

Veterans History Interview of

TSgt. Charles E. Gallagher

Monday, December 31, 2007

Interviewer: Joan E. Hamilton

[Notes: Descriptions for clarification in bold print and brackets are not on the audio tape. TSgt. Gallagher kindly reviewed the transcript and provided additional details which are in bold print and brackets with an asterisk (*).]

Introduction: Today is Monday, December 31, 2007. This is the Veterans History Interview of Tech Sergeant Charles Gallagher, a Flight Engineer with the 95th Bomb Group, 336th Bomb Squadron of the Eighth Army Air Force during WWII. This interview is being taped held at Charles Gallagher's home in Portland [**correction: Beaverton**], Oregon. I'm the volunteer interviewer, Joan E. Hamilton.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Interviewer: Where were you born and raised?

TSgt. Gallagher: This is Charles E. Gallagher in Beaverton, Oregon at my home. I was born in Parsons, Kansas, Labette County on November 5, 1921. My Dad worked for Swift and Company. We moved back and forth between Parsons and Hutchinson, Kansas where I did most of my schooling.

Interviewer: What's a switching company?

TSgt. Gallagher: Swift and Company.

Interviewer: Oh, Swift and Company. What did that company do?

TSgt. Gallagher: Dad was actually in the butter and egg portion. Swift also is meat packing and all those different things affiliated with agriculture.

[Tape Counter at 14]
STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION JOB
DAD'S CREAMERY

TSgt. Gallagher: I graduated from high school, there. I went to Junior College. I got a job with the State Highway Commission and went to school in HJC [***Hutchinson Junior College**] in the mornings and worked in the afternoons and Saturdays.

Marvelous experience. I was general flunkey. All of the men in the shop, they always had jobs for me. They were help when necessary, but I was on my own otherwise.

TSgt. Gallagher: In '33, Dad started a creamery, a butter manufacturing company. They bought cream from all over Kansas, southern Nebraska, eastern Colorado, Oklahoma, northern Texas. They shipped two [***railroad**] car loads of butter a week to Chicago. The drought came along and the government restrictions got too tough. So, Dad went to work for the railroad and then moved to Los Angeles to work on the railroad out there in California. The family moved out here later.

[Tape Counter at 30]
LOCKHEED
DRAFTED, 4 March 1943

TSgt. Gallagher: I went to work for Lockheed in early July of '43 [***Correction: 1941**]. I was working in production on the innercooler for the P-38, the leading edge of the wing. By July of '43 we were building 16 P-38s a day. They didn't need me anymore. So, I was drafted into the Army [***3/4/43**]. I have my dates a bit mixed up because I went to work for Lockheed in July of '43 [***Correction: 1941**]. Still something wrong. I'll have to come back to that [**dates**].

Interviewer: So, you were drafted into the Army [***Correction: Army Air Corps**] originally?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. How much do you want me to expound?

Interviewer: Go for it.

TSgt. Gallagher: I'm the luckiest guy there ever was. As you can see, I have a great wife. I don't have money, but I have everything else.

When I left Lockheed, they said, "Do you want a letter?"

I said, "Oh, yeah."

When I went to the induction center on Main Street in Los Angeles, there were 600 of us that day.

When I got up to the point of being assigned to a service, the Sergeant said, "OK, 'Gs' go to the tank corps."

I said, "Well, I got a letter here you might want to look at."

Heaven provided an officer walking by at that time. He said, "Is this man giving you trouble, Sergeant?"

"No."

"What is it?"

"He said he has a letter I should read."

"Did you?"

"No."

"Read it."

The guy [**Sergeant**] read it and handed it back to me, "'G's' go in the tank corps."

"What did it say?"

"He's been working on airplanes."

"Do we have any Air Corps, today?"

"Yes, but those are 'Ss'."

The Captain, the Officer said, "How about this 'G' going?"

"Ss."

I ended up in the Air Corps.

Interviewer: This "G" is going into the Air Corps.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yeah. That's how I got in the Air Corps.

[Tape Counter at 63]

TRAINING

Basic, Gunnery, AM School

TSgt. Gallagher: I went to Salt Lake City and was sent to Shepherd Field, Texas for Basic Training and AM School, Aviation Mechanics School.

Interviewer: The AM School was in Texas?

TSgt. Gallagher: At Shepherd Field. That's outside of Wichita Falls. We went through AM School on B-25's and B-26's. From there, I went to Tyndall Field, Florida for Gunnery School on the Martin Turret and flexible gunnery. I had a delay in route to Salt Lake City. I went to Los Angeles on the way to Salt Lake City. Then, we were [*the base was] confined with Spinal Meningitis for a couple of months. Finally, they got rushed and sent us down to the railroad station.

[Tape Counter at 77]

Becoming the Flight Engineer

TSgt. Gallagher: I knew the crew number I was on.

They said, "Line up on the Engineer."

Who was the engineer?

Finally, Ken Barning said, "Here, Gallagher is the Engineer."

That was another good stroke because that meant that I'd become the Tech Sergeant, eventually. Otherwise, I'd have been a Buck Sergeant. We went down to Dalhart, Texas. That's the first time I ever saw a B-17. A couple of days later, they loaded the B-17 and I was the engineer on it, the first time I'd ever been inside a B-17. We got through that program.

Interviewer: That was where in Texas?

TSgt. Gallagher: Dalhart, Texas.

Interviewer: Do you know how to spell that?

TSgt. Gallagher: D-A-L-H-A-R-T. It's in northern Texas on Route 66.

Of course, the B-17 doesn't have a Martin Turret. I wasn't in a B-25. I

TSgt. Gallagher: wasn't in a B-26. That's how really greatly planned the Air Corps was.
I ended up at Horham, 95th Bomb Group.

[Tape Counter at 85]

CREW TRAINING

Interviewer: When you were in the United States, after you'd had your B-17 training, did you train with a crew in the United States?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. We met the crew at Salt Lake City and went down to Dalhart and met the pilot and the officers. Our pilot was Jack, John A. Cotner. Jack Cotner.

Interviewer: How do you spell that last name?

TSgt. Gallagher: C-O-T-N-E-R.

[Tape Counter at 101]

HORHAM

Quonset Hut

TSgt. Gallagher: We were a very congenial group. We ended up in Squadron 336. At first, we were in a Quonset hut. Then, they needed that Quonset hut. So, we ended up in a tent.

Interviewer: Where was that?

TSgt. Gallagher: In Horham.

Interviewer: When you got to England? OK. **[*TSgt. Gallagher: We were in a Quonset hut, but moved to a tent.]**

TSgt. Gallagher: That was the best thing that could ever happen. The tent had a concrete floor. We salvaged bomb boxes and lined the inside of the tent. We had a coke stove right in the middle. We built clothes closets. Normally, in a quonset hut, you had either 200 or 300 watt bulbs hanging down. We had one at the top of the tent. Also, when we wanted to read or write, we'd reach between the wooden walls and the **[inaudible]** canvas and pull out 100 watt bulb. In the front, we had two bomb boxes: one for wood and one for coke. That of course is a fuel, not a drug. We always had plenty of heat because, if you got coke issued at 20 kilos a week. Theoretically, if you weren't there

TSgt. Gallagher: the day it was issued, you didn't get any, if you were flying or something like that. If that happened, we'd go down to the coke compound later in the day. There was a guard there. He'd get distracted and we'd go over the back fence. It's amazing how much bigger 20 kilos of coke was for our issue, than their issue was. He **[guard]** knew what was going on. They were a great bunch.

[Tape Counter at 126]

Crew Member Story

TSgt. Gallagher: Did you see the movie, *Memphis Belle*?

Interviewer: I did.

TSgt. Gallagher: Do you remember the one guy that was always psycho-type? We had one that wasn't a psycho, but he was scared, even more scared than the rest of us. We were worried that he would go over the edge sometime. So, we kept him mad all the time. When he'd start getting distracted, we'd get him angry about something, tease him about his girlfriend or something like that.

