

Wisconsin Public Television
Korean War Stories Project

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
DONNE C. HARNED
Fighter Pilot, Air Force, Korean War
2005

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Harned, Donne C., (1927-). Oral History Interview, 2005.

Video Recording: 3 videorecordings (ca. 35 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Donne “D.C.” Harned, a Madison, Wisconsin native, discusses his service as a fighter pilot in the Air Force during the Korean War. Harned speaks of enlisting in the Aviation Cadet Program in 1948 and being in a class that could choose between the old “pinks and greens” Army Air Force uniform and the new Air Force blue uniform. He talks about advanced pilot training at Las Vegas Air Force Base (later renamed Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada) in F-51Ds, assignment to the 31st Fighter Group at Turner Air Force Base (Georgia), and aerial gunnery practice in F-84Es. He tells of a friend who was towing the gunnery target getting hit and making an emergency landing. Harned mentions enjoying Naval Close Air Support School (Virginia). In 1950, the Air Force called for volunteer F-51 pilots to go to Korea and Harned volunteered. He describes riding over on the *USS Boxer* and comments on the Navy’s emphasis on timeliness. Assigned to the 40th Fighter Squadron, part of the 35th Fighter Interceptor Group, he discusses how near the North Korean People’s Army was to the air field at Pohang (South Korea) and the Air Force’s eventual evacuation to Tsuiki (Japan). Moved for a time to Pusan (South Korea), Harned expresses appreciation of the pierce shield planking on the runway and mentions always flying with a sleeping bag since they couldn’t be sure where they would land. He speaks of flying close air support for the breakout at Pusan, moving back to Pohang, and seeing an exploding artillery pieces come near his plane during a mission to destroy weapons in a Sujon-area landing zone. As his missions took him increasingly further north, he talks about using napalm, rockets, and .50 caliber guns. Harned acknowledges learning a lot from experienced World War II flight leaders. He reflects on the evolution of call signs and aerial tactics after the war began. Transferred to Yonpo Airfield (North Korea), he recalls the severe cold and flying a memorable mission with a Marine Forward Air Controller to support Marines in the Chosin Reservoir. He relates seeing an inadequately dressed Marine whose face was black from frostbite and states, “That was the enemy, frostbite.” He touches on destroying American equipment that was captured during the Chinese advance and states the United Nations had complete air superiority. Harned tells of once flying so far off-course that he could see the Soviet Union. He describes the men of the No. 77 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force and 2 Squadron of the South African Air Force as “the greatest bunch of guys.” He portrays the No. 77 wing commander and tells of flying cap for him after the commander was shot down. Harned says the Australians created a great restaurant on base that unfortunately got shut down for not inspecting meat to American standards. He details methods of target acquisition while flying air support and how napalm was loaded into the plane. He explains that the planes would be fired up by the crew chiefs at two in the morning to warm up, and the missions would usually take off a couple hours later. Harned recalls one instance where he heard a bang while flying and, after landing, found a round lodged in an instrument panel near his stomach. After flying his 100 missions, he returned to the States in April of 1951.

Biographical Sketch:

Harned (b.1927) served as a fighter pilot in the Air Force from 1948-1952 and in the Wisconsin Air National Guard as an air technician from 1955-1987. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1956 with a bachelor's degree in industrial psychology, and he currently resides in Blue Mounds, Wisconsin.

Citation Note:

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Related Materials Note:

Photographs of this narrator's military service can be found in Wisconsin Public Television. Wisconsin Korean War Stories records (WVM Mss 1389).

Interviewed by Mik Derks, Wisconsin Public Television, May 4, 2005.

Transcribed by Wisconsin Public Television staff, n.d.

Transcript edited and reformatted by Wisconsin Veterans Museum staff, 2010.

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, 2010.

Transcribed Interview:

Mik: Start at the very beginning, how you first got into the--were you Air Force?

Harned: Well it started in the fall of 1948, and I had always wanted to be in the pilot training program, become an aviation cadet. I was walking down the street in Denver, I was going to the University of Denver and here was this young man in pinks and greens at the time. And so I stopped him and I said, "Has the program started again?" And he said, "Yes it has." And I said, "Well, what should I do to get in the program?" And he said, "I suggest that you go to Lowry Air Force Base, which is located outside of Denver, and make an application." And I did, and was accepted, and I reported to San Angelo, Texas in June of 1948. I'll have to digress just a moment. I saw the young man in the Air Force, that would be the fall of 1947. So I was accepted in 1948 and reported to pilot training at San Angelo, Texas--Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo Texas in June of 1948.

