONNELL: How about any hunting, or fishing trips?

TARR: Hunting, well not really. We didn't have any guns back then. It was a little simpler life back then.

PIEHLER: How well did your family fare during the Great Depression? I mean your father was a doctor but...

TARR: Just kept body and soul together, you know. He didn't make any money. He didn't have any money when he died, as money if you think about money now, because he didn't collect anything. He had a ledger (shows size with hands) that was that wide and that tall.

PIEHLER: So a huge ledger with lots of pages?

TARR: Oh my goodness, [it was] unreal. He was owed over a million dollars I'm sure when, when he died. He never did make any effort to collect it. When they came and paid him, why if he had a little, but...

PIEHLER: So he wasn't going to send out a lot of notices?

TARR: No. It was just a different day back then. I know when I was—of course I was gone from home when he died. At that time, I was with the airline after World War II. I stayed in the flying 'biz, because that's what I'd been trained to do. And so I worked was an American Airlines pilot for several years, and I happened to be home, on vacation, one time while he died. He died while I was there. It happened very sudden, [he was] only 71 at the time. I had to get a leave of absence from the airlines for a couple three months to try and get his things settled up. I put an ad in the paper for folks to come in and see me and so forth. It was a very difficult time, because he had been known and loved by so many families. He had taken care of several generations of one family, you know. And, it was very difficult to do, because they'd come in and cry, and say, "What are we going to do for a doctor," you know. He brought all my kids in the world, this, that and the other. So, it was tough, but that's part of it.

O'DONNELL: So your community was fairly close to him?

TARR: Yes, yes this is true.

PIEHLER: Your mother, did she work at all before she got married?

TARR: No, no. She was the sister to Miss Lewallen, who ran the Lewallen motor company on Clinton, of course for many, many years.

PIEHLER: How about your mother—how was she active in any clubs or the church?

TARR: Growing up in the church, very active in the church.

PIEHLER: What were some of the things she did?

TARR: Oh, I don't know. Just the normal church work, you know—clubs. You know whatever the church clubs—whatever they were she was very active in those.

PIEHLER: Growing up traveling, how much traveling did you and your parents do growing up, before joining the military?

TARR: Oh very, little, very, very little. You know, it was a big deal to go to Knoxville then you know. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: That was one of the big trips, then? Well let me ask you, how far do they say south have you gone?

TARR: How far south?

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean you've gone to Knoxville growing up.

TARR: Oh, you're talking about in that period of time?

PIEHLER: Yeah, before entering the service.

TARR: Florida.

PIEHLER: You've been to Florida, for vacation?

TARR: Uh.

PIEHLER: Or to visit a relative?

TARR: Uh, I guess, my mother spent one winter down there, and I visited her down there.

PIEHLER: About how far north had you been?

TARR: Had I been at that time? Oh my, Washington D.C. I guess, yeah.

PIEHLER: And west, how far west?

TARR: West, at that time--probably west Tennessee.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean had you made it to Memphis before the war.

TARR: Ah, yes, yes, yes.

PIEHLER: Did your father have a car?

TARR: Yes, he did yeah.

PIEHLER: How about utilities? Did you have all the utilities growing up?

TARR: He started practicing on horseback.

PIEHLER: So, he did start on horseback?

TARR: Oh Yeah, this is 1907 you see, and practiced for several years on horseback. Then got a buggy—a horse and buggy, and then an old car later on.

PIEHLER: Would you—did he always have a car when you were growing up?

TARR: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: But he, it sounds like you've heard some stories about horse back riding...

TARR: Oh yeah.

PIEHLER: And buggy's?

TARR: Yeah, sure.

PIEHLER: Did you have—did Jefferson City at that time have electricity growing up and telephone ...

TARR: Yes they had electricity from about 19 and [pauses] oh, I would guess in the middle, early twenties, yeah.

PIEHLER: You had it before rural electrification?

TARR: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: What's your recollection—you went through entire Jefferson City school system. What's some of your earlier recollections, particularly your elementary teachers and classmates?

TARR: Oh, I can remember all my teachers from first grade on.

PIEHLER: Could you tell me, a little bit about some of them, particularly the ones that stick out in your memory?

TARR: (Laughs) Well, we had a good, a good school system there. Miss Lilly Franklin was our first grade teacher. Right straight on up we had a good, relatively good high school at that time also. And of course Carson Newman College was there. So, I went straight through the school system all in my hometown, you see. Maybe, because it was simple. You would be surprised, I think, as to how little the teachers made then. What would you guess Katie?

O'DONNELL: I guess, not that much.

TARR: How much?

O'DONNELL: A reasonable salary.

TARR: How much per month?

O'DONNELL: Per month? About fifty dollars per month.

TARR: Sixty dollars a month they made ... and the principal he made ... about fifteen dollars more, I believe—fifteen to twenty dollars more. A coach made about ten dollars more. So, it was a—of course things didn't cost very much either back then either. The standard of living was controlled, to say the least. (Laughs) It had to be.

PIEHLER: What was your favorite subject in school?

TARR: Favorite subject? Well, I guess the biology field. I was pre-med.

PIEHLER: So, you really did take to it, too. It wasn't just your father's ...

TARR: No, I liked it, very much.

O'DONNELL: So you liked sciences?

TARR: Huh?

O'DONNELL: Did you really like all sciences, or just biology?

TARR: Just biology, yeah. Yeah, I majored in Biology.

PIEHLER: I'm curious. What did your parents think of Franklin Roosevelt growing up?

TARR: Oh, they thought he was a good 'fella.

PIEHLER: Even being republican.

TARR: Yeah, oh, yeah ... my parents were not great party people. That seems to be the way we're termed more and more all the time, now. I know I have a son-in-law, who is a real, fine 'fella—married my daughter, but he is a party man 'til death to us part. A democratic party man, also. (Laughter) So, we have a definite understanding. When he comes to the house, politics is never mentioned from the time he sets his foot on the step until he leaves—if he wants to eat! (Laughing) And he's a big eater, so we don't have any problems. He was a—oh gosh he's done it all. He's been campaign manager for several big people here in the Knoxville area.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay. So, he's a real party person?

TARR: Oh, he's a real party man. Yes, indeed. So, that's the reason we had to have an understanding.

PIEHLER: Did you have a radio growing up?

TARR: Did I have a radio? Yeah I had a little portable radio.

PIEHLER: What were some of the radio programs you listened to?

TARR: Amos and Andy. Yeah, that was my favorite.

PIEHLER: Anything else?

TARR: Gabriel Heater. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: That one I've never heard of.

TARR: You've never heard of Gabriel Heater?

PIEHLER: No, that one I haven't. I've heard of Amos and Andy.

TARR: Oh yeah, yes.

PIEHLER: What about movies? Was there a movie theatre in Jefferson City?

TARR: There was, yes.

O'DONNELL: Did you ever go?

TARR: Huh?

O'DONNELL: Do you remember what your favorite ones were?

TARR: Oh no, no. I don't remember what my favorite movies were. They were...

PIEHLER: How often would you make it to a Saturday afternoon matinee?

TARR: Maybe, oh, I don't know. Maybe once a month—something like that. At ten cents you know, you could stay all day. You could see it three or four times. (Laughing) Your laughing, that's right you didn't have to leave.

O'DONNELL: You could come late ...

TARR: Yeah.

O'DONNELL: ...and stay and see it again?

TARR: Oh yeah, just sit there.

PIEHLER: You mentioned being very active in sports, being a boy scout, and an occasional movie-goer. What else? What other activities did you do growing up? Is there anything we missed?

TARR: I did some farming.

PIEHLER: You had your own garden?

TARR: No, farming. My grandmother had a farm. My dad grew up on the farm, of course. And, uh ...

O'DONNELL: Is this in Jefferson City or some ...

TARR: Yes, right outside—about three miles outside the city.

PIEHLER: Now, how often would you do—how often was this every summer?

TARR: Yeah. I—oh, when I was, I guess maybe ... late high school, I went to my dad and said, “Dad, I have got to get—I’ve got to do something to make some money. I’ve got to have something to spend.” ... So, I said, “Will my grandmother let me have a little land to put a crop down?” He said, “Well, I think so. How much you want?” So I said, “We;;, I’d like to have about a couple acres of tobacco and an acre of beans.” I didn’t know what I was getting into. (Laughter) So I ask her, and [she said,] “Why sure son. Yeah, sure you can have that.” So, I put down a couple acres of tobacco and an acre of beans, and that was all this little boy could handle. I’ll tell you that. Cause it was all hand done then, you know. You carried water to the field. You did everything by hand.

O'DONNELL: So you got your workout?

PIEHLER: What were some of the things you learned?

TARR: I walked to work—every morning three miles to work. I worked all day in the field and walked back that night. I’m just thinking. Now, you can’t get a guy to walk across the street to Kentucky Fried Chicken to get something to eat, if you pay for it. He wants to ride over there to a box across the street, you see. (Laughs) It’s just all—you know it’s so different.

PIEHLER: Well I’ve also—from what I’ve been told tobacco was pretty labor intensive...

TARR: I beg your pardon?

PIEHLER: You really needed to work hard to take care of tobacco?

TARR: Oh heavens, yes. Yes, sirree. Yeah

PIEHLER: I mean, because some crops you just put it in ...

TARR: No, it’s real labor intensive.

PIEHLER: And, how did you fare in terms of once the crop was in?

TARR: Well, it did fairly well. It was a real dry summer. We had to resift quite a few plants and also had to carry a lot of water to the field, so forth and so on. But, we made it—we made it alright. My beans—my beans did well. They don't require as much care.

PIEHLER: ... as tobacco.

O'DONNELL: Now when you did your farming would people just come up to the farm and buy what they want?

TARR: No, no, no. You had to market it. You had to put it on the market. Tobacco, of course, you have to take it to the place where all farmers take their tobacco.

O'DONNELL: So, it was like a farmers market?

TARR: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: The tobacco auction, was that in Jefferson City?

TARR: No, no. It was in Morristown.

PIEHLER: Oh okay.

TARR: The beans, now they had a place at home to handle the beans—Stokely. Stokely had a place at a...

PIEHLER: Oh, yeah.

TARR: ... in Jefferson City to handle the beans. So, there was no problem there. But ... good experience—real good experience.

PIEHLER: How many years—how many summers did you do it?

TARR: Just the one summer on that.

PIEHLER: And then what other?

TARR: Then the next summer, I had the opportunity to get a job on the—with the state highway crew. We dug ditches and cleaned out right-of-ways. You see these guys going down the—well, that's what I did one whole summer. I made twenty-two and half cents an hour, ten hours a day—two dollars and a quarter for hard work.

PIEHLER: But that's ...

TARR: That's right—two dollars and a quarter. So, I appreciated it. I appreciated a dollar there. [Laughs] Yep.

PIEHLER: And this was for your spending money, or did you ...

TARR: Yep. Yeah, that was for all of it—whatever I was gonna use.

PIEHLER: Was your father able to afford tuition at Carson-Newman or did you have to come up with ...

TARR: No, no. He supplied the tuition. Would you have any guess what it was then?

PIEHLER: Oh, I would say maybe \$100-200 a year.

TARR: Sixty-five dollars.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay.

TARR: Sixty-five dollars a year, and it was harder to come up with then than the big tuition you pay now.

PIEHLER: Oh, I can imagine...

TARR: Oh sure, yeah. But that's again, how things have changed.

PIEHLER: Katie, you wanted to ask?

O'DONNELL: Let's see, did you ever have to help your family out with money while you were working on the farms and stuff or was it just...?

TARR: No, my dad kept my family up.

O'DONNELL: It was just some things to do during the summer?

TARR: He would come home many times, of course, with groceries from the farmers that he'd been treating. With potatoes, with eggs, beans, or whatever, you know. Which is good, because we didn't have to buy that stuff. We'd get it that way.

