Michael Beahan
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
The Dartmouth Vietnam Project
February 13, 2025
Transcribed by Allie Roehm ‘25

ROEHM: All right. This is Allie Roehm. Today is Thursday, February 13, 2025, and I'm conducting this oral history interview for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. I'm conducting this interview with Mr. Michael Beahan. This interview is taking place in person in Berry Library on the campus of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Mr. Beahan, thank you for speaking to me today. So, if we can begin, where and when were you born?

BEAHAN: I was born in Towanda, Pennsylvania, in December 1945. And Towanda is a small town. It's actually the county seat for Bradford County in sort of northeastern Pennsylvania.

ROEHM: What was it like there?

BEAHAN: You know, my parents weren’t born—my mother was born there, I guess, my dad was not. But they went to high school there. It was kind of a fun small town, a railroad town. There was the Lehigh Valley Railroad—ran through town. And actually, there was a station in town that was at the bottom of the hill where my grandfather worked. He actually worked for the Lehigh Valley Railroad. So there was the railroad that came through. There was a big Sylvania plant. I guess I'm talking about some of the reasons why people were living there. There was a Sylvania electric plant, which was—I'm not sure if you're familiar with it, but they made electronic stuff, chemicals and light bulbs—

ROEHM: Oh yeah, yeah. [laughter]

BEAHAN: But it was also along the Susquehanna River, and so I think that was—the railroad ran along the river, and some of these bigger plants, these manufacturing plants, were along the river because they could use the water, I guess, for cooling and things. So I didn't really spend all that much time in Towanda. I was born there in a small hospital. But since I grew up in a military family, we started moving around a lot. But we would go back to Towanda when, like my father, who was in in the military, he went to Korea for a year, and we—my mom and my brother and I—stayed in Towanda. So, let's see, what else is it like? Small town, small stores, sort of a family-oriented place.

ROEHM: You mentioned your dad went off to Korea for a year. What was that like?

BEAHAN: Well, I should first mention that when I was born was just after he had come back from spending almost five years in the South Pacific in World War Two. He enlisted two years after he finished high school, with his older brother, and it was at a time, it was in—that was 1940, so it was sort of in the Depression. People really didn't have great opportunities for work and things like that. In fact, he worked in a silk mill, just making clothing fabric and stuff like that. So he enlisted and his first assignment was at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. And a year after he was there—Hickam was adjacent to Pearl Harbor, and he was at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked on December 7, 1941.

So that was quite an experience. He survived, obviously, and then he went into the service as a private—he wasn't an officer or anything. He spent the rest of the war as an operations clerk for bomber squadrons who were moving to the South Pacific towards Tokyo, trying to take on Japan. So that's how I started to get sort of an indoctrination into military life, because of his experience.

And like I said, he was an operations clerk, but he went wherever the squadron went, and just worked on things like making sure everybody knew what they were flying, when, where, things like that. It was sort of administrative, wasn't a real combat position, but he was always in areas that were being threatened by the Japanese. So yeah, that war he then got out of—

I like to give a little bit of background about my dad, because I think it's important to talk about the fact that I grew up in a military family, and I spent a lot of time around military people. And when some people want to know, well were you drafted, or why did you go into the service, it sort of explains that I had been around military people, and basically went to school on air bases throughout my youth, actually.

I had an uncle—like a lot of people we knew—an uncle who was a Marine, and his brother was also in World War Two, in the Navy. So I just was spending—I just knew a lot of people that were in the military, even though Towanda, our sort of family hometown, was not connected to the military in any way.

ROEHM: Can you talk a little bit more about that? Did you feel like it was an expectation for you to go into the military because of your family, or was it more of how maybe you looked up to your dad, or how they talked about things that made you want to pursue that, or both?

BEAHAN: Yeah, I don't know. I think I always felt that I was going to serve my country, or something like that. And that was probably from being around military people all the time. I never had any aversion to going into the military, even when it got time for it—when I was going into the military, it was during the beginnings of our involvement in the Vietnam War, so there were a lot of people who weren't excited about going into the military. Yeah, I think that I really—my dad was often working, even though he wasn't a pilot, he was working around fighter pilots. I always found them kind of interesting. They had done a lot of interesting things, probably in World War Two and then in the Korean War. And they were just kind of a fun-loving group for sure. I think I wrote at one point that they all seem to drive sports cars, and I don't know about that, but they partied a lot too, I guess. So there were things like that that were sort of attractive to me, in my youth.

And then when I went to college. It was funny. I went to Penn State [Pennsylvania State University]. It was a State University, and it was one of the schools at the time that all male students were required to—

ROEHM: Yeah, I read that.

BEAHAN: Yeah, to take ROTC. At least I think—after my first year there, which I think was in 1963, that was no longer a requirement. But I was pretty much—well ROTC actually was a pretty good deal at the time for me. And so after my second year in college, you could sign up and you could actually commit to going into the service and be part of what was called advanced ROTC, which meant you had to take courses on military history and things like that. There were some drilling, marching around, learning the military protocols. But you also got tuition paid, and there was a stipend. So for me, it pretty much paid for my last two years of college, which was good. And I would, at graduation, be commissioned and go in as a second lieutenant, as an officer, which was a good thing as well.

ROEHM: Yeah. Why did you choose Penn State? Or was it—

BEAHAN: No, that's interesting, because [laughter] I went to school in Germany. My dad was assigned to a squadron in Germany, and I went all through—I think I entered the high school, it was Kaiserslautern American High School, at a time when there were a lot of military installations. I mean, there were something like 50,000 troops at this one base.

ROEHM: Wow. Was it east or west?

BEAHAN: It was north, northwest, I think, and it wasn't that far from the French border, actually. But it was a huge army base. And nearby was Ramstein, which you still hear about now, an air base. It's still in Germany, and all the

kids from Ramstein went to school in Kaiserslautern. But so, having moved around before I got to high school and going to high school in Germany, I really didn't know that much. I never been on a college campus. We were Pennsylvania residents, so I could qualify as a state resident if I went to Penn State. I applied to a couple other schools. And my dad said, "Well, I think, you know, University of North Carolina would be kind of a good place to go to school." So I applied there, having really very little knowledge of that school, and I must have applied to at least another school.

But anyhow, I got into Penn State. I didn't get into some of these other places. And as a state resident, it was a good deal. And Penn State now has a bunch of branch campuses. A lot of students have to go two years outside of the main campus and then maybe be admitted to go to the main campus. When I went, you didn't have to do that. So I was at the main campus—it was a good school. Had a lot of things going on, was big. Athletics were huge there. They had—I mean they still have a really strong football team. They did back then too. So, there was a lot going on there, even though it's actually in the geographic center of Pennsylvania, and there's not much else around it. but it's sort of a world to itself. So yeah, that's how I ended up there. And then, as I said, one of the things I did was go through ROTC. I also played high school football in Germany. And all these military installations, they were really big. They had big high schools. I think mine was considered like a class A school. It had a couple thousand students. It wasn't that small.

ROEHM: All Americans? All kids like you?

BEAHAN: Yeah, these were all American schools. Yeah, exactly. And that was one of the downsides, really, was that we didn't really—because everything was so Americanized on all these bases—that you didn't integrate so much with the local population, which would have been good. I might have been able to play soccer, learn soccer really early on, rather than football. So I played on the varsity football team in Kaiserslautern. We played schools like Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Munich. All these places had large installations, so we got to travel around too, and the parents all came, and it was good.

But when I got to Penn State, I just didn't think I could continue playing at that level, yeah. But I did discover that I could at least learn about rugby. And so I joined the rugby team, which, at the time, was a club team. We had grad students. We even had some faculty who were playing on the Penn State rugby team at that time. And we played other schools. I know Princeton had a team because I think George [W.] Bush Jr. played for them. But we also played the Philadelphia Rugby Club and other non-school things. And I had a really good experience. I got to travel with the

Philadelphia rugby club, at one point overseas, and played in games in England and Scotland and Wales.

ROEHM: Real rugby!

BEAHAN: [laughter] Yeah, it was good. So yeah, I had a good college experience. But a lot of the stuff—well, I was in a fraternity too. At Penn State, there were 56 fraternities. And because we were not in either Pittsburgh [PA] or Philadelphia [PA], most of the social life took place in fraternities in those days, in 1967. When there began to be Vietnam protests in [19]68, [19]69— the fraternity system, I think, was still large, but there were other opportunities. People wanted to become independent. They didn't really want to be necessarily affiliated with a fraternity or maybe any organization at that point.

But anyhow, I was in a fraternity. I was just going to mention that I think there were three other men who were in ROTC. One was in Navy ROTC, one was in Army—you know, there weren't a lot of people in my fraternity that were in ROTC, but it didn't bother me. When we started getting closer to graduation, people were thinking about “Wow, if I could draft”—or “How can I avoid getting drafted?” things like that. Which was going on around me, but it didn't really affect what I had planned to do. I still felt like I wanted to be part of what was going on, and I was planning to serve in the military. And so it was—that's the way it—it didn't change my attitude too much.

In fact, I remember my father. Oh my gosh, yeah. My father was—at that time he was also in the Korean War, as you picked up on, and then he was also in Vietnam—was his last, one of his last tours. And so while I was a junior, maybe even—yeah, about a junior at Penn State, he was in in Vietnam. So as students started protesting against the war, like in our Student Union, like the student center here—I know I got into some not fights but just sort of verbal battles about what was going on and why it might be important for people to serve in Vietnam. Or maybe advocating for the Vietnam War. Which in retrospect, I'm not so sure I would do that, after I got out of the service or now, but at the time, especially with all my family background and my dad being there, I was kind of—that was the tact I was taking.

