Williams: This is the fourth interview with Senator John Glenn, which is occurring on December 12, 1996, in the Senator’s home in Potomac, Maryland, and this is Brien Williams.

We left off last time talking about World War II, but let’s step back a little bit and just review a few things that we may not have talked about in terms of New Concord. Is there a particular place you want to start, from your jottings there?

Sen. Glenn: No, let me go back. Did we cover high school and athletics and all that? I think we covered that pretty well. I think on into college, and maybe we need to cover that just a little bit more.

At Muskingum [College], I lived at home, as Annie [Glenn] did also, when we were both going to Muskingum. I had an old car my dad had given me
at that time; we called it “the cruiser.” It was a convertible that had been permanently converted, and I think maybe I talked about that some before. So I usually drove back and forth up to college in that car, walked sometimes, because it wasn’t that far.

But I started out in college not knowing quite what I wanted to major in. I had an interest in medicine, and so I was majoring in chemistry before I dropped out after World War II started. I don’t think I would have made a very good chemist. Did I talk before about Julian White? Remember that name? I think one of the reasons I became interested in chemistry to begin with, there was a woman who roomed at our home, named Martha Addy [phonetic], and she was a telephone operator in town. One of the fellows that was going to college dated her, and used to be around our house, and his name was Julian White, and I liked him very much. He was a great guy. On Saturdays when he would be doing some lab work up at the college, why, he would take me along. I guess maybe I was nine or ten years of age at the time. He’d take me along to the lab up at college, and while he was doing some sort of an experiment, I’d set up some glass tubes and I would bend the glass tubes in a Bunsen burner, and set up my own little chemistry operation there, while he was doing other things. I loved that. He was majoring in chemistry and wanted to be a chemist. When people would ask a kid, like I was at the time, what they wanted to be when they grew up, which was a natural question for a lot of people to ask kids, I got in the habit of saying I wanted to be a chemist like Julian White, and I guess I said it enough times I began to believe it myself.
Then later on, I’d always had a sort of an interest in medicine, and even as a kid I remember that, and so chemistry was a natural lead-in to that. I wasn’t that good in chemistry, although I loved the quantitative and qualitative analysis end of chemistry. That’s where you do the tubes and the mechanisms of it, and the Bunsen burner and things like that. But to be a good chemist, you had to be good in organic chemistry, and that was the step that I was just going into.

One of my problems at that time was that I had not had enough math to really be good in organic chemistry, and organic chemistry begins to get into formulas. It requires a little more math than I had had at that time. What I should have done is taken more math before I took the organic chemistry, but I didn’t do that. So I wasn’t doing all that red-hot in it, but I was passing. I wasn’t failing grades or anything, but I wasn’t doing as well as I would like to have done at that time.

So, anyway, just as a general comment, I think too many young people get accustomed to saying they want to do something, such and such, when they grow up, based on some friendship they had with someone else, whether their own talents or training should lead them into that area or not. And so, later on, what I always tried to encourage my own kids was to get as many different experiences as they could, and not settle on what they wanted to be too early, just take a wide variety of things in school, and they’ll find something that interests them in particular, and that their own talents and capabilities are suited to.

Muskingum life was usual college life. I was in my freshman year. I had played basketball in high school, loved basketball, also played football, and it was
fun. I wasn’t as good at football as I was at basketball. So, when I went to college, I tried out for the freshmen basketball team and made it, and I was on the squad that first year, but I wasn’t good enough or fast enough to really be a good college basketball player. In my sophomore year, I didn’t really go out, didn’t make the squad then. I think I tried, but I wasn’t good enough to make the squad. I wasn’t fast enough.

I did play football and was on the squad, although football was not something that I really – I enjoyed it, but it wasn’t something that I was really that good at either. I was a good average athlete. In high school, I had lettered in football and basketball and tennis, and I guess of those three, I liked basketball the best. And we did well. In the tournament play at the end of every season, we always did pretty well. I remember we used to pass the captaincy of the team around, game by game. We didn’t have one season captain or anything like that. I remember we were in the tournament one year, and our couch, Al Baisler, who was a great, great person, Al Baisler, and been a little All-American football player at Muskingum, and he came and then coached there at New Concord High School, and he was very good. This particular year, we got into the sectional tournament, and the night when it came my turn to be captain, it turned out that his mother had died. I remember that night very vividly, because we were playing one of our arch rivals, Philo [phonetic], at that time. He had had to go to his mother’s funeral, and so it was almost as though we were dedicating that game to him, and it happened to be my night to be captain. I remember that, because we won that game after, I think, an overtime, or maybe two overtimes. I don’t
remember. But it was a real tough game, and I was so proud of that because we had sort of won that one for Al. So there were a lot of things like that I remember from those days, too.

Back again maybe to high school a little bit. I don’t think I really talked that much about some of the details of high school, either, when we went through some of that. In high school, the languages were not something that I was particularly good at. We had to take Latin at that time. I never enjoyed that, was not much good at Latin, although my other grades in everything else were all As and Bs, until I came to the languages. Latin, I wasn’t much good at that. Took that for two years, which we were required to do, and then took French for one year, and French was another thing that I didn’t really enjoy, and I just took that one year.

Some of the courses, they had a manual arts course, they called it, which was like shop, making things, using a lathe, things like that. It’s rather surprising, looking back now on what we did, or what I did, as a freshman, I think, or sophomore, in high school. We still have a stand that we keep up here, that is quite a nice little stand, that I made and turned out on a lathe and put together, and it was a project for the year. It came out very well, and so we still have that. I look at that and sort of wonder about me making that in high school back then. I enjoyed that.

We had a number of—I don’t think I talked before about the teachers in high school did I? Did I talk about that?

Williams: You mentioned a couple.
Sen. Glenn: Did I? [Ellis] Duitch and Harford Steele? I guess I talked about them. Much of our life in high school, though, revolved around the athletic programs. That was the big thing. In the fall, there were the weekly football games, either at home or away. Back in those days, it was rare that we took a bus. It was usually some of the men in town that would provide cars, and we’d go by car to where we were going. There were about, I think, seven teams in the league that we were in at that time. It was the Muskingum Valley League, they called it. It was all high schools of about the same size that we were in. They didn’t have all the post-season playoffs in all the sports that they seem to have now in high schools around the country.

The old school building that was the high school there in New Concord, was New Concord High, is now an elementary school. The new high school, the consolidated high school, were they bring people in from a broader area now, was the new New Concord High School. Then after my orbital flight in 1962, they named the school after me, and so it’s now John Glenn High School. I was so proud of that. I got a bigger kick out of that, I guess, than almost anything else that happened after the flight, because the importance of education and the way people look at that, or the way I look at it, certainly, to have a school named after you is about as high an honor as you can have, and I looked at it that way, and still consider it that way.

We still visit the school back there occasionally, and I’ve been back several times to speak to the group, or speak to the high school there. We usually try, if we can, to get back, even to this day, and go to one of their football games
and go to basketball games once in a while, or something like that. So we still have a connection with them back there.

Williams: Are you aware of other high schools around the country that may bear your name?

Sen. Glenn: Yes, there are a number of them. One of the women in Cleveland, who works in my Senate office in Cleveland, has kept a list of as many of them as we can, and I’ve asked them every time we hear of a new one, that has my name on it, to put them on the list, because I’d just like to know what the list is. I’ve been invited to come to several of them. There are a couple in Michigan, and one in Los Angeles that I visited once. There are a couple in New York, One in Indiana I visited once. So, there are about eight or nine that I know of, and there may be more than that, but I don’t know. Some junior high schools, but mainly high schools.

I don’t know how much we covered the church activity around New Concord. I think I might speak a little bit about that. New Concord was a very religiously oriented town. I think the sign on the end of town when we were growing up was, the population was 1,185, as I recall. Now that would not include all the college students, which would be about, at that time, about another eight or nine hundred, or close to one thousand.

New Concord was a small town, but even though it was a small town, there were three different Presbyterian churches. There was a regular Presbyterian church that I grew up in. Annie was in the College Drive United Presbyterian Church, and then there was a Reformed Presbyterian Church, the “convenanters” they were called, back in those days. They were people who didn’t believe in any of the affectations of music and pianos and organs and all
that kind of stuff in church. Everything was a cappella. I remember going to some of their services when I was a kid, and it was a more austere environment than even our Presbyterian church. In their church, someone would sound a pitch-pipe, and then they all started singing. That was it.

The Presbyterian church that I was in had been there since, I think it was 1807 or 1809, something like that. I was a very old church. The other church that Annie was a member of was the College Drive Church, and it was affiliated more with the college. Muskingum [College] had an affiliation with the Presbyterian Church, with the United Presbyterian Church. Later on, when the Presbyterian Churches all combined, they took the name of United Presbyterian, even though that had been the smaller of the sects.

The regular Presbyterian church had I don’t know how many million people all over the country, and I think the United Presbyterian Church only had, I don’t know, maybe it was 250,000, or something like that. But when they all combined later on, they took the name of United Presbyterian, to show that they were all together, I guess. At that time, they were the smaller denomination. I used to kid Annie a lot about that.

New Concord, a lot revolved around the church. You not only went to church on Sunday morning, but there also was church on Sunday evening, the vesper service. There was a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening. My dad and mother didn’t attend every Wednesday, but they attended more than they did not. My dad was an elder in the Presbyterian Church, which means he’d been selected as one of the main officers of the church, outside the pastor. Elders in the
Presbyterian Church are looked at as being one step below the minister himself, when it comes to church activity. They are ordained, so once you are an elder, you’re an elder for life, and my dad was selected by the church as an elder, which we has very proud of.

