*Cara:* Today is March 22, 2023, and I am Cara Vanderree of the Ashland City Library, interviewing Bill Lang, resident of Ashland, about his memories of the Vietnam War era. This interview is done through Humanities Kansas, in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read Project. The NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. We are in the Ashland Library.

*Cara:* Bill. When were you born, please?

*Bill:* October 16, 1948.

*Cara:* In what branch of service did you serve?

*Bill:* United States Air Force.

*Cara:* What was your rank when you left?

*Bill:* When I left the Air Force, I was an E5 Staff Sergeant.

*Cara:* And where did you serve?

*Bill:* Lackland for basic training.

*Cara:* Where?

*Bill:* Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, for basic training, then Chanute Air Force Base, Rantoul, Illinois, for technical school for airframe repair. That was my AFSC (Air Force Specialty Code). I was an airframe repair specialist; I worked on airplanes. From there, I went to Tucson, Arizona and from there I went to Cam Ranh Bay, in Vietnam, and from there I went to Taiwan. Then I went back to Texas, Kelly Air Force Base; I got an early-out to attend college. That's my Air Force stint.

*Cara:* That was a lot of moving around.

*Bill:* A lot of moving around and I was married at the time. We married in November and I went in in March.

*Cara:* Were you drafted or did you enlist?

*Bill:* I enlisted.

*Cara:* Okay. When?

*Bill:* March 1969.

*Cara:* Where were you living when this was going on?

*Bill:* In Emporia, Kansas. I was working as a machinist and had just gotten married. Georgeann was finishing up college.

*Cara:* And you were working. Why did you join?

*Bill:* Why did I join? My dad served in the Army Air Corps in World War II and went to the Philippines. I just didn't have a lot of direction and wanted some opportunities to see the world and serve my country-- I guess.

*Cara:* You got to see a lot of the world!

*Bill:* I did!

*Cara:* Why did you pick the Air Force?

*Bill:* Because Dad was in the Army Air Corps. That's right when the Air Force was being established and now they have the Space Force and our son-in-law is going to be a part of that.

*Cara:* It's a family tradition. Do you recall what your first days in the service were like?

*Bill:* In basic training it was kind of a humbling experience. I was already not a radical. I was a pretty passive person and did what I was told. I grew up that way. I had a good work ethic and I was clean and neat. So, I wasn't ripped apart by the TI, technical instructor, and we as a group had to do calisthenics in the morning, go to breakfast, have lunch, and do whatever was required.

*Cara:* How long was boot camp?

*Bill:* Six weeks.

*Cara:* So, you didn't have as miserable time of it as some folks who had a lot to learn when they got there. Were you running five miles before breakfast?

*Bill:* We, yeah, we had to do calisthenics and all that before breakfast and get up like at probably 4:30, and make our bunks and get out and get in... I didn't have any problem with that, I was in shape and just...

*Cara:* Just did it.

*Bill:* Just did it, and now they say 80% of the people are not even qualified to go into the military because of their physical condition, pretty much. It wasn't that way when I was a young man and we had more work ethic and we didn't set around do this and I'm showing...

*Cara:* Thumbs, on a gamepad, and even people just getting out of high school, where you have to go to gym class.

*Bill:* When I went into the Air Force I weighed a 138 pounds. I was lean and mean.

*Cara:* And you were when you got out, too. Do you have any boot camp training experiences you would like to share?

*Bill:* The TI (Training Instructor), on one of the first days, picked out a young man from Georgia and he said, "Airman, (we were Slick Sleeves, but you still called us 'Airman') I forget his name, but he said, "Do you like pine trees? Airman?"

"Sir, yes, sir, I was born in Georgia."

He said, "Well, you go over and hug that pine tree and don't you stop until I tell you to." So, he singled him out. It's just what they did to try to break you down.

He said, "Any of you airmen have college? Have been to college?" A few of them raised their hands and he said, "Well, you college boys, you go police the area and pick up all the trash. You other guys watch them and learn something."

