

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

The Nimitz Education and Research Center
Fredericksburg, Texas

An interview with William Lindsey
Fredericksburg, Texas
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ED METZLER: This is Ed Metzler and today is the 28th of December, 2012. I'm in Fredericksburg, Texas at the Admiral Nimitz Museum interviewing Mr. Bill Lindsey. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. So let me start, Bill, by thanking you for spending your afternoon with us to share your World War Two experiences. Let's get started by having you introduce yourself and tell us when and where you were born. We'll take it from there.

BILL LINDSEY: Thank you very much and it's an honor for me to be here. My nickname is "Billy" and everybody in my hometown called me Billy but everybody else has called me "Bill" for all these many years. My full name is William Harry Lindsey. I was born July the 24th, 1919 in Hamburg, Arkansas. And did my school years there. Did my whole life there. And then I went to college in Henderson College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas for two years.

ED METZLER: What'd your dad do for living?

BILL LINDSEY: My dad was a plantation manager for a cousin of my mother down in the Delta region in Ashland County near the Mississippi River. And this is a large plantation in which they owned their own cotton gin and he had fifty negro families that took care of growing the cotton and pickin' it and what have you. And one family, as the saying goes, literally one family could take care of forty acres and you. Very primitive. Then when John Deere came out with their mechanized products, the whole scenario changed. But he was that until he died in 1942 at age

63. 'Cause he smoked himself to death and told me I should never smoke. And I've never smoked in my life.

ED METZLER: Good decision [*laughs*]. Now did you have brothers and sisters?

BILL LINDSEY: I had five brothers. I had five siblings and had three brothers and two sisters. And I was the youngest of six.

ED METZLER: Mm-mmm.

BILL LINDSEY: My mother was 40 years old when I was born and, so in essence I was sort of an only child. My sister being seven years older than I was.

ED METZLER: And probably spoiled too, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: Oh I was. And being born in 1919 I can remember that one of the big topics of conversation after seven or eight beers was the sinking of the Titanic. And times got good. I can remember the good times. Until the so called "market crash" in 1929 and the economic fact that by the time Roosevelt got in as President, the economic factor had begun to clear and our economy was coming back. And they elected Roosevelt as President and he conceived the idea of destroying several lives and, but I can remember my time during that Depression. That there wasn't, there just wasn't any money. There just wasn't any money. I got a job as a, after

I dropped out of college in 1940 because I didn't have any money and no job, I got a job doing school census. And I went around the school district and got the names of all the people. And I got so much, I got fifteen cents per enrollee. And when I got back I had \$105.

ED METZLER: That was good money back then! That was a ransom!

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. My daddy was workin' and he talked to the grocery store man, was his very good friend. And it was a year and a half before he was able to pay anything on his grocery bill. Because the people, my cousins that he was working for, had no money to pay him. But he stayed on for about a year and a half. And finally he got sick and couldn't work and they let him go.

ED METZLER: So after your school census job, you had other jobs?

BILL LINDSEY: Well I was a, in my genealogy I have learned that the condition of the Lindsey family, which goes back like many people to the Chesapeake country, came over in the early 1600s. Less than fifty years after they ended up in Massachusetts. But they invariably put in a saw mill around a stream. And use the water power.

ED METZLER: The water power, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And they also ground grain. And did woodworking. And from a genetic standpoint, my father and two of my older brothers were real good woodworkers. And my hobby, down through all these years when I be practicing medicine and wanted to get physical release of tension, I decided I'd do woodworking. And so I did woodworking. And I made lots of furniture. Tables and chairs. I made chairs for desks, cabinets. Stools. And everything.

ED METZLER: So you did that, you were doing that when the war started? Or did you go into the military before the war started?

BILL LINDSEY: No, no. I went into the military on February 7, 1941.

ED METZLER: Okay, so, ten months before the war, year.

BILL LINDSEY: I went, and so all this, I kinda got ahead of myself on the biographical aspects of this. I went into the service in 1941. I had planned to make it my career because I had two other brothers that had spent time in the Navy. I tried to get into the Navy first. Let me tell you how I got in the service. Is that alright?

ED METZLER: You bet!

BILL LINDSEY: A friend of mine's father was president of the bank. He came in to me one day, we were pretty good buddies. He was two or three years older than I was. And he said, "Bill,

Billy, how'd you like to fly an airplane?" I said, "Heck, what do you mean?" He said, "Well they got a program started. The civilian pilot training program. And if we go up here to Monticello and you can pass a physical, we can get in." And he said, "I'd like to have somebody to ride up and back." He had his own car.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: So I said, "Well tell me about it." He said, "The physical exam it costs \$6." And I said, "Heck, I don't have \$6. How 'bout tomorrow?" And I went back to the pool hall and won \$6. Went up there and passed the physical. And took my CPT training at Monticello, Arkansas and I saw real early, after about three or four hours in this Piper Cub. And the lady said, you'd be a good pilot, why don't you get in the service? All along this was, I knew, see I'm old enough to know that we're going to fight a war with Germany by this time.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: I've even seen the steel coming through our town going down to get on the ports in Houston so that Japan, who didn't have any air would have something to shoot back at us.

ED METZLER: All the scrap. Yeah, mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: All the scrap, that's right. And so I thought, well, let's do this. Because I wanted an education. My daddy used to always tell me, if you're going to amount to anything you've got to have an education. In those days. Now you just have to take the test. Alright. So I went to flying school. Got in in February of 1941. February the 7th. There were, I wanna say 13, but I think there's just 12, of all the people that went to flying school, they sent us to Hicksville and then we split up. Some went to Randolph and Kelly. Others went to San Angelo and Barksdale, and that's me. I went to San Angelo and then to Barksdale. Only two of us got through the war.

ED METZLER: Really. Two out of the 12?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. Me and a fellow named 'Kid'.

ED METZLER: Most of you ended up being pilots in the war?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. Yeah, we were pilots and I ended up an MOS number 1024. Do you know what that is?

ED METZLER: No.

BILL LINDSEY: It's equivalent to a commercial airline pilot, first pilot, in MATS – Military Air Transport.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And it's a long story about how I got to all of that.

ED METZLER: Well anyhow, so who pays you when you're doing civilian pilot training?

BILL LINDSEY: Oh, nobody! That CPT training?

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: I didn't pay the airlines. The government handled that program.

ED METZLER: And so, but you didn't have a job because you're full-time training, right?

BILL LINDSEY: No. We go up on certain days and fly.

ED METZLER: Oh, okay. So it's a part-time thing?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, it's a part-time thing.

ED METZLER: So how long did it take for you to kinda complete the-

BILL LINDSEY: Seven hours.

ED METZLER: Oh, that's it?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. And I soloed about three and a half or four hours of flying. We was out on that [*indiscernible, 11:29*] landing and Adam got out and said, "You take it around." And that Piper Cub, he's kinda a heavy fellow. Short guy. And that airplane was lighter than-

ED METZLER: That thing was a hot rod after he got out, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: He later came by to see me when I was stationed at Great Falls, Montana.

ED METZLER: I'll be darned.

BILL LINDSEY: And just, without going into detail, I don't know how much to say, what you want.

ED METZLER: I just want you to talk. Keep going.

BILL LINDSEY: Okay. I went Barksdale and graduated. And that was a two-engine flying school. And they took, I've learned later, they took, this is me as a number talking, I'm not bragging on

myself, but they took the best pilots and we became Ferry Pilots. And they didn't exactly know where they were going to send us. Well they sent us to Pendleton, Oregon and we were attached to Jimmy Doolittle's organization and was practicing take-offs in B-25s to bomb Japan.

ED METZLER: Now let me interrupt you for a second. The war hasn't started yet, right?

BILL LINDSEY: Oh, no.

ED METZLER: Okay, so we're still in 1941, but we're not in December yet?

BILL LINDSEY: We're still in 1941, before the war. To backtrack a little bit, in 1940, looking for a job, I did a lot of hitchhiking when daddy didn't have an odd job to do, like re-bonding this or putting down a floor and store building and stuff like that, I'd go hitchhiking. And I went out to Dallas and at the time of the expedition in 1936 and later. And then I went up to Salem, Massachusetts and was up there in 1940. And I remember listening to the radio, how the stupid French got bypassed in the Maginot Line. You know? And it was scary.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And the whole world, I shouldn't say that. The entire United States was absolutely scared to death. I have been told that at that time we only had 400,000 armed services men in service at that time. And they were scattered everywhere. That didn't work

out, so I hitchhiked back home. And that's when I went into the CPT track program. And then I sent the necessary letters to the Naval and to the Air Force which is part of the Signal Corps in Omaha, Nebraska at that time. And I finally learned that they'd accepted me for '41G Class. And entered through Little Rock and go. And so I did my flying training. Now we're back to Pendleton, Oregon, where we got out. We stayed there about six weeks and all I could do, I can remember hearing the roar of those B-25s. They'd set the parking brakes and just open wide, open and away you went. And so we went on down to Long Beach. Long Beach Army Air Base, which is part of the Douglas Plant down there. Do you know that?

ED METZLER: No, I know Douglass is on the West Coast.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, well anyhow it was part of the city airport. Used the same airport that Douglas Aircraft did. And I was stationed there. And on December the 7th, the dropped the bomb. I was commanding officer of the base for that Sunday. No Second Lieutenant. And I got a message from the teletype machine that said, "Close the base. Call your Commanding Officer. Further instructions will arrive soon." Or shortly or something. But that's all there was to it.

