

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Robert T. Martin

Date of Interview: April 19, 2016

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Interview in progress.

Larry Rabalais: ...so I'm just going to talk.

Mr. Martin: Okay.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, we're ready to go, so I'll read a statement and we'll go from there.

Mr. Martin: Alright.

Larry Rabalais: This is Larry Rabalais and today is April the 19th, 2016 and I'm interviewing Mr. Robert L. "Bob" Martin; is that okay?

Mr. Martin: Oh yeah, yes. Uh. R. *T.* Martin

Other Person: *T.* Martin.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, R...thought it was R. L.; alright, and this interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center Archives, for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. And in saying that, I'll turn this over to Robert and let him start filling in his life; basically, where were you born; where you (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: I was born...I was born in Champaign, Illinois where my...where my father was a graduate student...chemistry.

Larry Rabalais: What year was that...that you were born?

Mr. Martin: 1924, February 23, 1924.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, did you have any brothers and sisters?

Mr. Martin: I had two brothers and one sister.

Larry Rabalais: I see.

Mr. Martin: My oldest brother, we...called him Bud, and that's an interesting little side line, too. I...I...we went to a one-room country school...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum, yeah, that was pretty common.

Mr. Martin: ...because my father wouldn't pass...

Other Person: You want some water?

Mr. Martin: No, I'm okay.

Larry Rabalais: We have some bottled water downstairs.

Mr. Martin: ...wouldn't pass the football players, so my father was fired.

Larry Rabalais: Oh!

Mr. Martin: And put on a black list, so he couldn't teach it anywhere!

Larry Rabalais: Oh, my goodness!

Mr. Martin: And this was in 1931.

Larry Rabalais: Before being politically correct was the...was the thing, yeah, that's amazing!

Mr. Martin: So, so anyway, so...that he had come from a...little college in Spokane, Washington...

Larry Rabalais: Oh, way over there!

Mr. Martin: I don't...I can't even remember the name of the school.

Larry Rabalais: What ancestry are you guys; Scotch-Irish or...?

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: Mostly Scotch.

Larry Rabalais: Mostly Scotch, alright. So, so he was a teacher at that time, you know, when you were young. Was...did your brother end up in the service?

Mr. Martin: Yes, my brother, Bud, I found (cough) I found out at his funeral...loaded the bomb that Truman dropped on Hiroshima.

Larry Rabalais: Really?! The atomic bomb, wow! Okay, well then, you...you went to school in that area around Champaign or...?

Mr. Martin: No, no, no, this was in...we lived in northern Minnesota in the mining, iron mining district.

Larry Rabalais: The Mesabi Range?

Mr. Martin: Yes sir! (laughter), that's good!

Other Person: Yeah, that's pretty good!

Mr. Martin: And (laughter)...

Larry Rabalais: I'm pretty well read.

Mr. Martin: (Laughter)

Larry Rabalais: For a French Louisiana Cajun, I'm pretty well read.

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: Well, so then they...took this job at...we left Washington State, Spokane, and drove to...Minnesota, and...Don wasn't born yet, but Don and I...you see, I...I was probably...I was born in '24 and we moved to there

in '27 and we only stayed a year, so then in '28 I would have been four years old.

Larry Rabalais: Well, where'd you go from there?

Mr. Martin: Well, we went to...we moved to Minnesota.

Larry Rabalais: Right, I understand, but...from there then.

Mr. Martin: Well, from there...we needed to put in a little...details there.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, that's fine.

Mr. Martin: Uh, this was a...a mining operation, and they had built all the waste that they'd take off to get to the ore body...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: ...is piled up and we lived in a house when Dad...this was before Dad was fired...

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh.

Mr. Martin: ...and fact, when I...remember Dad taking us boy...boy, Bud and I...to the...uh, the...the lake had a...well, kind of an isthmus thing that...that went out...

Larry Rabalais: Stuck out into the water.

Mr. Martin: ...stuck way out into the water and he'd take us down there and we'd camp sometimes and...it was a lot of fun. Well, then...uh...

Larry Rabalais: Okay, school...in...at...at that time when you...when you were young and into high school; where was that occurring at?

Mr. Martin: Well, that...that's what I'm coming to. The...the...we went to school, you see, until Dad was...fired...

Larry Rabalais: Let go, okay.

Mr. Martin: ...uh, we lived in the town of Coleraine, but we still weren't in school. So, when Dad was fired then we moved...out to the country on...on tra...we were on Charlton (sp?) Lake Township. And there we had a one-room school, and...since there was nobody in the...I had gone to...kindergarten and starting first grade when we moved, so I went to kindergarten in town and then in first grade I moved to the one-room country school. And...then...then since there was nobody in the grade ahead of me, or there was a...a person in...in the grade ahead of me, so the teacher just decided..., "Well, I don't want to put up with too many...grades if I don't have to," so she put me in the...in with the kid that was...ahead of me. And then...that happened again because somebody left school and so on and...and so, I...finished there and went to...that was just grades one through eight.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: In ninth grade I had to move to town, so I had to ride the bus to town.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum, that would have been the high school?

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: The high school, right. There we had junior high school and high school. And when I was in...so, then a year later then my brother also comes into the...high school, and the principal (chuckle) of the junior high asked me in the hall one day, "Do you have a brother named Lesley (sp?)" And I

said, “No, I got a brother named Bud,” (chuckles) so, I kind of screwed that up (laughter) because his...

Larry Rabalais: Is that really his name...Bud or was it...?

Mr. Martin: No, that was...that was what he was called, you see? And...

Larry Rabalais: ...called; that’s what you called him, okay.

Mr. Martin: ...I didn’t...it didn’t dawn on me his name was...*Lesley Keith*, so...but...

Larry Rabalais: So, you finished high school there probably in...uh, ’30...

Mr. Martin: In...in ’40.

Larry Rabalais: Oh ’40, yeah, ’40.

Mr. Martin: Okay, so I graduated from high school at...in ’40; I’m sixteen years old.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: I have no intention of going to college; I wanted to be a farmer. Well, we...’cause we had...we had...we were milking five cows and I had a flock of pure-bred sheep and I...I had probably twenty or thirty sheep, and my flock...