Interviewer: So, he'd focus on that?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. In fact, one time on the way to lunch, he challenged me to a fight. I told him, "A fight doesn't make sense. You have a different concept of fighting. You believe in Marquis de Queensbury. To me a fight is to eliminate."
I said, "You are 165 lbs. I'm 125. It doesn't matter because, when you lose your eyes or lose your hearing. Let's wait until after lunch and go out behind the tents."

We did and talked him out of it.

Many years later, he came to one of the bomb group meetings, in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

He got me off to one side and said, "Charlie. I want to thank you."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I used to hate you guys. All of a sudden, I realized what you were doing. You saved my life."

[Tape Counter at 150]

MISSION STORY: FLAK MAGNETS

Squadron of Four

TSgt. Gallagher: We started flying. We didn't fly the same airplane all the time because we were a flak magnet. If anybody in the squadron got hit by flak, we did. They told us when we came into the group, "Man, you're lucky. It's easy, now."

I was sure glad of that. Four crews of us went in to the group on the same day. We trained together in the States. July 8th of 1944, we flew our first mission. We flew a couple more missions, all four of us. On the 12th, we flew one and I saw one of them blow, over Munich. No survivors. We flew some more. The three of us flew until the 19th and I saw one go down. They were KIA. No, **[they were]** POWs.

Interviewer: That was the 19th.

TSgt. Gallagher: Here, again, I expound. Did you see my jacket that I wore. I think I wore it. On the back is a Gorilla. We were "Jack's Guerillas". My original jacket got so flaky—the paint got flaky. So, I bought a knock-off and put out word that I wanted somebody to paint a jacket for me—from a photo. I got many offers from England and all over the country. For \$350, they'd do it. I got a note from some guy, Roy Brosi, in Hannibal, Missouri.

He said, "I have art in the capital. I have art in museums. I painted the nose on airplanes in England."

He said, "I'd like to do your jacket."

So, I mailed it and the photo to him. On the way back west, one time, we stopped to see him and he'd painted it for me. He wouldn't take anything **[money]**. During the conversation, come to find out, he was a POW and I saw him go down on the 19th of July **[1944]**.

Interviewer: He had been in that particular plane?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. My world is full of them. I guess we better move on. **[Looking at the list of questions.]**

[Tape Counter at 185]

SIBLINGS

TSgt. Gallagher: I told you my Dad was a railroader and worked the creamery. I had three brothers. I had three sisters. Of the three brothers, one was in the Air Force, Air Corps pilot. One of them was in the Navy during WWII. One of them was in Korea. He was in the forward section where they maintained the communications and they were all the time getting shot up. They'd have to go out and fix it. He eventually ended up driving for a General who was a great guy because he gave a great education to my brother—the history and all that. One time, they took him and had him driving somebody outside of the General. He got to drive Marilyn Monroe for a while. None of us were injured during the service.

TSgt. Gallagher: Incidentally, I do have a tape. You might be interested in it sometime. We were back in Kansas for a family reunion. A nephew had an assignment to interview Vets. He interviewed all of the Vets of the family. He also interviewed the sisters, so that the girls could tell their experience during the war. A lot of people don't realize what really went on with them. I think I know where that is.

[Tape Counter at 212]

BASIC TRAINING

Interviewer: You told me all about the enlistment, how you were enlisted. [**Correction: drafted**]. We've covered that page [**list of questions**]. You told me something about training, the basic.

TSgt. Gallagher: Basic Training. We got there in March, of course. That will straighten me out. I was mixed up on dates. I went in the service in March of '43 and got out in July 15th of '45 and went back to work for Lockheed.

Interviewer: You told me about AM School.

TSgt. Gallagher: Let's go back to "a" [**from list of question**]. Basic. It was hot in Texas. We'd be drilling at 105 [**degrees**]. One day I saw it kill 9 guys on the drill field. We were straight out of civilian life, a lot of these guys

TSgt. Gallagher: were soft. We'd actually wear gas masks sometimes in the heat to get away from the dust. It was real basic training.

[Tape Counter at 228]

AM SCHOOL

TSgt. Gallagher: Next, the AM School. We were trained on the B-25 and B-26, as I mentioned. The graduation was that we went out on the bivouac. They had an airplane out there. We had to build a scaffolding or tripod to get an engine off. The engine had been bugged. We had to get it back on and hand-crank it up until it was running, again. We got that done.

Interviewer: It was like a test?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes, to see if we had learned anything.

[Tape Counter at 237]

AIRCREW TRAINING at DALHART

TSgt. Gallagher: What kind of training? Where's your aircrew training? That was in Dalhart. That was an experience. One night, we had a night mission and took off for some reason or other, we didn't have the power to climb out. So, we circled around and did get over the telephone lines and came back and there was only one row of landing lights.

The pilot decided, "Well, I'm the pilot. I'm going to have the lights on my side, the right side."

We did high altitude and all kinds of different training. We never did pick up the B-17. As I said, we were assigned at Salt Lake City to a crew and went to Dalhart.

[Tape Counter at 249]

GOING OVERSEAS

TSgt. Gallagher: From Dalhart, we shipped out of the east coast on the *HMS Rangitata*.

Interviewer: How do you spell that name?

TSgt. Gallagher: *H.M.S.*, Her Majesty's Ship, *Rangitata*. *R-A-N-G-U-I-T-T-A*. No, *-G-U-A-T-A*. **[Correction: *Rangitata*]**. It was a little trans steamer out of the South Pacific. It wasn't very pleasant—hot, smelly. You'd line

TSgt. Gallagher: up for meals in a big, hot corridor. When the guys came out, they came back by you and we got in. One of the most interesting things I remember about meals was the big bowl of soup with fish eyes floating around in it. Naturally, some of the guys weren't able to retain their lunch on the way out—leave it there in the corridor. We got there.

Interviewer: Do you remember how long it took?

TSgt. Gallagher: Probably 7 days. It was in a convoy.

[Tape Counter at 269]

ARRIVING IN ENGLAND

TSgt. Gallagher: Got up in the morning when we got there, went out on deck, and there's **[*Mersey Dock]** Liverpool. There was a song at that time. I can't remember exactly what. **[* " Mairzy dotes and dozy dotes and little lamsy divey"]**
["Mairzy Dotes" words & music by Milton Drake, Al Hoffman & Jerry Livingston, 1943 and Recorded by The Pied Pipers, 1944.]

There were signs there remind me of it. I'll probably come up with that. From there, we went to The Wash which inland, south of the North Sea where they had another gunnery training.

[Tape Counter at 283]

HORHAM

8th Army Air Force

95th Bomb Group

336th Bomb Squadron

Station 119

TSgt. Gallagher: Then, we went to Horham, the 95th **[Bomb Group]**, 336th Squadron. As I say, we flew our first mission on July 8th. That was the first time they ever put the guts in both weapons, both guns in the top turret.

[Tape Counter at 287]

CREW

Twins Story

MISSION #10

31 July 1944

Munich

TSgt. Gallagher: Again, marvelously scheduled, another smart scheduling they did. We had two twins on our crew, Don and Dan Matthews. When we got to about the 10th mission, they decided to cut the crew down to 9 men. Dan was the only one married. So, we booted him off. The first mission after he [Dan] was off the crew, we flew and we had some problems. Of course, the wonderful planning of the Air Corps, Dan was assigned to the ground crew of the airplane we happened to be flying that day. We were about—soon as the airplanes get back from a mission, all the ground crews go to lunch, dinner. We were about 45 minutes late coming back.

Old George Dyer said, "Don't worry. Don't worry, Dan. They'll be back. They'll be back." [*I lost track of George in the late '50s.]

What happened is that we got shot up pretty bad and Don had climbed out of the ball turret because, anytime the oxygen gage flickered, he was out of it. He had just gotten out of the turret and got hit in the leg. Ken Barning, our waist gunner, was trying to get down to see the leg and what the problem was, and Don got hit in the back. Ken was getting a little nervous at that time. Then, Don got hit in the chest.

Ken said, "You get back in that turret. Don't you come out anymore."