Yeah, it was an interesting time, it really was. But like I said, I have plenty of friends who were spending as much time trying to figure out ways to not get drafted. Like, I don't know, people would stay up late. They'd take a lot of amphetamines or something like that so they might not pass the physical, or they might claim something about their background that maybe wasn't completely true that might eliminate them from the draft. Things like that. But it's just—in a way for me, it was sort of amusing, and I

wasn't—I didn't really feel like I needed to castigate anybody. I knew what I wanted to do and understood why people might not want to go that route.

ROEHM: Really interesting. Can you talk more about the sentiment of Vietnam War at Penn State at the time? You said that there was this pushback on the fraternity system?

BEAHAN: Yeah, there was a little bit—yeah, that—but it was really my wife—I met my wife at Penn State on a blind date, actually. It was my senior year. She was a junior, and we started dating. It worked out. It was—let's see where was I going, the sentiment of Penn State. Yeah. So she was a year behind me, which was '68, and I graduated in '67. I really felt like there was a real demarcation in the attitudes on campus in '68. I felt like I could—I mean, you can imagine at some point, like '68, '69, '70, that if you walked across campus and you had on your ROTC uniform, which is just like a military uniform, you could get some cat calls. You might not even do that. You might, I don't know, take your uniform when you put it on, when you got to where you're studying.

But that didn't really happen, because I feel like I graduated right at the time when the sentiment was turning around. Really the next year—I know because my wife and I, we didn't get married in college or right after college. We actually got married after I got out of the Air Force, like five years later. I could see just in—we did date a little bit in my first year in the military, and I could just see her whole—even just her whole way of dress. People were—I mean, consider, I guess you'd call it pretty much goth now. It's just things were just changing. When I went to college, my father—if you read an article in Esquire magazine about what every college student should take to campus, a three-piece suit was one of them. As a college freshman, I went to football games early on in a three-piece suit. It just seems so ridiculous. I don't even own one today. It was so formal. We were wearing really formal ties just as little young punks, really.

So that's just sort of the way it was leading up to, let's say, '68. I just sort of see that as a point of demarcation, but the sentiment changed then. I think there was a lot more anti-war spirit, and since ROTC was no longer mandatory, there were a lot fewer people who even elected to take the advanced program where you could get tuition plus a stipend, really, which was good. So yeah. That sort of—it changed just as I was leaving, in a way. It's probably just as well that I was leaving campus.

And then I, well I went—my first assignment was in Montgomery, Alabama, which was like a world away in terms of political outlook. And the whole—George Wallace was running for president, actually. He was a real strong segregationist. It was just so much different from being what I

was used to up north. Of course, we didn't really in Towanda, for example in those towns, didn't necessarily have a lot of diversity in the population. But still, it was a real eye opener to see what was going on in Montgomery, Alabama and in the south more generally, in terms of segregation and racial relations.

ROEHM: Did you feel a lot of culture shock coming from Germany to Penn State and then Montgomery, Alabama?

BEAHAN: Yeah no, not so much really, because it wasn't—I mean, because it was such an Americanized environment—the school. Yeah, and just even when—we did travel. We went to Paris. We actually went to the hometown of my grandfather, who was the guy that worked on the railroad, in this really small town in Italy. So we got outside, we got off the base, but it was still—there wasn't much of a culture shift, definitely from going from high school in Germany to Penn State. So if there were some specific things—there were actually a couple of my fraternity brothers. One's father worked in the State Department in DC. Another, who we'll talk about him more, his dad was an Air Force Colonel at the time. So there was, there were some—We had some things in common, for sure. And what about the other people? It wasn't a big cultural change, no.

ROEHM: I'd love to know more about your ROTC experience on campus and what that was like day to day, and why you chose the advanced option.

BEAHAN: Yeah, it was—we had—there was an ROTC building on the far end of campus. It had a marching field, and it had classrooms. We took these courses in, like I said, military history. And you sort of learned what the protocols were in the service. I don't know. I think the courses, you didn't get credit. You had to take them the first couple of years, and then when you were advanced, you had to take classes and stuff. But you didn't get credit, I don't believe, towards graduation, although you had to pass them in order to be commissioned as an officer going in. The movie that I always think of, though, some college fraternity movie that was actually supposedly based at Dartmouth.

ROEHM: Animal House.

BEAHAN: Yes! Oh my god. [laughter] I could watch it a million times. We all thought that that movie was made about our fraternity, actually. There was one guy in there that was—he was an ROTC guy, and he acted like he was already in the military, was riding big white horse or something like that. I think John Belushi shot something at the horse, to get him to—well, this guy was on him because everybody hated this guy, because he was a really hard ass, just bossing everybody around. I think they shot

something at the horse. The horse reared up, and I think took off. I don't remember whether the guy fell off or not.

It wasn't—I could see maybe in a few years after I left there, it might have been more like that, but, yeah, it wasn't—We kind of—you went off to your classes at that far end of campus with your uniform on, and then you took it off, and you were pretty much like any other student. We had a fraternity house. It's funny. I think it was cooler. It had a lot of cool guys that had a really good reputation just about the time that I joined, and then it sort of went downhill.

ROEHM: [laughter] No correlation.

BEAHAN: No, I know. I actually ended up being fraternity president, and it was really—I don't know. We didn't rush, we didn't get enough new people. We didn't really take care of business. One thing that was very apparent was there were all these secret robes and things like that, that you supposedly wore for fraternity meetings and things like that, when you discuss the business of the fraternity and maybe about rush and what we were going to do. I don't think I ever wore one of those. That was a little bit of a break from the past, for sure, that a lot of those kinds of traditions were really breaking down. In fact, my brother joined the fraternity a few years after I did, because he went to Penn State too. And they really—they actually were running around downtown State College [PA], which was the town where Penn State is, in their fraternity robes. Oh, it's just such sacrilege, it's unbelievable. All the things were sort of—the traditions were breaking apart. Now, I think it's largely because, you know, the Vietnam War, a lot of what was going on. And, yeah, maybe even things like racial tensions. Things were just in a little bit of upheaval. It was like the late '60s, early '70s. There was a lot of change going on.

ROEHM: Can you talk about why the Vietnam War, or sentiment around that, was breaking down the fraternity?

BEAHAN: I think it was, like a lot of things were—I think it was just a time of change. People weren't—like I went to college in a three-piece suit, and now we're talking about everybody wearing bell bottom jeans. Even in appearance and stuff like that. People were starting to smoke weed, a lot more than they did. When I went it was pretty much just drinking, but then that was changing. I just think there were a lot of things in society that were changing in general that contributed to the fraternity system also being—it was something you had to pay dues, the whole rituals of pledging and the things you had to go through to become a brother. I think people were rebelling against things like that. Not totally because—I think actually things did change so that even though those things existed they were not the same as they had been in years earlier in terms of the whole pledging.

In a way I really felt like rebelling, because I felt like what some of these brothers who would drink heavily and then harass the pledge class—I wanted to, like, wrestle them to the ground rather than kowtow to their demands, because it just seemed, not only silly, but, I mean, who were they to treat us that way? So maybe some of that was what was going on, as well as the war. I mean, there was just a lot of change in society in general, and certainly the way young people were thinking and deciding things about their future.

ROEHM: But you decided to become president!

BEAHAN: Yeah, I fell into this a lot in my life. I think that it just—I wanted the place to survive, the fraternity to survive, and so I felt like I could help it in that way. And I wasn't—yeah, that was probably the biggest thing, yes.

ROEHM: What was your transition like? Graduating, graduating the ROTC program, and then to Alabama?

BEAHAN: I think I wrote it down. I think it was—I graduated and literally nine days later, I had to report for duty at Maxwell Air Force Base, which was where the Air Force's Air University was. They had like a college type system that had courses for officers who had been in for a few years, but then they wanted them to be trained to move into more senior positions. There were a couple of schools like that at this base. So that's sort of what went on at this base.

But it was in Montgomery, Alabama, which like I said, I actually was in a barber shop getting a haircut in downtown Montgomery when George Wallace, who was a candidate and a couple of his cronies, I guess, a couple of his people who were working on his campaign, came in and just greeted me and said, "Oh, you're in the military. We appreciate that." I actually have some little pins from his campaign, from "Wallace for President," and a couple other things. I don't know, that was a pretty big change. When we went off-base in Montgomery, that whole thing was going on. On the base, it wasn't that much different from being in other places that I lived, growing up, and maybe even like on a college campus or something like that. Especially because the Air University was there.

I think the biggest change was all of a sudden, I felt like I was going into a squadron that was doing things like disciplining, and as an officer I was supposed to be disciplining enlisted men who had done something wrong. It might have been a fairly minor violation. They call these things Article Five. Basically, you get a written reprimand. It can be really harmful because it can keep you from getting promoted. It can have an impact on your career. Some people, they don't really care, because they're trying to get out of the service quickly as possible. But I felt as like this young—I

was only a 21, probably, year old, coming in and trying to enforce, things like that, on enlisted guys who are older than I was, and who was this young—I mean, they didn't really push it, because they would get a worse thing.

What was good though, is that—and I think this is what happens to a lot of young people just starting in service—you rely on some of the older guys who have been in for a long time. We had a guy named Emmett Morgan who was a senior master sergeant. He was one of the highest-ranking enlisted people in the Air Force at the time, and he had been in World War Two and Korea, so he was great. He would just take me as an officer under his wing and help me get through this kind of stuff and work it out. Counsel me. So that helped a lot.