Larry Rabalais: My goodness!

Mr. Martin: ...and...and, uh, fact, I made a good bit of money out of that.

And...well, so at sixteen I graduated from high school; I didn’t want to go to college, and...but I had somehow is...I thought about it over the years and I think the reason that I...wanted to get into...fly...flying and that sort of thing...was because when we lived in town, we had a...we lived in a house where there was a...a nice maple tree...that was...that far from the...you only had to step six inches to get onto it, and that...so,

my brother and I...when we were to take naps, we would go upstairs to take our nap and we'd wait just a few minutes and then we'd go to the window and open the win...

Larry Rabalais: And sneak out in to the tree.

Mr. Martin: ...and sneak onto the tree and go down and it was only across...there was one road we had to cross which is...a pretty narrow road and this is northern Minnesota in the early days...and then there was a...about a thirty, forty, fifty-foot-high fill on top of that, and on top of that was an...airplane landing strip.

Larry Rabalais: Oh really?! Okay. Even back then, alright.

Mr. Martin: Okay, so they had it, and the ran...the man that ran this thing...we...we would go up and we'd just kind of hang around and...and then he...he finally asked us, "Do you want...do you want to go for a ride?" So, he...take...take us a ride and...and so...

Larry Rabalais: A plane ride!

Mr. Martin: A plane ride! I mean, that was pretty good, you know?!

Larry Rabalais: That was a big deal for kids then!

Mr. Martin: Yeah, sure was! And it didn't cost us anything! So, so when I graduated from high school, I decided...well, I...I don't know how I really got to...to doing this but I...found a school that would teach me aircraft engine mechanics.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: In Wichita, Kansas, they had built fighter planes for the First World War. In the affec (sp?) of this building, it was nothing but engines...this whole floor! There must have been two or three hundred engines in there!

Larry Rabalais: Wow!

Mr. Martin: So, since I was taking...learn how to take care of these engines and then, as another side trip, I had a friend who was...not in engines, but in...plane – the fabric and do...doing that kind of stuff, and he came across the plane that he...that we could buy for a hundred dollars, so we got it. And we got it all put together and then we realized this was a one-seater; now, how in the hell are we going to fly this thing?!

Larry Rabalais: ‘Cause you didn’t know how to fly really yet.

Mr. Martin: No, we didn’t.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: But there was an ins...one of the instructors we had was a pilot and he said, “Well, I think I could,” ...he...he actually asked...well, Arnie wanted nothing to do with flying.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: So, I...the...the guy that...he looks at me and he says, “Well, let’s...let’s see what we can do.” So, I would go out...well, we had it at the school which is downtown Wichita...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: ...and then we had to get it out to a...a field, so where we stayed...he had a brother that lived...owned a big farm out near the Wichita airport. So,

one Saturday he says, “Well, let’s go out and see what we can do.” So, we go out and I taxi around and...get to be...comfortable taxiing the thing; slowing up and speeding.

Larry Rabalais: But it’s still a one-seater?

Mr. Martin: It’s still a one-seater; that’s right!

Larry Rabalais: (Chuckles)

Mr. Martin: So, finally he says one Saturday...I don’t know how long we did this kind of thing, probably three or four weeks, I don’t know, uh, he says, to me one day on the way out to the...airport he says, “I think you could...you’re ready to...to take off!” Well, so we get out there and I taxi around a few times, and he says, “Okay, let...,” he says, “thumbs up!” So, I took off! Well, of course, that’s easy.

Larry Rabalais: Getting back down safety is another thing.

Mr. Martin: (Chuckles), yeah! So I made...I...I always say three passes; it might have been five; I don’t know, but anyhow, the first time I landed it...I needed...I hit kind of hard and so on, but then I...he said, “Go around again!” So, I went around again and it only took three or four times, and then I could land it quite safely!

Larry Rabalais: And did that have the inline engine like the JN-Jenny (sp?) did or...?

Mr. Martin: Well, it was a...

Larry Rabalais: Or was it rotary?

Mr. Martin: No, it was an inline engine; it was an OX...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, the...

Mr. Martin: ...the OX-5 I think it was called.

Larry Rabalais: That was common in those days.

Mr. Martin: So, it was an OX-5 engine. Uh...

Larry Rabalais: But you didn't bust the undercarriage?

Mr. Martin: No.

Larry Rabalais: That's amazing.

Mr. Martin: So, I didn't land that hard. And I...I didn't damage the plane, so that was my first experience at flying.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, but how did you get into the engine repair thing...officially after that?

Mr. Martin: Well, I was in...I was in the school to teach aircraft engine mechanics...

Larry Rabalais: Right.

Mr. Martin: ...and so on...right then.

Larry Rabalais: Right, and that was in Kansas, yeah, Wichita.

Mr. Martin: And that was in Wichita. So, then I...you have to have so many hours of doing this and doing that and so on and so on. And so in May...I had...I...don't even remember the number...well, however many hours, anyway, I got my certificate. So, then I immediately applied to get a...a license which I still carry!

Larry Rabalais: Oh, my goodness!

Mr. Martin: (Chuckle), but...the...

Larry Rabalais: How did they examine you for a license? What...what was involved? Was it pretty strenuous or not?

Other Person: Well, this was...flying lessons or...mechanic license?

Mr. Martin: No, this is all...this was all me...mechanics.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, the mechanic, oh, the mechanic stuff, okay.

Mr. Martin: Yeah, I had...the...the toughest part was the...carburetor...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, I can imagine.

Mr. Martin: ...what you had to do for that. And...but...I...I knew...in fact, the as...actually asked a trick question...but I forget what it was. But anyhow, I knew the answer.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: So, I answer it correctly. So, I got my license!

Larry Rabalais: Were you offered a job there or anywhere?