Then later on, this was just about the time I left home for World War II, my mother was selected as an elder, and that was something new and different. They hadn’t had any women elders at that time. That raised some eyebrows around New Concord that a woman would be selected as an elder in the church, but if ever a woman deserved it, it was Mother, and I know people are all proud of their mothers, but she was really some person. She was very quiet and unassuming, but I don’t think there was anybody in New Concord that helped more people, or tried to do more good, or was more active in church work and the women’s organizations of the church, and Presbyterian meetings and things like that, than she was. She really was very serious about it and was respected for it. So the fact that she was selected as an elder in the church, that wasn’t a gift; she had earned that one and everybody knew that.

There was Sunday school every Sunday morning, with all of the usual Sunday school songs and so on. We always had a man who led the singing in Sunday school, named D.F. McKinley, who was the father of one of my close friends, Alex McKinley. He had at one time been a song leader for some of the meetings for Billy Sunday, the old-time evangelist, way back. I can still remember him with his little black baton, leading the singing in Sunday school.

It was expected in the young people’s Sunday school classes that you took
turns either leading the service or sometimes there would be special programs that would be put on, would be a Sunday evening vesper service or something like that, and I remember one time I was leading that, and I made a lot of special effort to have some special music and things like that.

So it was that kind of a general environment around New Concord, as far as developing a–I guess you develop a sense of right and wrong, that’s hard to get any other way. Growing up in a household where both my dad and mother were elders in the church, they put a lot of emphasis on what was right and what was not right, and truthfulness, and honor and decency, and that was the kind of a town that New Concord was. I’ve joked sometimes in the past, saying it was almost like a real-life version of “Music Man,” and that the feelings of patriotism and responsibility to country and church were very, very real. I think that that kind of upbringing in New Concord was at least partly responsible for my deciding, when World War II broke out, that there wasn’t any doubt about what I was going to do; I was going in, represent the country, and do the best I could.

The high school, in school there, there was a lot of reflection of some of these values also. For the boys there was the High Y Club, which was an adjunct, or associated with the YMCA, as sort of a youth group out of the YMCA. There was what was called the Girl Reserves, which Annie was a member of, and that was a group that was affiliated with the YWCA. We had a meeting once a week, and you had readings. It wasn’t a complete devotional meeting, there were discussions, but that was every week, every Tuesday evening as I recall.

The activities of the school were such that you had something almost
every evening. I think band practice was every Monday evening, which I played the trumpet and Annie played the trombone. I think Tuesday evening was High Y and Girl Reserves. Wednesday evening, I don’t remember quite what that was. I’m sure there was something there. And then Thursday—I don’t remember what was on Thursday, maybe nothing on Thursday. And then Friday evening was always a basketball or a football game. Our football games were played in the college stadium where they had lights, so that was a big thing to play under the lights every time.

In high school, there were a lot of activities also, such as different plays, and I always liked that. I enjoyed that. So I’d try out for the plays. A couple of the plays we had, I had the lead part in those and I enjoyed that. It was a lot of fun. It was a lot of work also, because you had practice, practice, practice for those things.

Even in grade school and in elementary school in New Concord, this Rangers Club that we had, we often put on plays to raise money. I think maybe I talked a little bit about that before. In those, I had the lead in a couple of those plays, also, and I still remember that very, very well, because I was very proud of that at the time. In college, I never tried out for any of the drama or for any of the plays or anything in college.

Let me talk about Annie just a moment, because Annie and I started going together, if you can call it “going together,” when we were in about the eighth or ninth grade, and there was never anyone else that either one of us dated seriously from then on. Our parents had been good friends, and visited back and forth quite
often. I think I talked before maybe a little about Annie and I, actually, we were in the crib together and playpen together when we were small. She’s a little over a year old than I am, so she was a little bit older, but we, nevertheless, were in the playpen together, or played together as kids. So there was never a time when I really dated anyone else except Annie, and we were sort of an item that everybody just looked at as, well, we were together, from the time we got into high school, all through high school, and those early years in college, until I left to go in the military.

Annie had a lot of stuttering problems. I don’t think I really talked about that before. Did I talk about that? I hadn’t remembered whether I talked about that before or not.

Williams: You have.

Sen. Glenn: Okay. Maybe I can just let that one go then.

Williams: Was there a kind of townie-versus-college-student distinction, as there are in some towns, or did everyone sort of mix it up? Did you only begin to meet college students when you went to college? How did that work?

Sen. Glenn: You met college students. Just being around New Concord, you met them, but there wasn’t any real close relationship. The relationship I had with Julian White, he was about the only person in college up there that I really knew. Living there in town, you knew some of the professors and their families and their kids, who you were going to school with, so you had that connection with the college. College basketball games and football games, we attended those religiously. We went to those all the time, and so you were interested in college athletics,
following those, and followed whoever the sports stars were at the time.

One other thing in college, I don’t think I had talked about the different “clubs” as they were called then. There were no regular fraternities and sororities at Muskingum at that time, no Greek-letter sororities or fraternities, but they did have what were called “clubs,” and these clubs had a background to them. They had originally been called “forts” when they were formed, and the fort idea came clear back in Civil War days at Muskingum. The different eating clubs were called “Fort so and so,” I guess in sort of a reaction to the Civil War. Back in those days, there was no central eating place or cafeteria or dining room on the campus, and there were all these different places in private homes that had developed, where students ate, and some of them lived at those places.

Now, as an outgrowth out of that, then, there had been a number of different clubs developed, and when we were going to school, they called them clubs. There was the Stag Club that I became a member of, there was the Mace Club, was another men’s club, the Alban Club. They all had their own particular characteristics. The Albans were looked at as more of an academically oriented club. Stage Club tried to be both academics and athletics. Mace Club was more known for its athletics, and so on.

Annie was a member of the Delta Women’s Club, which was one of the leading ones, and then they had another one that was called the F.A.D.s. It wasn’t “fad” as a word, but that was a short for some longer title, which I don’t remember what it was. The title may have been secret until you were a member of the club, I’m not sure. And Kianu, whatever that stood for, K-I-A-N-U.
So there were these different clubs and there was a lot of competition to get various members for these clubs. I remember, as a kid, and just in New Concord, I always thought the Stag Club was about it, and that that was the one I wanted to be a member of when I went to college. Annie’s dad had been a member of the Stag Club when he was in school there at Muskingum. So I was a member of the Stags and then we had our weekly meetings, and twice-monthly meetings, and some ritual and things like that, that went along with it, and then initiation of new members every year, which got a little out of line once in a while, I thought.

I remember once when I was being initiated, they used to take pledges out, and this was on what they called “hell night,” which was the night in which you did your final initiation. They would put people in the car and blindfold them, take them out and turn them loose someplace, and you had to find your way back to New Concord. Well, for kids who didn’t know the area, this was a bit of a problem, and so they would spend most of the night getting back, some of them. There wasn’t all the traffic along the roads, some of the country roads, that there is now.

But I remember, on that particular night, they took us out in a car and I didn’t have to peek to know exactly where we were going. When we went across what bridge or whatever, I just knew by the sound where I was, and I think I almost beat them back to town after they had let us out. Not quite, but, anyway, knew where to go.

Much of the social life, then, in college revolved around the clubs and
what they did. There were some things like a few joint parties together and things like that, where you’d have that with one of the other particular clubs, women’s or men’s clubs. Back at that time, New Concord being the church town that it was, the college did not permit dancing for instance, at that…

[Begin Interview 4, Tape 1, Side B]

Sen. Glenn: In fact, back in those days, no dancing was permitted, and it wasn’t until later, about the time when we were in school there, that there was a lot of pushing to even get dancing—and no alcohol. In fact, Ohio has what’s called “local option.” Local parts of the state or counties or townships or municipalities can select to be completely dry, no alcohol at all permitted to be sold in the town. New Concord was that way. In fact, I think, still, I think it’s somewhere around thirty or thirty-five percent of all of Ohio is still under local option, that no alcoholic beverage can be served in that political entity, whatever it is. New Concord is still that way now, except just in the last few years, Muskingum has voted, and the board of trustees voted, to permit beer on campus, but only under very, very controlled conditions. This has been the case of a lot of the smaller schools, the church-related schools across Ohio that have moved in that area in the last few years. It’s been sort of new and controversial.

I must say that I would just as soon Muskingum would not have gone to even permitting that amount of alcoholic beverage on campus. I think there’s so much problem that’s caused by problem drinking these days, that I just don’t think we needed to go that route, but that was the vote of the board, so that is now permitted, but that was unheard of back in those days. Also, smoking on campus
was not permitted then. Now smoking is getting to be unpopular now, so it doesn’t make that much difference now, but this was a little bone of contention for some students back in those days.

So, it was a rather strict environment, and I guess had a lot to do with shaping my views of what I thought was right or wrong, or how I thought I wanted to live my life. Annie and I were not Puritans by any stretch of the imagination, but I think when I left then and went in the military, it was with a very well formed sense of what I thought was right and wrong, and how I wanted to conduct myself.

In the military, of course, all at once you found yourself thrown into a situation where you’re in there with maybe not hundreds of people close to you, but certainly many tens of people close to you that you’re working with every day, in a squad or a platoon, that were just from all over the country, with a hundred different backgrounds. So I guess I came into World War II with a very decided view of patriotism and sense of right and wrong that maybe was a little more strict or a little more pronounced than many people had from their backgrounds, coming into the military.

Williams: Let me go back just a bit. One thing that strikes me, as you’ve described the activities that were part of your life in New Concord, your lives were very structured, weren’t they in a sense? I mean, every night there was something going on. Every weekend, there was something going on, so you didn’t have to sort of come up with your own activities. Would that be correct?