Yeah, it was—the problem for me was that I had wanted to do something more interesting than what I just described, and more interesting than being an administrative officer. I wanted to be doing something that was where the action was. So I really—I think I mentioned I couldn't become a pilot, because I couldn't pass the eye test. So I heard—well, my fallback was, I thought the next best thing would to become an intelligence officer. So that's what I put in for. When I was in ROTC, I think you try to select areas that you'd like to be placed in. I didn't get into intelligence school because—it actually was a school—and they didn't have very many students going through it. That's what I hope was the reason why I didn't get in right away.

But after—I had to be at my first job for 18 months, and then I applied to go to intelligence school, which I did as soon as I could, and I was accepted. So my time in Montgomery was—I actually lived on base in a BOQ, Bachelor Officers Quarters, with some other guys who were just coming in, officers just coming in the Air Force. Then we moved off base, and the guys I lived with, we've been lifelong friends, actually. They all—one of them stayed in for a career, and the other three, I guess—one stayed in, then there's me, and then two more. They just served their three, four or five years, and got out like I did, went on to do other things. But, yeah, it was great. It wasn't—and then living with them, we had a lot of fun. We all had sports cars, actually. I don't know how that—I mean, I don't think students today, it's not any—

ROEHM: We don't have money for that. [laughter]

BEAHAN: Well I know. Well, I was out of school. But I mean, they were just—mine was a used Austin Healey 3000 which was like, god, if I had that car today, I'd be the coolest guy in Hanover [NH]. But anyhow, we were living the little life. So I got accepted to an intel [Intelligence] school. I could tell you more about that.

ROEHM: Taking a step back, your decision to go into the Air Force, and your decision to go into intelligence, too. Was that guided by your dad?

BEAHAN: Yeah, not really. He was in a different line of work. He was something called an Air Intercept Officer, which I think by the time that I got in the Air Force, there weren't really that many people doing that kind of work anymore. Because the airplanes had all their own radar and stuff like that. It used to be that there was a guy on the ground, and if they were trying to intercept a foreign aircraft coming in—it was all the Cold War. There was all this concern about Russia sending planes into Europe or somewhere like that. That's why a lot of those bases in Europe all had fighter squadrons with interceptors. So he worked on the ground, and then would match up an airplane with an airplane intruding into that space, and somehow, they would coordinate so that the good guy could go get the bad guy. Could you just repeat the—

ROEHM: Yeah. Your decision to go into intelligence—

BEAHAN: Yeah. It's funny because I think that I did, on my own, figure out that that was going to be the most interesting thing you could do in the Air Force, aside from being a pilot.

ROEHM: Why?

BEAHAN: Well, just because it was—you would go to places like—this is telling that when I went to intelligence school, everybody in my class, except for one, went to Vietnam. I think everybody wanted to go. Everybody wanted to be part of what the Air Force was really doing. And so that's the way I felt. If I wanted to be in for five years, I don't want to be some administrative officer at some base just doing paperwork. I wanted to be where the action was basically. That's why I wanted to do it. That was my thinking at the time. I think it proved to be true. I think I got interesting jobs as a result of being an intelligence officer.

ROEHM: When you were in Alabama, this was 1968? '69?

BEAHAN: Yes. I was there. I got my little [gestures to notes] It's funny because I graduated in '67 and I was in Montgomery until January '69 and then I went to intelligence school, which was—this is another reason why I wanted to be an intelligence officer. The school was in Denver, and then it was a six-month training program. It was in Denver, Colorado. As it turned out, the course was divided into two areas. One was briefing officer, so you would be gathering intelligence and trying to put it together in a way that you could brief the senior officers in your unit on what was going on, and then the other track—you had to do both tracks.

The other was photo interpretation. It was looking at photographs taken by reconnaissance aircraft. They had a number of different cameras on it, and they would—a lot of times during the war, after a bombing mission, they would send these other fighters that had cameras on them through the area. They could take pictures of what—like if you were supposed to blow up a surface-to-air missile site, then they would take pictures of whether you did that or not. And my job was—they come back, they develop all this film. And it wasn't digital. It was amazing. It was incredibly, incredibly detailed, because some of the film that they actually used is almost like an eight by ten big format camera. The actual negative was that big. When they printed it so that you could look at—actually we often looked at stuff through it, like a scope. I don't know that they were actually prints, not so much on photo paper, but you could look at it and it was in really high—it was very detailed. So that was the other track, was learning how to—a lot of it was learning how to identify the kinds of targets that these reconnaissance planes were going for. It could even be targets that hadn't been bombed. But just—okay, we think that there's a surface-to-air missile site down there. You look at the imagery of what we think was in this site and tell us. We had to know the configuration of different kinds of things. That's what the photo interpretation was. Then you had to be able to quickly write up reports in a certain format and get it to somebody who could say, okay, yeah, we should go after that target, because it's a threat to our forces. So anyhow.

ROEHM: Was there a track you preferred?

BEAHAN: I ended up doing both. And it turned—When I was at Udorn, [Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand], initially I was sort of a briefing officer. Even when I was flying in these airborne command posts, I always had to give a briefing before every mission about what was going on to the crew, actually. Then, actually, after I left Udorn, I joined a reconnaissance squadron, which was sort of what I described. It was these jet fighters that had a great tagline, that they were "alone, unarmed and unafraid", because they had no weapons or anything, they were flying into dangerous territory, and they were usually by themselves. They didn't always have an escort with them. So they had to get in, get the pictures, get out, and not get shot down. I got to do that job after the other, so I enjoyed both. I think I enjoyed the briefing or the airborne—being able to fly with a crew of a lot of other people in a combat zone, just by its nature, that was more interesting than the photo interpretation.

ROEHM: When you were in Alabama, in Colorado, what was the—was everyone there gearing up to go to Vietnam, and what were people talking about?

BEAHAN: Yeah, not necessarily in Alabama. I think that place is so strange. There seemed to be a lot of people stationed at Maxwell Air Force Base and in different organizations, not necessarily the one I was in, who were, like, from the south, really wanted to be in the south. There was this one guy. Their big interest was Alabama football.

ROEHM: Roll Tide!

BEAHAN: [laughter] There were these guys. I don't know how they were able to just stay in that one place for so long. This one guy, he knew every player that the University of Alabama was trying to recruit. I guess they weren't all from Alabama, but he knew all these high school players. There's still people like that, people that are really tied to their region, or their schools, or their teams. But anyhow, that place was different. I don't even remember anybody talking that much about the Vietnam War, because I think they felt like they weren't people that were doing things that would have contributed that much to what was going on in Vietnam. So they were sort of safe staying in Alabama, on this base in Alabama. Like I said, it was the Air Force's college, Air War College. Those guys might have been a little different, but I wasn't really around them that much. My job was just doing—literally, it's called a headquarters squadron. It didn't seem to have a really direct purpose other than just keeping everything going on base that was not tied to any kind of war effort or preparation or anything like that.

ROEHM: Interesting.

BEAHAN: Yeah. That's why I wanted to leave and go to Colorado.

ROEHM: I remember you saying something. There was this weird power balance of you being the one to yell at these older guys. Do you have any funny stories from that, or things you remember about that?

BEAHAN: I just remember it was a really uncomfortable trying to just—I think you would call them into your office, you'd have this thing written down, this Article 15. It was like, let's say, on one sheet of paper that described what they did and what the penalty was going to be. What I remember more about it was this old, crusty first sergeant just counseling to me about, how to do it, and don't get—don't let them push you around or anything like that. But yeah, he was great because he was like a southern gentleman too. He had good advice about—I mean, down there, and at that time, these guys played golf. That was sort of their level of engagement in what was going on.

Actually, a guy that got to be a good friend of mine was the adjutant. He was a lieutenant like me, but he worked for a general, and so he was the

general's right-hand man. If the general needed this or that, or needed things to be arranged, to go somewhere, do something, to meet with people, that's what this guy, Bill Eager [William G. Eager III], did. And this guy was like—he was perfect. First of all, he was from Georgia. Let me think of the name of the place. I'll think of it. But anyhow, he was a southerner. He went to a southern university. He was very young but dignified. His father, in their hometown, his father ran a big financial services business for people in town. So he grew up in sort of upper-class life, but his real talent was he was a scratch golfer. He would play golf with the general and even with this first sergeant. Sergeant, yeah.

So that's the kind of stuff that they were doing. I wasn't really into it. And I couldn't even get my—I couldn't integrate myself into that thing anyhow, because these people were perfectly suited for it and I was—I had played rugby, and that doesn't go that well with golf, actually. It was a very kind of—it wasn't a war effort going on down there at that time. But it was interesting. It's different from what—although I had lived in Florida and I lived in the south when I was growing up, so I could sort of understand it. It was a good life for them. That was their good life, and I was looking for something a little different.

ROEHM: Was it any different in Colorado? Were more people—

BEAHAN: Well Colorado was great because we lived in like a—we didn't live on base. It seemed like we lived in an apartment building off base. I was there in the winter, and we went skiing every weekend at a different ski area. I went to Snowmass [Ski Resort, Colorado] and Aspen [Ski Resort, Colorado]. There are a lot more now than there were then, but it was also a lot easier to get to them, because now you can't even—to go from Denver to a big ski area, the traffic is so bad, because they're all up in the mountains and you have to get to the first one and then get to the other ones. Anyhow, it was a very sort of relaxed—we couldn't do any Air Force stuff on weekends because all of our training and schooling—it was actually a six-month program too. So I had time to adjust to life in Denver, which was really great. But all of the stuff we dealt with was classified, so you couldn't get access to it on the weekend anyhow, like you couldn't do any homework on the weekend. So you had to go skiing. It was great. It was such a change from Alabama, and it was just a lot of fun. We just did the coursework. I think all the instructors were—it was interesting.

