

**William Howard Hull
Veteran**

**Mike Russert
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Interviewers**

**Interviewed on 16 October 2007
Saratoga Springs New York**

Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth?

WHH: Yeah, William Howard Hull, uh, born March 3rd, 1921

Q: Okay, where were you born?

WHH: Cohoes, New York

Q: What was your education background before you went into service?

WHH: I finally quit in the senior year of the education in Cohoes, in the high school.

Q: Okay. Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

WHH: Gee, that's a good question to ask. That was on a Sunday right?

Interviewer: Yes it was

WHH: I was delivering papers myself when I heard about it. I was delivering the Times Union. I had quite a few customers. Maybe about 21 to 30 customers that I delivered to.

Q: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

WHH: Drafted. You want to know my draft number?

Q: What was it [draft number]?

WHH: 32373637

Q: You still remember that?

WHH: Gee, easy because it was all in the 30s.

Q: You ended up in the Army Air Corps?

WHH: Yes.

Q: How did you end up there?

WHH: How did I end up there?

Interviewer: Yes sir

WHH: Well, the end of it, all my records were down in Stewart New York, the air base there. And when I got discharged from the air corps I was down there at Randolph Field. And uh, the only thing is they had me home within about 2 days I think it was. Then they had you, you know, go down to the enlistment, not the enlistment, the veterans, uh what are they, induction-

Q: They inducted you?

WHH: Yeah they inducted me, but I had my car, and my wife who loved me, down there with me in San Antonio so in order to be home on my time I enlisted in the Air Corps Reserve. So I was discharged down in San Antonio at Randolph Field, but all my papers went over to New York at Stewart Base. And when I first went over to the East I thought I was going to be called up, but I never was called up. I was a sergeant all the way through. They actually have private, private first class, corporal, and sergeant.

Q: Now you went in in July of '42, where did you go for your basic training?

WHH: Basic training, actually uh, down in Bainbridge, Georgia. I was inducted up in Albany, and went down to Long Island, what was the name of the place in long Island?

Interviewer: Camp Upton?

WHH: Camp Upton, yes, but I didn't get much training there, all my training really came from down in Bainbridge, Georgia.

Q: What kind of training did you get down there?

WHH: Radio operator and mechanic. And uh, from there I went to Scott Field and uh, that where I got the schooling.

Q: Where was Scott Field?

WHH: Scott Field was, uh, in Illinois, over there near St. Louis. Back to why probably chose to go there, when I went to work at General Electric in Schenectady, and they assigned me to the end of the manufacturing of shortwave radios. I had to take and test every one that came off the line and if I found anything wrong with the shortwave radio I would take and send it back into the factory and they would check what I wrote to see where it would go, but eventually it would come back to one of myself. And I got the final approval for the transmitters. And the transmitters were the ones that would be used in like the Bombers like the b-17 and the b-24.

Q: Okay, so you had for GE with radios prior to the war?

WHH: Yes

Q: Now Scott Field, was that a radio school?

WHH: Yes

Q: How much schooling did you have?

WHH: About 3 months training

Q: The radios that were on the planes, is that what you worked on?

WHH: Yeah, the bombers in particular

Q: So you did repairs and so on in those?

WHH: Yes, basically, I more or less you would take it out of the thing, look at it, and if it failed it had to go back to the place where they would do all the repairs. I would recommend what had to be done to the equipment.

Q: Where did you go after Scott Field?

WHH: Oh that's a tough one. If I had that application I could tell you precisely where I was. Um, I should know where I was.

Q: Well you stayed in the States for the war correct?

WHH: Yes, yeah, but I did a lot of flying over water. At the gunnery school I was on the plane that told the target. We would be in the b-26 or the uh b-20, no uh the 2 engine bomber-

Interviewer: b-25?

WHH: Yes, b-25, the Mitchell.

Q: So you told targets?

WHH: Yeah, so you told the target and the planes behind you; when it started out, by the way, they would take and have them shoot at the targets. Of course the target was alone, about half a mile behind you, in other words they approached from the left or the right, but never directly in front of you.

