

What is your full name?

Mr. Hadley: Wade Hadley; no middle initial.

When were you born?

Mr. Hadley: May 25, 1920.

Where were you born?

Mr. Hadley: Greenbrier, Tennessee.

Is that your hometown?

Mr. Hadley: Yeah. Well, we have been living here since about 1934. We call this our hometown.

What was Greenbrier like when you were little?

Mr. Hadley: It was a small town. It was north of Springfield; between Springfield and Nashville.

What branch of service did you serve in?

Mr. Hadley: Air Force; the Air Corp they called it back then.

Did you have a preference for Air Force?

Mr. Hadley: When I got out of high school, it was back during the Depression so I couldn't go to college so I started work at a mill, Wrango Milling Company. I was working from 6 in the morning to 6 at night, 72 hours a week and made \$12.00 a week. I knew one of the boys was coming along so I knew I wanted to apply, but I couldn't do it because I didn't have the two years of college. I knew that I was going to have to be drafted so I went ahead and volunteered in September of 1941 and went to mechanic school in Keesler, Mississippi. At that time you had to have two years of college before you could go through pilot training. After about 6 months, the Air Corp ran out of folks that had two years of college. So then if you could pass all the physicals and all the mental tests and coordination test then they fixed it to where you could go through the flying training. I started flying training and aviation training in the first part of 1942. I went to Cuervo, Texas, for primary training which was held on the PT-19. Of course ya'll don't know what I am talking about here; it is a different kind of airplane. The way it started, it was like an old \_\_\_\_\_ separator. It had an inertia start on it and then you get out there and crank it and then somebody would pull a little button to engage the motor and that is the way the airplane would start. Cuervo was about 40 or 50 miles south of San Antonio. So each one of these phases you went through took about two months. I went from there, I stayed there two months and then I went to Sherman, Texas, which was about 50 miles north of Dallas. I went through basic training there and at that time we had what you called BT-13. They were larger than the ones I started with. As you got better, you got on bigger airplanes. We stayed there two months.

What did your basic training involve?

Mr. Hadley: What was it like? I had such a hard time growing up during the depression getting up early, and when I worked at the Milling Company I weighed about 100 pounds. I was handling 150 pounds \_\_\_\_\_ sacks. I was glad to get in the service. My service was a lot of fun. Really!

What did your parents do for a living?

Mr. Hadley: They were farmers.

What did they usually farm?

Mr. Hadley: Yeah, they were farmers. I left Sherman, Texas, and went to Eddington Field in Houston, Texas. There were twin engine airplanes. One thing that might be a little bit interesting to you or whoever you are going to show this to is one night we were going long distance cross country. They had about 30 airplanes and there was supposed to be two instructors. Instead of that, one instructor was sick so we had one instructor. Ya'll want understand what I am talking about but I will try to explain it anyways. When they took off they would take off and circle this way (toward the left) and let everybody catch up. We were the last plane to take off and by the time we would catch up then they would go this way (toward the right). So we had to run full throttle all the way to Lubbock, Texas. Coming home we got about 30 minutes out of Eddington Field and we ran out of gasoline. It was about 11:00 at night and the moon wasn't shining. There was an old silence, like the engine in an airplane when all of a sudden they quit, so we jumped out. There were two of us in there. I landed in a, it couldn't have been more than 500 feet when I got out because I swayed about three times and hit the ground. I tried to call this man that was with me to try to whistle to him. My lips were like this desk here, I couldn't make a noise. I will never forget, I couldn't make a noise. They called us in to the headquarters the next morning. What they thought we had done, they thought we had just panicked and jumped out. They said, "The airplane landed out there. It is not damaged too much." We put that down in a field. They said, "We are going to go out there and check those tanks and if there is any gasoline in those things, you may as well get ready to go back to mechanic school." That is the last I heard of it. They were dry. That is the most exciting thing I reckon that has happened I guess since I was there. I hated to tell my mother about it because I thought that she would be afraid. She said, "I thought that was what you are supposed to do."

Your plane landed just fine? It didn't crash?

Mr. Hadley: No, we had it trimmed up and it landed in a field there.

So it was usable after....?

Mr. Hadley: No, I don't know whether it did. They knew something was wrong that night so they wanted to shut it up. I never did hear anything else of it. After I graduated I was sent to Love Field in Dallas, Texas. I was flying in the Fairing Command. I would fly different airplanes at different places. I flew B-25's to Europe two or three times and to Asia a couple of times. Then I went overseas to stay in about 1944. At that time I was stationed in India.

