

Interviewee: Hart, James C.
Interviewer: Ed Keuchel
Date of interview: July 23, 2004
Category: Military
Status: Open
Tape location: Box#49

Hart: I told Robin [Sellers] that my experience was during the Korean period. However, I didn't serve in Korea, but I was in for four years, nine months, and twenty days, and served on an aircraft carrier. You go ahead and tell me —

Keuchel: No, no, you tell me something about your background.

Hart: I entered the military in December of '52, and went to Bainbridge for boot camp. Then they gave us various tests to tell us what they thought our aptitude was best suited for. They said, "You'd do well in aviation," so they sent me to Norman, Oklahoma, to an airmen preparatory school.

Keuchel: Had you been to college already at this point?

Hart: Yes, uh-huh.

Keuchel: Where did you go to college?

Hart: Bowdin.

Keuchel: Bowdin, in Maine?

Hart: In Brunswick, right. I did not want a commission because I knew what the long-term commitment was there. I had some friends that had done that. Of course, they were recalled later. Since I had just an eight-year obligation – I was in the Reserve for two and a half, three years after I got out. But went to Norman, Oklahoma, and then they said, "Well, you'd do well in the electrical field." So they sent me to Jacksonville, Florida, to an aviation electrician school.

Keuchel: What base was that?

Hart: It was Jacksonville Naval Air Station. From there, they assigned me to VF-61; it's a fighter squadron at Naval Air Station, Oceania, Virginia. They were just fazing out from propellers. They were flying, at that time I think, the AD Sky Raider, and went from the AD Sky Raider to the F9F6 Cougar jet. The F9F5 preceded that, but that was with another squadron.

Keuchel: I worked on that engine.

Hart: Oh, you did?

Keuchel: It was a G-34, wasn't it?

Hart: I think it was.

Keuchel: After college I worked for a while for Westinghouse in Kansas City that made jet engines for the Navy.

Hart: That had burner baskets, didn't it?

Keuchel: It had an after-burner.

Hart: After-burner, okay, that's what it was. Anyway, at the squadron — I hit it just right, I guess, because they began to deploy for winter exercises down to Guantanamo Bay. Now, Guantanamo Bay was not suited for jets, but right across the bay is what they call Leeward Point. Leeward Point had runways used by jets. So they brought us down there in MATS, Military Air Transport Service, and MATS was flying at that time DC-6s and DC-7s. So we as a squadron went down there, and the pilots, of course, flew the airplanes down. We lived in Quonset hut type buildings. They were metal with a screen at each end. There was no uniform on Leeward Point, so we were wearing shorts all the time. I grew a great big red beard because my hair was an auburn red at the time.

Keuchel: That doesn't sound like the Navy, though.

Hart: I know, it doesn't. And I'll tell you, the food was fantastic. Every once in a while we got to go to Gitmo City, they called it. We'd take a boat over to Guantanamo Bay and then pick up a wooden train with no windows, just boards on the side, and these poor kids would chase the train looking for a nickel or a dime or a quarter or something, you know. The fellows would throw the money to them and the youngsters would pick it up. I saw one little girl stoop to pick up a nickel or something and some guy right behind her just booted her in the rear, sent her flying, and we all yelled at him, but there was nothing we could do because we were on the train.

Anyway, we had flight operations there. You know, quite rigid — they were flying day and night. When they would come in, we had a fuel dump which was probably five miles from the airport, and they would leave the airplanes there. We would refuel the airplanes, even though here we were electricians, they had everyone doing that kind of stuff. They had to get the airplanes back up to the ramp. So we would individually take the airplane, start it up, run it up the runway (we'd go probably fifty miles-an-hour) to get back to where they were supposed to be parked.

Keuchel: Were they just surveillance or what?

Hart: No, no, they were fighters. They were actually training with sleds.

Keuchel: Training, okay.