And of course, they shaved your hair off. After you'd got your hair cut, other guys in the barracks would call you a "Ping," "Ping," "Ping." You know, stuff like that, anything to demoralize and that's the way it was. But you did what they told you to do and you said, "Sir," before you said anything else to them.

Sergeant Blevins was a three striper, just a buck sergeant, but we all looked up to him because we didn't have any! Then there was Sergeant Hanapa who was higher ranked; he was a master sergeant. So, he was over Blevins and Blevins was over our crew. That's pretty much basic training. I was glad to get out and get into my assignment. From that, they tried to fit us in where we could help them. I did well in airframe repair, and that's where they sent me to school.

*Cara:* Was that because you were already a machinist?

*Bill:* Pretty much.

*Cara:* And so, after boot camp, where did you go for airframe repair school?

*Bill:* I went to Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois. That base is no longer an active base. They put a lot of guys through there, for school.

*Cara:* Do you remember what it was like when you got to Rantoul? Did you fly? Did they put you on a bus?

*Bill*: Car. I was married and had to get off-base housing. Georgeann got to go with me to Rantoul, Illinois, and we rented a little apartment from a sergeant who only rented to military. We stayed in that apartment while I went to school. He knew we would take care of his property. Anyway, it was short-term but not a lot of money per month to live there.

*Cara:* Do you remember how much money you were making?

*Bill:* In the Air Force?

*Cara:* As a married person.

*Bill:* $237 a month.

*Cara:* And Georgeann was working then, so you had a little...

*Bill:* She was baby-sitting, just to make a few dollars.

*Cara:* All right, then, where did you go after Rantoul?

*Bill:* Went to Tucson, Arizona. First, I got leave. My grandma had passed away, so I left school early but tested out and went to Emporia, Kansas, for Grandma's funeral. We stayed with my parents while we were there and then we went to Tucson, Arizona, and spent about a year there.

*Cara:* Learning your trade.

*Bill:* Yeah, I was actually working on airplanes right there. The F4, that's the airplanes I worked on at Davis Monthan. It is a fighter jet, and it was a training base to train pilots.

*Cara:* Does that mean there were lots of planes needing repair, if it was a training base?

*Bill:* Pretty much, yeah, they put them through the motions as pilots.

*Cara:* So, both pilots and mechanics... Excuse me, you were not a mechanic, you were an airframe specialist.

*Bill:* Yeah, repair specialist, and worked alongside the machinists and the jet engine mechanics. We all worked in the same hangers and when they'd bring an airplane into the phase docks, inspectors would go over that airplane and write out all the discrepancies. If they found a loose rivet, if they found a crack, if they found anything that had to do with airframe-- we would get a list and the tail number of the aircraft and go to the hanger with our tools and work on the airplane until we completed those discrepancies. Then those would have to be signed off by another inspection to make sure that everything was...

*Cara:* Kosher?

*Bill:* -----You understand.

*Cara:* Did you enjoy it?

*Bill:* Yes, I loved my work and I was good.

*Cara:* Because you're meticulous.

*Bill:* Pretty much, yeah, yeah, and they could count on me to go out and do the job. Other guys, they'd send with me and they'd watch me and I'd do the work because it was that kind of a deal. I liked to do it and I was good at and I tried to teach them. Some guys just didn't have the ability.

*Cara:* Or the interest.

*Bill:* We're all different.

*Cara:* Did you see any combat at all, yourself, as a mechanic?

*Bill:* Combat, no.

*Cara:* So, you were putting things back together.

*Bill:* I was putting things back together. In Vietnam, I had Augment Duty and that's where you would go out and guard. I was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay. It was a hospital base and at night, you wouldn't want that base infiltrated with any enemies. So, they posted guards all around the base in different locations and would give you little C Rations, which was a box that had canned, yucky stuff in it.

*Cara:* To eat.

*Bill:* So, I'd have a lot of Augment Duty.

*Cara:* Is this after you put in a full day of, I'm assuming, repairing things?