Mik: What are pinks and greens?

Harned: That was the uniform that the United States Army Air Forces wore in WWII. And the Air Force, President Truman designated the Air Force a separate service, I believe it was September 1947, but the uniform hadn't changed yet so the officers still wore the pinks and greens. Olive drab blouse and a--rather a--the reason they called it pink, they did look kind of pink, and it was a nice looking uniform. And of course after that my class had the chance to wear either one, the pinks and greens or the new Air Force blue. So we continued on through pilot training and I graduated in July from advanced training in Las Vegas, now Nellis Air Force Base, July 1, 1949. And was assigned to the 31st fighter group at Turner Air Force Base, Georgia, as a fighter pilot. Oh, I have to tell you that Nellis Air Force Base at the time, the advanced training at the time, was conducted in F-51Ds. The other advanced training base was Williams Air Force Base in Arizona and they graduated in the F-80A, one of the new production Jet fighters that the new Air Force had. And--so that is part of the story. So at Turner Air Force Base we were flying F-84s, we started out in F-84Cs and gradually, as the production airplanes were improved, we finally--the last eighty-four that I flew, was the 84E. Now the reason that we had the F-51D on base at Turner was we--the F-51 towed the target for the F-84Es flying aerial gunnery. And we flew aerial gunnery out over the gulf in Florida and we flew in from England Auxiliary Base number two. And it was great sport. Initially the 84E had a radar gun sight and no one knew how to use it and it didn't work so we used a fixed piper with mixed results on the rag, we called it the rag. And so Republic sent down Robert Johnson, great guy, WWII Ace and he taught us how to use the A-1 CM gun sight. And a little story there. When you're firing aerial gunnery, if you get too low and angle off from the rag, which is towed behind the F51, which is I believe 750 feet of cable on this rag. If you come in and you have too low an angle off you're liable to hit the tow airplane. And that's exactly what happened to a friend of mine. He was towing in the F-51 and a guy came up about five degree angle off and hit him in the coolant. Well in the F-51 after you're hit in

the coolant you have about 8 minutes before the engine seizes. But this young man, his name was Nate McGraw, an exceptional pilot, he dropped the rag and I believe he was at 20,000 and he made it to Aux 2 and made a dead stick landing, which was just an outstanding feat.

Mik: How did you get into being a fighter pilot; was that your aim all along?

Harned: Yes. When you're in training, primary and basic, after you finish basic, you are recommended by your instructor for fighter pilot training. And of course, I made my wishes known. And fifty-five of us were in the first graduating class, I might add, from Las Vegas Air Force Base. And the other fighter pilot designees went to Williams Air Force Base to train in the F-80As I mentioned before. And the training at Nellis---the F-51 was not a two place tandem aircraft. However, the F-51 had a fuselage tank. They would remove the fuselage tank and put a seat back there but the rudders were very rudimentary and they were just, there were no pedals or breaks or anything like that, and they were just, sort of like stirrups that you could put your feet on. And the instructor would take you around. We got three landings and the third landing, he made the first two as I recall. He let you, very gingerly, of course he's following you through, to land the aircraft and after that you soloed the F-51. The F-51 was just a marvelous, marvelous aircraft. And you had a Rolls Royce and V1650 that put out 1,670 horse power. So it was very adequate and of course it was very prominent in WWII as a fighter aircraft and was very successful. The Air Force at the time was drawing down from WWII strength. WWII strength was 2 million plus people. And it had drawn down to 400,000 plus people in that era. So we continued on with our training at Turner Air Force Base in the 84.

Mik: Was that just luck of the draw, which base you went to?

Harned: No. You were assigned a base. You didn't have any--

Mik: But I mean that was--has nothing--you didn't choose between jets and the F?

Harned: No.

Mik: That was decided--

Harned: That was decided, yes.

Mik: By the Air Force.

