

**Oral History Interview of
William Patrick Tynan**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez
September 30, 2017
Lubbock, Texas**

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features William (Bill) Tynan and his wife Alyce (Lolli) Tynan as they discuss Bill's life and service in the US Military. The pair describes Bill's family, deployment, and the people of international importance that Bill interacted with while he was employed at Reese Air Force Base.

Length of Interview: 01:35:28

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Daniel Sanchez (DS):

My name is Daniel Urbina Sanchez. Today's date is September 30, 2017. I'm at my office at the Southwest Collection, and today I am interviewing Bill Tynan and his wife Mary Alyce Tynan also known as Lolli, are both going to be in the office and every once in a while Lolli many interject some things. First of all thank you both for coming in and Lolli lets start with you saying your complete legal name.

Mary Tynan (MT):

My legal name is Mary Alyce Tynan. My birth certificate is from Chihuahua. Chihuahua, Mexico. I was named after my mother and Alyce had a "Y" but I didn't find that out until I was twenty-one really because I never looked at it, that my dad made me sign it with an "I" to not confuse me with my mother. So, I sign everything with an "I" now.

DS:

But it's really a "Y"?

LT:

It's really a "Y" but since it's the middle name, it doesn't matter they said. When I got my naturalization paper, it didn't matter.

DS:

They didn't send you back, right?

LT:

They didn't send me back.

DS:

Okay. Yeah and Bill, could you state your complete legal name?

Bill Tynan (BT):

William Patrick Tynan.

DS:

And where and when were you born?

BT:

I was born in Saint Catherine's Hospital in Brooklyn, New York.

DS:

And, you know, I mentioned earlier, and Bill used to work as an old Historian here, so he knows

the drill. Let's have a little bit of history on your family. Your dad's complete name and your moms and they're date and places of birth.

BT:

Okay my mom and dad were both illegal immigrants from Ireland. I know that my father worked against the British when the British were trying to take over Ireland at the end of World War II—but somehow—my father, father was a policeman in Ireland and he died and left his wife—

LT:

Reynolds, her last name was Reynolds.

BT:

Reynolds, just over there. My father somehow or other got into the British Merchant Marine and he traveled as a ship to shore operator all over the world. He got to places where people are only learning about them today, Oman and—

LT:

India.

BT:

He was—well like I say he was a ship to shore operator. I'm pretty sure that he was aware of the ship that ran into an iceberg, and as a ship to shore operator he was trying to get help for that ship that was sinking. It was kind of—I think off Nova Scotia, Canada, and anyhow, my father wound up working for the consolidated Edison company in New York City. That led to a job that took him around the east coast trying to keep electrical systems and communities going. And while he did that, my father met a man that had come up and grown up at the military academy, but he was from Ireland and he was hired at the U.S. Military academy in New York as an athletic director and Marty Maher was the guy's name. Now somehow, my father had met Marty Maher and we used to be—my two brothers and myself, my mother. My parents thought the best thing for me was to go into the Army when I grew up or whatever. Well, they thought I should go to college first, and since they were catholic, they decided that I had to go to a Catholic college or whatever. It turned out that Siena College had just been created up in Albany, New York or just outside of Albany, New York. So, that's where I wound up going to college. I graduated from there but it took me six years before I was able to pay my way through. I worked for the upholstery craftsman company, I worked for the post office, and I enjoyed working, you know, whatever I was doing. Whatever, and after that I thought it would be nice to have a better degree than what I had gotten from Siena because it really wasn't recognized at that point in time.

DS:

Well let's get back to Siena in a little bit but I want to go back to, you know, where you grew up as a young man and how many brothers and sisters did you have?

BT:

I had—there were two brothers, and brother Dez did not stay with us very long. He married a girl from Saint Bonaventure University in New York State, and they had gotten married and they lived near Albany, New York. Dez was into electronics, there wasn't anything he couldn't do about electronics and he just left me standing, watching what he was doing. But he met this girl Trudy who had come to New York to meet her old grandmother. Trudy had grown up in California and she came to New York and met my brother, and they decided to get married. So they—I mean they did get married but they were only married for a little amount of time when Dez caught some kind of a disease or whatever. I'm not sure exactly what it was that he died from. One of the worst days I had in my life was when I got a call from Trudy saying that something happened to Dez and he was in an ambulance on the way to the hospital. And then, you know, he died from whatever the problem was. And I guess Trudy had been a reporter for newspapers in New York State, a whole bunch of newspapers.