The photo stuff was all new to us. And even the briefing. Briefings had to be kind of formalized, just kind of like you're doing an interview. You had to learn the ropes, how to do it, how to stand up straight and deliver your message. Just little pointers. We had one guy who was really good about—you look sharp, and you act sharp, and you maybe be sharp. Most of the time, we went to school during the week, and then our weekend is

almost like we were civilians. We did probably travel together to these ski areas just because those are the people we knew, although we did get to know other people in our apartment building. In fact, it was really close to—the old airport in Denver used to be called Stapleton. Stapleton Airport that was on one far end of the town. Now it's way outside of town. There were actually a lot of flight attendants who lived in our building too. So we had friends as a result of that, too, which was a nice environment. And, yeah, it wasn't—the military part just sort of went away on weekends.

ROEHM: Where was your dad during this? Was he in Vietnam?

BEAHAN: Let's see. He was actually in Vietnam when I was in college. So by the time I got through Montgomery and out to Denver, he was—he pretty much retired about a year after he came back from Vietnam, because I mean he started in the Air Force—it was actually Army Air Corps—in 1940 so by almost 1970 he had served more than 20 years.

ROEHM: An incredible career.

BEAHAN: And actually, he—I talked about my advanced ROTC. After he came back from World War II in 1945, he got married to my mom, who was not his high school girlfriend, but a high school classmate. He came back on leave, and they sort of got to know each other, and they corresponded a lot. He knew her—they knew each other in high school. When he got out of the military after World War II, they got married. I was born a year later, then he went to Syracuse University on the GI Bill. So he was actually out of the military. He went to a great—he got a BA degree, and then he was working on a master's degree when he was recalled, called back into the military for the Korean War. So then once he did that, he just stayed in. By the time I was in Denver, he pretty much had finished his—he was winding up his career after Vietnam. He might have had another year or so, and then he was out because he had been in for 20, 28 years or something.

ROEHM: How was his experience in Vietnam and what did he tell you about it? How did it affect you, do you think, at that time?

BEAHAN: Yeah, I actually have a lot of letters he wrote home to my mom, which I haven't really read that many. But he had a job that was similar to the job that I ended up having at Udorn. Earlier, like I said. It was, I think four years before that, and he wouldn't take—he said he couldn't tell us what he did. Actually I just—he was this air intercept person, but he was flying in the back end of a C-130, like the one that I flew in over Laos, but it was configured a little bit differently. And as he described it—some of the stuff it kind of came out because I had a cousin who interviewed him about what he did, just like we're doing now, what he did in Vietnam. And he said—well, they brought these airplanes in from—I guess it was Yokota

Air Base in Japan. They would land at Da Nang, where he was, which is way up north in [South] Vietnam, and then he would get on board and there would already be some people on board.

Anyhow. I've figured out actually, just in the last couple of months, because I've been working on sort of a memoir, a memoir about my dad, which he always said he would write, but never did, although he was a very literate person. After he got out of the Air Force, he went to work for a newspaper, and was a really—was writing every day at some point, because he became the arts and entertainment editor for the paper. He was still pretty tight lipped about it, but some of this—a lot of this information about what people were doing during that time that was supposedly highly classified has been declassified. And I think it was actually a mission where they had a lot of people that they might not necessarily been in the Air Force, but they were in some branch of the government that were language specialists. So they were actually language specialists, and he talked about these Ivy League guys on board because they were listening to communications in Vietnamese from China, which is really close by. Was it just those two? And maybe even Russian, because they were trying to figure out and make sure that they weren't planning—well, they would then take some of that information, and this is where he got involved. If they heard—if they were able to decipher that there were going to be enemy aircraft up in the area from one of these countries, they could relay that to the American pilots who might be flying missions over North Vietnam.

So I think that's what was the nature of what he was doing. Like me, I think he really enjoyed that, since he hadn't really had a flying job before in that he was flying, that he was really in a very kind of important position for what he was doing. I mean, again, he probably felt like I did. He couldn't be a pilot either because of his eyesight. If you couldn't do that, then this other kind of work was interesting, and for him, I think, very stimulating. I think he felt like he was making a contribution to what was going on. So that's what he was doing. It's funny, because—God, he was just like me. When I first went to Southeast Asia, I was supposed to be at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon, which was the headquarters for all Air Force activities. And the same thing happened to him. He was sent there. But then not very long after he was there, he went to Da Nang, and then got this flying job, just like I was actually in Saigon for only—I think it was like three days and then I got orders that sent me to Udorn. Our paths were similar, but it wasn't that I was trying to follow what he did. But, you know, as these opportunities came up and they looked interesting to me, I took it and he had done the same thing.

ROEHM: Were you, when you were wrapping up at Colorado, assuming that you're getting ready to go over to Southeast Asia, were you nervous at all? What

was your—or were you excited to end the schooling and kind of follow in the footsteps?

BEAHAN: It's such a great question, because when I—so I'm living the dream in Colorado. Skiing, everything. There's no real pressure. I think the school went well. I did well, and I knew that I was probably—and I wanted to go, to be involved in the Vietnam War. So when I got to Saigon—again, I'm pretty young, wet behind the ears. When I got off the plane in Saigon. I don't know if you ever seen the movie Apocalypse Now? It's an incredible war movie. But there was so much going on there. I remember writing something about that when I got off the plane, first I got hit with this hot, humid air. And you're climbing down, you're out on the flight line, and there are helicopters flying, airplanes flying in and out. The smell of—everybody's being refueled to the airplanes, the helicopters. The smell of, it's not gasoline, but this flight fuel is really pungent. There were army guys riding around in jeeps with guns and machine guns on them and everything, and so yeah. I was a little freaked. I felt—I was scared, I think. Because it was—talk about the difference in from where I had been in an air-conditioned classroom in Colorado and had great weekends and stuff like that, living almost like a civilian life, and then literally, within a few days, here you are, and it's like, okay, wow. I hope I'm ready for this.

But I got bailed out, you know. I got the orders then to go to Thailand, which we had talked about. I had thought that it was an R&R [Rest and Recreation] site, and I did discover that it wasn't a formal R&R site, but it was literally like—for me, it was like being on R&R. There were some people who could arrange to come to the base from either Marines or Army or something like that. It was like R&R because it was safe. It was safe and it was just like there was—you could go into town. That was safe as well. There were bars, there were women, there was drinking. It was like R&R. I mean, that's kind of why you want to go on R&R, unless you were married and going to go meet your wife or something. Definitely that transition was—it's funny, because it's a little bit like going from Denver to Vietnam was a little bit like going the other—going to Montgomery, Alabama. It was a little bit of a different world. Although I was going to say, you couldn't get shot. You could get shot if you were—yes, it was a big change. I was nervous. I felt like—am I prepared for this? And then, boom, I got reassigned. Just out of the blue. It wasn't like anything had been arranged. I think they just needed another briefing officer in Udorn at the time, and that's where I went. So it was a blessing.

ROEHM: Did you—what did you expect going in—landing in Saigon, correct?—to be doing, or did you not—did you know that you would not know?

BEAHAN: No, I was going to be a briefing officer. Basically I was going to be—and I think there were a lot of different Air Force groups there, and I would be a

person who would, again—maybe I'd be briefing on the situation in Thailand and Laos, for example, because it was sort of the headquarters. And that friend of mine from college, whose dad was an Air Force colonel, and now is a general. [General] George [Kunkel] Sykes was the head of Air Force Intelligence in all of Southeast Asia. I might have been briefing him and his—well, he was the head, but his group. Or his—he was the commander. His underlings. So that's what I probably would have ended up doing, which could have been really interesting. And Saigon was an interesting place. I mean, they were—one thing I do remember taking notes on at some point was that there were hotels and there were journalists. Big time journalists who were writing about the Vietnam War, who were staying there, living there. There was a whole community of people just trying to figure out or reporting on and writing about the Vietnam War, because that was the headquarters for a lot of—I don't think it was just the Air Force, I think for maybe all the forces in Vietnam.

But I still think it would have been intimidating. I still think I was young, and I felt like, okay, I've been through school, but hey, I got no experience, and here I am in a war zone. Although it was pretty safe. I think there were some minor attacks on Saigon, on Ton Son Nhut [Air Base] in Saigon, but it wasn't considered to be a really dangerous place to be.

ROEHM: Did you feel more prepared than other people coming in with 18 months in Alabama and then six in Colorado? Or did you still just feel like it was totally new?

BEAHAN: I think I still felt like whatever experience I had was kind of like classroom experience, and this was like the real world. Yeah, one thing that—and I think there would be a distinction, because some people—like at intelligence school, for example, there might have been some people who had been—I'm saying there's some that might have been, I think there definitely were a couple of guys who had been in the service in a different capacity, and then they wanted to become—because the school in Denver also trained people. The Navy used the Air Force School because they had a big flying program too, and photo interpretation and briefing. So there were a couple of guys I remember, and I think maybe one guy was in the Navy, Marines, and I don't know if there were any Air Force—I don't think so many of the Air Force guys had prior experience. I think most of them were, like me, pretty new, young lieutenants. But yeah, these older guys who had been in the military in some other capacity, they certainly would have—it would have been different for them going to Vietnam. They would have been much more—less intimidated. I'm sure. They may have even been in other combat areas. But most of the guys in the school—it's funny. I was just looking at a list of our whole class, and most of them were really pretty young guys. Some were married, most were bachelors, virtually all lieutenants. And the one guy, I think I said, who didn't go to

Vietnam, was Russian. And he spoke Russian, and so he went to a special language school, which would have—he may know the language, but it would be so that he could do the Russian military—he would be working with people who are trying to figure out what—because he could speak the language—what the Russians were up to.