PIEHLER: You didn't have any brothers and sisters.

TARR: No, no. I'm a spoiled brat. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: Growing up did you miss not having any siblings?

TARR: Oh, sure yeah. That's a shame for any kid to grow up without sisters or brothers. It really is—really is. I had my uncle out in Clinton. My mother's brother had two boys just about my age, so we spent an awful lot of time together. They were almost like my brothers. But ... that should never happen.

PIEHLER: You mentioned growing up that you sort of decided to enlist in the Air Force, because you wanted to pick your service. When did you have a strong sense that we would be going to war?

TARR: Well, I mean everything is just pretty much similar to what it is right now. Everything you read and heard was war, war, war. See, Germany had already gone into Czechoslovakia and wiped it out. They'd gone into to Austria. They had gone ... into all of the surrounding areas there and started into France. They had pushed—Dunkirk, you may remember the name—they had pushed the British back into the sea there. They lost all their equipment—every bit of it, and a lot of men. So ...the French, of course, they would fight 'til the last Englishman, you know. Just like now—gutless bunch of people. I haven't any use for them at all. I hope you're not French. But they—we've gotten their eggs out of the fire in two different wars, and what do we get for it? You see it. They don't even stand behind us on our deal at all. But that's—I was based in France. I was stationed there for about six months too, so I got to know em' over there first hand. But, at any rate, that's what it looked like at that period of time.

PIEHLER: So it sounds like you were following the news pretty closely?

TARR: Oh sure, yeah. Absolutely, because that was your life's blood back then, you know.

O'DONNELL: Did you follow it by radio, or did you have a lot of newspapers?

TARR: Radio, because you didn't have any TV then.

O'DONNELL: Did you have newspaper access back then?

TARR: Oh yeah sure you had newspapers, yeah.

PIEHLER: Was there a local paper in town did you get?

TARR: Yeah the local paper, but it was always a week behind time.

PIEHLER: Did you—I just interviewed someone from Morristown. They said they would read the Knoxville paper. Would you read the Knoxville paper?

TARR: Oh sure, we took a Knoxville paper everyday.

PIEHLER: So you would get home delivery?

TARR: Oh yeah. Sure.

PIEHLER: What about magazines? Did your family subscribe to any magazines?

TARR : Oh yeah. At that time, I guess *Life* was my favorite magazine then.

PIEHLER: What about *Saturday Evening Post*?

TARR: No, I don't think we took the *Saturday Evening Post*.

O'DONNELL: What about *Look* magazine?

TARR: What?

O'DONNELL: *Look*.

TARR: *Look*—I think possibly it was available. I don't know. I've never seen quite a bit of it.

PIEHLER: When you were in Carson Newman, did you join any clubs or other organizations? You played sports ...

TARR: I was in the Clement Literary Society. I had two Clement ... but that was about the extent of our...

PIEHLER: What did you do in the literary society? Did you have ...

TARR: Oh, we had some debates, and, you know, this type thing. Not anything of any consequence, just ...

PIEHLER: What would you debate? Do you remember any of the subjects?

TARR: Ah, some subjects they'd come up with you know.

O'DONNELL: Was it normally on books and poetry or was it on ...

TARR: What?

O'DONNELL: Was it just on books or poetry?

TARR: It wasn't on poetry, honey. No, no, there weren't any poets in that crew. (Laughter)

O'DONNELL: So, was it only on literary novels?

TARR: Possibly.

PIEHLER: Why the Air Force? What made you think to join the Air Force?

TARR: It just appealed to me.

PIEHLER: Had you ever been in an airplane before?

TARR: Yeah, I'd been in one. That's about it though. I'd wrote—read a lot of about 'em.

PIEHLER: Where had you been in an airplane?

TARR: Oh, my cousin had—he had his license and a Cub. I'd been in that Cub once.
(Laughter)

PIEHLER: Had he taken you up in it?

TARR: Mm hmm. But, I'd read a lot about them, and they came over the house everyday landing and going into...

PIEHLER: Tyson-McGee?

TARR: Yeah, yeah. American Airlines came over everyday.

PIEHLER: You mean, you could spot it?

TARR: Oh, yeah sure.

O'DONNELL: So, you had a lot of exposure to it?

TARR: They were a lot lower then than they are now. But, it just always appealed to me.

PIEHLER: And you mentioned—I mean, you would enlist in November. You mentioned you had enlisted before Pearl Harbor. When did you enlist again, and when did you actually report? It says here in the survey, it says November 1941 at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

TARR: Yeah. I went into Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia and that's where I was sworn in.

PIEHLER: But, then they told you to go home...

TARR: They told me it would be probably a few months before there was any opening for flight training, but I was in lock, stock, and barrel.

PIEHLER: So, when you went back home what did you do? You had graduated from college.

TARR: Oh, I just worked at odd jobs until it was time to go.

PIEHLER: Yeah, what kind of odd jobs? Was it farming or...

TARR: Ah, jerk sodas at the drugstore and whatever ...

PIEHLER: So really a range of odd jobs?

TARR: Yes.

PIEHLER: And do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor occurred—the attack?

TARR: Well, I was at home. But, it really wasn't any great shock. The location probably was, but, uh, everybody expected something to blow anytime.

O'DONNELL: Do you remember hearing it on the radio or...

TARR: Beg your pardon?

O'DONNELL: ... Or did you pick up a newspaper first?

TARR: Well, oh yeah, we had good radios, yeah...

PIEHLER: How did you feel? Did you think you might be going to the Air Force training sooner than later, because you had mentioned you were assured it would take a few months. How fast did the Air Force move after Pearl Harbor to get you into training?

TARR: Oh, I went directly to Maxwell Field, Alabama, for my Pre-Flight Training. I had about six weeks there. I went from there to a—wait a second, now—to Dorr Field, Arcadia, Florida, for my Primary Training. That's the first series of Flight Training—with an old PT-17 Stearman. That's what I learned in. Then, after about sixty hours there, we went—were sent to Shaw Field, Sumter, South Carolina, for my next series of training—another sixty hours or so. From there to Moody Field, Valdosta, Georgia, for my Advanced Twin Engine [Training]. I graduated there, and I got my wings.

O'DONNELL: So how long did it take you to get your wings about?

TARR: Well, sixty hours in each ...

O'DONNELL: It was a consistent sixty hours, you went up a couple hours and rested and came back?

TARR: Everyday you got some flying time.

PIEHLER: When did you actually report? Do you remember? Was it January, February, or March?

TARR: Well, I think I went to Maxwell in—I think in sometime in January.

PIEHLER: In January?

TARR: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: What was—people who have generally gone into sort of initial training said it was very spit and polish and lots of inspections and a lot of—any recollections?

TARR: There was. You had to do a lot of parading, and you learned a lot of the a ...

O'DONNELL: Of drill and ceremony?

TARR: You learned a lot of what the old Army does you know...

PIEHLER: You were still a part of the Army ...

TARR: Yeah, that's right. You learned a lot of marching—how to march and drill and all this type of thing. Spit and polish ... this was, primarily, your stuff at Maxwell Field. From there on, it was Flight—Flight Training.

O'DONNELL: Were there and instructors at the school that you remember?

TARR: Do I remember them? Yeah, sure.

O'DONNELL: What were they like?

TARR: My first instructor, his name was Ganley. Ganley, he was our primary instructor. That was the most—I guess the loneliest feeling I think I ever had. When we were given about six or seven hours in the airplane. We came around once. He got out and said, "It's all yours."
(Laughter)

PIEHLER: When he got out he ...

TARR: When he got out he said, "It's yours. Take it up."

PIEHLER: So you landed out ...

TARR: Solo. You knew it was either that or forget it. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: So the solo—it sounds like you were a bit nervous at going up for your first solo...

TARR: It wasn't nervous; it was just shock.

PIEHLER: Shocked that you could ...

TARR: No, I had confidence that I could get the job done.

PIEHLER: What was the most difficult thing about learning to become a pilot?

TARR: I don't know if it was difficult. Some people take to very readily, others just never do.

PIEHLER: Of your—particularly in Maxwell, how many didn't make it through the program roughly?

TARR: Well, at Maxwell, now—of course, that was not Flight Training, that was the...

PIEHLER: Pre-Flight?

TARR: ... preliminary stuff. In Primary class, we had four to an instructor.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

TARR: We roomed together, the four of us. It so happens, I was the only one that got through that.

PIEHLER: Of the group of four, you were the only one that made it out of Primary?

TARR: That particular class, yeah. Then Shaw Field—I think out of the four, maybe two of us made it through. At Advanced, I think maybe three of us—maybe all four of us. I've forgotten. But, they were very, very careful about this, because, you got to remember, that those guys they are passing on—some of those guys will have ten men behind them someplace over there, and they've got to be pretty sure that they know what they're doing.

PIEHLER: So, you got a sense they were pretty rigorous in training—that if you couldn't cut it, you would be washed out.

TARR: Yeah.

O'DONNELL: What was the training like? Was it mainly flight time? Was there any training on the ground?

TARR: Well, it was training. We had classroom [instruction] everyday on systems of the airplane, navigation, so forth, and so on. You had several hours of training per day along with Flight Training. Again, you might just have two hours of Flight Training and four hours of schooling each day.

PIEHLER: You mentioned you took to the air training as a pilot. What about classroom instruction? Was it—how difficult or how easy?

TARR: Well, see back at that period of time, when you first went in, they required a college education.

PIEHLER: So, your group was college educated?

TARR: So, you didn't have any problems, generally. Then they let the bar down to two years of college, and you could see things drop off.

PIEHLER: When you were in Maxwell, then so, everyone else had been to college already?

TARR: Oh yes. Then later on when I started instructing—I was kept after I graduated from Moody Field. They kept me there as an instructor for—oh, I guess. Gosh, I was there for roughly

a year and a half. I wanted to be getting into combat in the worst way and applied for a B-17, P-38's, and everything else I could. No, they kept me there as an instructor, and that's typically—no you don't get what you want ... (Laughing) Quit laughing at me...

PIEHLER: So, you really—I mean, you did not want to be part of the training program?

TARR: No, I wanted to get into combat. But at any rate, that's the way it was. So after—finally the colonel called me in and he says, "Tarr, I'm tired of listening to you." (Laughing) He said, "Everything that comes to"—every so month, various things come in, openings in the Far East or Europe or someplace. If pilots want to, they would. He said, "I am tired of having you worry me to death about getting out of here. The next damn thing that comes up you're going." (Laughter) I said, "That suits me Colonel, just fine." So, at any rate, it was a—I finally got out to a—from then I went to the Ferry Command, which is delivering aircraft to different parts of the world.

PIEHLER: When did you join Ferry Command?

TARR: Well, that was in February, March—maybe of March of '44. I went on to Memphis. That's where the fourth ferry group was. Out of there, they dispatched them all. First outfit went to—I took a B-25 to India—to Agra, India—delivered it to a group there. They ... supplied the Hump over to China. The next trip I brought a B-24 back from over there. That was a war bird B-24 called the 'Sad Sack.' It had been written up in *Reader's Digest*. It was a well-known warplane. It had a lot of history behind it and so forth. They wanted it back over here for a bond drive. It was sitting over on the ground for about a year. So, I brought it back and took it to Ogden, Utah and delivered it out there. And, let's see then. The next trip I made was—I took an A-20, which is a fast little twin-engine attack plane. I took it over to Abadan, Iran. But—right over the country we're talking about now, just south across the south Atlantic, across the middle of Africa to Khartoum, up the Nile to Cairo, just south of Jerusalem, directly over to Baghdad, down the river to—down the Euphrates to Basra, across to Abadan, Iran. So, to deliver it to the Russians, and they took it on to Russia. We supplied a lot of Lend-Lease stuff to the Russians back then. Whether you knew it or not, but we did. (Laughing)

PIEHLER: Okay. (Laughs) You started off with two very memorable trips these were quite extensive trips. What was the third trip?

