

Interview with Harold Holesinger

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: Today is Tuesday, April 1, 2008. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and I'm here with Major General Harold Holesinger. Do you prefer to go by Harry or Harold?

Holesinger: Harry is what I normally go by. My nickname.

DePue: Okay. If you don't mind, we are here to talk about your experiences. I know you finished off your career as the Adjutant General for the State of Illinois, but you started your military career back in the late forties. By early 1952, 1953 you found your way to Korea, so that's what we're here to talk about. But I always start with when and where you were born.

Holesinger: Morrison, Illinois. That's in Whiteside County.

DePue: Okay, and when?

Holesinger: 4 October 1929.

DePue: 4 October, so right after the Great Depression started.

Holesinger: Mm-hmm.

DePue: Do you remember anything about growing up during the Depression?

Holesinger: Not really, not really. All I know is that times were tough. We didn't have much in the way of finances or anything like that, and I came from a relatively poor family, so we worked hard. We always had a large garden and all that sort of thing to help put food on the table and that sort of thing. As youngsters, we had relatives who lived on the farm and they'd bring in farm products like fresh eggs and produce and that sort of thing, and as youngsters we'd sell those out in the neighborhood and I'd make a few extra dollars for the family.

DePue: What was your father doing for a living?

Holesinger: He was a sheet metal worker in his early years. Finally just a few years before he retired, he became the foreman of the metal shop of the factory he was working at.

DePue: What was the factory?

Holesinger: I think it was the ice cooling, they'd call it, in Morrison, Illinois. They built, early on, iceboxes and that sort of thing, and later on refrigerators.

DePue: So he was able to keep employment all the way through the Depression?

Holesinger: Oh yeah.

DePue: Reduced wage is all?

Holesinger: Well, during the Depression, he actually worked in—I'm trying to think of the name of the small town, but it was about ten miles away from home—so he traveled back and forth all the time during that period of time, and I can remember those days. He'd make maybe ten dollars a week or something like that. Not very much. Then after that, he became gainfully employed in our hometown, Morrison there, at the Ice Cooling Corporation, and that's where he retired out from.

DePue: Did your mother work?

Holesinger: No. No, she didn't. My mother passed away when I was in third grade, and my father didn't remarry until I was in college.

DePue: What were your parents' names?

Holesinger: My father's name was Otto Holesinger, and my mother's name was Henrietta.

DePue: You can't get much more German sounding than Otto Holesinger.

Holesinger: Yes. That's heavy Dutch.

DePue: Okay, and what was your mother's maiden name?

Holesinger: Henrietta Bos, B-o-s.

DePue: Okay. You're of an age, you must have been about twelve years old when Pearl Harbor happened. Do you recall Pearl Harbor?

Holesinger: Yes. I can distinctly remember—I think it was on a Sunday morning—listening to the news on the radio and just basically we were glued to the radio to hear what news they had about Pearl Harbor.

DePue: The years before that, were you paying attention to the news from Europe and the storm clouds that were building over there?

Holesinger: Not really.

DePue: After the United States got involved in the war, after Pearl Harbor, did you start paying attention to what was going on with it more?

Holesinger: Much more. Yes.

DePue: Now obviously one of my interests here is that you spent the rest of your life in the military. Did you think at that time that's what you wanted to do?

Holesinger: Well, not really, except when I was in high school, myself and three of my good friends, we all joined the Army National Guard as seniors in high school. So that was our earliest start in the military.

DePue: And what year was that?

Holesinger: That would have been in forty-seven or forty-eight. Well, that was my first military service.

DePue: Now, that's not because you dropped out? You joined and still stayed in high school at the same time.

Holesinger: Yeah. Sure, yeah. It was a reserve, and so you know, as I remember, we trained on Wednesday nights and maybe one Saturday a month or something like that.

DePue: Well, as I recall, the Guard kind of didn't exist at the end of World War II, and that's about the same time that they reactivated all of these Guard units as well. So you would have been at the ground level of a brand new unit essentially. Does that sound right?

Holesinger: Yeah, that's probably right, yeah. I joined and signed up in a heavy weapons company of the Army National Guard in Sterling, Illinois. I stayed in that unit for several years, until I was in college and dropped out of the Guard. That

would have been in beginning of my junior year in college. The reason I dropped out of the Guard then is that I went ahead and signed up in the Air Force for pilot training. Once I was accepted for pilot training in the Air Force, I thought, well, I might as well just drop out of the Guard. I think it was a four month deferment or something like that, automatically went with your acceptance into the Aviation Cadet Program. I soon found out that that four months ran out real fast. So this good buddy of mine and I—we kind of joined together into the Aviation Cadet Program—decide we better go to the recruiter and find out what was going to happen to us, and they said, "If you don't get on active duty within thirty days, you're probably going to get drafted into the Army," even though we were accepted for Air Force pilot training. So that gave us both a good signal we'd better get in the Air Force. So we enlisted in the Air Force, and we told the recruiter, "If there's a vacant spot, plug us in." He said, "Well, if you can be ready to hit Chicago by eight o'clock in the morning if I let you know by about six in the evening, I'll find you a spot." So he did, and that's the way we wound up going in the Air Force.

DePue: But that's a big change from being an infantry man dealing with heavy weapons and then deciding you want to be a pilot. Had that been a lifelong interest of yours?

Holesinger: Well, I kind of had it in the back of my mind when I was a youngster that I might like to fly. But then when the handwriting was on the wall I was going to go on active duty, I thought, I want to go on active duty in something that I can really learn something in. So that's why I decided to go Air Force and take the pilot training tests and all that sort of thing. So we signed up in the Air Force—and I think it was in January of that year—and we were sent down to Lackland [Air Force Base in Texas] and went through basic training in enlisted status, with this acceptance to pilot training letter in our hind pocket all the time. Once we got finished with basic training, they elected not to send us to a tech school because they knew we were headed for pilot training, so they didn't want to waste the time and energy of training us in the career field. So they assigned us to another Air Force base and initially put us in the Support Squadron doing menial labor tasks. Well, somebody—not anybody that I knew—but someone that was waiting for pilot training got into that category and he said, "You know, this is not right, to have these people pulling for full time KP duty and all this sort of thing, and barracks duty." So they then assigned us all to a maintenance squadron, so we worked on the flight line then. We wiped the tar of the flaps, and of course, you got a chance every now and then to ride in the back seat of a T-6 or something like that.

DePue: That's not bad experience for somebody who wants to be a pilot.

Holesinger: No, that was good. Once we got out of the support business and into the maintenance business, why no, that was good experience and probably helped us out later on in our careers. But I spent I guess about seven months in that status and then we got a pilot training class.

DePue: Was this still at Lackland?

Holesinger: No. No, I was at San Antonio, Texas then. I said San Antonio. Del Rio, Texas.

DePue: Okay, Del Rio. Was that the name of the base?

Holesinger: Oooh....

DePue: We can track that down later.

Holesinger: I keep wanting to say Laughlin but that wasn't it either.

DePue: You were in college for how long then before you...

Holesinger: It was beginning of my junior year when I dropped out.

DePue: And where was the college?

Holesinger: Northern Illinois State Teacher's College, then.

DePue: And what were you majoring in?

Holesinger: Engineering. Pre-engineering.

DePue: So that's not bad training also for somebody who's going to go into pilot training.

Holesinger: Yeah. Well, I took a lot of mathematics and sciences and that sort of thing, and of course that was of a lot of use in pilot training.

DePue: Okay. Let's talk about going through flight training, then.

Holesinger: Okay. I'm trying to think. It was in the fall of that year that we got a class assignment. Seemed like September or something like that. And my first base was, okay... I started out at Del Rio, where I was at then. But then they looked for volunteers to transfer to a civilian contract base in Mississippi, and I raised my hand and volunteered. So then I went to... was it Gulfport, Mississippi?... No. I can't come up with the name of the base.

DePue: Don't worry about that. We can...

Holesinger: But at any rate, that's where I started out my actual flight training, and that was in T-6s. We spent about six months in the T-6, and then I got transferred back to Texas. I'm trying to think of the name of the base now and I can't bring it up. Then I spent three months in the T-28, and the T-28s were new in the Air Force then. That was a new airplane, new trainer for the Air Force.

DePue: Was that a jet or was that a prop?

Holesinger: Prop. Prop driven. But it was a tricycle gear airplane, and I spent three months in that. Then they shipped us off to Laredo, Texas, and there we picked up T-33 training. We spent three months in T-33s, which was a jet. I graduated from pilot training having flown a T-33.

DePue: So this is roughly a year in some kind of a cockpit in flight training, then?

Holesinger: Yeah. Just about a total year.

DePue: And was it at the end of that that you got your commission?

Holesinger: Yeah, that's true, yeah.

DePue: Okay, and I believe that was in the fall of 1951 you got your commission.

Holesinger: I think so.

DePue: Were you commissioned a second lieutenant, then?

Holesinger: Second lieutenant.

DePue: So you get to start at the bottom again.

Holesinger: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

DePue: Was it shortly thereafter, then, that you found out you were heading to Korea?

Holesinger: Well, from basic pilot training they sent you off to combat crew training, and the combat crew training I got sent to was at Luke Air Force Base. It was in the F-84, which was an air-to-ground airplane. We spent, I don't know, two to four months in that training program, and then from there we were assigned to a combat zone.

DePue: Okay, let me back a little bit, because I think this is something that always intrigues me. Were you the one who selected the F-84 or the fighter bomber aircraft?