Harned: Yes it was. So we continued our training at Turner and we went to various exercises on the East Coast and we ah--Langley for example, and the time went by. And 1950 rolled around and in April of 1950 I was sent to the Naval Close Air Support School at Little Creek, Virginia. Very early April. And it was a very good experience. The Navy is just a tremendous, tremendous organization to teach the close air support techniques. And of course they teach the Marine facts. And I don't know if the Air

Force foresaw this or not but anyway, I graduated from Little Creek, Virginia. So in April--then again we just continued our training: aerial gunnery and air to ground at England Aux 2. June 25, 1950. The start. The word came around. There were several of us that were--whoops [something falls, laughter, then interview continues]. There were several of us that were current in the F-51 and we used that aircraft as I mentioned to tow for aerial gunnery. And the word came down immediately that they needed F-51 drivers and ten of us volunteered to go to Korea. And we had to tell everybody where we were and leave our telephone numbers with the Ops Office and so forth because we never knew when we were going to get the word. So I was at a cocktail party in Atlanta and I had left the telephone number with the people we were at the party with. Telephone rang and it said "Harned, you better get down here quick. You're leaving." So Atlanta was three hours away and this was about one o'clock in the morning so I had a long drive to Turner Air Force Base. We left the next morning for Camp Stoneman, California and that is a port of embarkation. We were told we were going to sail on the *Boxer*, a Naval carrier. And that they were going to unload F-51s on the carrier *Boxer*. And they did 145 F-51s. The F-51s came from, largely, the Air National Guard inventory and a few came from the unit in Madison, Wisconsin, the 176th Fighter Squadron at Truax. The journey over was made in record time. It was made in eight days. We landed at Kisarazu where the birds were offloaded onto barges and the cocoons removed because all the 51s were cocooned, they were all topside on the carrier deck. Kind of an interesting story, the Navy of course is very traditional and we were assigned mess times and so we also were assigned to check the tie downs on the 51s on deck. Well, one day, one late afternoon I was called by the O.D. [Officer of the Deck] to check the tie downs which I did as several of them were pretty loose because the ship was rolling a bit. So the Navy people tied down the 51s. I came down to the mess and I was late. And the officer of the mess, a lieutenant commander said, "Lieutenant, you're late!" And I said, "Yes, sir," I said, "A little problem up on topside. Had to tie down the tie downs on the 51s." "Well, well, alright. I guess you can eat." No, they were great people but of course they had their traditions. So the aircraft were offloaded at Kisarazu and we flew them to Tachikawa Air Base in Japan. And from there they were flown to Taegu. I didn't go to Taegu. My squadron, the 40th Fighter Squadron, was then based at Pohang. Pohang Gong, K-3 on the east coast of Korea. I was flown there and I flew my first combat mission on August 4, 1950. And at that time the enemy was very, very close, the NKPA, the North Korean People's Army. And we flew until--I believe it was the middle of September when the guerilla forces were so close that our crew chiefs were in slip trenches at the end, the end of the runway and we were sleeping underneath our cots with our .45s. And the situation, the wing commander, deemed the situation untenable and so we evacuated. And the crew chiefs and maintenance people were evacuated on LST [landing ship tank] to Tsuiki, Japan. And that's where we landed and we conducted our missions from Tsuiki, Japan which meant we had to fly across the strait and Korea. Can I have a break? [Interview pauses]

[Question not recorded]

Harned: Yes, that's correct . Okay I'll start again. So we landed in Tsuiki and flew our missions out of Tsuiki in support of the 24th Division under Major General William F. Dean. The situation there is, as the saying goes, or as we used to say in Korea, the situation was very fluid. And it certainly was. We, the 40th Fighter Squadron and the 39th Squadron--the 39th and the 40th Squadron were a member of the 35th Fighter Interceptor Group, although we were doing air to ground/air to mud. After the war the 35th Fighter Interceptor Group was responsible, in their area, for the air defense of Japan. And so it was never changed from a fighter interceptor group to a fighter group or fighter bomber group. The 35th Fighter Interceptor Group--I've got to kind of drift back here a little bit--they were converting to the F-80A aircraft. And they had not completely converted all of the squadrons of three squadrons. June 25th came along and because the F-80 had to fly from Japan to do the air support work for the Army, they could only stay on target for about 15 minutes. It's a very, very short time. Whereas the F-51 could stay on target for, well, two or three hours at a time with drop tanks, 165 gallon drop tanks. So the Air Force, at the time, had 700 plus F-51s in the United States inventory and they had about 150 in storage that had been put there while the units were converting to the F-80A. These were taken out of storage. The 40th Fighter Squadron regained the F-51 and I'm sure they were very disappointed to lose the F-80A and the 39th Squadron also went back to the F-51D. The 41st Squadron stayed at, I believe Misawa, to continue the air defense mission from Japan. The perimeter was being held very tenuously. We were ordered back to Korea. We were ordered--we--our airfield was Pusan, which the engineers had done a great job of putting down PSP, pierce shield planking, instead of the muddy almost unacceptable runway that it was. So we flew out of Pusan and the campaigns at the time, this was the Korean perimeter and at this time General MacArthur decided on his brilliant plan of landing at Inchon. I believe I have the timing right here. He--so the Inchon landing was successful. The Pusan Perimeter, the American troops, Commonwealth troops broke out and continued northward and met up with, I believe it was, General Walker's Army on the east, on the eastside of Inchon. And that was the breakthrough. Can I stop a minute? Let's see, OK now, I've got to move and I move someplace. I am moving to--