How did you get overseas? Were you on troop ships or did you fly?

Mr. Hadley: No, we flew. When I got to India, I met up with an old buddy from Dallas. We got out and celebrated a little too much so I missed an airplane we were supposed to take up into Sam Valley. So the transportation officer, he got mad and he made me ride the train. I was the only one on there that could speak English and they gave me these little green things that looked like a \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know what they were. I got a chance to see the Taj Mahal when I went through it but it took about three days to get there. We were flying then from the Sam Valley which is the in the eastern part of India. It is next to China in the Himalayans. We were right in the shadow of the Himalayans. We were flying supplies into Chennault. We were flying the pursuit planes in China. We were going from the Sam Valley in India to over in \_\_\_\_\_, China. We were flying gasoline, mules and a little bit of everything. I stayed over there about a year in \_\_\_\_\_. I earned a Distinguished Flying Cross in a cluster and an Air Medal in a cluster which means I got

two air medals and two Distinguished Flying Crosses. At that time in the military I had an airline. They called it MAT; Military Air Transport. I flew that from Dallas to Nashville and then I got out in 1945. That is pretty much the story of my military career.

What did you think of the Indians, the civilians?

Mr. Hadley: Huh?

What did you think of the Indian civilians? What was your impression of the civilians in India?

Mr. Hadley: I will tell you one funny thing. We lived in bamboo huts over there. There were about four men to a bamboo hut. Each bamboo hut had a barrel they called it. Somebody would come in and clean up the little thing for you. His name was Jabba, Jaboo. He was a little bitty fellow and we all liked him. He told me, he said, "You know, I bought a pair of sunglasses. I can't get them out of the post." They checked for things like they are stealing. He said, "They want let me out unless I have permission and for you to sign that these are my sunglasses." So I signed that they were his sunglasses and the next day I tried to find my sunglasses. That is how slick he was. Then I came back as an instruct out at Outlaw Field. I stayed there for about two years on a farm with my folks. My brother was still farming and I was an instructor in aviation. They would be down on the ground. One time I saw them down there gathering corn so I swooped down and kind of \_\_\_\_ a little bit and made the mules run off. They got mad at me so I thought that was a lot of fun. So the next day I tried again but they were ready for me. They had some shotguns. They shot \_\_\_\_\_.

Did you come across any Indian officers or soldiers?

Mr. Hadley: No, I didn't. I could have gone to Bombay, Teleca, and Rusalii. If you got 600 hours, you got to come home. So I didn't go to Bombay, and I didn't go to Calcutta. The only place I went to was Karachi. At that time Karachi was part of India. But now that is part of Pakistan. That is not part of India anymore. They had a rest camp up in Darjeeling which was supposed to be nice and up in the mountains. I didn't go, I stayed right there and got my fly time in and I wanted to come home.

Did you go anywhere else in the Pacific?

Mr. Hadley: No. The way we went, we didn't go through the Pacific. We went to Flora and then from there to Venezuela, South America; and then from Nepal, which was in South America, and then we headed east to the gold coast of Africa. We had to land at a little island there called Ascension Island. That was about half way between South America and Africa. One night when I was taking an airplane over there I was taken to England and then we landed at the gold coast of Africa and headed north and spent the night in Casablanca. It was real hot. They put us out in tents with cots. But when dark came, we were in the shadow of the Atlas Mountains and it got cold. We took off in the airplane to take the final leg up to Lands End, England. We were flying about 10,000 feet at the Iberia Peninsula which was part of Spain and Portugal. We saw this German plane that was flying at the same altitude but he was just going the opposite way that we was. We were about a half a mile apart but I seen him and he could see me. I didn't bother with him and he didn't bother me. I was flying a B-25 and I was getting ready to take that down to the deck if I could. I wanted to get away from him but he never did make a pass at all. He must have been on recon of some kind.

Did your plane have ammunition or bombs?

Mr. Hadley: No, no we didn't. The only thing we had was a 45. They issued a 45 caliber pistol to us and we always carried that. That is about the only thing.

This wouldn't have done you a lot of good up in an aircraft.