TARR: Oh, gosh, let's see. I don't know ...

PIEHLER: Well, I guess one question—how long were you in Ferry Command?

TARR: I was in Ferry Command from, let's see—only about three months or four months maybe. Then, I applied for overseas permanently. I wanted to get over. I got assigned to the Air Transport Command, which was the service airline. That's the service airline, which was set up and manned the airline personnel of the states—mainly American Airline pilots and Eastern Airline—TWA Pilots. They set up the whole network over in Europe. So I was assigned there, and I was there until the war was over. I was based in England for a while—France for several months—six, seven months—during the Battle of the Bulge time. Then on I was a chief pilot of the base down at Naples for about six months until the war ended, and that was about it.

O'DONNELL: How long would it take you to do these trips?

TARR: How long would it what?

O'DONNELL: To take these trips, how many hours would it take to make a straight and to bring back...

TARR: Depends on where we're going? Which one you talking ...

O'DONNELL: The two trips to India. How about those other ones? Like the one to India, how long did that take?

TARR: Oh, the one to India. Ah well, we had to go down to the Caribbean and down to South America to Natal, Brazil, which is right on the hump. Then from Natal across to Ascension Island, which is 1450 miles out of—let me show you where it is. I brought these maps along to show you, in case you wanted to look at 'em. (Pulls out a airline map and points) That's an airline map there. I'll show you that in a few minutes, but I'll show you ...

PIEHLER: That airline map that you brought, is that an original from ...

TARR: That is. (Pulls out the map) Get that thing apart. (Laughter) We—that was a bad check somebody gave me. I don't want to lose that. (Unfolds the map) Can you pull that around back there in the back? Can you open it up?

PIEHLER: Yeah.

TARR: Okay, just open it up and lay down here on the floor. You got a yardstick or something like that?

PIEHLER: Um ...

TARR: Any kind of pointer?

PIEHLER: I guess maybe a pencil will have to do.

TARR: Okay, yeah, Okay. Memphis down to Florida, down to Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico down to Georgetown, South America, from there down to the Belem [Brazil] and the mouth of the Amazon. Belem down to Natal, which is right on the hump. Alright, across to Ascension Island. (Pulls out the map and points) There it is right there. Ascension, that's 1450 miles from here to here with nothing in between but water.

O'DONNELL: How'd you manage the fuel?

TARR: Well, we just had barely enough to get there. So, you didn't want to miss that little booger. It's about a four and a half hour flight in an A-20, and you had about five hours and fifteen minutes worth of fuel.

O'DONNELL: Cutting it close...

TARR: You get the idea, don't you? (Points) Alright, from Ascension Island up to Accra [Ghana] on the Ivory Coast, right there. Alright, then we went up to Kano and all the way across Africa to Khartoum, right here. (Points) From Khartoum, depending on where you went from there—you either went straight up the Nile to Cairo and across to just south of Jerusalem—this is Iraq right here—across to Abadan—to Aba—what's the capital of ...

O'DONNELL: Baghdad.

TARR: Huh?

PIEHLER: Tehran?

O'DONNELL: Tehran?

TARR: No, the capital of Iraq?

O'DONNELL: Baghdad.

PIEHLER: Baghdad.

TARR: Baghdad, alright. Over to Baghdad, right there, down the river to Abadan, Iran right there. (Points) Or if you are going to India, you came in here, across to Khartoum and right here to Aden, on to the coast of Arabia, right across to Karachi. At that time it was part of India. Now, it's part of Pakistan. There was no Pakistan then.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE-----

PIEHLER: Let me just re-ask that question. You were at Moody Field for a year and a half, and you mentioned—this got cut off the tape—it got tedious and also some people you liked more than others. Some were, it strikes me, trying harder than others. How many people would you have to wash out? I mean, how regular ...

TARR: Well, we had four students to an instructor.

PIEHLER: And when you were at Moody Field, what level of training were they at?

TARR: That's Advanced...

PIEHLER: So, they had already been through ...

TARR: That's the tops.

PIEHLER: That's the tops—and what types of aircraft would they, in a sense, qualify in?

TARR: Well they were flying twin-engine trainers. That was a twin-engine field. There were both single engine fields and twin-engine fields. Depending on which one the cadet was elected to. So this was a twin-engine training base. People that went into multi engine aircraft came through here—the people that flew the B-25 or B-17 or the B-24—the heavy stuff. They had to have multi-engine training.

PIEHLER: And um ...

TARR: I happened to be the gunnery officer on the field, too, which I enjoyed very much because it broke the routine of the straight and level flying all the time. One week out of the training period—out of the two-month training period per class—I would take the cadets down to Eglin Field, Florida, for live gunnery. Each instructor would send me his top cadet to me, and I'd take em' down—several of em'. We would have targets on the ground there, and in the air also—live gunnery. And [we would] give them a little taste of that, you see.

O'DONNELL: Was anyone ever hurt?

TARR: Well ...

O'DONNELL: Were there ever any training accidents?

TARR: Well, yeah you always get somebody hurt. You know, some dummy always screws up somewhere, you know. We had one—for example—targets was set up six of them across the field up on a mound of dirt about eight or ten feet high. Targets were six by six, and [they] had a big white line drawn across the field. It was 100 yards from the actual target, and the cadets were to break off they're firing at that point. Not beyond, because they were coming down about 200 miles an hour on the target. And at 200 miles an hour, you cover that 100 yards is a short period of time. Anyway I had—we always took 'em out, had them space themselves, and they had to make several passes at it before we could actually start live firing. This one guy—I noticed he was breaking off too late. I called him and told him. I said, "Break off. You're firing back 100 yards back; otherwise, I'll have to send you back to the base." He acknowledged. So, we came around with the first firing pass, and I knew he was 'gonna get it. Before I could get the mic engaged and call him, he plowed through it. Well, he got the target all right with the prop—just boarded right through it. Luckily, he hit the ground right behind it and didn't kill himself. But, these things will happen from time to time.

PIEHLER: Did you keep him in the program?

TARR: Yeah, I took him up right after. Anytime a cadet had an accident, you never let him think about it. You got him back in the air just as soon as you could.

PIEHLER: So, that didn't necessarily wash him out of the program?

TARR: Not right instantly. No. The kid could fly well, but he had this phobia. He couldn't—now a lot of kids have this. They get hypnotized on the target. You know they say, "It's bumping around, it's bumpy." Oh they say, "Just another split second and I can put that thing right in here, you know." And he waits just one second too long, and he's on the ground. And that's what happens. I took him up that afternoon. [I] took him to the hospital first—got him examined. [They] passed him okay. I took him up that afternoon, and he liked to flew with me. I said, "Son, this is not for you. This sure ain't for you with me in here. It ain't." (Laughter) So, he was washed out.

PIEHLER: So, he was washed—in other words, if he had been able to perform the second time around ...

TARR: Oh yeah.

PIEHLER: So, the accident didn't necessarily mean you were out of the program. You mentioned that gunnery was sort of a break. How tedious would it get—the training? What was sort of a typical day like when you were at Moody Field?

TARR: Well, a typical day was a long day really. I mean you had four cadets that you tried to get up everyday. You gave them at least an hour to an hour and a half training to each one of them. Between the times of the day—see that's a days worth. Very tedious. You see them make the same mistakes, over and over and a so forth and so on. It's tiring, real tiring.

PIEHLER: And you would do this how many days a week? Six days a week, or seven, or ...

TARR: Six or seven. Whatever was required.

O'DONNELL: Did you ever need any extra training hours or did you just ...

TARR: Honey, I didn't hear you.

O'DONNELL: If you had any extra training hours, would you try and oblige that, or was that just the training hours they got or that they had to use?

TARR: Well, you had a certain number of hours of training for each specific thing. Yeah, now I know we had one little airplane called the AT-9, which is a little twin-engine plane. It was built for a B-26 trainer. That's what it was built for, because the B-26 was a very—I guess you would say it was a vicious airplane in that it had vicious flying characteristics for people who had never been in a hot airplane before. It stalled at very high speeds, and you could not take liberties with it. First one the Air Force ever had, so they need a trainer to train kids before they got in it, 'cause they lost a lot of airplanes that way—a lot of pilots. So, it was tough to fly, but I had some experiences which you wouldn't want to take about... This was great for the cadets. Once they got a handle of this thing, they never had trouble with anything. The colonel called me up one time on the flight line—the CO of the base, and he said, "Tarr, I understand you are the man to check me out an AT-9." I said, "I don't know, Colonel, whether I am or not." But I says, "If you want

to come down, I'll be happy to take you up." So, he did. He came down and we went up. He said, "Let's go up about 2500 feet, and I want to do some stalls." He said, "I'm going to do some stalls." We got up and I said, "Colonel, I believe we need to go a little higher." He said, "No 2500 feet's enough." I said, "Colonel, if you want to get back, we need to get up to altitude." I said, "Let's go up to 5000 feet." "Awe, we just waste a lot of time you see," he said. I said, "No, I don't think so." So, we go up and I said, "Now, you do your full-power stall." So he did, and he lost about 3000 feet. (Laughter) So he says, "I see what you mean." (Laughter)

PIEHLER: Because that quite a drop.

O'DONNELL: That's a slide.

TARR: Oh yeah it was a vicious little airplane, and it hurt when it took along time—a lot of distance to recover, so forth and so on. But ...

PIEHLER: Of the World War II planes, what was your favorite plane to fly?

TARR: Well, it depends on what for. Just for out and out flying pleasure, the A-20 was a beautiful little airplane, fast and maneuverable and so forth and so on. But an everyday deal for to go there and be sure you go back—the DC-3, and that's still all over the world, even today.

PIEHLER: It's still...

TARR: It's still everywhere all over the world! It's built just like a John Deere tractor.

PIEHLER: It will just keep going ...

TARR: Well it's over built, you see. That's the reason you see them everywhere. You can't wear them out. Good instrumental little airplane—any kind of weather you can fly in and such.

PIEHLER: One of the things—well, there's several things. When I've interviewed pilots from this period, one of the things that struck me, which I've now gotten used to thinking—I now recognized to ask—navigation was very important. There wasn't—pilots or their navigator had to really navigate. Could you maybe talk a little bit about that? Particularly, when you were in Ferry Command you were—you had mentioned earlier, pointing out, you had to hit Ascension Island, and if you didn't you going to run out of gas pretty quickly.

TARR: Oh yeah, that's right. What did you want me ...

PIEHLER: Well, in terms of navigating a plane during that period, both as a pilot ...

TARR: Well—you learn how to read weather. You learn how to read the signs. You have of course—you have some radio help. It was limited back then, so you had to learn how to make the most of what you had, I guess.

PIEHLER: Well, because one thing—I once talked to someone who had been in the civilian pilot training program, and he said on his last flight before he got his license, he had to do solo. He described sort of flying to Harrisburg. Then he was supposed to pivot at Atlantic City, and then fly back to New Brunswick. Well, he overshot Atlantic City because, I think it was fog and he ended up finding himself over the Atlantic Ocean, and he had to literally figure out how to get back to the coast. And I thought, you know, it's very different now. Now, air traffic control can tell you pretty quickly where you are. Any experiences, particularly when you were teaching people how to fly, that they would get lost?