ROEHM: Yeah. You said that Udorn was a blessing.

BEAHAN: For sure, yeah. I lived in a BOQ when I first got there. Just little wood-frame places. They weren't bad. It wasn't bad. But then I found a couple of other guys to share rooms with in town. That's what I did, and it was great. The food was interesting. I don't know. There was a dichotomy of—there was still a lot going on the base, in terms of the officer's club. Like our squadron, there were always—anybody who was leaving to go back to the States, let's say, there would be these champagne breakfasts. There would be going away parties. Since we were flying at night, we'd come. A lot of times we'd just come home and go to the officer's club and have breakfast. Again, sometimes to celebrate something. But then there was the whole town. There was nightlife there. It was kind of interesting food. They actually had steak houses and things like that where you can go and you could eat. So it was very civilized, for sure. Maybe it was like—I don't know. Once again, once I started doing the flying job, it was just great. There was a lot of camaraderie because we were all in the same squadron. Most of us—everybody would fly every third night, because you couldn't fly every night. And there were like three crews that flew at night. And so you wouldn't always fly with the same guys, but often you would. I remember there was one big celebration when the colonel who was the head of our squadron, which is called Alleycat. Where's my patch? You can see here somewhere [gestures to Alleycat patch on his jacket].

ROEHM: Nice!

BEAHAN: Anyhow, there was a big celebration off-base for him because he was a full colonel and pretty respected. It's funny, though, these guys. They were in charge, but it seemed like the rest of us were doing a lot of the work. I guess they were just making sure that everything went smoothly. I mean, they didn't seem to have real day to day—maybe they had to make sure that all the people in the squadron were behaving. If there were any issues, they had to deal with personnel, stuff like that. They certainly were briefed every day on what was going on. I think they had a pretty good life, for sure. Big parties for them off-base. One of the guys in the squadron actually was from a place that knew how to roast pigs [laughter] and so we had this roast pig and lots of champagne. And then there was teak, which was accessible in Thailand, and there was a lot of furniture, little knickknacks, and bowls.

ROEHM: Teak wood?

BEAHAN: Yeah, teak wood, sorry. They started getting an alley cat, an actual alley cat carved out of teak. At these big going away parties you might get—you'd be given—I don't know if I ever got one. I might have. Anyhow, stuff like that. It was all in good fun.

Actually, there was a lot of camaraderie, and it wasn't really super dangerous. We had really good pilots. The most dangerous part of it was, that to be able to fly for 12 hours, you had to really carry a lot of fuel. And these planes were specially modified so that they had these tip tanks on the wings that provided—first you fill up the whole wherever the fuel compartment was on the fuselage, but then you had these other tanks. The takeoffs were always a little hairy because it was like a 10,000-foot runway, which is really long, but we would just barely get off the ground at the end, and you'd be just hovering over trees and trying to gain altitude, because you had to burn off enough fuel to really be able to climb up. And then we fly for like 100 miles north of the base in a big orbit at about 35,000 feet, which meant we were out of range of most anything that could be shot at us from the ground.

ROEHM: How did you get into this particular operation? Because I know there was —was a great story.

BEAHAN: Yeah, there was a story. After I got reassigned from Saigon, I became a briefing—again I must have been the youngest guy, because I knew some other guys who—but they had been there for a while. I was the new guy on the block and briefing the commander and staff at Udorn. I was working for a full colonel. I'll tell you, I wasn't really all that good at it, I didn't think. I think I was a little nervous about all of that was going on, and maybe not that confident. I could do the briefings, but I was nervous and maybe some of that showed. My boss was not all that impressed with me, and I wasn't all happy about it. I wasn't crazy about what I was doing. I heard, after I'd been doing this for about a month, that there were intelligence officers who were actually flying, you know, in this—there were actually four different squadrons, because there were two that were flying in Southern Laos and two that were flying in Northern Laos. And one was flying during the day, and one was flying at night in each region. There were quite a few people involved in that. But anyhow, there was an opening in the Alleycat squadron for an intelligence officer. Also, on every flight there was an intelligence officer and there was an intelligence enlisted man. You needed two people, because if you were flying for at least 12 hours, you couldn't really stay up the whole time. You switch off. I would usually—the officer would usually take the early part of the evening when there was more activity going on, and then you could sleep in your—actually, I didn't make a copy of this picture, because I think it makes it look kind of silly.

But that's on the plane. [points to photo] Yeah, that's on the plane, and that's the capsule. We're all in the back end of the plane. I was here, and there was another intelligence guy maybe next to me. The commander was all the way up front there, and he had an assistant. And then there was radio operators maybe over there. But anyhow.

ROEHM: Great photo.

BEAHAN: But see, it makes me look like I'm not really—I think it was kind of a joke at the time, so maybe I don't want to have it live beyond your knowledge. [laughter] I'd work probably for eight hours or a number of hours during the night. That's usually early in the evening, when stuff was going on, and then the enlisted—then I could just go. I just slept, I guess, in our chairs. Or you could—I think I actually—we were at the back of this capsule so we could sleep on the floor back there too. I think we did that. The story part of it is that, since I wasn't that crazy about what I was doing, this briefing job and everything, and I heard there was an opening, and I knew that General Sykes, who knew me from—his son and I were fraternity brothers. I knew I was pushing it, but somehow, I guess I just called him and I asked. I told him what I was doing, but there was this flying job, and it was a combat job, and they had an opening for an intelligence officer, and was there anything he could do to help me. I don't think I sort of said it like that. I think—I would like to get that job. He said, "well, somebody's got to have it. I don't know, why not you?"

The next day I got the word that I had been reassigned to that job. Not only did I learn about it, but my boss learned about it, and he was really pissed off. As if I really cared. He came in and said—I think by that time, I was a Lieutenant—"Lieutenant Beahan, I hope you don't think you can operate at the one-star level". Because he was talking about—I was breaking the chain of command, and that was not good. "You're getting away with it this time, but only because you have friends in high places." So he was—but you know what? I don't even know if I ever saw that guy again. But again, I was really fortunate because the job was so much more interesting. I liked it. I got along with everybody. I felt like that it was an important thing to be doing also. And it was no small thing that you got additional pay. I think you get flight pay plus comb—if you were at a flying job, even as a crew member, not as a pilot, you get extra pay. And if that flying was in a combat zone, then you'd get combat pay too. So hey, who wouldn't want to get that, do that? It was a lucky break for me that I knew General Sykes.

ROEHM: Did you feel—I don't know if this is the right word, but guilty at all by doing that? Or—

BEAHAN: No, I felt—

ROEHM: Empowered?

BEAHAN: Yeah. I felt like I agreed. Why not me? I want the job. I want to do a good job with these guys, and I want to be part of something that's more directly involved in what the Air Force is doing over there. So, yeah, no. I didn't feel guilty. I felt lucky.

ROEHM: So what did you—we've talked about it a little bit—what did you actually do on board in the back of the plane?

BEAHAN: Yeah. I got information, intelligence information before we took off, before every flight. As I said, I would look at that and say, okay, it looks—first of all I'd look at that and see what was going on up in the area that we were flying. We always flew in the same area in Northern Laos. There was another airplane that did the same thing, during the daytime in Northern Laos, and flew in the exact same orbit and everything. It's just different hours. Then in the south, there was two other airplanes that were flying and actually involved with the Ho Chi Minh trail. It was mostly about North Vietnamese trying to get troops and supplies and things like that through Laos and into South Vietnam to fight the South Vietnamese and Americans for that matter. The intelligence guys had to—just for our area in the north—get information every day about what was going on and do a briefing. In that briefing, you always had sort of a sense of—and the other people you were briefing, like the commander for that night's flight and everything. You'd have a sense of how many aircraft were going to be coming up to provide air support for the guys on the ground up there.

These weren't Americans on the ground. They were all Laotians, really. Laotian army. You kind of got a sense of the North Vietnamese during the dry season were pushing way down, further into Laos. During the rainy season, which was like six months of the year, they couldn't get their equipment, they couldn't get their supplies, their guns in. Then they were able to be pushed back, or they retreated because they couldn't operate during the rainy season as easily. They're taking all that stuff into consideration, and then having some sense of what were the important strongholds. There were all these little—they were called Lima sites. They were places where the friendly troops were, basically. They were places that were able to be resupplied. So the site part of it was—this is where I don't know—did you read about the CIA and everything? Air America, CIA?

ROEHM: Yeah.

BEAHAN: They did all the resupply stuff up to these Lima sites with let's say ammunition, food and everything, and so some Lima sites in some areas

were more important to hold on to than others. My job was then to suggest that, okay, if we have air support tonight, like we have all these airplanes that might be coming from Udorn. Fighter jets, they might be coming from actually South Vietnam over into Laos. Some even came off carriers from the Navy early in the time I was there to provide air support. I would get some sense of how many of those and what kind of aircraft were available, what was going on on the ground, and where we would want to send those aircraft during the night to help out. So anyhow. That was the preliminary part of it. The commander for that thing would also have a sense of what was going on. He might say "okay, yeah, but I think from what I'm hearing we should be supporting these guys."