*Bill:* If planes got shot up pretty bad, they would fly them out of Vietnam, because they didn't have tooling and facilities and stuff to really work on them. But we would do what they call "scab patches" and we had aluminum tape for cracks. We'd stop drill the hole crack with a drill, and put the tape on it enough to get to the Philippines. That's one of the bases where they would really go through and do major repairs.

*Cara:* So, you did running repairs to be able to fly it farther on.

*Bill:* I was stationed in Taiwan after my six months in Vietnam. So, we had a major maintenance depot there and I worked on the C-130 aircraft there. That's also what I was stationed in Vietnam to work on, the C-130s. The hospital base had C-141 aircraft, which had a hatch that would come down in the back and you could roll in wounded personnel.

*Cara:* How big is a plane like that?

*Bill:* It's a big one, it's a transport, the C-141 transport, but they made them into what they called "hospital ships," where they had seating and also stretchers that they carried guys on. I got to fly on one of those missions, a Medevac Mission. We flew from Cam Ranh Bay up to the DMZ, de-militarized zone, picking up wounded guys and bringing them back to the hospital. I got to go on one of those because they asked me if I'd like to and I said, "Sure I'd love to." So, I did that.

*Cara:* How long would that take?

*Bill:* It was about a day, flying up and back. Not a long time.

*Cara:* So, you were part of keeping everything going.

*Bill:* In Vietnam, it was kind of a boring job because we couldn't really do a lot with the aircraft. But we could sit around and play chess, Larry King and I would play chess and do things like that. We had a different USO Club where you could go in and play ping pong and pool and all that sort of thing. And then we had a library and we also had a hobby shop where you could go in and just... I did lapidary work. I don't know if you're familiar with dop sticks and stones and forming and polishing. I did that for a hobby.

*Cara:* You still do some of that.

*Bill:* I do some of that. Well, I don't have the equipment to do lapidary, but I do different stuff.

*Cara:* So, they got you started on some of your current hobbies.

*Bill:* Yes.

*Cara:* Were you awarded any medals or citations while you were in the service?

*Bill:* Just my campaign ribbon.

*Cara:* Because you served.

*Bill:* But I wasn't injured.

*Cara:* Is there anything about life in the service that you would like the current generation to know about? Was there anything about how you lived and what you did while you were there?

*Bill:* Well, it's a commitment. You're committed not only to serve your country but your fellow man. If somebody's down or hurt or anything like that, you want to be available. And before we went to Vietnam, they told us, "You will carry handkerchiefs in your pockets, in your fatigues, and you don't use your handkerchief. If you have to make a tourniquet on somebody else, you keep your handkerchief, you use his. That way, if you get hurt, you've got handkerchiefs. That's one thing. Augment Duty, you never knew. You know there were sampans out there. I can show you where Cam Ranh Bay was, where I was.

*Cara:* And the sampan is the boat.

*Bill:* Yes, little Vietnamese fishermen and stuff, but you never knew who they had or what they had. Cam Ranh Bay is right there, and that was a hospital base and there were about 20 other hospitals in Vietnam.

*Cara:* If you will lend me this, I'll scan it. (This map is included in the photos section.)

*Bill:* This book is going on loan to you.

*Cara:* Thank you, and let me mark page 182.

*Bill:* And this one, you can keep. I always envied the pilots getting in those jet planes, I looked up to them, when they flew off.

*Cara:* Weren't they the rock stars of the Air Force?

*Bill:* Of the Air Force? Pretty much. One thing about… when you worked on an airplane on the flight line or in the phase docks, you had to account for every tool and fastener that you took out. In other words, you didn't leave stuff lying around that could... These jet fighters had jettison seats that would have rockets under them and would fire the seat out of the airplane in case they were hit and going down. You couldn't leave anything that would get under there and get crushed or damage any of that. It is called an Egress System. So, everything had to be accounted for and you just had to be a Sharp Troop and do things right. They expected it.