Holesinger: No. You had a choice of going into the, well, I was going to say it's the air combat program, but basically air-to-air mission which would put you in the F-86 or an airplane like that, or air-to-ground. And you can put in your desire, and of course I asked for air-to-air but I was assigned air-to-ground. So that's what determined what airplane I was going to fly then. That put me in the F-84.

DePue: Why did you want the F-86?

Holesinger: I don't know. It's a little more advanced airplane than the F-84, and I just thought the air-to-air mission would have been good mission, but, you know.

DePue: Well, we were talking before, that's also the kind of mission that gets all the attention and all the glamour.

Holesinger: Sure. That's right. But I didn't mind going into the F-84 at all. It's a good mission.

DePue: Never was interested in going the bomber route or transport route?

Holesinger: No, no. Not at all.

DePue: Was there a different kind of personality that headed that direction instead?

Holesinger: Well, it seemed to me—and of course, I was an aviation cadet going through pilot training –and I was in pilot training with student officers who were ROTC graduates and all this sort of thing, already commissioned. It seemed like they had a tendency to ask for the multi-engine missions more than the other people did. And they generally got those because of course they already had a commission so they were higher on the pecking order than we aviation cadets were.

DePue: So some of those bomber and even cargo missions might have been missions that people thought were better to choose?

Holesinger: Mm-hmm. Yeah, well it had always appeared to me that the student officers were always looking a little bit further in advance than maybe we aviation cadets were. They were looking at a civilian career down the line and they thought maybe the multi-engine mission would be more educational or lead to a job in the airlines or something like that.

DePue: Well, that makes sense. This was a time when the Air Force obviously was drastically reduced from what it had been in World War II but still a sizable number of aircraft. The Air Force was pretty new at this time, too, wasn't it? [During WWII there was no stand-alone Air Force; the main force was the Army Air Corps.]

Holesinger: That's right, yeah. You got right in on the ground floor.

DePue: Did you run across a lot of instructor pilots and people who were veterans of World War II, then?

Holesinger: Well, of course most of our instructors in training were World War II pilots, but it was a mix at that time, yeah.

DePue: Okay. So when was it, then, that you found out that you were going to Korea.

Holesinger: Well, when we were assigned to the air-to-ground role, I know we always used to have a favorite saying as we're marching down the road. "FE Fighter Bombers," which meant air-to-ground, but most likely FE would be Far Eastern

Command, more than likely Korea. So yeah, we were pretty well destined in that direction once we got into the air-to-ground mission.

DePue: So few doubts even though there was a sizable Air Force still in the United States and certainly in Europe at the time as well.

Holesinger: What's that?

DePue: That there was an awful lot of Air Force headed to Europe as well at that point.

Holesinger: Oh yeah. Yup.

DePue: Were you asked if Korea was the place you wanted to go?

Holesinger: No, no, no. That was just an assignment.

DePue: What was your father thinking about your career choice?

Holesinger: Well, he used to worry a lot about me. I used to tell him, I says, "The most dangerous part of my activities would have been in pilot training, in combat crew training, leading up to the combat mission." So I says, "Once I get through that, don't worry about me anymore." Of course they always do. Your parents always worry about you.

DePue: You didn't believe that, did you?

Holesinger: Yeah, I did, really. I thought I was in the right mission and the right roles.

DePue: That it wasn't going to be dangerous once you got to Korea?

Holesinger: Well, you know, when you're in pilot training, especially in the air-to-ground business, you're doing a lot of work close to the ground, and there's a lot of potential for a small, slight error to put you in the ground, and so it was a higher risk mission than the air-to-air mission for sure.

DePue: Did you get any survival training while you were going through all of this?

Holesinger: We got some, but it was just very meager.

DePue: By this time there were already Air Force pilots who were spending time in North Korean prison camps, right?

Holesinger: Oh yeah, that's right.

DePue: But there wasn't much training for that?

Holesinger: Not a lot really. We got some training, and I can't really remember. I think we were maybe shipped off a couple of times to somewhere for a couple of weeks training or something like that. That was about it; it wasn't that extensive.

DePue: Did you have any girlfriends at this time? Anybody else you'd be leaving at home?

Holesinger: No, not at that time, nope. Sure didn't. I was footloose and fancy-free.

DePue: That makes life a little easier then, doesn't it?

Holesinger: Sure did.

DePue: Talk about how you got to Korea. How were you shipped overseas?

Holesinger: Well, we got a short leave. I don't know, two weeks to a month leave, after we finished combat crew training, and then I shipped out of the West Coast, and of course took a train out there. And then, I'm trying to think, yeah. We were put on a commercial airliner and then contract airliner, and that's how we got from the states to first Hawaii, and then on to Japan. We'd be put in a pool in Japan, and that's where they'd determine what base or unit we were going to go to in Korea. You didn't have any choices, again. You were in that mission and they put you where they needed you. But I wound up at K-2 Air Base in Taegu, Korea, which was a big air-to-ground fighter base. It was 58th Tactical Fighter Wing there, which consisted of four squadrons in the 58th wing. I was assigned at that time to the 49th wing in the 474th group. We had two squadrons in Korea, in Taegu: the Seventh and Eighth Squadron. The 9th Squadron out of that group was assigned in Japan, and they were one of the first units to get involved in the special weapons mission. So that's the reason, I guess, they were separated from the rest of the group.

DePue: Let's go through very quickly, how many actual aircraft would have been in a squadron then?

Holesinger: As I remember, we had eighteen or twenty aircraft to a squadron, I believe.

DePue: And about three or four squadrons in a group?

Holesinger: In the normal wing was four squadrons. I'm not sure, I imagine the fighter group normally would have four squadrons in it, too, but our group only had three: Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Squadrons.

DePue: Was the wing entirely fighter bombers? Was it entirely F-84s?

Holesinger: Well, 58th wing was and the 474th was all F-84 fighter bombers.

DePue: Okay, okay. Tell me a little bit about your first impressions actually landing in Korea.

Holesinger: Of course we were shipped over there and, as I remember, C-54 was the favorite transport airplane there, and we were dropped off at our particular base in Taegu and assigned to a squadron then. Strange as it may seem, once you were

assigned to that squadron, most of the squadrons had more pilots than they knew what to do with, than they had aircraft for them to fly. So we'd wind up spending about the first sixty days in Korea with menial groundwork. Well, they looked at my background, they noticed I had an engineering background, so guess what they made me? A sidewalk engineer. (laughter) So I was in charge of, well, we'd go down to the U.S. prisoner camp in the morning and pick up a crew of workers, one security guard and about six or eight workers, and we were building sidewalks. And that's what I did for about sixty days before I finally got started flying missions with the squadron. It was okay, you know? We didn't sign on for that, but on the other hand, it kept us occupied. And we were doing something that was good –because I don't know what you know about the Frozen Chosin – but it was a muddy place in the wintertime.

DePue: Well, I looked at the map. I noticed Taegu, I think Taegu never was actually occupied by the North Koreans. It was almost part of the Pusan Perimeter, wasn't it?

Holesinger: Yup. The North Koreans moved back just to north of Taegu. They almost overran the base. As a matter of fact, the units that were there when the push came and the North Koreans moved south, they evacuated everyone except essential personnel and a lot of the equipment. Well, during that period of time—that's a very disorganized operation, when they're withdrawing something like that—so there were weapons and ammunition floating all over the place unaccounted for. And fortunately, you know, each of us would pick up a Tommy gun or something like that, and we'd have a personal weapon, and that's the way we got them. But then, after the Koreans were pushed back again, of course the base was reoccupied by everyone. They never really closed the base. We kept operating all the time.

DePue: Well, what surprised me when I looked at the map, I realized here you have a fighter bomber air base that's well south, probably 150, 200 miles south of the actual combat zone.

Holesinger: Yeah a long way south. Most of the missions we flew were close air support on the front lines, because that was the least distance. If were to fly or be assigned missions that were general interdiction missions, like dam busting missions or airfield missions far north, we'd have to reduce our bomb load. Normally, we'd be carrying thousand-pound bombs and four napalm tanks, but when we were scheduled on these far north missions, we'd carry five hundred-pound bombs; that'd allow us to carry enough fuel to make it all the way up to the Yalu [River]. Like I said, most of the long-range missions, well, I don't know... Probably the last five or six missions I flew before they signed a truce over there were missions up bombing airfields right on the northern border.

DePue: In what they call MiG Alley?

Holesinger: Yeah, mm-hmm.

DePue: And did you see some MiGs [enemy fighter aircraft] when you got up there?

Holesinger: I only saw MiGs one time; we were on a close air support mission on the east coast. I'm trying to think what the name of the base was we were doing. But by that time, I was a flight leader. Once you got into the flying business and the mission business, you moved up real fast, because you flew missions real fast. You'd fly—it wasn't unusual to fly three missions in one day. Generally, you were selected, you know, first you were a wing man, number two or four in flight, then you were the element leader, number three. Then from element lead, you'd move to flight lead. And I think I was a flight leader by the time I had about eighteen missions, something like that. Pretty quick.

DePue: Okay. Of course, again, if you read a lot of World War II history and you read about the bomber missions over there, you think twenty-five missions and that's it. That's a remarkable accomplishment if you're in a B-17 or a B-24 [air-to-ground bombers]. Not the case at all for fighters, apparently not the case for fighters in...

Holesinger: No. In Korea, on the fighter mission you'd need to get a hundred missions to rotate back early.

DePue: And how long would that normally take?

Holesinger: About ten months.

DePue: How many missions overall did you have, then?

Holesinger: I think I had fifty-six or fifty-seven total missions when they signed the truce. Then once they signed the truce, we were just flying training missions all the time.