Don never did move out of that turret, again. If it wasn't functioning right, he'd take it and park it so he could lift the door out to get out right away.

None of it [wounds] was bad enough to get a Purple Heart.

[Tape Counter at 325]

MISSION STORY: Flak

TSgt. Gallagher: One time, a round came down through and took the back of the Navigator's suit and Jack's **[pilot's]** sole of his shoe—cut that and damaged the rudder, but that was about it.

Interviewer: So, the sole of his shoe?

TSgt. Gallagher: Cut a slot about that wide, clear through to the sock.

Interviewer: That was flak?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes, flak. Like I say, miracles and miracles.

[Tape Counter at 335]

MISSION STORY: Rudder

TSgt. Gallagher: One day, the pilot told us—we'd been shot up pretty bad recently—and we were flying.

Jack called and said, "Hey, our rudder control is freezing up. Go back and see what you can find out."

I followed the cables back and got back of the tail wheel and found where a cable went through a quadrant. It was bound up with tape, which was standard procedure. They'd lash the cables together while they were stringing them. Then, they'd put tension on them and take the tape off of them. They missed that one. So, I reached back and tapped Carroll Watts, my tail gunner, for his headset. He ignored me. I tapped him again and he took a swing at me. I stole the headset and put it on.

All I heard was, "Here they come again."

I set a world's record to the cockpit. That was the only time we'd been bounced by fighters.

[Tape Counter at 356]

B-17s

TSgt. Gallagher: As I say, we flew different airplanes all the time.

Interviewer: Do you remember the names of any of the B-17s, by any chance?

TSgt. Gallagher: No, no. I could eventually find them, but I've never been concerned about it.

[Mission List: B-17's #297194 (1) "Good Pickin''; 297334 (2) "Haard Luck" photo; 231989 (7) "Black Magic" photo; 231867 (1) "Go Getter" photo; 231376 (1); 2102560 (2) "The Thomper" photo; 337801 (1) "Reluctant Dragon"; 297894 (2); 338617 (1) "New York Express"; 46583 (1), "Cadet Nurse"; 297844 (1); 338584 (9) "The Dawnbusters"; 48272 (1); 338469 (1) photo; 48604 (4) "Section Eight" photo.]

Information from the Official Website of the 95th Bomb Group:

http://95thbg.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=129&Itemid=258

http://95thbg.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=130&Itemid=259

http://95thbg.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=131&Itemid=260

[Tape Counter at 364]

TSgt. Gallagher: I'm going to digress, again. People don't realize the fortitude and the conscientiousness and the necessity of the ground crews. We'd bring an airplane back. One time we came back a little worse than usual. I started counting the holes from the nose to the trailing edge of the wing. We had 189 holes and that airplane was flying within 2 or 3 days. We'd flown a "war weary", a dog, on a practice mission. It burned 50 gallons of fuel an hour, more than anything we'd ever flown. They had a maximum effort. Went to briefing. Take this of what I'm saying about the ground crew, not about me. Looked up and there was that dog we'd been flying. I looked at the pilot. We looked at the navigator. We knew where we were going, northern Norway, almost all the way up the North Sea. Fifteen minutes is the maximum you'd survive in the North Sea.

TSgt. Gallagher: So, went out after the briefing. Went out to get the airplane ready to go and crew chief came in. He remembered I'd been the engineer.

He said, "You coming back?"

I said, "No."

He said, "That's what I thought."

He went out and came back in, "Come here. I want to show you something."

TSgt. Gallagher: He took me out and dropped the flap on the wing and looked up in there and

saw some fuel lines and stuff like that. I couldn't see anything. This was just after a very few missions. We didn't know anything. He reached in his pocket and got a little bitty old torch. Didn't say anything. Pulled out a screwdriver. Must've been about like that. It looked about like that right there. **[Disabled the hose].**

[The crew chief said], "Oh. Got to ground the airplane. It'll take me 6 hours to change that hose."

Now, he could've had a new airplane the next day and gotten rid of that dog and never been worried about it, again. But, he knew we wouldn't get back.

Interviewer: So, he didn't want you to go. He fixed it so you didn't have to go?

TSgt. Gallagher: Well, they didn't know, but from the fuel loads and the bomb load, they knew that airplane wouldn't get back that day. It would run out of fuel before it would get back. Maximum effort that meant that everything went that could go.

Interviewer: Did you have to go in another plane or did they just scratch that?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. In maximum effort, every airplane was flying on the base.

[Tape Counter at 412]

CREW MEMBERS

Carroll Watts Story

TSgt. Gallagher: OK. How many crew members. You want the names?

Interviewer: First names, if you remember them.

TSgt. Gallagher: Al Hillman, navigator; Lowell Wagner, bombardier; **[John]** Jack Cotner, pilot; Val Mathews (with one "t"), co-pilot; Ray Ptacek, radioman; early Don Matthews, ball gunner; early first 10 missions, Dan Matthews (these were double "t's"), waist gunner; Ken Barning, waist gunner; and Carroll Watts, tail gunner.

Interviewer: How did you spell "Carroll"?

TSgt. Gallagher: C-a-r-r-o-l-l. Still talk to them once in a while. There's Val and Carroll and Don. Don is in pretty bad shape right now with cancer. Lowell Wagner,

TSgt. Gallagher: quiet guy, bombardier. He's never been to any of the groups. He went to

work at Wright-Pat [**now Wright-Patterson Air Force Base**] right after the war. I guess he'd been working there, before. He got married after he got back. One time, Marilyn and I were in Dayton on a 95th Bomb Group Reunion and went out to see them and spent the night with them.

The next morning, his wife was saying, "Here, we've been married for 20 years. I found out more about Lowell last night than I ever knew before." He was a marvelous bombardier.

Of course, I was top turret engineer. I was responsible for the aircraft pre-flight, the crew's pre-flight, and anything that occurred during the flight.

Interviewer: So, you had navigator, bombardier, pilot, co-pilot, radio operator, ball gunner, top turret, 2 waist gunners.

TSgt. Gallagher: At the beginning [**2 waist gunners**]. First 10 missions. And tail gunner.

Interviewer: I don't know if I wrote down the tail gunner's name.

TSgt. Gallagher: Carroll Watts. Carroll was the quiet sort. Lives in the Carolinas. He was always writing letters to his girlfriend and family. One time we were sitting. He and I were in the tent. I was probably writing a letter or reading something. All of a sudden, the darnest explosion you ever heard and a roar was coming in. A V-2 [***rocket**] had landed about a mile behind us. I looked over and Carroll was getting up off the floor, looking at his fingers, down the way his fingernails were going through the concrete. Carroll is a very, very conscientious guy, religious. He'd be 85. He still takes old folks to the doctor and helps them go to shopping.

[Tape Counter at 486]

TOP TURRET/ ENGINEER

Interviewer: You were top turret and engineer?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. That was pretty standard procedure.

Interviewer: What were the duties of an engineer—of a flight engineer?

[Tape Counter at 492]

MISSION #10

31 July 1944

Hamburg Oil Plant

TSgt. Gallagher: If anything happened, I was suppose to take care of it. Also, I'd monitor the the instruments on take-off and landing—read the air speed on take-off. In my particular instance, it got kind of messy one time. This day that Don got shot up, going back a bit.

MISSION STORY: Hydraulic Pump

TSgt. Gallagher: The crew chief ran a barber shop in the mail room and various guys would gather there and chit-chat. The ground crews would tell the flight crews different little tricks about things. One of them was, as soon as soon got in flight and got the hydraulics stabilized, you'd remove the fuse to the hydraulic pump. When you got back, out of enemy territory, you'd check the pressure. If you didn't have the right pressure, you had a problem. So, you'd go around the crew and collect all of the liquid you could so that you could overfill the hydro tank which is up in the corner behind this turret. Try [***pouring a one**] gallon can of urine into a spout like [**on a gas tank on a car**] that with the airplane bouncing around. It's messy. Anyway, just as soon as we touched down, I punched the fuse back in and we got **3** brake applications.