Mr. Martin: Well, that's another thing. While I was there, the owner of this thing, the...the head honcho on it, of the school...had a plane that was a radial engine and he was having a lot of trouble because he...he'd go...he'd go...some place and land and...and it'd...it'd be a lot of gravel and stuff in it and...and so I said, "Well, I...we ought to be able to easy fix that 'cause you've got your intake...down at the bottom of the...instead of at top," I said, "we'll change that; that...that should help a lot." And...I said, "Of course, we could...," and he...he...see, he had a prop that was probably twelve to...twelve to fourteen feet in diameter.

Larry Rabalais: That's a large prop!

Mr. Martin: Yeah, it was! It was.

Larry Rabalais: For a small airplane.

Mr. Martin: Uh, well, he was just, you know, fooling around with it, and...and so he...he decided that well maybe I could help him there. So, I said, "Well, that's easy, we'll just put some...some stronger struts on the thing and jack it up a foot."

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: "That gives you an extra foot, and if you don't take in the...air at the bottom but put it up at the top, that'll do it." Well so he was impressed. And then when I graduated then he wanted me to stay as his personal mechanic.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: I said, "No, I don't think I want to do that." So, I took a job in...in St. Louis, but this was a...these guys had a government contract to train airplane engine mechanics. So, but I'm only at this time I'm barely seventeen.

Larry Rabalais: My goodness yeah!

Mr. Martin: Okay, well, needless to say that...that they didn't...they didn't look very...I mean, it...they have...you'd have these...guys coming into the Army who are twenty, thirty years old and this seventeen-year-old kid that's going to teach them something?

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: Well, in the...the...I guess they recognized that, so then they...they gave me a...it was a guy who...uh, well, let me just say...this guy was...was...I don't know how he got a degree in anything...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: ...'cause he wasn't very bright.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: And I was embarrassed that because these...these guys...some of these guys were...were...had a brain and they would use it, and they wanted to know *why* you had to do this.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: Of course, I knew all of that because I had *done* it, but this guy didn't. So then...so I quickly kind of got...feeling that this is not for me. So, then I applied to Northwest Airlines; Northwest Airlines had the...uh, government contract to haul the supplies to build the Alcan Highway, so...

Larry Rabalais: Were they using C-47s for most of that?

Mr. Martin: Yes, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: And DC-3s?

Mr. Martin: Yeah. Uh, in fact, that's what...that was the...what I did. So, I went to work for Northwest, and...by taking the...

Larry Rabalais: This was before...Pearl Harbor...

Other Person: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ...or right after?

Other Person: Before.

Mr. Martin: This...this would have been...

Larry Rabalais: Right before... '41?

Mr. Martin: Yes, this would have been right be...no, no, no, no, no; this has got to be '42.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: Be...because...in '40...I...I remember that we were listening to Glenn Miller's music Sunday afternoon...and they came on and announced that...we've been attacked...at Pearl Harbor.

Larry Rabalais: I always wonder, and I ask the question...and I always ask veterans...where were you when you heard that, you know, and...?

Mr. Martin: Well, I was sitting in the...on the front porch of...Oceana's...service (chuckle)...

Larry Rabalais: It was a Sunday; that's right it was a Sunday.

Mr. Martin: It was a Sunday.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: Yep!

Larry Rabalais: So, you probably weren't working.

Mr. Martin: No.

Larry Rabalais: So, at that time, so '41...you were born in '25, so you'd of been...

Mr. Martin: No. '24.

Larry Rabalais: ...'24, so you would have been about...uh, eighteen, roughly; right at eighteen?

Mr. Martin: Well, see my birthday's in February.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, so '41 you'd of been...seventeen.

Mr. Martin: Seventeen.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: I'm seventeen years old.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, because the Alcan Highway was...the...the idea was...something to do quickly right after Pearl Harbor when they realized they were going to have to protect...that part of the United States, so they hurriedly built this Alcan Highway.

Mr. Martin: Yep!

Larry Rabalais: That was quite an experience; the two teams came from two different directions.

Mr. Martin: Yep.

Larry Rabalais: One of them was mostly black men, and the other one was...the whites and the competed with each other and there was...some feuding there, but...they respected each other's abilities.

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: And a lot of people died in doing that on those little bulldozers. I've interviewed some of those men. That was a terrible, brutal...it...hurry up and get it done kind of thing.

Mr. Martin: Yep, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Safety was not, I don't think...

Mr. Martin: No.

Larry Rabalais: ...OSHA was real close by then.

Mr. Martin: No, I don't think we even had OSHA...

Larry Rabalais: No, they didn't.

Mr. Martin: ...thank God! (laughter)

Larry Rabalais: No, they didn't 'cause they...nothing would have been...done.

Mr. Martin: Well, so you see, that the...but they...but...Northwestern...Airlines was worried because it took so much fuel to keep the plane...you had to...you couldn't turn the engines off 'cause in half an hour they'd freeze up.

Larry Rabalais: It's too cold!

Mr. Martin: It's too cold! So, they wanted to know..., "Well, what could we do?" I said, "I don't know; I'll go find out." So, they sent me up to...Alaska.

Larry Rabalais: Would that have been Fairbanks or Anchorage?

Mr. Martin: Well, whatever the end of the road was.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, well...okay. And (unintelligible)...

Mr. Martin: Okay, the end of the road, whatever that was, so I spent about a month...first I said, "We only need to run one engine at a time because it takes it a half an hour was...was, I think, the number we started with.

Larry Rabalais: Were they landing on fairly primitive strips?

Mr. Martin: (Laughter), oh you better believe it! (laughter)

Larry Rabalais: Real primitive, okay.

Mr. Martin: Real primitive (laughter)! So...

Larry Rabalais: Well, they must have been bringing very critical supplies to fly that in rather than find a...bring it in by road. Must have been (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: Well, but there weren't any roads.

Larry Rabalais: Well, that's true; there (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: So...so everything went by plane.

Larry Rabalais: Everything by plane. The men...the men and...and...

Mr. Martin: The...the men and their food...

Larry Rabalais: ...(unintelligible), food...

Mr. Martin: In fact, I remember in...in...particularly in the summertime, it was hard because the...the air temperature...made a lot of difference in how...how much load you could put on the planes.

Larry Rabalais: I understand that.