DePue: Well General, what I'd like to ask you now is if you can describe the F-84 for us. How it flew; things like that.

Holesinger: Of course it was a straight wing airplane, subsonic, and built for the air-to-ground mission. So it was not a fast airplane. It liked the ground. Wherever you saw F-84s flying combat missions, you saw long runways; in fact, at Taegu where we were, our runways were over 10,000 feet long. And during the heavy summer months when you'd carry a full fuel load and a bomb load, you used almost every foot of that runway to get off the ground. We did use JATO, Jet Assisted Take-Off, in some cases during the real hot weather. That wasn't so much to get us off the ground as it was to clear the mountains off the end of the runway. So we didn't really fire the ATO bottles until we were just about to get airborne.

DePue: ATO bottles?

Holesinger: Yeah, ATO, or JATO. Jet Assisted Take-Off. And we generally would not fire that until we were about to break ground or maybe even after we broke ground, and the reason being was that it was a smoke product and it would really cloud the runway up. In fact, a good friend of mine wound up in a rice paddy off the end of the runway because the element in front of him fired their ATO too early, smoked up the whole runway, and he settled back into the ground after take-off and wound up in the rice paddy. Fortunately, he survived it.

DePue: But he didn't survive the ribbing that he got afterwards.

Holesinger: Oh no. No.

DePue: How many aircraft in the wing?

Holesinger: Of course, we were in a group. But the normal fighter wing would have had...

DePue: I'm sorry, flight. That's what I meant.

Holesinger: Oh, flight?

DePue: You were a flight leader, weren't you?

Holesinger: All right. A squadron would have about eighteen to twenty something airplanes. A flight would have four.

DePue: OK. And you said you finished off the war as a flight leader, then.

Holesinger: Yeah.

DePue: We're looking at a picture of the F-84 here, and one of the things that's really distinctive about the F-84 –the way I always recognize it –is the pods at the ends of the wings. What were in these pods?

Holesinger: Those were fuel tanks.

DePue: Could you drop those?

Holesinger: Only if we were on an extremely far north mission. Normally we would not drop them. I never once dropped my fuel tanks. The F-86s that flew top cover for us frequently would drop their tanks; in fact, we used to think they dropped them right over the top of us all the time, but they didn't of course.

DePue: So when you had a close air support mission, which means you're working with the ground troops, did you usually have F-86s flying cover for you?

Holesinger: Not on a close air. The only time we'd have 86 escort is if we were going up near the Yalu.

DePue: Tell me a little bit about a typical air support mission.

Holesinger: Well, you could get your missions two different ways. You could get on a mission by sitting alert; each one of the squadrons had four aircrafts sitting alert all during the daylight hours. We'd go on duty a couple hours before sunrise and go off duty a couple hours after sunset. They would scramble you off those missions based on calls from the front lines that they needed some aircraft on site to do this, that, or the other thing. We normally would carry a bomb load on that. Once in a while, they'd send us on alert with napalm, but not very often. Most of the time, we were carrying bombs off alert. So I don't know, I would say probably less than 10 percent of my missions were flown off alert. The rest of them were prescheduled missions. On the prescheduled missions, if you were going to carry napalm, that's normally when you'd carry it. But normally, our normal bomb load was thousand pounders.

DePue: You had guns on board as well, I would assume.

Holesinger: Oh yeah. Yeah, we had a 50 caliber machine gun in each wing, and I think it was more in the nose. Being in the air-to-ground mission, about the only time we would use those is if we were going on a convoy or something like that, because 50 calibers aren't... So most of our work was really dropping the bombs and the napalm and that sort of thing.

DePue: Were you diving in on your targets then when you're dropping the bombs?

Holesinger: Mm-hmm. Yeah, mainly because you'd want to stay above the small arms fire, so you'd roll in on the target from maybe around ten, twelve thousand feet of altitude, and then dump all your bombs off maybe three thousand feet in the air or something like that.

DePue: What would the angle be as you're coming down, roughly?

Holesinger: We normally would be at a thirty to forty-five degree angle. Most climbs around thirty degrees.

DePue: So not really steep, not like the old dive-bombers.

Holesinger: No.

DePue: Okay, but you're picking up good speed as you're coming down.

Holesinger: Oh yeah. We'd generally have to pull the power back to keep from exceeding the allowable speed limits. For the weapons you got—certain, like, napalm, I forget what the speed was but—you couldn't exceed a certain speed with napalm tank on because it would start to lose its shape.

DePue: Did you ever have missions where you'd fly up and loiter around the combat zone and then respond to the ground support?

Holesinger: No. Most of our far north missions were in large numbers. For example, if we were going up on a dam busting mission or something like that, we'd be going up there in a flight of anywhere from twelve to twenty aircraft in the flight. We'd fly formation on the way up, and then as we get into the target area, we'd break off and hit our assigned targets.

DePue: Well, the reason I ask that, is because my understanding of the mainline of resistance, where the fighting was going on—it's mountainous terrain—and both sides are dug in, but especially the Chinese and the North Koreans. They're bunkered in and they've got elaborate bunker systems and caves into the side of mountains and things. It had to be hard to be digging them out with bombers and fighter bombers.

Holesinger: Yeah, it certainly was. Normally on those types of missions on the front line, we were under the direct control of a close air support aircraft. I say aircraft; the close-air- support director could be in a jeep, on a hillside observing you and guiding you into your target, or he could be in an airborne, forward air, a T-6 FAC airplane. You know, and they'd say, "Well, follow this road, you know, and then pick up this ridge line. If it was not a real hot target, he may mark it with a rocket from his own aircraft. If it was a real hot target, he'd lob a rocket over there and say, "See where my smoke hit? Now go from here to here." And that's how you'd determine where your target was, because they were well dug-in.

DePue: Did you have any missions where you knew for certain that you nailed the target?

Holesinger: Well, if you were fortunate enough to hit an ammo dump or something like that, you get a lot of secondaries. But most times you didn't see much of anything, really.

DePue: And the ground, the Forward Air Controller wasn't necessarily telling you the effects of the target?

Holesinger: Yeah. They would give us a mission effectiveness report. That came back to our home base as to how well we did on hitting the target. So they pretty much knew how well we did.

DePue: Were a lot of those close air support missions for supply dumps, ammo dumps, convoy routes immediately behind the enemy lines, then?

Holesinger: That kind of thing, yeah. Not convoys because about the only time the Koreans would move any con would be after dark. That's why, generally off alerts, you'd fly either late night missions or—late light missions or early light missions, and that would mean take off before daylight and be at the border at sunset so you could maybe catch their convoys on the road before they got off and into the hills and hid; and the same way at night. If they try to get on the roads early, you might be able to catch some of them on the road and hit them that way.

DePue: But you weren't flying night missions over enemy territory, though?

Holesinger: No. Not other than, like I said, just mainly the late light missions, you maybe find some of those after dark. But what was I going to say? I lost my train of thought there. Oh, I know what I was going to say. When you went on these missions, they were kind of reconnaissance missions. If you could not find a good target of opportunity on that reconnaissance mission, you were assigned a secondary and a tertiary target, pre-designated that you'd go hit that with your ordnance. You never brought ordnance back; you always had a target of some sort.

DePue: Did you catch a lot of ground fire when you were flying these missions?

Holesinger: A little bit. You know, when you first get into combat, and especially when you're the ground load, you have a tendency to think every one of those golden BBs is going to hit you right between the eyeballs. And they look like it, especially if you're on an early light mission or an early dark mission. Those rounds really show up, and it looks they're parked right at your forehead, but they're not. The longer you were in a unit, you'd finally get an aircraft assigned to you. Not that you flew it all the time, but that was your airplane. And the particular aircraft I got was brand new and just right back from the States. And the first mission I had it on, I got hit—the small arms fire in the tail section—and unfortunately it hit up in the antenna in the tail end of the airplane up in this area. That messed up the navigation of that airplane from then on out. You just really had to watch it, because...

DePue: Even after the repair, it still remains a problem?

Holesinger: Yeah. They never did repair it exactly right. But everybody knew that.

DePue: Was that the only time you got hit?

Holesinger: That was the only time I got hit, yeah.

DePue: Okay. Anybody in your flight or your squadron who ended up going down?

Holesinger: Well, we lost - I'm just trying to think. Out of the squadron I was in, we probably lost three or four people over the period of time that I was there. But not all of them were to combat, you know? Some of them were just plain aircraft accidents. This one individual I mentioned to you who wound up in a rice paddy, being he was heading out on a combat mission—normally if you get shot down over there, they're not going to send you back in combat because you're going to have to list some identifying markings or something like that, so they normally ship you back to the states. Well, he thought because he wound up in a rice paddy he was going back to the States, so he didn't fly any missions for a while. Finally he realized that the only way he was going to get back home was to get back in the heavy flying missions; unfortunately, he was shot down.

DePue: Now shot down over enemy territory?

Holesinger: Over North—yeah.

DePue: Was he killed then? Did he die in that incident, or was he...

Holesinger: We assume that he did, yeah.

DePue: Okay, so he's probably reported missing in action?

Holesinger: Yeah, I'm sure.

DePue: How about the other ones? Were some of those pilots who were downed rescued then?

Holesinger: Don't know of any of them that were rescued until after repatriation came about. There may be some that came back. But I didn't personally know any of them.

DePue: I know you mentioned before you had one mission, you had a problem with authentication. Do you recall that one?