I can still hear the stupid tower calling, "You're off the runway. Get back on the runway."

We knew we were off the runway. We got over there. There's an airplane here and an airplane here and an airplane here [**triangle of 3 airplanes**].

This just happened to be our particular airplane[***'s hardstand**]. We ended up and the wings just about got these 2 tents. I happened to look out. I don't know what happened. I saw a guy run through the tent wall, getting away from there. We got out and the odor was quite something because the hydro

TSgt. Gallagher: leak was right at a break. It was really steaming. Ol' Don was trying to show his brother his wounds. That was quite a day.

Interviewer: That was the day that he got hit.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes.

Interviewer: So, you also had a break in the line on that day also on top of everything else?

TSgt. Gallagher: Right. That was probably my 11th mission. Something like that. I can't remember. **[Looks at sheet.]** Mission July 8th. It was at Munich. The 12th I don't remember. I'd have to look it up. **[See Mission List]**

[Tape Counter at 562]

EXTREMES OF TEMPERATURE

Extreme Cold

Hamburg

Interviewer: Tell me about the clothing you wore for the weather because it was very cold in the plane.

TSgt. Gallagher: There again, I've probably experienced greater temperature extremes than 99% of the people in the world. One time, going in to Hamburg. We wore long johns and usually wool clothing plus a gabardine flying suit and over that an electric suit that was good to 65 below.

TSgt. Gallagher: This one day, going in to Hamburg, the crew started calling, "Getting cold." On practice missions, guys would go to sleep and we'd turn the rheostat down. He'd wake up and turn it back up. About the third time we'd pull it so that it didn't have any power. We knew that wasn't happening that day. Got to checking and the fuse was all right.

The navigator said, "Well, our OAT—outside air temp--only goes down to 80 below—I've extrapolated to 100 below." We were only there 20 minutes. We got back to briefing. Everybody reported that same thing. So, we knew it wasn't out imagination.

End of Tape 1, Side A

Tape 1, Side B

[Tape Counter at 655]

Extreme Heat

P2V Program

TSgt. Gallagher: The other extreme. As I mentioned, I was in engineering flight test **[after WWII]**. I spent several years on the P2V, the *Neptune*. One of the tests was that you had to check out the heater system.

So, one time, they told us, "We are going to go flying tonight."

It was summertime. I wore long johns and wool suit. I had a bucket of water with me and a helmet. For 45 minutes, we were over 180 degrees. We got as high as 189. You being a lady and a cook, realize you don't touch things that are over 140. We had to be very careful our arms didn't hit the parachute buckles otherwise they'd burn. That was another one of

TSgt. Gallagher: my experiences in life.

Interviewer: That was after the war when you were back at Lockheed?

[Tape Counter at 669]

P2V PROGRAM

Civilian Contractor in England

TSgt. Gallagher: Also on the P2V, I ended up in England as a civilian contractor for the Air **[*Armaments Rep]**. I was lead **[*Tech Rep on Armament]**, RAF Coastal Command. I was a tech rep on the P2V. That was a great experience for a year and a half or so.

[*Location: Forres in Northern Scotland]

[Tape Counter at 674]

MISSION #6

19 July 1944

Schweinfurt

TSgt. Gallagher: **[Looking at questions]** Let's see. July 12th, I can't remember and July 19th, I can't remember.

Interviewer: July 19th, I had [**from a previous speech at the Old Bold Pilots group**], "...saw a plane go down and the crew became POW's.

TSgt. Gallagher: That was on July 19th.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were going that day?

TSgt. Gallagher: No, a little later I'll look the record up. [**Mission List: Schweinfurt**]

[Tape Counter at ~680]

MISSION #12

6 Aug 1944

Gydnia

TSgt. Gallagher: Bombed Gydnia. I can give you the dates upstairs.

Interviewer: That was a shuttle mission. What is a shuttle mission?

TSgt. Gallagher: We took off from Britain and bombed Gydnia and went on to Russia and and landed in Poltava. We flew over this city of about 60,000 and saw the basement floor of this building. Then, they refueled and reloaded us and we bombed Krakow the next day. Went back to Poltava.

[Tape Counter at ~685]

MISSION #13

7 Aug 1944

Trzebinia SE of Warsaw

Oil Refinery

Bomb Hanging Crooked Story

Interviewer: Was that when there was that story about the bomb hanging crooked?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes.

Interviewer: Was that when you bombed Krakow, coming back?

TSgt. Gallagher: Going back to Poltava.

Interviewer: Tell me about that.

TSgt. Gallagher: Naturally, after I'd get out of the target area, I was right there at the front of the bomb bay. I'd look in the bomb bay to make sure it was clear before we closed the bomb doors. There was this one bomb on the left side of the bomb bay, hanging on one hook. The rack had only one hook caught. The little

fan was turning **[on the bomb]** which means it was getting ready to be armed So, got a hold of the bombardier and ball gunner. They were the ones to take care of it. They got the pin back in the fuse. There's about a 6" beam going up through the center of the bomb bay. It's probably 2 ½ to 3 feet from the center to the hinge line of the bomb door. Well, the bomb doors were open, naturally. So, these guys were standing with one foot on the main beam and one on the hinge line, shaking this 250 lb. bomb around, trying to get rid of it. When it finally let go, the tail fin of the bomb caught the, Don's, the ball gunner's heated glove, silk glove, and wrist watch, but it didn't take him.

TSgt. Gallagher:

Interviewer: I had **[written]** down that the ball gunner, in that case, he **[*the ball gunner]** was the armament man **[*also]**.

TSgt. Gallagher: Of course, the bombardier was responsible for the bombs, also. So, we were coming back and spotted enemy aircraft way in the distance. Couldn't see too well, but they had the configuration of the Focke Wulf 190. We used calculating sights. You would take and put the wing span which you knew of all the aircraft, into the sight. Then, you'd frame it and that would take into account the **[range (distance)]**, the altitude, the deflection, and all of that and show where to fire to. We were tracking. Finally, the pilot said, "OK, open fire when you're in range." Well, before they got in range, they turned into Me-210s. So, we reset the sights. Then, all of a sudden, they turned into B-17s. We'd been firing, then. The tail gunner said, "What are you guys shooting at? What are you shooting at?" He finally got to where he could see and he said, "You're shooting at B-17s." Then, we got the disturbing message that a ball gunner got hit by a caliber

TSgt. Gallagher: 50. Fortunately, he was 200 miles away. So, it wasn't us that hit him.

Interviewer: In that particular B-17?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes.

[Tape Counter at 728]

MISSION #14

8 Aug 1944

Ploesti Rail Yards

Buzau Air Field near Ploesti

TSgt. Gallagher: The next day, we went to Ploesti Rail Yards. I can come up with that date on that. Landed in Foggia, Italy. I forget how many days we had there. I can determine it from the record.

TSgt. Gallagher: Ray Ptacek wasn't a drinker, but he got acquainted with the natives. A florin, 2 shillings, which would've been about 40 cents, would buy a bottle of wine. After a bit, we ran out of florins. We had the half crowns. They didn't want to take those. Those were 2 shillings, 6 pence. We finally convinced them. Ran out of those and suddenly found a bar of soap would buy 2 bottles. So, we weren't bored during that time. We went swimming in the Gulf of Manfredonia.

[Tape Counter at 745]

MISSION #15

9 Aug 1944

Toulouse Southern Invasion Airfield

TSgt. Gallagher: Went through town of Foggia, but then we supported the southern France invasion on the way back to England.

[Tape Counter at 747]

Ruhr Valley

Interviewer: **[Question] #8** Ruhr Valley was, of course, a highly concentrated manufacturing. Naturally, there was a lot of flak there. We stayed out of it **[the Ruhr Valley]** until the last few missions. I think it was the last 4, we were right in the middle of the Ruhr every time. We didn't get hurt.