Then once we got airborne, I would be talking to what were called forward air guides. They were actually Thai. I thought they were like mercenaries. They were Thai soldiers, let's say, who were trained to be able to talk to—to call in airstrikes, first of all, and talk to me and give me the information about what was going on in their area. They were like one guy with this group of soldiers, let's say, that would communicate with the airborne command post, because that's how they would get air support that night. They would say things like—they would call "Alleycat, Alleycat, I have TIC, I have TIC, troops in contact. I need help. I need Spooky." Spooky was one of their favorites, because it was an airplane that had—it was an old like World War Two airplane that they had configured so it had machine guns that they could fire down on—They could fly around like we were flying around, except they were able to shoot. They only had machine cannons, but they could be up there for an hour, maybe two hours. Whereas a lot of other air support, they come in, they could drop a bomb, napalm, or something like that, and then they'd be gone. These more sophisticated jets, they'd run out of fuel, they'd be gone. But something like this Spooky could be there and support these guys for a long time. The person on the ground, a guy that I talked to a lot, his call sign was Hilltop. Hilltop would say, "Okay, I need Spooky. I need Spooky." Towards the end of the time that I was there, it went from being U.S. pilots flying that Spooky to the Laotian pilots. They were being trained too, and then they actually gave the airplanes to them so they could support themselves.

My job then at that point was to—If I had a number of people calling me, I was sort of supposed to know what the priorities were. How many, how much air support we had, and then recommend to the commander on board where they should be sent. That's pretty much in a nutshell what we were doing. It was to assess the situation and have a good sense of it from the intelligence we were getting before the mission. Understand what—also, sometimes some of the forward air guides were less reliable in what they communicated than others. They might say they had troops in contact all the time when they really maybe didn't, or if they did, it wasn't

as bad as they might be portraying, because they were trying to get support. There was the judgment part of it that was somewhat—and so I wasn't making final decisions, but I was to get the information from the forward air guide and then talk to the commander on board and say okay, this is what I think we should do with the resources that we have coming up tonight.

ROEHM: Did you ever deal with particularly complex situations? Were people ever calling you in disaster situations?

BEAHAN: Troops in contact could have been pretty disastrous, really, because that meant that the guys that they were with, let's say, at that Lima Site were under attack, and they really needed help. Then you just had to try to do the best you could. Maybe it would be that we could try to divert. If some airplanes we thought were going to really support this group over here, we would say, no, look, these guys really need it. They're being overrun. Then it might be taking an airplane that was well suited to supporting them, moving it to where they were.

Then it'd be a thing like—then that forward air guy would actually start talking direct—if the Spooky did come over, he would then start giving him—either marking the target—sometimes they would have flares and they would send them into an area. Okay, here's where these guys are. Or they would give the pilots on the planes, because now they're talking directly to the pilot of the Spooky, give them coordinates of where. Because they might not be able to really see the coordinates of where the enemy was. Yeah, there was some of that. I don't know, there was one thing that all—not one incident.

There was one incident that did start making me think about what I was doing. It was this one pilot. I had run into some guys like him. They're old, kind of crusty guys. They probably hadn't been promoted that high. But he was flying another really good airplane. It was a prop airplane from the Korean War era. It could carry a lot. It had a setup like the Spooky. It had a really good quote hang time. It could stay in the area for a while, but it also carried a lot. It could carry bombs. It could carry napalm. It could carry—it had cannons. It had guns. They were a big favorite of the forward air guides, too. But this one guy, he got called in for a strike. And I guess the forward air guide marked where the target was. He said, "Okay, I'm going to come in and drop napalm on him." And so that's what he did. Napalm. Are you familiar with it?

ROEHM: Yeah.

BEAHAN: They said, "how was that Hilltop? Crispy critters." It was just like, man, this is just not—I mean war is hell, but this is—you know. There was stuff like

that. I've started reading a little bit about it. Sometimes people may have said that to protect themselves from, you know—

ROEHM: Distance—

BEAHAN: Right. Definitely distancing themselves. That's when you started to reflect on what you're really doing. And then also during the time I was there they started using B-52s which were these huge bombers that could—it's like they could drop a—they came at this time from a base in Thailand. When they were deployed to Vietnam, they often would fly from the Philippines. They would fly for hours and hours. But they could drop streams of bombs over an area almost a mile and a half long and half a mile wide. Just a stream of bombs like that.

As it turned out—this is something I found: “When we left the war in Laos the US had dropped an estimated two million tons of bombs over the course of the war. More than the Allied Forces had dropped on Germany and Japan combined in World War Two.” So it's the scale and then there were also a lot of cluster bombs that had been dropped in Laos. After we left, and they finally—the North Vietnamese, actually, as they took over South Vietnam, also took over Laos in like 1975. For years and years after that, there was just all this unexploded ordinance that was still there, and cluster bombs too. You read about all the time now that the kids find them and get maimed or killed, because they're still there. You have to think about what you really accomplished during this time. Wasn't all about you having an interesting job, you know?

ROEHM: Yeah. Real consequences.

BEAHAN: Yes.

[Brief break in interview.]

ROEHM: All right, we are back after a short break. Something I'd like to know, that we haven't quite touched on yet. I was able to do some research on the background of US intervention in Laos and the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and also what was going on in your region. How much did you know about, on a macro scale, what was going on, what were you doing, how it was connected to the Laotian government? I'd love to know more about that.

BEAHAN: I think before actually arriving, or being on the ground there, I don't think I knew much at all about it. Since it seemed like most people were, like people in the intel school, all going to some place in Vietnam. I think even in our studies for briefing officer, how do you evaluate this intelligence and stuff like that, it would have been mostly all related to South Vietnam. The war in Laos, even at that time was called like the secret war. We weren't

supposed to know. Americans weren't supposed to know that much. I think other intelligence people certainly knew, but somebody coming right out of intel school might not know that much about it. It was all kind of new to me. You mentioned the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We would have known more about stuff going on in southern Laos and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail than what was going on up north, around the Plain—it's Plain Des Jarres, but Plain of Jars is what—I don't find sort of the French spelling much anymore. I didn't really know that much about it, and historically, boy, probably even less about Laos, and not that much about Thailand's involvement.

Where I was at Udorn was actually where—at least in Thailand—is where Air America, the CIA based airline and everything was. They had a big unit at the far end of the runway at Udorn, but they really kept to themselves. They had their own base and they're doing all their own stuff. They didn't come to the officer's club. They had a hotel, a pretty fancy hotel where some of their guys would stay from time to time in downtown Udorn. We were kind of told they don't want to talk to you. It was mostly just because it was supposedly—nobody was supposed to know about what they were doing. We understood that. It's funny because there were Air Force people involved in their activities up in around the Plain of Jars and some of these Lima Sites and things, but they actually were not uniformed. They almost had to depart from being in the Air Force to do the work they did. They trained Laotian pilots to fly, again these prop planes, T-28s, which were pretty effective in providing air support during the day at least, up there with helicopters. I think they were involved in helping to train these Forward Air Guides too. Again, we didn't know what all was going on there, but I learned more and more as the war went on. There were some guys who were actually—this one intelligence officer that I knew, like plain clothes. He never wore a uniform. And there was another guy like him who was Air Force Intelligence, but he was always in civilian clothes. They were working closely with these CIA guys, but it was always—they didn't talk about what they did, and they didn't want you asking anything about what they did, either. We just learned as we were there about what was going on and how we were, at least from strictly Air Force resources, supporting it. It was interesting because you know, wow, this is all pretty wild. And then you learn even more about it certainly after you leave and things start to get declassified, and people start talking about it more. But maybe even most of that was after the war.

ROEHM: At the time, did you feel like you were there to support the Vietnam—like as a parallel to what was happening over there?

BEAHAN: Yeah, because I think that the party line was—what was going on was the North Vietnamese, and what was called the Pathet Lao, which they were Laotians, but they were communist Laotians. They were directly trying to

support the war in Vietnam by moving stuff from North Vietnam—well, actually, yeah, maybe taking over Laos and then opening up their Ho Chi Minh Trail and things like that so that they could better supply. It was all just kind of the North moving south and they moved into Laos as well as Vietnam to help that goal.

ROEHM: Did you feel like you had to be secretive about what was going on to your family? Was there official rules?

BEAHAN: Yeah, I think so, I think that we didn't really— it's funny, because I remember when—I mentioned that I had letters that my dad wrote home from Vietnam to my mom and really the boys, sometimes, too from Vietnam and didn't talk much about it. But boy, where we really knew about that was that I also had all the letters he sent home to his family and his parents, actually, from World War Two. And those were strictly censored. You couldn't tell people—his thing would start out, for example, from somewhere in the South Pacific. That's about as specific as he could get about it. If he talked about anything, it was just, it's a hot day. We fired—we're headed to this island or this island or this island. Not any real details about what was going on. I think we were told the same. We had the same restrictions. But what was kind of humorous was that being in intelligence, most of the stuff that we saw—if I got, you know, a paper with intelligence information on it, it was secret. And a lot of times we would read the Bangkok Times the next day and find out exactly what had happened. Like we couldn't talk about because it was secret, but the newspaper was somehow getting the information about attacks, or the North Vietnamese moving south, taking over the Plain of Jars, things like that. But we couldn't really talk about it. There was some—I had an intelligence friend who, and I don't know if it was about the incursion into Cambodia, but there was something that the military tried to make him reveal—or say that sites were bombed. But you couldn't—you had to lie about what was really going on, I guess is what I'm saying. He was somebody who—actually, I don't know what happened, but he was trying to resist this. He said, "No, I can't do this." I don't know exactly what happened to him. So,yeah. There was definitely a lot of—we weren't supposed to talk about things.

ROEHM: How much did you know about what was going on in mainland Vietnam and that war in itself?