LT:

Associated Press, the first—

BT:

Yeah, Trudy was the first woman reporter—

LT:

For the Associated Press.

BT:

--Hired by the Associated Press. So, she was leading the women or whatever, and so she was always leading women and I thought that was pretty neat. I know, when we started having women's basketball or whatever, she was a big leader for women's basketball because that was new in those days or whatever. Trudy is still alive and she still works on her own. Has two sons, one lives out in California.

LT:

Nathan.

BT:

Nathan, and Walter stays with her in Massachusetts.

LT:

He's a forest ranger.

BT:

And he's a forest ranger and he knows everything about being a forest ranger, every kind of animal you can think of, he knows what it looks like, you know, and he's got pictures of the—not just picture but pieces of the animals or whatever that he puts together and keeps.

DS:

How— what age difference is there between you and your brothers?

BT:

Well I guess, Chip and I, it's about seven years.

LT:

Five years.

BT:

Huh, five?

LT:

Five.

BT:

Is that all? Okay.

LT:

You and Dez three.

DS:

Because I was just wondering, you know, what— you know, what the age gap was, if y'all hung out together in the neighborhood that you grew up in.

BT:

Well basically we did, yeah.

DS:

What neighborhood was that?

BT:

Well we lived in Valley Stream, Long Island and then we moved to Katonah, Bedford Hills slash Katonah. There's four communities that are kind of inter meaning. a lot of the people that lived there were people that worked down in New York City. They were people who knew how to get around, they were builders and stuff like that. And I guess my mother and father met down there in New York City and decided to get married or whatever. And it was part of a big— a monstrously big Irish family that came out of that, but I know my uncle had fought for the U.S. military in World War II. He went to USC and that's a company.

LT:

Edison. No, no, no. IBM.

BT:

IBM.

LT:

He's one of the first IBM.

BT:

He was one of the founders of IBM, and that was— his business there was in Poughkeepsie, New York. He worked there, basically his whole life. This is my uncle now.

LT:

Uncle John.

BT:

Yes.

LT:

Hughes.

DS:

And you know, growing up as an Irish family there, what was typical life for an Irish family back in those days?

BT:

Well, they pretty much stayed together. Like I say, my mom was very upset with anybody that she met, and like I told you they— the barber decided he wasn't going to cut black hair, and my mom ran out and told all the black kids in town and the mothers, that, "Hey look it doesn't make any difference what color your hair is, you just come by our house." Our house had a big steps

up to the level of our house. It was built on a hill and she would take anybody in that wanted to come over and have a drink or just have breakfast or something like that.

LT:

She'd cut their hair.

BT:

And, you know, for the girls she would cut their hair.

LT:

Or the boys.

BT:

Or the boys, yeah.

DS:

How uncommon was that? Was it uncommon for the era?

LT:

Yeah.

BT:

Well, I took it for granted because that's what they did.

DS:

Yeah, so that's what you saw.

BT:

Yeah.

DS:

Yeah.

BT:

A lot of the— when we got to high school, a lot of my class members had people that had fought against the British at the end of World War II and I don't know why they decided to start coming the Irish or whatever. But anyhow, it was a lot of then that they would meet— as we grew up we'd meet other kids and, you know, you have to ask the kids, the kids have to ask, you know, where's your father? What did he did do this that and the other?" But my father would— he would never talk about it. All I know is he had been put in jail by the British and stayed there

probably at least four years or whatever because he was fighting the British because they wouldn't let Catholics— they were trying to drive all the Catholics out of Ireland. It's about what they were trying to do, I guess in the long run they didn't succeed in doing that.

LT:

That was before World War II. Wasn't that?

BT:

Well, it was kind after—well whatever. I guess—

LT:

That was before World War II.

BT:

Yeah. Before it finished, yeah.

LT:

He was in the IRA [**Irish Republican Army**] wasn't he?

BT:

Yeah. Irish Republican Army. So, but he would never—

LT:

He helped people escape from prison.

BT:

Yeah.

DS:

He had an interesting life, huh?

BT:

Well, you know, I learned most of that from my mother because my father wouldn't talk very much about it.

LT:

And your father was also on black Sunday at a soccer game when he was a young man and British soldiers came in and started just shooting at everybody. And Pop, we call him Pop, was with his best friend and they took off running for their dear life, and unfortunately his friend was killed. And Pop must've been—

BT:

They blew his head off.