Sen. Glenn: Well, not as much, maybe, but I suppose things were more structured around
school and community activities, maybe more so than most towns, because in New Concord, a small town, you knew practically everybody in town, or knew all the main people in town. There still was plenty of time, though, to do what you wanted to do. I was saying, in grade school, where we had the Ranger Club and things like that, that we formed ourselves, now, that wasn’t something that the town did. We formed that ourselves, as kids.

Williams: We read a lot now about small-town life in America, and there seems to be a lot of disaffection among young kids with the quiet life in the small town, and yet it seemed like a very full life for you, so I was wondering if you could draw a comparison between things.

Sen. Glenn: I guess in those days, compared to now, I won’t say you were isolated, but you were isolated a lot more than kids are now. You have transportation now that is so different now. In those days, your life pretty much revolved around what was going on there in the town. There wasn’t any television. You had radio, of course, and everybody had their favorite radio programs they listened to almost every day. But you didn’t have computers. As an example, here I am in the Senate, and every spring I have dozens of school groups come that want me to talk to them, eighth grade, some seventh grade, in from Ohio. We’ve had eighth grade groups from California fly clear across country for a spring break, for ten days or two weeks on the East Coast. Eighth grade. I don’t know where the kids get all the money these days, but that’s not unusual at all.

    Back in those days, we didn’t do that. On a weekend, if we went on a Saturday to see a movie in the afternoon on Saturday, in Cambridge or Zanesville,
that was a major event, or not the usual. A few times a year, you might go to Columbus on a shopping expedition, which was about seventy miles away. But there wasn’t the same flow of information that the kids have now, in fact, that the kids are just inundated with now, TV and radio and CDs and cassettes and thing like that.

I think the kids now—and I’m not saying it’s bad now—but I think the kids are exposed to a lot broader, a whole array of different forces or interests as they grow up than we had back in those days. I’m sure that the kids today wind up with a much broader education at a younger age than we has then, but I think they also wind up maybe with less of a sense of right and wrong, and a moral sense of what direction they want to go, and maybe less of a sense of patriotism for the country, than we did the way we grew up back in New Concord. It’s dangerous to say something like that, because there are so many exceptions to it, and so many small towns now really have a lot of emphasis on incorporating the activities of the young people in the community, and that’s good, that’s great. But I think, in general, now, we were more isolated back then, which in some ways let you grow up maybe with a more restricted or a more channeled view of what was right and wrong, than the kids have now.

Williams: What about the differences between passive and active? So much of what kids do today is sort of brought to them by television or arcade games and whatnot, whereas it seems to me a lot of what you were doing, with the Rangers and with church activities and whatnot, were very active.

Sen. Glenn: Were self-generated more than it is now. I think that’s right. I think now the kids
growing up perhaps have a lot more non-family, non-community influences on them, things that are decided by some marketing expert in New York or Hollywood or someplace, that decides what’s going into a particular video or a CD-ROM or whatever, as to what will sell, and that may be a good influence, or it may not be such a good influence. There’s a lot more of that, and I think we decided more of what we wanted to do.

There’s another thing, too. Back in those days, there were no parents that I recall that told their kids they couldn’t go out and roam around the community, and you were just as safe. In summer, we’d be out until late into the evening, maybe playing “Capture the Flag” or something like that, where all the kids in the whole town, almost, got together and were running all over the place. At Halloween, where you got into a little bit of devilment on Halloween, people didn’t worry at that time about their kids being safe when they were out. Now you’d have second thoughts about your kids. And even here, where we live now, kids from the local community here, Halloween time, when they come around, parents are with them, to make sure what’s going on. They wouldn’t think of letting their small kids out. Back in those days, in New Concord, of course, the very smallest kids, why, their parents probably went around with them, but once the kids got to be of elementary school age, they roamed around all over town. Nobody thought anything about it.

On parental influence, and who had the most impact on my life, I guess it was pretty well split between my dad and my mother, in different ways, though. Mother certainly had a big interest more in literary matters and poetry and things
like that, that she had been interested in when she went to Muskingum and became a teacher, and you could get a teaching certificate in two years back then. I think I mentioned earlier about her memorizing poems and how she’d recite these poems, and I was always sort of interested in that.

I guess my dad’s influence on me was not only in the standards that he set and the religious background, but, I guess, my mechanical aptitude, if you want to put it in those terms, was affected more by my dad, in that when I would be a kid around the plumbing store. I remember playing with other kids, and we would get the fittings out of the bins and we’d lay out pipes around the floor and screw them together, and then put them back in the bins, and things like that.

Then later on, when he had the Chevy agency, I would take an old car and take it partially apart, or take the brakes apart, or the engine partially apart. If there was an engine on a block someplace, I could take things off of it and put them back on. I’m sure that led into a lot of my knowledge of engines and things that did me very well later when we got into real serious study of engines when I was in flight training. I suppose they each had their own influence on me in that particular way.

Williams: In terms of your aspirations to become a doctor, was that based on any particular doctor you know, or was that a more abstract thing?

Sen. Glenn: No, it was more abstract. I don’t really know where that came from, and I don’t know that I would have gone ahead with it. Maybe I would have. I know I had an interest in it at that time, and I thought that my interest in chemistry, which I had started out with sort of an interest in just being a chemist, but as I went along,
I thought one of the alternatives that I was considering seriously would be to use that background to go into medicine. The other courses that I had taken in college were such that they would apply to a pre-med background, but whatever would have happened in that area, I don’t know. Anyway, World War II came along and altered the course of events.

Williams: The last summer you spent in New Concord, was that when you were at that camp?

Sen. Glenn: No, the last summer I spent in New Concord, I spent that working for the college all summer, I believe. I had a partial work scholarship. You have to remember, this was back in the early forties, and I think when I was a freshman, I was paid twenty-five cents an hour. Now, that was very low pay, even in those days, because most kids that had jobs working on road crews during the summer, in the State Highway Department or something like that, which were considered plum jobs, I think they got maybe seventy-five cents an hour, some even maybe a dollar and hour, and that was big pay. That was good pay back in those days.

Of course, the tuition then was in the hundreds of dollars instead of the thousands, and as I recall, I had a $250 grant, and I worked that off during the year at twenty-five cents an hour. Then during my sophomore year, I think that automatically you went up to thirty cents an hour, maybe thirty-five, I’m not sure. So, the pay, you have to remember that money was a little bit different back in those days than it is now. But that was worked off at the college, that last summer, doing things like running a big power mower on the campus, or working with a man named Jim Hurley, who was sort of the campus engineer, plumber.
But most of my work was doing things like mowing, or sometimes, when they wanted to an area cleared out, swinging a scythe, using a scythe. It was really manual labor, but I enjoyed it. Then in the winter, I would work, and do work on Saturdays and during holiday periods, on things such as running one of these floor polishers and doing the halls, and the waxing, and thing like that.

Williams: The camp that you had worked at, that was in your last years of high school?

Sen. Glenn: Last years of high school, and first year of college.

Williams: And then the next summer was the one you’ve just been describing?

Sen. Glenn: Yes, right.

Williams: And then the next summer, you were already…

Sen. Glenn: I was gone.

Williams: And the sequence of places you were, were Iowa City, Olathe, and then Corpus Christi?

Sen. Glenn: Right.

Williams: I came across, in some of my research, some evaluations of you during that early period. This is one from a C.P. Whitman. I don’t recall whether this was Iowa or Kansas, but, anyway, he said, “Student’s turns were very poor. His bracketing – is that the word? – is poor.”


Williams: “Student’s timing is poor. Student knows what to do, but is afraid to do it. His grade is 2.75.” Now, that was rare, because most of them were far more positive than that, but I wonder what…

Sen. Glenn: I don’t remember what that was. I don’t remember any grades ever being written
up like that, but I’d have to look at those. What was that in?

Williams: I’ll find the reference for it. It was in some grade report.

Sen. Glenn: Was this in military training?

Williams: Yes. It was not in New Philadelphia.

Sen. Glenn: I don’t remember that one at all. I have no idea what that was. I’d have to look at that. What kind of airplane? Do you know?

Williams: I don’t. I just came across that in my notes.

Sen. Glenn: I’d have to look at that one. I’m interested, because I didn’t know I ever got written up that low. I’ll have to look at that one.

Williams: I thought it was interesting, because it showed, as he said, that theoretically you knew what you were supposed to do, but at that point, you were still—what about overcoming fear during that period, as you got into more powerful planes and were asked to do more stunting and whatnot?

Sen. Glenn: I didn’t have any fear of the flying. My only fear was not doing well. I wanted to do the best job I could possibly do, and that was my main motivation. So, as far as the fear of flying, I didn’t have any fear of flying. I’d done a little of that, of course, in CPT, and loved it. In fact, I looked forward to each flight. I certainly didn’t dread it.

Williams: But there must have been the first time when you, say, stalled out in the air and whatnot. That must have been hard.

Sen. Glenn: Well, that’s different, when you do intentional stalls and spins and things like that. It’s a first-time experience, and you have a little apprehension going into it. But those airplanes were such, you knew you could get them out of it all right, and
you had an instructor that could get them out if you couldn’t. I don’t recall that there was ever a time when I had any problem like that where I was really so scared I didn’t want to do the maneuver, or anything like that.

Williams: Were some of the other men dropping by the wayside at this point?