Mik: Tell me what does it takes to move? Like when you said you were moved from Japan back to Pusan. What does that involve in addition to you guys flying your planes over there?

Harned: Let's see. OK to digress. To move, for example from Pohang to Tsuiki, as I mentioned the LST, they move the personnel and maintenance equipment on the LST. For us it wasn't much of a move, we just tucked our sleeping bags under our cockpit seats and flew to Tsuiki. As a matter of fact, for a long time we always carried our sleeping bags, put our sleeping bags under our cockpit seats because we didn't know where we were going to land, if the airfield was going to be secure enough for us to land. But now at Pusan, we moved--after Pusan I believe we moved back to Pohang because it was secure. We flew close air support for the breakout. The forces were very successful. The North Korean People's Army were in retreat. And we were marching north up the peninsula. We--as I say we were

operating out of Pohang and one of the memorable missions that I remember was, prior to the drop of the 187th Regimental Combat Team into Sujon from C-119s, C-97s, C-46s, we were directed to destroy weapons in the LZ, the landing zone. The weather was absolutely horrible at Pohang when we took off and we flew to the Sujon area. As we got there it just seemed like the stories you hear from the Civil War. The sky just opened up over the battle and it was clear. And we were receiving the flak at the time. And at the bottom the artillery pieces and other weapons were located on the hillside adjacent to the LZ which was a, would be a great hazard when the 187th dropped the next day. And there was an Air Force forward air controller who knew where the positions were and was controlling it. The flight lead put us in trail and we were armed with the 50 caliber machine guns on the fifty-one. Which, six machine guns 300 rounds per gun and we had three 5" 38 rockets, three on each side of the aircraft. We would arm the aircraft this way for just this type of mission because napalm would not be that effective against artillery pieces. We went in trail, flight of four and I was number three. So number one, number two went in and strafed and fired their fighters' 5" .38 rockets. And I was number three and I was coming in and I could see the explosions up ahead and all of a sudden this seven foot barrel, artillery barrel came leisurely floating up in the air and passed off about a hundred yards off my port wing. And I said, "Gee, I hope number four sees that". But we were very successful and the--of course we weren't the only fighter aircraft that made that strike. There were other aircraft also. But the weapons were sufficiently, the enemy weapons, were destroyed and the drop was very successful for the 187th. So we continued on up north. We operated briefly from a grass strip after the UN forces captured Pyongyang just a very few sorties. And then we went back to Pohang. Time frame here is late September and we continued to operate out of Pohang. The--our missions took us further and further north. We'd drop lots of napalm in support of the UN, American, Commonwealth troops. And we were, we became very good at--I have to tell you this, that when I was a 2nd lieutenant when I arrived in, at Pohang. And second balloon brown bar, never fired a fifty-one in combat. All my gunnery practice had been in the F-84. And I was a flight leader in the F-84 before I went over. And the flight leads were experienced WWII pilots. And they took these young lads, including me, and they taught them everything they knew about close air support combat. There isn't any doubt in my mind that I wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for those gentlemen. And they were just marvelous. Taught us every trick of the trade. So--excuse me. Going to have a little "mizu" here. That's Japanese for water. Am I talking too much? [interview pauses]--You know--you're not filming now are you?

Mik: How often did you fly and did your planes go out more than once but with different pilots in a day or--just how did that all work?

Harned: When the war started in June of 1950, the air staff and the Joint Chiefs were very concerned because we had 40,000 troops in Korea and the budget, the DOD budget, was very, very tight. And some commanders, some, on the Joint Chief said, "We can use these troops better elsewhere," and so forth. At the time the American Army, they were in garrison in Japan. And the American forces had not practiced

joint operations and the lessons they had learned in WWII. The Pusan perimeter was quite chaotic and Lieutenant General Stratemeir was the head of Far Eastern Command, and General Partridge was the commander of the Fifth Air Force.