ED METZLER: My goodness.

BILL LINDSEY: So I get in the recon car with the driver and we go out to the front gate. And I tell the Sergeant out there that I've received these orders from Washington, that I've been asked to

tell you to close the base and don't let anybody in. And guess what? The Officers Club was right next to the front gate. They hadn't closed that gate yet.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] It's still open!

BILL LINDSEY: First order I ever gave of any consequence was that.

ED METZLER: [*laughter*] And it was totally disregarded!

BILL LINDSEY: It was totally disregarded. The next morning the western United States was afraid and they thought that the Japs were going to attack us but they didn't know when.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And they were literally scared to death. That they might come. And so the Signal Corps went and painted all the tops of all the store buildings and everything, so from the air you thought you was in a neighborhood. And they wanted to go up on Monday. They wanted to go up and inspect and see how their camouflage looked. And guess who knew how to fly a Stearman PT-13? Which is the only airplane available from that airbase. Was me!

ED METZLER: Yeah?

BILL LINDSEY: And so they got me in that stupid airplane and it took us, we got up to 10,000 feet but we didn't get up high, after about 5,000 feet you just climbed 1- to 300 feet a minute. By the time you covered that whole lot, we were gone all morning. We finally came back down and that's the last time I flown that airplane.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] What did the camouflage look like? Was it effective?

BILL LINDSEY: It was good! It was effective to me. They said, "Did you see that community over there?" That's what they looked like, and it would be a plant. An aircraft plant. [*Indiscernible, 18:48*] and Lockheed and North American, Vultee. And it was all there. And soon therein, I'm sure you had pilots tell you this, but soon thereafter my wife-to-be came out and we married in early January, the 19th. People do crazy things in the war. [*laughter*] And I say that DNA will not be denied. [*laughter*]

ED METZLER: Yeah, I know what you're saying.

BILL LINDSEY: And so we, we were in bed one night shortly after we got married. I was not flying an airplane anywhere. Around, I don't remember what time it was but it was late at night. All hell broke loose. Anti-aircraft guns started going off and the sky had lit up and everything.

ED METZLER: Now this is in the Long Beach area?

BILL LINDSEY: In Long Beach.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And what in the world? Have the Japs landed? Because we'd had any number of reports of Japanese submarines on the west coast. And all kind of rumors that the Japanese, people, as part of all this, they didn't like the United States even though they ran all the truck gardens there. I maintain, as a matter of opinion, that Roosevelt and the war powers were justified in confining those people.

ED METZLER: Really?

BILL LINDSEY: I really do. I think it's, you know, I think it's terrible that they question that at the present time.

ED METZLER: Of course they didn't at the time, I don't think.

BILL LINDSEY: No! Everybody's glad! Didn't know if they were going to stab you or not. Everybody was scared to death! So anyhow, came to find out that some nut had not filed a flight plan that was passed on to the Signal Corps and they were trying to shoot him down. And they never did hit him.

ED METZLER: That's what's really troubling! *[laughter]* That they never got him!

BILL LINDSEY: And to this day, that's known as the Battle of Signal Hill. *[laughter]* You've heard of it.

ED METZLER: Well I know Signal Hill just because I've been in the oil business.

BILL LINDSEY: Oh, okay.

ED METZLER: Signal Hill is big on oil. I never heard of the Battle of Signal Hill.

BILL LINDSEY: It was a battle. It was the Battle of Signal Hill.

ED METZLER: That's good.

BILL LINDSEY: And so that's my first dealings with Pacific Theater, *[laughs]* was on the United States of America. And I ferried airplanes there for a while and then in July they ordered another ferry group in Great Falls, Montana, called the Seventh Theater. I went up to that assignment-

ED METZLER: What did they call the first ferry group that you were in?

BILL LINDSEY: Well we were just there in Long Beach.

ED METZLER: Okay. Didn't have any special-

BILL LINDSEY: Didn't have any special, not, name that I can remember. So anyhow, they farmed us out and I was a System Operation Officer in Edmonton. To fly airplanes from Great Falls to Fairbanks. Because, to help the, you know the Russians came into that war, kinda sideways. And we used 'em to our advantage, we thought, because they would present, faced the headway from the east and the west. And catch 'em in the middle. And then we flew airplanes up there. Well the Operations Officer was a man named, I don't want to say bad things but I remember it was a man named, his name was Foote. And he had come in, in those days, rank had some meaning and respect. And this character went to Washington, I know that because I've talked with him, and he had a trucking business in Bedlam and all he had was a flatbed truck and a pickup truck and he presented himself as a Transportation Officer. So he wound up as an Operations [Officer]. And he and I didn't hit it off in Edmonton.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And I wanted to fly airplanes anyhow. I said, "I can sit behind a desk. I won't be here forever. Not my whole career. I want to go back and fly airplanes." So I went back to Great Falls-

ED METZLER: So you didn't actually ferry aircraft up to Alaska?

BILL LINDSEY: Oh, beau coups.

ED METZLER: Tell me what you were flying.

BILL LINDSEY: Well I flew, up to Alaska I flew A-20s and B-25s.

ED METZLER: Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: Shortly after I went to Great Falls, around November, I think it was, they sent me to Smyrna, Tennessee and I got four-engine training at that time. And everything after that I figured was four-engined. Mostly picking up B-17s down to Seattle and flying 'em to modification plants in Pyote and Cheyenne and Denver and Salina, Kansas. And I can't think of any others.

ED METZLER: Modifications?

BILL LINDSEY: Well they built a basic airplane and give it technological advances that the war created because of the experience of usage. You know. For example, one model of the B-17, the Billy gun down below, which was a death trap. They changed that.

ED METZLER: Yeah, they changed the nose turret, gave 'em, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: Those changes.

ED METZLER: Yeah, so the B-17 actually got up to G or H version I think.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Before the war was over.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, that's right. And so I, after I learned how to fly four-engines, then I just flew B-17s. And I flew B-24s.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm. Liberators.

BILL LINDSEY: If you want to know of an airplane that ain't worth a damn, it's the B-24.

ED METZLER: Is that right?

BILL LINDSEY: You need to read the book *Connected*.

ED METZLER: Who wrote it?

BILL LINDSEY: I want to Hillenbrand.

ED METZLER: Something like that?

BILL LINDSEY: Something like that. It's been a best seller recently.

ED METZLER: Oh really? I'm not aware of it, but that-

BILL LINDSEY: *Unbroken*. And it talks about life in the B-24. And I've got a story I'll tell you later about a B-24.

ED METZLER: Okay. Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: And so we flew those airplanes and then I kept on, I would sometimes go over to Fairbanks and then sometimes I'd go to, I'd go from Seattle out in the B-17. Flying the Alaskan highway, we'd take off from Great Falls and go to Edmonton and Fort Saint John and Fort Nelson and White Horse and Big Delta in Fairbanks. And one experience I had at White Horse. Oh, two things. One was that at one time a classmate of mine was a C.O. at White Horse. He was part of the group that went up there from Long Beach. Craig Cruise from Missouri. And it got 70 below zero. See when the wind gets still, down in those valleys, the air gets heavier.

And heavier. And heavier. And it got to 70 below zero. We were to stop flying when it got 40 below zero. And so I left Fort Nelson, going to White Horse and landed at White Horse and found out that it was 70 below zero and [*indiscernible, 27:53*]. And he said, "Lindsey, come out here." And he whipped out his tallywhacker and took a leak. And, rising up like an icicle about this high. It froze as he passed the water! And I did the same thing.

ED METZLER: That's cold.

BILL LINDSEY: That's cold! [*Laughter*]

ED METZLER: That is cold. Made your own icicle right there on the spot.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. When I came back to Great Falls and told my wife about that, she just, fit to be tied. But it's those things that you remember.

ED METZLER: That's right.

BILL LINDSEY: And I told you, I used to shoot pool when I was a kid. I got pretty good at it. I wasn't *very* good but, 30 or 40 balls was a long string for me when I was 14.

ED METZLER: That's long for anybody.

BILL LINDSEY: So anyhow, I got to Fairbanks, on one of my trips to Fairbanks, there was a Russian, I hear the Colonel, was in the Officer's Club. Cold, underground. Somebody heard that I, one time in the past, had played pool. Anyhow, this guy was looking for somebody to play. So I said, "Yeah, I play. I haven't practiced but I'll play." And so I got to beating him. He was losing. And the personnel officer at Land Field, he was a Marine in the Officer's Club. He sidled over to me and he said, "For political reasons, you better let him win." And I did.

ED METZLER: Really?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Dang. It would have been fun to have beaten him, wouldn't it?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, it would have. But I didn't win. I was clever enough to know how to do it and he may not know why I did it. I don't know. Instead of shooting an obvious shot I would take the more difficult shot.

ED METZLER: So what do you think about the Russians?

BILL LINDSEY: What do I think about the Russians? I think the secret thing about the Russians is that they are, what's the word for it? They are afraid of outsiders.

ED METZLER: Xenophobic.