Holesinger: Yeah. Of course, we always had authentication tables with us all the time. It was a new table every day and this sort of thing. You really never thought too much about it except you had them and you were aware of them. The purpose of the authentication tables was: there were times when the enemy would attempt to guide a flight somewhere and have you hit your own people. So you had to be real careful about that,. Normally, by the time I got over there, the front line was pretty steady. It didn't move forward or backward very much except once in a while on a bushwhack they'd penetrate an area and they'd have to fall back and that sort of thing. And that's what happened to me one day; I was leading the flight on the close air support mission, and the Forward Air Controller was calling me in on our own panels, our own ground panels, and that made me real concerned, because I thought, Am I getting bad signals for somebody or what's going on? So I required the Forward Air Controller to authenticate, and he did. It turned out that their position had been overrun, and he called us in on one of our own ammo dumps that had been overrun, and that's what we hit. And we did hit it. We could see that real easy.

DePue: I would think, and I've seen all these old movies, I guess, you hit that ammo dump and you're just trying to get out of there as fast as you can.

Holesinger: Yeah, well you know. And right on the front line there, there was not much anti-aircraft fire. If you were going to encounter anti-aircraft fire, it was generally in the north where you were hitting targets in the north. On close air support missions, you would very seldom ever... You might get some small arms fire from the enemy's front line, but that would be about it.

DePue: Did you ever have any opportunities to work with the forward air controllers on the ground to see what it was like on the other end?

Holesinger: Before you were put in charge of leading flights on close air support missions, where you were working with the front lines, you had to spend a certain amount of time on the front line. What they would do is they would ship you up with a unit up front, and you would work with the Forward Air Controller on the ground for maybe a week or so and help him direct missions. So that was your exposure to that, and that gave you a good feel for how close you were working to your friendly troops and all that. And I think that's the reason they insisted that flight leads all get that kind of training.

DePue: That makes a lot of sense.

Holesinger: Yeah, sure does.

DePue: And the forward air controllers were Air Force personnel, right?

Holesinger: That's right.

DePue: Living the life of infantrymen.

Holesinger: Well, that's exactly right. Unless they were an airborne forward air controller, but the ones that were assigned the ground duty, yeah, you lived and ate and slept with the Army.

DePue: Now that's not necessarily the most prestigious job to have in the Air Force. Were these people who maybe had washed out of flight school or were they ones who elected to do that?

Holesinger: Well, a few of them elected to do it. Otherwise, they might have had an aircraft accident or something like that and wound up assigned to that kind of duty. But most of those people were real good people. They knew what they were doing.

DePue: It was just like any team. They were just as crucial to the success as that pilot is, I would think.

Holesinger: Absolutely.

DePue: Okay. Any other comments about close air support? I want to ask you about air interdiction, but before we move onto that, any thing else on the close air support? Any missions in particular you remember?

Holesinger: Well, probably that one that I mentioned where I required a forward air controller to authenticate because I was worried about him sending me out on the wrong target. Because he was. He was sending us in on our own panels, and that created a lot of concern in my mind, anyway. But other than that, the close air support missions were relatively short. Generally an hour or less and we

were back on the ground at home plate. As I said, we would receive our directions to check in in a certain —. We generally were flying in a certain sector of the front line, so we were familiar with the terrain, the hills, and what the front lines were. That's normally where you flew your close air support. Once in a while, you get shipped into another sector, but very seldom. And it was good reason behind that, because you were familiar with the forward air controllers, you were familiar with the terrain, and where the lines were.

DePue: Were you working, supporting a particular American division? Do you know what division that might have been?

Holesinger: No, I don't. I don't. I don't remember if I did, anyway.

DePue: Where on the line, roughly, would you have been?

Holesinger: We were close to the center of Korea. And we didn't get out of that area very often. There were always plenty of missions to fly. It seemed like—it seemed to us in the air side that no matter what sector it was in, they had plenty of targets. They were a target-rich area, so they always were able to find you a target.

DePue: Were some of these missions in support of South Korean army troops?

Holesinger: They could have been, but I don't really remember whether we had any Koreans on our line or not.

DePue: Now, I know that you mentioned most of your missions were combat support, but you also did air interdiction missions. And what's the definition of that?

Holesinger: Well, interdiction missions we flew were generally highway bridges, dams—I mentioned bridges, didn't I?

DePue: Yup.

Holesinger: Bridges and dams.

DePue: Rail lines? Railroad?

Holesinger: About the only time we'd hit any railroads was if we were sent on one of the east or west coasts, and there was some rail traffic sometimes. But most of the other rail lines were kept cut all the time. They were just continually being cut.

DePue: I would imagine that's more of your traditional bomber missions for the rail lines.

Holesinger: Right. We would—if the weather was terrible and you couldn't visually bomb your targets, we'd get sent on what we called MPQs. Let's see, now, what's MPQ stand for? Well, basically what they were was easily identifiable ground targets where you could be directed in by radar. Actually, it'd be like flying a

GCA. They'd set you up on kind of a base leg, you'd be fine. Straight and level, with your flight together, and once they vectored you across our own lines, then they say, "OK, you can arm them up now," and we'd set up our bomb switches and everything, set them up hot. Then they'd set you on a final course for your final heading to make your bomb drop, and then they actually gave you a countdown. You know. "Ten, nine, eight," you know, right down to the final count, and everybody would pickle [release the aircraft's bomb load] on the final number.

DePue: So this is obviously being done by a forward air controller...

Holesinger: By radar units, yeah.

DePue: OK. GCA, do you recall what that stands for?

Holesinger: Well, GCA is a ground-controlled approach. That's normally a final approach to an airport, where you are flying in fairly low weather and you were being guided by a ground controller to the runway for landing.

DePue: These air interdiction missions: did you encounter more anti-aircraft fire then?

Holesinger: On a general interdiction, yeah. And the farther north you went, the more fire you got.

DePue: How far did you penetrate into North Korea in some of these missions, then?

Holesinger: Well, we weren't supposed to be across the border ever. And we normally weren't. We may hit a bridge that was on the border, but as far as going across the border to hit an airfield or something up there, that was a no-no. Although I'm sure it happened.

DePue: OK, I might be confused here. Are you talking about the border into China?

Holesinger: Yup, that's right.

DePue: OK, but otherwise, your air interdiction missions were the entire length and breadth of North Korea?

Holesinger: Yup, yup. From our front lines right up to the Yalu.

DePue: Well, what was it like in a fighter bomber, bearing in on the target, and now you've got anti-aircraft fire coming at you?

Holesinger: Well, it was like I told you before. The first few missions, you know, you thought everyone of those golden BBs is going to hit you right between the eyeballs, so the first mission or two it would kind of spook you a little bit. But you know, that was your job, so you had to roll in on your target, and if there was anti-aircraft fire, you could do some jinking around this way on the final,

but there's a certain point where you have to stabilize out and concentrate on making your bomb drop. So there's a short period of time there prior to each bomb drop where you're pretty much exposed.

DePue: You felt a lot more at risk than when you were doing the close air missions?

Holesinger: General interdiction missions, some of them were pretty interesting, if you were going on a dam busting mission or a bridge mission or something like that. Or one particular time—-the only time I saw a MiG—was we were directed in to one of the east coast harbor areas north of the border, and we were to hit a supply dump there.

DePue: Wonsan or somewhere around there, maybe?

Holesinger: Let's see now. Wonsan. No. I think I gave you the wrong coast.

DePue: The west coast, then?

Holesinger: Yeah. But this one particular day, I was leading a flight of four up there, and we got sent into that area. It was right on the coastline, and it was a supply depot we were going in on. And we identified the target pretty quickly and rolled in on it, and we—I'm trying to think. I think we made individual drops. The flight split up in a trail kind of thing, you know? So each was doing his own site picture and called his own bomb release. So as I came off the target—of course your first thought is you want to make sure your flight keeps track of you so that you can get joined up after the ordnance has been delivered—and just about the time I pulled up, I saw three MiGs, and they were probably above us by eight or ten thousand feet, something like that. They were heading north, and I called them out right away to alert the rest of the flight. They were no problem because they just kept going. They were probably low on fuel. And that's about the only time I saw a MiG. As I said, it was pretty easy to evade them because they never bothered to turn to attack us. And we would have been at a disadvantage had they, because they were an air-to-air airplane and we weren't

DePue: And you didn't have an F-86 with you.

Holesinger: No. We didn't have an 86 cover at all on that mission.

DePue: Were you involved—I know that you mentioned a couple of dam missions that you ran—the one that I'm most familiar with is Toksan Irrigation Dam, which was just a few miles north of Pyongyang, and that was May thirteenth of fifty-three, so that would have been the time you were there. Were you on that mission?

Holesinger: Yup. Sure was. Matter of fact, we went up there two different times. It takes a lot of bombs to bust an earthen dam, and that's what that was.

DePue: I read an account of it. Can you describe as much as you can remember? The actual first attack that you had on the dam?

Holesinger: Well, the dam was real easily identifiable and that sort of thing, so it was no problem picking up the target and dropping the ordnance on the dam. But the problem is, an earthen dam like that takes a lot of weakening in order to break it up. So the first mission we went on, you know, we dropped our ordnance, came back home, and of course, shortly we found out we were going back the next day, which meant we didn't get the dam busted. Now, we weren't the only flight that went in on that thing. There would be probably seventy-five to a hundred aircraft going on one of those missions.

DePue: The account I read, it said that the first flight, maybe a couple flights of F-84s, were dropping skip bombs. And obviously a skip bomb, so they skip and so they get very close to the lip of the thing and the bomb sinks down to a certain level. But then a lot of the other later flights were flying parallel to the dam. Do you recall the approach that you had?