Q: So you did that and you repaired radios in the bombers also?

WHH: Yes, I would have been in the 17 and the 24. We had to learn the room, I usually flew one. I only got sick once while I was out there and that was because one of the gunners got sick himself and the radio room was more in the center of the plane so it doesn't go up and down as much. So of course he got in and he started throwing up, and I didn't want to die, I got the enrollment. I went over and joined him. But I mean that was the only time I got sick and I did a lot of flying, I was a very good operator.

Q: What, did you fly through the coast?

WHH: yes, the station was actually down in Panama City, Florida. After that I went over to Apalachicola, Florida, and that's really where I was more so. I was an affiliate of Tyndall Field.

Q: What did you do on your days off?

WHH: Well let's see, on the days off I'd go down there at the armory and the station headquarters. There was an area there where you'd go down to sit and read or you would talk with the fellas, stuff like that. Also it wound up that I had my own car down there and I had permission to bring it right on the field because I was living off base with my wife.

Q: You were married before you went into service?

WHH: It had to be in service because I got married down in Bainbridge Georgia. Sorry that was my past wife, this is my second wife. That wouldn't have been very good.

Q: Did you see any USO shows at all?

WHH: What?

Q: Did any USO shows or anything like that come to your base?

WHH: I don't believe so

WH's wife: I don't think he heard you, he's a little hard of hearing.

Q: Did you see any USO shows?

WHH: Oh, yeah they'd have them come in and we'd naturally attend. It was at a regular theater on the coast. That's where you would see those types of operations shown. For our amusement

Q: Did you see any big-name stars at that time?

WHH: Not to my knowledge, I don't recall. Don't forget you're going back quite a few years.

Q: So you lived off base then?

WHH: Yes. You had to be there by 8 o'clock, sometimes I'd arrive at 7:30 or so. I'd leave my car there in the parking lot, where it's supposed to be. One time I come in from a flight 19 and my doors are open my trunks open. What they did was they searched my car for tools and took a sample of the gasoline in the tank because they suspected that I might have been taking some of the gasoline from the airplanes and putting it in my car, fortunately I never did any of that. Therefore, I had a clean record. I remember they did find a screwdriver. They asked me and I said "yes, I borrowed that from the parts place there" and I said that I had asked my lieutenant if I could do that first, because they were going to pin something on me because I had it in my car. I said it's been in my car about a day. That's the only incident I had. I had it in my car on base. That was Georgia. They brought me down to Texas, to Randolph. One of the reasons I joined the Air Corps was so I could take my time going home. My wife and I, we toured the southern part of

the United States on our way home. I think it took about 3 weeks to get home. So that's one of the reasons why I joined the reserve

Q: Now, with living off the base and driving your own car, did you get extra gasoline?

WHH: Yes, I had to do that in the city though and I had to buy my gas at the pumps down there. Where I bought the gas was where the tankers unloaded into the bigger tankers, so I got gas a little cheaper. I didn't have no records, bad records, in my car, or myself.

Q: Now did you eat on base?

WHH: Yes, yes, I ate on base, yes.

Q: Was your wife able to eat on the base?

WHH: No, well I mean there was only one meal I ate on base. Breakfast I had at home, then dinner, in the evening, I had with my wife.

Q: Did you get any extra food rationing because you were a member of the armed forces?

WHH: I let my wife handle all that. She could do that, she could go down to the city there and talk with them, which she did.

Q: Did she have a job too?

WHH: Yes, uh, watching her child, the one child that we had. Wait she did, she worked in the place civilians could go to

Interviewer: Commissary?

WHH: Yes. Uh we were only there for a short time because I got transferred, she came with me. Of course they knew she was with me.

Q: Now you traveled around quite a bit during the war, did you stay mostly in the south, southeast

WHH: Yes, down in the south east more a less Florida. I was up there in North Carolina. Then I went to school over near St. Louis, Scott Field.