[End of Tape WCKOR091]

Mik: You were taking us through the evolution of the system?

Harned: So the aircraft would check in to Mella control. The fighter aircraft--our call sign was "Wolfhound". And our flight was B, Bravo. Wolfhound Bravo. And Mella would say, "Contact Mosquito, call sign thunderstorm coordinates so-and-so." We'd fly to the coordinates, pick-up the mosquito visually. Then he would either pinpoint the target with WP, white phosphorus, or he would make a little pass over the target and we would take it from there with napalm, rockets, and .50 caliber. So it was very effective but it did take time to evolve and General Partridge--made that decision to, instead of interdiction, at that time in the war, going behind the enemy and chopping rail lines and supply. He wanted to support the troops immediately and it was very important and it was successful. The interdiction, and the rail cutting, that came later. We were proceeding up the peninsula and very, very rapidly. We were transferred to the Yonpo Airfield which is in North Korea. We went to Yonpo, we were told not to rocket certain buildings because we would be staying there. And so we didn't and it was extremely cold, we're getting into late November and December. I hope you can cut this in the tape I have to digress a minute. Flying out of Pohang--one of our flights went way up North and this was in the first week in October, and observed an enormous number of trucks coming across the Yalu through the valleys and into North Korea. This was duly reported during the intel debrief. Shortly thereafter the CCF, Chinese Communist Forces, streamed over the mountains and the Yalu and headed south. This is when we went to Yonpo Airfield, in North Korea. The 1st Marine Division and the 7th Army Division proceeded towards the Yalu, north and were met with a hundred thousand or so Chinese troops. And they had to--I'll take that back. As General O.P. Smith said, "We're not retreating. We're attacking in a different direction." And so the reservoir, Chosin Reservoir, is in a bowl and it's surrounded. On one side there are higher mountains and they were, I recall, seven or eight thousand feet and on the other side they sloped down. And then as you went east, highway took you to Hamhung which was the port on the East Coast. The Marines and the 7th Division were in--had their retreat cut off. At Yonpo Airfield we had the--our squadron, number 77 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, just a great bunch of guys, Marine S-7F Tiger Cats, and F-4U5 Corsairs. There may have been other squadrons there I--these are the ones I remember. I'm sure there were other squadrons there, fighter squadrons. One memorable mission that I remember is that it was snowing quite heavily at Yonpo airfield. Marines were calling for air support. They were quite desperate. And this is to illustrate again, the dedication of the men that fought in WWII and now were fighting in this war. We took off in the snowstorm and to get to the reservoir, a flight lead had to find a pass. We climbed up through the weather and we topped out at, I don't know, eleven or twelve thousand, the maps weren't too shiny at the time. And the flight lead started his letdown, trying to find this pass. And he would

letdown until he saw the pine trees going by and then he'd pull the flights up. The flight up--we were in figure four. And--he tried three times and I was number two and I see the pine trees coming up and I'd say well, I'll see you later. But just to illustrate he did find the pass, we went down in the bowl and flew close air support for the Marines. Still snowing down in the bowl but the vis was still a mile or so. I was assigned a Marine FAC, what a crazy guy. And there was another Marine FAC at the other end, Forward Air Controller. They split the fight up. So here we are and they're directing us. And this one Marine said, "I want you to hit that line of bushes over there." And I said, "Is it clear of the troops?" "Aw," he said, "yeah," he said, "they're a hundred feet away." That's how close we were operating. And so we made pass after pass at the enemy and these FACs, they knew where we were all the time in that bowl with that snow flying. And they helped join us up, we joined up, went up, and climbed up and out and back to the Yonpo Airfield.

Mik: Now, when you make pass after pass, you strafe and then rocket or--

Harned: Yes.

Mik: So you make several passes?

