Kenneth R. Carlson
Narrator

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New York State Military Museum
Interviewers

MR: Could you please give us your full name and your place and date of birth?

KC: My name is Kenneth Rudolph Carlson, born January 28th, 1921 in New York City.

MR: What was your education prior to entering military service?

KC: I was very fortunate. Though I was from a middle-class family I was able to attend what was probably the best private school in New York City, which was the Collegiate School. It was 375 years old and was attached to the Collegiate Dutch Reform Church, the minister of which was Norman Vincent Peale who wrote The Power of Positive Thinking. So I was able to walk from my dead-end street up eight blocks to a private school. I had a terrific education, even though I had to fight my way through the Irish gangs on 69th street when I came back home from school.

MR: Do you remember where you were and what your reaction was when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

KC: You never forget it. My father had died in 1939 unexpectedly when I was 18. The only asset that he had was a brownstone home on 73rd street and Lexington Ave. So I had my mother and grandmother to support and we lived in a 4th floor tenement, a walk-up. It was Sunday and I was in the front room listening to the radio. Being a former athlete, I was listening to the Giants football game and during that game there was an announcement that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Even though I'd had a great education I wasn't sure where Pearl Harbor was. As a matter of fact I thought it was in the Philippines. So that's how I found out and that's where I was.

MR: What was your reaction to this news?

KC: Probably unbelievable from the standpoint that, although I was well educated and was aware of the problems we had been having with Japan over the last few years, I felt that this could not have happened. With no television, we had to wait for radio reports and read about it in the newspaper the next day. So it really didn't make that big an impression on me. I had no idea of what the magnitude of this bombing was until a day later.

MR: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

KC: I enlisted.

MR: Why did you select the Air Corps?

KC: That's an interesting question. It took me a couple of days to think through and to read and to see news reels and see what really had happened and the damage that had been done, what was really going on and how that related to the war in Europe. We declared war on Japan and they were negotiating in Washington when the surprise attack took place. Two days later Germany declared war on the United States. That made my decision to go to war. Why did I pick the Air Corps? I guess because my father had taken me to see Charles Lindberg take off, when I was seven years of age, to fly across the Atlantic. Being Swedish-American like me he was a hero figure to me. And with my education I understood about Billy Mitchell and the power of the air force and how it was going to be the future of any war. So in my own mind I decided the best thing I could do was to become a fighter pilot and shoot down the Japanese who had attacked us. So two days later I enlisted in the Air Corps.

MR: Had you ever flown?

KC: Never.

MR: Can you tell us about your military experiences from the time you went to boot camp?

KC: When I enlisted I was just about to be married. I was 21 when I got married. The Air Corps did not call me until January, 1943. So it was a little more than a year before I was called to active duty. The reason for that was that they had very limited training facilities. So in January 1943 I got on a train with orders to report to Nashville, TN, which was a reception and classification center.
When I got there they took away my civilian clothes and gave me my uniform, which was two sizes too big. It was a GI uniform because at that time you were enlisted as a private at $21 per month until you were accepted as an Air Corps cadet. That meant that you had to qualify as a pilot, a navigator, of a bombardier. Though I qualified to be a pilot, based on my math skills they wanted me to be a navigator. I didn't want to do that, as my mind was set on being a fighter pilot and shooting down Japanese. But they told me I would have to wait 6-9 months to get into pilot training, whereas if I accepted navigator training I could go immediately. I accepted navigation. I had no feel for bombers and I had no idea where that was going to take me. They sent me to San Marcos, TX which was a navigation school. I had just opened, located between San Antonio and Austin. There I underwent 6 months of navigation training. In August, 1943 I was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant.
From there I was sent to Boise, ID where the crew would be assembled. When I got to Boise I found out who my pilot was. He became my best friend and was just an unbelievable pilot. He was a small guy. His parents were from Czechoslovakia. His father was a bar tender in Hollywood, CA. all he wanted to do was fly. He didn't drink, he didn't carouse and he was single. Then I met the rest of our crew. By the way, my pilot's instructor was Jimmy Stewart, the actor.
Then we were sent to a new air base in Mountain Home, ID south of Boise. It had the longest runway in existence and that is where we did our crew training. From Mountain Home we were assigned to Wendover, UT. Wendover was a little town one hundred miles west of Salt Lake City at the end of the salt flats right on the Nevada border. We lived off base in this place called the State Line Hotel. On the Nevada side they were drinking, gambling and doing anything they wanted, but on our side, because of