And then they'd have times where they would call out a few guys and have you pick up FOD (Foreign Objects Damaging) off the flight line. They'd be like any bolt, nut, stick, rock... anything, because you don't want that sucked up into those jet engines. So, we'd police the flight line and had trucks take us out and then we had 'low packs' and 'high packs' to run our air tools and drill motors and rivet guns. That sort of thing.

*Cara:* They were air-driven?

*Bill:* Air driven, not electrical. They were low pack portable air compressors.

*Cara:* You could carry a container of compressed air with you?

*Bill:* No, it was on a like a little wagon, that you would have, but then the high packs, they'd drive those out and unhook and fire them up. They had high packs for even starting the engines on the planes. They would hook those up and that's how they would start the engines.

*Cara:* So, any bit of debris could actually ruin an engine if it were sucked in.

*Bill:* Yes. You've got all these blades in there, in those jet engines, all different sizes and shapes to move that air. Heat the air and the air expands, and that gives you the propulsion. Very interesting, a lot of power for fuel. Another thing, every time I had to work on an airplane, that airplane had to be grounded and there were ways to ground them and you had to ground them to make sure that no static or spark could start.

*Cara:* Oh, an electrical ground.

*Bill:* Yes, grounds for static and that sort of thing, because you didn't want any of that to catch that jet fuel on fire. We were very safe.

*Cara:* But I'm going to assume that the hanger where you were working on these, these things had to be built so that you could work on them there. Was everything in place when you got there?

*Bill:* You mean in Vietnam? Everything was in place when I got there. I was at the end of the war and Cam Ranh Bay was being closed and that's why they sent me to Taiwan to finish out my one-year overseas’ assignment. So, they were closing that base down and we had barracks and sandbags all around. That's what we slept in and I had an M16 in my locker with 10, 10-round magazines of 223 ammunition, and that was because I was on Augment Duty. My sergeant, instead of going to the armory every day, would just let me keep mine in my locker.

*Cara:* And if he hadn't been a sergeant, he would have had to have gone and checked out a weapon and all that stuff.

*Bill:* Yeah, I had a good first sergeant. He and I were buddies and he had a lot of faith in me and liked me and took me under his wing.

*Cara:* Did that make your life a little easier?

*Bill:* Yes. I got along with everybody, just did what I was told.

*Cara:* You keep mentioning that "doing what you're told" part, that seems to be a very important part of military life.

*Bill:* It is. There's a rank and you respect officers. If you're enlisted, you salute them because they've earned their commission, we were non-commissioned, we were non-coms, and they were commissioned officers, but they had their own clubs and everything too.

*Cara:* To which you were not invited.

*Bill:* We were not invited. They had better food and service and entertainment, whatever. That's the way it was.

*Cara:* What was your food like?

*Bill:* The food in Vietnam? It was good.

*Cara:* To the noncommissioned person, describe what the C-ration is

*Bill:* The C Ration (Field Ration, Type C) is you get maybe two or three cans in a little square box and (we called them Benny's Benefits, a little can opener. P38, I think they called it to open those cans.

*Cara:* It was like a little key that you spun...

*Bill:* Yes. You carried them on a key chain, but they gave them with every box of Bennies. Four cigarettes in a little cigarette package, which you could trade for whatever you wanted. Some guys really had to have their smokes. Anyway, you'd open this can and it would be like cold spaghetti and stuff like this. It was not good. Some guys, if they were on a truck or something, could heat those cans up by putting them on the manifold.

*Cara:* Did that make them a little more palatable?

*Bill:* Yes, a lot more palatable, but it also had this other little can that had, like a dried-out cake, like no icing or anything like that, just a piece of dried out biscuit-type cake.

*Cara:* And if you're hungry, you eat it.

*Bill:* It wasn't good, but you got by.

*Cara:* Did you have plenty of supplies where you worked, or did you ever have to wait for parts to repair things?

*Bill:* I never did. We didn't have to wait for parts, but we just put band-aids on these planes and flew them out of there, if they were flyable, and most of them were. The C-130 was a workhorse. In fact, it had that trapdoor on the back that would open up where you could drive things in. But they also had a 10,000-pound Cheeseburger Bomb on a pulley. A skid and drone chute would come out and open up. That had a six-foot detonator on it and would drop down with this parachute and blow up and make a helicopter landing for the jungles and the areas.