LT:

--Ten or twelve years old and so, yes he became an IRA person.

DS:

Wow.

BT:

Yeah, so he fought the British.

DS:

Yeah, something like that affects you for life doesn't it?

LT:

Yes, they say it's a political—I think it was a political war too. They wanted to take over the country, the British.

DS:

Well, and you know—so you're—your dad's back in the states and you said you'd gotten a degree but it wasn't really what you wanted or you want something else, so what did you do after that?

BT:

Well, I think I told you it took me so many years to go through Siena College and graduate from there.

LT:

You were a groundskeeper, too.

BT:

Yeah.

LT:

For a golf course.

BT:

On the golf course, I did whatever they asked me to do. I would stay overnight.

LT:

Tell him the name of the golf course, it was a famous one. Do you remember?

BT:

Bedford Hills Golf Course.

LT:

Okay.

BT:

That's all it was. But my brother Dez— I worked for the caddy guy who got the clubs for the VIPs that lived in the area there, and Dez would sit down, and at that time, they were letting black people come in and work amongst white people or whatever. But Dez didn't mind what color you were. Dez had a technical mind and he could do all kinds of things that I have no ability to do, and he would sit and talk with the black guys and start telling them about, you know, if you do this you could do that and if you could do this, you could do this better. And he would teach them how to drive. Some of them didn't know how to drive properly, and you know, you can teach them, you need to stay on this side of the road and not that side of the road. And Dez was somebody that could do anything that anybody asked him and he'd find a way to do it. Again, like I was saying we got a call one day from Trudy saying that something terrible has happened, that Dez was being taken to the hospital in an ambulance.

LT:

Dez had cancer of the esophagus.

BT:

Oh, that's right.

LT:

But as a young child he had contracted— he got rheumatic fever, so he wasn't in the best of health. He was a teacher at Massachusetts Holyoke College, he was a math professor at Holyoke College when he died, and he had called Bill that day and they had a wonderful conversation about three hours long. Just enjoying visiting with each other, and Dez was so happy that his cancer— he was cleared of cancer and he was going to work and he was starting on his lesson plans. Half an hour later we get the call, he died of a heart attack.

BT:

That was Trudy calling.

LT:

And Bill was so lucky, I said I think God meant it for you to have that special time with your brother because he was planning something else for him. To go to heaven with him. They tried to resuscitate him, they couldn't. He was gone.

BT:

My brother Chip is still alive and kicking.

LT:

Yes, that's his nickname. His real name is Gerald.

DS:

So what does Gerald Chip do? Or Chip Gerald?

BT:

He works—he is still working at the Botanical Garden in St. Louis.

LT:

Missouri.

BT:

Missouri.

LT:

And he had a radio show on plants for many years.

BT:

Yeah. Who was the lady that was—that used to listen to his program?

LT:

She worked here.

BT:

Yeah.

LT:

She was in Missouri.

DS:

Hmm.

LT:

Well, he had a radio program show on plants.

BT:

He still does it. He's still alive and doing that. Now he's had some cancer problems too, right?

LT:

Yes and his wife, Susie is just retired, she was a nurse at St. Louis Hospital.

BT:

And we are trying to get him to come down and visit with us, but I think he's going to stay put up there. But we used to go up— well I was a big fanatic of sports, so St. Louis at a point in time they would play the basketball playoffs. And St. Louis was a couple of times awarded that and probably about at least three times, and I make sure that I was up there to go to the Final Four up there, and actually I think Trudy used to like to go to the basketball, also.

LT:

She would cover them in News, Spike Dykes. Spike Dykes knows Trudy, you ask him about Trudy Tynan he'll know her. Not Spike Dykes. Bobby Knight. Bobby Knight. Yeah, if you ask Bobby Knight about Trudy Tynan he knows her and the way they greet each other is not— I won't mention it, but they have their own familiar way of greeting each other. [Laughs]

BT:

Bleep, bleep, bleep. [Laughs]

DS:

From the era. Well, you know— and that's one thing, you know, you mentioned you're— that you were a sports fanatic and I was wondering, you know, when did that start? Did that start in childhood? Or when did you become interested in sports?