TARR: Well, I'll give you a personal experience to this. Probably—well, I know what you're talking about. The closest I ever came to buying the farm was in an A-20 delivery—Natal to Ascension Island—had this little navigator on board. We normally had a range station on Ascension Island. We had to put out a signal. It had been there every single trip I had before, but we got a note tab saying it was out of commission. So, they had to put a navigator on board. He had a sextant of course, you know, they would take plots of the sun. I'd never seen the guy before. His name was Salamano. I never will forget it. He is indelible in my mind. The day flight, of course, we left out of Natal—had a flight plan of about four hours, and to Ascension had about four hours and forty-five minutes of fuel left on board. Beyond Ascension there's nothing but water. So, a very short time each hour, he would give me a little, few degrees correction to the north of the track. And I kept checking the water to see what the drift looked like on the water, and it didn't show that to me. Of course a lot of the time it's different at that altitude. I kept questioning him about it. He says, "No, this is right. I've checked it several times." So, you've got to go along with it. He's a professional navigator with an estimate. So—but I did not feel good about it. Everything about it told me he was wrong. Well, we got up—Ascension Island has a little peak on it about 2500 feet high. It had little cumulus clouds that always sat right over that thing—always. And you can see it generally for about 40 miles out or so. So at any rate, we got out there. I said, "Salamano, when we hit our ETA," estimated time of arrival, that's what he did. I said, "If I don't see what we need to see, I'm turning due south." I was convinced we were quite a bit north of the border. He said, "Oh, you'll be making a big mistake, if you do." And I said "Well, we're lost now that's for sure. If we don't see anything in time, I'm turning due south rather." I made preparations to ditch. I told him to get the raft loose back there, and all this business needs to be done when you ditch. Ditching in an A-20 is—you have two chances. You have slim and none, because it's real fast, and you hit the water at about 120 miles per hour. And ... just almost no chance of getting out. So, when we got there on ETA and I saw nothing, zero. I turned due south, and in about fifteen or twenty minutes I saw the cloud—just a little bit off to the left or right of the nose, I don't remember which way. Now, I knew that we were homing in then. So in about another fifteen or twenty minutes I saw the island, and in fifteen more we were on the ground. We had about fifteen minutes of gas left when we landed. We were that close to buying the farm.

PIEHLER: So, that was your closest call in terms of piloting ...

TARR: Yes!

PIEHLER: That's a pretty ...

TARR: Yes, definitely. When we got ready to leave out the next morning—we spent the night there. I said, “Now Salamano, you go back there and get real comfortable. Make yourself a bed and go to sleep. I don’t need you from here to Africa. I can hit it. Ain’t no way I can miss Africa. So, you just go back there. I don’t need you now.” (Laughter) Oh, boy! I was really teed off, cause’ he almost dumped us. But, that’s as far as it got.

PIEHLER: What about—I once flew with a student who was a pilot. He was trying to demonstrate, you know, how you need to rely on your instruments. Now I’ve learned to ask—what about vertigo? Did you ever have any vertigo in any of your flights?

TARR: Oh, initially when you first start flying, everybody has a little—particularly when you start instrument training with no horizon at all. You just fly strictly by the instruments, themselves. Sure, you can have vertigo. It’s normal. Yeah, but you learn to overcome that very quickly. You learn to overcome it. In other words, your eyes tell you one thing. Your senses tell you something else. You would swear that your turning or upside down or sideways or something, and you’re just straighter—you’re just going straight.

PIEHLER: In training people, were there some pilots who could never get over it?

TARR: That’s right. Some of them never get over that.

PIEHLER: You mentioned the one case of the pilot and gunnery. Vertigo was another thing—what were the other mistakes? You know, why would some people make a good pilot? What were some of the other reasons? And some sounded like they didn’t listen. Because you said some worked harder than others. What were some of the other reasons, why some people just couldn’t make it as a pilot?

TARR: Well, some people take to machinery real easy. Others don’t.

O’DONNELL: Is it more of a natural thing?

TARR: Yeah, some of them take to machinery real well, and others don’t. Some people learn how to drive very easily. Others don’t, and never can drive very well. You know, that’s just part of nature I guess. But ...

PIEHLER: When you were at Moody Field, you were at sort of a fixed spot for a good part of the war. Did you live on base?

TARR: Well, that wasn’t a good part of the war. I was there about a year and three months.

PIEHLER: Where did you live? Did you live on base at Moody Field?

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: In Bachelor’s Officer’s quarters?

TARR: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: What would you do when you were not an instructor? What were the opportunities?

TARR: Gosh, it seemed like I was doing it all the time. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: I guess I would say was there ever a USO to go to or an officer's club?

TARR: Yeah, we had an officer's club on the base. We went over there in our free time. They had a pool hall or whatever. Occasionally, you know, we got some good looking gal out. (Laughter) And all that kind of thing, but not much. Not much really.

PIEHLER: What about getting into town? How often would you get into town?

TARR: Well, maybe once a month or once every two or three weeks.

PIEHLER: What about—did you get any leaves or furloughs to go home or to go anywhere besides—I mean you know mentioned going to Florida for gunnery practice. This was something you looked forward to doing to break the monotony.

TARR: Well, but that was strictly work.

PIEHLER: Strictly work.

TARR: Strictly work. No off-base stuff with that at all.

PIEHLER: Any furloughs or leaves to go home?

TARR: Once every class, you had a break of three or four days. But, I never tried to go home during that period of time—too much of a hassle.

O'DONNELL: So, you just took time off?

TARR: Huh?

O'DONNELL: So, you just took time off?

TARR: Yeah, three or four days. I was generally down the flight line flying a little. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: It sounds like you genuinely liked flying?

TARR: Oh yeah, yeah. I still fly—still. I've got a little airplane.

PIEHLER: So, you still have an airplane? Oh, so you haven't lost the flying?

TARR: Oh, no. I haven't lost it, nah.

O'DONNELL: What kind of airplane do you have?

TARR: I have a twin Cessna.

PIEHLER: When you did—particularly on your first trip to India, then your second flight to Iran, what was your sense of the places you had mentioned—and it sort of gotten cut off, that you didn't think of these places as exotic. You viewed them as the ends of the earth.

TARR: Oh yeah, they weren't exotic—far from it!

PIEHLER: Anything that stuck out, because you had gone to places most people, even now, just read about in *National Geographic*.

TARR: Well, they were just—obviously they were—most of them were just stinking holes. People were very, very, poor—just the bottom of the rung, you know, the bottom of the ladder. So the poorest people in Jefferson City were rich compared to these people.

PIEHLER: You really sense that in Africa or India?

TARR: Oh yeah sure, absolutely. And a little later when I went over with the airlines—well you want me to carry on here?

PIEHLER: Oh, whatever you like, yeah, yeah.

TARR: When—I was stationed in England for a little while—Scotland for just a couple of months. We were all over England at that time and into France. Oh this is something you might be interested in. At that time, the buzz bombs were very active in London. You've read about ...

PIEHLER: Yes.

TARR: ... I'm sure, and they came over every night, every night! I'll tell you, I have a tremendous amount of respect for the English. They got their gut; they're gutty people. They complain so seldom, and they had hell all the time. They lived in this for years and years. See the German's bombed them every night in 1939, '40, and '41. Bombed em'—I mean just terrible. We weren't even aware of most of it, but [it] killed a lot of people. Imagine going to bed at night and knowing it was coming, every night. Any rate, I had taken a flight down there one day to London and was going down to my place where I was going to sleep. I was walking down the street there at Oxford Street, and the siren goes off. A wail, you know, you've heard it many times. In just a matter of minutes, the searchlights come on there. They pick up this buzz bomb coming in. One of them got it, and then they all picked up on it. They come in low—about 400 feet above the ground—something like that and at about 400-500 miles per hour. They are pretty swift. Initially, they tried to shoot these things down. In that case they would have success, except when they did it'd come down and blow up something 'cause it would hit right in the middle of London. So, they got wise and finally decided to try and let it over fly, and several of them did. This particular one over flew, the night I saw this one. It came in, and they just fissile it

with those search lights. The thing went over London, and I never did hear it hit anywhere. The next morning in the paper—the irony of the thing was this. It hit a schoolhouse out in the country, several miles out, that they'd moved the people out of London to keep the kids from getting killed. They had a whole bunch of 'em out there. That's the irony of it. But, the V-2 was the rocket that they'd shoot ... They'd go up many thousand feet, and it had a one-ton warhead in it. It would go up and come down right in the middle of it and blow up half a block. I was in my bunker one night in London, and one of these things came in and hit and just blew all the glass outta the windows there where we were. It makes a pretty good racket, you know. It had hit a block over. It hit the end of Selfridges department store. That's the biggest department store in London. So the next morning, I got up there and looked at it. It hit a pub right on the end of Selfridges... full of British and American sailors. They were picking—they had a crew over there getting everything up—shovels, automatic shovels and all that stuff. Gosh, it was gruesome. They were picking up hands and arms, and this and that everywhere, you know. They must have had fifty or sixty people in this thing. The next day, I read that this American sailor was in there. He was about thirty or forty feet down. All this junk had gone up and come back down. It just so happened; it wedged all this stuff around him, where it didn't mash him. He was still alive and in not too bad shape.

PIEHLER: So, it also sounds like it took a while to dig him out?

TARR: Yeah, and the taxi was going along at the very time this thing hit, right between Selfridges and this pub. It was—it had blown it up into the show window of Selfridges department store and the meter was there—guts all over the meter. The farer was in there at the time, and it killed him instantly and the driver too. But, that was sort of a gruesome ...

PIEHLER: That in some ways is a pretty close call. I mean a block away isn't that far away.

TARR: Well, it was closer than it should have been. (Laughing) Yeah.

PIEHLER: How long were you based in England?

TARR: Oh, I was actually based in Scotland.

PIEHLER: Scotland ...

TARR: I was going back and forth every day.

PIEHLER: And so you were ferrying planes?

TARR: I was running a run!

PIEHLER: A run ...

TARR: Yeah, just an airline run.

PIEHLER: So, very much like an airline?

TARR: Oh, yeah. Exactly.

PIEHLER: And you were flying mainly officers? Were you flying officers?

TARR: And men.

PIEHLER: I mean what was a typical reason they would be flying between Scotland and London?

TARR: Well, they had the biggest ferry base in England over there was in Scotland at the time—Prestwick, Scotland. We went down to—of course, London was the—that was the base where the head guys were at the time. Then later on after the invasion, they moved across to Paris. I went to Paris a short time after that and was based in Paris there for about, oh, six months, I guess. Flew outta there into Germany and all over the place. Eisenhower's headquarters of course were there at Versailles. Patton had just come in and gone across northern France and into Germany. Incidentally, my wife was an Army nurse. She was with Patton's Army.

PIEHLER: Oh we need ...

TARR: She a ...

PIEHLER: ... we need to interview your wife.

TARR: No, you don't want to really interview her. (Laughter) But at any rate, she was right behind the front there for a good long while, and ...

O'DONNELL: Is that how you met?

TARR: Oh, no she was a stewardess with the airline. That's really how we met.

PIEHLER: After the war ...

TARR: After the war.

PIEHLER: But during the war itself she was a ...

TARR: She says, "Coffee, tea, or me." So, what choice did I have? (Laughter)

PIEHLER: I just want to go back to Scotland and London. It sounds like you got to the English. I mean you go to meet civilians quite a bit.

TARR: Oh, yeah. Sure.

PIEHLER: What—would you go to the pub for example?

TARR: What?

PIEHLER: The pub. Did you go to the pub?

TARR: No. I had never been to the pub, while I was over there.

PIEHLER: Really?

TARR: No, I'm not a drinker. But ... I lived right off the base in Prestwick. I stayed—I had a little room with a Scottish lady's home. We lived with her. She served us tea every night when we came in from flying, my co-pilot and I. He was from Mooresville, North Carolina—Glenn Smith. So, later when we moved out to Paris, why of course we missed that. But, she came to visit us after the war.

PIEHLER: Really?