*Cara:* Why did you call it a "Cheeseburger Bomb"?

*Bill:* Because it was 10,000 pounds, it's just a nickname they gave it because it was a BIG bomb.

*Cara:* And its whole job was to clear an area.

*Bill:* And they couldn't fly that in those little jet planes; this was a big cargo plane bomb.

*Cara:* What were your stressors? Did you feel pressure or stress while you were there? Was anybody yelling at you to do something?

*Bill:* Not, really, I didn't feel stressed or pressure. In the Augment Duty they gave us a radio for emergencies when they posted us out, and guys would do their rounds and come by with their dogs and we'd sit and talk and things like that.

*Cara:* Is that how you entertained yourself, then?

*Bill:* Yeah!

*Cara:* Visiting, and you said you had pool and ping pong.

*Bill:* Yes, and hobby shops and things like that. We played a lot of chess, Larry King and I, and he was a lot better than me. But anyway, it passed time, and he taught me quite a bit.

*Cara:* I've heard that Bob Hope and entertainers...

*Bill:* I didn't get to see any of that entertainment. Well, I think that was more in Saigon, and in places like that, than Cam Ranh Base Hospital Base.

*Cara:* So how many people would have been on that base in Cam Ranh Bay?

*Bill:* I don't know. But Saigon would have been much larger, lot larger. Well, there was maybe 300 at Cam Ranh Bay, a lot of nurses, doctors, cooks...

*Cara:* It was smaller.

*Bill:* I was there for airframe repair but didn't do a lot of it. But I don't regret having served and having been there, because that's where they put me and that's where they wanted me, so that's what I did.

*Cara:* Did you get to go on leave?

*Bill:* No, because I was only there six months. If I would have been there a year, I could have gone on a TDY, but they figured when I went to Taiwan that was my TDY. and it was interesting.

*Cara:* What does TDY stand for?

*Bill:* Temporary Duty Yielding.

*Cara:* When you got to go to Taiwan, what did you do there?

*Bill:* The same, Airframe Repair was my title and we had a lot more work at Taiwan. I was on Herky Hill with the C-130 Hercules, it's the name of that aircraft, C-130 Hercules Transport, and that's what I worked on. They put us out on Herky Hill.

*Cara:* And Georgeann got to go with you to Taiwan.

*Bill:* Yes. We were at the CCK Airforce Base (Ching Chuan Kang Airforce Base). I'm not sure what it stands for and I'm not sure that they even have it anymore, but it wasn't in Taipei, which is the capital. It was in Taichung. Taichung was quite a distance from Taipei, so it was a bus trip.

*Cara:* Did you get to do some nice traveling while you were in Taiwan?

*Bill:* We toured the whole island, Georgeann and I. Every weekend, they'd ask if you wanted to take a trip and go, and we always did, because we enjoyed it. The people of Taiwan are Chinese and they left China when it was mandated that you could only have one baby and things like that. They just wanted their freedom and now China is trying to take it back. We feel really bad about that because those people are industrious. They're superstitious, though.

*Cara:* About what?

*Bill:* They planted rice paddies, back when I was there, with the water buffalo and by hand, putting rice plants in the mud. Then they would flood it. You know, they'd divert the water and flood the rice. The rice grew in the water, but whenever they would plant their paddies, they would take a wicker basket on a pole, fill it with fireworks, and light that to ward off the evil spirits off there. I just don't know that they're Christian in any manner or any way. Probably Buddhist was the main religion there, because where we would travel, we would see these huge Buddhas that were their gods. It's just different ways of life and we kissed the ground when we got home. If people could experience some of that, they would appreciate our country more. It's like Pastor Rick took a trip down to Mexico to build a little house. You know that they erected one for a couple there. No plumbing, no electrical, just four walls. They abide in that and have a community restroom and stuff. So, we've got to be thankful in this country, that our forefathers fought to give us this country that we're not proud of. A lot of people are not proud, a lot of people are too.