Hart: Training, yes. It was a training exercise. In fact, it was really great because we had occasion — oh gosh, no, I'm getting ahead of myself now. After they came in, we'd bring the aircraft back to the ramp and park them. Then we were free for the rest of the day. So we would go swimming or whatever. It was for roughly a two to three month period in the dead of winter.

Keuchel: Not bad duty.

Hart: It was beautiful duty. It was. Well, anyway, got back to the mainland — back at NAS Oceania for probably just a couple of months and we deployed to the aircraft carrier USS Lake Champlain. We went on a shakedown to Gitmo again and then back to Norfolk, where it was based. Then we took off from Norfolk and went on a nine-month Mediterranean exercise where we hit sixteen ports in the Mediterranean. I've lost part of my hearing because being on the flight deck while those things were tuning up. You know, they never used to wear the cups on the ear because they didn't realize how much danger there was. So as a result, my left ear is in bad shape.

Well, the Med cruise was fantastic. This was during the time when the USO would come aboard the ship, and I remember when Bing Crosby lost Dixie, his wife, and was dating Kathy Grant. Kathy and Bing Crosby were in the USO troop that came aboard ship. Oh, that was some of the nicest times we had. In between flight operations, we would hopefully pull in near a port. The aircraft carrier could never dock; we had to stay outside and take small liberty boats into port. A bunch of the fellows who had been on cruises before put us wise to some of the things that we could do that would be helpful ashore. That is, we could buy — cigarettes then were eight cents a pack and you could buy a couple of carton of cigarettes on board and we used to strap them to our legs and try to get through the MPs at the gate and take the cigarettes in town and barter for whatever, jewelry or whatever. I tell you, the thing that I really enjoyed was the tours that the chaplain would put on while we were in port. Some of them were overnight tours, and I remember in Barcelona, we went up to the mountains to a monastery called Mont Surrat. It was beautiful — 10,000 feet in the mountains. I'll never know how they ever got all the building material up there. It should be one of the wonders of the world.

Anyway, another thing that I was really surprised at, here we were in Italy. We went to Florence, we went to Pisa, we went to Naples (*Napoli*), and I could not find a pizza pie [laughs]. We finally found something that resembled it, I think it was in La Spezia, Italy.

Keuchel: But pizza is an American invention [laughs].

Hart: Yes, that's for sure. We had a mail detail that would sometimes take off from the ship. We had SNJs — do you remember that airplane?

Keuchel: No.

Hart: The SNJ was a two-place trainer, one pilot behind the other in two separate cockpits. Anyway, they would take that off the ship and go to town and pick up mail and so on. Capodichino Airport, you see, in Naples, was the military airport. I remember one time I took off from the ship not on the SNJ but on a TBM, because we had three TBMs on board. We circled the ship, flew around the ship and then formed up in a formation and went into Capodichino Airport. Before we went in there, we circled Mount Vesuvius, you know, the famous volcano there. I was so disappointed - I didn't know what to expect looking down in there, but it was just like the inside of a Dixie cup. I thought I would see a great big hole going into the depths of the earth, but that never happened.

Then in Genoa, I was put in charge of a detail. We had a group of buses - three buses came from Laverno, Italy, and met us in Genoa. The idea was there were spare parts for our airplanes being flown into a airport in Milan. So we went over the road with these buses to the airport in Milan. On the way, we were getting hungry and we had C-rations - I think it was Franco-American spaghetti. Someone got the idea that hey, if we put them the exhaust manifold, we would have something nice and hot. Well, of course, you know these military drivers take care of their buses like an infantryman would take care of his M1 rifle. All of a sudden we're going along and we hear "Pop Pop Pop Pop!" Those cans burst and there was Franco-American spaghetti all over the engine.

Anyway, we got up there and we got the parts from the airport and then we were on our way back and one of guys in the group spoke Italian. So we stopped at a restaurant on the way back, all three buses, and I was supposed to take a head count and I messed up that time. I didn't take the headcount. And do you know, we got halfway back to Genoa going through tunnels and so on and I said, "Where's Frankie?" "Oh, well, he was back at the restaurant. Didn't you see him talking to that girl?" My God. I said, "What do we do?" They said, "Don't worry, he speaks Italian - he'll get back there." Well, you know, he got back to the dock before we did. I felt so good when I saw him standing there because all I could see was a court martial or something like this for missing one of my men.