TARR: Yeah. I kept in touch with her every Christmas. We would write Christmas cards, and this, that, and the other. And she came to the states to visit all of her boys.

PIEHLER: Really?

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: What year was that?

TARR: Oh gosh, it was—I don't know maybe five, six, or seven years after the war was over.
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PIEHLER: She took a trip to the United States and ...

TARR: Yeah. My co-pilot lives in Mooresville, North Carolina. She saw him first. Then she came to my place. [She] stayed almost a week with me—with Helen and I. Then [she] went on to the west coast and stayed with one right after another. She was going on to New Zealand. Her daughter married a New Zealander, and she was going on to visit her. She was only about twelve or thirteen when I lived with them—when I stayed with them there. Alice.

PIEHLER: Her daughter?

TARR: Yeah, so many years later when I was a Chevrolet dealer, we won a trip to New Zealand and Australia. So, I called Mrs. Banks and asked here where Alice was. She told me—a little town called Wang Ere, which is up on the north island. I called Alice ...

PIEHLER: You know her last name?

TARR: Alice Banks. I called here and said, "Alice, I'm coming your way pretty soon gal! I want you to come down and have dinner with us in Auckland." Oh, just take a look at that. She did.

She and the whole family came down. She had a bunch of kids. Gosh, she had about six of em'.
(Laughter)

PIEHLER: And the woman in Scotland that you stayed with, what was her name again—just so we make sure that we have it? Do you remember?

TARR: Her name was Banks.

PIEHLER: Banks. Her first name—do you remember Mrs. Banks?

TARR: Wait, wait a minute now ...

PIEHLER: Her daughter was Alice ...

TARR: I don't remember her first name. No.

PIEHLER: Mrs. Banks?

TARR: I don't remember her name.

PIEHLER: But, the daughter's name was Alice.

TARR: Yeah. But at any rate, that was an unusual situation. Then when we got to Paris, we flew everyday of course. From Paris, we flew south primarily to Dijon, France. That's down in the middle. [Then] down to Nice, down to Marseilles on the southern coast, then on down to Rome, then to Naples, and then back. After one day the colonel called me and he says, "Tarr, I've got a special duty for you here." I said, "What's on your mind?" He said, "I want you to take your crew to London and outfit them all in civilian clothes." I said, "Colonel, are you feeling alright?" He said—I won't be as explicit as he did, but he said, "Yeah, I'm feeling alright. Just do as I say. I hear there's a requisition. Now, get good stuff, now don't get no crap. Get good stuff!" So, I said "Okay, I'll get good stuff." So, I took 'em over to Seldridges and got them John B. Stetson hat's, right on down to the shoes. So, we got back, and he had closets built for these things. Already had closets built while we were gone—lock and key. I said, "Now, tell me what we are 'gonna do with these things." He said, "You're gonna fly into Switzerland a few trips. We've got a special deal here." I said, "Well, how we going to get by flying in there with an Army plane?" He says, "That's the Geneva Convention. They pay no attention to the markings on the airplane, but the crew has to be in civilian clothes." So we did. We flew there back and forth several times.

PIEHLER: And this was while the war was still ...

TARR: Oh, yeah. The war was going full field. So, I expected to be incarcerated, when we hit the ground over there, but no one paid any attention to me.

PIEHLER: The fact that you were in civilian clothes?

TARR: Yeah, that's right. The Germans were doing it. Everybody was doing it. The Swiss were making a fortune off everybody.

O'DONNELL: So, did you know who was who? Because, they were all in civilian ...

TARR: What's this now?

O'DONNELL: Did you know who was who?

TARR: No. I didn't know who was who.

PIEHLER: Why were you flying you there? I mean what was—did you know the mission?

TARR: Well, we were carrying sensitive stuff in and out of course.

PIEHLER: People or packages?

TARR: Packages.

PIEHLER: But, you didn't know what they were?

TARR: No, no, no, no. I didn't ask ...

PIEHLER: How long would you stay in Switzerland?

TARR: Oh, we would just go in and out.

PIEHLER: Literally. You didn't stay overnight?

TARR: No. Not at that time, we didn't.

PIEHLER: So, that was sort of a very quick in and quick ...

TARR: That's right.

PIEHLER: So, which airport did you fly into Switzerland?

TARR: Geneva.

PIEHLER: Geneva.

TARR: Yeah, that's right. Then a short time after that, maybe a month or so. He called me in and said, "I've been contacted General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff. He wants me to send him a pilot down there for General Eisenhower." He said, "You ready to go?" I said, "Well, I sure appreciate your confidence in me, but let me think about this." I'm trying to prepare myself for airline work. And I said, "The more I get of this, the better I'll be." So, we flew instruments

everyday. A lot of times we would have two, and three, and four instrument approaches everyday. Stinkin' weather over there—that was the worst winter they'd had in Europe in fifty years. Cold, snow, ice ...

O'DONNELL: Was that '45?

TARR: Yeah. So at any rate, he said, "Yeah." He said, "Okay, think about it for a day or two," and so I did. Of course I would have loved to accept the job. But, I knew that it would not further what to what I wanted to do. So I told him—I said, "If I have a choice, I'm gonna turn it down. I want to go airlines." He said, "Okay, that's fair enough." He had—he was an airline—this man was the director of operations for American Airlines in civilian life—that I was talking too. So, he was going back to the airlines in a short time.

PIEHLER: You remember the colonel's name?

TARR: Colonel Flynn.

PIEHLER: Colonel Flynn.

TARR: Yeah. Jim Flynn. So, he said, "I can appreciate that." So, then maybe three months later or so, he called me in one day. He said, "I've got a very serious situation down in Naples." He said, "I understand that the CO and the Executive Officer down there are smuggling gold in from North Africa." He said, "I want you to go down there as base chief pilot." He said, "I'm gonna replace the chief pilot. So I'm going to cut the orders, making you chief pilot of the base, and I want you to tell me what's going on." So, that's where I went. And, uh, I went into a hot bed there, obviously. The colonel of the base was—he owned a string of bakeries out in Oregon in civilian life. He was fifty-five or sixty years old and needed the money like he needed a hole in the head, but he was just greedy you know. They were involved in this stuff. He had about four or five pilots that he was using for this. I found out who they were, and we got that all straightened out. He canned the base—he canned the colonel and the executive officer, both of them, and got them out of there.

PIEHLER: Now, the allegations were true? There was smuggling of gold?

TARR: Oh, yeah.

PIEHLER: Anything else being smuggled.

TARR: Well, I don't know much about that, but the gold...

PIEHLER: But gold was definitely ...

TARR: ... The gold was it. We proved that.

PIEHLER: Was there a court-martial that came out of it, or were people sort of quiet about it?

TARR: No. He just quiet it down—got rid of them—sent them off to a base, where nobody could hear ‘em.

O’DONNELL: Was he still in the Army?

TARR: What?

O’DONNELL: Was he still in the Army after the investigation?

TARR: No, no. He was long gone. But ...

PIEHLER: And how long did you stay in Naples?

TARR: I stayed in Naples until the war was over. I stayed down there about six months, roughly.

PIEHLER: How did you like living in Italy, in Naples?

TARR: It was—it wasn’t bad at all. I lived in the—I had a real good set up down there. Mussolini had just built this big apartment complex before the war. It was really swanky. It had marble floors, and all this you know, and grand piano in a big room—all that kind of business. And, uh, so, the director operations, myself, and my assistant all lived in this place. It was right across from the officer’s club, so we had a good set up there. Incidentally, one day I picked up the *Stars and Stripes*, and I see that the Andrew Sisters are touring Europe. And they’re—you don’t even know who they are honey. You’re too young. (Laughs) He does ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, I know. Yeah.

TARR: Alright, they were touring the ETO, and were on they’re way home. They were over in North Italy some place, and I called the club and said, “Contact their agent, and I’ll go pick them up and bring them down here.” He said, “Ah. They wouldn’t come by here.” I said, “Well, it’s for sure they won’t come unless you ask them.” So, I conned him into it. He called and “Why sure. We’d be glad to come.” So I went and picked them up—brought them down. Patty was the lead singer, you know, Patty Andrew, Maxine, and Laverne. Laverne was a red head. Maxine was a brunette. Patty was the blonde. Anyways, they could really sing. We brought em’ down and they put on a great show for the base. Then, we had them up in the apartment that night and they put on a great show for us.

PIEHLER: So, this sounds like a lot of fun.

TARR: That was ... a lot of fun!

PIEHLER: Yeah.

TARR: Some—oh I guess maybe a year later when I was with the airlines, I was in London one night flying for American. I flew back and forth to Europe then, and I picked up the paper—there

were two or three crews of us in there. I took the paper and saw the Andrew Sisters were playing at the Palladium, in London. So, I told this guy here, captain of the other crew, I said, "Let's go down to the Palladium and see the Andrews Sisters." He said, "Ah, I checked on that they've been sold out for weeks." I said, "Don't worry. Come on. Let's go!" (Laughter) So, he went down. I've got to get something. I'm about to choke.

PIEHLER: Can I get you another soda?

TARR: Nah, this is good. This will quench a little bit here. So, we went over to the Palladium. We got lined up, people were lined—there were limeys lined up for everything. They were lined up all the way around to the stage door. I said, "Come on Wilkie, we'll get in here." He said, "There ain't no way you gonna get in that." I said, "Come on with me, buddy." We went around to the back there, and I gave this limey a pound note and wrote a little note for him to take in there. I said, "Take this in there and give it to Miss Patty Andrews please." "Yes, sir." So, he took it in. He came back in just a minute and said, "Come right this way sir." (Laughter) So, we go in and back to their dressing rooms, you know. Just like all movie people, you know, they act like old home week—a big hug and a kiss. Old Wilkie liked to drop his teeth, you know. (Laughter) "Buddy, some other night some of us have it, you might as well admit it." (Laughter) Oh, I put it on him. Anyways, Patty says, "Y'all want to see the show." I said, "Well sure, we want to see the show." She turned to her manager and says, "Take these men down and put them in the orchestra." (Laughs) We were practically up on the stage. (Laughs) Wilkie liked to never got over that. He talked about that for years.

PIEHLER: But you obviously left a good impression on the Andrew sisters.

TARR: Well, you know, I mean a hug is a hug, I don't care where it is! (Laughter) So back—let's see. When was it? In '81—1981—the fair was in Knoxville, and I picked up the paper one day and I saw Maxine Andrew was coming to entertain. The red head Laverne, she had died, and Patty was no longer with the group. She was doing here solo deal, all over the country. I called the guy I knew down there that was in the deal, and I said, "Where's Maxine Andrew staying?" He said, "I can't tell you that's against the rules." I said, "Don't tell me that old stuff, buddy." I said, "How long have we known each other?" (Laughter) He said, "Yeah, I know." He—I said, "I know what the rules are. I'm not going to give you away." So he told me. She's staying over at the Hyatt. So, I called over there and her secretary answered, I'd like to speak with Maxine. Now she won't know who I am. It's been years since I've talked to her. And she said, "Well, just wait a minute." Maxine came right on the phone. She said, "I do remember you, too. You flew us over to Naples." I said, "That's right." Anyways, we had a nice little conversation. "Now you're coming to the show, aren't you?" she said. I said, "Sure I'm coming." She said, "Well be sure to come back to the dressing room now after I get through." So, we had a nice visit. That was 1981. Boy, they had little cubbyholes for their dressing rooms down there. Little bitty cubbyholes.

PIEHLER: At the World's Fair site?

TARR: Yeah, little cubbyholes. But at any rate, those were memories.

PIEHLER: Any other famous celebrities that you met flying? Because when you were flying—most people didn't get to fly in World War II. I mean, you spent a lot of time traveling on ships. It seems like you carried a good bit of brass on some of these flights.