[Tape Counter at 754]
MISSION # 35, LAST MISSION
28 January 1945
Duisburg Bridge RR

TSgt. Gallagher: We flew our last. I can't remember where we were off hand. That was July 28th [**Correction: January 28th 1945**]. The pilot went down to the engineering department and gave them a song and dance about how we had been flying together. We'd been flying since July of '44 to late January [**'45**]. That was a long time because, while we were in Italy, the bombardier got malaria. One month, we only flew one mission. Eventually, Ken, the waist gunner, took over as togglier. He'd drop [**based**] on the lead

TSgt. Gallagher: bomber, the lead airplane.

Interviewer: So, you all stayed together as a crew, pretty much.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. If you flew 4 hours, you got flight pay which was half your pay. So, Jack went down to the engineering office and gave them a song and dance about how we wanted to fly one more last time together. So, we flew 0 missions in February [**1945**]—but 4 hours, [***slow time**].
The engineer said, "I've got a slow time airplane. Make it a real fast 4 hours."

[Tape Counter at 775]
GOING HOME
Convalescent Hospital

TSgt. Gallagher: Then, I ended up going back. Went to the Redistribution Center and went back to Santa Ana for redistribution.

Interviewer: That was when you were being discharged?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes, before. I was supposed to go to the South Pacific on the B-29s. When you went in to Santa Ana, all the other guys you'd been with—we knew guys who had already [***gone through ahead of us**].
When they'd see you, they didn't say, "Hi" or anything.

They said, "Get in the hospital."

That was the first thing I remember anybody said.

TSgt. Gallagher: I said, "Well, why?"

They'd say, "Ahh, the food's marvelous."

We thought it was marvelous, anyway, because we went in there and there'd be a big long table—had half a dozen different salads and half a dozen different vegetables and half a dozen different meats and soups and desserts.

They said, "Aw, that's nothing to what you get in the convalescent hospital."

So, everybody was bucking to get into the hospital. When it came time for me to see the flight surgeon, I sat out there and held my hand **[tight]** like that.

Finally, they called me in.

He **[the flight surgeon]** said, "How are you Gallagher?"

I said, "Well, I'm fine."

He said, "Do you have any problems?"

"Not that I know of."

He says, "Do you ever have any dreams?"

"Yeah, I had one."

He said, "That's not bad."

"No, I've never dreamed before"

He said, "What was it about?"

"Oh, my buddies."

"Where are they?"

"They're dead."

He said, "Hold your hands out."

Naturally...

Interviewer: Your hands were shaking.

TSgt. Gallagher: He said, "Turn them over."

Sweaty.

He said, "Listen up, Gallagher. You've got your car here, haven't you?"

I said, "Yes, Sir."

He said, "You live in Los Angeles, don't you?"

"Yes, Sir."

TSgt. Gallagher: "You're going to town every night, aren't you?"

"Yes, Sir."

He said, "Well, I'll tell you what. We'll put you in the convalescent hospital for 5 days."

He was telling me that he knew what was going on. It turned out that they needed a CQ and I took that.

Interviewer: What is that?

TSgt. Gallagher: Charge of Quarters. His duty was to run a roll call of the barracks. That's where we were, at the barracks, not the hospital beds and all that kind of stuff. You had to do 5 hours of PT or Education or go to the beach on a tour or go to Hollywood on a tour, play ball, play tennis. I took some typing and all that kind of stuff because in 3 months I knew what a typewriter was, anyway.

[Tape Counter at 813]

CO

Flak Shack

TSgt. Gallagher: The Point System came out. I was very lucky. Our squadron's CO hated us. He may have had reasons for it. I'm not real sure. But, as an example, Jack, the pilot was at the Officer's Bar telling everybody what a no good son-of-a-gun he was—the squadron leader was. **[Inaudible]** Jack looked and here was the CO, "Isn't that right, Colonel."

We had probably a 200 yard drive up to the main highway up to the squadron area. A lot of times the 5 of us would be going to lunch and we'd see the Colonel drive—start up—we'd take and stop 15 feet, 15 feet, 15 feet. So, he had to give 5 salutes rather than 1.

To show us how much he appreciated us, he didn't want to lose us. So, he kept putting us off for going to the Flak Shack **[break from combat]**.

Finally, he had to do it.

He says, "You will be back here in 7 days!"

TSgt. Gallagher: Going to Southport [*on the west coast]. We went in to London and surprisingly enough, we missed the train over to Southport that night. The next day, we went over and checked into the hospital for the rehab. Four of us made it, but a couple of 'em hadn't gotten there, yet. We told them our problem--that we'd missed the train.

"OK", he said. "You're going to be here 7 days."

"Sir, our squadron commander told us we'd be back at the base in 7 days."

"I'm your CO, now."

Eventually, he let us go at the end of 7 days. We went back to London and I'll be darned if we didn't miss the train to the base. We caught the last train, the next day and they had to come pick us up about 1 o'clock at the train station the next day. Went to squadron headquarters to check in and there was the CO. He wasn't very happy.

He said, "All right, you guys. You're due in such-and-such a time. You're flying tomorrow."

That meant we'd be getting up in a couple of hours.

An old guy sitting back in the corner, he said, "Well, Colonel, those guys aren't flying tomorrow. I grounded them."

He was the new flight surgeon.

The Colonel said, "You will be in my office at 9 o'clock in the morning."

TSgt. Gallagher: During the night, it'd changed to a "milk run" [**routine trip**] and he went.

So, he said, "You will be in at 9 o'clock the next day."

We went out. It was a hairy mission, we went on. Number 3 engine wasn't working right, but we were still keeping up with the other airplanes. We decided we'd go to at least go get shot at and then we'd come back and get credit for a mission. By the time that we could go back, it was too far to go back. So, we stayed with it. What happened is the exhaust manifold had a hole in it and we weren't getting boost—turbo boost. We went in to see him.

TSgt. Gallagher: He wasn't very happy with us.

He said, "Why on earth did you go with a bad airplane?"

He'd gotten a report we were flying with a downed airplane.

Jack said, "Colonel, we had an absolute great time at the Flak Shack you gave us, we just couldn't couldn't come back."

[Tape Counter at 871]

AAND POINTS

DISCHARGE, 15 July 1945

TSgt. Gallagher: The Squadron could—every time the group recommended you for a DFC [Distinguished Flying Cross], the Squadron could refuse it. Every time, group recommended us for a DFC, the squadron refused it. So, the group could give us an air medal. So, we ended up with 4 or 5 or I don't know how many Air Medals. Each of them worth 5 points. DFC was only worth 5 points. So, you got a point for each year of age, a point for each year in the service, a point for each year overseas, I think 15 points for a wife. I didn't have any of those things, but I had 75 points. When the point system came out, one of my jobs was to pull the files for the flight surgeon to interview every time. The first time I put mine there, he said, "You don't need to put yours out. You're here."

When the point system came out, I pulled them.

"I told you, you didn't..."

"Well, Sir. I have 75 points. I want to get out."

"You're doing a good job for me. I need you."

The next week, I had another guy do it for me. He pulled them out.

I said, "I didn't pull them. I had a guy pull the files for me this week."

"Oh. Well, next week, you have him do it, but don't you touch it."

So, he let me go. I went over and processed and went over to get my orders right after lunch. The old Sergeant picked it up and started to hand it to me.

"Hey, Sarge. I've got a problem."

"What's that?" he says.

TSgt. Gallagher: "I've got a flight engineer, here and they declared him essential."

"Are you real sure of that?"

"Well, I think so."

"Are you positive?"

"Well."

"Do you want to have to undo all this paperwork?"

"Nah, go ahead."

TSgt. Gallagher: So, I was going to stay in L.A. that night. Instead, I drove on up to Beal—
Camp Beal. Got there about midnight.

The Sergeant said, "You want to start process in the night or in the morning?"

I said, "Well, what's the difference?"

Of course, we didn't have air conditioning in those days and this was right
outside of Sacramento. It was mid-July.

He said, "It's cooler."

I said, "I'll start, now."

TSgt. Gallagher: A couple of days later, I got my discharge, just before lunch. One of the guys
I knew was getting his after lunch.