Sen. Glenn: Yes, some people didn’t like it, and there were some dropped out, and some people just didn’t like flying. Even in those war years, they didn’t want anybody to drop out because they needed pilots, but there were some people who just didn’t like it, and particularly in areas, like you talked about, if you get into acrobatics or unusual flight attitudes, spins and things like that, they didn’t like that, they were scared of it, and when you got to that point, the best thing to do was to get out. So you had some people got washed out, as they called it then, and some people just decided to quit on their own. There weren’t too many in that category, but there were a few that left.

Williams: You speak of some people going off to single-engine flight and others getting into transport and so forth. When were you sent off in those two different directions, or how did that work?

Sen. Glenn: Usually, when you graduated, and it depended pretty much, I guess, on what the service needs were at that time, and we weren’t of a level where we even knew how they were making decisions at that time. You just graduated, and you got your orders, and you had applied for a certain type of flying that you wanted, but they would assign you on what they needed. I guess, probably, this being sent to an organization called OTS-8 at Cherry Point immediately after graduation, I’m sure that was on the needs of the service, but it was also on the background of
what type of planes I had been flying.

I had gone through PBY, the old Catalina twin-engine flying boat, in the belief that having twin-engine time was going to put me into P-38s, the rumored Marine Corps fighter. They didn’t have any fighters, so when we went to Cherry Point, we were in OTS-8, Operational Training Squadron 8, which has the old PBJs, the P25, that had been in the Air Force. And then they had so many people lined up there waiting, we were there a very few weeks, and they sent us out to the West Coast to go into transports, I suppose, because of the multi-engine time. But that hadn’t been my objective in multi-engine time at all, and so we managed to get transferred out.

That transfer was not without its own trepidation, though, because—I don’t believe I described that, but Tom Miller and I, when we got to the West Coast, we still wanted to get into fighters, and here we were in a transport outfit. Across on the other side of the field was a Marine F4F fighter squadron. It was called an observation squadron, VMO, for observation, at that time, but it was actually a fighter squadron. It was later designated VMF, as a fighter squadron. But the squadron had come back from Samoa and that area, from the early days of the war, and was being reformed, and was going to be retrained then, and supposedly it was going to get the Corsairs, the F4U, later on.

Tom and I went over and talked to the people in the squadron over there and talked to the CO [commanding officer], and he said he needed a couple of people, and if we could get transferred, why, that would be fine. Well, we went back to our group that we were attached to, the air group that we were attached to,
and were talking to personnel people about getting transferred. Well, the
commanding officer heard about it, and he was mad. The worst dressing-down, I
guess, that I ever got in the Marine Corps. He called us into his office, Tom and
me. Actually, he stood us at attention in front of his desk while he chewed us out
royally, I’ll tell you, the worst I ever got in the Marine Corps, that we might be
brand-new pilots in the Marine Corps, but we better learn where orders came from
and how you did these things and so on. And he stood up, and he walked around
in front of us and behind us, and it was almost like a scene out of a movie, and
him chewing us out for what we had done.

I thought we’d never get transferred, and lo and behold, a few days later,
our orders came through and they transferred us over to the fighter squadron. So I
guess it was a good lesson for us, starting out, that you don’t bypass authority
when you’re trying to do something in the Marine Corps. But I remember that
very well.

Williams: And how do you figure that actually did come to pass, since he appeared to be
opposed to it?

Sen. Glenn: I guess he just decided we wanted to go bad enough and that we were new, and
hadn’t realized quite what we were doing, and he let us go, for which I’m duly
grateful to this day.

Williams: Did you ever have any additional contact with him after you made that transfer?

Sen. Glenn: No, not really. I think his name was Zonne, as I recall. He’d been a transport
pilot on the early airlines, and then he was in the Marine Reserve, I guess, and
came back in. He was running this transport outfit and the training of it, and I
think he was VMR, I think it was, VMR-353, I think was the designation of that squadron.

Anyway, we transferred over then, and just very shortly after we got transferred, the squadron moved to El Centro, California, moved over the mountains into the valley, for training, and it was detached from that particular group then, at that time, so we were transferred just within days after we had stood up and been lectured very thoroughly.

Williams: Let me get this straight now. So you made the transfer to the unit while it was still where?

Sen. Glenn: Still at Kerney Mesa, old Miramar, which is just north of San Diego.

Williams: And then within a few days…

Sen. Glenn: Yes. We hadn’t even checked out any airplanes yet, at that point, and the squadron was transferred to El Centro, where we then checked out the airplanes and so on. I remember that transfer, because I think we actually went to El Centro, loaded our—well, let me go back a little bit.

When we went to San Diego, Annie and I, it was always a problem trying to find a place to live in those days, very tight, people shuffling around, and you’d do things like go to the electric company to find out who had had their water cut off when they were moving, paid their water bill and checked out, so you’d find out where the house was, and you’d go and try and get the house, or get a room. This was a continual fight, trying to find a place to live. There was no base housing; that was something that was nonexistent, of course. In fact, all during my whole Marine Corps career, we only had base housing one time in twenty-
three years, official base housing, that was at Quantico, in the late forties.

But in San Diego, I think Annie found this place, and it was a one-room efficiency apartment back on sort of an alleyway, a sand roadway, alleyway that was about two blocks off of Mission Beach in San Diego. There’s still a big pier out there that was there even back in those days, and so that’s where we set up housekeeping, and that’s the first residence, really, we had, outside of the place we’d been to at Cherry Point, which was sort of a converted sun porch. So this was a little efficiency apartment, one room, large room. I would drive out every day to the base and Annie would go out on the beach, and then I’d come in the afternoon, and we’d go out on the beach.

Williams: You’d recovered from you sunburn.

Sen. Glenn: At Cherry Point. Yes, we certainly had. That was our first visit to the West Coast, and so it was quite an experience.

I happened to think of this. Gasoline was a real problem then. You had gas chits, to permit you to buy gasoline. Out at the base, out at Miramar, or Kerney Mesa, as it was known then, when you were working on an airplane, and you took the hundred-octane aviation gas out of the airplane, there was a regulation, you couldn’t put it back in, because it might be contaminated or have gotten water in it or something like that. Legally, they were supposed to dump that gasoline and just let it evaporate, but they didn’t do that, and they put it in fifty-gallon drums our behind the squadron, this hundred-octane stuff, and with a pump on top, and so we’ll pull our cars up there and fill up on that, or put about half a tank in. You didn’t want to put a full tank in because it burned differently
than regular gasoline. They found out you could burn out the valves in your car with that if you used too much of it, so we used to put about half a tank of that in and go down and save our gas chits that way, so you had a little more mobility.

Williams: What was the octane rating of regular gas?

Sen. Glenn: Regular gas, I suppose, was in the seventies or maybe eighty or something. I suppose seventies at that time, something like that. But this was hundred-octane stuff, which always surprises a lot of people that hundred octane burns slower than lower octane, because when the cylinder fires, you don’t want all the whole explosion to go at once—pow!—like that, because that’s what makes an engine knock, and you get less power out of a given amount of fuel. What you want to do is, you want the burning to be very even across the cylinder, and so the higher octane gas back in those days had more lead in it, which made it burn slower.

[Begin Interview 4, Tape 2, Side A]

Sen. Glenn: A lot of people don’t realize, even to this day, that the higher-octane gas burns slower than low-octane gas. Low-octane gas, there’s a spark put to it. It just explodes and the whole thing explodes—bang!—and that’s the end of it. So, all your power stroke occurs in that thousandth of a second, or whatever it is. Your higher-octane gas burns more slowly and makes an expanding gas in there over a longer period of time, which gives you a longer power stroke and more power out of that amount of gas. But it’s a hotter flame, because it is burning longer. It isn’t just a flash like that, so you had to be careful you didn’t burn out some of the valves in your regular automobile engine. The valves in the aircraft engines were
set for that. But I just happened to think of using the gasoline that way.

Williams: What was it like at El Centro? Paint and picture of what that was like.

Sen. Glenn: El Centro is out in the desert, over the mountains and down in the desert, right by the Salton Sea, which is where some of the water that comes down the Colorado River used to wind up, and it’s a dead end there. It doesn’t drain into anything. It sits there and evaporates. It’s very, very hot. The day we were transferred, and the day Annie and I put all of our belongings into our little ‘39 Chevy coupe, and drove over the mountains to El Centro, was a day they set a heat record for particular time, and El Centro is a very hot place anyway, and I don’t know what it was. I think it was 112, or something like that, or 114. I don’t remember what the exact temperature was, but we checked into the old Barbara Worth Hotel, which I think is still there in El Centro now. The Barbara Worth at that time—and, you know, air-conditioning was not as common then as it is now, of course. The Barbara Worth Hotel had air-conditioning on, I think, the first three floors. They had no vacancies, and we were on the fourth floor, with no air-conditioning on this record-setting day. We still joke about that and remember it, because that really was an experience. It was really hot.

El Centro, in the middle of the summer, this whole joke about frying eggs on the pavement, some of the guys used to do that on the ramp, just for the heck of it, bring an egg out and it would sit there, and the white of the egg would get white, and it would literally cook, low-grade cooking out there.

We usually worked what they called tropical hours, more to prevent not just wear and tear, but blowing up tires and things like that, on the airplanes. So
we would start very early in the morning with the flight schedule and then we
would usually stop, I think, maybe about twelve or one o’clock, and then you
might be scheduled for night flying, or something like that, that evening. But you
didn’t fly in the hottest part of the day, mainly because some of those old
airplanes used to blow up tires all the time, it was so hot.

But we did a lot of training out there. We got checked out in the F4F, the
old Wildcat, which is the one that the Marines had used on Guadalcanal. Some of
our instructors that came back and were with the squadron, and they were people
who were veterans of Guadalcanal, and so they coached us in combat tactics and
gunnery and things like that. We had a gunnery range up over the Chocolate
Mountain area, where we towed the banner back and forth and did our aerial
gunnery up there.