Q: Did the radios for the bombers improve at all during the war?

WHH: Well, of course the bombers they had in there, I worked on them and for GE, so I was familiar with those types of bombers, that shortwave equipment. I was aware what I was and wasn't supposed to work on

Q: Did they improve at all during the war?

WHH: If they did, I wasn't able to tell, at least not that I can recall. They were all in good working condition, maybe some that I'd have to take out of the airplane.

Q: Now, you flew coastal patrols also?

WHH: I would say yes up to a certain point, but the majority of the time I was flying out over the ocean.

Q: What were they, like submarine patrols?

WHH: Well anything they knew. I would say if they had any ships looking at them, or airplanes, stuff like that. I got half base pay for flying. So as a sergeant I made a fairly good amount of money at that time, then I got half pay for flying time.

Q: When you went on a plane for flight time, what was your job on the plane, radio operator?

WHH: Yes

Q: And you flew mostly b-25s?

WHH: No, well b-25s b-26s, b-17s I liked very much, then b-24s

Q: Why did you like the 17?

WHH: It was more stable in the air, I felt more secure. What was it, the b-24 I just didn't like that airplane as well. Although I guess that was the more modern one at that time, but I liked flying on the b-17 the best of all. Maybe it's the way they had things arranged for me.

Q: Now you were in until 48. What did you do after the end of the war?

WHH: Well after I got discharged down there at Randolph I went into business with my father and brothers selling [unclear, 19:15]

Q: Now from 1945 to 1948 you must've seen some big changes.

WHH: Well I was in the reserves. They never did call me up or anything. And of course in those years I was selling cars and I wasn't working for the General Electric at all

Q: After you left service did you use the GI bill at all?

WHH: I don't think so. In what manner would I be using it?

Interviewer: Education, or to buy a house.

WHH: Oh, well yeah probably when I bought my first house. There is that possibility because I remember I got it at a lower rate of interest.

Q: Did you ever use the 5220 Club?

WHH: No

Q: You went right back to work?

WHH: Of course, yes.

Q: Did you ever join any veteran's organizations?

WHH: No, they didn't have any. I'd have to have gone to Albany or Schenectady if I wanted to.

Q: Did you stay in contact with anyone who was in service with you?

WHH: Not too long after. I moved where the headquarters are and so therefore, I wasn't in the unit where they had stationed all the enlisted personnel.

Q: So you didn't make many close friends then?

WHH: No

Q: Because you moved so much?

WHH: That's right. I moved around a lot, about 8 places I imagine I've been to. It was always flying around in the headquarters section

Q: How do you think your time in the service affected your life?

WHH: Well, it got me around the United States quite a bit and I didn't have no bitterness at all. To my knowledge I didn't get in any fights or anything at all.

Q: Did you meet your wife while you were in the service?

WHH: No. Wow, going back a lot for me. I had met her before I had gone in.

Q: Have you stayed in touch with anyone you were in the service with?

WHH: No. I had my brother in the service, he was a master sergeant. He was in quite a while himself.

Q: Did he go overseas?

WHH: Yes, he was over in the Philippines.

Q: Do you remember where you were, or do you remember anything about the death of President Roosevelt?

WHH: Yes I remember. Where was I at the time, now that's another good question, I don't know.

Q: How did you feel about that when you heard about it?

WHH: I felt a lot of loss, he was the commander, but I didn't know him at all. He was from New York, so once in a while when I go to New York City I pass by where he lived in that city. So that's how it felt, I didn't know him but I knew where he lived.

Q: Harry Truman?

WHH: Oh, he was a stranger to me.

Q: Do you remember hearing about the atomic bombs being dropped?

WHH: Yes, I remember.

Q: Do you remember your reaction to that?

WHH: Glad that I lived where I was. A lot of people were simply killed. I saw a lot that were injured; that was a sad story. However they were our enemy so I didn't feel too bad. Once I came down and thought of it as an individual, I did feel bad.