Mr. Martin: Uh, and so, these guys were taking off; they didn't even try to take off during the day, but about two to three o'clock in the morning, they would take off and they would clear the fence at the end of the field which was only five or six feet high. If they cleared it by six inches, that's good.

Larry Rabalais: Weren't there a lot of mosquitoes and so forth at that time of the year? That probably was a real problem with the insects from what I understand, but you were there mostly in the winter to try to solve their winter problem, is that correct?

Mr. Martin: Yeah, I was to solve the winter problem. So, what I did was I first said, "Well, we really don't know how...how fast you have to turn the engine to keep it so it doesn't stop. So, I did it a number of little experiments and wrote it all up and...

Larry Rabalais: To see how low your RPM could get?

Mr. Martin: Yeah, and it...I...I...as I recall, it was 250 RPM.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: That's not very much.

Larry Rabalais: That's pretty slow...for a rotary!

Mr. Martin: Yes, it was, but it...it...they could do it; I could reproduce it...time again. So, then the question became, okay, now how are we going to switch it? Well, so you just...you just put the...we just put a rotary switch in and counted the numbers...so many rotors, and then that...then would switch from one engine to the other.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, I see, back and forth to (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: Yeah, just switch them back and forth.

Larry Rabalais: And these, again, were mostly C-47s or whatever you called them?

Mr. Martin: Yes, I think there was...there was a...wasn't there a C-46?

Larry Rabalais: Yes, there was, uh hum.

Mr. Martin: And...the...RPM...it was still a...a radial engine.

Larry Rabalais: Right, it was. A little bit bigger engine.

Mr. Martin: Uh, and I think some of those were used on hauling the supplies.

Larry Rabalais: Yes, that was the bigger...it had a bigger cargo bay, but...the engines were a little bit less dependable than the [C-]47; it wasn't...

Mr. Martin: Well, and...my...my tests...I couldn't see the...the difference be...250 was a fine RPM.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: So, then all I did was I just took...put a counter on...and to count the revolutions and...when it went the right number of revolutions, it would just...switch it to the other engine.

Larry Rabalais: What'd you do...just switch the magneto to that side or...start the other engine and...(unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: Start the...start ot...

Larry Rabalais: And then kill the other one?

Mr. Martin: ...kill...kill this one; start that one.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: And then...so then I...all I had to do was I had to then just make a...a thing you could...when you...parked the plane, you put this thing in to set the...counter, and then it just...switched back and forth.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: And doing that I could run both...both engines...I...and never freeze up.

Larry Rabalais: And save fuel?

Mr. Martin: And save fuel, and only took...it was...between four and five gallons a night.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum, wow!

Mr. Martin: Instead of one barrel.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, uh hum.

Mr. Martin: So, they were very pleased with that. So...I...

Larry Rabalais: (Unintelligible words)

Mr. Martin: ...I get back to Minneapolis, and of course, then all the engineers come...they come down, "What did you do?!" 'Cause they'd heard...'cause I had called them; I talked several times to the...to them...about it, and...and...but anyway, so then I decided...I don't think

I want to be an Aeronautical Engineer if this is what...an Aeronautical Engineer does...is...you get somebody to fix something and then you come in and...

Larry Rabalais: Take credit for it.

Mr. Martin: ...take credit for it (laughter).

Larry Rabalais: Okay, and Uncle Sam's going to call you up then at some point?

Mr. Martin: No, I got, at that point, I got very disgusted with...Northwest Airlines.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: And so, one day I...there was a...Naval Recruiting Station...right outside of the...airport at Minneapolis, so I went over there. So, that...that explains why I chose Navy and not the Army or something. I mean...

Larry Rabalais: It's coincidence it happened to be there.

Mr. Martin: It just happened to be there! So, I went over...

Larry Rabalais: That'd have been '42 then?

Mr. Martin: Yep, so that's in '42. Alright, well so that took time, so it was in '43...the...I...I've seen some of my records that says...five or six of '43, but I went...I was...I went into the Navy in August of 1943.

Larry Rabalais: So, you actually up then when you went to that recruiting station?

Mr. Martin: Yeah, and then...and then after he...of course, I...I actually should have known this, but I didn't...I had an automatic...deferment.

Larry Rabalais: Because of the aircraft mechanic...aspect...

Mr. Martin: Yes, for the engine mechanic's part.

Other Person: Then you never would have flown!

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: So, anyhow...he tells me this...after I've signed the papers.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: (Chuckles)

Larry Rabalais: Well now, when you signed the papers, was it to go in as a potential Naval Aviator Candidate?

Mr. Martin: Yes.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, you did, okay.

Mr. Martin: I signed...

Larry Rabalais: Not just as an ordinary Seaman, but just a...yeah.

Mr. Martin: No, I signed on as a...

Larry Rabalais: Now, you didn't...hot...you did not...formally have...uh, two years of college at that point, so therefore, were they...sort of stretching it a little bit to sign you up for that program...or they had the...what they called...

Mr. Martin: Well you got to realize that...that, you know, this was when...

Larry Rabalais: Nav...

Mr. Martin: ...Nav...Navy pilots didn't last long.

Larry Rabalais: No, they were hurting.

Mr. Martin: They were hurting; I think that's how I got in.

Larry Rabalais: Was that the V-12 or what...program was that?

Mr. Martin: V-5.

Larry Rabalais: V-5 Program, yeah.

Mr. Martin: So...so I was in the V-5 Program.

Larry Rabalais: So, where'd they assign you...right at first? You (unintelligible)...

Mr. Martin: Well, first...well, I went to college at St. Olaf in St. Olaf, Minnesota; that was my first station. Then I went to Le Mars, Iowa where they taught me how to fly, and then I went to Iowa City, Iowa where I was...we...we also...that was a ground school kind of thing, and they were trying to get your...your...get your physical up.

Larry Rabalais: Alright, well now, you had had a little bit of flying before then; was it relatively easy for you to transition into it?

Mr. Martin: It was easy. In fact,...

Larry Rabalais: It was easy?