TARR: Oh, yeah. We carried a lot of people, you know—New York to London. We carried Walter Reuther over one trip, you know, the union boss. You remember him.

PIEHLER: Oh yeah.

TARR: And his henchmen. Let's see, we had—oh my gosh. We had a good looking heifer, too. What was her name? You know whom I am talking about? Ah, Ava Gardener.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay.

TARR: Ava Gardener. Yes, sir. We had her on board, and I couldn't keep the crew out of the ... (Laughter) I tell you what's the truth, before she ...

O'DONNELL: (unintelligible)

TARR: What?

O'DONNELL: When were you flying these celebrities over too, mainly USOs or were they ...

TARR: Now honey, you're going to have to spit it out a little clearer.

O'DONNELL: Were you flying over ...

TARR: I was flying New York to London.

O'DONNELL: To USOs?

PIEHLER: This was with American Airlines.

O'DONNELL: Oh, American Airlines.

TARR: American Airlines. This was just scheduled airline. Yeah.

PIEHLER: This tape is almost ready to run out ...

-----END OF TAPE ONE SIDE TWO-----

PIEHLER: This continues an interview with Lonas Tarr on March 7, 2003, at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with Kurt Piehler and ...

O'DONNELL: Katie O'Donnell.

PIEHLER: ... One thing you had written in your pre-interview survey is that you, during the war, had ferried troops to the Battle of the Bulge.

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: Could you talk a little bit about that?

TARR: Okay, the Battle of the Bulge started April—on December 16th

PIEHLER: In 1944.

TARR: In 1944—December 16th. This was the last convulsion that Hitler had. He threw everything that he had left in the way of armament and men into this thing. The purpose was to go to the sea on the north—Antwerp, Belgium—and to the south to capture headquarters at Versailles. And ... he really thought he could do it. After the first few hours, we—our people began to think he could do it, because he made tremendous strides for the first few hours. It was a surprise to us—completely surprised! We were not—this was—here again now, this was the coldest winter we had in 50 years. The troops were not prepared for it. That was our fault. See, we didn't have sufficient clothing up there for them. We didn't have sufficient places for them to sleep or stay. They were sitting in foxholes during this stuff, and it was just hell on earth, really. And getting shot at, at the same time—now that's a combination that's not pleasant, you know. Well, they had so much resistance that they didn't expect. At Bastogne, they just passed—they bypassed it—went on several miles by it on both sides. Well, this presented such a difficult thing to the allies that they called all the high command in from the states. They called Marshall in, who was head of everything—General Marshall. Spatz—Spaatz [from the] Air Force. They had the high man in the Marines, the Navy admiral for that part of the war. Everybody was there—was called into Eisenhower's headquarters—plus Patton over there. I happened to be down at the airport when Patton came in. He jumped out of his DC-3 and had that pearl handle pistol on his side—looked like Buck Jones. (Laughs)

O'DONNELL: So you actually saw him, Patton?

PIEHLER: You ...

O'DONNELL: Go ahead...

PIEHLER: So you've actually seen the pearl handle?

TARR: Oh, yeah. Yeah, he was very free with his gun. What did you ask me?

O'DONNELL: You actually saw Patton?

TARR: Oh sure, and all these other guys. You never saw much brass in your life at one place, you know.

O'DONNELL: Did he always have his helmet on? Was it with him ...

TARR: Oh, yeah. He always had his little helmet on. And ... so, they all met out at Versailles and the purpose of this was, of course, to plan where to move if they had to leave quickly—where to move headquarters. So this was serious—real serious. So—and Patton played a big part in this. He drove his army—they were down about forty miles south in—on the east side of France. He drove them in two days, on foot, fifty miles to the German front and took the pressure off him. It was a great, great feat. And, we lost—in the Battle of the Bulge—we lost something like 33,000 men. I think I have something here on that. (Looks through his bag) But ... after just a few days there—you see, the Germans picked this perfectly because they wanted to take it when the Air Force couldn't fly. I mean the stuff was down in the trees. Clouds were down in the trees, and the Air Force couldn't fly—particularly, I'm talking about the gunnery Air Force. Now, we flew everyday.

PIEHLER: Even in the midst of this?

TARR: We flew all the time, because we were instrument trained and so forth. But, you can't drop bombs on estimates, you know. So, it was—I believe on the 23rd or 22nd it began to lift, and on the 23rd the sky was absolutely black with airplanes—absolutely black with airplanes. Now, they had sent ... several ships over from the states with the troops—came into Marseilles. Two days before Christmas, after this had lifted, we flew all day long—from Marseilles to the front.

PIEHLER: Where would you fly too?

TARR: The front?

PIEHLER: Yeah.

TARR: Oh, we just had a little—they had a bulldozer that ...

PIEHLER: These were very hastily built fields?

TARR: ... scraped and put some field mats down, right behind the front.

PIEHLER: So, you literally, drove right to the front.

TARR: Oh, sure.

PIEHLER: Right to the front.

TARR: Yeah. So, we took the kids right in. Of course, they were scared to death. You can imagine.

PIEHLER: You could tell they were scared?

TARR: Oh heavens, yes. They we knew were eighteen, nineteen year old kids, and they knew they were getting into.

PIEHLER: They had just flown across the Atlantic to Marseilles. I mean, they had really been rushed.

TARR: Oh, yeah, sure. Yeah.

PIEHLER: Most troops spent the long journey in troop ships. I mean this ...

TARR: Well, they had come over in troop ships, but I mean...

PIEHLER: But, now they were in Marseilles.

TARR: I mean we just picked them up and took them straight to the front. And ... so, in just a short period of time, of course, the heavy use of the Air Force—the gunnery, the bombs, and all—turned the tide and pushed the Germans back. But, they came so close to making it succeed. It was scary.

O'DONNELL: And now ...

PIEHLER: So—oh, go ahead ...

O'DONNELL: Now, would you fly mainly American prisoners, because I know you mentioned or ...

TARR: You talk so softly I can hardly hear you.

O'DONNELL: Would you fly mainly Americans prisoners over there, or would you fly any prisoners of war back?

TARR: No, we didn't fly any prisoners at all.

PIEHLER: When the Bulge was happening—those initial days of the Germans attack, what kind of rumors were circulating? You obviously knew something was very important, because all the brass was coming in. But were there any rumors sort of circulating ... that later really had no foundation?

TARR: Well, we knew what was happening.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

TARR: We didn't have to hear any rumors. I mean, they were driving through our lines.

PIEHLER: So, that was pretty clear to you?

TARR: That was clear, yeah. And we knew where they were heading—they were heading for the sea to cut off ... our armies, you see. If that had taken place—why it would have been a different story.

PIEHLER: You talked a little bit about living in England—a little about living in Naples. What about when you were based in France? What was that like?

TARR: Well, we lived in an old—some kind of old house about like that thing right there—a brick château that probably dated back, maybe a hundred years. (Points to the building out the window) It had no heat. That was one winter I'll never forget. I slept in my heavy flying suit—I'm talking about hood, pants, boots, fur-lined boots—for one solid month during the Battle of the Bulge.

O'DONNELL: It was very constrictive, right?

TARR: What?

O'DONNELL: It was a lot of constriction of movement with all the ...

TARR: Yeah. Well, I'm in the bed. I didn't worry about being constricted in moving. (Laughs)

O'DONNELL: Well, during that time when it was so cold, you put everything on for warmth?

TARR: Yes, yes. I was trying to stay warm, and we didn't take a bath for a solid month—believe it or not. Now, we weren't the most popular people around, I'll guarantee you that. (Laughter) But, we were all in the same boat, so it didn't make much difference. The only time we ever got warm was in the airplane, because it was nice and warm in the airplane.

PIEHLER: That was the warmest place?

TARR: Oh, sure. Because it had—you just bled the heater off the manifold, then.

O'DONNELL: So you're sure everyone inside would get it ...

TARR: Yeah, but on the ground—terrible. Anyway, to this day I do not like cold weather. (Laughter) We had about—oh, there was twenty to twenty-five inches of snow on the ground and extremely cold. Now, we didn't drive cold, because—the guys on the front had the same conditions and they were getting shot at—sleeping in foxholes. Now, they caught hell, there's no two ways about it. I admire them. I tell you what, I admire them. We had a guy from my hometown that was in that out there—101st Airborne. They were in that zone when the Germans hit.

PIEHLER: Did you know he was there, or did you learn that after the war?

TARR: I knew—I learned he was there, but not where I could get a hold of him. After the war, we talked about it a lot.

PIEHLER: Sounds like he told you some stories.

TARR: Well, he you know—he just related to what was there.

PIEHLER: Is he still alive?

TARR: No, he's dead.

PIEHLER: Oh. Well, before we start to talk about what happened after the war, is there anything else about the experiences during the war with the Air Force that we forgot to ask you about?

TARR: I don't think so—not of any consequence.

PIEHLER: How long did you stay after the war? After VE—VJ day?

TARR: Well, I was officially discharged in ... February of '46.

PIEHLER: '46?

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And your last tour, before you came home, you were based in Naples?

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And so you left from Naples to come home?

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: What was your first job? Was it with American Airlines?

TARR: [My] first job was. Yes.

PIEHLER: And you had mentioned that you had thought of being a doctor ...

TARR: Yeah. Well ... after four years of this, you can't get back to studying again. I couldn't. I wasn't in any condition to go back to studying books again.

PIEHLER: Really?

TARR: No.

PIEHLER: Even with the G.I. bill which would have paid for ...

TARR: No, but, mentally you're not ready for it.

PIEHLER: How did you get your job with American Airlines?

TARR: Well, the colonel that sent me down to Naples as chief pilot—he was the director of operations for American Airlines.

PIEHLER: So, Colonel Flynn?

TARR: Colonel Flynn. He told me—he said, “Tarr, if you ever want to fly for my airline, just let me know.” So, that’s all there was to it. I laid around the house for a while, maybe a month or two and got all that out of my system, you know. I shot all the pool I wanted to shoot and said hello to the girls for a few days—all that kind of stuff. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: So, it sounds like you did use some of the fifty-two and twenty clubs? (Laughter)

TARR: But then, I wanted to get back in it, and I just called him up. He said, “When can you be here?” I said, “In a couple days.” He said, “C’mon.” So, that’s about all there was to it.

PIEHLER: Then, it sounds like you did the Atlantic run for American Airlines.

TARR: Yeah. American Airlines—American Overseas.

PIEHLER: Overseas?

TARR: Yeah, oh yeah. That was New York to London to Paris to Amsterdam to Munich ...

PIEHLER: How long did you remain with American Overseas?

TARR: I was with them for six years. Yeah.

PIEHLER: So, from 1946 to 195—uh?

TARR: ’52. Yeah.

PIEHLER: ’52.

TARR: And during that period of time, the service, of course, had become—brawl with the Russians again—in Berlin—to the point where Berlin blocked ‘em out. [They said,] “You can’t come in here anymore. It’s ours. Get lost.” Well you know, we don’t cotton to that too well in America. That’s the same thing we’re not doing now, you know. So ... we decided we would feed those people and keep them warm all winter. Berlin—several million people, by air. That’s impossible. Absolutely impossible, but we did it. It’s a—everything was flown from Frankfurt to Berlin, Frankfurt to Berlin. The air was black with airplanes every day. Every three to five minutes an airplane landed up there in Frankfurt. The pattern was so precise that if you missed your approach going into Berlin, you had to go all the way back to Frankfurt. You could not get

back in the pattern, because you'd screw the whole thing up. It was a very difficult approach to up there too, because it was right down between the buildings. It was Tempelhof Airdrome.

PIEHLER: How many flights did you make to Berlin?

TARR: Oh, I don't know. We made several. Some of us flew for a long time. I made several flights in there. But I'm glad I got to do this, because I never would have known what they went through unless I had.