Anyway, the cruise ended rather tragically. We developed polio on board the ship and four of the shipmates got polio. We were docked in Gibraltar and the skipper got word that we better get back to the States with this problem because they don't know whether it was infectious or what. They did quarantine these guys.

Keuchel: That was just about the time the vaccine was coming along.

Hart: Yes, I'll bet it was. Anyway, we made it back. after we got back - that was at Norfolk Naval Air Station. Oceania, Virginia, is only a few miles from there. We went back to our base and I met a fellow that said, "Jim, you know, you could really have a great time in your tour if you became involved in patrol squadron operation." I said, "Well, tell me about it." I was so pleased. I explored it further and I found that there was an opening for electricians in the patrol squadron eleven, VP-11. They were based at NAS Brunswick. Of course, my gosh, I lived in Bath, Maine, eight miles from Brunswick. I thought, "hey, this would be just great."

My mom was living alone at the time, my brother had been married, and I thought it would be nice, I could visit it with her and help her around the house and so on (my father had died). Well, I got to the base and VP-11 was in Malta and on deployment. They said, "Jim, we're going to send you to Malta." I said, "Well, that's fine with me." There was another aircraft going that way so they put me on board and they stopped and let me off in Malta and I joined the squadron. I was instant on flying status, but the thing is, I had no idea that the operating limits were fifty feet and below when you were on station. In fact, at the mess hall in Argentina, Newfoundland, at that time, there was a big picture on the wall, it was a mural, and it showed a P2V making a tight turn over the water and it was making two wakes in the water with its propellers it was so low. I never, ever forgot that.

But, of course, being on Malta and instantly flying, I got to know the equipment that I was using, which was called ECM, electronic counter measures, and MAD gear, magnetic airborne detection units. That's where we would spot a sub, hopefully before he dove, once he got off on his radar he would dive, but we had a good idea of what the general location was. So we went over and we started dropping smokelights and sonar buoys, which are radio transmitters. At my station, I could dial into any one of these radio transmitters and listen for the cavitations of the sub. I would switch on one and the cavitations might be faint. If they were growing fainter, I knew that he was heading in another direction away from us. So I'd tell the skipper where the sub was heading and we'd fly over and we'd get a strong signal, drop another smokelight. We'd usually make a cloverleaf pattern. But once we had him, we'd drop smokelights —. And we carried homing torpedoes. But now these are Russian submarines, and all we were told to do was to track them and document where we found them and so on. So we did this and we were really successful. It was kind of interesting - we were flying sixteen hour days. We'd take off in the morning before the sun came up and then land well after the sun had gone down and vice versa - we'd fly all night. I remember some of the times we were under thunderstorms in the Mediterranean and the north Atlantic and one time we hit an updraft, something like 500 feet. It's funny - when you're down at fifty feet and suddenly find yourself at 500 they often wondered if that had been a downdraft of 500 feet, I wouldn't be here talking to you now.

Well, we stayed on Malta for six months and then went back to Brunswick and did our normal thing. We had a lot of exercises out on the mid-Atlantic coast. I remember we were on an exercise down near Pope Air Force Base

Keuchel: Pope?

Hart: Pope Air Force Base in the Carolinas.

Keuchel: P - O - L - K?

Hart: No, P - O - P - E. Pope Air Force Base. We suddenly heard a distress call on the radio and apparently there had been a parachute drop and one of the last to leave the ship got hung up somehow and he was hanging below the aircraft. I mean, that was a really tense-full time. They were afraid he was going to suffocate. We had a hatch on the top of our airplane,

which we could take off and pull inside the airplane. It was the probably the size of a whiskey barrel, and we could get up there and look out and so on. So we thought, well, let's go and try to get up under him and lower him into the airplane. Then they decided no, that the propellers are too close. I mean, we'd chop him up before we'd be able to get him in. So they decided not to do that. But we flew beside and we watched and they let us know that they were going to foam the runway at Pope Air Force Base and bring the airplane down as slow as they could and cut him loose so he would slide on the vegetable oil base, you know, that the foam provided. That's what they did, but I think unfortunately the guy had died before they got him there. That was a very tense-full time.