the Mormon influence, it was ice cream sodas and going to bed early. This is where we learned to operate as a bomber crew. Wendover later became the secret training base for the crew that dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The scary part about training in those days was that so many of us had learned to do things individually, but were hard-pressed to learn how to do it together. We lost a lot of airplanes, through poor maintenance, false navigation, and pilot error, into the surrounding mountains of Nevada. So we suffered losses right there in training and we understood that not everyone was going to go down because of enemy fire.

After we completed that training we were then sent to Harrington, KS, where we would pick up our own airplane and fly it to wherever we were ordered to fly. In Harrington the thing I remember most was sitting in the room while Joe Rosmus (sp?) signed a piece of paper that said he was responsible for a B-24J, which was a four-engine Liberator bomber. The J signified that it was a later model which had a turret in the front with two machine guns instead of just two flexible machine guns that the navigator shot. He signed a paper for $250,000 worth of government property and would return it, and the question was (chuckle) what if we don't come back? They said don't worry about it.

When we picked up the plane, said goodbye to our wives or girl friends (five of us were married and five were single), we were given orders to fly it to West Palm Beach, FL, Morrison Field. When we got there our passes were taken away and we were confined to the field, awaiting orders to see where we would be sent. At that time we were all hoping that we would be sent to the south Pacific and that we would be "killing Japanese". When we got down the runway and opened our orders, we were sent on a southern route. As navigator I had to plot our southern route which took us into Trinidad, then Brazil, and over to Africa. Our final orders indicated that we were to report to the 8th Air force which was headquartered in England. So we knew then that we were not going to be "killing Japs". We were going to be killing Nazis.

The trip over was an unbelievable experience. It took us 45 days because there were weather delays all along the route. This was the first time that I had ever left the U.S. As a matter of fact, having grown up in New York City, the only places I had been were Maine, where I worked briefly in a mill, upstate New York, Long Island, and one trip to Cincinnati. So this was the first time this city kid was about to see the world. The thing I remember most was when we got to Brazil, where we saw three different towns before flying to Africa, was the tremendous poverty, disease, and filth. Young people were walking around naked, they were going to the bathroom in the streets, and diseases such as elephantitis, which I had never heard of. So that was a big shock.

So when we left Brazil it was the moment of truth for me as navigator, using celestial navigation. We had no radar. We would see if I could navigate our way across the south Atlantic, which was eleven hours, and arrive where we were supposed to. So that memory remains a very dramatic one for me, of being alone in the nose of that plane with my sextant (an instrument used to shoot the stars to get a location fix). The stars were so bright over the south Atlantic ocean. You felt so alone and so at peace at the same time. You had this tremendous worry about knowing where you really were when you looked down at that ocean. So when I would plot these fixes that showed where we were according to the stars, that's when I found that we were not on the course that was planned. So now the moment of truth was do you accept that as fact and correct it or do you pretend that maybe you didn't shoot the stars correctly and stay on the course. I decided to do what I was taught and that was to correct the course based on what the star sightings taken. After doing so, eleven hours and some odd minutes later,

on the far horizon there was Africa, and there was Dakar and we were on target. We landed and everybody thought I was just terrific. Five of them thought so because they couldn't swim and all they could think about was that we were going to run out of gas before we got to Africa. There again it was the poverty. There were young people who were pimping their sisters, pre-teens almost, to make a living off of those who were passing through there. They were sailors or soldiers, Americans, British, or Dutch.