BT:

In sports. I would have to say my mother played tennis so she got me into tennis, and I didn't like tennis all that much. But in high school I was a runner and we used to go down in front of Courtland Park down in New York and run races. And it'd be six miles races and it would go up to about thirty mile races down in front of Courtland Park and believe it or not I would do the running, I didn't always come first. I was happy to get through in the five hundred— it was still five hundred guys behind me or whatever, so at the top five hundred, so—

LT:

You were in basketball in high school, weren't you?

BT:

No, I played but there were better players than me and they did the big playing, and Teresa and I—

LT:

Teresa McInerney [00:24:56].

BT:

Teresa McInerney was my girlfriend at that point in time.

LT:

And remains a good friend.

BT:

Yeah, she's still alive and kicking and her husband is Lito Antiporta [00:25:06] and he's having a hard time right now in Florida.

LT:

He has cancer.

BT:

He has cancer. And we just talked to her quite recently and it's kind of strange, at least I think it's kind of strange because we've kept in touch with each other for so long. Fifty-fifth reunion, I had to pass on that, I wasn't able—that's when I was getting my eyes worked on. So, I had to pass on that but they still want me to go to the sixtieth reunion or whatever.

LT:

For Saint Mary's High School.

BT:

Yeah, well it's not called Saint Mary's, its something—

LT:

Kennedy.

BT:

Kennedy Catholic School or whatever in New York. But they still come looking for my money.
[Laughs]

DS:

[Laughs] It's still good, huh?

BT:

It's still typical.

LT:

Weren't you a good altar boy?

BT:

Huh? Oh, yeah. I was such a good altar boy that the priest from Katonah would come to the little church on Sundays that I would go to. After the church, about a mile and a half beyond that, there was the women's prison for New York State. And so I would go with the priest to the women's prison and help him with the mass. I knew how to do the mass and all that, and so I would meet the women at the women's prison. And that was kind of— that was about as close as I use to get to girls. [Laughs]

LT:

You were a good altar good.

BT:

I was an altar boy, yeah. But they would come up to me and they would recognize me and they would see me coming, and they'd see me coming and they'd say, "Hey, here comes the altar boy. Hey, how you doing?" So, I would always try to be nice to them and I'd go in and the priest would say the mass, and I'd help him go out and give out the things that you give to the— put on your lips and put on your teeth. And I was the altar boy at the women's prison, and they would see me coming and they'd recognize me and they go "Here comes the altar boy." [Laughs] So, I don't know what happened to them, I don't know if it's still open. I would suggest that it's probably not in existence anymore in New York.

LT:

How about your experience in Bedford Hills at church with the Von Trapp family? That the movie was made you—

BT:

Oh, okay. You remember the Sound of Music?

DS:

Um-hm.

BT:

One of the church members that I went to church with was a friend of the Von Trapp's and they used to come over to the church when I would go there, and I would be the altar boy, taking care of the von Trapp family. They were very nice, we ran into the Von Trapp family when Keith Bearden was a member of the—the head of the marching band here at Texas Tech and Keith was—he was an absolute go-getter and he used to take the band over to England, to Ireland, to Germany—

LT:

Everywhere.

BT:

Where ever else, and the neatest thing for me was to go with the Texas Tech band—I love music. And while Keith was there I would go with the Texas Tech Band and—I can't—there was a faculty lady and I that used to go in the women's—the band in those years was like there was nine busses that they would go. And so, god, I can't remember the name of the lady, she was a faculty member, and so she and I would ride together and we'd go to Dallas to see a game in Dallas or something like that. And the twirlers would go out on the—the Texas Tech twirlers, it didn't make any difference what schools were playing, but the Texas Tech twirlers at that time were the best twirlers in the world. So I used to go in the bus, bus nine, with this lady and stay with the twirlers. And actually just recently this past year I was here walking on campus and found the lady that was watching the band getting ready, you know, this year for the marching band, and I started talking to her and I said, "Do you have anybody in your family, you know, in the band?" She said, "Oh yes. My daughter." They grew up in Brownfield. "We come from brownfield and since my daughter was in high school all she ever wanted to do was go up and be part of the Texas Tech Marching Band." And I said, "Well at least she's here right now." She says, "Well yes she is, she's come over here." And so, she introduced me to her daughter, so I thought that was pretty neat. She would introduce me to her and I told her, "You're going to be going all over the world traveling with the band," and I don't know whether the band travels as much now as they used to. I think they've cut it down quite a bit, that I don't know anymore, but that used to be kind of neat and that's the neatest, latest thing that I've had with the band.