BEAHAN: You know, only big things like the Tet Offensive or things like that. There were so many points of battle, I guess. It would have been really hard for us to keep up. I think that we were pretty busy just doing Northern Laos, actually. I'm sure that people—colonels and generals—were maybe much more informed about that stuff. But I don't feel like I really was.

ROEHM: Yeah. You were talking about the seasonal nature of pushing through the Plain of Jars, and then coming back. Did it feel, when you were there, that there was like a theme of, oh, things are going well, things are progressing, or things are not? They're getting worse?

BEAHAN: I think that there was some skepticism about it, that people sort of—it seemed like after you had been there for a while, it seemed people might—I mean, even the people above me or whatever might be saying something, but we might have gotten a little bit callous and thought, oh yeah, well, okay. Here it goes again. But we know that they're going to push in the dry season and get pushed back in the in the wet season. But it actually started getting worse. I mean, they took over more territory maybe every few months. I can't really say years, because I wasn't really there years, but it got—yeah, and after I left or whatever, it got worse. We might have been told to be more optimistic than what turned out to actually happen.

ROEHM: How were you feeling? Were you feeling—

BEAHAN: I wasn't as skeptical, I guess, as some people were. I think in the end, they were probably more accurate. That what we were being told was more optimistic than what was really happening.

ROEHM: Going back to life at Udorn, you've talked a little bit about the atmosphere of that. How do you think it was different than maybe what was going on in Vietnam? Did you have a sense that you were having kind of a unique experience?

BEAHAN: I think so for sure. I think, my god, of all the guys who were really on the ground in Vietnam and in the bush. They had their little strongholds or whatever, but it was mostly just guys trying to survive mortar attacks, being shot at or getting shot, going through the jungle and everything. Where we were was nothing like that.

There were a few—gosh, this is kind of like the difference—There was a tragedy that happened at Udorn when I was there. It was an airplane that had been shot up after a mission in Northern Laos. The pilots tried to bring it back to Udorn and land and as they were making an approach they were—actually I and some other guys, we were getting ready to get on our airplane to fly that night. We were out at the end of the runway and we could sort of witness this whole thing. The airplane just became very unstable as it was trying to land, and at one point—there was a pilot and then a co-pilot. They ejected, so they bailed out, but the airplane then just became totally out of control over the base and crashed into the—it sounds sort of amusing, but it wasn't. It wasn't at all. There was actually a radio station, like Armed Forces Radio on the base. It crashed into their

building and killed like five or six people. Just it blew up and these people were all killed.

It was like such a freak thing. So you weren't totally—there was always some threat that something could go wrong. Like our airplane, sometimes we would lose an engine. In a four-engine plane, you could usually—well, if you lost an engine taking off, I think our maintenance guy said you could still somehow get off the ground. But if you lost two engines, you couldn't. You could lose one engine while you were flying in your orbit, and you could get back to the base safely because they had enough power and aerodynamics to survive something like that. But there were things that could go wrong and fortunately they didn't in any of our squadrons. While I was there, I don't think one of those planes ever crashed, actually, which was a miracle.

What was the real point? Just that it was just so much different, our day-to-day life and threats to us as compared to what was going on with foot soldiers and even some air bases in Vietnam. They were getting attacked with mortar attacks and everything. We were just sort of in a safe zone. We weren't subjected to that. That made our whole situation very different from others. It was sort of hard to—you could say you're a Vietnam veteran and you did this and that, but I don't really like to, you know. Certainly I don't push it too much because I don't feel like—I mean, I served my time and it was in a combat zone, but compared to what other people were experiencing, I'm not going to be waving the flag around too much about what I did.

ROEHM: Yeah, I understand that. So you said there was kind of a mix of people at Udorn. How much interaction did you get with both Thai people, Thai locals, Thai pilots? Laotian pilots? I don't know if they—what was the mix?

BEAHAN: Well the big mix was for a lot of people at the various clubs like the enlisted man's club or officer's club where there were Thai women who were waitresses and servers. I actually had a Thai girlfriend, who was a waitress at the officer's club. We lived together in this place downtown for, not the whole time I was there, but the last probably six months at least. And, I mean, it was great. I don't know if that's fair to be—were we mixing intellectually? [laughter] I don't know. We took a few trips around Thailand together. We didn't really stay together after I left. I think it was an understanding that that was going to be the case. But I think it for a lot of those Thai women, they would have preferred a different outcome.

Although there were guys who actually did marry Thai women and took them back to the states. There were guys who came back to Thailand, I think, after they got out of the service and ended up with Thai women, probably women who had often worked on a base or something like that.

These were not prostitutes, really. There were in town. There were houses of prostitution, and everybody understood it. It was I guess accepted. It wasn't—everybody knew what was going on. It wasn't, I mean, it was kind of—yeah. As far as mixing more with—no, there wasn't really that much of it. It was all just like in restaurants and things like that, but not on any real meaningful level for them and us. Maybe we were taking advantage of probably whatever was going on and not—we weren't really too invested in improving the lives of the local populace. Yeah, that's sort of the way it was.

ROEHM: There to do your job.

BEAHAN: Well, yeah, I know. But I mean it is still in a way, taking advantage. The rich Americans or whatever—privileged Americans coming into a situation like that, where that's sort of how they behaved. I think I told you when we were talking about some of this. There were guys who were more senior than I was. One of them actually married a Thai. He asked me to be part of a wedding ceremony with a Thai woman, with me knowing full well that he was married and had a family back in the States. I didn't really—I never really—I did it, but I never, because I sort of liked the guy, but I just never understood what that arrangement was all about. I don't know. He might have felt like he was contributing to her wellbeing, not necessarily marrying her, but maybe he was providing some financial support or something. But this guy had been—he was a major. He had taught at the Air Force Academy. It just seemed pretty odd to me. And actually, one of our squadron commanders, too, he had a Thai girlfriend, and I know he was married. I don't know. That was just like a strange relationship, because, as the commander, I didn't think you would want to put yourself in that kind of light. Everybody was just hands off. It's like this guy was—that woman in a normal situation would not have chosen that guy I think to be with, yeah.

ROEHM: So in some ways, maybe you felt like, or the general vibe was, that the rules didn't apply. Do you think in other ways, other than in love and stuff like that, that there was different ways of operating, or social norms?

BEAHAN: I don't think—there wasn't a lot of, I don't know, abusive behavior that I ever witnessed. I think I felt like there was sort of an understanding by both parties of what was going on, and that I'm going to do this because maybe it will help me out financially in the long run. Or will, for whatever reasons. Maybe I'm trying to—I don't really want to try to justify it, but there weren't fights and there weren't shootings and stuff like that. So I think there was a general understanding what was going on. And I think sometimes people did provide financial support for a woman, let's say, and her family, extended family, and stuff like that, which maybe—yeah.

ROEHM: You said there was a lot of camaraderie, on your team, and on the base. On the other hand, was there any kind of maybe political or power or racial or any sort of conflict in that way as well?

BEAHAN: No, I don't think so, no. I think everybody, even among officers and enlisted men—it seemed like we were a crew. We all—I mean, they did stuff for us, we did stuff for them in terms of just the job and everything. We had a mission. We all pulled together to do it. Yeah, I think there we had some black enlisted men. I don't think there were any black officers in our thing. But there wasn't tension at all. In fact, the military usually was pretty—it was a place that those barriers, even if people were from the north, south, wherever, were less.

ROEHM: You're all in it.

BEAHAN: Yeah. In fact, there wasn't in our squadron, but there was this one guy. He actually became the highest—well, now there's a higher-ranking black man who is head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But at the time, there was this guy named Chappy James, and he was a fighter pilot. His boss—he was in the same squadron with a guy named Robin Olds. And Robin Olds was like—he shot down a bunch of Vietnamese airplanes. He was the real hot shot pilot in all of Southeast Asia for a while, and they were known as Black Man and Robin. He would be totally fine with that, because he was a total stud himself and totally respected, and did become, I think one of the highest-ranking and among the first many-star generals, black soldiers, airmen. I think that the job, the flying together, we all had to support each other. It all helped. There weren't barriers.

ROEHM: So you were there—was your contract for one year, knowing that it was one year?

BEAHAN: Pretty much. I think so. I think people generally served one-year tours. Some people—you could try to extend, and some people did. I didn't know anybody that extended. I just had heard about pilots—unfortunately, this one that I read about, he got killed in his second tour. He served one year tour, and then he was on his second year tour when he was shot down or something. There were probably some other others like that. I don't remember anybody in our unit that did that, but yes. Basically a one-year tour of duty.

ROEHM: What were your feelings when leaving? Last weeks, last days? Feeling relieved, ready?

BEAHAN: Oh gosh. I'm trying to think of whether I knew where I was going next. I think I was ready to go. I think things were probably changing a little bit up in Northern Laos. Things might have been deteriorating, might have

looked like—I don't know if—I don't think the Airborne Command Post flew for many—maybe only another year or so after that. You probably would have been working in more difficult circumstances in that the situation was deteriorating pretty quickly up in Northern Laos.

But yeah, I ended up then going to the photo reconnaissance squadron in another overseas assignment—was actually in Okinawa [Japan]. I was there for 18 months after I was at Udorn. That was a really good job too. It was different because it was a photo interpretation part of the specialty. But it was bunch of gung-ho pilots and then us photo interpreter intelligence guys. Everybody got along. We didn't have sports cars. We had motorcycles. And yeah, it was relaxed. It was mostly looking and being prepared in case something happened in Korea, like North Korea. All the training missions that these recon pilots were flying was over South Korea. It was all in preparation for identifying different kinds of targets, not in South Korea, but that there might be an equivalent in North Korea, and that they would just know the territory. How to get there and back. Yeah, it was interesting.