Leaving Dakar, our next stop was Marrakesh which took us over the Sahara desert and over a mountain range called the Atlas Mountains. We flew through them and into Marrakesh which was in a beautiful area of Morocco. That trip I will never forget either. I plotted the course and, it being daylight, I went to sleep. When I paid more attention to where we were and looked at the maps it seemed to me that we weren't really where we were supposed to be. This was not looking at the stars. It was looking at the mountains and fixes on the map. So I found that I had made a mistake. Instead of taking the deviation between true north and magnetic north I and adding it, I had subtracted it, so I was basically twice as far off the course as I should have been. So I didn't notify anybody else and made a correction and the correction worked, taking us into the mountain pass through the Atlas Mountains and into Morocco. So once again navigation was working, what I had been taught was working, and I was becoming relatively confident.

The last leg was to go from Morocco up over Portugal, the Atlantic and on to Prestwick, Scotland. That was a long flight and gas was a factor. It was uneventful until we got to Prestwick, where there was fog and drizzle and it was difficult to get clearance to land. One plane in front of us ran out of gas and crashed, but we landed ok and that was it. They took our plane away from us, and that we didn't expect. Then they put us on a train and sent us to a reassignment center for the 8th Air force in England. So we lost our plane which we had names "Myrtle the Fertile Turtle". That was our first disappointment. The plane that we thought was going to be ours for our missions was not going to be ours.

MR: How did you come up with a name like that?

KC: I did, and the reason I did it was that people were talking about wives or girl friends, but our pilot was Joe and he didn't have a girl or a wife and he wasn't interested in doing that. So I said let's give it a girl's name. The B-24 is a very slow lumbering thing, like a turtle, so I said let's call it "Myrtle the Turtle". The fertile part came from the plane's ability to carry the biggest bomb load of any of the four-engine bombers.

MR: did you decorate the nose?

KC: Yes. We didn't put a picture on it, just "Myrtle the Fertile Turtle". There was nothing sexy like on most of the other airplanes. So at the center where crews were assigned to established bomb groups we waited and finally got our assignment. We were assigned to the 93rd Bomb Group. We were sent to a little town about twenty miles south of Norwich in East Anglia, which is where most of the heavy bombers were stationed. They were all within about a 50-mile radius around Norwich in the northeastern part of England. It was easier for them to form up and go out on a mission together. When we got there we learned two things. First, that our airplane was an old airplane that had survived 25 missions. At this point in the war (late 1943 to early 1944) if you completed 25 missions you were

promised that you could go home and become instructors for new cadets that were learning about combat. We did the math at that point and we were losing airplanes at the rate of 5 to 10% every mission. The actual math worked out that most people either got killed, wounded or captured by their 8th mission.

So we got this old airplane called the "Judith Lynn" that had no nose turret. It just had the two flexible machine guns, one on either side, that the navigator used, or the bombardier if he wasn't at the bomb sight. But it had been a lucky ship because it had completed 25 missions. So that was our first shock, that we had an old airplane. We were in the 93rd Bomb Group, which by the way was called "Ted's Traveling Circus" the reason for that was it had moved from England to Africa where it made raids on the Romanian oil fields at Ploesti, then back to England, and back to Africa again.