DS:

Well let's—we're way up here again in 2017, let's go back a little. Let's go back to, you know, you had been in college and you were coming out, what year was that that you finished college?

BT:

[Sighs] I don't know if I could tell you. I don't actually have a date but hang on. Well, I did graduate studies at Texas Tech, '82 to '84.

DS:

I mean the first time, as a young man when you first finished college up there in.

BT:

Oh—

LT:

That took you six years, you say, so—

BT:

At Siena?

LT:

Yeah, so you were—

BT:

Took me six years to get through there.

LT:

So, when you were how old— what year did you graduate Saint Mary's?

BT:

I wish I had brought my book with me. [Laughs]

LT:

He was eighteen in July. Did you graduate at eighteen or at seventeen from high school? Were you eighteen when you wen to college? Or did you work for two years?

BT:

Eighteen or nineteen.

DS:

Okay, May of 1966. I read it here. Okay.

BT:

Yeah.

DS:

Okay, so it's May of 1966. What did you go off to do after that?

BT:

Went straight into the Army.

DS:

Wow. What service?

BT:

In the Army.

DS:

In the Army.

LT:

Air defense.

BT:

And I went to Vietnam, so.

LT:

You were the air defense.

BT:

Not in the Army. In the army I was when I graduated. When I graduated from Siena I was in the Army.

LT:

Yeah.

BT:

So, I went to Vietnam.

DS:

What area?

BT:

Vũng Tàu [0:35:00]

LT:

You were with the ARVN [**Army of the Republic of Vietnam**].

BT:

I worked with the Fifth ARVN Infantry Division. I was assigned to them, and my job was to keep the records of what the ARVN were doing in the brigade that I work with. And I guess it was good for me for the most part because most of the people that I worked with were Catholic, and they thought that was great because the Catholics had been driven out of north Vietnam down to the south and they were being obliterated by the north Vietnamese at that point in time. But to make a long story I stayed in Vietnam for a full year working with them and as it turned out we were not too far from Saigon, so my counterpart—

LT:

What was his name?

BT:

Michael Hugh, and he had a little group that worked with him and— I'm going to say there was a little guy, a little black kid, that came in and was assigned to our group. Our group was like seventy or eighty people at the most, some of them would be coming and going, stuff like that. I mean, Spike was just out of high school, I think, back in the states and he had enlisted and came straight over. He was a go getter. He wanted to do everything, he wanted to help out with the ARVN, he got to know the Vietnamese or whatever, well I got to know the Vietnamese very well.

LT:

Who was your counterparts brother? He was the Bishop, right?

BT:

Well I was going to get to that. Yeah.

LT:

Okay.

BT:

Yeah. For his thirteenth anniversary of his kid, he asked me if I would go down to Saigon with his brother and meet his brother. Well I said, "Okay." I went down, and I mean they lived in a house that was about as big as what we live here and they had pigs running around that were oinking and goinking, and they stayed in the house they keep it locked up, and when they needed meat or food or whatever, they would kill the pigs and eat them. But anyhow, while I was down there I found out that I had to go to the Christening of their thirteenth child and we went to go to the biggest Catholic Church that had existed then. And then Saigon, very Catholic monstrous Catholic Church or whatever, and it turned out—

LT:

A Cathedral? [Coughs]

BT:

Yeah, you could call it a Cathedral, yeah. It turned out that that's— his— the Bishop was his brother, so I got blessed, blessed, blessed more than ever or whatever. And unfortunately, at the end of the war, I don't know what happened to them, I just assumed they were probably run over by the North Vietnamese and shot to bits or whatever. If you remember the President of the United States said we'll do everything we can to get the people coming out of Vietnam, but there was so many people wanting to leave Vietnam, they were getting on little boats and rowing out—

DS:

Were you there when all that was going on? When the boat lift occurred?

LT:

No.

BT:

Yes— no, when they were getting— I knew that they were getting out of there at that point in time.

LT:

Oh, you were?

BT:

Yeah.

LT:

Okay.

DS:

So what was that like, you know, watching that going on?

BT:

Well— okay hang on. I stayed down in Saigon and was on the next to the last helicopter that came down and took us out of the American building where they worked in Vietnam. So I was on the helicopter that took us out to sea.