ROEHM: Did you know that you were going to go to Japan, or were you able to choose it?

BEAHAN: Yeah, I don't think so. I can't remember exactly how that happened. Sometimes it just—yeah, I don't think so. No, what was a little bit amusing was that before I went to that job, they sent me back to the States for—it was like eleven days. Eleven-day counter insurgency course. And I thought, wow man, that would have been really useful if I had done that before I went to Udorn [laughter]. Here I am going to essentially Okinawa, Japan. But it was in Florida so everyone there was nice, and I guess it was useful. I don't have really strong memories of it.

ROEHM: Do you remember kind of your emotions of coming back to the States and then going back to Asia again? Was there big feelings about it?

BEAHAN: No, it was fine, because I knew that it was going to be another interesting place. And safe. Yeah, no. I didn't have any strong feelings about it.

ROEHM: What was your relationship with your family at this point, and your dad as well?

BEAHAN: Yeah. I mean, they were living in Central Florida. He was working for this newspaper. I feel like once I got out of college and I was sort of my own person, I tried to get home to visit or keep in touch and write letters and stuff as much as possible. But our relationship was good. I actually have a brother that was 10 years younger than me and he was there. He was the son who could do things with my dad. They used to actually—I hate to

keep bringing up sports cars, but he was like racing little Austin Healey sprites and stuff like that. My dad always was sort of known around town for driving a MGB convertible in the winter in Winter Haven, Florida. He never put the top up. He kind of became somewhat of a—I mean, he did a great job. People really liked what he did, but he was a little bit of a character, you know. But for me, I felt like I had my own life. We got along fine, but I was not longing to be home.

ROEHM: Yeah, I guess you were young at this point.

BEAHAN: Yeah. And, yeah.

ROEHM: Did you have any thoughts on, in the early 70s, when the Vietnam War was turning? I don't know if you were in Japan still or not. And when the Lao situation also turned at the same time?

BEAHAN: Yeah. Well, I actually got out of the Air Force after Okinawa. I was there for like 18 months and then my contract was—normally, you would serve four years in the Air Force. Like in the army, you could go two years. But in the Air Force, it was four. But because I had gone to intelligence school after I had gotten this training, I then had to add on that time. So I actually was in for five years rather than four. I didn't mind it. I felt like I had great assignments.

When things were really—'75 I think is when it actually ended. I think all the Americans left Vietnam and probably Laos, and maybe, I don't know about Thailand, but in '74 I think. North Vietnam took over Vietnam and Laos in '75. Gosh, I don't know. I hope I wasn't just thinking I was just moving on in my life, but I probably was. Yeah, I was, because then I went back to graduate school at Penn State, actually. I studied journalism and then I went to a special program that was the first year of a program to learn science writing at the Argonne National Laboratory out around Chicago [IL]. And then right after, soon after that, it was when I got a job at Princeton. I worked there for almost 18 years and then I came to Dartmouth for 20 years. So then everything was—wasn't like I wasn't thinking about it, but I was sort of removed from real day to day. I was just kind of like everybody else, just sort of reading about it, feeling like, wow.

I think that's when we—another thing is that we started attending a Quaker Meeting in Pennsylvania when I was working at Princeton [University] and I was becoming much more attuned to anti-war activities. The Quakers did things like counsel people on becoming a conscientious objector. If you were officially one, then you were exempt from going into the military. A lot of that stuff was—I was feeling like I was more in tune with that than kind of the raw military life. I think my father might have been felt a little the same way. Although I think he was always very proud

of what he had done, where he contributed, certainly all the people that he had met and worked with and supported when he was in a supportive role. I think he probably was a little more reflective upon what all had gone down, what we had accomplished or wrought upon other people.

ROEHM: Going back to the beginning of the interview, you were talking about a story where—at Penn State, when there were some objectors of the war, and you kind of felt defensive of your dad. Did you feel—because you were still in the ROTC program then, and then after the war—and maybe there was probably equal amounts of anti-war sentiment. Did you feel the same reaction?

BEAHAN: No, not really. I think I felt more in tune maybe with the people who were at that desk at the Student Union who were arguing against us being involved and what were we doing there. They were young people too and so I don't want to say what did they know, but it's just like we weren't that different really. It's just that maybe they had feelings that were more attuned to the way I began to feel after I left the military and saw other things, learned more about what was really going on.

This whole CIA thing, it seems sort of glamorous at the time. Air America and all these, they were kind of the—I think they were doing what they thought was right, but they were also doing interesting things. They were involved. They were out there in the field. They were gung-ho. So I don't know. I just don't—the more I look at what the kinds of things that we've done in various countries, and the outcome usually turns bad, and when you look at what the root is. Isn't it really providing arms and benefiting business and things like that, rather than the people involved? I don't know.

ROEHM: Yeah, what was your decision—was it a kind of an easy decision to move on with your life, after you were done with your five years?

BEAHAN: Yeah. It's interesting because in the Air Force if you really want to make a career out of it—it's really hard to advance, to get promoted and become a real leader in the Air Force if you're not what's called rated, which means you're not either a pilot or navigator. I don't know if it's maybe sort of the same in the Army too. Maybe if you're not in something like infantry or something where you've really been out there on the tip of the spear. You can't be an administrative officer in the Air Force and become a general. Let's say to get promoted, you might only get through 10 years, and you don't get promoted anymore. There you are. You don't have many skills, and you can't retire with a pension or something. So it's not very advantageous. That's the way I felt about the Air Force.

I don't know, I never was—I felt like I wanted to serve and I wanted to do something as interesting as possible during my time, but I never really thought about making it a career. If I had been a pilot or something, it might have been totally different. It would have been a different world but it just wasn't in the cards. I'm glad. I don't know if I'd have been a great career officer. Anyhow, maybe my doubts would have been showing through early on.

ROEHM: Is it kind of a personality?

BEAHAN: There's some of that, yeah. Some of the personalities—there were a lot of what my dad used to call cement heads. And yeah, some attitudes were a little—I guess it wasn't me, really.

ROEHM: At Princeton, and here at Dartmouth [College], you did media. How did you get into that? Was it connected to what you did? Were there skills you felt like—

BEAHAN: I think I had always been—actually, I guess I started—I don't know if Virginia [Beahan] was an influence, but I started doing photography for sure. We actually had a friend, Emmet Gowin, who's a really amazing photographer that taught at Princeton and has been super successful both as a teacher and as an artist. Lots of books, really smart guy in so many different areas. People like that influenced me and my wife to photography.

At Princeton I became the editor of—they never had a faculty-staff newspaper there until I got there. They just had a calendar of events. So we started one while I was there and I did a lot of photography for that as well as writing. Then I actually started working on some video projects with Alumni Council, when video was just starting to be used as a way to record things that were going on at Princeton that could be shared with alumni, I guess was what—as much as anything. Maybe that's how the media stuff really got going. I must say I was—sort of like the president of the fraternity house, I was more of an administrator. I was a director of the group but the guys who were really doing the creating the media were more—I was doing some, but I was more trying to get the resources, come up with ideas about what we were doing and stuff like that. Yeah, that's the direction.

I'm trying to get away from that now and that's why I'm trying to become a freelance writer. I'm not trying to get away from the media, but I mean being the administrative person and actually doing the more creative work, which is good. Being around a place like Dartmouth helps, actually. I still have colleagues in the MALS [Master of Arts in Liberal Studies] program. I just keep plugging away.

ROEHM: How much do you keep up with your fraternity brothers—Alabama, Colorado, Udorn?

BEAHAN: The guys I lived with in Alabama, I still—one guy lives in San Diego [CA] and I see him. We have another really good close college friend that lives out there. Virginia has done some projects in California, so I see them. Another guy, the guy who made a career of the Air Force, he lives in the DC area. He just continued. I think he finally quit working after being a career Air Force officer. Then he got like a defense job and so I see him.

[Recording paused for phone call.]

Yeah, George [Kunkel] Sykes [Jr.] He, not his dad, but he shot himself, if you can believe that. I don't know. I went in the Air Force and he actually went in the Army as an enlisted person. We always thought that maybe his dad had something to do with the fact that he didn't go to Vietnam, because he worked for the base newspaper at Fort Benning [GA], someplace where everybody from there usually goes to Vietnam. Anyhow, then he moved to California and something went wrong. He was having a lot of problems. He was getting ready to go into a psych facility, and he said, "just a second, I have to go out to my car." He went out and he had a gun in the trunk of his car, and he shot himself right there in the parking lot. That was just tragic beyond belief.

Other fraternity brothers—another really close guy, one guy I played rugby with. He was really good rugby player but he was a diabetic. He never really took care of himself, you know. This is all this stuff that happened in the 70s. He just became more and more diabetic and I think he was abusing drugs and stuff like that. He died, really young, before 30. So, yeah, I kept up with them. I read their obituaries, I guess. [laughter] A bunch of my fraternity brothers just died. Another guy was actually in the Marines. He just died, but he was old, guess. There you have it. Do you have any others?

ROEHM: No, as long as there's nothing else that you'd like to mention.

BEAHAN: I think I've told all of it. I really—

ROEHM: It's been two and a half healthy hours.

BEAHAN: Were you one who said some people just go on and on?

ROEHM: Yeah. [inaudible, laughter] Well, thank you, Michael. I'll end it here.

BEAHAN: Great. Thank you for all that you're doing, and you know, for just doing the project. It's great.

[End of interview.]