BILL LINDSEY: Xenophobic! That's it. I just couldn't recall the word there. Xenophobic. And they're xenophobic because when you look back over their history that they had interfaced with the Chinese and the Mongrels who were Chinese, out in the Balkan country and in the Eastern Mongolia. Over a long period of history where there was no bad air, no nothing, they were at the mercy of those people. And since time of the world, long before the birth of Christ, there was trade between what we now know as the Holy land and the tribes that were up in what is now Russia. Russia doesn't have any natural resources except timber and farmland. They don't have minerals and gold and those kinda stuff. And so they, they're xenophobic and that's their problem. And Stalin, God bless his soul, he was a schizophrenic. He was paranoid. Everybody knows that. It's said in that book called *Let History Judge*, that he eliminated some 40 million people.

ED METZLER: Of his own people. Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: Of his own people. And yet they get teed off that the Germans got rid of all his six million people that claimed to be Jews! When nobody really knows what a Jew is!

ED METZLER: Yeah, it was blurred.

BILL LINDSEY: It really was.

ED METZLER: Let me ask you about a few of the aircraft you flew because I was interested in your comment about the B-24.

BILL LINDSEY: Alright.

ED METZLER: And you, your personal observation was the B-24 was a nightmare, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: Alright, let me. When I was flying up, got, let's see. Let me just give me about a minute and then I'll come back to that. After I learned how to fly the four-stuffs, they formed the 21st bomb group that went over into the Pacific and they were flying B-29s and also they were flying in India, around Calicut and East Pakistan. Okay? And I came back from flying and had learned that nearly all of my base, let's say all of 'em, had been assigned to the 21st air command. [*Indiscernible*, 33:33] we need you because of this airplane. And I can tell you something about it, too, second handed. What the pilot told me. Anyhow, and Colonel Scharbert said, well then he said, "Well we got what I think will be a better deal for you. We're going to send you down to Homestead and you're going to qualify as an airline pilot." And so I went down to Homestead, Florida and qualified and went up to Wilmington, 99, Delaware. And after that I flew out of Mitchel Field and stayed at [*indiscernible*, 34:13], Casablanca, Tripoli, Cairo, Abadan, and Calcutta. And I made that run several times.

ED METZLER: And you were flying what?

BILL LINDSEY: C-54s.

ED METZLER: C-54s.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right.

ED METZLER: The C-54 was what the DC-4?

BILL LINDSEY: DC-4. Triangle, tricycle in there.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

BILL LINDSEY: And so I flew those, really the rest of my, but once I was flying the B-24 and I'll get to the story I'm going to tell you.

ED METZLER: Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: Would fly a B-24. But mostly C-54s. And then they wanted instructors. And they looked at the roster and asked me if I wanted to be an instructor down in Homestead and teach the pilots coming in. And I said, "Sure."

ED METZLER: Now what time frame are we talking about right now? What year.

BILL LINDSEY: This is in late 1944.

ED METZLER: Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: Well actually I'd say the summer of 1944. Because there was a hurricane came through in the fall down there. Anyhow, so I said, "Sure. I'll do that." So we packed up everything from Wilmington, put my son in the back of my two door '39 Chevrolet and away we went. Went down there, I walk into the operations, and I see the man, the one person on this earth that we just didn't click. And I sat in a tourist court for six weeks. I was out in Long Beach. Nothing ever really was said. He was two classes ahead of me. He was in 41-East.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And nothing really hardly was ever said. He just didn't like me. For some reason. I don't know why. I never figured it out. Well anyhow, we left the homestead and went to India. To fly the Hump. When I got over to India, I made 32 trips across the Hump. I was one trip, and they would give you enough gasoline, see they were hauling gasoline over to support the clerics and all [*indiscernible*, 36:57].

ED METZLER: In barrels. In drums.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, barrels, drums. Usually had a B-24. They shut off the auxiliary tanks.

Interesting feature, the B-24, right down here is a cross feed and you can put all four engines to feed off each other. So it was, you know, not just in this tank and then that tank and then that tank.

ED METZLER: Sure. Kinda almost like a manifold and you can share.

BILL LINDSEY: On this trip I was sent to Kunming. In a B-24. And from there I was to go north to Chengdu. Cause it's a big city in western China. Big city. And I learned a lot of information about the Chinese there. Remind me and we'll come back to it.

ED METZLER: Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: I had checked out a classmate of mine from the time that we had entered flying school. A fellow named Davidson. And he was following me some of the flight but we were close together. Well I landed first and he told me, said, "I'm never going to come back from this war." And I had got on the ground and was just got debriefed from the weather man. And we heard Davidson's voice saying "This is so and so and so and so". And Tyler responded. Boom. He flew into the ground.

ED METZLER: What do you think caused that?

BILL LINDSEY: He did.

ED METZLER: You think he just hung it up.

BILL LINDSEY: He just hung it up. He just didn't, it was his time. And I saw they had hurt me.

ED METZLER: Strange.

BILL LINDSEY: But anyhow, in talking with, and I'll get to my B-24 in just a minute.

ED METZLER: Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: Let me digress a second. And this Chengdu, I had a long talk with the weather man. Who told me that the young, business-class people in China were going to be heard from in the future. And if they weren't ready, wanted to become westernized, because we'd been friends with China all those many years, Boer War. I mean the Boxer Rebellion. And Chennault went and responded to the Jap invasion, all this kind of stuff. After the war, immediately after the war, Roosevelt sent a commission over there to interview and find out who they're going to support. Because a lot of the gasoline we were hauling, to take care of aircraft over the Burma Road and Chennault had been stored by these moguls. These, you know, local chiefs.

ED METZLER: Yeah, kinda local warlords, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, warlords.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: It was viewed, and so I've always felt, that Chiang, Madame Chiang, so enamored Roosevelt, that he listened to what she said. Which is what Chiang Kai-Shek wanted her to say because he was a warlord.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: We made a tremendous blur, error right there. A fellow named White that's written a book and this is the essence of it. The way I interpreted the book. But anyhow, when we went over to take our load over, the weather man took our travel time and they knew our fuel consumption, and they plotted enough gasoline to be left in the airplane to come back plus 45 minutes. Okay?

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: I had made an awful fast trip to Kunming. Which tells you that I had bought a tailwind.

ED METZLER: Right. And good gas mileage.

BILL LINDSEY: The weather forecasting was in its primitive stages even in those days. So I've got to leave Chengdu and I've got to go back. And, if you go to Kunming, you go here. And you go up to Chengdu, up north, 600 miles. If you want to cut a hypotenuse, and come back to Emeishan, which is in upper Burma, you save a little distance. And one thing is you have to come awful close to a mountain called "Tali", T-A-L-I. And I reasoned that the best thing to do, since all the gasoline we've got, I knew I had a tailwind. But I better do it that way and not come around. You didn't land in Kunming, you just drove on through. So I take off. And I get to, we didn't have pressurized tanks and stuff like that but I did have a little mask.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: To have oxygen and stuff like that. And I got up to about 21,000 feet. The highest I've ever been personally. Flying an airplane. I just didn't fly that high. Over The Hump, we flew 12-, 14-, 16,000 at the most depending on the weather. And so here we headed back home. And all we had then was a directional radio and I tried to pick up mission [*indiscernible*, 43:29]. And I couldn't get 'em. But I had enough sense to fly what I had plotted as though I was on instruments. And so I held my headache and when we were, oh I don't remember now, but we were considerably overdue, I finally picked up the airbase extension. Bad weather. Limited visibility. 50 to 100 feet at the most, which was pretty low in those days.

ED METZLER: Yes it is.

BILL LINDSEY: And so I had to come in. I had to admit I was running out of gasoline. So when I went across the upper cone, there's a little radio base that's broadcast A and N, you know? But if they're fused together, those are the objects when you get one signal. A and N and N and A in Morse code, dot dash, dash dot. Okay? I come in on the upper cone, this is the way you're supposed to, and you fly so many seconds. And then you turn 45 degrees, dropping down in about 500 feet a minute, and make a 225 degree turn and come back down and land on the runway. When I go over the upper cone, this outer engine on here sputters. At this time, I put it on cross-feed. Or, the co-pilot. My co-pilot was named, what's his name? Jim Jones from [*indiscernible*, 45:20]. Later we went to China together after the war. Put it on cross-feed. And when I leveled up to finish the curve to get us back in, when I turned this way, this one sputtered and quit. And then when I level up to do this number of seconds and turn again, this thing quits. When I crossed into the runway, the inside engine on the left was the only one running.

ED METZLER: That's what they call, "running on fumes" [*laughs*].

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. The right engine, the third engine, has a hydraulic system on it. And it was gone. I had no brakes, I had no nothin'. Going down the runway, this damn thing quit. And I landed out of gas at the end of the runway. That's my worst experience with the B-24.

ED METZLER: But you can't blame the aircraft for that! [*laughter*] That was just, got stretched too far.

BILL LINDSEY: Just got stretched too far. On another time, one of my friends, was the class of '41-E. Fellow named William Wespun, who retired over here in Kerrville. It was a Lieutenant General that stayed in SAC. And that secret mission they had. What was it? The treaty heading was NORAD. North Atlantic Air Defense Command. And I've been through that.

ED METZLER: North Atlantic, Radon?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. Anyhow, he worked at Hastings Mill. The headquarters of the CBI. And he came over and he wanted me to check him out over The Hump. And so we loaded up with gasoline and took off. And we were whizzing down the runway we got just, the B-24 has real heavy landing gear. And just as we were lifting off, the fourth engine, the temperature of the thing just [*whizzing sound*] and I looked down and I'm blowing oil. So I feathered the engine so it stops on the co-pilot seat. And he's the pilot. We, and you had an airplane has the tendency to turn this way. On the right rudder, he put both his feet and I put both my feet. And I bet you we didn't get 200 feet high. Trafficked around, came back in and landed. That old thing was a B-24. When I read that book *Connected* this fellow is a navigator in the story. The airplane got, I'm not really telling you anything you won't know. The airplane got splintered flying patrol out in the Pacific. And they got out of the thing and it's a real story. So my story with the B-24.