Mr. Martin: I got a story there, too. On my final flight to be a cadet, the guy says, "Okay, we're going to," we get in the plane and he puts the hood down; he says, "now, use your instruments to take off," and so I did and then he says, "Okay, let's go back home." So, I then...took the plane back home, and when I got over the Wold-Chamberlain field I...popped the hood and I was kind of surprised myself; I was upside down.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, my goodness! He didn't say anything at first?

Mr. Martin: No, he never said anything (laughter).

Larry Rabalais: (Laughter)

Mr. Martin: He...but he did...he then later...he told me he says, "You know, I've never seen a pilot, even with it right side up who could do...keep a line like you did!"

Larry Rabalais: That's right; it's hard to do that; you keep wanting to go down. You have to keep the stick...

Mr. Martin: And so he said...

Larry Rabalais: ...to get the nose up.

Mr. Martin: ...“Well, I can't turn...no, I've never seen a better eye!”

Larry Rabalais: Was that in a...bi-wing Stearman?

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Or whatever they called it; I forget what they called it, but...

Mr. Martin: SNJ.

Larry Rabalais: ...the yel..., “Yellow Peril,” or whatever they called it, uh, SSJ, yeah, SNJ?

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Okay. Uh, did...did you fly...that...now the SNJ was a single wing; were you, at that time, in the double wing, uh, I forget what they called it...the Navy did, you know?

Mr. Martin: Uh...

Larry Rabalais: The Stearman is what the...air...Air Force called it.

Mr. Martin: Uh...

Larry Rabalais: At that time are we in a bi-wing or a single wing?

Mr. Martin: I don't remember.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: I don't...

Larry Rabalais: I know you ended up in the SNJ. You know, we had a gathering here last week and there was about, oh, a dozen or so SNJs and T-6 Texans came in. They come in once a year also for their big gathering; there might be fifty of them come in, and that is quite a site! In excellent condition; a lot of them have the colors of the nation's that used them. Like...they might have Belgium or Brazil or something like that in them; beautifully colored! They're very, very nice gathering that we have here, and it's just open to the public. It's...it's quite a...quite an experience to see that. So, after you got certified as a pilot...and where did you go to Advanced School then?

Mr. Martin: Well, on...on the west coast.

Larry Rabalais: West coast.

Mr. Martin: We...I spent time in...in San Diego and then I...I spent time in Alameda at...uh, Oakland, California, and...

Larry Rabalais: I understand you ended up at Corpus at some point, Corpus Christi?

Mr. Martin: Oh yes, that...that's where I got my wings.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: Well, we...yeah, could we have gotten our wings before we'd even flown off a carrier?

Larry Rabalais: Yes, you usually do; carrier comes fir...later on from what I understand.

Mr. Martin: Okay, 'cause then...then we went to...uh, on Lake Michigan, we took a...

Larry Rabalais: That's where they do that, yeah. Got a...small carriers out there.

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Actually, they were converted...something; converted ferries or converted something into a little flat-bottom.

Mr. Martin: Yeah, right. They...they would...but there were...there must have been three or four of them...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: ...because the...the...you know, carrier landings are, at least when you're beginning it, it...it's kind of a...it isn't a very efficient process if...you don't put them through every minute. But one of the...well, that's an...I got another story there.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: In...in...when I was at Corpus, we...we were...we had been there all winter, and the people that had...they'd only spent, uh, three weeks there, and we were there for *months*!

Larry Rabalais: Uhm!

Mr. Martin: They sent us out on a...on a...all-day journey.

Larry Rabalais: Over the gulf?

Mr. Martin: Over the gulf, but the wind changed tremendously, and I didn't really realize it. And so, I'm in charge of sixteen planes, and I...I realized, "We're never going to get back (unintelligible)."

Larry Rabalais: There's a fuel issue.

Mr. Martin: There's a fuel issue! So, 'cause we had been...we had been driv...we had been driven by the wind down to...to Brownsville.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: So, I look as...we approached Brownsville, and there's a...there's a plane that's about five miles away and I said, "Boys, we're going to land before that plane does!" So, four of you on this side of the runway, four of you on this side of the runway and then repeat it and *get off of the runway!*" Needless to say, and I told the tower this...this is what we were going to do, so when...when we get there...immediately, they send out the XP...to put me in prison because I didn't obey orders. They said, "You can't; we got a plane coming in!" I said, "Well, we're in!"

Larry Rabalais: Now that was a civilian airport or was that a military?

Mr. Martin: No, it was a military airport.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, okay.

Mr. Martin: So...

Larry Rabalais: That's right, today it...during the war it was later on...it was a...it was an Army airfield, yeah, I remember that.

Mr. Martin: It was an Army airfield.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, that's right. So, they weren't happy with you?

Mr. Martin: No, they weren't!

Larry Rabalais: (Laughter)

Mr. Martin: So, (cough) I said, so they come out and they say, "Get these planes up to the line!" I said, "Sir, we have no fuel." So, they go and try to start the engine and of course, they couldn't start any of them!

Larry Rabalais: Y'all were that low, huh?

Mr. Martin: We were *that* low!

Larry Rabalais: That...probably SNJ is, I imagine, is what you had (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: No, we were...we were flying F4Fs.

Larry Rabalais: Oh really?!

Mr. Martin: Yes.

Larry Rabalais: Wow! That's a gas-hogging little plane.

Mr. Martin: Yes, it is (laughter).

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. Got the narrow undercarriage, too; I...I've always wondered when they land those things, you know, the...

Mr. Martin: You...you can land on a field with a crosswind and scrape both wingtips, and keep...

Larry Rabalais: And both wingtips.

Mr. Martin: ...keep a perfectly straight line. You can scrape both wingtips and there is nothing you can do about it.

Larry Rabalais: It's a sturdy little plane, but it's got a lousy undercarriage!

Mr. Martin: It sure does. But I preferred that a lot to...I...I got a Kleenex here, I'll...

Larry Rabalais: Well, how'd you compare that to the F6F Hellcat? Of course, that was a faster...

Mr. Martin: Well, you see, I hadn't flown the Hellcats much, and I...to tell you the truth, I don't know whether it was a...a...F4F or an F6F...