That takes me up to what I guess was the moment of truth, which was our first mission. The first mission is one that you never forget because it starts with a wake-up call. People talk about how we got a wake-up call at Pearl Harbor or on 9/11. That's nothing like a real wake-up call. That began in the 8th Air force with a hand on your shoulder while you are sleeping on a little cot in a cold Quonset hut. The hand shakes you and says you're going to fly today and you have to get up. So it's 3:30 am and you get up and go to a cold stove and try to find water to shave because you have to be clean shaven in order for the oxygen mask to fit closely when you are up high in the air. So your wake-up call starts with a soldier waking you up, shaving, going to eat breakfast, and then going to a briefing room. By this time it's 4:30 to 5:00 am and there you are locked in in a secret way. Up front is a covered map. The commanding officer and intelligence officer uncover the map to show you where you are going and what the route is. So now you find out what your first mission is, which in this case was Nuremburg, which was far inside Germany. That was where the war trials were held later, but it was also near Firth where there was a factory that made ball bearings. So this was our first mission. You get up, get dressed, and put on your electric flying suit, and heavy clothes after that. The navigators go to a special briefing where they plan their course. Then you go to your airplane. You are in your airplane by 7:00 and you look for the weather. It is normally rain or drizzle, as it is never clear in the morning in England (or snowing). You wait to find out if you are actually going to take off because many times the operation is what they called "scrubbed". If it never takes off it is called scrubbed. If it takes off and then the mission is called off it is called abortion. So you are waiting to see if the mission is scrubbed and never takes off. So we waited and fortunately on our first mission it did take off. There was nothing worse than having a mission scrubbed knowing you were going to go back and have to do the same thing the next day. So, on that first mission you understand the power that is basically there. It is overwhelming and it makes you feel terrific. A B-24 starts down the runway and it only gets halfway down the runway when another starts down the runway and then you start down the runway, so at one time there are three B-24's on the runway, one taking off, one halfway, and one starting out. This sense of power that you have, going down that runway with four tons of bombs is quite overwhelming. From there you work your way through the clouds and come up above and there is an airplane up there with a big yellow body on it with zebra stripes. That is the plane you are going to form on. It doesn't go with you. It just circles up there until you get into formation and ready to go, and then you are on your way over the Channel. And this sense of power really is overwhelming. You are happy that you made this decision and you see all the hundreds and hundreds of bombers that you have with you. And you have air cover. In those days it lasted for 50 – 100 miles over the coast and then they run low on gas and have to return to base and

then there is no air cover. That is when the German fighters of the Luftwaffe would begin to attack the bomber formations as they came in. Then you begin to see the losses of your power because you look and see planes on either side of you being shot, being on fire, going down. Or you feel that yourself, which we fortunately did not on our first mission. We did not feel any hits directly. But I did se planes going down that were in formation with us. So the mission was long and it was successful. We hit the target, everything worked, we came back, and we landed. It was a very powerful experience. When you come back however, the letdown is tremendous. There is nothing to look forward to except doing it again, and you don't really want to do it again. You wanted to do it and you did it and it was terrific, but knowing that you have to do it another 24 times, knowing what you have seen, is not something you look forward to. So in between missions, one of the paradoxes is that you are at death's door and the next night you are down at a British pub drinking yourself silly because you are not going to have to fly the next day. You are with other fliers, British, free Poles, and you are having a great time. So from that experience you learn that maybe today is the day you are going to live or today is the day you are going to die. Most people drank a lot when they weren't flying. So, alcohol became pretty much a way of life for people in the Air Force who were not on missions. I won't bore you with other missions, but we were on the first three raids on Berlin. March 6, 1944 was referred to as "Bloody Monday" because we sent 600 airplanes up and 69 did not come back. That was not the worst experience I had because our group was not damaged. A lot of groups were, so we were very fortunate.

But on our 8th mission we were sent to Freiburg in southern Germany, near the Swiss border. And it was there, just as we were going over the target……but first let me tell you a little about flak. I have carried this with me ever since because this is what flak looks like (shows a piece to the camera about the size of his finger). This is a piece of flak from a German 88mm artillery shell, which is fired from the ground and explodes at 25,000 feet, which is where we were flying. It is designed to destroy the plane or the engines or blow up the gas tank. And on my eighth mission, just as we were flying over the target, through these black clouds of exploding shells that you had to fly though, and just as the bombardier released our bombs I hit the salvo handle, which is a handle right next to the instrument on the navigation table. That would release the bombs in the event that the bomb sight did not release the bombs.

MR: So you had a bomb sight on board?