ED METZLER: Not your favorite.

BILL LINDSEY: No, it's not my favorite.

ED METZLER: Let me back up here for a minute.

BILL LINDSEY: I flew P-38s.

ED METZLER: Oh, you did?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, I flew P-38s.

ED METZLER: Lightnings.

BILL LINDSEY: It was a, they had 'em redlined at about oh around 500 miles an hour. If you got above that the back tail would flutter.

ED METZLER: *[laughs]*

BILL LINDSEY: And you know me, I got it up, as soon as the tail fluttered I got, I slowed down right quick.

ED METZLER: You knew when it started fluttering I bet.

BILL LINDSEY: I got to wondering one time, whether or not a B-17, what they would glide at. All the time I'm thinking about self-preservation. That's the first law of nature. And when I was way back there in Great Falls, and they just started flying those things, I got up to about 13-14,000 feet, which above Great Falls was about 10,000 feet above ground. And I stopped off those Boer engines. All four. And I flied it at about down, I was able to maintain my airspeed at about 500 feet a minute. And so I knew from that that if I ever had to ditch an airplane I could do it. At 500 feet a minute. Because you dip it just before you land and then turn it up and it'll-

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: It'll push on in. That's what the guy Sullenberger did.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm. We landed on the Hudson.

BILL LINDSEY: He knew how to do it.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: I'd sure like to talk to him. But anyhow, so I flew B-24, I didn't fly a B-25. We picked 'em up from Lockheed. Lockheed Navy Terminal. Took 'em to the east coast. Our usual route going to the east coast, this is way back to begin with. Would be to go from Long Beach to Palm Springs and to Phoenix to Tucson, El Paso. And then we'd go to Dallas. Sometimes stop in the Big Springs and Love Field, Jackson, Mississippi and Atlanta Georgia. And all the way into the east coast.

ED METZLER: So you kinda took the southern route, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: We would take the southern route.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm. What about the A-20? One doesn't hear a lot about the A-20.

BILL LINDSEY: The A-20 is, the A-20 and the DB-7 had all the character, the first A-20 I ever flew, got it out of Seattle. And the test pilot saw Eddie Allen from Boeing. Who later got killed in testing an airplane. But he said, he showed me the cockpit. You familiarize yourself with all the things. I was supposed to go to McChord Field which is southwest of Seattle at 240 degrees. He said, "You get in this airplane and you set your, and go" whatever RPM to take off was. But said that the crew was made of 1600 RPM a minute. At 2,000 feet in five and 20 minutes and you'll be at McChord Field. That's all the instructions I had. *[Laughter]* I get in the airplane and it jerked my hat off when I give it the throttle because of the power. We go down the runway at 2,000 feet, 1600 RPM and we're landing at McChord Field. I only flew one or two of those.

ED METZLER: Was it easy to fly?

BILL LINDSEY: Yes. Later, as you know, strafing airplanes, railroads -

ED METZLER: Attack aircraft. So how many times did you fly The Hump?

BILL LINDSEY: 32. Roughly.

ED METZLER: And some of those runs were harrowing and others were just kind of everyday –

BILL LINDSEY: Routine.

ED METZLER: Routine, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: You'd land in Kunming and turn the airplane off. Somebody would come out the little dune buggy. And you'd turn your airplane over to them and you'd go into the mess hall and there would be a lot of people from as far as here to this wall over yonder.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] 150 feet, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: There would be three pans, about this big a square.

ED METZLER: [*laughter*] Three foot pan, yeah?

BILL LINDSEY: And all they were cooking was eggs. And the sorriest bread. It would have straw and everything else in it.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*]

BILL LINDSEY: And the only English that the China would use was “Flied Eggs, Scrambled Eggs?” And you’d walk by in your pan and he’d say, “Flied eggs, scrambled eggs?” And you’d say, “Scrambled eggs” and then, boom. Down he’d go and you’d get your bread. They had no citrus fruits.

ED METZLER: So this wasn’t a fine restaurant? [*laughter*]

BILL LINDSEY: No it wasn’t. And the last flight I took over The Hump was with a fellow named Jiggins. We called him “Mama Jiggins”. And he had started flying school with me and he said, “Lindsey, when you,” and he’d been sent over there for some reason. I don’t know why. He said, “Lindsey,” he said, “I am starving to death. Something to eat, I want some citrus juice of some type. Could you bring me a can of orange juice or something like that?” I told him I’d see what I could do and I never did go back. And I bet he’s still waiting on that juice.

ED METZLER: [*laughter*] Still waiting!

BILL LINDSEY: Oh golly.

ED METZLER: So there's lots of stories about aircraft that were lost flying The Hump. I assume most of those were due to weather. Is that correct?

BILL LINDSEY: I want to say yes. I want to say that on January the 5th, early January, 5th, 6th, or 7th in 1941, the weather was horrible. It was horrible.

ED METZLER: '41?

BILL LINDSEY: I mean, no, I mean '45.

ED METZLER: Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: '45. What's wrong with me? And the gentleman in charge of the CBI, and I don't remember his name. But he insisted that flights continue. I heard three maydays. Totally useless and unnecessary. Just because the words of a man, said something.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: Things like that bug me.

ED METZLER: What was your cargo usually?

BILL LINDSEY: Flying The Hump?

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: Gasoline.

ED METZLER: I've heard stories that they flew mules and everything.

BILL LINDSEY: Alright, now, let me tell you a little bit more about the CBI. My experience. They had the Burma Road. And Stilwell was working and they built the bridge over the River Kwai and all this kind of stuff. The Japs came up north up into Burma, up to [*indiscernible, 56:43*] which is open country. East of that was a string of mountains called the Salween Hills that looked, from the air, it looked like strips of bacon. Deep gorges, rivers, rope bridges across. All this kind of stuff. The first fliers over The Hump, because the pressure of the Japanese were further north, up at the Assam Valley, and they flew C-53s and C-46s. C-53, DC-3?

ED METZLER: Oh, that was a C-47.

BILL LINDSEY: They called it that too.

ED METZLER: So it's the same variations on a theme, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: They're all two-engine aircraft.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

BILL LINDSEY: And then, as the war progressed, and like others coming from the southeast, there's a need to intensify this to take the pressure off of him when he comes up. And so they used the four engine airplanes down low. And it was at this time that they decided that they needed to have direct communication with MacArthur instead of coming back through Washington and going out. You see?

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And how you going to do it? Well they figured the best way was by air so they created an air route that went from Calcutta to Salon and across to Perth, Australia. All this while we're fighting the war at that time. To Brisbane. Up to Great Barrier Reef, up to Hollandia where my cousin's headquarters was.

ED METZLER: New Guinea, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And then Biak and down to Arlin and then to Exmouth Gulf where they had a submarine refueling station. And then fly on back in to Salon and then to Calcutta. American airline pilots had that and I had, it's not what you know, it's who you know. I had another classmate who was in the main office at Hastings Mill. And he called me and asked me if I'd like to have that. I said, "Damn right." I said, "I'm not going to fly The Hump anymore if I don't have to."

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And so they gave me that route and I flew through two circuits on that. By that time I had my required number of hours and I picked up an airplane that was ready for engine overhaul and brought her back to the United States and went back the usual route by Casablanca. I went to Asia over to the Bermuda Triangle area, where I lost an engine, by the way.

ED METZLER: Interesting.

BILL LINDSEY: I really did. It landed in Morrison Field, over it.

ED METZLER: What was this, a B-24? You were flying a B-24?

BILL LINDSEY: No. No, I was flying a DC-4.

ED METZLER: Okay, so this is a C-50, C-50-something. You said it earlier.

BILL LINDSEY: A DC-4.

ED METZLER: Right, okay.

BILL LINDSEY: And that's when I came back.

ED METZLER: Hmm. Did you ever fly into Europe during the war?

BILL LINDSEY: The answer is no. Except at Casablanca. I don't know what it was but they needed somebody to take a few people and some orders, some written documents, I'll put it that way. To England. And so they chose me to take a C-54 and I flew out to the 14th parallel and flew all night. Stayed awake for the Germans. And then I turned east and landed in Scotland.

ED METZLER: And then returned?

BILL LINDSEY: No. I left there and went to Iceland, from there I went to Newfoundland, and then down on to Mitchel Field. While I was doing those routes, so they diverted me, not to the

Azores and up but to take it up through England and that's the only time I ever got to Europe. I've been to Cuba one time when I was taking my flight training. For this MOS number.

ED METZLER: What about the South Pacific?

BILL LINDSEY: Well I flew up-

ED METZLER: I mean you kinda got up through Hollandia and that kind of thing, I know that.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. The only time I was in, I never was in the South Pacific except that one time in my time in the Pacific. It was when I came back, I went back to Long Beach and they assigned me to Fairfield-Suisan. Which is an airbase out of Sacramento. Between there and Hamilton Field. Which was in business at that time. And I was to go back and get on that run. And I had to fly two flights as a co-pilot, as a checkout. And I made those two and, at that time we went to Oahu and then went to Johnston Island and Kwajalein and to Guam. I never did go to Saipan.