Harned: On the passes we would make, well we'd make passes till we ran out of ammunition. As far as the machine guns were concerned on the F-51, they fired 600 rounds per minute, you had 300 rounds per gun so you could just use short bursts. By the way, you did not ever, ever, ever, hold down the trigger. Your bursts were 2 and 3 seconds otherwise you'd burn out the barrels. It'd get so hot. The battle at the reservoir continued. The Marines were very thankful for the close air support they received. The--I had some Marines tell me they wouldn't have made it out of there if it hadn't been for the close air support, Air Force, Navy and Marines. It was very, very disturbing to me to see the way the Marines were dressed. I saw a young Marine who was evacuated in Yonpo he was about--remember we're talking thirty or forty degrees below zero here, and he did have on a field jacket but his inner clothing was khakis and his face was completely black with frostbite. And as I recall, many, many casualties were that. That was the enemy, frostbite. And so anyway, the Marines and the 7th Division made it to Hungnam. The Navy did a great job. They were ready for the evacuation. They evacuated the 1st Marines and the Army and they also took onboard 90,000 North Koreans who wanted to escape the regime and took them to Japan which I thought was just a marvelous thing. It was a beautifully executed by the Navy. Not only that, they blew up the port of Hungnam. And I'm sure you've seen pictures of that. I didn't get to witness that but the pictures are quite impressive. But they did destroy any useable equipment and so forth. So there we were and we moved back to Pusan because the Chinese were continuing south. And the 2nd Division had been caught by the Chinese and they were in--well I won't be too graphic. But we had to destroy a lot of American equipment which included thousands and thousands of gallons of gasoline which made a lot of smoke. The Chinese continued south, down the peninsula. And the--politically--the situation was to stop at the 38th Parallel. At least that's my

understanding. And they did and Panmunjom, of course, and so forth. But during that period, this period would have been 1951, and during that period of course the fighting was still going on and we were still flying close air support missions. And the fighting continued as--the fighting continued until an armistice was signed July 27, 1953. But during that interim, of course, the F-86s were tangling with the MiGs that had sanctuary across the Yalu. And you've all read about the F-86s and their kill ratio over the MiG which is a Russian, Soviet I should say, Soviet fighter and one of the first jet fighters. The F-86s were very successful and one of the reasons that the American offensive was successful from the outset is because the UN Forces and UN Commonwealth Forces had complete, had complete air superiority. At the beginning there were a few Yakovlev fighters that tried to, for example, prostrate Kimpo during the evacuation of the civilians during the early part of the war. That would have been the first week in July when they were evacuated. Excuse me, I'm jumping around here Mik.

Mik: That's fine. That's no problem. You jump anywhere you want, really. We transcribe everything, we can put pieces together.

Harned: Well--excuse me. I should have taken my Sucrets. I should quit smoking that pipe that would cure it.

Mik: You know when you mentioned the MiGs--did you encounter any MiGs when you were flying your missions?

Harned: The MiG aircraft--they didn't bother us. I'll tell you a mission where we saw two contrails. We were assigned, we were flying out of Pohang, to escort B-29s who were going up north. We were to rendezvous at some coordinates in the Sea of Japan. We flew to the rendezvous point and the B-29s didn't show up. We continued saying--thinking that perhaps we'd missed the rendezvous point. And we continued and continued. Finally the flight lead said he saw some outline in--up ahead that would have been to the, that would have been to the--north, northeast. And it was land. And so this didn't look too shiny and of course it was the Soviet Union and we calculated later that we were 60 miles south of Vladivostok. We were way, way out over the South China Sea and we immediately did a 180 and throttled back the 51 to 16 hundred RPM which is very, very hard on the engine and--to save fuel. And we made it back to the base to Pohang and during that time, I was going to say, we did see two contrails above us. And they were MiGs. But we were at what, 15,000 and they were probably 30,000 or 35,000 so they didn't even see us.

I'd like to mention the Australians, Number 77 Squadron and also number 2 Squadron South African Air Force. The Number 77 was the Royal Australian air force. They were the greatest bunch of guys and so were the South Afs. And they flew with us--everywhere we went, every base that we transferred to, we went all up and down the peninsula. And they were there with us. The wing commander was just the greatest guy, had just a marvelous personality. So he was up north and, on a mission, and this was in late November and he was shot down. And he--snow was