The old F4F was a good airplane for its day, but combat had long since
gone beyond its capability, so we were glad we weren’t going overseas in it, in
particular. So we did get the F4U, the Corsair, which had been developed. It had
had a lot of problems with the Navy when they tried to put it aboard ship, and so
they had sort of given it to the Marine Corps, because we were going to be land-
based, and we would only go aboard ship occasionally.

The Corsair, then, when we transferred into it, it was a great airplane, but
we did an awful lot of training in the old F4F, and it was a plane you still had to
crank the landing gear up and down by hand, and things like that. When you
charged the guns, you had a big handle in there on each gun. You pulled this
handle up and let it go and that charged the gun, put the first round in. It was not
nearly as automatic as the Corsair later on. But we did a lot of training with it, anyway.

Williams: Describe some of the training, the details.

Sen. Glenn: I still remember a lot of the characteristics of it. It had a very narrow landing gear, and it had a tendency to want to veer off the runway a little bit when you were landing, if you got the tail down too soon. There was trouble controlling it in a crosswind, and so it was not unusual at all to have people run off the runway and be bouncing out across the sand there at El Centro.

We’d go up on gunnery flights. We’d have probably maybe four or six planes, or maybe eight planes on a particular gunnery flight. One person would be the tow pilot, and they would have a wire mesh banner that was about four or five feet across, and about thirty feet long, and you could set the weights on it so that it either flew in a vertical position or it flew in a horizontal position. All of you ammunition, which was .50-caliber, if you were doing gunnery training, each airplane had their ammunition. Just the nose, the tip of the shell, had been dipped in colored ink paint mix, so that if I was going up, maybe I would have all red ammunition, somebody else would have all blue, somebody else would have all green. Every round had been dipped that way and then dried, but when it hit the banner, when it went through this wire mesh banner, it left a little trace of that. So when you came back, you could tell who had hit the banner the most times, and that was a real competition. I’ve seen people almost get so mad they wouldn’t speak to each other, down arguing over which color it was, because sometimes they didn’t get a very big chunk of paint on it there. You counted the
exact number of holes out of your total ammunition fired, and this was always a lot of squadron competition, whether you were in the old Wildcat or the Corsair later on. That was real competition, as to who was best in the training at hitting the banner.

Williams: How did you take aim on the banner?

Sen. Glenn: You didn’t have automatic gun sights and things like that, like were developed later on in the jet days. What you had was a regular reflector sight up in front of you, you could see it, and there was a projection, then that came up from under the instrument panel, that hit that reflector and came back to you eye, so that you would actually see your target out ahead, and you would see outlined in a little red light on that reflector sight.

You would have the rings that told you how many mils of lead you needed to hit that airplane, but it was up to you to set that lead. You didn’t have any automatic sight for you. That was the reason for all the gunnery training. It’s like doing skeet training. When people go out and shoot skeet, you don’t have any automatic sight that lets you hit. It’s sort of intuitive, almost. You get accustomed to knowing just about how much lead you have to have to hit the target.

The had all the charts, of course, that you memorized, so you knew them just cold, as to, if you were at a forty-five degree angle and a thousand feet out, you knew what lead you had to have, whether it was seventy-five mils or a hundred mils, or whatever it was, that you needed to hit. So you’d use that sort of a base to make an estimate to start, but then, for training purposes, I think, every
third round was a tracer round, and so when you shot a tracer, when it went out, you could see the burning on the back of the bullet, of the shell, so that you could see whether it was hitting the target or not. So you fired and then corrected your fire with the tracer fire, but your first rounds were what you tried to hit with, because that meant you were aiming correctly, and you didn’t want to waste ammunition.

So it was a lot of good training in that, and we did the same thing later in the Corsairs. That’s the only kind of sighting that we ever had, all during World War II. There were no computing gun sights like we had later on in Korea. Even in Korea, the computing gun sights weren’t very good. They were nothing like they have now, where we have computing gun sights that are very accurate, and missiles that go out and do the job for you. Back then, you had to actually fly the thing into position.

People are accustomed now to seeing movies and so on, where you line up an enemy aircraft on radar so many miles away, and fire, and that takes care of that. Back in those days, though, what you had to do, it was pilot against pilot. You had to maneuver your airplane behind the other pilot and pull the right amount of lead on that pilot to hit him, whatever his maneuver was, because there’s a finite time of when you fire the gun and the bullet is going out, it goes to a certain spot out there.

Now the airplane is moving, it may be in a turn, so you have to allow for that amount of time for that shell to get out there and be at the spot where he is going to be, so you draw a lead on it. It’s like a person passing a football. You
might want to look at it that way. The quarterback, when he’s going to pass a football at a receiver, he doesn’t look at him and throw the ball straight at him, because the receiver’s not going to be there when the ball gets there, so the quarterback has to lead him as to where he’s going to be, and that’s the same thing exactly you had to do in an airplane when you were going to hit another airplane.

Williams: Were you changing the position of the gun?

Sen. Glenn: No, the guns are fixed onto your airplane.

Williams: So you change the position of the airplane?

Sen. Glenn: Yes. The guns are fixed. They’re fixed, forward-firing guns, and in the Corsair we had six .50-calibar guns, hadn’t gotten to 20-millimeter yet on airplanes, like some of the later planes did in Korea. But even in Korea, we just had six .50-calibers. For ground strafing on the Panther, we had four 20-millimeter cannon, but we had six .50s on the planes in World War II, and they were fairly accurate out to about 800 to 1,000 feet. So if you started firing out that far and were maneuvering, it was up against a maneuvering target, that required quite an amount of lead. We went up day after day after day on gunnery practice, until you just got to where you almost did it in your sleep.

Williams: And you were also having to be aware of where everyone else in the squadron was, so that you weren’t hitting each other, right?

Sen. Glenn: Well, no one else would make a run at the same time—in other words, we’d be lined up, we’d be lined up here in an echelon, away from the target plane. First plane goes up, makes his run, pulls up on the other side, and until he’s clear of the
target, the second plane doesn’t make his run. So you’re very careful, because you could get somebody shot down doing that.

A couple of other things I was thinking about at El Centro, too. El Centro had some characteristics besides just the heat. There was a certain time of the year in the late summer in El Centro when, still, to this day I guess, they have big infestations of crickets, and I’d never seen this before. I remember in a little apartment that we finally got at El Centro, one day the crickets were piled up, literally, three or four inches deep up against our front door, just dead crickets out there. There was just an infestations of these things. They’d come up and they’d just go up against the house. I never saw crickets like that anywhere, in Ohio or anywhere else, but I think they still have those out there.

The area around El Centro, of course, is all irrigated land, and it was developed back prior to World War II, and, of course, it’s been expanded a lot since that time, too.

One event there that had nothing to do with flying, I just happened to think of it and I’d like to mention it while I think of it. We had a friend in the squadron, two friends in the squadron, Henry Knauth and Stan Lutton, and they were both bachelors in the squadron and were good friends of ours. We were at home one night, One Sunday evening. They had gone up to Los Angeles, over a weekend, even though we were flying seven days a week, normally, but you had a day off once in a while, and so they had gone up to Los Angeles, and had met these two girls up there, and they invited them to come down to El Centro the next weekend, and they did.
Well, about ten o’clock on Sunday evening, I get a call at the little duplex that Annie and I had found to live in, nice little place, and it’s Henry Knauth, and he wants me to come down to the Barbara Worth Hotel. I said, “Well, it’s ten o’clock and I’ve got to fly early in the morning. What do you want, Hank?” Henry Knauth. He said, “Well, Dorrie and I are down here, and we decided we want to get married, and we want you to take us to Yuma.” Because you couldn’t get married in California, but you could go across the border over into Yuma, Arizona. They had Justice of the Peace marriage places, like out of a movie, almost.

I thought these guys were down there and they’d been drinking too much, and they were both wanting to get married—Stan Lutton and Henry—with these two gals. I said, “Look, Hank, look, you don’t want to go over there.” I tried to talk them out of it. “Nope.” And it finally wound up, he said, “Well, if you don’t want to take us over, then we’re going to get somebody else to.”

I said, “Okay. Don’t do nothin’ until I get there.” [Laughter]

So, Annie and I jumped in the car, the old ’39 Chevy coupe, and went and drove down real quick to the Barbara Worth Hotel, and nobody had been drinking. Everybody was cold sober, and they’d all decided they wanted to be married, and nothing would do but that we were going to drive them to Yuma. So we did. We packed six people—Annie and me and the two couples—into the little Chevy coupe, some of them in the back on this little luggage bin, because there wasn’t a second seat in it. So we drove over and went to one of these little marriage places, with a little light out front, and it was just like out of a movie.
This was midnight or after by the time we got over there. We knocked on the door, or rang the bell, whatever it was, and this fellow came down in his bathrobe. It was just like something out of a movie.

Anyway, we wound up with the two couples standing up, in a joint ceremony, and Annie and I on each end, standing up with them, and they both were married. Henry Knauth, we still see them occasionally. They’re married, raised a family, and happy as could be, and it’s one of those unusual ones that really took. The Luttons—I think they got a divorce. They were married, though, for, I don’t know, fifteen or twenty years, something like that.

But what an experience there. I can still remember that. I thought they’d been down there drinking too much, and went down, they were sober as could be, and so they were married and happy as could be.

Williams: Literally, after knowing each other for how long?
Sen. Glenn: That was the second time they’d ever been together. They’d gone up, they met these girls in Los Angeles, and then the girls came down, by bus, I suppose, the next weekend, and they decided to get married, and they did, and that was that.