Of course, I should have mentioned too, back on Malta – it was during the Suez Canal crisis. So we were flying with live ammunition. We had a 50-caliber machine gun, a turret on the top, and we had rockets on the wings and we had, of course, the homing torpedoes. That was kind of a tense-full time as well.

But anyway, we did our training exercises around the mid-Atlantic coast and made another trip to Malta. It was shortly after that – that was in probably 1955, '56 – it was shortly after that that we opened a base in Rota, Spain. Now, I never did get there. I certainly would have wanted to go there. Back at the base, they said, “Hey fellas - you've got to get some training on the ejection seat.” I said, “Why on the ejection seat when we don't have that thing in our airplane?” “Well,” they said, “you never know.” So they took us to Quonset Point, Rhode Island, and they put us into the Dilbert Dunker. The Dilbert Dunker is where you get into a car, a little car, you're strapped in like the cockpit of an airplane, and you slide down this chute and it's pretty steep. You hit the water with real tremendous force and you flip upside-down under water. You're supposed to keep your wits about you, unbuckle your seatbelt, and open the door and swim up to a life raft which is in the water, and get in the life raft. Well, I didn't realize how many fellas could not even swim.

Keuchel: In the Navy at that.

Hart: In the Navy, yeah. It was not a requirement, but I loved the water; I was born in Maine and played on the seashore all the time. Anyway, when I hit that water – they didn't give me the proper instructions. When I hit the water, my head slammed forward and then slammed back again when it flipped up, and would you believe it, I've got a whiplash injury. A whiplash injury and I had a terrible nosebleed - it would not stop bleeding. Well, I stuffed something in my nose. I got in the ejection seat and they put something like a 40-caliber shell in this capsule. You pull the shield over your face and - boom- automatically you're shot up there. After we left there, I got what was called an “Oh My Ass” card, and it was funny - it showed a pilot with his helmet on and the seat of his pants all torn apart. I still have that.

After that training ... well, I actually had to go to the hospital. I spent a few months in Chelsea Naval Hospital in Massachusetts. They tried everything. Finally, the thing that worked was they stretched my neck with weights. They were going to operate on me, but I said, “Geez, if you can do it some other way, I'd rather do that.” But I lost the curvature of my cervical spine, and for a long time after that I could not – well, even today, I cannot sit in a chair and have the sun shine on the back of my head. Otherwise, it really starts a terrific headache.

All during this time, back at Brunswick, they were sending us to advanced training schools to learn about new equipment and so on. I know I went to Norfolk Naval Air Station a couple of times to the special classes and they gave us certain credits. The thing I liked about being a crew member, of course – I was helping to support my mother, so every month \$137.10 went to my mother, part of it out of my pay and part of it the government added some money to it. But as a crew member, I was getting what we called flight skins - an extra \$150 a month. Oh, that really helped, it did. But you know, when you look back, almost five years of my life – and as a youngster you have no inkling about the dangerous job that you're doing.

Keuchel: No, you feel immortal.

Hart: That's it. Of course, flying at those heights, 50 or 100 feet, we loved it. And we had something in the airplane called PDC, a practice depth charge. What it was was a little cast iron bomb, probably weighed five pounds, and we had a shell, it looked like big shotgun shell. We would put a cotter pin in there, put the shell in there and put the cotter pin in to hold the shell in, and if we spotted one of our own subs – we were again training – we spotted one, we were only supposed to throw one or two of those things down there because when they hit the water near the sub it makes a terrific noise. Well, we had a hatchway in the back of the airplane that we could lift up. We'd strap ourselves in and lift up this hatch and we would throw the PDCs down through this hatch, but we would throw five or six of them down. The sub skipper would yell up there, "Hey, come on guys. You got us, you got us."