Holesinger: No, we were always diving in on it. Like I said, the second set of missions we flew up there, it was pretty obvious the dam was starting to leak already, and it broke loose that next night.

DePue: Okay, and I know when it broke loose—at least this Toksan Dam—it took out something like four or five miles of rail lines and roads.

Holesinger: Yeah. We were accused of atrocities on that mission. They said that we created atrocities against the enemy...

DePue: What was your reaction to that allegation?

Holesinger: Well, it just wasn't true. We did our job to break the dam. Now, what happened to the water after that, you know, that's another story. And it sure did wash out villages and that sort of thing, so I'm sure there were a lot of people drowned.

DePue: Well I know, just again by reading about it, that the Air Force held off on that target for a long, long time, because they knew the impact would be on rice production. Then they figured out the rice was being used to purchase arms and things like that. So right at the end of the war.

Holesinger: Yeah. Sure thing. That's interesting, you know, they waited that long to hit that really, but that... Probably the last four or five missions that I flew were way north, carrying 500-pound bombs, hitting what can be used as an airfield, or landing strips and this sort of thing, to make sure they were pock-marked and unusable. Otherwise the enemy would just come back across the line.

DePue: So these would be missions very close to the Yalu River, very close to the border then?

Holesinger: Yeah.

DePue: Flying over South Korea, flying over North Korea, did it look different?

Holesinger: Oh yeah. Over South Korea, it was a beehive. The roads were busy and things were happening all over the place. Once you hit the front line and moved north, you very seldom saw anything moving on any roads or anything like that in the daytime. At night, they would try and move. We did have a few missions that were flown at night. These were pre-canned missions where you'd take off maybe eight, nine o'clock, ten o'clock at night, midnight, and you'd go north and you were assigned a sector to go to. What you were doing was looking for truck lights on the highways, and if you could locate some, you'd roll in on them. But rolling in at night, dropping bombs, wasn't the most interesting thing in the world to do. But we did it, and some of it was effective; some of it wasn't.

DePue: Let's talk for a little bit. You just mentioned the effectiveness. Do you think that the tactics that you were using make sense to you, the Air Force tactics?

Holesinger: Yeah, I think so. Of course, we were under strict orders to never make a second pass on a target, and that was for our own safety. Because, you know, if you're going to bomb or napalm a target, once you roll in and drop your ordnance, if you come around back again, they're going to know exactly where you're coming from. So you're going to be exposed to a lot of small arms fire. So the rule of thumb was, other than during a couple of the peak periods where the push was really on, was never make a second pass. Go in, drop your ordnance, and get out of there.

DePue: And again, the rationale for never making that second pass was...

Holesinger: Well, you were exposing yourself to unnecessary ground fire, is what it boiled down to.

DePue: This is kind of a little bit off-base question, but you've got to be amazed – watching the Air Force work in the last ten years –with these smart bombs.

Holesinger: Oh yeah. I used to, you know, not to openly criticize, but I was always questioning why we would send a flight of eighteen or twenty-four aircraft in to hit a target and send them all in, in one big mass gaggle to hit that one target. Why not just send a flight of four quietly, you know, and let them roll in and hit it?

DePue: A little bit more precision, maybe?

Holesinger: Yeah. But that never happened. They always sent a massive number of aircraft up to get a massive number of bombs on or near the target. Today with the smart weapons, they don't need that. They can do it with fewer aircraft.

DePue: One of the things that comes across pretty clearly when reading about the air war in Korea –this is before the time you got there –but there was a lot of criticism from the Army that the Air Force just wasn't doing its job of providing close air support, that here the Air Force is a brand new organization, that the top brass of the Air Force seem to be overly emphasizing the bomber mission and nuclear weapons, and they kind of forgot about doing the close air support mission. I know in the Air Force there was an awful lot of debate about whether that was effective, whether these interdiction missions were really where the big payoff was. Any thoughts or reflections on that, coming in later in this argument, if you will?

Holesinger: Let's see now. Let me get my train of thought together here. There seems to be a continuing—I don't want to say battle—controversy over how air missions are allocated on the targets. That's a joint effort between the Army and the Air; they select the targets and they select which ones are going to be hit. There was always plenty of targets to hit. There was never any shortage of target. So in essence, there were more targets than there were bombs and aircraft available to hit them all. Now, whether they were being allocated properly or not, I can't answer that question. But it's been an ongoing—or in those days, it was an ongoing controversy between Army and Air. Army didn't think the Air was delegating enough air support to their particular roles and missions. Of course, the Air said, "We've only got so much in the way of assets, so we've got to allocate them out on a priority basis." And that's kind of the way it was. That's been a constant—and I don't know whether it still goes on today or not—but in those days, it was a constant conflict between the Air and the Army.

DePue: And at that time, your particular view of the disagreement, if you will?

(doorbell ringing)

Holesinger: I didn't think it was that much of a problem, but then I was in a different place in the Army. Hi, I think Dee's upstairs.

Unknown: Is she? Dee?

DePue: So you didn't see it as that much of a problem, you said?

Holesinger: I don't think so, but I'm speaking from the Air perspective, I guess. And of course, I was an air-to-mud guy, so like I said, it was a target-rich environment. There were always targets available.

DePue: I like the phrase "the air-to-mud guy." Did you guys have a nickname for the Thunderjet?

Holesinger: I'm trying to think whether we did or not.

DePue: Did you have a name for your particular aircraft?

Holesinger: No, I didn't. I can't remember any particular name that we gave to the aircraft. When I first got into Korea, we were flying –I think it was the D model –of the F-84, and then after a couple months in Korea, there was a big conversion to the G model of the airplane. During this conversion, of course, you wind up with a shortage of aircraft because you're using some of your newer aircraft to retrain pilots into that new weapons system. So it was kind of frustrating for a while because it just seemed like when they converted from one aircraft to a new one, it decreased the amount of combats orders you got to fly.

DePue: What was your attitude and the attitude of the other pilots you worked with about the F-84? Good aircraft?

Holesinger: We thought it was a good airplane, yeah.

DePue: The F-86?

Holesinger: A good airplane, too. We used to joke about them dropping their tanks through us up north, but that really didn't happen, I don't think. It may have once in while.

DePue: Were F-86's flying out of Taegu as well?

Holesinger: No. Most of the F-86's were flying out of northern bases. Kimpo and way north, because they had a fuel problem, too. And of course they were looking for stay time on the target, because they'd be up there flying top cover for several flights coming in, you know?

DePue: You've kind of addressed some of this already, but was there any time—that first couple missions you flew and the first couple times you're taking some incoming –how do you deal with the fear? What were your emotions at that time?

Holesinger: Well, like I said, the first time you're exposed to that kind of fire, especially on an early or a late night mission, it seemed like every round was going to hit you right between the eyeballs, and so there's some concern, I guess I might say. It never stopped us from rolling in, hitting our target, and that sort of thing. But it got your attention. After a few missions of that, you just ignored it.

DePue: Did you have any problems coming back from those first few missions and decompressing?

Holesinger: No. Most of the time, we'd get in decompression is if you—the old straight wing F-84, for some reason or other –if you rolled over like this and pulled a lot of G's, once in a while the canopy would pop open. And by that, it would just pop open on the rails, and suddenly you're...

DePue: Slide back?

Holesinger: Yeah. Suddenly you're exposed to a lot of ground noise, and you'd wind up having to slow down and close the canopy again and go right on.

DePue: Okay. Typical routine after you got back from a mission?

Holesinger: Well, of course we got back, first thing we'd have to do is go to headquarters and debrief the mission. And there, we'd get our so called combat shot, you know, and...

DePue: Combat shot? Is that the shot I'm thinking of?

Holesinger: Yeah. That was whether you wanted it or not, and it was offered but most of us didn't even take it. The rule was twelve hours bottle-to-throttle; most of us were interested in getting missions, so we didn't jeopardize that opportunity. But we'd get back off the mission –we'd get together as a flight, go in and debrief together, and then back to the squadron, and get there and try to get on another mission. You know, it's kind of funny. A lot of people would think, You're flying combat, you wouldn't necessarily want to volunteer. We were always volunteering for additional missions, because we knew that we get a hundred, we go home, and that was a driving force between everybody wanting to get more missions.

DePue: And it strikes me just listening to you that you didn't feel there was much of a threat, then.

Holesinger: Not really, no.

DePue: Even though there were soldiers you knew that got hit.

Holesinger: You never figured that that golden BB is going to hit you anyway. It's just luck that they hit you.

DePue: What did you think about your fellow airmen you were serving with?

Holesinger: We had a real good bunch of pilots. Of course, the system that was set up over there because of, I said, an excess of pilots, you'd get assigned to a new squadron and you were assigned other duties: ground duties just to give you something to keep you out of their hair. Then, once you got over that phase of it and you were then looking for missions all the time. Even though you got your pre-assigned missions flown that day, you were down there at Ops [Operations Center] hoping an opportunity might come up. Somebody couldn't go on their mission because of a cold or something like that and you'd fill in for them.

DePue: Did you get any medals or citations while you were over there?

Holesinger: Yeah. I got a couple of Air Medals, and a DFC, Distinguished Flying Cross. The Air Medals were given for mission effectiveness. They used to call it 100 percent of the runs on the target, 100 percent exposure, effectiveness of the

drops. Then when you got to the DFC, it would either have to be an outstanding mission or a total number of missions. It was pretty standard that once you got seventy-five missions, then you were going to get a DFC. That was just almost automatic for having flown so many combat missions. By the time I left there, they dropped that back to fifty missions.