on the ground and he did a great job of bailing in F-51. And he's way up north no--there wasn't any way that he could be rescued. We were told about it and they said would you please fly cap as long as you can, which we did. Now the lat/lon [latitude/longitude] is pretty much the same like it is in Wisconsin. It was getting dark. We were first found him about 4 o'clock. And he was sitting on the wing smoking a cigarette. And we went by and capped him as long as we could. Finally we had to leave because we were beginning to go low on fuel. And so we made a low pass to say goodbye. And he waved and said I'll see you later. And he was captured. Now this gentleman, I wish I could remember his name, was--the #77 Squadron wore polka dot scarves. I mean it was a blue scarf with polka dots and the North Koreans amazingly, I said this man was a very charming fellow, sent his scarf back through the lines somehow. Sent back to the Americans. His wife and family lived at Johnson Air Base, and the flag got back, or the scarf, got back to his family. And he was one of the first people to be repatriated in 1953 shortly after the armistice. If I ever get to Australia I'd like to tell that story in a #77 Squadron's mess. The South Africans, I could never figure out how they could fit in the cockpit of an F-51. They were all big men, I mean six foot two, six foot three. And just great people too and great pilots and we enjoyed them so much. The Australians at Pusan, a C-119 had crashed. A C-119 they call a Flying Boxcar and had a great big old fuselage that was just essentially a box. Twin booms, twin engines and the Australians made a restaurant out of it. And they imported fresh Australian beef. Meanwhile, in our mess, we didn't have a mess like they did we just had a tent where we had food. And we had bully beef, stringy bully beef and scrambled eggs and that kind of thing. But you could go over to the Australian C-119 restaurant and get steak and real eggs and lettuce and tomatoes. It was all put a stop to, however, when the base veterinarian, an American, asked the Australians if their beef was inspected to American standards. And they didn't know anything about that so we said, "Well it's not, so this place is closed." We were extremely disappointed.

Mik: Let me stop you there. [Interview pauses]

Harned: I am embarrassed--

Mik: About your throat.

Harned: Yes.

Mik: Oh, don't be embarrassed. I don't talk nearly as much as the person telling their story, when I get through a day, you know, my voice starts to go.

Harned: Okay, ready.

Mik: When you talk about the Forward Air Controller and he says hit that line of bushes, what do you see from where you are and how fast are you going and how do you pick out things when you're on the deck?

Harned: When you're flying close air support, the F-51D had a very simple gun sight, a ring gun sight that was centered on your windscreen, the bulletproof windscreen in front of your face. The target acquisition-- we were very low. We would cut grass, particularly when we were dropping napalm. But in a troop situation, when we we're very close to the troops, we had to be very, very careful, we had to know what we're shooting. And the Marine FAC at the Chosin was well aware of our concern there. But he was so sure of what we should strafe that we just strafed where he told us to strafe and it was effective. When you drop napalm the--you should get--dropping napalm is, low altitude. It is almost like a skip bombing run. The squadron sent, from Pusan, two people back to Japan to figure out the best air speeds that would bring the best pattern to the Napalm drop. And they found that 300 miles per hour--the fifty-one--Air Force aircraft were not converted to knots yet on the airspeed indicator. So 300 was a very--the optimum airspeed to get a maple leaf pattern, which would spread 100 yards in width to maybe 150 to the forward point. But the edges, it would look just like a maple leaf. And it had to be dropped at a very, very low altitude and by low I mean cutting grass, twenty feet--ten feet with a very sharp break after you broke. By the way, the--originally the napalm tanks were very expensive, they were aluminum because they were drop tanks, 165 gallon drop tanks that we'd use for fuel on a on a certain type of mission. The Japanese started to manufacture them out of fiberglass material that is much less--it was inexpensive and just as effective, saving our aluminum tanks for the drop tanks. [Pauses]

Mik: How is the napalm loaded into the plane?

Harned: OK, good question--I just spoke about the napalm, the pattern that was made. The--napalm is manufactured from gasoline and a special powder that you put into the gasoline and mix it and it becomes a gel. The fuse is in the top of the tank and of course at that airspeed--the explosive in that fuse explodes and detonates and ignites the napalm. At one point in time the--we experimented with--excuse me. [interview pauses] Do you really want to hear this stuff because it's going to get--people are going to watch this and say, "My goodness sakes, this is terrible".

Mik: Yeah. Well, in a way we do, to a certain extent.

Harned: Well you know it's war and war is a very, very messy thing and it's terrible and it's messy. So that's how they--that's how the armories manufactured napalm. The armories also had a really brilliant idea and that is to weld .50 caliber barrels that were burned out onto the end of a 250 pound frag bomb. And it was very effective. One 250 pound frag, because when it hit the ground, the barrel was four feet long, would detonate. The frag, by frag I mean there were rings of steel all the way up to the body of the bomb, and it would clear out--a woods, a three acre woods no problem. And that was one of the weapons that we used. And it was, of course, recycling the .50 caliber gun barrel. The missions that we flew--the Air Force--there wasn't any limit through January of 1951 how many you had to fly before you could rotate. And we weren't concerned with that. We were very busy. Finally the--the mission number was established and it was 100 missions and you could rotate

either back to Japan or back to the Z I, [zone of interior] United States. Interesting, The Australians, number 77 Squadron, their tour was 75 missions and they would go back to Australia and then they'd come back for another 75. Like I say, great guys. But the Air Force, once you finished up 100 you were rotated. And--the--the war continued and stalemated at the 38th and kind of stuck there and the Army fought innumerable battles for Hill 902. A good friend of mine--was in a number of those battles. And the very, very, very brave men assaulted those hills and the Air Force continued to provide close air support for those assaults. Which I might add, some casualties were taken during--after the armistice. I finished up my 100 missions and was rotated to the States in April of 1951. And so that's the end of the story of the Korean War for me. **[End of Tape WCKOR092]**