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: ...that we were flying.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: I really don't.

Larry Rabalais: That would have been '40...late '43 probably.

Mr. Martin: Uh...

Larry Rabalais: Early '44 maybe?

Mr. Martin: No, this would have been...late '43, I think.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, that's what I figured, yeah. Okay, so after Corpus, where'd you go; did you get assigned to a carrier or a...

Mr. Martin: (Blowing nose)...

Larry Rabalais: ...(unintelligible) at that time?

Mr. Martin: Well, after...after Corpus then we went and did our landings on aircraft carrier. And the trick there is...*believe* that Signal Officer. Yeah, whatever he says...fine! It looks like you're going to smack into the back end of the thing, but *shhhhhh*...perfect landing!

Larry Rabalais: Catch that wire!

Mr. Martin: Catch that wire. And, boy, they...those guys on...that do that landing stuff on the carriers...it's amazing what they do!

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. I've always admired them of that 'cause that's...one of the most difficult things for Naval Aviators. Okay...that...were you assigned to a particular carrier at that point, or were you just...?

Mr. Martin: No.

Larry Rabalais: No? Not...'cause...

Mr. Martin: 'Cause I'm still in training; I was...I was...from then on I was training to do these skip bombings.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, and where did they train you for that?

Mr. Martin: On the west coast.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: And I can't separate; I think we went back and forth as a matter of fact.

Other Person: That's what your naval record shows.

Larry Rabalais: So...but Oakland area maybe or...?

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: And we had...Oakland and...uh, San Diego...whatever the Naval base is.

Larry Rabalais: Right, uh hum.

Mr. Martin: And so, we operated...

Larry Rabalais: Back and forth?

Mr. Martin: ...and we would go back and forth. We'd be two or three months there and then we'd go up there; it'd be two or three months and...

Larry Rabalais: Would skip bombing be on land or sea?

Mr. Martin: No, no, it was at sea.

Larry Rabalais: At sea, okay. And those...what did you use? Practice bombs obviously, but...did they skip pretty good or...?

Mr. Martin: Oh yes!

Larry Rabalais: Yeah?

Mr. Martin: In fact, uh, well initially they of course, gave us dummies.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, right; I understand.

Mr. Martin: Uh...

Larry Rabalais: Usually just one...one per flight?

Mr. Martin: Yep.

Larry Rabalais: Not multiple bombs 'cause that...

Mr. Martin: No.

Larry Rabalais: ...that fighter won't carry a whole lot.

Mr. Martin: No, and...you'd also have a hard time...how you're going to mount them so you could skip them.

Larry Rabalais: Right, right.

Mr. Martin: So, that would be a...but then...after we got through that, then we actually used...I remember we were using *live* bombs.

Larry Rabalais: Right. Would that of been about a two-fifty or five hundred do you think...as being a five hundred or...you have any idea?

Mr. Martin: Well, I think we were at least five hundred.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, five hundreds; really?! That's pretty serious bang!

Mr. Martin: And...but then...I was home on leave...expecting to go to the invasion of Japan...

Larry Rabalais: Were you an Ensign at that time...I assume?

Mr. Martin: Yep.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: ...when Truman dropped the bomb.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: And my brother, Bud, who had been in the...he was in the Seabees...they said he...he took an eye exam and he...he's blind they said. Well hell,

I've ridden with him. When...when we were a little bit younger, we'd go...partridge hunting...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: ...and he would sit on the front fender and...he'd...shoot the partridges...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: ...and I was driving the...was an old...it was a Model-A Ford we had.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, so let me tell you a little bit about the skip bombing that I've...I've interviewed people on. Uh, like I said, it was mostly in the Philippine Islands, the many, many scattered little islands and they would do it with a twenty-five, and of course, they could carry multiple bombs, but they carried relatively small bombs, you know, two-fifties and stuff like that is what the guy told me. I...I interviewed a...a top Gunner; he was a...the turret Gunner...

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ...but what he said what they done...is they not only removed all the oxygen system, they removed most of the machine guns. Because if you're going to be skip bombing that low, you know, you're really not going to be...other than the...they mounted, you know, the B-25 had...had multiple machine guns mounted in the bow...

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ...in...during the latter part of the war...

Mr. Martin: Right.

Larry Rabalais: ...and they would strafe the heck out of those...guns with that and then skip bomb into the side of the ship. And he said...I was asking him something about oxygen when they..., "Oh," he said, "we didn't carry any oxygen; we never flew above five thousand feet my entire career (chuckles).

Mr. Martin: (Chuckles)

Larry Rabalais: He said he never did. Said, "We didn't even have it onboard." So, and of course, it was hot and humid at that elevation, you know, so...and but they were very successful with it. Now, they had to be very careful about the...delayed action. Sometimes they also used, if they were going to do a little bit of...on the little islands, there was sometimes little...other things to bomb...they used Para frags (sp?) with the little parachutes and they'd put a whole string of those and they'd be...quarter of a mile away before they start...hitting, you know? So, that's the only experience I've had in my interviews, but yours is very unique. So, apparently, we were going to try this...I...I guess the Japanese main islands...

Mr. Martin: That's right.

Larry Rabalais: ...is what you're saying. So...

Mr. Martin: Well, and I don't know what...'cause they don't tell you, you see?

Larry Rabalais: I've never heard of that.

Mr. Martin: That was all...all we knew was...we are training to do skip bombing because they've determined from...the...all the aerial bombing that the Navy had done...that the things withstand that; there's no...way.

Larry Rabalais: The Japanese would provide some type of protective cover for vertical, and so the...it would be limited, so you'd need to go sideways to try to get through (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: That's right, so we were trying to get down to where we could get the underpinnings of the building.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. Uh, another thing that was never talked about, along the same lines of what you're talking about, now was that really made public because the war ended soon...was that...uh, the invasion would have required a great number of paratroopers also. Most of the paratrooper...fame and...and movies and all like, you know, the ones...Band of Brothers and all that...was in Europe.

Mr. Martin: Yep.