Williams: How would that kind of behavior have gone over in New Concord?
Sen. Glenn: Well, that wouldn’t have been looked at too well, I guess, in New Concord, but, you know, it wasn’t up to me to judge. I thought they were making a mistake, because I thought they ought to know each other longer. But it was their decision, and that was it.

Henry was one I had been together with—we’d been together all the way through, as a matter of fact. We had checked into Iowa pre-flight school together
and been in the same platoon up there, so I had known him ever since those days. Lutton, I had known a shorter period of time, but I knew Hank pretty well, so it all worked out very well, and we saw them about a year ago, as a matter of fact, and they’re still happy as can be. We’ve all changed a lot, different weights and different hairlines, but outside of that, why, they’re great.

Williams: When you and Tom Miller came and joined the squadron, was there a kind of initiation you had to go through? How did you integrate yourselves into that group?

Sen. Glenn: No, nothing like that. It’s just when you were assigned to a squadron, why, you joined in and you fit in the training cycle wherever you were. They’d get you up to speed. Every squadron was not set with a certain number of people, and it was just static, so that everybody was at the same stage of training. There were people in and out of the squadrons quite a lot back at that time, and some people were back from overseas, were being reassigned to squadrons, and they sort of became the instructor pilots. Then there were newer people like ourselves who came in and we were being trained, and then there were people who came in after us, who we helped train then later on. Then we trained there until we went overseas, doing mainly gunnery training, some bomb training, dropping bombs off of these airplanes.

Another thing I was laughing about a few days ago, I told somebody, and this was another one that happened at El Centro I thought was very funny. The old F4F would run off the runway occasionally, and there were people back then who would come in, and radio was not as good, it wasn’t as reliable, and people
would forget to put the landing gear down sometimes, they’d get so concentrated on traffic, and it was not unusual that somebody would make a belly landing, forget to put the gear down. Well, that was the cardinal sin of all cardinal sins, was to forget to put the gear down. And in the F4F, if you had a dozen airplanes around the field and you came back—and you had to grind this thing down by hand. It had a crank over on the left side, and you had to get that crank out of its stowed position then, manually. When you took off, then you pulled the gear up the same way, until it was up and latched and had an indicator that it was latched.

Well, one fellow came in at El Centro and landed, ran off the runway, bounced off across the desert there a little bit, and there was a big irrigation ditch, went across the field, that was maybe eight or ten feet deep. Just as he got there, this thing dipped down into it and went upside down, with the wings across this ditch, so the cockpit is hanging upside down. He had landed belly up, but it had slid off here, and gone over to this ditch, and went upside down. When the crash crew got out there, the pilot was still hanging there upside down, trying to put the landing gear, in this case, up, and as they came, you could just see him grinding very hard on this thing, because the gear would go up a few inches, up a few inches, up a few inches, as he was trying to make sure he didn’t get blamed for not putting the gear down. [Laughter]

Let’s see, what else in El Centro?

Williams: Talk a little bit about how you practiced bombing.

Sen. Glenn: Well, the bombing was done usually with—we didn’t drop live stuff at El Centro that I recall now, but we did all kinds of dropping of bombs with two-pound
miniatures. These are miniature bombs that are shaped like a little bomb. They’re about maybe ten inches long, have a hollow point down the middle, a hole down the middle, and you put a smoke, a shotgun shell is what they are, in that, so that when you drop the bomb and it hit, there’d be a big puff of smoke come out, and you could tell exactly where you hit. So we dropped a lot of those, both with the F4Fs and then later on when we went to the Corsair.

I might say a little bit about the Corsair at that time. Corsair had been a plane that the Navy had had problems with. They gave them to the Marine Corps because we were going to be land-based, and we got the Corsairs, and we started flying them. The old airplanes were called “birdcage” because they had a lot of forms down around the cockpit that made it look like you were almost in a jail cell, when you were inside the thing. It didn’t have a big plastic canopy to it. And it was a little harder to handle. The airplane, once again, was an airplane that if you didn’t land just right and just keep it going straight, it would tend to veer one way or the other off the runway, so there were a lot of problems with it. Those were fixed later on, and it got to be a very reliable and a very good airplane, by raising the tail plane up a little bit on it, and by some aerodynamic changes they made on the airplane.

But there was enough problem with it, and it was a suspect enough airplane that [Charles] Lindbergh, then working for United Aircraft, Lindbergh actually came around, flying a Corsair to different squadrons, to give some instruction on the new characteristics of this once we had the later model of the Corsair that had been corrected. He came and stayed at our squadron for—I think
it was three or four days, and so we met him, got to know him. I never got to
know him well, of course, but he was around the air group there at El Centro,
where we were training for a little while, and flew a few flights with us.

Then later on, when we were overseas in combat out in the Marshall
Islands, he was on a tour out there, and actually flew a couple of missions with us
out there, where we were doing actual live bombing on enemy positions.

Williams: How large is a squadron?
Sen. Glenn: Twenty-four airplanes and I think we had thirty-six pilots most of the time. But
twenty-four airplanes was a standard squadron then. Each pilot had different
assignments that they were particularly responsible for in the squadron. I was
assigned as instrument officer, and, by that, it meant that I was responsible for
making sure that all the compasses were swung, as they call it, which means that
you align them properly.

There’d be an area out on the airfield someplace, away from the hangers,
or away from any other metal object, and that particular spot, called a compass
rose, that compass rose would have been surveyed in, so that there were markings
on that compass rose of exactly what was north and what was not north, magnetic
north. What you did, you took the airplane out there, and had the engine running,
and had blocks in front of the wheels, so that you knew the airplane was headed in
the exact direction. You knew exactly what it was, headed north or east,
whatever. Then you adjusted the compasses with little magnetic things that you
put into it, to adjust it as close as you could, and then you out a tag in the airplane
on what the deviation was from north, so that later on, then, if you’re flying a
compass heading someplace, you corrected it by that exact amount. So I did all that. They called them “swinging the airplane.” I did all the swinging on all the squadron airplanes to make sure the compasses were right, as well as overseeing if we were having any problems with instrumentation in the airplane, with certain gauges or gyro horizon, or anything like that, why, I kept up with all that. So that was my particular responsibility in the squadron then, before we went overseas.

Williams: I don’t know whether you want to do this with the F4F or the Corsair, but could you just talk through what it would be like to go up, what you do for preparation and then takeoff, and fly, and come back down?

Sen. Glenn: Well, an ordinary training mission at that time, you’d have a briefing and you’d have somebody be assigned as the flight leader. Usually, while we were in the early stages of training, the flight leader was usually one of these people that had been overseas and had come back, and was acting sort of as an instructor pilot. They’d lead the flight, and those of us who hadn’t had that much experience yet would be assigned different positions in the flight.

You’re organized in flights of four. You’d have a leader, and then his wingman, which would be the first section, as we called it. The Air Force called it an element, but we always called it the first section. Then you had another pilot and his wingman, made up your four-plane division, and then when you joined up two or more groups like that, that became a flight. So you quite often went out with—eight planes was a very common number to go out with. You’d go out with two divisions. Each had two sections within that division, if you follow that. You’d be assigned, you’d come in, get all your flight gear and all your knee
pad—have all your equipment ready to go, life vest, the whole works, just as though you’re going on a combat mission. If you’re going to simulate combat, you’d have a shoulder holster with a weapon in it. Later on, you’re going to carry that if you’re overseas, in case you went down someplace and needed it. And a knife and all you combat gear, and you’d try to train with that, just like you would after you went overseas.

You’d be briefed then on what we were going to do. Whichever way the wind was blowing, you’d say where we were going to rendezvous that day, or what runway we were going to take off on, and weather conditions, where we’re going up on Chocolate Mountain gunnery range, which was about sixty or seventy mile northeast of El Centro, was our usual gunnery area. Our squadron would have been assigned a particular time to enter that range and be up there, and so we’d always try and get off at a time that would allow you to get up there right on time.

The target plane, the one that was going to be dragging the banner, would already have gone out, and that’s a special operation because that is laid out on the runway. It would be about a thousand-foot-long cable, or rope, that was going to pull this banner, and the pilot would go down, taxi down the runway, and the crew would come out and hook that on a hook on the bottom of the airplane. And then on signal, he would take off and drag this banner down the runway then, and he’d pull up as steeply as he could safely and pull this thing off, and so then he’s flying with the banner strung out here about a thousand feet behind him. That would be the target. He would already be up there, circling, and we’d probably
have a guard plane along with him that would fly back beside the banner, so nobody who would…

[Begin Interview 4, Tape 2, Side B]

Sen. Glenn: So those planes would already have been up there, and be waiting up there until the flight got there. So we would brief on exactly what we were going to do, whether we’re making runs on a vertical banner or a horizontal banner, and the length of time before we had to be off the range, before somebody else was going to be on, and what weather was going to be.

If anybody got detached and lost sight of the target plane, we’d have a rendezvous point at the end of the flight, in case you lost radio contact, which was not unusual, with the radios we had back then. Didn’t have all the transistor reliable communications that we have now, so you occasionally would lose contact with someone, so you always had a rendezvous point for them. You would go up and the flight leader then would clear the target plane to start down range, and it was up to the target plane then to make sure you stayed within the boundaries of the range, and that would be about seventy-five to ninety miles long on the range.

So he’d not only time it as to when he had to turn around, depending on his air speed, but also by landmarks on the ground where he knew where the end of the range was. So with him flying along the, the flight then would get usually up maybe a thousand to three thousand feet above and off to one side, and then you’d take turns. You’d go down and come up and make your run on the banner,
and fire, and come up on the other side and assume the same position up on the other side. You’d just keep going back and forth like that, making runs and firing, until you either ran out of time, or usually what you did was run out of ammunition.