Mik: It was overcast and you weren't able to fly, but otherwise were you up every day?

Harned: Before we moved to Yonpo Airfield, I believe it was K27, they had a K designation for all the airfields, we were told not to rocket certain buildings because we would be staying--they're where our quarters would be. These were Russian, Soviet built facilities and we slept in a large room with a samovar. It was fired by coal. That room was warm in twenty and thirty degrees below zero. We really felt guilty because the maintenance people, the crew chiefs who worked on the aircraft in the bombed out hangars. No roofs, they did have sides but there wasn't any roof and they put their tents inside the hangar. So we felt--rather guilty about that, that we were so warm. And we even felt worse when we followed the Marines at the reservoir. But we would--on a mission of course we would hit the sack early and at 2 o'clock in the morning we hear the engines crank up and of course they had to do it because of the extreme cold. And our T O, take off times would be in the area of zero five hundred, zero five thirty. So two o'clock in the morning we hear the rumble of the Rolls Royces and the Wrights and the R-2800s out there and then we'd get up an hour, hour and a half later and--well, you couldn't sleep anyway with all of that noise. And we'd brief and off we'd go. Crew chiefs were very ingenious. The F-51 cockpit air, the inlet ducts were, I believe, near the wing roots and they would put beer cans in the wing roots, in the, in the inlet ducts and I could be wrong about the location. Anyway, wherever they were they put beer cans in the inlet ducts to give us a little heat in the cockpit. Nice guys. They were all good guys. You know, when an aircraft is hit by ground fire or flak or whatever, it just makes the whole aircraft shutter. I can imagine what the air crews did over Germany in their B-17s and 24s. It makes one racket. When you're hit in the 51 you have approximately 8 minutes. Either the oil line or the coolant line before your engine quits. And if you're way up north, North Korea that is, on a mission, you don't have--what you try to do is belly the thing in if you can and escape injury. Well I was on a strafing run up north and we were attacking troops and all of a sudden "KABLAM!" And dust started flying in the cockpit and I said, "Holy smoke, what is this?" And I--we pulled up and I checked my oil, coolant. And everything was no damage at all so I continued the mission and recovered. So I taxied into the revetment and the crew chief always did the post flight on the aircraft. And--so I was unharnessing and filling out the form and he said, "Lieutenant," he said, "Did you know you got hit?"

And I said, "Well," I said, "I heard a clang and a bang over there." And I said, "Oil was okay, coolant was okay." And he said, "I think you better look around the cockpit." And--no I was out of the aircraft and he was doing his walk around, his post flight and the round had gone past all the coolants, coolant lines, past the oil line and wound up in the lower instrument panel and I didn't even notice it. And it was a bulge about as small as your little finger sticking out there where the round had expended and it was aimed right for my stomach. So the old saying, "Fate is the hunter."

Mik: You know, that's something that I thought about when you were talking about that stock cannon barrel.

Harned: Yes.

Mik: Cartwheeling through the air, and I mentioned that we had interviewed a crew chief and he said that that--you know, there was flak and bullets coming up from the ground but also explosions you had to be careful of when the ones in front of you blew something up.

Harned: That's right.

Mik: That flying through that--stuff was getting through the plane.

Harned: That was why that time that flight lead put us a thousand feet in trail so we'd avoid that. Well Mick, what do you think?

Mik: You need some more water?

Harned: No. I'm good.

Mik: You mean you're done?

Harned: I think I've--I've told enough sky stories. Don't you think guys? [OFF CAMERA: No.] But if you have anything else--

Mik: Wish I could go have that beer with you cause I'd just like to get more and more. We've certainly got plenty to work with here.

Harned: Just the tale, Mick, of a simple fighter pilot.

Mik: Are you gonna tell us what everybody else--"I don't know why you want to talk to me, I didn't do anything."

Harned: Yeah.

[End of Interview]