Mr. Hadley: In another interview his name was James Krantz I believe it was. He was in the \_\_\_\_ the other day. He was flying a B-29 on one of the last flights over Japan and he was a side gun. The Japanese pursuit planes hit him and that depressed the cabin and threw him out at 30,000 feet. He had a rope he was tied on to. The rope was about 15 feet long but they were on a bomb run when this happened so they couldn't get him back in. You are not supposed to live but just a few minutes at 30,000 feet without oxygen. The flight surgeon in the plane next to him said, "You are going to have a corpse on the plane when you get home. That man can't live that long, 15 minutes at 30,000 feet without oxygen." But he got back and he is living out here off of \_\_\_\_\_ City Road now next to Big Dave's Bar-B-Q. He made it through that. It's just a miracle. Anytime over 10,000 feet you are supposed to have oxygen.

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Hadley: I have two sisters and three bothers.

Did any of your brothers serve?

Mr. Hadley: Yeah, I had one brother that was in the Marines. He was in Guadalcanal. You ought to go interview him sometimes. He went through hard fighting all over the islands over there. I had another brother who was younger. He got in but he didn't have to go overseas or anything. I had an uncle that was on the Bataan Death March in World War II. He was killed. He was real tough. He was one of the few survivors of the Bataan Death March and they were taking him to work in the coal mines in Japan. They had a ship that had a red cross on it; the Japanese did but they had been using it to haul supplies. The American Navy sunk that boat about 3 miles off the China coast. That is what happened to him pretty much at the end of the war. If he was living today, he would be in the early 90's.

Did any of your friends go overseas to fight?

Mr. Hadley: Most of them did but you kind of lose track of folks. I still have folks that I went overseas with that I check with about every year. Nearly everyone I graduated from high school with 50% of them if they could went in the service of some kind.

Do you ever have reunions?

Mr. Hadley: Well they have them but I don't ever go. They are all old folks that I don't want to be around.

You said the Great Depression was rough on your family. Can you explain?

Mr. Hadley: What?

Can you explain what happened to your family during the Great Depression?

Mr. Hadley: Well we had a pretty hard time. Dad was a farmer and he pretty much lost everything he had at one time. The only thing he had was a team of mules and one of the mules was crippled. They lost everything and that was in 1934. About 1938, somehow he bought another farm. He bought the farm back where my mom was raised. My dad and my grandfather bought this farm together out in Rango and then things started picking up again. By the time he died, he had the farm paid for. He recovered from the

depression but it was some hard times he went through then. My children they don't like for me to talk about the depression.

When you were in school did you think the Nazi's and the Japanese were a threat to the United States?

Mr. Hadley: When I was in school, no not really. I was just trying to get out of school.

Did you ever follow any of the World War II through newspapers or the radio?

Mr. Hadley: No, they didn't have it. I think they had an Army newspaper. Are you talking about while I was in the service? I think they had the Stars and Stripes. Where we were I don't think we ever got it. We were what was called "The Forgotten War." Nobody ever knew much about what we were doing over there. In fact, Pat O'Brian with the USO, he came over there and entertained us a little. We were pretty much, our outfit, we were pretty much forgotten about.

Do you remember when Pearl Harbor happened, where you were?

Mr. Hadley: Yeah, I was at Keesler Field there in Biloxi, Mississippi. We had gone to a USO dance up north of there somewhere. We were coming back in the truck and it came in on the radio on December 7, 1941. We knew then that we were in trouble. The country came together at that time. You just can't imagine. We didn't have any airplanes, we didn't have trucks, we didn't have anything; and all of a sudden everybody pitched in and we had crank airplanes, and boats. I don't think we could do it today. I don't think the Patriotism is there today like it was at that time. Over at River Run in Detroit with the Ford Motor Company, they made those B-24's. They had a lot of enclosed places that they got midgets to go up and work inside of those things and then the women worked. There is never a good war. It was a good war for me because it got me out of poverty really, and I got a good education. I could have gone and flown in one of the airlines after the war if I wanted to. But I went and stayed home and instructed aviation for a while and farmed. I got in the insurance business in 1948 and stayed there until I was 75. I stayed there about 48 years and then I went to the John Deere place and stayed there about 5 years. I keep worrying about retirement. I keep thinking I am going to die and want worry about retirement if I keep on living.

Do you remember how much you were paid when you were in the Army Air Corp?

Mr. Hadley: I don't know but a whole lot more than what I am making \_\_\_\_\_. It seemed like to me when I was working at Wrango Milling, it was 6 in the morning to 6 at night, 6 days a week, 72 hours and made about \$14.00. When I went in the service it was about \$21.00 a month except for when I got to be an officer. I was right proud that I went from a Private to a Major when I got out of the service. I think I was making about \$300/00 a month at that time.