ED METZLER: And this was towards the end of the war? When you were doing this?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. And as I was doing that, as I was doing that we dropped the bomb.

ED METZLER: August '45.

BILL LINDSEY: I've often wondered, well one of my trips, all I had, all we had in the back end was a box about that big a square. Nothing else.

ED METZLER: You wondered what it might be, huh? *[laughs]*

BILL LINDSEY: I've *always* wondered what it was. 'Cause I know it wasn't a bomb. But I'd often wondered if it was a trigger mechanism or something like that.

ED METZLER: Something really important like that.

BILL LINDSEY: Let's see now. And I flew into Tokyo but you didn't fly into Tokyo directly.

ED METZLER: So this is all post-war, of course?

BILL LINDSEY: This is all post-war. This was post-bomb, now. Post-bomb we drew straws on it to see who'd be the first to get in to Japan. And mine was oh, about 22 hours after the first guy. It didn't really make a difference. And we really initiated what later became the Berlin airlift. We flew into Atsuki which is southwest of Tokyo about 48 miles. And when, and we landed. And gave a weather report to the weather man. And they gave us something like a ham sandwich to eat. And then we went back to the flight man and got our instructions and went back and got in the airplane. And we was only on the ground about 20 minutes. It went

like clockwork. It just worked like a charm. Interesting thing about Tokyo, after the war I had always said I'd like to show my wife where I had been. And I remember when I flew into Tokyo that first time, I took enough liberty to look at downtown Tokyo. There wasn't, it was absolutely flat. Except for the masonry buildings that were part of silos or storage tanks. Plus three things. Guess what they are. Do you know?

ED METZLER: Well I know the Emperor's Palace.

BILL LINDSEY: And his son's palace. And the railroad station.

ED METZLER: What?

BILL LINDSEY: The railroad station. It had never been touched. Because I went there in 1983. I went back and re-tracked all that stuff. And that's all that remained.

ED METZLER: Yeah, I mean a lot of that was firebombing that did that to Tokyo.

BILL LINDSEY: You're right. And he was criticized at the time.

ED METZLER: Yeah. Well some people criticized him.

BILL LINDSEY: I didn't.

ED METZLER: A lot of people didn't either. I mean, he was a doer, not a talker.

BILL LINDSEY: The politicians that tried to make it a diplomatic, negotiated peace. And God bless Roosevelt and Churchill to begin with. We'll have utter destruction. There won't be anything left.

ED METZLER: So were you in, so how much time did you spend in Japan immediate post-war? Just that one time in and out or-

BILL LINDSEY: I was in two or three times. And when I came back somebody, on a first or second trip, somebody, I was buddies with one of the operations fellas, named Miles Simmons who went in to flying at the same time I did. Up in Arkansas. He was from Missouri but went in the same primary flying school. MacArthur owned a brewery down at Manilla. And they needed somebody to go down there with a C-54 and fill it with brew and come back. And I went down to Manilla. All the while all the allies were arguing about who was going to go in first. And all along the Navy was just sailing right along, Nimitz, God rest his soul. And I've always thought that was kinda funny. But anyhow I brought back that beer for everybody. And, God it was a mess on Okinawa. There was about, I forgot, I think there was 402 airplanes. Big number of airplanes. And all the crews. And we had about four or five spigots to take a shower.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] Talk about *alive*!

BILL LINDSEY: And you talk about scratching coral dust. It was a mess. Well anyhow, I'm fresh back from flying in India and flying The Hump and had been down in Australia and everything. They whip out their personnel data and they find this poor character who had been into Chengdu, China. And I got this notice that they were going to, I was going to meet him, a flight. I don't remember how many, six or nine airplanes, and we were going to fly from Okinawa to Chengdu. Indians came into World War Two with the understanding that the Allies would get out as soon as things would end quickly. 60 days. Weather forecasted was practically zero. And the moral imperative to sacrifice your life wasn't there. For me. And my friend Max told me about this. And I said, "Well," and I made another flight up when I came back. I finally said, "Max, do you happen to have an airplane that needs to go back to the States? Needs an engine overhaul?" He said, "I don't know whether I do or not, let me check." And he was gone about I reckon 15 minutes at the most. He said, "I got one." I said, "Can I have it?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "When?" He said, "Anytime." I went immediately to my tent, packed my bag, got my crew and we got in that airplane and we went down to Guam. There was a typhoon coming into Guam at that time. To nail down the specifics for you. And I slept on the floor for a while and the weather was getting worse and I said to myself, "If I'm going to get out of here I better do it right now." So I got my crew together and got a flight plan and took off for the States. Came back Kwajalein, Johnston Island, Oahu, Hamilton Field. And went to Sacramento. Fairfield-Suisan. And I told the personnel man I wanted to get out of the service.

ED METZLER: And when was this? What was the-

BILL LINDSEY: Immediately after the bomb was dropped.

ED METZLER: Okay. But before-

BILL LINDSEY: It was before August 14th. It was before VJ-Day.

ED METZLER: So, early August, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: Early August. My father in-law, I talked to the bank there in Saint Angelo, and I was to have a job when I came back. And I was a young fella and a novice and when somebody told me something, I believed it. As far as I was concerned, in Texas, your word's your bond.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] Yeah. Right.

BILL LINDSEY: And so I got out and went to San Angelo on my way to get to Freeport to get released. When I came back, I went into the bank and the bank said, "Oh yeah, we got a job." And they were going to put me on a training program at the end of the month. [*indiscernible, 1:12:49*] and so I said, "I can't do that." And her father felt real bad about it but nevertheless, things work out. I got a job putting up sheet rock. On, up.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] Way up.

BILL LINDSEY: Not this way, but up. And I'm a little man and I had hurt my back doing some similar work when I was a kid, back home in Williamsburg.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: 'Cause I've got six vertebrae instead of five, so I've got more limber. I'm a lot more limber. And my wife's sister's husband and I were working together. And he said, "I've learned something." I said, "What is it?" He said, "They passed a GI Bill and they'll send you to school." And I said, "Glory be!" And I got in my car and I went up to University and told the boy, I said, "I'm going to be a doctor." He looked at me kinda funny, Doctor Proctor, and he said, "You and 5,000 others are either going to be a doctor or a chicken farmer."

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*]

BILL LINDSEY: And I went to medical school and that's another story.

ED METZLER: What's your favorite aircraft of the World War Two era?

BILL LINDSEY: Of the World War Two era? The airplane that, I feel absolutely safe in a C-54. And before that, the DC-3 which was the original metal airline. The DC-3, it's, there's a book about it, *The Airplane that Changed the World*, or something like that.

ED METZLER: I think that's right. We got one sitting out at our airport, out here just sitting there waiting to be restored. Nobody's restored it.

BILL LINDSEY: Lord have mercy. Anyhow, let me tell you a story. When I was over in Chengdu, that same night, they had let some Chinese fly DC-3s. And they took the door out. Of the DC-3. They didn't keep a door that they open and close. They just opened. And so they, they tell the story, I think this really probably happened. That the guy was having a hell of a time trimming the airplane up. And he told the co-pilot, "Go back and see what's going on back there." And he stood there, opened the door and stood there and every once in a while he'd hear this wild laughing. And he went to investigate it and those guys were pushing each other out.

ED METZLER: [*Laughter*] My gosh!

BILL LINDSEY: I would say the most graceful airplane was the P-38. It made a different noise because it was an inline engine. And it [*whooshing noise*].

ED METZLER: And I've heard, and I'm not an aircraft expert, but I heard that it's twin engine and because of the rotation of the props-

BILL LINDSEY: That's right.

ED METZLER: That they were actually, you know, they were counter, they countered each other. I think that's so you don't get the torque steer things. But it was tricky to fly.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. But they fly this way.

ED METZLER: Yeah. So, was it tricky to fly? I mean did you have to-

BILL LINDSEY: No! No, it's smooth as glass.

ED METZLER: Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: If you, the air, thinking back in World War One and having seen the barnstormers come through my little town and take you up for two dollars, and the open cockpit, two wheels and a [*indiscernible 1:17:23*] tail. The plane I learned how to fly in was a Stearman PT-13. And that was the type of airplane, it was a biplane airplane. And, in order to land it, you had to stall it and exactly the ground level. And I've always maintained that if you, if anybody, whether they're going to be a, go work for the airlines or what, they need to fly a PT-13. And if they can't do it, I wouldn't let 'em fly one of these big airplanes. That sounds silly.

ED METZLER: But if you know they can fly that little guy-

BILL LINDSEY: If you can fly that, you can sense flying. You are flying an airplane instead of a truck driver.

ED METZLER: Right. Right, right. You're not steering, you're flying. Yeah, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: The B-25 was a very, very good airplane. You know, it had a double tail. I liked that one.

ED METZLER: Have you heard, I'm sure you have, of the, I think it's called the "Vultee Vibrator".

BILL LINDSEY: The Vultee Vibrator, yes sir.

ED METZLER: Did you ever fly one?

BILL LINDSEY: Yes sir. In basic training.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] Okay. Well I guess it had that name for a good reason.

BILL LINDSEY: That's a noisy damn airplane.

ED METZLER: Is that right?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. Real noisy.

ED METZLER: Didn't the C-54, wasn't it the backbone of the Berlin Airlift?

BILL LINDSEY: Absolutely. It *was* the Berlin Airlift.