Well, I tell you, we had one practice mission, and I was so pleased to be on board then and operating, from a dead stop at NAS Brunswick. A sub was spotted, so to speak, about twenty-five miles out to sea, and so we scrambled, and we had a kill in eighteen minutes. I thought that was excellent. And the whole crew did. Our captain was Barney Schrader, and Barney was from Wheeling, West Virginia. I remember one time overseas — you see, we were able to use our airplane on weekends. They wanted the pilots to get as familiar as possible with the whole Mediterranean area. So we would take the airplane and maybe go to Naples one weekend, or to Germany. We went to outside Munich and landed. In fact, one of the crew members decided that they would like to have a memento of one of these particular trips, so they commissioned a brewery to make some beer mugs for us with the squadron insignia on it and your name on it. It was really a pretty mug. I still have that, as well. But they produced those mugs for us at something like \$5 or \$10 apiece and it was a big success. The thing that we were able to get off the island for a little bit of R and R was really something we looked forward to.

I should go back just a little bit. On our Guantanamo Bay venture, since we were working long hours at Leeward Point, they gave us the opportunity for – I think it was once every few weeks – for a group of six of us – they would use an SNB (it was about a ten-place, two engine airplane) and they would take us to Jamaica. I remember we landed at Palisados Airport in Kingston, Jamaica. It was just a little, little, airport - I think it was a gravel runway. We landed and, of course, the pilot put the – I think that had reverse pitch on it – I think he put it in reverse and we picked up stones and dented the side of the airplane. But what they do, they would leave us there for three days. Now we didn't know where we were going, what hotels or anything we were going to stay in. And like most sailors, we wanted to have a good time. So by

the end of the second day, we had no money left. So we went out to the airport and I went up to the tower and asked them if they could call Leeward Point and indicate that we were ready to come home. They said, "Well, fellas, we're sorry. You've got to stay another night because we're not scheduled to pick you up until tomorrow." So we slept on the beach that night. That was something.

Now, there was another experience in the squadron that I thought was unique. We would go to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, and you've heard about this Vieques Island that they're having all the trouble with? Well, we used to hit it with rockets and practice depth charges. Barney said, "Hey fellas, let's try something different." What we did one time – we went so low and shot a rocket and the stones came back and hit one of the props. Didn't do any damage but we heard it. So he said, "Nah, let's lay off the rockets. We'll try lob-bombing." Are you familiar with that term?

Keuchel: No.

Hart: It's where you go into a target and rather than drop the bomb as you're going in, you pull up just prior to the target and then let it go and it shoots an arc. And, of course, you're well away from any explosion at that point. So we like to feel like we were one of the inventors of lob-bombing.

Keuchel: Underarm pitching.

Hart: Yeah, that's it, that's it. The other thing down there - at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, it was the prime base for SEALs. So we were in the mess line with these fellas going through SEAL training. I had never seen such big guys in all my life. Everyone had to be 6'5" or larger, muscular, I mean in tone and every way. When we wanted to buy toothpaste or something like this, we'd take the bomber (we'd take orders from the rest of the guys) and we'd fly over to Kinley Air Force Base which was on another part of Puerto Rico, and we'd land there. I remember, what a time! We land and there was no parking space, so we had to park our airplane under the wing of a B-36. We thought that thing was really something.

Keuchel: Isn't that something?

Hart: It was.

Keuchel: I've seen them at the Air Force museum at Henderson and I say to myself, "It's so big it could never fly," but I remember seeing them in the air.

Hart: That's right. Well, the other things that we would do – of course, in training, again in that area, it was really hot. When we flew, we flew in just our flight suits; we had nothing but underwear under the flight suits, that's all. We, at one time, were down off Barbados and we lost all hydraulic pressure. They said, "You land at the nearest air field." There was a gravel runway on Barbados. So we use the runway but we couldn't use reverse pitch. Thank

God, we had air bottles that we could control the brakes with. So we landed and it was three days before they could get a new hydraulic pump to us.