PIEHLER: Were you flying in passengers?

TARR: Oh, yeah.

PIEHLER: Or were you flying ...

TARR: Passengers.

PIEHLER: Not food or ...

TARR: Oh, you're talking about—we were flying strictly food and coal.

PIEHLER: And part of American—the Airlift?

TARR: Airlift. Strictly all that was.

PIEHLER: That was when you were with American Overseas?

TARR: Yeah it was all American Overseas—all the overseas flying.

PIEHLER: And so you were a part of the Berlin Airlift. I think people think it was just military that did the airlift.

TARR: No, no. Well primarily, but ...

PIEHLER: But...

TARR: ... but they couldn't handle it by themselves, so they chartered a lot of airline personnel, you see.

PIEHLER: You mentioned it was very precise to fly in patterns, and if you missed run ...

TARR: If you missed you let down ...

PIEHLER: Did you miss you let down ever?

TARR: No, no.

PIEHLER: You were always able to land?

TARR: Yeah. We were—having spent and an awful lot of time in Europe with their facilities, we got pretty sharp on that kind of thing. We had several—we had sometimes five let downs a day, literally. So, it just got to be second nature with us, but it could easily happen.

PIEHLER: What were your impressions of Europe while you were flying for American Airlines from 1946 to '52?

TARR: In what respect?

PIEHLER: Well, I mean—what did it look like, because I've been told by a lot of people that a lot of the cities didn't look like they now look ...

TARR: Well of course, it's like I told you before. I have tremendous amount of respect for the English. They suffered an untold amount of damage to their island, to London, to all the big cities—just an absolutely untold amount. Now, of course over on the other side, the big cities in Europe—everybody but Paris—Paris, France didn't get it, you know. They just—when the Germans got close, they just laid down and said, "Come on, take it." So ... but, Berlin caught it real heavy—Rome, Munich—bad news. I had a chance to go—to fly a group of inspection personnel—high ranking inspection personnel—over to Hitler's home, immediately after he surrendered ...

PIEHLER: Berchtesgaden.

TARR: ... Berchtesgaden, which was interesting—very interesting. Incidentally, it sustained a lot of damage, but the damage occurred after the war was over. Did you know that?

PIEHLER: I've heard that. I ...

TARR: The British bombed it after the war was over, after it had been declared. (Laughter) They got a lick or two in, you know. They just about demolished his home there. I've got a lot of pictures of it.

PIEHLER: You actually—in flying, you actually got to see Berchtesgaden.

TARR: Oh yeah, yeah. We were there and went up on the mountain behind Berchtesgaden, where his Eagle's Nest is, you know, and so forth. That's 8000 feet up. Another interesting thing we got in on was—I flew a bunch of howitzers down to Crete, immediately after the German's surrendered. They had about 10,000 Germans on the island, and they—when they surrendered—when the war was over and they surrendered, the British sent, I think it was 15 officers—men in to take the surrender of 10,000 Germans. I flew them in there in a B-17 and landed there on the island. A lot of shrapnel was flying over the island up there. We bust a tire going in—in the B-17. They were still riding around in their command cars and had ...

PIEHLER: Their weapons?

TARR: Weapons, yeah. So, what? I mean, you couldn't do nothing about it. (Laughter) That was their word. They had surrendered, but you couldn't do anything else. Later on, of course everything worked out. But ... that was an odd feeling. I'll tell you that.

PIEHLER: It strikes me—was that was really the first time you had really gotten that close to the enemy. They had just surrendered—the Germans.

TARR: Well, of course I was close to them in Germany. I had been flying in and out of Germany.

PIEHLER: When it was—the war was still going on?

TARR: Yeah—into Munich, Frankfurt and so forth.

PIEHLER: So soon after the certain cities had fallen, you would fly in?

TARR: Sir?

PIEHLER: Soon after the enemy ...

TARR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: Which must have been a very strange experience to fly into ...

TARR: Well, it was a little bit, yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: Why did you—changing to post-war—why had you decided to leave flying—American Overseas?

TARR: Why did I decide to leave?

PIEHLER: Yes.

TARR: Well ...

PIEHLER: Because it sounds like you liked flying quite a bit.

TARR: Oh, very much. Yeah. I never dreamed of leaving, truthfully. I happened to be home on vacation when my dad died suddenly. While I was there, I had to take a leave of absence about two or three months to get his stuff settled up. This place that I'm in now, this Chevrolet place, came open at that time while I was there. My friends encouraged me to get into it. I was determined to get out of New York, because that's where I had to live. I was not going to raise my kids in New York City. No way. I was going to bid out of there somewhere. But this seemed to present the opportunity that I wanted. That's the reason I'm where I am.

PIEHLER: So it was ...

TARR: I left a good job, making big money, and doing nothing half the time, except playing golf to go—to work fifty hours a week. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: And some of it was that the fact that you were based in New York. That was really sort of the push.

TARR: Yep.

PIEHLER: Where did you—had you met your wife?

TARR: In New York.

PIEHLER: In New York, and she was a registered ...

TARR: Nurse.

PIEHLER: How'd you meet? How'd you meet your wife?

TARR: Well ...

PIEHLER: You mentioned ...

TARR: Odd situations really. This guy I was in the Air Force with, he went with American at the same time I did. We took a room together in this Irish lady's house just off LaGuardia Airport. You could almost throw a rock and hit it. We'd been out in Victoria having a little fun one night and slept pretty late. I got up and looked out the window and these two cabs pulled up in front of the house. Well I was standing there looking, these five women got out. I said, "Beasley, get up right quick, buddy." I said, "We've hit the jackpot." (Laughter) I said, "These five quails just landed on the curb out here." (Changing his voice to sound like Beasley) "There ain't no quails in New York." I said, "These are San Quentin quails buddy." (Laughter) So, one of them was my wife. They went right next door—a room in the apartment. That's where it all started. Yep.

PIEHLER: And it appears where were you—because you get once you got married in December of 1947 in New York. Where did you live? Where did you and your wife live, when you first got married?

TARR: We went out on the island.

PIEHLER: Long Island?

TARR: Yeah, yeah, bought a little house there on the island.

O'DONNELL: What part?

TARR: You know where Levittown is?

PIEHLER: Did you live in one of the original Levitt houses?

TARR: Yeah—you know where it is?

PIEHLER: Oh, yeah. My wife is actually from Long Island.

TARR: Long Island, you know we bought one of those original Levitt houses. He built 17,000 of them in two years or three years. Yeah.

PIEHLER: You'd mentioned, you really love flying and continued to fly. A dealership was a lot of hours. What was it like to run—I mean I've never run a dealership, so what is it like to run a dealership?

TARR: A lot of hard work, my friend. It's a small dealership, so we don't have people to do everything like the big ones do. I'm the chief cook, bottle washer, and everything else.

PIEHLER: And ...

TARR: Our son's in the business with me.

PIEHLER: You mentioned in your pre-interview survey that you're the oldest continuing Chevrolet dealer in the state.

TARR: Yes we are.

PIEHLER: I guess—do you have any regrets? Or what do you like about being a dealership? I mean, you've done this for a long time ...

TARR: Oh I just like people. I like people, and I like machinery.

PIEHLER: The machinery part you liked a lot.

TARR: Oh, yeah I liked the machinery, and I liked people. I like the little area we live in and the schools—good schools.

PIEHLER: Because you had sort of seen the world, quite literally, as a pilot.

TARR: Yeah, we've seen it several times, really. We've won about 23 Chevrolet trips.

PIEHLER: Okay. So you ...

TARR: And gotten all over the world again—a couple of times.

PIEHLER: So you've liked to travel quiet a bit. That bug I think hasn't left you.

TARR: Well, of course, we win 'em. You're not going to sit there if you won them. You're gonna go. (Laughter) In fact, we just got back, well, about two months ago. They gave me a trip to Hawaii for my 50th ...

PIEHLER: 50th year as a ...

TARR: Yeah, yeah. We were in Maui for a week.

PIEHLER: What's it like—I guess one of the things that struck me is the relationship between the dealer and the automobile company. How has this been—being as part of sort of the umbrella of GM, has that been good a relationship?

TARR: We've had a good relationship. Yeah. Yes, sir, it was a good relationship.

PIEHLER: You're children, none of them served in the military.

TARR: No, hadn't been—they came at the time where there hadn't been any problems, you know. My son's a doctor here in Knoxville.

PIEHLER: So, he continued the family medical ...

TARR: My second son.

PIEHLER: Second son?

TAR: Yeah, he's out on Middlebrook Pike.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm. And you have a daughter, who is an ...

TARR: You know where Dr. Akers' place is out there?

PIEHLER: No.

TARR: Right across from the post office, out Middlebrook, down on Weisgarber Road.

PIEHLER: Oh yes, I know where that is.

TARR: He's down about 200-300 yards on the right. There's a clinic there—has about seven doctors in it. Stop in and see him sometime. He'd like to talk to you.

PIEHLER: And your one daughter, who is an interior decorator?

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And you have one son—did all your children go to Carson-Newman?

TARR: Let's see. Yeah, all of them went to Carson-Newman.

PIEHLER: And one son, what did he do?

TARR: Ah, Bill?

PIEHLER: Yeah, William, Bill, or ...

TARR: He's with me in the business.

PIEHLER: He's in the business. So he...

O'DONNELL: Do you like having him help out?

TARR: Yeah, he helps out. Whatever I need to have done, he does.

PIEHLER: How many people do you have working at the dealership?

TARR: Ah, about twenty-three, four, or five, somewhere along in there.

PIEHLER: Which is now a smaller dealership.

TARR: Oh, yeah sure.

PIEHLER: How much does a big—say, some of the dealerships on the Motor Mile—how much would they have?

TARR: Oh I don't know. Forty or fifty people or more, maybe.

O'DONNELL: How do you ...

PIHELER: Oh, go ahead.

O'DONNELL: How do you feel now that you're in the car dealership? Do you feel like you miss aviation, or is it something else you like to do? Do you regret leaving it, now?

TARR: Honey, I don't have any choice. Once you commit everything you own to a dealership, you've got to stay with it and work day and night—whether you like it or whether you don't like it. (Laughter)

PIHELER: One thing I meant to ask about, when you bought your first house, did you use your G.I. bill or loan?

TARR: Yeah, I can remember it right now what the payment was on my house including taxes and everything in Levittown.

PIEHLER: What was it?

TARR: \$55.

PIEHLER: A month?

TARR: Yeah, that includes my mortgage, my taxes, and everything—fifty-five bucks a month. I lived at 133 Short Lane.

PIEHLER: I guess one thing—you've lived in Jefferson City really, with some breaks, your entire life. What sort of—do you miss about the Jefferson City that you grew up in? What do you miss and what do you think has changed for the better?

TARR: Well, you know, things—everything changes from time to time. The town is, uh, sure better now than it used to be in most areas. It was an awful friendly little town growing up, and it's still a friendly little town. But ... passage of time, of course—things change a little bit, but it's still a real nice place to live.

O'DONNELL: You said the place has gotten either less—I guess it would be less simpler now?

TARR: What was that now?

O'DONNELL: You think the place has gotten less simpler, now than it was?

TARR: No, it's just as friendly as it always was.

PIEHLER: And it sounds like you mentioned your father having a sort of having this multi-generation connection. Was it a help when you took over the dealership that your father had been a family doctor for so many generations? How many of your customers would you get that way?

TARR: Oh, I don't know. I suspect in some way it was, but not noticeably. Probably a little bit, but not to any great degree.

PIEHLER: Not the way I ...

TARR: Not to any great degree.

O'DONNELL: Do you still keep in touch with any of the families that your father helped?

TARR: I'm sorry?

O'DONNELL: Do you still keep in touch with any of the families that your father helped?

TARR: Oh sure, yeah.