ED METZLER: Yeah, mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: Oh, I get out of the service, and I go to pre-med at the University of Arkansas and I come out and my last act of duty was December the 19th, 1945. And I begin to get letters. I've been placed on inactive reserves. It was in 1959 before I finally got out of inactive reserve. At one time, as the paperwork set up, what's the word for it? Just like England had a paperwork army to foil Hitler into thinking that were coming up north-

ED METZLER: Yeah, mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: The reservist had a paperwork organization and they were supposed to meet two weeks a year or something like that.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

BILL LINDSEY: I was a CO in Arkansas and didn't even know it!

ED METZLER: *[laughs]*

BILL LINDSEY: I got out of active duty, I turned down promotions. You know, I've been in this thing five years and all my buddies are either Majors or Lieutenant Colonels at that time. And I turned down promotions so I could fly airplanes.

ED METZLER: What was your rank when you left the service?

BILL LINDSEY: When I left the service, my rank was Captain. And on this inactive reserve, I was discharged completely as a Major. Which is sort of standard. And I, I thought, when I was flying all these airplanes I thought, "I'm going to stay in here" until I ran into that Okinawa mess in Chengdu. And so, if I'd have sat behind a desk I'da made more money and all this kind of stuff.

ED METZLER: What was your closest scrape? Your closest call in any of these flights?

BILL LINDSEY: I would say that probably my closest call was when I nearly run out of gas.

ED METZLER: That's what I was going to guess but I thought there might be others.

BILL LINDSEY: There were others. One time I was fairing a north landing and it was a A-20. And had left the west coast and took the middle route. And went up to, through Albuquerque and up across that way. And Memphis. I forgot to change the pitch. You have a lower pitch and a higher RPM to take off. And when I landed and taxied, I forgot to change the pitch, which I always usually did on that airplane when I got out, so I wouldn't forget it. But I forgot it. Get out the next morning and crank this thing up and I start down the runway. And I just, it just doesn't have the power. About the time I get, I'd say halfway down the runway, maybe two thirds, it dawned on me what I had done and I hit the throttles and switched the pitch. Made the loudest noise I'd ever heard in my life besides what I heard Doolittle. And I didn't have enough power to go over the powerline at the end of the runway. I went under 'em.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] Oh my goodness.

BILL LINDSEY: Well I knew that the airplane wasn't that wide. And so, if I'm smart enough, I can get under 'em. And that's, that's to my knowledge, that's the only real mistake I ever felt like I made. I had another close call. I was at White Horse. And I had two airplanes in my formation. And we'd been sweating out the weather and all this kinda stuff. And finally, after begging the weather man, we got clearance. And I'm the flight leader. I'm the last one to take off. And I come and I catch up with 'em and we go, and we go about ten minutes and we're just flying after we had got settled. And it dawned on me that the weather was getting worse. I better go back to White Horse. So I told my boys over the intercom, I said, "We're going back to White Horse." The weather changes very rapidly up there. And by the time we get back and I get my

two fellows down, the field, you couldn't see the other end of the field when I landed. And it was socked in completely.

ED METZLER: So was it snow or fog or sleet? Or all of the above?

BILL LINDSEY: Snow. 'Cause it was wintertime, you know?

ED METZLER: Sure.

BILL LINDSEY: And that was a close call that I had. When I was bringing my airplane, when I left India to come back to the States, and I had left the Azores going to Miami, I've forgotten which engine it was but I think it was the number one engine. It started running, got over the Bermuda triangle. It just got rough as all get out. And I said, "Well we're going to drive this airplane to death." So I feathered that engine. And when I feathered it, after I feathered the engine, then I believe it was the number three engine, decided it wanted to quit. And I said, "Well I've gotta see if this engine will run." I'm going to bring it up again and see what happens 'cause I was worried about this one. Very bad. But the airplane was really shot and it needed some work. And so I unfeathered that engine. You have, at that altitude and at that time of the year and weather conditions, if you didn't do it within about ten or 15 minutes, you better not try to crank it up 'cause it just freezes. Freezes up. And I took that thing and unfeathered it and it ran alright. And this one just got worse. And so finally I feathered it completely and we went into Marshal Field on three engines!

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] Could have been two! Would she fly on two?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. As a matter of fact, the DC-3 that this fellow Tex, who worked for TWA designed and lead to the DC-3, that was one of his specifications. That you could take off and land on one engine.

ED METZLER: Wow.

BILL LINDSEY: And to be metal. Had to be able to fly in all kinds of weather.

ED METZLER: And it could.

BILL LINDSEY: I always felt that the C-53, before the C-54 came out, was the safest airplane that they had.

ED METZLER: And so I guess I'd be correct in saying the B-24 is on the bottom of your list of-

BILL LINDSEY: Of the ones I've spent all these hours flying, the answer is yes. The wing wasn't any good. It was a Davis wing. Just straight out.

ED METZLER: Yeah. Thin and long.

BILL LINDSEY: Thin and long.

ED METZLER: Not much drag but it didn't, it wasn't pilot friendly either, was it?

BILL LINDSEY: No, it wasn't.

ED METZLER: That was the same kind of wing that the P-51 had, wasn't it? The Mustang? It had that long, thin, low, you know, low drag wing.

BILL LINDSEY: Similar. I never did fly a P-51.

ED METZLER: What about a B-29? Did you ever fly a B-29?

BILL LINDSEY: No. That's where the ruckus came that I wanted to get to that.

ED METZLER: Tell me about that.

BILL LINDSEY: Well that's when I had been up north and came back and Colonel Scharbert sent me down to be a part of MATS. And I had wanted to go to the B-29. When I was flying to India, we were flying gasoline besides parts and people and what have you, to support the 21st bomb

group because they were bombing down in Burma and they had a long range and everything like that.

ED METZLER: That was the first active B-29 squadron, wasn't it?

BILL LINDSEY: That what?

ED METZLER: Wasn't that the first B-29 squadrons? The 21st?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. It sure was.

ED METZLER: And they had a hell of a time with that aircraft, especially the engines.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. That's right.

ED METZLER: Fires in the engines?

BILL LINDSEY: And they would overload the airplanes. Captain Billings told me that they were abusing the airplane. It was scheduled, I don't remember the numbers, but let's say it was scheduled and loaded to be 124,000 pounds. Well they'd hop it up to 139,000. And expect it to take off and do what it was supposed to do. So he was, he said, "I don't think I'm going to make it in this airplane." And I don't know what ever happened to him but he was a nice guy.

ED METZLER: Tell me about this experience you had with the Doolittle group.

BILL LINDSEY: Well it happened. But there's really not much to it. We knew, well let me back up just a little bit. Before I got in the service, and it was after I left college and couldn't get back, there was a man in my town who was a plantation owner down in where my daddy worked. Named Fred Blakes. He did polio and he was a heck of a swell fellow. And he and I would talk a lot. He wasn't married at the time, and he'd come down to the Confessioner which is a little hangout in our town. And we'd sit on the stool there and he'd talk. And that was back in the days when they were invading as far up as Finland when Russia was fighting. And we both knew, and I knew, and I've always been historically oriented in those affairs of the world, you know? And we knew there was going to be a war. And we knew that I was going to be part of it because I'm that age. Was just a dead ringer. He said, "Billy you're just [indiscernible, 1:31:36] fodder." And he really kinda encouraged me to get in the service. He said, "If you know you're going to do it, why don't you go in and get experience so that you won't be walking and carrying a rifle like a foot soldier?"

ED METZLER: You won't be fodder.

BILL LINDSEY: You won't be fodder. Yeah. And so in essence he kind of guided me in that sense. Guidance. Which I believed in. And so all this was happening. I was politically sort of aware. And I was aware of the seriousness of the mistake of the Maginot Line.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And things like that. So I, you know, it has really effected my life. And I really think, since it's all over and time has passed, back in World War One, there was a man came home and he walked around the square with a blank look on his face. And I said, "Jess, what are you doing?" Name was Jessie. He said, "I'm packing concrete."

ED METZLER: He's what?

BILL LINDSEY: I'm packing concrete. World War Two. I mean, World War One. Repetitive stress syndrome. Then comes along World War Two. And we had Anxiety Syndrome. And now we've got, what's this coined and perfected by the Menninger Clinic up in Topeka, Kansas? Which I think is the greatest –

ED METZLER: Post-traumatic Stress, now.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. Which I think is the greatest psychiatric clinic in the world. And now we got post-traumatic stress.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And in a sense I think that I had post-traumatic stress. But until I was about 60 years old.

ED METZLER: Really?

BILL LINDSEY: That's some 30 years ago.

ED METZLER: Now, what were the symptoms for you?

BILL LINDSEY: Extreme insurances, to the best of my ability, on perfection.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: Because I know that I'm alive today because of instinctive actions that the decision had been made previously. I didn't have to think about it. Think about shutting off that engine. We feathered that engine, it was hot. I didn't even have to think about it. I just did it. And did I tell you about the take off in the P-38 in Long Beach?

ED METZLER: Tell me again.

BILL LINDSEY: Well I was taking off. And I knew that lift off speed was about 100 to 110 miles an hour. And we were told that if you lose an engine, before you leave the ground, to go ahead

and shut her down. And I took 'em at their word and just as I was getting ready to lift off, the right engine quit. And I instinctively shut that engine down and put my foot on the brakes. I go down to the end of the runway, there's a Douglas air plant near that airport terminal. And a chain link fence. The airplane has nose guns in front of it. The nose guns went through the chain link fence but it didn't touch the body. Just instinct.