Meanwhile, because we traveled sixteen hours, we always carried food on the airplane. At this point, we hadn't planned to stay anywhere - in fact, we hadn't planned to stay out very long - but, we had a lot of canned goods. I went up to the tower (it was like a little line shack, really) and there was a fellow there. They had sandwiches and so on and it looked like they had some cooking gear. We spoke to this fellow and said, "Listen, we have string beans and we have green beans and we have regular B and M baked beans" and so on. We had clam chowder, we had chicken noodle soup and all this. We said, "Could you prepare some of this for us because we don't have any way to do that right now?" "Oh," he said, "fine - I'd love it." Well, meanwhile, we went kind of walking down the road and we found this English - it looked like a southern plantation - and people were in the yard having tea. We walked over and introduced ourselves and they invited us to have tea with them. They were very British. Of course, we told them the story and they said, "Well, you're more than welcome to use - " they had like a bunk-house and so we slept there. A couple of guys slept on the airplane because we didn't want to leave it alone; we had two bunks on the airplane. Then, it came time to have a bite the next day so we went and the fellow - "Oh, I've got it all ready right here." You know, he put everything in one pot and it had to be the most nutritious thing you ever saw in all your life. But that was funny; it was just another episode.

Keuchel: That's what the Marines do with the MREs.

Hart: Is that right?

Keuchel: Yeah, they called it Somali Stew - they put everything in one pot and there's little bottles of hot sauce that come with it [laughs].

Hart: Oh my gosh. Well, the other thing, too, flying off Malta, I should mention - you know, there are 200-foot cliffs all around Malta. We used to see - we could actually go down and see where the Maltese people hid when they were bombed during World War II, where they had actually tunneled in the side of the cliff probably fifty feet down. It was all sandstone-like, so they were protected from the bombings by doing that. However, all around the island are unexploded bombs. If you're swimming, the water is probably thirty-forty feet deep, you can look down and see all this munitions down there. I mean, nothing ever blew up while we were there, but —

Keuchel: No, but they could.

Hart: I thought it's a wonder someone doesn't have a problem. They want to go down and check these things out. I stayed as far away as possible. In fact, because I was still single at the time, I struck up an acquaintance with a British WREN. These are the ladies who are telephone operators, telegraph, and so on. Her name was Margaret Cooper and - it's funny - I taught her how to swim. And of course, some of the guys are swimming there and they were

razzing her and so on and causing her to get upset. I said, "C'mon fellas." I said, "Let her learn how to swim." So they left her alone. It was funny, one day, I said, "Margaret, you're doing a great job." I said, "You're swimming like an old pro." She up and she hit me over the face, slapped me over the face. I said, "What's wrong? What did I say?" She said, "You don't know what you said?" I said, "No." She said, "In England, a pro is a prostitute." Oh my God. Anyway, I apologized and everything went well. I kept up an acquaintance with her all the while we were there, which made it more compatible, more palatable, I should say.

On the way back from Malta, we had to stop a couple of times along the way for refueling. I remember that we stopped in Lodge's Island in the Azores and it was kind of a long flight from Malta. I had a problem with one of the engines electrically and so I had to work on that engine. So the next morning we took off rather early. Do you know, in pre-fighting the airplane, we never opened the bomb-bay doors; there is no reason. And we had rubber curtains that zipped all around the bomb-bay door, which were pretty tight. But on take-off, all of a sudden there was a terrible smell of fuel, and we were burning 145-octane gasoline in the engines at that time. Well, it was so bad that we turned right around and we passed notes to each other - "Don't key a microphone because it could set off an explosion." Well, we landed, and stopped right on the runway where we landed and opened the bomb-bay doors and there was just a mass of fuel in there - there had a been a fuel leak overnight. So that was a real tense-full time.