KC: You had a bomb sight and the bombardier would say "bombs away". The minute he said "bombs away" the navigator hit the salvo handle so if any bombs did get hung up they would automatically go when you hit the salvo handle. So as I hit that handle this piece of flak nearly took my right arm off. And all I felt was no pain, just the feeling that someone had hit me with a sledgehammer. I felt total peace. It was the most unbelievable experience I'd ever had in my life. I didn't talk to God or see God, but I had absolutely no fear. I looked down and there wasn't much left of my right arm. I saw it hanging there. I called Joe and asked him to send somebody down to put a tourniquet on. Meanwhile I was checking instruments because now we were on our way back and navigating was part of what I had to do, and I was capable of doing it, I had no problem with it.

The radio operator came down, took one look at it, and fainted. So I called again and the engineer came down. He revived the radio operator and sent him back with his portable oxygen mask. He then put the

tourniquet on and stayed with me for the three or four hours it took to get back. An engine was on fire. Joe put the fire out and we lost a second engine. He brought it back, we landed, and I was brought to the hospital. They repaired my arm. I was on the operating table for eight hours. I didn't wake up for 72 hours due to an overdose of pentothal, which was the drug they used in those days.

MR: So this piece of flak was where?

KC: This piece of flak was in the instrument panel and it had a piece of my wire suit and blood on it. So it took part of my arm and went on to demolish part of the instrument panel. While I was in the hospital our plane had 150 holes in it and my crew was given a leave to go to London and relax. Joe came and brought this piece of flak to me and he said to me "sorry you are so unlucky, Navigator. We're going to miss you", because there was no way I was going to fly again.
Then they came back from leave to fly the repaired airplane and they flew and they never came back. The crew next to them saw them explode (just like the Space Shuttle did on my 65th birthday). They were declared missing. One parachute was seen coming out, and for years they were declared missing. For years I assumed they were missing rather than the fact that they were killed. About two years later the government declared them killed in action. But up until about four years ago, through a German internet source, there were no bodies ever recovered and no indication other than that they just didn't return. Then about 4 or 5 years ago on the internet I discovered that they had been found by the Germans and were buried in a small German occupied cemetery just north of Paris. But there were only body parts and one piece of wing that had a star on it. That was their indentification. So they were in a cemetery in a little town northwest of Paris. That was the end of my combat career.
My arm was repaired by a doctor who, by fate, I met thirty years later. When my hand began to contract again I was sent to an orthopedic man. As I was sitting across from him he was questioning me about where this had happened, and he was the doctor that had put my hand back together again. He was the only doctor in that hospital which had just opened the week before I was shot. As a matter of fact, this book "High Honor" which my story is in, his story is also in. The book, published by the Smithsonian, is the story of 28 people that played a part in the air war against Germany and Japan.
So when I came out of the service (when I came back from combat) I was sent to a rehabilitation center in Poland, NY. There we had the company of people like Lowell Thomas, the famous commentator, and Tom Dewey, and Norman Vincent Peale, who came over and played softball with us. So here we were with missing legs and arms and we were called the "nine old men". This was the wonderful part of convalescence, and they were great people.
From there I was sent back to San Marcos as an instructor. All of us there would devote our time and energy to trying to tell people that what they learned in school would take them only so far. That what they needed to learn in combat was how to operate under conditions that were not classroom. That's how we made most of our contribution to those people before they were sent to Japan.
I had enough points to get out so in September of 1945 I was sent to Fort Dix, NJ (close to my home in New York city) and that was the end of my Air Force career. I resigned my commission at the beginning of the Korean War. I felt that I was no longer young enough or capable enough to keep up with the modern technology to be of use to the government in Korea.

MR: Do you remember your reaction to the death of President Roosevelt?

KC: Yes, we are talking about 1945. I was an instructor in Houston at the time on special assignment. Having been a" peacenik" before the war, I would never have gone to war unless we were attacked by Germany. I had studied enough about World War I and understood there was no way in the world that America should get trapped in another European war with France and Britain who has allowed Hitler to build himself into a dictator over ten years. So I was always an "America first" person. Lindberg was one of my heroes, saying let's take of America first, and that is what my politics were. Pearl Harbor changed it. So when I went to war and served Roosevelt I was doing that I was doing that from a family where my father thought Roosevelt was the worst thing that had ever happened to America because the free enterprise system was going to go down the pike. I would have tremendous arguments with him. I would say look, the banks are closed and the Republicans have not done a thing and this guy is doing something. So I had a fondness for him. So when he died I was relieved because I was aware of the fact that he was a very ill man. And I learned to have a tremendous respect for Harry Truman who I didn't know anything about prior to Roosevelt's death. So yes, I was interested and I remember thinking thanks god that he lived to the point where we knew the war had been won. And he did know that and I knew that.