DePue: And so that's how you received a DFC?

Holesinger: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. What do you think the toughest part of your service in Korea was?

Holesinger: Toughest part? Probably the missions that required the most intense concentration and that sort of thing were the close air support missions, because you were being directed in on a target, you knew you were close to the friendlies. The last thing you wanted to do was drop on friendlies, so there was probably more pressure on those missions to make sure you did everything right and didn't make any mistakes.

DePue: This particular war was the first war that the United States Military had been integrated. Did you have any blacks in your outfit?

Holesinger: Sure.

DePue: Your impression of how that integration was going? Because it was still something they were experimenting with.

Holesinger: It went real fine as far as I know. I'm trying to think whether we had just one black pilot in our squadron or not, but he was well accepted. And he was an excellent pilot. I think from a flying standpoint, if you go through pilot training and you go through combat crew training, you've been screened and screened and screened, so you're going to be pretty well-qualified or you don't ever get there. And I never saw any evidence of any discrimination whatsoever.

DePue: Did you have opportunity to work with Korean Military much?

Holesinger: Not really, no.

DePue: There weren't any Koreans integrated into your unit?

Holesinger: No.

DePue: Like they did for the ground units?

Holesinger: No.

DePue: Okay. Did you have a chance to get off base and see the countryside much?

Holesinger: Well, I think I had one R&R out of Korea, into Japan, and that lasted about four or five days, something like that, and that was about it. Had the war continued and we'd flown a full tour, I'd have probably been on another R&R over in Japan for a week or so.

DePue: I'm getting the impression, then, that your life was pretty much confined to activities at that base at Taegu and flying missions.

Holesinger: Yeah. Yeah. The only exception was we used to go in and harass the Army. (both laugh) I forget what Army Headquarters it was at Taegu. There was a major Army Headquarters there, anyway, so there was a lot of Army around there. We used to go in and use the club all the time, of course. The Army would use us, too. We'd send our transport aircraft over to Japan to take people on R&R, and when they came back, they were always loaded with steaks. And the good meal steaks went to the Army Officer's Club.

DePue: Make sure good relations are maintained. (both laugh)

Holesinger: There you go. But we got along real well.

DePue: Do you know if your unit sponsored or supported any orphanages or any other charitable work with the local surrounding...

Holesinger: I wasn't aware of any.

DePue: Okay. Let's go to the end of the war, then. July 27, 1953, I think. The war ended with that armistice. Your impression of the way that war ended?

Holesinger: Well, I think we all had mixed emotions about it. I don't know. You know, being a combat pilot and everything, you're always ready to do more, and so when all of a sudden bang, it's shut off just like that—(clears throat)—the obvious part of it was that as it was drawing down, we were flying missions way north, hitting potential targets that could be used by the North Koreans sending people across the border just before and during the truce. So that part of it, I thought, was good. But they were awful long missions for us, and you don't know how effective they really were, really.

DePue: Any resentment that it ended, not with victory, but with a tie, if you will? Not necessarily just yourself, but the airmen that you were working with?

Holesinger: Yeah. I don't know. There's always a feeling that we probably should have gone all the way north. But on the other hand, you have to look at the fruitfulness of that, too. So I didn't really have any opinion, I don't think.

DePue: Here's a different kind of question for you. What was the most humorous event that you recall?

Holesinger: Let's see. Humorous event.

DePue: I put you on the spot here, I think.

Holesinger: Yeah, I don't recollect anything really that occurred. There were probably some things that did occur, but you know, you're in your own little world with people you're dealing with. I can't really think of anything.

DePue: Once the armistice is signed, did you guys continue to fly missions after that?

Holesinger: Oh yeah.

DePue: None of those counted toward the hundred, though?

Holesinger: Yeah, well, we were flying training missions all the time. And that was one thing that, you know, you get involved in air-to-air combat and all this sort of thing. I think during the first few weeks of the armistice, we lost more of our own people towards stupid accidents. You know, going at it too hard when we shouldn't have been. I don't know what you credit that with—a lack of good leadership or what—but they clamped down on us pretty hard and heavy as to what we could do in training and what we couldn't do in training, and that was a good move, I think.

DePue: Yeah. But you didn't fly any more missions up towards the DMZ now? [De-Militarized Zone]

Holesinger: No, no.

DePue: Okay, what finally made the determination that you got to come home, then?

Holesinger: Well, it was a total number of missions I had. Once the truce was signed, anybody with seventy-five or more went home right away; then the next cut came at fifty missions, and I was in the second cut.

DePue: When did you go home, then?

Holesinger: Seemed like it was in—got over there in January—seemed like it was in September. I can't remember.

DePue: So just a couple months after the war ended, then?

Holesinger: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Were there new pilots coming in?

Holesinger: Yeah. Oh yeah.

DePue: Okay, so the units stayed there. It wasn't coming back as a unit?

Holesinger: That's right.

DePue: Able to stay in touch with your father during the war?

Holesinger: Yeah. He used to get a little upset with me because I'm not a very good letter writer. In fact, he even wrote a letter to my commander one time saying, "Hey, get my kid to write me a letter, will you?" (laughs) So I was not a very good responder that way. And that's normal for your parents to worry about you, especially when they don't hear.

DePue: Well, your dad understood how the chain of command works, didn't he?

Holesinger: Oh yeah. Yeah, he did.

DePue: How about the food you were getting? The food?

Holesinger: We had good food all the time. Of course, what food wasn't shipped in by ship, these flights over to Japan all the time, they were always loaded back with steaks and that sort of thing, you know? So we had good food.

DePue: You were having three hots a day, then?

Holesinger: Hmm?

DePue: Three hot meals a day?

Holesinger: Oh yeah.

DePue: Describe then how you came back to the United States, and then arriving back and the reunion with your family and friends back here.

Holesinger: Let's see. I'm trying to think about that now. Again, we came back by air. That's one thing. If you're an aviator, they always made sure you went over by air and you came back by air.

DePue: Well, everybody I've talked to who had the experience of being shipped over in the army, it was by ship and it was not a pleasant (laughs) experience.

Holesinger: That's right. Well, I didn't get to experience that. So I guess I didn't miss it, either. But I'm trying to think. I can't remember how we got our assignments when we came back to the States. Of course you go on leave after you came back, you know, visit with family and friends and what have you, for maybe a two-week to three-week leave, something like that. You generally would have accrued that much leave time, having been overseas all that time anyway. And I can't for the life of me remember when we received our base of assignment after coming back from Korea. But I got assigned as an instructor pilot to a Fighter Squadron (pause). In Texas, of course. (pause)

DePue: We can clean some of this up when we get to the transcript phase.

Holesinger: Yeah. I can't remember what. I keep wanting to say Del Rio, but that's...

DePue: How much longer, then, were you in the Air Force on active status after you came back?

Holesinger: Nearly two years.

DePue: So this would have been up to about 1955?

Holesinger: Yeah. Fifty-five is when I got off active duty.

DePue: What did you do there in 1955 then?

Holesinger: Well, I rotated back to the States, and my intent was, all along, to go back to college and finish my degree. So I had actually come home on leave and visited the colleges and universities and everything and had all the groundwork laid, because when I got off active duty, it was almost the next day I started classes because I had come home and gotten all signed up before I could do that. Had I not come home and made prearrangements, I would probably have had to stay out a quarter.

DePue: And this was a Northern again? [Northern Illinois University]

Holesinger: Yeah.

DePue: And your major, again? Still engineering?

Holesinger: Pre-engineering, yeah. I was a chemistry major, really. You know, at that time, in this stage of the game, all I was interested in was in getting a degree. It really didn't make any difference to me what the degree was in. Most of my earlier education was in engineering type courses, anyway, so engineering looked like the way to go, and that's the way I did. I had it all figured out where I'd spend that first year back in class again. Then in the summer following that first year off active duty, I had just a few too many credit hours. I needed to go to summer school and finish it up, so I decided the smart thing to do would be to drop out for the summer school and enroll in the fall session. In the meantime, I was in the Guard, the Air Guard, based in Chicago.

DePue: What was the unit then?

Holesinger: It was—I'm trying to think.

DePue: But a fighter unit in Chicago at that time?

Holesinger: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Okay, we can track that down later.

Holesinger: And then I, through my own unit, I made arrangements that I'd come down to Springfield and sit the alert. Because they were sitting day alert in the fighters here at Springfield. So I'd come down here TDY and spend time with the Springfield unit and sit alert, and that put me on the payroll, you know.

DePue: Set alert? What's the phrase? I'm not familiar with it.

Holesinger: Close air support alert. Yeah. Runway alert. Daytime alert. And our mission then was, you know, if you were scrambled, it was the air-to-air missions even though we were in F-84s.

DePue: But this is obviously just training missions at the time?

Holesinger: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Then Did you go back to college the next fall?

Holesinger: Well, that's another story. When I was in Springfield, I met my wife and...

DePue: And her name was?

Holesinger: Delores. Haynes, at that time.

DePue: H-a-y-n-e-s?

Holesinger: Mm-hmm. We got married and I had an opportunity to sign on full time with the Air Guard here at Springfield. Of course, I got to know those people real well sitting alert with them all summer long. They were needing some good leadership; at that particular time in the Illinois Air National Guard, I was one of the highest jet-time pilots in the whole Illinois Air Guard, so I didn't have an problem finding a unit that wanted me. So I signed on with the Springfield outfit and was assigned the Ops Officer duties of the unit there real early on. Shortly after that, I took command of the Fighter Squadron.

DePue: The 183rd?