Then you rendezvous your flight again, and assign one person then to be escort, to escort the banner back to the field, the tow plane back, and the tow plane would come back to the field then and fly along where the banner was still maybe three or four hundred feet off the ground. There would be a designated area on the field where you dropped the banner, and as he came over that area then, he would pull a handle inside the airplane that detached the ring that was holding the tow line on the bottom of the airplane. It would drop, and usually by the time the tow plane got back—the tow plane flew slower than the rest of us—and by the time the tow plane got back, we would have landed and taxied in, were out of our airplanes, usually, and they’d go out in a jeep and bring the banner in. We’d lay it out on the ramp, and that’s when the arguments started over who had what hits on the banner.

Some of our greatest arguments were down on our knees, looking at these holes in the banner, trying to see who got what, but that was always a lot of fun. I was always very good in aerial gunnery. We always kept the percent of hits, how many hits you had on the banner. This was always on a big board in the ready room, so everybody knew who was doing what. Without any lack of humility, I can say I was always pretty good at aerial gunnery. I was always in the top few in the squadron. I always took great pride when I could lead the squadron in
gunnery.

I remember many years later, when we were out on Guam and still doing gunnery training out there, there was a fellow named Michaelson, and he and I were always neck and neck with each other. We were always just a few rounds apart on this. We used to have some great competition, but that’s the way you got good at it, though, was just doing it over and over and over again.

So that would be sort of a typical mission out there in training, would be to go out like that, come back and get ready for the next flight.

Williams: Did you always use the same plane, or did you trade off planes a lot?

Sen. Glenn: No, you’d use different airplanes. Once you got overseas and were flying Corsairs, you had an assigned airplane. If it was up and you were on a flight, why, you usually would have your own airplane, but you didn’t do that all the time. You flew your own airplane perhaps two-thirds of the time or three-quarters of the time, but you’d occasionally fly other airplanes. But in training, it was pretty much potluck. You just took what you were assigned.

Another thing you paid great attention to, too, was in bore-sighting these airplanes. They had to be taken out, of course, and put out in the gun butts, as you call it, where you actually have a baroscope that looks down the barrel of each gun, and you line it up on a target out there, eight hundred or a thousand feet away, and once you adjust the gun so that it’s actually lined on that target, then you actually would fire single rounds out of it, to see where they hit on the target, out in the gun butts. And then you’d do burst fire, to see how that worked out, too, sometimes. There was always an argument as to whether your plane had
been bore-sighted correctly if you didn’t get a good gunnery score, of course.

Williams: This will be a naïve question now. How do you determine a rendezvous point? Is that some ground feature?

Sen. Glenn: Yes, usually a ground feature. We had several places around there, like an intersection of a creek bed and a railroad or something, up across that area, or a place where a railroad line crossed a route whatever it was, going up toward Palm Springs.

Williams: So if you got lost, you’d come back and just circle around that?

Sen. Glenn: You’d come circle at that point, or if you got lost and you had radio contact, why, your flight leader would give instructions to exactly where the flight was, and you might try and rendezvous with that person again, or that flight again.

One thing I remember about the old F4F, it had an electric propeller control. It was a Curtiss prop on an electric control on that thing, and occasionally it would go out and let the prop go almost completely flat, so you ran at high RPM, and there wasn’t any way you could handle that except just come back and land. I remember that happened to us several times, too, with the old Curtiss electric prop. That had been one of the complaints about it by people in combat in the Pacific, was occasionally the thing would go out and they’d wind up with an engine that they couldn’t really control that well, because you have to control it by prop pitch. It’s a constant-speed propeller, so you’re controlling to a certain RPM for cruise, a certain RPM for combat, for whatever, and the electric prop would go out and you’d have to come back and break off your gunnery flight, and come back and land when that happened.
Williams: Did you sometimes fly the banner?

Sen. Glenn: Oh, yes. Sure. Everybody took their turn. Everybody took their turn flying the banner and flying the guard plane and so on. Usually, I think, on guard, I think what we usually did on that, we’d have somebody that was going to be on the gunnery flight, anyway, and they’d brief in advance, and they’d go out with the tow plane and they’d go up and then they would join the gunnery flight once we started. Then at the end of the flight, they would join the tow plane to come back again. I think that’s the way we used to work that.

Williams: What about noise? Are a lot of ex-pilots suffering hearing loss these days?

Sen. Glenn: Well, that used to be a bit of a problem. These was more racket back then, and I think it was as much going up and down, air pressure on the ears, going up and down, all that very rapidly. I think maybe that tended to make the eardrums thicken up a little bit, to protect themselves that way.

I think some of the old flight surgeons used to claim, when they gave a hearing check, when they developed this check, where they actually measured the frequencies that you were susceptible to, some of the used to claim that they could tell what kind of airplane you has been flying by what frequencies you were deficient in, because there was a certain beat to different airplanes in certain frequency, to different airplanes. I never even really knew whether that was true or not, but that used to be one of the stories, anyway.

Williams: What about other physical perils of this line of work?

Sen. Glenn: I suppose, just having an airplane quit and have to bail out would be one of the things. I never had an airplane quit. I was hit twelve times in combat—five times
in World War II and seven times in Korea, but I never had an airplane quit, so I was always able to get it back. I never had to bail out. I was very, very lucky in that regard.

But as far as physical characteristics, back in those days, we didn’t have some of the pressure suits and things like that we have now. G suits, they’re called, where you have leggings, in effect, that are inflatable, that run up each leg and around your abdomen, and these are hooked into an air-pressure device on the airplane, where, when you start pulling Gs, which will normally drain the blood down to the lower part of your body, a G suit will then squeeze your extremities and keep the blood up in the upper part of the body so you don’t black out.

Now, back in the days of the Corsair, we didn’t have that, and when you made these gunnery runs, at the end of each run, you’d be pulling maybe, I suppose in each run, you’d maybe get up to four or five Gs, something like that. Making a dive bombing run, when you were out doing dive-bombing practice, now, you’re coming in much steeper, and doing a sharper pull out the bottom, and you would get up to maybe six or seven Gs during pullout, which would last, I suppose, ten to fifteen seconds, maybe. And you have to strain very hard against that.

In other words, you’re tightening up all the lower extremity muscles and you abdominal muscles, and even you chest muscles, to keep from blacking out, keep the blood up in the upper part of your body. So by the time you’ve done maybe eight or ten dive-bombing runs, or have been up on gunnery runs, where you’ve made, I suppose, fifteen passes, twelve or fifteen passes at the banner and
pulled Gs like that, at the end of the day, you know, you’ve had some physical exercise. But you get used to it, and I think your muscles get accustomed to it, too, so you’re adapted to it, and you know exactly just how hard you can pull without blacking out. And obviously, if you start to black out, well, you let up a little bit on it.

Sometimes in dive-bombing practice, you have to be a little bit careful because if you’re trying to carry an attack low, and you’re coming in very steep, why, obviously, if you’re starting to pull out and you’re getting a little bit low, why, you can’t just ease up on it, because you’re going to hit the ground if you do. But usually you’re out of your run on a dive-bombing run, and pulled out and clear, even in the old Corsair, by 1,00 to 1,500 feet, something like that, at the lowest. In a situation like that, you actually would have dropped your load at probably 2,500 feet, something like that, 2,500 to 3,000 feet.

Williams: Your cruising elevation would be about where?
Sen. Glenn: In those old planes we ran on supercharged, and you’d normally cruise at 8,000 or 10,000 feet, something like that.

Williams: How high could you go?
Sen. Glenn: In the Corsair, you could go on up. You had superchargers you could select on that, that you could get the airplane up in the upper 20,000-foot level. The old F4F didn’t have that kind of stuff on it. I don’t remember what the max altitude was on the F4F, but I suppose you might struggle it up to 18,000 or 20,000, maybe something like that, but you wouldn’t have much power left when you got up there. Corsair was a good operating airplane up there. It would operate very
well up there.

Williams: How does this dive-bombing experience compare with, what, I guess, a roller coaster?

Sen. Glenn: Oh, not much—well, I suppose you’re pulling a couple of Gs or so on the bottom of a roller coaster, but it’s very short-lived. It’s not like pulling in, where you’d be pulling for a lengthy period of time for, say, twelve or fifteen seconds, something like that. That’s different.

Williams: So that’s a sensation that really takes time to get used to, I would think.

Sen. Glenn: Yes, it does, and you have to become accustomed to it. If you’re a fighter pilot, too, it’s not only just the positive Gs. We think of the positive Gs. That’s another thing we did a lot out there, is practice air-to-air combat, without shooting. You’d pit certain people against others, and you’d go at it. You’re hassling, you’re doing dog fighting, and in dog fighting, it’s not all positive Gs. You want to get somebody off your tail, and he’s coming in on your tail like this. If you push over sharply, so you’re riding on the belt, going over like that, that’s almost impossible for him to follow and still get ahead of your dive, so he’d have any lead on you.

So you’d go negative Gs a lot of the time, or turn upside down and push up like that, and then you have too much blood in your head, instead of not enough, like you do in at the end of a dive-bombing run. You have to really be cinched in tight if you’re going to push negative Gs, because that rides you up on the belt, and unless you’re doing it every day, day in and day out, it’s very uncomfortable to do that.