MR: what was your reaction to the dropping of the bombs on Japan?

KC: I think all of us who had been in combat felt that Harry Truman did the right thing. I was aware of the fact that Einstein, one of my heroes growing up, said that you have no idea what you are doing when you set off this weapon and that it is beyond anyone's wildest imagination. I still think that politically at that point in time, rather than send people to occupy Japan, knowing that they would have fought, as they did in the islands, to the last man, it would have been unconscionable as to the number of Americans that would have been killed. And I had to put it into perspective, and this is the thing people, including my own children who are in their fifties, don't understand is that when we dropped bombs on Berlin and other cities I understood that, not only did we hit our target, we killed hundreds of thousands of women and children. But at the same time there were nights when I wasn't bombing Germany that I sat in a bomb shelter in England with a woman and her child right next to me while Germans were dropping bombs on England. So I saw it both ways. I was in a bomb shelter seeing the horror those women were going through and remembered that Hitler had been doing this to England for a year without any protection whatsoever and without any target. He had just leveled London and Coventry. So in doing what I did it seemed that what I was trapped in had to do with the fact that war in today's world has nothing to do with soldiers. It has to with civilizations and cultures, so whatever it takes is what a President has to do. So I thought that Harry Truman made the right decision, one that I would have made. And I would have taken the bomb had I been the navigator. I would have had no problem delivering the bomb.

MR: I know your crew was lost but did you remain in contact with anyone else that you served with?

KC: I did not, for that reason. There was no reunion that I went to. I had lost my crew and it was something I didn't talk about for many years. I had no desire to go back and share memories with crews that had survived. It wasn't until much later that I decided to do this book for reasons that it would be helpful to young people in understanding what World War II was like. Not so much understanding it in

its entirety but how it affected individual people's lives. It wasn't until then that I had any real reason to try and recapture people who had been there. Then I joined what is called the 8th Air Force Historical Society. And through that I have maintained contacts at both the national level and at the local level in New York City. I found that very rewarding.

MR: did you ever join any other veterans' organizations?

KC: No. I never joined the American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars.

MR: did you ever make use of the GI bill?

KC: No. I was already married when I came back and I also had my Mother and Grandmother to support because my father had died. I went back to work to progress as fast as I could and did progress pretty rapidly.

MR: Did you ever use the 52-20 clause benefit?

KC: No.

MR: Did you get to see any USO shows?

KC: No, I was never present at a USO show.

MR: How do you think your time in the military changed or affected your life?

KC: I think in a very dominate way. The moment of truth comes to you (and people talk about religion and believing in something). I was raised and schooled in the Christian church. I don't go to church anymore, but I do have the faith that came to me when this piece of flak hit me. There was no question in my mind that I was coming home and was going to be safe and go to work and just do the job that I had to do. It is a feeling that has stayed with me all my life. So, from that standpoint there is no fear. So many people today seem to be afraid of so many things. The fear of doing things or fear of failing has never been with me since I left the service. I have continued to look at my own life as one of missions, a series of missions and not just adventures, and it has worked for me. After the war I was lucky enough to be able to open my own business on Madison Ave. doing advertizing, marketing and public relations. I started with Milton Bradley, the game company, and helped make them very successful. And for my second client I had the opportunity to make a presentation to BMW (motorcycles and cars). Here was a German company and 34 organizations were making presentations. I flew to Munich to meet the director of BMW. In talking with him after making the presentation he asked me where I was during the war. I said I was in the 8th Air Force bombing Germany. He said he wanted to show me what we did to Munich. He drove me out to a park and he said they had to bulldoze all of Munich out here and razed everything. So I pulled out my piece of flak and asked him if he knew what that was. He said "yah, German 88". I said that this went into my right arm and almost took it off and another one on its next mission went into my airplane and my whole crew blew up. He looked at me and said "you see this missing ear lobe? American 50 caliber machine gun bullet." From that moment on we would drink together and he would say: "we should have been on the same side. The Russians were the enemy". But