*Cara:* That's why I like a small community. I feel like we're more grateful in some ways. Was there anything funny that happened while you were in the military?

*Bill:* Funny!

*Cara:* Yeah, anything humorous anything. You've got a lot of guys kind of packed together.

*Bill:* I can't think of anything.

*Cara:* Yes.

*Bill:* Can I call you back if I do?

*Cara:* Yes, do you have any photographs of your time there?

*Bill:* Not really. I've got some at home there somewhere. I didn't dig anything out.

*Cara:* If you find them and you want to share them, I'll put them on the website. Did you keep a diary or anything? Okay, because you have a lovely time line you made of where you went when, did you have to think your way through this?

*Bill:* This morning, but I went by the church and asked Georgeann if this was correct and she said, "Yeah, looks good to me." So, I did okay.

*Cara:* If she gave it her blessing, it's okay! Do you remember the day your service ended?

*Bill:* The day it ended? Well, I got an early out. I was at Kelly Air force base and we were getting everything packed up and because I'd made staff sergeant, they went ahead and moved all of our possessions. We didn't have furniture and stuff but...

*Cara:* But you got better treatment because now you were...

*Bill:* Yeah, yeah, I did.

*Cara:* Where did you go after you were, you said, "Early out."

*Bill:* Went to Pratt Junior College and had Georgeann's mother for Economics, Anna Jean Wilson.

*Cara:* I'll bet you learned a lot.

*Bill:* That was fun.

*Cara:* Did you use the GI Bill?

*Bill:* Yes, I sure did. I applied for college because Georgeann had a degree from college and none of my family ever went to college. So, I'm the first to go. I took a couple of courses too when I was in, I think I was in Tucson at Davis Monthan. I took an English Class through Extension.

*Cara:* But you got college credit for it?

*Bill:* I did yeah, and they accepted it at Pratt. So, yeah, I did a few things like that to pass the time.

*Cara:* What degree did you get from Pratt?

*Bill:* I've got an associate’s degree from Pratt, then transferred and went to Pittsburg State University, which is a four-year college, and majored in manufacturing technology there and got my B.S.

*Cara:* You've used... you were in manufacturing before you went to the military, and you used all of the things you learned there as well as your college. What did you do after you graduated?

*Bill:* From college, my first job was a service engineer and I covered Georgia and Florida for Master Chemical Corporation. They made cutting and grinding fluids that went in machine tools for cooling and extending the life of tools. And there's quite a bit to it, because we got into recycling our products, cleaning them back up and putting them back in the machines with additives so that they would not have to go to disposal. So, I did that. They liked what I had done in Georgia and Florida, and when a fellow retired in Indiana they moved me up there and I took over Indiana as a service engineer for Master Chemical. Then I went to work for a distributor that sold not only the cutting and grinding fluids, but machine tools and tooling. I worked for them as a representative.

*Cara:* So, you've used your machinist experience your whole life.

*Bill:* I have, my whole life.Then I started my own business.

*Cara:* And what did you do?

*Bill:* I had a rep company with 10 different companies and covered the State of Indiana with a couple of other guys. It was called Lang Industrial Sales and Service and I did that for over 25 years. It was very interesting, we had some big projects, sold some high dollar machines that got automated with "pick and place" units. Every time you had a person\engineer buy off on a machine you had to be with them. So, the companies I represented would demonstrate the machine's capability. It had to manufacture what we said it was going to: quality wise, timewise. So, we would take gauges and a gauge engineer and operators. And course the engineer that bought the machine and everything had to be checked and signed off, pages and pages of documentation.

*Cara:* So, the military trained you well for that as well.

*Bill:* Yes, very much so.

*Cara:* And you enjoyed that.

*Bill:* I loved it, I was good at it. I had a good reputation, a good name, and guys would come to me because they knew if they bought something for me, we'd stand behind it and it would make them look good. Even if they had to pay a little more for it, it was worth it, because they get burnt too.