How long were you in the service?

Mr. Hadley: About 5 years. I went in September 1941 and got out in May of 1945. When I was about 14 years old we were in a mobile accident; some fellow hit us head on. I woke up in a doctor's office at New Providence. He was shelling teeth just like shelling corn. All of these front teeth were knocked out. So I went all the way through high school without any front teeth and everybody was laughing at me and making fun of me. The first thing I did when I got a job at the mill, I took \$14.00 and went to Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ and got him to make me a set of teeth. He charged me \$12.00 and I still had \$2.00 left. After that I was so proud of those teeth, I just smiled all the time. At that time we didn't have any indoor plumbing so I would have to wash my teeth and take them out. I was out there washing the teeth off and pumping the \_\_\_\_\_ and dropped them in a roosters pin. The rooster was hungry and he thought they were corn

so he picked up those teeth and took off. My grandpa and all my brothers and sisters chased that rooster all over the farm.

When you were in the service do you remember the day that Roosevelt died?

Mr. Hadley: Remember what?

Do you remember the day that Roosevelt passed away?

Mr. Hadley: No I don't. Did he pass away during World War, was the war going on?

Yes.

Mr. Hadley: Was that about 1944 or something like that?

Cause then Truman took over.

Mr. Hadley: I don't remember.

What was your opinion of Roosevelt?

Mr. Hadley: I always thought he was a good man. I think he helped a lot of people like we were. I think he helped get us out of the Depression. It was pretty tough times.

Was your family ever helped by the WPA or CCC?

Mr. Hadley: No, we never did that.

When you were overseas do you remember anything about your favorite food or anything, what you ate or where you slept?

Mr. Hadley: We had what they called C-rations. That was just basic stuff, dried food and everything.

A number of the people that she has interview, they have said that there is one food because they had to eat it so much during the war that they would never eat it again. My father-in-law was potatoes because he was in German for so long. Another man that was in Africa or Italy, I guess he ate lots of rations; he hates green peas and orange marmalade. Is there some food from your time in there that you will never touch?

Mr. Hadley: No, most of that stuff was when we had to go to \_\_\_\_\_, China, they had a restaurant over there for us, and they had a lot of bacon and eggs over there. In India we didn't have much; just mostly what they called K-rations. It was pretty basic stuff that came in a cardboard box.

When you were in India, where did you sleep?

Mr. Hadley: They had a little place out there. They had straw roofs to them and just about this size and four people stayed in these. It had mosquito nettings around there and you had to take some malaria, \_\_\_\_\_ or something like that. When we would come in from a flight it would take about 3 hours to get over there and about 2 hours to get back because the difference when you went over the wind was; no it would take less time to go over because the wind was with you and a little bit more when you came back. You had been up there about 18,000 feet and you were on oxygen. When you would come down you would

get what was called a combat ration with a little shot of rice whiskey about like that. Drinking was real bad and I didn't know anything about it but I got to where I liked that stuff.

What would you say is your most memorable moment in World War II?

Mr. Hadley: While I was over there? I think the time I had to bail out in Texas. I think that was one of the highlights and in flying what they call flying the humps. We were right south of the Himalayans. The Himalayans I don't know they are about 28,000 feet. We were flying right south of there and we flew about 18,000 feet. Most of the time the wind was from the west to the east. One night, back then we didn't have, see they have global positions and everything now. They have the thing now where you could tell exactly where you are all the time and we didn't have that. One night instead of coming out of the west and east, it was blowing from the south. We lost airplanes. The Japanese would come down and get one every once in awhile. What we lost most of the airplanes to was weather. There was a down draft all of a sudden and the mountains over there would just go down like that. On this night the wind was out of the south about 80 miles an hour that nobody had predicted, and I was flying that night. As you fly we had what you call a, I don't know if I can explain it to you. They had a radio beam that you honed in on. You had an arrow there. At that arrow you were supposed to head that at that beam and it was pretty weak. To make it work I had to drift, I had to head into the wind about like; to go like that (straight), I had to head into the wind about like that (toward right). A lot of folks would find out and I couldn't believe it. They wound up out there in the Himalayans and they lost a lot of airplanes like that that one night. But I believed the thing and I got in alright.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Mr. Hadley: No I think that's it.

(End of Tape)