Larry Rabalais: But we had a specific which was the Eleventh Airborne, and my uncle happened to be in that and he told me about the fact that because there was not going to be enough C-47s and C-46s available to bring that many troops into Japan at one time, they were practicing jumping out of every kind of airplane and bomber that they could think of to see how it would work. How many paratroopers could you put in and where would they get out, so he says, "We jumped from B-24s, B-25s, B-17s, in addition to the usual C-47 and every kind of bomber, even B-26s," you know, trying to figure out how you get out of those because they're not normally...have doors for paratroopers.

Mr. Martin: That's right.

Larry Rabalais: So, he said, "They would drop us through the bomb bay." Well, the problem with the B-24 bomb bay is...it's got a narrow catwalk with a whole bunch of struts, and it's pretty hard to...to do a clean jump out of there.

Mr. Martin: Yeah!

Larry Rabalais: So, he said, "We did that," and he said, "We jumped out of everything you could think of." They were doing this in the Philippines as a practice for the home island invasion. And so...but he did do a parachute jump in the Philippines also, but...but they did a lot of practicing for Japan. And of course, the war ended and they never found out what...whether they could or not. So, what you're telling me about your skip bombing, that's another new wrinkle I had not heard about, okay.

Mr. Martin: Well...

Larry Rabalais: So, you made it actually to Japan or was that later on?

Mr. Martin: No.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: That was...that was...I was home on leave. When I went back to Alameda, I was going to...we were going to invade Japan.

Larry Rabalais: Did you stay in the Reserves afterwards?

Mr. Martin: Yep.

Larry Rabalais: That's what you indicated in your email, yeah.

Mr. Martin: Yeah, and that was kind of fun, too, 'cause we would come into a little town and we...we went all over Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota,

a little bit in Iowa and a couple in Nebraska...that...places we'd go...every year.

Larry Rabalais: See, that's not an area you would associate with Naval Aviation too much, northern Minnesota, but...

Mr. Martin: No, we...we always had a go...always had a good reception wherever we went.

Larry Rabalais: Well, I imagine so. But people usually think of the east coast or the west coast, especially the west coast.

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: You don't think about Minnesota of being a hot bed of Naval Av...Aviation (laughter). Although, come to think of it, the little carriers that they practiced was in the Great Lakes, you know?

Mr. Martin: Yeah, that's right!

Larry Rabalais: I guess Lake Michigan and so forth. As a matter of fact, there's a number of little F4Fs and F6Fs over in the bottom of the lake there; they've...I think they resurrected one of those (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: Yeah, there's one down there, an F4F.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. Was it one of yours?

Mr. Martin: Yeah (laughter).

Larry Rabalais: (Laughter)

Mr. Martin: Well, I...I don't think so because I'm here, and it...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: ...it laid for...but it was recovered after the war.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. And because it was fresh water, they weren't...terribly deteriorated...not like it would have been...

Mr. Martin: (Blowing nose)

Larry Rabalais: ...in salt water.

Mr. Martin: That's right.

Larry Rabalais: And so, there...is in a reasonably good shape from what I understand. Yeah, those were...those were fairly short carrier, too; they were converted, like I said, I think they were converted ferries and converted, uh, cargo carriers that were made into carriers but they were pretty short. And that...that...would have been tricky landing on those things.

Mr. Martin: Well, you see, you always just depended on the...the landing Signal Officer...

Larry Rabalais: ...(unintelligible) in water.

Mr. Martin: ...and then when you...when you land you hear a bump, and then if you hear *another* bump, that's not so good.

Other Person: (Giggles)

Larry Rabalais: Not good.

Mr. Martin: By the time you hear the third bump, you know you're in trouble!

Larry Rabalais: So, then you got it...and try to get out?

Mr. Martin: No, you...there's no way you could do that.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, couldn't do it, so you go into the emergency fence or something or...?

Mr. Martin: Yep, that's one. You...you let the...there...there's two guys that are there and as soon as your front wheels get across that...they raise this fence and they catch you!

Larry Rabalais: That's probably not a fun thing though, I imagine, that's probably rough.

Mr. Martin: No, it...it stopped you in a hurry though (chuckles).

Larry Rabalais: Yeah (chuckles). Alright, well that pretty much covers the World War II part of it; I won't get into, you know, the later part of it, but that...that covers your experience there. So, you came out of that...with a positive attitude towards the Navy or...?

Mr. Martin: Oh yes!

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: You enjoyed it?

Mr. Martin: As a matter of fact, just...the 2nd and 3rd of April this year, the Carrier Nimitz was...parked off of...off of Key West.

Larry Rabalais: Oh really? The Nimitz, the big Nimitz, yeah?!

Mr. Martin: Yeah!

Larry Rabalais: It's a big sucker, yeah.

Mr. Martin: And...then the...uh, Blue Angels flew and I don't know how they did it, but my son-in-law...he's a real...he'll talk to anybody. Anyhow, he got...three passes to the select, you know?

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: All cordoned off, you...and so on, and you could hear the...the lady that...there was a Naval personnel person who directed the whole thing.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Martin: And we could hear her talking, and she'd always point with her fingers and, you know, if you're going...if you're going to go...come this way; okay, that way or this way or that way or that way!

Larry Rabalais: This was a Key West you say?

Mr. Martin: This is at Key West.

Larry Rabalais: I did not realize they had a show there; I'll be darned!

Mr. Martin: Well, we went to a show there...four years ago; five years ago?

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: Four or five years ago, and I was kind of disappointed that I didn't...what...of course, then I was just...general...uh, admission; didn't have the benefits of the...all of the other thing, but I've now got... 'cause Scott is a...is a nut on taking pictures...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: ...my son-in-law. So, he's taken...eight hundred and fifty pictures he took that day!

Larry Rabalais: Oh, my goodness! (laughter)

Mr. Martin: And each picture...is between twenty-five thousand and thirty thousand...

Larry Rabalais: Pixels?

Mr. Martin: The...the...the...

Other Person: Size, file size.

Mr. Martin: What?

Other Person: I don't know, I...

Larry Rabalais: Probably pixels or...

Other Person: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ...or real high-quality; is that what you're saying?