He said, "I'll buy gas for your car if I can ride down with you."

So, I was sitting in the back of the hall. The guy was passing out discharges
to guys. An officer came on board and went through and pulled some out of
the hands of guys who had them all ready. Went over and pulled some more
out. They were pulling the flight engineer's. Well, I went out the door and I
was gone. Ran into a guy there that July—ran into him down on the beach in
December—and he was still in. See how lucky I am?

Interviewer: Yes.

[Tape Counter at 925]

LOCKHEED

TSgt. Gallagher: Then, I just haven't figured to this day why I did it, but the Hershey Bill was
in effect. You know what that is?

Interviewer: No.

TSgt. Gallagher: Anybody that was inducted in the service, was entitled to the job they had when they left. So, they [**Lockheed**] offered me my old lead man job in production.

TSgt. Gallagher: I said, "No. I want something in experimental."
Not knowing what it was about. Building experimental aircraft of something like that. So, they didn't send me to that. They sent me to engineering flight test. Old Pappy Grey asked me what I did.
I told him what my experience was with live aircraft, "You got your hand tools and I'll get them."
Went through that two or three times.
He said, "OK, I'll hire you."
Nights, flight test.
He said, "I'll take you on as nights."
I got ready to leave and he said, "Don't you want to know how much you're going to make?"
I said, "You told me."
"What did I tell you?"
I said, "Nights, swing shift."
"Don't you want to know how much it is?"
"I'll find out when I get my check."
A dollar and a quarter, Dad-gum-it. That's what I would've been making as lead man, top in production. Here, this was the bottom of top [***rate**].
It was 3 years before they hired anybody else in flight test.

[Tape Counter at 951]

ENGINEERING FLIGHT TEST

CAA Certification

Constellation

TSgt. Gallagher: My first job, we were doing the CAA Certification for the *Constellation*.

Interviewer: What is CAA Certification?

TSgt. Gallagher: Civil Aeronautics Administration Certification for the airplane that can fly passengers.

Interviewer: On the *Constellation*, right?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. That was a luxury, big airplane right after the war. That was the three tailed airplane. The [***other**] commercial one was the Douglas C-4. It was just a civilian version of the military airplane. Then, DC-6 and 7. It was a great airplane. Some of them are still flying.

[Tape Counter at 969]

P2V Neptune

TSgt. Gallagher: Then, did the [inaudible] armament work on the P2V.

Interviewer: The *Neptune*.

TSgt. Gallagher: The *Neptune*.

[Tape Counter at 973]

F-90

Breaking the Sound Barrier

TSgt. Gallagher: Then, they developed the F-90, which was a [***stainless steel**] "battleship"—six 20 mm [**guns**], stainless steel. Tough, tough, tough.

Interviewer: Say the millimeters, again.

TSgt. Gallagher: Six 20 mm guns.

TSgt. Gallagher: I just happened to be up at North Base, Edwards. They were having some trouble with the guns. Kelly Johnson was up there that day and a whole bunch of the wheels. I figured there was something going on. [**Pilot**] Tony [**LaVier**] took off in the other—they had two of them—I was messing with the armament airplane. There was the flight scheduled airplane. Tony left [**in that airplane**] and a few minutes later, called in that he was **going [into the test phase]** at that radio wagon, there. Everybody was standing around there.

[Tony said], "I'm going into such and such program."

TSgt. Gallagher: All of a sudden we heard the dog-gondest explosion you ever heard in your life.

Interviewer: This was on the F-90?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. Radioman called, "Tony come in. Tony come in."
Finally Kelly, "Tony, this is Kelly. Come in."

TSgt. Gallagher: Finally Tony came in, "I've been a little busy."
"Well, get back in here."

They went over that airplane trying to figure out what happened. Three months later, [**Chuck**]Yeager broke the sound barrier. In the meantime, an F-4 had broken the sound barrier, also. So, Yeager was actually number 3.

Interviewer: What were the first two that broke the sound barrier?

TSgt. Gallagher: The F-90 and the F-4.

Interviewer: What was Chuck Yeager in when he broke the sound barrier, do you remember?

TSgt. Gallagher: X-1.

Interviewer: He received the credit, for being the first one.

TSgt. Gallagher: Oh, yeah. I don't have much respect for him. When Jeana Yeager and Dick Rutan did the *Explorer* [**Correction: Voyager**], Yeager was, "Oh, that wasn't anything. Anybody could've done that."

There weren't half a dozen people in the world that could've done it.

[Tape Counter at 1017]

SpaceshipOne

Peter Siebold

TSgt. Gallagher: That's another one of my lucky points in life. You know *SpaceshipOne*? I have a granddaughter [**Traci**] married to Peter Siebold. They were up here last week. Peter was supposed to fly the first qualifying flight for the *SpaceshipOne*, but they'd just had a new baby and he hadn't been feeling too well. So, he asked for somebody else to do it. Patrice, my daughter who lives here, and I were down there for this qualifying flight. We were over in the VIP section because my daughter is all involved in that kind of

TSgt. Gallagher: stuff. They were interviewing the pilot of the second, the really qualifying flight.

He said, "Wait a minute. Pete, come up here."

He put his arm around him, "I want you to know that none of us could've done what we did without Pete."

TSgt. Gallagher: Pete had designed, built, and programmed the trainer—flight simulator. Therefore, they didn't have to do the actual drops every time they wanted to check something. Although, Pete did do 3 drops—3 dead drops—they take them to 40,000' and drop them. One live drop—dropped him. Fired the rockets and went to 95,000' at Mach 1.6. Real nice guy.

Interviewer: I bought my husband a DVD about *SpaceshipOne* and they were talking about these various pilots. That's very, very interesting.

TSgt. Gallagher: Burt [**Rutan**] is quite a guy. Pete was telling me that [the group is losing its feeling now because they are having to hire so many people that are building the Virgin spaceships. He says the new people coming in just don't understand how everybody checks on everybody for everything they do. A lot of people object to someone else looking in on what you're doing.

Interviewer: So, the company is really growing.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes, and it'll shrink when they get this done because Burt doesn't build anything on his own. He always builds them for somebody else, like for Paul Allan. That's his airplane. He can do with it what he wants.

Interviewer: *SpaceshipOne* was Paul Allan's? Paul Allan sponsored that?

TSgt. Gallagher: Virgin. They can do what they want with those airplanes.

Interviewer: That's Richard Branson's, I think, who sponsored that.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes.

[Tape Counter at 1075]

F-104 Starfighter

Interviewer: You also dealt with the F-104, right.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes, I did all the armament development on that one. That was really a great program. That's the first production dual double Sonic airplane. 20 mm

weapon. We could "C" rate. It was driven by an electric motor. "C" rate was the maximum rate and that's 6,000 rounds a minute. That's 100 rounds a second. 100 rounds is about from here to that couch. Can you imagine accelerating and firing that many rounds in one second?

[Tape Counter at 1090]

F-94 Starfire

TSgt. Gallagher: Do you know what a 20 mm is?

Interviewer: How big is that? **[TSgt. Gallagher brought in sample projectiles.]**

TSgt. Gallagher: That's 94.

Interviewer: That was between the?

TSgt. Gallagher: Probably both sides of this?

Interviewer: The *Neptune* and the *Star Fighter*? In there?

TSgt. Gallagher: The F-94 was a derivation of the F-80, the first production jet. It was originally caliber .50s. Then, a group of us went up to China Lake, California, the Navy's proving ground and developed a 24 rocket nose, 2.75" folding FFR rocket. Folding Fin Rocket. It was used quite a bit during the Korean War and later, the tail end of Vietnam. The F-94 won the first total jet fighter dogfight. It was quite an airplane.

[Tape Counter at 1129]

Test Track

SR-71 Blackbird

TSgt. Gallagher: Then, the F-104. Then, what did I have next? The *Blackbird*.