Holesinger: No, it was the 170th Fighter Squadron; it was the 183rd Group.

DePue: And then the rest is history. You didn't get back to college, then.

Holesinger: Nope. I met my wife Delores, and (pause). It just worked out that I—you know, being as I was full time with the Guard here, I had a good job. I enjoyed my job and I enjoyed my work, so I just stayed.

DePue: And something like twenty-five years later, then, you became the Adjutant General for the entire state of Illinois?

Holesinger: That is correct.

DePue: Okay. We covered twenty-five years. There's an awful lot of your life encompassed in that. Anything you want to say about that twenty-five years?

Holesinger: Well, I was very fortunate through my whole Air Guard and Air Force career. I never had to hunt for a job; I was always offered an opportunity. So I, you know, would move from the squadron into the group. They asked me to transfer up to Chicago O'Hare and take over the wing up there; that was not a move that I was really campaigning for, but being a good soldier, I know when you're asked to do something, unless you've got very good reason, you just go ahead and do it. So that forced my family to move up to Chicago O'Hare, which was fine. We had a good five and a half years up there. I went from fighters into transports into tankers, and that was a new experience for me because I'd always flown fighters before that. When you fly fighters, you're pretty much self-sustaining. You know, you're used to changing your own radio channels and making your own calls and doing everything yourself. Well, once you get in a big airplane like the KC-135, you've got a crew of five people there that you talk to. You have a navigator and a crew chief and a copilot. So that was a different operation. I had to get used to the crew coordination business. But I was sent to California for my ground training leading into the KC-135, and that was about a three-week to a month course out there. Normally, you would go from that into flight training out there, too. But being as I had a lot of military background and was a commander of the unit up there, I was able to do my flight training right there with the unit through its own unit instructor pilots. And they had some excellent instructor pilots because they had a lot of people in the Chicago unit that were people who transferred off active duty in the tanker mission right into the Guard. So we had a lot of highly qualified instructor pilots. So I did all my flight training right there out of O'Hare.

DePue: Now, you mentioned earlier that was transport, and you just mentioned that was a tanker, and of course the KC-135 is a refueler. I would think that'd be one of the most challenging aspects of learning how to fly that air craft, the refueling missions themselves.

Holesinger: Well, not really because all the work really, all you have to do is navigate and fly the airplane, and you've got to designate a rendezvous point where you rendezvous with your receivers. You set up an orbit, and your fighters come in behind you and then you set course down to refueling track. The fighters, you know, sashay through the boom, take the fuel, and move to the other side. Then off they go. So all you do is fly. The only thing you have to do is fly a pretty stable airplane when they're trying to refuel.

DePue: Okay. Well, let's just ask a few questions in to close up here. It's been a wonderful interview. I think you've done a great job of painting a picture for us of what combat was like in Korea, and I really appreciate that. Looking back on that, especially your experience in Korea, do you think your personal sacrifices that you made were worth it?

Holesinger: Oh yeah, yeah sure. I don't look at that as much of a sacrifice at all, really. Because you were exposed in combat to some enemy fire and that sort of thing, but being in a fighter you have a lot of control over your own destiny. Even though you're shipped on some pretty tough missions, that's just part of the business.

DePue: Looking back some fifty-five years, are you proud of what you personally accomplished and what the United States accomplished in South Korea?

Holesinger: Yeah, I think so. I think it would have been nice had we had a nicer outcome there, but things were stabilized and we weren't really going anywhere, forwards or backwards, you know. We're just sitting right there, just expending people and money. So probably the call to sign that truce was a proper call. As far as my personal career, I was very fortunate my whole career. I mentioned earlier that I never had to look for a job; I was always offered jobs. So I had lots of opportunities to perform in very good jobs. I had outstanding people working for—and I never say for—with, all the time. Because you don't have people work for you. You have people work with you. And that's where it was. I probably was able to do more in a positive nature towards the Guard in Illinois when was DAG because now I had both the Army and the Air Guard to work with. The Air Guard—and I may be somewhat biased here—has always been really forward. Do the very best you can all the time. The goal is to accomplish or exceed in the mission all the time, so that meant 100 percent combat readiness, 100 percent recruiting, and this sort of thing. When I took over the Army Guard, I didn't find that kind of attitude. I kind of perceived an attitude as, "Let's do what we have to do but not any more." As a result, there was a lot of marginal readiness in the Army National Guard. Because the attitude appeared to me to be, "OK, if a C-3 rating is good enough, then we're not going to go any higher than that. If we can get by with recruiting to 80 percent of the unit, don't go any further." Well, the problem is if you operate in that mode in a unit, you never quite achieve the readiness you're supposed to. A lot of the Army Guard in those days were C-4, not C-3. They were supposed to be C-3 but they weren't.

DePue: And C-4 is considered broken?

Holesinger: Yeah. Oh yeah. Not ready. Absolutely not combat. C-3 is marginally ready. So my goal was to change that once I found out that was the situation. I ran into quite a bit of headwind sometimes, people not wanting to go the extra mile. But I'm proud to say I enjoyed working with the Army Guard. There's just one heck of a lot of excellent people there. It's just that they weren't given the proper leadership. The goals weren't set for them. Well, I immediately raised the goal post, and initially I got a little negative feedback. But it wasn't long that everybody realized that was the way to go. And when I left the AG's job, almost every unit in the Army National Guard carried a high C rating, C-2 or better. A lot of them were C-1. And my goal was not to man at 80 percent, which was the minimum standard, it was if you were authorized to recruit to 105 percent, then

105 percent is the goal. And the same with the Air—the Air Guard always operated that way, and they were authorized to man to 110 percent.

DePue: Your time as the Adjutant General, correct me if I'm wrong, was 1983 to 1991, correct?

Holesinger: That's correct.

DePue: So you were the first Air and Guard Commander for the Illinois National Guard?

Holesinger: Mm-hmm.

DePue: And it just occurred to me. You had the opportunity to be the Adjutant General during the Reagan years.

Holesinger: Mm-hmm.

DePue I know that the Army especially, the active Army and the National Guard who are kind of the same thing, after the Vietnam War was pretty all beaten up and it took them some time. It wasn't really until those early eighties that they started to refine themselves, even on the active duty status. Equipment started to come a little bit better. Did it for the Army Guard during the eighties?

Holesinger: It was a constant battle though, especially in the equipment. But you know, there again, my attitude was, if you can carry a C rating and train people and this sort of thing, there's more of a tendency for the equipment to follow. I think you set the standard that way.

DePue: So the brass will reward the units that have the good ratings.

Holesinger: I think so, I think so. But I was proud of what I was able to turn around in the Army Guard, because I think there was a turnaround. A lot of people were concerned about me because I was pushing, pushing, pushing. But I did a lot of that by getting out in the units and visiting the units. And I never visited a unit that I didn't have an opportunity to talk to the people, and when I did I always zeroed in on readiness. That was my bottom line every time, and when I went to a unit, I knew their numbers. I knew where their shortfalls were and...

DePue: Maybe better than they knew their readiness numbers?

Holesinger: Probably so. But they soon learned that I knew the numbers. I was their friend. I don't think, when it was all said and done, anybody hated me. They appreciated what I did for them.

DePue: Let's go back again in that Korean War era, that experience as a young adult. How do you think that changed you, changed your outlook afterwards?

Holesinger: Well, I think having had that experience, I had a lot more respect for the leadership in some of the battles they fought, you know, to keep things going in the right direction. And I say this again. I never was in a bad unit. Anytime I was in the military, I was always in good units and good people. What I found out most of the time is what they really look for was some good leadership. Somebody who was interested in what they were doing and showed it.

DePue: And the bottom line was whether or not they could do their job, and that's translated into readiness and the Adjutant General?

Holesinger: Yeah. And like I said, I felt pretty good about my tour as Adjutant General because I think I kind of—and I hate to say this and don't put this in writing—I kind of ignored the Air Guard. Because they had good leadership and their goals were already established, and they were there. So I didn't really spend a lot of time with them; I spent 95 percent of my time with the Army and with the Army Guard. Through that, I learned to respect them a lot, too. But there were some real shortfalls there, and it was mainly in establishing goals. It was always we'll get this much done, this is what we got to do, but we're not going to go to the next step.

DePue: Well, you're getting to one of the questions I always ask, and that's what you would be most proud of. And obviously you're proud about being able to help the Army Guard during the Adjutant General time to refine themselves if you will.

Holesinger: Absolutely, absolutely. And I was proud of them, too.

DePue: Here's the flip side of that. Any regrets looking back at your career? Maybe especially during the Korean War era, but throughout your entire career?