I would remind him that they had a little guy with a mustache named Hitler. Then he would say "what could we do? We had Hitler and you had Roosevelt." See, in his mind it made no difference. In either case we had to do what our leaders said. Anyway, he became a good friend and I did get the account. I became very successful. I drove the first BMW that came in from Munich for $2,300, drove it to Maine, wrote the marketing plan, and you know the rest.

Another thing I might mention, working with the game company, Milton Bradley. Later, working on a consulting job, I had to go to Tokyo. And dealing with electronic games (this was back in the 1970's when this was an idea that had not yet materialized) I met in one marketing company a man who told me he was the last kamikaze pilot. I said "what do you mean, you were the last kamikaze pilot?". It was the last day of the war and he was on a suicide mission to crash his plane into an American ship. Halfway there he decided he didn't have enough fuel and turned back. He said he got back and the war was over. He was seventeen! So I had met the head of BMW who had been an SS trooper and had met the last kamikaze pilot during my business career, so it has been a fun trip.

In 1972 when I retired from business the war then had become the war on drugs. President Nixon had declared war on cancer and then a war on drugs. I became aware of how our young people were being destroyed by drugs, and had been destroyed by drugs since the 1960's. By 1972 it was a problem in all of the high schools in New York or Maine, or wherever. So most of my effort has been talking to people in the school systems and helping young people in finding some kind of career guidance. That is my current war.

MR: Well, thank you very much for your (?).

KC: You're very welcome. When I work with young people in the school systems, both public and private, I try to use the book "High Honor". Not just in reference to the War but what it really means, the word honor. In the preface of the book we have included what is the final sentence of the Declaration of Independence. And what the Founding Fathers said was: "And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." And it is that word that is difficult to define, but easy to understand when to read it in relation to what the founding Fathers said when they signed the Declaration of Independence. In my own chapter I talk further about the drug problem and why the war on drugs is so vital to the future of this country. It is entitled "Borrowed Time", and in that chapter there is a photo of me and my crew taken in 1943.

MR: Would you like to name the whole crew if you could?

KC: (pointing to each man in the photo) They are: Frank Caldwell, the bombardier, from Anderson, IN; Johnny Johnson, the co-pilot, from Houston, TX; Joe Rosis (sp?), the pilot, my greatest friend, from Hollywood, CA; Wally Waldron, waste gunner, from Houston, TX; Ed McCue, waste gunner, from Montana; Ed Miller, tail gunner, from Wyoming; Frank Dickens, the engineer; Rosie, ball turret gunner and an uncanny shot; and Purceval, our radioman. He is the one that came to help me and fainted. And he failed to go on that last mission. He had had enough. The thing that haunts me is that I can't put a face to the guy who replaced him. He was an 18 year old Jewish boy named Henry Vogelstein from Brooklyn. It was his first and last mission. And when you think about it, an 18 year old boy was put as a

replacement in a crew that he did not know. We were an all Christian crew. We all had our little New Testament that the Air force gave us and he would have been given an Old Testament. He made his only mission with a crew of strangers. Now that's bravery.
So, the way I sum it up when I talk to people, I say that we all want to be free, but very few of us want to be brave. For ALL of us to be free, a FEW of us must be brave, and that is the history of America.

MR: Thank you very much.

KC: This guy (pointing to photo in book) spoke with Walter Cronkite on TV. He flew 75 missions. He flew 25, re-enlisted, flew 25 more and was untouched, then did it a third time. He flew 75 missions and was never shot.