ED METZLER: That's close.

BILL LINDSEY: So, in all the things that I did, to my dead level best, they had to be right.

ED METZLER: So you carried that almost to an obsession, then, in your-

BILL LINDSEY: I did. I did. And I had a pretty thin skin in the sense of the word that if somebody tried to correct me, they had to be pretty dramatic about it.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*]

BILL LINDSEY: Now I just don't worry about it anymore.

ED METZLER: Well it's good you got to that point, because, yeah. Now you were going to tell me about the Doolittle experience.

BILL LINDSEY: Oh yeah, that's right. I got off.

ED METZLER: No, no, you didn't get off, you just got on to something else! That's all.

BILL LINDSEY: When we finished flying school, we went to Pendleton, Oregon.

ED METZLER: Okay. Now, set the date for me here, roughly.

BILL LINDSEY: September the 26th, 1941.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] Okay.

BILL LINDSEY: 25th or 26th, I can't recall.

ED METZLER: Okay, so we're still pre-war. Pre-war.

BILL LINDSEY: Early pre-war.

ED METZLER: We're definitely a couple of months away from war still. Active war.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. And we went and we were told that we were going to go to, ultimately we were going to Long Beach, California to be the ferry aircraft. Not to be ferry pilots, but to ferry aircrafts from the aircraft plant.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And so we sit there about six weeks and the only thing I know about Doolittle's operation was that we could hear the engines. That these fellas were practicing on.

ED METZLER: So what this tells me is that they were practicing aircraft carrier takeoffs with B-25s-

BILL LINDSEY: Yes.

ED METZLER: Before the war started?

BILL LINDSEY: Yes. The powers that be felt, for political and psychological reasons, geopolitical reasons if you please, that America needed some type of response and victory in order to convince the American people that we were for real in this and we weren't going to take Pearl Harbor laying down. And Pearl Harbor had never occurred!

ED METZLER: Well now, that's the thing that puzzles me.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right. It had never occurred at that time. But it needed to be done.

ED METZLER: Hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And I know Doolittle's original operation started down in MacDill Field.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: In Tampa.

ED METZLER: I guess this was our way, if we ever really needed it, to have at least medium range bomber capability off of an aircraft carrier. 'Cause we didn't have any Navy aircraft that could do that.

BILL LINDSEY: That's right.

ED METZLER: Okay. Alright, I can understand that if I understand it that way. So what do you think about the Japanese? After all these years.

BILL LINDSEY: I think that when the Japs, I think that when they attacked Pearl Harbor, that they were doing exactly what the Emperor told 'em to do because they were Emperor Worshipers. I'm a Christian. And if I feel like Jesus told me to do something, I'd probably do it.

ED METZLER: Yup.

BILL LINDSEY: But he doesn't believe in war, so that makes it easy. *[laughs]*

ED METZLER: Yeah. Well I see the analogy but it's just to make a point, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, to make a point. So that if you look at the Japanese historically, way back there, they have always, since the days of what's his name? What's the name of the fellow of the Chinese religion?

ED METZLER: Confucius?

BILL LINDSEY: Confucius? Yeah, I'd reckon you could say him.

ED METZLER: But anyhow, go ahead and make your point.

BILL LINDSEY: My point is that they did what the Emperor said. And in a sense, one of the things that we don't realize and don't really think too much about, different people think

differently. There's, for example, I am very poor at mathematics, but when I think of realities that you can't measure, which go to the thing that makes us complete, and we'll have to use this word – spiritual. And physical. I spend a lot of time thinking about that. But I don't think about Einstein's theory of relativity. Okay? There are coffers in which the mind works differently. And there are languages designed and will show those differences among people.

ED METZLER: I can understand that.

BILL LINDSEY: Okay? So our understanding of the Japanese, they were basically savages. In one sense of the word. And that's, they demonstrated this by the tenacity with which they would let themselves be completely burned out of caves.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: On Iwo Jima and places like that. In war. I have no respect for the Japanese from that standpoint. They'll smile at you and cut your throat.

ED METZLER: If they can, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And I've never been able to really reconcile that. The Germans, for example, they think more like I do.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And so I don't charge modern Germany with anything wrong. They didn't fight World War Two. There may be a few old fuddlers around like me that are still living, but mostly they didn't. It's the younger generation is the New Deal. And the healing of time takes care of that.

ED METZLER: But you don't feel that way about the Japanese also?

BILL LINDSEY: I can't. I just can't. I try to. And I just can't. Wait till you read *Unbroken*. It's quite a book. I, one other time, and I had a fear, had a scare. You know, you talked about the incidents.

ED METZLER: Close encounters, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: On one of my trips that I had got all the way up northern New Guinea and landed in a little island called Biak.

ED METZLER: Yeah, I've heard of Biak.

BILL LINDSEY: There's an airbase there and there's ocean on each side of it. And on this flight thing that I was on, we went by schedules, you know? I was expected to leave at such and

such. Got time to go and, as you know, there's always an inner tropical front that shifts up and down with the seasons. And inner equatorial front.

ED METZLER: Yeah. I'm not aware of that but I'll take your word for it.

BILL LINDSEY: And, well there is. And in those days, you didn't fly at 40,000 feet like I did the last time I went to Australia. You get over it. You go through it. And, with our military transport operation, which was new, a new activity. We were taught by the weather people, don't fly through one of those things or the lightening's going this way. Fly more towards horizontal.

ED METZLER: Horizontal lightening, no vertical lightening.

BILL LINDSEY: No vertical, the best you can. Ain't a way you're going to go around it. *[laughs]*

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: You'd run out of gas. Anyhow, left Biak one night, late in the evening, on this trip. It's the second trip I took. Left Biak. Go through this front. And it was so severe that I could not discern any place that would be less electrically charged than another place. And so I was, normally your altimeter, on an airplane, can be off as much as 750 feet. At the most. If you fly too low, you'll fly in the water. And so I doubled my altimeter setting. And got what I thought

would really be 2,000 feet or 1600 feet, something like that. And I got the co-pilot and the navigator to peep out on the side and help me see. We could see whitecaps. And here we go. And the next morning, in those days you didn't fly very fast. 150, 160-70 miles an hour, indicated airspeed.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And I landed [*indiscernible*, 1:47:02]. And went to bed. Didn't think too much about it. And when I woke up, I was covered from here down, on both sides of my legs, with the itchiest urticarial rash that you could imagine. Which was pure psychological. You heard of people sweating blood? It does happen. I almost scared to death and didn't know it. It took me forever to get rid of that rash.

ED METZLER: Is that right?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, I still itch.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] You still remember how bad it feels, huh? Isn't that something?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, when I think about it I itch.

ED METZLER: I'll be damned.

BILL LINDSEY: And that was a scary situation for me.

ED METZLER: How did you communicate back home during all of your travels? Or did you?

BILL LINDSEY: APO letters.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: APO letters.

ED METZLER: So, they get all the, you know, marking out the words and –

BILL LINDSEY: None of my letters were ever tampered with.

ED METZLER: Now that was probably because you were an Officer. I would guess.

BILL LINDSEY: It probably was. Because a lot of enlisted men told all kind of tales.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: This buck writes home, "Oh there's a lion coming in my tent. I've gotta quit writing." *[laughter]*

ED METZLER: Need to close.

BILL LINDSEY: We had a family when I was in India or in Tejgaon, which is over in east Pakistan now.

ED METZLER: Yeah, Bangladesh.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah. Right. We had a family of monkeys that live over on the railroad track between the mess hall and where our tents were. *[laughs]* And everybody had to have a barrow. Which is a British term for a body servant. Because they said if you didn't, they'd steal you to death.

ED METZLER: Hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: But they take care of your tent while you're gone. My experience with a barrow, the boy was named Hasim Kahn. He had a family of about four kids. And I paid him a half a rupee a day. And the rupee was worth about \$0.35 in those days. And he did me a good job. He laundered everything and, and I asked him about this one time. And he said, "No, we don't steal anything like that." The British had just done that.

ED METZLER: Why?

BILL LINDSEY: I don't know.

ED METZLER: The British just say that, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Hmm. Did you have a lot of dealings with British Officers?

BILL LINDSEY: I never had any dealings whatsoever with British Officers. All I know is that they had tea at 4:00.

ED METZLER: Yeah [*laughs*] tea and crumpets, huh? And what about Australians and other allies? Other than Americans and Chinese.

BILL LINDSEY: All the people that I knew and most, I only landed at Exmouth Gulf one time. Which is north of Perth. And they had a submarine refueling base. And I had the best meal I've ever had in my life. Steak. Salad, baked potatoes and everything. They had to do something for those poor devils waiting there to refill a submarine.

ED METZLER: Boy, no kidding.

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, the Navy took care of the food which made me so damn mad how well they eat and we're starving to death.

ED METZLER: 'Cause your food generally wasn't so hot, huh?

BILL LINDSEY: No, but in India we got our beef, now that's an American food. We got our beef from Australia. And that was the toughest, toughest, toughest, toughest meat I ever ate in my life. You could chop it and you just ate BBs.

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] It was still tough!

BILL LINDSEY: It was still tough. No way to tenderize it.

ED METZLER: Now what about mutton? Did you have to eat a bunch of mutton?

BILL LINDSEY: I like mutton.

ED METZLER: Not lamb now, but mutton.