Williams: How did you practice the ejections?
Sen. Glenn: Well, back in those days, in World War II days, we had no ejection seats. There wasn’t any such thing; they hadn’t been invented yet. In fact, ejection seats did not become commonplace in fighter aircraft until the late 1950s. When I was doing test pilot work at Patuxent is when the first of the ejection seats came into common use.

Really, the first practical ones were put together in Britain, in England, and they were the Martin-Baker seats, was what they were called. They were the first ones to give really good low-altitude ejection capability. They’d had some that were high altitude, but the Martin-Baker was the first one that developed a low-altitude capability where, if you were down a hundred feet or something like that, you could get out and the seat would work and get you down okay. But in the Corsair, in World War II airplanes, we didn’t have ejection seats.

Williams: So you went down with your plane if your plane was going down?

Sen. Glenn: No, you had parachutes. You could get out all right.

Williams: How could you get out?

Sen. Glenn: Well, what you would do, you had an emergency handle in there that would release the canopy. If you pulled that, the canopy would go, and then you’d get out. Obviously, you’d try and have the airplane going as slow as you could. You didn’t want it in a big dive that would probably blow you back into the tail, but you would get out, and when you’re freefalling then away from the airplane, if you were sure you were clear of the airplane and you weren’t ahead of it, so it was coming down above you, then you’d go ahead and pull the ripcord, and that was it.
You didn’t have a backup chute or anything like that. You sat on your parachute, back in those days. All the Corsair flights and Wildcat flights, you sat on the parachute and had the harness around you and the ripcord handle, D handle, was over here on the left, and when you pulled that, that little wire then went back, and on the parachute, when the pin was pulled, that let the little bungee cords pull the strapping, or pull the cover off of the parachute, and the parachute then would stream out behind and gradually fill with air and let you down.

Williams: And the plane would be at what kind of an attitude? It would be dropping.

Sen. Glenn: Well, if you were going to bail out, you probably didn’t usually have that much control over the airplane. You might if you just were running out of fuel, you could decide exactly how you wanted to do this thing and slow up to where you were almost at stall, and you would get rid of the canopy, of course. You used to practice exactly what your handholds would be, getting out, and where you would put your feet getting out, so that you could push yourself out away from the airplane, so the slipstream wouldn’t blow you back into the tail. They’d had some people that got blown back into the tail and broke arms or legs or whatever. So when you went out, you wanted to go out, really go out hard, and get clear of the airplane. You’d get up and crouch, and the idea was to crouch in the seat, if you could, and get your foot back against the rail on the other side, against the canopy rail on the other side, and you’re still protected from the airstream by the windshield up ahead of you.

Then when you went out, you just ejected yourself. You just gave the
greatest push you could push, and go out. We trained for that once someplace
where they had sort of like a scaffolding, almost, that could be rolled up by the
side of the airplane, and then they had a lot of big pillows and stuff in this thing,
and soft stuff, and you could actually practice getting up in the cockpit and really
shoving yourself out hard. You’d land in all this soft stuff there that was up at
your level. It wasn’t down at the ground. But that’s the only time we ever
practiced that.

Williams: And meanwhile, while you’re in position to kick off from the canopy rail, your
parachute is already in the process of…

Sen. Glenn: Oh, no, no. No, you don’t pull the…

Williams: Until you’ve gotten yourself…

Sen. Glenn: Oh, yes. You’re out and clear of the airplane before you ever pull the D handle.
In fact, that’s one thing you want to protect. You want to make that that D handle
is not going to get caught on a canopy or something, going out. If it does, and it
lets your parachute go, then the parachute probably is going to get caught on the
airplane, and you’d go in with the airplane. So you don’t release the parachute
until you’re out and clear and falling, and even if you’re out and falling, if you got
out at high speed, were lucky enough to get out at high speed, and you have
plenty of altitude, you want to let yourself slow down a little bit before you open
the parachute. The human body, falling, with the area the human body has, falls
at about 128 miles an hour, max speed. So if you got out at 200 or 250, you want
to slow down a little bit before you let the chute go, so you don’t rip any panels
out of the chute when they open.
Williams: Did you ever have to do this?

Sen. Glenn: No, I never had to bail out. I was lucky. Had problems with airplanes and got hit by antiaircraft, as I said, a few times, but never had an airplane go out from under me. I’ve had to make emergency landings and come back, but never had to get out. Never particularly wanted to.

Williams: Talk to me about the *esprit* at El Centro. Was there a lot of swagger there or how were guys behaving?

Sen. Glenn: Not swagger; a lot of pride in what we were doing, a lot of pride in how our training was going. A lot of pride in gunnery, bombing scores, as I mentioned before. Proud that we were getting a squadron together that was going to go overseas, as soon as our training was done, we knew that’s where we were going, so it was very serious stuff. There was a lot of camaraderie. We were forming up a squadron, and the squadron was going to fly together overseas. We knew that, and so it was a very serious business.

We had a CO [commanding officer] then, he’d been in the Marine Corps, he was Major Haines, Pete Haines. Pete was an excellent CO, one of the best COs I ever had, and I always felt I was fortunate to have him as my first CO in the Marine Corps. One instance just comes to mind as far as *esprit de corps* goes. We were all proud to be in the Marine Corps, but I remember one day I was waiting in his office for somebody to come for a meeting. This was at a time when the Marines were really into heavy ground combat out in the Pacific. There had been a lot of stuff in the papers and on the radio about what the Marines were doing out there. We’d been sort of joking about it, and I was sort of making a half
joke and I said, “Well, Major, what makes Marines any better than anybody else out there?” And he got very serious. He didn’t treat it lightly. He said, “I’ll tell you.” He said, “Marine training makes every Marine more afraid of letting his buddies down than he is of getting hurt himself.”

I always thought that was pretty good, because if you’re talking about people in boot camp, for instance, which I didn’t go through, I went through flight training, but people in boot camp, they take them from being civilians and take them down to nothing in boot camp, and then rebuild them with a loyalty to each other in that unit that goes beyond anything people who haven’t been through it can imagine, and there’s that same kind of feeling in a squadron, and the same kind of feeling between those in the air and those on the ground.

It what, later on, nor so much, in my case, in World War II, but in Korea, we’d go out and be doing work in front of the First Marine Division, and we worked in close and you took hits sometimes that you might have avoided had you been dropping higher, or in and out fast, but you wanted to do the best job for those guys on the ground. There was that feeling even in El Centro, when we were training, about, if you want to call it pride in the Marine Corps, well, so be it. It’s esprit de corps. It helps win battles, because people are willing to do things that they wouldn’t otherwise do. In Korea, we’ve broken up fire sometimes, where there was intense antiaircraft fire. Sometimes people come back in on a second run to help break up antiaircraft fire, because people are getting concentrated fire. Well, now that’s a little bit crazy, but you do it.

You have that kind of feeling about the job you’re doing, and the pride
you take in it. It’s not just a flying job; it’s a job where you’re there to accomplish a certain mission, and that was the feeling in the squadron, even back then.

Williams: What about the relations that you had with the people at El Centro who were ground controllers and mechanics and so forth? How did that work?

Sen. Glenn: Well, you spent some time with those people, because these were the people that were going to be your enlisted people when you went overseas. They were the ones who were going to keep the engines in good shape, and the instruments in good shape, and pack the parachutes, and these were people you were going to depend on, so we had quite a few squadron activities there, where we did things together, you know, if you had a stand-down some day and we had a barbecue, where the whole squadron was there, or something like that. It was training as a combat unit, and that’s what we were, and we were in good shape when we finally got ready to go.

Williams: We’ve talked about gunnery, we’ve talked about bombing practice. Any other practice activities that you did?

Sen. Glenn: No, those were the main things. Well, you used other airplanes. You used what we called the SNJ, which the Air Force called the North American Trainer. It was the AT-6 in the Air Force. We had instrument training in the back, where you put a hood over you in the back and then you had to fly this thing from the back seat, completely on instruments, without being able to see out and see the horizon, just like you do in weather. So we had certain requirements for that.

Night flying is different. We had night flying, so much night flying that
you had to do. We did that in the SNJ, so you did some dual flight in that, because you had an instructor in the front seat, as well as night flying in your regular F4F or Corsair. Of course, they didn’t have any landing lights on them, so what you did, you landed by your estimation of how high you were off the ground by looking at the runway lights along the side of the runway. So that’s a little different kind of landing than most people have experience at today, too, when there are landing lights on the airplane that illuminate the runway ahead of you.

El Centro was a good place for night flying, though, because it was usually crystal clear and you could see a hundred miles out there at night. In the old SNJ, if you had a nice, clear, moonlit night, I remember we used to do loops out there and do mild acrobatics at night, which wasn’t part of the syllabus, but it was something that we did anyway. That was sort of fun. I remember doing that.

Williams: Just before we finish up here today, what about life off the base, while you were at El Centro?

Sen. Glenn: Well, life off the base. We got together a lot for dinners and got to know each other better that way. One thing that I do recall on this that came out after the war, this was sort of funny. We used to all jump in our cars and go about fifteen miles down to the border at Mexicali, and just across the border at Mexicali, there was a big nice restaurant. This was in Mexico, a big restaurant called the Golden Lion. Of course, in El Centro, we were on meat rationing, and we had certain meat rations and we used that very carefully, of course, and if you were going to somebody’s house, quite often, if they were having steak, why, you’d say, “Well, okay, take a couple of my ration things,” to help out on a steak dinner or
something like that.

Well, you didn’t need any ration sheets down in Mexicali, of course. You were over into Mexico. We used to go over there and we’d get some wonderful steaks, big sirloin steaks that were just wonderful. So we’d go down there maybe once a week. It wasn’t until after the war, we found out that what we were buying was horse meat down there. [Laughter]

[End of interview]