Interviewer: SR-71.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. There again, crazy world. I had just gone to an off-site base. Base manager said, "I've been waiting for you Charlie. Want you to take over the escape systems."
This would've been on the A-12. Prototype developments up there. Gave me a stack of prints to look at and I realized I'd run the high speed test track. Tests on that seat used before, but nobody knew what it was for.

Years before, we had to develop a seat system. You have a sled and you've got a nose of the aircraft or whatever on it. You have a track—a railroad track. The tracks are accurate to a 1/10th of an inch every 10 feet, vertical or lateral. They have a pusher sled--that's rockets. They push the sled down and then they fire the seat. North and South Base, Edwards and White Sands and China Lake. All those were level. Hurricane Mesa up in Utah is on a mesa and there's a 180' vertical drop. Then, it goes to a 30 degree slope. All these other places, if you hadn't deployed by the time you hit the ground, you didn't know what happened. With Hurricane Mesa, it had as much as 4 or 500 feet. We always had good luck on that. The track was 9,000 feet long. If you're going to launch at Mach 1, I think you'll eject at 5000 feet from the edge of the mesa. By the time it deployed, it was out over the end. Mach 1, you had 50 lbs. to the square inch on your body, which is 50 lbs. pushing on your eye. It was quite a while before we really developed a Mach 1 escape system. That was an experience.

Anyway, at noon, the base manager came back and said, "Hey, can't keep you. Somebody's got their finger on you. You are going to Edwards, Monday."

I got down there and didn't even get out of the parking lot before Charlie Griffin, the assistant manager there, said, "Got a job for you, Charlie."

I said, "Well, you know I'd do anything that's legal."

He said, "We want you to do ground handling."

"I don't even know what ground handling is."

He said, "All that [***yellow stuff (equipment)**]."

"I don't know what that is."

"You'll find out."

TSgt. Gallagher: I ended up doing all the launches. I did all the equipment—the electrical generating equipment, [***Lox, liquid oxygen**], LN2 [***liquid nitrogen**], hydro systems, everything that supported the aircraft. It was really a great job.

[Tape Counter at 1222]

SR-71 December, 1966 Story

TSgt. Gallagher: If your husband is interested, like you mentioned *SpaceshipOne*, I'll send a couple of e-mails to you. One of them was an airplane that we launched the 24th of December, 1966, if I remember right. This e-mail was written in just the last few years. It has more info. on the SR-71 than we'd ever seen public before. We launched these 2 guys and not too long, they disappeared. They disintegrated over Four Corners. There was a rancher out when he heard the explosion and he waited about 15 minutes. He saw 2 chutes come down out of the clouds. He raced back to the ranch headquarters and got his helicopter and went out to the crash site to help the pilot and co-pilot. He wasn't the co-pilot. He was the rear-seater. The pilot was OK, but the rear-seater had broken his neck. They hadn't ejected. They'd been ripped out of their seats. Four of those heavy harnesses went out. Surprisingly enough, the escape system—I mean, the escape kit that they sit on—functioned. So, they had the oxygen bottle. So, their suits were pressurized because at 78,000', if you aren't pressurized, you're dead because of bends.

Interviewer: This was on the SR-71?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes.

End of Tape 1, Side B

[Tape Counter at 1276/ start of Tape 2]

Tape 2, Side A

TSgt. Gallagher: The guy got the pilot back into the hospital within an hour of the crash. This pilot is the one that wrote this [**letter**]. He was flying again a month or so later. The debris was scattered over a 10 mile area.

Interviewer: Did they figure out what happened?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. What happened is they'd have unstarts. You have the nacelle and you have the engine inside and up front there's a [***cone**] that comes out, call it the spike. It'll move in and out to keep the air going into the turbine subsonic. Once in a while, it goofed up and would cause the engine to have

TSgt. Gallagher: a sudden stop. This particular time, it put them in a violent turn and come apart. They cured that, later.

[Tape Counter at 1289/ 13]

Engineering Flight Test at Burbank, S-3 Viking

Instrumentation at Yuma, H-56 Cheyenne

TSgt. Gallagher: I left that program in '68. Went back to Burbank in Engineering Flight Test and worked on the S-3, the aircraft that took **[President Bush]** Jr. out to the carrier to tell them the war was over, a little bit pre-mature.

TSgt. Gallagher: Then, I went on a helicopter, H-56, and went out to Yuma working out at the Army proving grounds at Yuma. There again was one of the fortune things in my life. Bob Williams and I had just barely known each other. He was an instrumentation man. By that time, I was in instrumentation. We'd both always stayed in hotels when we were out in the field. Other guys would get trailers or apartments or something like that. He'd been there 2 years and I'd been there a year in a hotel.

One time he said, "Hey, I'm going to go out and look at apartments. You want to go out with me?"

Found out he was thinking about me sharing one with him. We found this triplex and agreed that we'd have somebody in to clean it every week, have 2 newspapers. I forget whether we had 2 telephones or not. Even if we'd ever had any dissatisfaction, even though we'd paid the rent the week before, we were back in hotels.

[Tape Counter at 1310/ 34]

MARRIAGE TO MARILYN (1973)

TSgt. Gallagher: It worked out great, 3 kids moved in next door. Come to find out they had a Mama. She was a kind lady. Bob always cooked and ate in. I always ate out. She hated to see this old man have to go out and eat by himself every night. So, we go in to—Yuma's a party town. They have great music. We'd go have dinner. After dinner, go up to the bar. They always had someone good playing there. That went on for 3 ½ years. I went back to Burbank

TSgt. Gallagher: and she thought that was the last time she'd ever see me.
I said, "No, I'll be back. I'll be in touch."
I'd get off at 12:30 and drive down to Yuma and get down there about 6.
Kathy usually would let me in. Marilyn would get up and go on the couch.
TSgt. Gallagher: I'd go to bed 'til about 10. This one day, I was sitting on the edge of the bed
talking to her, "Have you ever thought about getting married, again?"
She says, "Well..."
I said, "How about me?"
TSgt. Gallagher: Had a rain storm in there, all of a sudden.
So, we got married. 34 years [now].
Interviewer: You asked her if she'd thought of getting married, again?
TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. She finally admitted she had. It worked out—34 years ago.
Interviewer: What year would that have been?
TSgt. Gallagher: '73.

[Tape Counter at 1331/ 55]

More about the H-56 *Cheyenne* at Yuma

TSgt. Gallagher: That was an interesting program down there at Yuma, too. The helicopter,
the stupid Army couldn't make up their mind what they wanted. This
airplane, pilots could take their hands off the controls. Any other plane,
they could never take their hands off the 2 controls. Could loop it and
roll it, but they just couldn't make up their mind. If they'd bought that
airplane, they could've had it for \$17 million. It's better than what they've
got today and their cost was, I don't know how many hundred million.
Interviewer: So, they never did buy it?
TSgt. Gallagher: No. We fired, I don't know how many rockets. Of the hundreds of rockets
we fired, had an average of a 9 inch dispersion. Normally, with helicopters
in those days, their machine guns, they'd start firing. Then, they'd wait until
they hit the ground and track them in. On this one, at one time, they had a
bunch of wheels up there—congressmen and all. They went cruising down
through this target area and the pilot had a helmet. He fired 3 rounds over

TSgt. Gallagher: here. A little bit later, there was another target. The front-seater would fire 3 rounds. By the time they'd be getting ready to hit the 3rd target, the rounds would just be getting in the target. They could take it, be out in the country. They could be down low and they could pop up, lock onto a target, and drop down in and fly back around the mountain or something. Get in close and pop up and fire. They wouldn't have to wait. They were all ready locked on him. They didn't do it.

Interviewer: What did they [**Army**] buy instead, do you remember?

TSgt. Gallagher: Oh, one of the **Hueys**.

[Tape Counter at 1360/ 84]

P-3 Orion

The Maintenance Shop

TSgt. Gallagher: When I finished that program, I had a maintenance shop with another guy. We maintained the mock-ups, electrical system mock-ups, the *Aurora* which was the Canadian patrol aircraft; the US Patrol aircraft [***P2V Neptune**]; the *TriStar* [**L-1011**]; and the 104.