Holesinger: No, not really. I thought I was privileged. I never once had to look for a job in the military. I was always offered opportunities. Sometimes I had to think a little bit about, like, when I moved my family from Springfield to Chicago O'Hare, I knew the O'Hare unit and I knew the people up there, because I flew with him when I was going to college. So I was familiar with the units up there and the people, and they had a lot of good people. But I wasn't real anxious to move up there. But you know, I said to Dee, I says, "If I don't move up there, that's the end of the road. Because I'm not going to do anything to help them out and they're going to say, Well, OK Holesinger, that's enough for you." So we both moved up there. I spent probably two to three months up there, commuting back and forth to Springfield, and then Dee and the family moved up there with me. She enjoyed the people up at Chicago O'Hare just like I did, and got acquainted with them real well, and got along with them real well, and in fact she even enjoyed living—we lived in Arlington Heights, which is kind of a high class residential area, really—and I think she enjoyed it up there the same way I did. In fact, when we relocated back to Springfield, she says, "I'm not sure I want to go back." But she did and we did. But like I said, I was always

privileged in the Guard. I had good people I worked with, and they were—believe me—both on the Army and Air side. When I first moved up to O'Hare from Springfield, that was a problem unit. It really was. And that's the reason they asked me to go up there, because they knew I'd been a successful commander down here and had a pretty good idea how to lead people. So that's the reason they moved me up there. When I moved into that unit, I could see—of course, me being an operations guy and an operational person—I could zero in on operations and that's where the bulk of their problems were. They had two senior commanders up there that were doing nothing but fighting each other all the time. They hated each other and it was obvious, you know? And with that kind of an attitude, it just permeates the whole unit. I didn't have to fire anybody up there, but I had some people that decided it was time to retire, on their own. I didn't have to fire them. But they just saw the way things were going and what was acceptable and what was not. So it was a good experience for me, and I made a lot of good friends up there. And still have a lot of good friends up there. And of course, that unit's now down at Scott. I hated to see them leave O'Hare. I think that was a mistake. I don't think they should have ever left O'Hare. But politicians being what they are, the City of Chicago was trying to get that military real estate on O'Hare. They'd been trying to get it for years; in fact, when I was a commander up there, two different times I fought City Hall up there when they were trying to get us to relocate. I just fought them tooth and nail. And unfortunately, later on it changed. And I'm not blaming anybody for that, but it did. I just think it was a mistake because you've got a manpower pool up there that is out of this world, you know?

DePue: Especially if you're an Air Force unit, since you've got O'Hare airport.

Holesinger: Yeah. You could get highly qualified people in your enlisted ranks and in the officer ranks both, and it was just a real fertile ground. Unfortunately, they relocated down at Scott. Some of those people went with the unit, but unfortunately they had some real short falls for about two years, until they were able to fill the gaps. That's a good unit right now.

DePue: I hadn't thought about this question, but here's an obvious one now that we're both sitting in Springfield and the 183rd is losing its aircraft very quickly and fighting for its life. Your thoughts about all of that?

Holesinger: Well, let me go back in history a little bit. For years and years and years, the Air Force has had a problem with single-base fighter units. They think that every base that has fighters ought to be a wing base, whether there's three or four squadrons on that one location. That's just their mentality. And of course, that's the way the Air Force operates. So the Air Force, had a goal for years to eliminate all these single—and they wound up doing it with this BRAC thing. [Base Realignment and Closure] You know, that's what happened to the 183rd. They move their unit and their aircraft up to Indiana and make a wing base up there. And the Air Force's publicized excuse all the time is that it costs more to have all these units out by themselves. There's only one additional cost factor to

it, and that's support equipment. You can use less support equipment on a wing base where you've got three or four squadrons because you can share a lot of that equipment. If you spread them all out at four different locations, you can't do that. So there is some additional expense for support equipment for those units. But that's a one-time expense. Once you spend that money, it's there, and it's no longer a cost factor. It's actually cheaper to operate those units in the single bases than it is to consolidate them and put them together. The Air Force, though, and I listen to the Air Force BRAC Reports. I watched every one of them, and I listened to the Air Force leadership. They didn't tell any lies, but they didn't tell the truth either. They didn't tell the whole truth. They kept hammering on this thing, that it's cost ineffective to have these separate units. That's not true. That's absolutely not true. So I was pretty upset with the BRAC hearing, and unfortunately some of the senior leadership in the Guard didn't speak up the way they should

DePue: In the Illinois Guard or the national level?

Holesinger: The national level. They did not speak up the way they should. They sat there and let it happen. Now, the Air Force put out the word from the Air Force level to the National Guard Bureau level, "Stay away from it." In other words, don't fight it politically. And unfortunately, our leadership at the Washington level and the state level listened to that and did not fight to retain those units. No one at the leadership level would fight to retain the 183rd. I talked to some of them one on one. Now, of course, I'm out of the system and I don't have any influence. And I said, "What are you doing?" "Well, Harry, you don't understand. This is the way it is." And I says, "I do understand. I understand that you're not willing to stand up and be counted." And boy, that upset a few of them. Some of them don't hardly like to talk to me today yet over that one, but that's exactly what happened. And that happened in every state. I went to our fearless Senator Durbin –and I knew him one-on-one because I worked with him as the AG and I worked with him when I was with fighter group out here – and I had a meeting with him. I said, "Senator, we need someone to get the states together. We've got thirty-three states that are involved in losing Air Guard units, fighter units." I says, "If we could get that group together, they could fight this thing politically and just shoot it down." He says, "Harry, it's politics." I says, "So it's politics, Senator. Are you a politician from the state of Illinois?" "Yeah." I says, "Well, you're not fighting for the state of Illinois. You're not helping, or are a part of the solution to the problem." If they could have gotten a few senior senators of a few states together and fought that thing politically, it would have shut off. It would have shut off.

DePue: Well, the thing that always aggravated me in watching from the outside, and obviously not being in the influential position that you were in, was, it's the base consolidation was so contrary to the overall notion of what citizen soldiers and the National Guard is supposed to be about.

Holesinger: Absolutely.

DePue: It's supposed to be community-based, spread widely throughout the entire country, tapping into that community's identity.

Holesinger: But that's not the way the Air Force looked at it. And unfortunately, the senior leadership in the Air Force stepped across the National Guard Bureau, and the Bureau caved in. They caved in. And that permeated right down to the state level, and it's just really sad. I'm a citizen soldier. I've been a citizen soldier. And just like you said, that's where the strength is. Now, you put all three of those, or four of the units, over at one base in Indiana, now you can say, "Well, we're going to give some new roles and missions to the 183rd." If they don't get another active flying missions I will bet my last dollar that they will slowly but surely go down the drain. They'll start losing other roles and missions and disappear. You're hearing some of it now with the firefighters out there making a lot of noise. Well, they're right in one respect, but it's too late. A lot of that noise should have been made before the decision was made in BRAC, and unfortunately the handwritings—you know, the governor can play his games right now, like you know, I want to X-out that unit and all this sort of thing. That's all it's going to be is a game plan, because you're not going to change that decision. And I guess I've said enough about that, but that whole thing was wrong. Absolutely wrong. And unfortunately, I don't know how it can ever be repaired because there's not going to be enough flying missions available in the Air Force to keep all these units going and give them new roles and missions. There's just not that many of them there.

DePue: Well, I'm glad I asked you that question. It's an important one, and you obviously have strong feelings about it.

Holesinger: Oh man, I got real strong feelings about it. I do.

DePue: Well, let's ask one more question and finish up with this. You've had a very long and successful career. Reached pretty much the pinnacle that you can achieve in the Illinois National Guard, and led that organization with distinction for eight years, something like that. What advice now would you give this new generation? What advice would you pass on to your children but also to those young airmen and soldiers who are out there?

Holesinger: Well, I've always been a good soldier, and you heard me say I was a foot dragger—well, not a foot dragger—but a reluctant guy to move to Chicago O'Hare. But I was needed there, so I went, even to the sacrifice of my family a little bit. Turned out it was a good sacrifice, you know, they enjoyed it too. But first of all, you've got to be a good soldier. And that is, you know, do what's best for the military in your own roles and missions. I always use the term—people say, "Well, you had a lot of people working for you." – I say, "I didn't have a lot of people working for me; I had a lot of people working with me." That's the other thing. People are one of your most important assets in the military. People. But they've got to believe you're a part of them. And that's by feeling the part of the role and mission. I just, I don't know. It's a tough world we live in out there

right now, because the roles and missions are not as plentiful as they used to be. But that doesn't mean you still can't get out there and fight for them. I'm a firm believer that if you're going to have a flying base, a flying organization, you've got to have a flying mission. Without a flying mission, I'm a firm believer that that unit is going to slowly but surely disappear. A lot of competition. There's a lot of competition out there. But if you're not competitive, you're not going to get there, either.

DePue: Any advice for your children or your grandchildren, perhaps?

Holesinger: Having been a military guy, I'm always pro military, and I don't have any problem with my offspring being in the military. My daughter, I think, kind of sometimes wishes I'd pushed her a little bit to get involved in the flying game. But I didn't ever, and I still won't, want to push any of my children into the military. They've got to want to go there. But I've got a grandson that's over in England right now. He's just finishing up a five, almost six year tour, in the Air Force. He's going to get out. I thought he was going to be a career guy, but he decided not to and that's okay. But I would never discourage any of them from becoming a part of the military. There's a lot of good people there, and they need a lot of good people, too. I don't know, as far as I'm concerned, I was privileged. I mentioned that before. I never had to hunt for a job. I've always had people offer me a job. And I've never hated any job I had, either. I enjoyed every day I went to work. Sometimes some days were more challenging than others. But that's just part of the business. I still think that the Guard has a very strong role to play in our military, and hopefully they'll continue to play that role

DePue: Well, thank you very much, General. It's been a real pleasure to interview you this morning. I think you did a wonderful job, painted us a pretty vivid picture of flying combat support missions in Korea, and for that I really appreciate it. So thank you again.

Holesinger: I'm just going to say, well, I said it before. But I never hated a day in my life to go to work when I was in the military. And I don't today. I've been in a few challenging positions once in a while, and I especially remember that, being relocated to Chicago. That was a real problem unit up there. They asked me to go up there for a good reason. But all I did was really kind of pull them together, and those who were shirking realized that they weren't going to be around too long so they just retired or resigned. I never had to fire anybody. Never fired a soul. And that's, to me, a good way to operate.

DePue: Absolutely. Thank you again, General.

Holesinger: You're welcome.(end of interview)