Other Person: Yes.

Mr. Martin: Yeah!

Larry Rabalais: Holy cow!

Mr. Martin: Uh, you could take...you could take a dang good picture with...six, eight thousand, but he was doing...

Larry Rabalais: Oh, my goodness!

Mr. Martin: ...ten times that!

Larry Rabalais: That's high speed; that's high speed.

Mr. Martin: He was high speed. Well, he needed to be because they...they had a guy that announced...kind of what was going to happen.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: And he said...so...he...he just gave the plane number and, "he's going to be flying at mock one, and the guy coming the other way is going to be going at mock three and a half."

Larry Rabalais: (*Swoosh* sound), I bet!

Mr. Martin: No, not like this...*like this!*

Larry Rabalais: Oh, edge-wise! Oh, they were doing...*this thing?*

Mr. Martin: Yeah!

Larry Rabalais: Oh, my heavens!

Mr. Martin: And so, he's got...he's...there should be pictures on this thing that I've got...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Martin: I just gave it to Ed because he's...and that...that's his specialty is...

Other Person: (Giggles)

Mr. Martin: ...that kind of stuff. Well, and...and my daughter, too. Uh, where they did this...this one...and of course, you couldn't see...you couldn't then tell...but then they did one...where the...they changed it ninety degrees, so all you see...is the two planes passing, and they're five feet apart.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, that's scary! They using, I believe, the...F-18 Hornet is what they're using their air shows for the last several years, so...that's probably (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: I don't know.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, it's the detail (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: I...I've given up trying to keep track...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, trying to keep track of all that. So, you did probably fly the F6F and the F4F; you probably flew both a little bit and trained in the SNJ quite a bit. Now...

Mr. Martin: Well, I trained in the SNJ; I also trained in the...in the...

Larry Rabalais: Yellow Peril, the bi-wing of the...

Mr. Martin: No, the...the...TB Avenger; one where you had to do...

Larry Rabalais: Oh!

Mr. Martin: ...where you had the two-thousand-pound bomb?

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, the...the Avenger.

Mr. Martin: (Chuckles), yeah, that's kind of funny, isn't it? You're...you're sitting on a bomb that's two thousand pounds (laughter).

Larry Rabalais: That's a serious chunk of iron! Well, that's pretty much...

Mr. Martin: And...but it...it was...it was kind of fun though...doing that because you...you see, you had so much space 'cause they...they had made the...had to make the fuselage bigger to put the two thousand pound bomb...

Larry Rabalais: Uh, you had a crewman with you on that or two; one or two crewmen?

Mr. Martin: Oh no! Not what we did...there...there was no...there was no gun turrets.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Martin: It was just...

Larry Rabalais: You and the bomb!

Mr. Martin: I...and the bomb! But we...we just practiced the...the flying, uh, getting the...the feel of how to fly it and so on. That was all that was.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum, that's a load, that two-thousand-pound bomb. That's not normal for a single engine airplane, but...

Mr. Martin: Well, but you see, it had...it had a double...uh...

Larry Rabalais: Radial double.

Mr. Martin: In fact, there were four...it was...four re...re...one, two, three, four...

Larry Rabalais: Oh.

Mr. Martin: ...on the engines; I mean, it was a...monster of a...

Larry Rabalais: I think it was a Pratt and Whitney 2400; it was (unintelligible).

Mr. Martin: Yeah, a Pratt and Whitney 2400; that's right!

Larry Rabalais: (Unintelligible) is what it was.

Mr. Martin: Those were a bitch when you got to working on them.

Larry Rabalais: I imagine!

Mr. Martin: To get all that timed right and so on, that was...a real chore!

Larry Rabalais: Well, you know, you talk about...in your early schooling...one of the things that you answered the question on was a carburetor question; do you remember?

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: You told me that? Well, you remember about 1927 when, uh, what's his name went over the (chuckles)...Lindbergh!...

Mr. Martin: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ...went over to...uh, Europe and that was one of the things that he learned was that...to backfire the carburetor, he could keep it from icing. And he had to do that because the...the carburetors tended to ice up, and they...they were always a tricky problem...carburetors were in the late '20s and even probably early 30s. So that...that was...a focus was their carburetors in those times. Of course, now everything is fuel injection, so...

Mr. Martin: Yeah, it doesn't matter (chuckles).

Larry Rabalais: It doesn't matter, yeah. Well, I...I really enjoyed...you sharing this with us; this is quite a...a little bit different and unusual...take on...on that part of the...the war. And...I...again...

Mr. Martin: Well, I...I'm surprised that you haven't heard from...

Larry Rabalais: I have not. I...I...

Mr. Martin: Of course, we...we were a pretty small group. I think that that...the...as I recall, there were only...I don't know...maybe as low as eight, but not more than sixteen of us.

Larry Rabalais: I'm curious what command you would have been under. You were assigned to different...

Mr. Martin: Well...

Larry Rabalais: ...you were trained in different areas, but you must have been under some kind of VF squadron or something or other maybe; I'm not sure.

Mr. Martin: Yeah, well I don't know either, and I don't remember who signed my paper.

Other Person: I have that information.

Larry Rabalais: That was a very unique...group, so...

Other Person: I can get you that information.

Larry Rabalais: Okay, okay. However, my...like I said, my computer's down because of the lightning strike, so...

Other Person: (Laughter)

Larry Rabalais: We had a lightning strike the other day. Well, listen, I...again, I'll close so that I can turn the unit off, but again, Robert, or can I say Bob or Robert or whichever?

Mr. Martin: Bob.

Larry Rabalais: Bob will be fine.

Mr. Martin: In fact, my high school diploma says "Bob Martin."

Larry Rabalais: Okay, it's not like Bud Martin, and then you've forgotten what the real name was?

Other Person: (Laughter)

Mr. Martin: (Laughter), no.

Larry Rabalais: Well, we thank you so much for taking the time, uh, and I'll go ahead and close out with that.

(end of interview)

FINAL copy
CD – #OH04584 – Mr. Robert T. Martin
Transcribed by: K. Matras
Houston, TX
February 23, 2019