Interviewer: What was the number on that one [***Orion**]?

TSgt. Gallagher: The P-3. I forget the name of it [***Orion**]. We had 23 people in there. We'd taken over the shop from another guy and he'd been a packrat. He had all kinds of stuff stashed every place. I started clearing it out and cataloging it and storing it.

TSgt. Gallagher: A lot of stuff that, technically we weren't supposed to have, but anytime you got a new job, they'd bring a print down with mods. I'd take it and work up a harness for it and put it out on the bench. The guy I worked with, black guy, best avionics guy I ever saw in my life. He was ready to build an airplane if he had 1 piece of wire with a pin on the end of it. I wasn't ready to build an airplane unless I had everything. It worked really great. Department managers would go through every once-in-a-while and tell everybody to clean out. The guys knew us, "Hey, we're getting rid of a bunch of stuff. Do you want it?"

TSgt. Gallagher: "Sure. Bring it over."

They found out eventually that we had all this stuff.

One time, field service called and said, "We've got a P-3 down in Spain. It's been down for 2 months. Can't get a connector. It's going to cost \$5000 for a connector and it's going to take a year for us to get it. You got any?"

I said, "Let me check. You have them pull that connector out and send us every number that's on it."

"Oh, we can't do that."

I said, "You've got to take it out eventually. So, you mark every wire."

Three weeks later, I called field service, "I've got 3 over here. Two of them are updates, much better connectors than what you've got."

"Can we get it?"

"Sure. Come and get it."

"So, what do I owe you?"

"Nothing."

Here we got an airplane back in service that would've been out for ages. Also, when we'd get a change, we could use our stock to build it while we were waiting for the new parts to come in. It worked great. One of our buddies that was in another area came over and wanted to know if we had AN plugs which were the old type plug. I knew he was building an instrumentation system. When you'd develop a new airplane, you'd try to use non-standard connectors so you'd never take and pull out a piece of the true harness.

TSgt. Gallagher: He said, "You got some?"

"Yeah, we got some."

"Could we get some?"

I said, "Well, I don't know. What do you need?"

He told me and I went and checked. I said, "Yeah, we got enough to build the harness you're wanting to build."

"Can I come over and get them?"

I said, "No. You just take and bring me a wiped print and a work order."

I had these 23 people and we didn't always have work for them. We had a hard time convincing them that, for 2 or 3 years, that we were supporting him. They finally told him to quit that. We only had top labor people. They had lower grade people who could be doing those. The guy said, "No way. From these guys, when we get the harness, we can install it. If our people do it, there are mistakes and mistakes and mistakes and they take longer."

TSgt. Gallagher: That worked really great for us.

Interviewer: What was he building? Do you remember?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. That was why I retired early. Then, I started having people drop by the shop to talk to me that had no reason to be coming over to talk to me. I knew that they'd want me on that airplane for the flight test program. I wouldn't do it because I was 62, I guess, at that time. A flight test program was 7 years and I knew I didn't want to stay that long. So, I retired. It was the F-117, *Stealth Fighter*. They called it a *Stealth Bomber*, but it was designed as a Stealth Fighter.

[Tape Counter at 1428/ 152]

RETIREMENT

Interviewer: That's when you retired, then, when you were 62?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. I retired the last day of '84.

TSgt. Gallagher: We had a great time. I'd bought a house in Yuma because I thought maybe we'd retire down there, but we didn't really want to do that. I had this house up in Mission Hills in the San Fernando Valley. Marilyn worked down there. She was with the police department for 6 months [***about 10 years total**]. This place went empty—that I was renting up there. I asked her what in the world it was that would [***convince her to move**]. She went up there with me, "That would be fun to fix up." I said, "Well, you've got 30 days to make up your mind. After 30 days, I've got to be having things done that I'd live in, not that I was going to buy for somebody else."

TSgt. Gallagher: She finally decided. That was in late '73. We came up here in '90.

[Tape Counter at 1445/ 169]

PORTLAND, OREGON and FAMILY

Interviewer: Why did you move up here?

TSgt. Gallagher: What?

Interviewer: Why did you move up to the Portland area?

TSgt. Gallagher: I had a daughter here and one up at the coast. We'd have come up earlier, but I had a boy that was fighting melanoma. He had a boy that he was going to live long enough for his boy to know him. Finally, he says, "Aw, go on up there. You'll be down here in 20 hours. So, we just came up.

Interviewer: You had 2 daughters and a son?

TSgt. Gallagher: Three daughters: Clorinda who is down in Phoenix; Patrice lives here; and Michelle lives in Mohave. She works with her Mother. Her Mother owns probably ½ of Mohave. I didn't want the divorce, but she liked money and I didn't care about money. I liked vacations. Vacations were fine, but they cost money. She finally learned to spend money. In fact, two years ago, Marilyn set up a trip, the bomb group reunion in England at the old air base. She got 44 out of 45 in the same hotel in London the same night. I like to tell people that I had the most family there. I had 4 daughters, a granddaughter and 2 wives. Pat had been in England with me—Scotland—when I was with the RAF. She wanted to go back up there again. Pretty soon, Patrice and she took off mid-tour.

[Tape Counter at 1474/ 198]

MARRIAGE TO PAT

Families

Interviewer: You were married when you were over in England?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes, I got married in '47.

Interviewer: That was to Pat.

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. Had 20 great years. Got to raise my 4 kids and got to raise Marilyn's three.

Interviewer: Marilyn has daughters or sons?

TSgt. Gallagher: Two boys and a daughter. The daughter first and then the boys. Michelle and Pat are very active with Burt Rutan. They helped raise the money for the *Explorer* [* **Correction:** *Voyager*]. They helped raise money to get it back to Washington, D.C. They were back there for the dedication at the Smithsonian. Of course, they helped raise money for the *Spaceship* stuff.

Interviewer: Which one is the Mother of your granddaughter who is married to **[Peter Siebold]**?

TSgt. Gallagher: Pat. Clorinda is married to Dan Dodds. He was in education forever. At 50, he decided he didn't want to do that. They had a superintendent of schools for a place down in California. They hadn't told him when they hired him that they let a contract and it was going to terminate. They'd completed it long before Dan got there, but they got sued about this. Everybody thought they should've won it, this board, but they were awarded 1.3. So, the lawyer for Dan went up to terminate the contract.

The lawyer down in San Diego said, "Dan, you aren't happy there, anymore."

He said, "No."

"Clorinda isn't happy there, anymore."

He said, "No."

"Why don't you go work for me?"

"Well, I'm not a lawyer."

He said, "You know more about education law than 99% of the lawyers do."

"I'll pay you the same you're making."

So, he went back and talked to his confidant on the board. She was an attorney. She said, "Do what you want."

So, he did and got his law degree. Now, he's entered in the Arizona bar. He's doing some great jobs down there. He was offered 3 partnerships when he graduated, but he didn't want them because those are all on the corporate side.

TSgt. Gallagher: He'd seen how parents were having such a terrible time getting the rights, that he works for them. He's quite a kid.

Michelle, of course, I've mentioned her. Patrice. She is married to a guy that's working for FLIR.

Interviewer: Is that F-L-I-R? That company?

TSgt. Gallagher: Yes. He's a certified mechanical engineer.

Interviewer: Their daughter's the one who is married to Peter Siebold?

TSgt. Gallagher: No, Michelle's daughter.

Interviewer: What's her name?

TSgt. Gallagher: Traci. T-R-A-C-I.

Interviewer: I want to watch the *SpaceshipOne* video, again. I watched part of it. I'm going to watch it.

TSgt. Gallagher: I've got some stuff you might be interested in over here. Now, what else [**do you want to know**]?

Interviewer: That was pretty good. You did great.

[Tape Counter at 1533/ 257]

Tape 2, Side A

End of Interview

~110 minutes

Other References

***Old Bold Pilots Speech, 14 Nov 2007, Tigard, Oregon.**

Interview at the 95th Bomb Group Memorial in Arizona.