Then we continued on to Gibraltar where stopped. I was in my bunk and I was really tired because we had a long day. All of sudden I felt this tap on my shoulder - "Jim, Jim." This fellow said, "Jim, my name is Rene, I'm a friend of your mother." Well, this fellow was on his way over to relieve us on Malta and he learned that my airplane was in Gibraltar - can you imagine that? So we met, we sat there and we talked for a while. My mother had told me that she had met a friend after my father died and it happened to be a 1st class aviation machinist mate, Rene Moreau. So we had a very long and lasting friendship for years and years. I think he's passed away now. My mom died about three years ago now.

But my military experience, I'll tell you - there's no one that should grow up without it, because it taught me the value of having a nice home, living in the United States. Every time I got home I was so thankful to be back home. And I would bring trinkets for the family, my brother, and so on. In fact, I have a scrapbook here that has things in it, items that have fond memories. In fact, there's a *USS Lake Champlain* association of which I'm a member. There's a United States Naval Training Center Bainbridge Association, and I have donated a lot of things to them for their archives. Now, their home was at Bainbridge, Maryland, until this year. Now I understand the government has sold the property and so they're going to move to another location, somewhere around Perryville or Havre de Grace, Maryland.

But after I got out, I had to sign up, of course, with the local office to let them know where I was. It was the 3rd Naval District, I guess, to finish out my eight years as a reservist. And, of course, after that I got a paper telling me that I was properly discharged and so on. Well, I felt good about that.

And the strange thing is, I looked in the paper and there was a notice from Eastern Airlines who were hiring in Hartford, Connecticut. So I went down and I interviewed and they hired me and I went on a management training program for them. I ended up staying with them for ten and a half years. Who, lo and behold, should be employed as a captain with Eastern

Airlines, but my captain, Barney Schrader. And so, I got in touch with him. And to this day, he lives in Reston, Virginia, now. We call every once in a while or send a Christmas card and things like that. One of the crew member is up in Whitefield, Maine, and I lost track of the others. But it's nice over the years to be able to keep in touch with people like this. But again, I just feel that my experience really made me wise to the ways of the world. And again with Eastern Airlines, would you believe, I ended up opening – I went from Hartford- Springfield to Washington-Baltimore as a district sales manager and had a hand in building Dulles Airport. Then I ended up in the New York City home office. I don't know if you've been near 10 Rockefeller Plaza, but it's where you overlook the skating rink, at Rockefeller Plaza. You remember - in the wintertime, where they put the Christmas tree?

Keuchel: Right, right.

Hart: Well, I stayed with Eastern for ten and a half years and then I went into what used to be the family business, which was being a stockbroker. I had insurance licenses and so on. I did that for thirty three and a half years. I'm retired and, unfortunately, my wife Carol died of kidney failure back in '79. I was single for six years and then I met a woman on a blind date in New York City and we're married. We got married in '86 and we live in Palm Beach ... actually, Royal Palm Beach, eighteen miles inland, in the wintertime and in the summertime we come up this way. My wife comes for about three or four weeks and then she goes back. Because of my experience with Eastern and because of the job I had, I'm presently president of the Eastern Airlines Retirees Association, Palm Beach Chapter.

Keuchel: One of the three Florida airlines and they're all gone now.

Hart: I know, Northeast went, National went, Eastern. Anyway, I had a beautiful ten and a half years with them and now, staying close to a lot of the people that still think very fondly of the airline – they have a board meeting once a month in Miami, and that's the second Wednesday of the month. I always attend that. At the same time, I'm president of Eighth Air Force Historical Society, which I guess you already know, Florida chapter. In fact, we had one of your associates speak at our last reunion, and he did an excellent job. We had a lot of people that signed on to do what I'm doing here now. I don't know what else I could add to what I've told you already....

Keuchel: Well, I think that you've given a nice account of a experience for someone in the Cold War period.

Hart: Yes, yes. And that was a period we — we, of course, were concerned about any repercussions from what we were doing with the subs.

[personal conversation not transcribed]
End transcription