*Cara:* And then people lose money.

*Bill:* Yeah!

*Cara:* I'm going to backtrack just a second. One of the questions that they want to know is: how were you treated when you got back from your service, even in a small place like Pratt?

*Bill:* Yeah, I was okay in Pratt. It was when I went home to Emporia, where I grew up, that I wasn't treated very well by friends that I thought were friends, just because I had been to Vietnam. Emporia is a college town, and I guess there was a lot of, I don't know, civil unrest at the time. I think it was unnecessary and they really get into that in this book too, and you'll enjoy reading it.

*Cara:* The book is Vietnam 101 - A Class Like No Other by Jerry C. Davis. Oliver North does the forward.

*Bill:* Yeah, and some of the students from College of the Ozarks went to South Vietnam with veterans and toured and got to find out what the veterans did, where they were... It's a good book, it is a good book.

*Cara:* And it's respectful. Did you join any veterans’ organizations?

*Bill:* The VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) here.

*Cara:* Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?

*Bill:* Why were we in South Vietnam? We were told it was to stop the spread of communism and if we would have attacked the enemy north of the DMZ, that China would get involved. Well, there at the end of the war, we were attacking Hanoi and bombing Hanoi. If we would have kept going... but we had a mess here. We had no money to... and that's what we're getting into now, I think, too. It just divides the country, the war, even though they're not here fighting us on our turf. People have so many different visions of what we're doing, why we're doing it, and should we be there? And I do too. You have mixed emotions about it. I don't know. To me, we're part of NATO. NATO should step up more and (they should) contribute their fair share to NATO, because we're protecting all of NATO. The reason that we're in Ukraine right now is because we were contemplating letting Ukraine into NATO. Russia was totally against us letting Ukraine into NATO because NATO is a big power. They did not want Ukraine in NATO. They wanted Ukraine. They wanted it for the agriculture and a lot of different things that Ukraine has to offer, the ports...

*Cara:* The ocean-front property.

*Bill:* Yeah, but they're tearing it all apart and somebody's got to go fix it all, and is that going to be the United States of America?

*Cara:* They feed… Was it 30% of Europe is fed by the Ukraine?

*Bill:* They have big Ag, big Ag, and Russia wants that. I don't know if their people are starving or what, but I don't... I can't get my mind around it right now. I've got mixed feelings about Ukraine. And Taiwan, I sure don't want them to go communistic with China, but it looks to me like they're putting their ducks in a row and right now she is talking to Putin and they're forming agreements and stuff. It's just going to be interesting. That's why Gary Vashus and I need to re-enlist.

*Cara:* Good luck!

*Bill:* If they put me behind the stick of an F14 and give me a chance, I might consider.

*Cara:* They'd probably still make you run.

*Bill:* Wouldn't that be fun?

*Cara:* In retrospect, how do you feel about your service in Vietnam?

*Bill:* I have no regrets because I did use the G.I. Bill and get my college degree and Georgeann had a good go, you know, getting to see other parts of the world. We've travelled a lot, Georgeann and I. I don't regret spending any of the money we've spent to go wherever we went because she and I have had a great life. I love the United States and, like I say, I'd go fight again if I had to. I just feel that way, feel strongly about it. I don't like people putting our country down.

*Cara:* Is there anything that you would like to add that I haven't thought to ask?

*Bill:* I don't. We've covered so much.

*Cara:* It matters. There were untruths told about Vietnam, and it's good to get someone who was there, to get their perspective.

*Bill:* And this Ukraine thing, too. I think there's a lot of untruths being told there, like people are saying, and you don't know this, but they're saying that some of the supplies and stuff never even got there because they were sold on the black market and stuff like this. I just hate to hear all that, because is it true? Do they have evidence? Do they have proof of it? It turns people...

*Cara:* It makes us fight each other instead of the enemy.

*Bill:* And why are we giving, if they're not even getting it to protect themselves? I don't know.

*Cara:* It's a funny world.

*Bill:* It is. Not "Ha ha." Strange.

*Cara:* I thank you for your service.