BILL LINDSEY: No, never did have to eat any mutton.

ED METZLER: Yeah, 'cause that's real strong now, apparently. I've heard a lot of veterans complain about getting stuck with –

BILL LINDSEY: The Iranians eat a lot of mutton I think.

ED METZLER: Well, yeah. Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: But the people I knew at Brisbane, well they were of course part of the service but they were all Australians. And I've been to Australia several times. The last time was about two years ago. 'Cause I've got friends there.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: Not because of the war but because my secretary had a son that was brilliant and he got a degree in nuclear physics. And went to study under Doctor Krumpton in Kendra. And so we've been over there three times to see him. And all the Australians were just like Americans. And we had friends from Brisbane. I was president of the rotary club one time, and sponsored a scholarship. And a fella came from Rockhampton. Named McCauley, to the University of Texas. And we've been to see those people on a visit. Up into the Hamilton Island Great Barrier Reef. And everybody we've met has just been just like us. Only 40 years behind. First time I went to Australia in the 1980s I thought I was back in the 1940s. And this McCauley,

conceived of the idea of having, that you go in and do your own shopping. Put it in a bag and come back and check out. Before that they'd always had the clerk go back and pick up all the stuff.

ED METZLER: British style, kind of. Yeah. Right.

BILL LINDSEY: And he opened 15 stores with that idea. He did real well.

ED METZLER: I bet he did. Well what else can we talk about of the war years? I am amazed at how much of the world you traveled. Just during those four or five years.

BILL LINDSEY: I have, if you take Canada, you got one, but if you take all the provinces you've got about seven or something like that. If you put all that stuff together, I've traveled in 63 different countries. I figured it up one time. Couldn't sleep one night and I said, well –

ED METZLER: [*laughs*] And started counting? Instead of counting sheep, you counted countries!

BILL LINDSEY: Yeah, that's right. I say I've always liked geography. They don't teach geography anymore.

ED METZLER: That's true.

BILL LINDSEY: And over in Hamburg, Arkansas, where a tree this big around is a little overgrown sapling because they've got a lot of big trees over there. When I was a kid, I would get up in the highest tree I could find to see how far I could see. And radio was just coming in. I was born in 1919. And when I was first born and in my very early years, our streets even had grass on 'em. I think there were about two or three cars in town.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And my daddy bought our first car in 1925. And then in 1929 he bought his second car. Then they had the crash.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: And we got so poor we didn't, we lived off of two cows, two pigs in our garden, and about \$8 to \$10 a month grocery money to the grocery store that, at one time, I've mentioned this before, it was about a year and a half before-

ED METZLER: Before he could pay it off.

BILL LINDSEY: Before he could get to pay it off.

ED METZLER: Wow.

BILL LINDSEY: But the point I'm going to make in saying all that is, we were not poor. We, poverty is an attitude in this country. Now you see the slums of, like one time I was traveling in Bangkok. We were on this freeway. Rodney and I were on this freeway going up to the upper country where they do the dances and the boards and all that kind of stuff. And I said "Arunyan, tell me about those people. What do they do? Does anybody try to help those people?" He said, "If they do what Buddha do, they don't need help." And Buddha don't have a missionary program. You see the genius of Christianity is that it speaks with perfection to the psychiatric analysis of the human personality. Everything, I know when I was young I'd get to thinking about all this kind of stuff. Who am I? What am I gonna do? Is there a God? If there is, do I know Him? And if I don't pay attention to Him, what's in it for me and so forth. All those questions. We've all had 'em.

ED METZLER: Sure.

BILL LINDSEY: Jesus, nothing that has appeared in the four gospels, and I grant you that the apostle, Paul, was a genius as an expositor of amplifying. Nothing has been found in those four gospels that's not absolutely psychiatrically correct. And I studied, makes me an expert, see? I studied for a while at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas. And they were a Christian psychiatric clinic. And they didn't call it anything.

ED METZLER: Okay. Shall we end it?

BILL LINDSEY: Well I had my opportunity to tell all. I was trying to think of what I thought of ahead of time.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: But, I'll say one more thing that is super personal. And every soldier is super personal to himself. But I consider myself as the caretaker of DNA. You know what DNA is. Everybody do. And that, within the scheme of things, it is impossible for a man to think of anything impossible. If he can think of it, it's possible. If it's possible, than there's a probability. And if the positive side of life seems to make more sense than the negative side, which is the difference between the Muslims and the Christians, why not take the positive side? Everything that I can know about God almighty is embodied in what Jesus said. And it is verified by modern psychiatry and not by quack psychiatrists who are looking for a book. And I say this to you because there have been a number of incidences, and I'll mention some of them to you, and I may have covered 'em in this memoir thing.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: Or whatever this is. That I feel like there has been a presence that I could not explain in any way whatsoever. And so that kind of makes me a nut, see? But when nobody wants to admit what they really believe. I've had things happen to me which I thought were

sorriest thing in the world. When I graduated from primary flying school, we didn't go Randolph and Kelly. We went to, told we were going to San Angelo. And the Commander of the post up there at Saginaw, Fort Worth, he just said, "I don't know where San Angelo is" and my buddy Crady Comb said, "let me get in my car and I'll get a map." And they brought a map of Texas out and laid it on the ground and we were in formation and they pointed out where San Angelo was. And the Cadet Commander said, "Well, the best I can say about it is, the only way you're going to get to San Angelo is to go there cause there's nothing else." The people that didn't go to San Angelo, and went to Randolph and Kelly, were in the Bataan Death March.

ED METZLER: Oh.

BILL LINDSEY: There are very few atheists in foxholes.

ED METZLER: Yeah, that's what I've heard, yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: I had a car wreck one time. And I won't go into the details but when I got through, rolling out, my left heel was right up here. And some other stuff and so forth. And I was laying there in a dazed condition and a figure, human figure, dressed in white was standing there. And I said, "God, what do I do?" This was in a period of time when I was leaving my practice and going back to get into training. It disappeared and I hadn't seen it since. Minister came in to see me at the hospital because of his connections. He was from San Angelo. And he said, you're supposed to go back and do exactly what you think you can do best. I didn't

answer. He did. I have had one other theophany if you want to look at it that way. Maybe two. That I'll get off my chest and I won't have to worry about it anymore. I, as I got older, well I had this hobby, not being able to work, so I bet you could make money out of it. Often, when I retired. And I was getting older and I was getting tired-er and I was getting kind of shaky. And I ran through this finger through a haul. This kind of floored me down and later on I dropped a router on my foot which put me in a wheelchair for about six weeks. And then, when this was getting better, and this had happened about a year before. I just didn't feel good and I went to bed. And I woke up and there was a figure standing in front of me, pointing at me. And he wasn't pointing at this thing that was hurting. At that time it was giving me trouble. This thing, I've never had any pain any more than I had at that time. And it pointed its finger to me. And my answer to the point was, "Never again, Lord." And the pain quit. Those things kind of get to you. And this is a place for me to say it and in my memoirs. The last time I had pneumonia. I got sick. Without going into the details, I had a poor old pair of [*indiscernible*, 2:05:54] in which another fella and this academic died. It was very serious. And I thought, you know, I just didn't realize how sick I was. I was out of my head, all that kind of stuff. And then the last time I got sick, this was about a year ago now. In the wintertime. And I got so sick until I was unconscious. And what in modern terms, you would call "hallucinations". And I begin to hear music. The prettiest music I've ever heard in my life. I had just been to Washington, DC on an honors flight that had been given to us by a group over at Conroe. And I begin to visualize this Vietnam War memorial which is that long wall.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

BILL LINDSEY: And this music was coming from the other side of that green wall. And it wasn't horns. It was stringed instruments. Real smooth, real pretty. And the only words that I could discern was, "I'll see you in the morning. My friend will be there." And I'd hear this, and I'd tell Betty, "Did you hear that music?" And of course she couldn't. And then as I got better, this lasted about three days, and I finally got better. I got to wondering how can I psychoanalyze this so I can know what it really is? And I began to think, we never forget anything. Don't you ever forget that. We may not be able to recall it, but you don't forget it. When I was a little boy, before going to school, mama would lay down in the afternoon and I'd get in bed beside her. And one time I remember that I begin to hear this, this tonal noise in my ear. Like a smooth tone. And my mother said, I told her about it and I said, "Mama, what is that?" And she said, "That's death bells."

ED METZLER: That's?

BILL LINDSEY: Death bells. I don't know if you've ever heard of 'em or not. Just ringing in the ear. Heard it ringing in my ear. And so, when I get my sanity back, I put all this together and it all fits. As far as I'm concerned. That there's a power higher than I am and we live in a space-time continuum where we think this is all there is to it, but we don't know. We didn't watch television in Jesus' day. You know? We didn't know anything about radio when He was going along. And so I have a very strong conviction that there is no ending and no beginning of that which is. It's a figment of my imagination. We live in a space-time continuum and for me to be

the best that I can is to accept the positive. Because everything that Jesus has taught me has been to my benefit. Now that doesn't have much to do with the specific war, but it does tell you what one of the millions of people that went through war-

ED METZLER: Yeah.

BILL LINDSEY: What they felt. And so I leave you with 426767 and 17 million 01425 and I think it's been an honor for me for you to call me to come over here and let me-

ED METZLER: Well, trust me, the honor is all ours. Not yours. So I want to thank you for spending the time.

BILL LINDSEY: Yes sir.