O'DONNELL: Do you remember anyone?

TARR: Clinton—Mildred Ives, she's from Clinton.

PIEHLER: Did you stay in touch with anyone from the service, particularly after you left American Airlines? Because it sounds like the people you flew with American Airlines—these were people you knew from the military. Is that fair ...

TARR: Some of that's true, yes.

PIEHLER: Did a lot of veterans fly right after the war?

TARR: Yeah.

PIEHLER: But have you stayed in touch since the early 50's with people you served with?

TARR: Once in a great while, I'll see somebody that comes through that will stop when they see the name on the sign and stop. Like this boy that roomed with me, when I told the gals drove up in the front of the house, he stopped here about two years ago.

PIEHLER: He was driving through and saw the ...

TARR: Yeah, he was driving through, saw my name, and stopped, and we had a big time. (Laughter) Beasley. His name was Terry Beasley.

PIEHLER: So the sign was just the attraction they needed?

TARR: Yeah he said, "I know there was nobody in the world with that name besides you." (Laughter)

PIEHLER: Was there anything we've forgotten to ask you? Or anything you'd like to tell us about?

TARR: I think you've covered it pretty well.

PIEHLER: Well, we really appreciate you coming in.

TARR: Why, you are so welcome.

PIEHLER: We are really sorry you had to take two, you know ... and use your car.

TARR: Oh well, no problem.

PIEHLER: But ... I'll have Katie walk you to the garage, so you have no problems getting there.

TARR: That's good. That's good. Now, since I brought this ... (Pulls out the airline map)

PIEHLER: Yeah, before we turn off the tape, I'm curious ...

TARR: The airline map. I'll show it to you. It might be interesting to you.

PIEHLER: This is the map you ...

O'DONNELL: Is that the flight plan?

PIEHLER: This is ...

TARR: Hold that end right here.

O'DONNELL: A map of the original flight plan?

TARR: Now, this is a map of the North Atlantic. (Unfolds map) This is from New York, right here. Hold that, honey. That's New York to London, right here. That's Shannon, Ireland. This is Paris, right here. Now, in any airline map like this, you have—when you make your flight plan, you have two important times that you must be aware of. One is the equitime point—EQT—and the other is the PNR, which is point of no return. In other words at the equitime point you can either go back or forward in the same amount of time. If the weather shuts down in New York or back here, you can judge accordingly. And the PNR, the point of no return, beyond that point you can't go back. So you program this out according to the winds, before you ever leave, you see. Okay. Now let me get this up here where I see it a little easier. My eyes aren't as sharp as they used to be. Okay, here's the EQT right here—equitime point. 0155—that's Greenwich time. (Points) This point right here—you can go back or forward, the same time. Now the—here's your PNR right here. (Points) Beyond this point, you can't go back. You've got to go forward regardless of what the weather is. You don't have the fuel to go back. Okay. So that's the way it's programmed out. That's Newfoundland right here, Gander, Newfoundland. (Points at map) Sometimes we had to go up to Goose Bay, Labrador, which is right up here. And, of course, this is New York, right here.

PIEHLER: What's striking, I think—you would go from New York to—what would be next stop after New York, going across the Atlantic in your day?

TARR: Well it just depends on whether you're going direct or whether you're ...

PIEHLER: Could you do a direct flight?

TARR: Sure you could.

PIEHLER: You had enough ... This was the DC-3?

TARR: No, no, no. This was four engines stuff.

PIEHLER: Okay.

TARR: DC-4, a Constellation aircraft, a DC-4, or a DC-6. DC-3 couldn't go non-stop.

PIEHLER: You could go—how long was a flight?

TARR: Well, a good flight at that time—non-stop New York to London—was ten hours.

PIEHLER: That's a long flight.

TARR: Ten hours. Once in a while it'd be eleven, but ten was a good flight. In the service, when we ferried aircraft across, we'd would go by DC-3. We'd go up to Gander or Goose Bay, up to Greenland, right here. Greenland up to Iceland, right here, and then down to Shannon, Ireland. (Folding up map) Any other questions? I'd be glad to try to answer them.

O'DONNELL: How many hours do you think you've logged over the years?

TARR: 10,000 plus.

O'DONNELL: Did you have anything happen when you pulled up with weather or any other close calls?

TARR: Oh you always, of course, had bad weather from time to time. That's just a part of being in the air.

PIEHLER: I guess the one—my late father-in-law used to work for American Airlines in the computers. He was one of the people who set up the computer operations. Flying was glamorous in your day. I mean, when you were a pilot. I mean it's still—there's a glamour on pilots and so forth. But I get a sense that to be a pilot or even to fly was very glamorous thing. People wore ties. This was a time when people wore ties to the airport, and jackets.

O'DONNELL: Would little kids even ask for pilot's autographs? Did that ever happen to you?

TARR: Well, suppose so.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

TARR: I need to get this thing folded. (Folding up map) I think right down here would be the best place.

PIEHLER: Wherever you think.

TARR: On the floor

PIEHLER: There's one thing you forgot to mention ...

TARR: There's one thing I forgot to mention. When I was with American, the colonel called me in one day—well, he was the director of operations of American Airlines. The man I call colonel, he was in the Air Force, you know. He said, "Tarr, I've got another assignment for you." I said, "Colonel, what you up to now?" He said, "Air India has contacted us and wants us to send a pilot over there to train some of their people on Constellation aircraft." And he said, "You've been in that area a lot, and you know what the story is." He said, "I want you to go." I said, "Colonel, I just got married." I said, "That woman ain't going to put up with that." I said, "She's pregnant, and I believe it's mine." (Laughter) So I said, "I'm gonna have to stick around here." He said, "Well, now talk to her a little bit see how ..." Make a long story short—I end up going to Cairo, and living there for six months during 1948. I'd been with the airline two and a half years. And ... we were flying from Bombay to Cairo to Geneva, Switzerland, to London. That was the route, and these guys had no four-engine training at all. They had flight training. They had been flying DC-3's, but they didn't have the four-engine training. So I finally—we all talked about it, and we figured that would build us a house for what I'd make over there. So, we decided we go ahead with it. My dad took care of my wife. She went down to live with him and my mother. So at least she was in good care. So, the baby was born while I was over there. I kid her ... around. I say I was over there for sixteen months, but he was a long-term baby you understand. (Laughter) He's a pretty good boy.

PIEHLER: What was that like? I mean, you were living in Cairo and you were, once again, training people.

TARR: Yeah I was living in Cairo, and we were training these guys. This was the toughest job I ever had.

PIEHLER: What made it so tough?

TARR: The same thing that's making it tough now. They had two or three different religions on one crew, and they all hated each others guts. Might have, uh, three Hindus, three Muslims, a Buddhist or two, and possibly a Christian. And they wouldn't work together, believe it or not, on the airplane. So this was bad news. I had to have to chats with them several times and I said, "Now listen. Either you're gonna cut this crap out or I'm outta here. I ain't going to fool with it. I'm going to call up your director of operations in here and if you don't want that to happen, you better change your ways." So it got better for a while, and then it'd get right back the same way. I finally had to call him in from Bombay. He had a—I told him what the situation was. I said they either cut it out or I'm going home. So he had a heart to heart with them, and it got a lot better for a while. So my tour of duty was up after six months, they wanted me to stay another year and give me a bunch more money. So I told them, "Not a thing shaking. I've got a kid born since I've been gone, that I haven't seen." So forth—he goes, "How many of our guys are ready to check out?" I said ...

PIEHLER: None of them had.

TARR: ... "Zero." I said, "There's some of them ready to go mechanically, but mentally." I said, "You're going to have to get rid of this old Islamic, Buddhist stuff." So, I'd been home

about two months. About January or February of '49, I picked up the paper one day and big headline said, "Air India crashes into Mont Blanc kills everybody on board." He turned them loose.

PIEHLER: Even though you had said they're not ready?

TARR: Yeah, yes sir. That's so deep within their culture, it's beyond our thinking. But it's so deep within their culture its unreal—unreal. We had important people on board. Nehru, he was on board every once and a while—the Prime Minister. The guy that wore the long jacket all the time.

PIEHLER: Oh yeah.

TARR: We had him on all the time. Madame Pandit, she was the first Indian delegate to India to the UN. She was Gandhi's sister.

PIEHLER: So you were flying important people?

TARR: Yeah, flying whoever they had, you know. But, I didn't figure they were anymore important than I was. I wanted to get there too. (Laughter) But so it was interesting. It was interesting.

PIEHLER: What was Cairo like to live in as a city?

TARR: Cairo was a big city, lots of things going on there. I lived out of the Heliopolis Country Club which is out of the teeming part of the city. It was about seven, eight miles from the airport. It was the best place to live really, so it was too bad of a ...

PIEHLER: Well, that's a great story, and if you have more stories we can really keep going ...

TARR: Nah, that's enough.

PIEHLER: I'm glad you remembered that.

TARR: That's—but they were very kind to me, the powers that be.

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE-----

PIEHLER: You were taken care of.

O'DONNELL: He looked out for you?

PIEHLER: He gave you some very interesting assignments, both in the Army—well in the air force, and then in the American Overseas.

TARR: Yeah, well he had to have somebody he believed in you know, to do what he wanted to have done.

PIEHLER: By the way, did you ever get to meet Eisenhower? You almost became his personal pilot.

TARR: No, I didn't get to meet the man.

PIEHLER: Never.

TARR: I would have loved to—I would have loved to ... Actually, I wouldn't have been his pilot for a very long while. Well I made the right decision because otherwise, I would have never gone to the airlines. Of course, I would have flown him around a while he was president. (Laughs) But at any rate ...

O'DONNELL: Did you ever meet any other famous generals? Like Patton?

TARR: Oh, we had people on board all the time with a lot of rank. They just as a general course, yeah. But those are long days ago, you know. Long days—hard to believe it's been that long, really. Hard to believe it's been sixty five years ago.

PIEHLER: Now, we're having the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II in another two years. (Indicating a document) Please read it. If you'd like to read it, please do.

TARR: I think this reflected the mood of the time quiet a bit and really told quite a bit about the men that went to war. I say, "Now let's reflect for a few moments to get the mood of the time." It was a very tense time. Everyone knew the U.S. was going into the actual fighting. The U.S. was just emerging from the worst depression the country had ever known. Ten years of privation. Banks had failed by the thousands. Red lies were prevalent. School teachers were paid in script—\$65 a month—not money but script. Principals made \$90. Coaches got a \$10 supplement. First good job I had was in 1936. I told you about that. I see ... Discipline did not have to be taught in school. It had already been taught at home. That's our problem right now—it isn't taught at home. 1939—Germany invaded Poland. Along with Mussolini took all of central Europe. 1940—Germans turned west and conquered Belgium, Holland, and France. British evacuated troops at Dunkirk, June '40, with terrible loss of life and total loss of equipment. Rommel's *Panzer* units swept everything to Cherbourg in just a few weeks. The greatest blunder that the Germans made was not invading England and also trying to invade Russia and capture them. June 21, '41, Germany invaded Russia. August 25th again—900 day siege of Leningrad—900 days. Never did capture it. Germans and Russians each lost approximately about a thousand—a million men in 900 days. That's almost incomprehensible to us now. But, we were in Leningrad back a few years ago, and they still are proud of the fact that the Germans didn't capture the place. 900 days—that's almost three years.

PIEHLER: Yeah, no, it's very long.

TARR: Two and a half years.

PIEHLER: When did you go to Leningrad? When it was still the Soviet Union or when it was the Russian Republic?

TARR: No, no we went to Leningrad back—in '86, I believe.

PIEHLER: Oh, it's—it was still the Soviet Union.

TARR: '86. But I'll get outta here and let y'all get back to your business.

PIEHLER: Well, thank you again. We really ...

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