LT:

Weren't you— when did that happen with the helicopter? I believe, Bill, that you were— we got married in 1971.

BT:

Okay.

LT:

And you had been at Fort Bliss for about a year or six months, hadn't you? Prior to that?

BT:

Yeah, whatever.

LT:

So were you involved with that?

BT:

Yeah.

LT:

Because Ray went to Vietnam after you had.

BT:

Right. No, he was before me.

LT:

No, because you were in Okinawa at the time when Ray came by through Okinawa to meet you. And so, I think that happened after you had left Okinawa. No. I mean after you had left Vietnam.

BT:

I think I was a part of the boat lift, that's all I can remember anyway. Getting them out to sea.

LT:

We tried— we were already— in nineteen.

DS:

So, right here it says when you were in Okinawa that you split your time as being the commander of the Hawk Air Defense.

BT:

Air Defense Missile, yeah.

DS:

What was that— what did that entail?

BT:

[Laughs] Shooting down any planes that came over that weren't supposed to be flying over there. Well that was still Vietnam then, right? That point in time?

LT:

Well, we had Vietnam going on at that time, yes. And so, you were Battery Commander [redacted] [0:43:51] of the 13 Battery, 13 Hawk Missile site—

BT:

Artillery.

LT:

Artillery, yeah.

DS:

So were y'all already married by this time?

LT:

We got married while he was a Battery Commander, yes.

DS:

So when did you meet Lolli?

BT:

Totally by accident. [Laughs]

DS:

I didn't say how, I said when. [Laughter]

LT:

You were with my friend, Paul Love.

BT:

Yeah, oaky. And I guess she was her boyfriend or something like that. I was in the Army, we had gone out to a race track outside of El Paso, and racing cars, I don't think it exists down there anymore. But anyhow we went out that night to watch the track, and when we got out there it started pouring, pouring like hell. And to make a long story short, the cars, racing cars said that's it we're not driving in the rain. So, that ended. We went back—the group I had gone out with to watch the racing cars decided they wanted to go back and start drinking, and I was never a big drinker. So I just went back just to my barracks, but the rain stopped and I knew that there was a concert that was being played downtown in El Paso. So, I put my uniform back on and went down to where the concert was being played, and actually I was basically by myself and I guess Paul or whatever—

LT:

Yeah, showed up.

BT:

He showed up and then her brother—two brothers.

LT:

Patrick and— Pat and Hymee.

BT:

Yeah, Hymee. Came out to where I was sitting, listening. But, you know, I was still wet. I had a coat on, and they said well, "Would you like to come and have something to drink?" Your family was having some kind of get to together or something.

LT:

It was my father and my sisters birthday, the seventh of August.

BT:

Okay.

LT:

And my uncle at the time had the only T.V. sound service system business in El Paso, and he used to set up the sound service for all the events that occurred in El Paso, from President Kennedys visit to all the concert on the stars. Any rock star event or rodeo, my— it was my uncle that set up those businesses. And my brothers were little and helped him and learned a lot from him and they were there at Memorial Park helping him, and they saw Paul Love and they invited him to go over to the house to have cake and ice cream to celebrate my sister Patricia—or my sister Arlene and my father's birthday.

BT:

Same day.

LT:

Same day, yeah. So, they came over to the house, knocked on the door. Opened the door and there they were. [Laughs] We were interested at the time, very interested, of course, I was really impressed by him. I think Paul realized that he shouldn't of brought him.

BT:

She came running in past me and she had just come back from cookie.

LT:

Well, no. I worked for Morton's potato chip factory.

BT:

Morton's potato chip factory.

DS:

Oh.

LT:

And I smelled like every spice you can think of, and I had just bathed from getting home from work late, it's like six or seven o'clock in the evening. I was just in shorts and taking it easy, and when they knocked at the door and— but anyways one thing that way really interesting to us was the fact that he had just returned from Vietnam and my brother Ray at the time was in Vietnam.

BT:

Still there.

LT:

And Bill would go and present his slide show since he was in the ARVN, he was a main speaker, and he would go to different organizations in El Paso and speak about Vietnam. While he was in the ARVN he got to meet, at the time that the president, of Vietnam. He dealt with generals, with everybody, and he had slides of them and spoke about his time in Vietnam and we were extremely interested because our— my brother was there. And so I liked the way how he was such a nice man, you know, and I told my mom, "Well listen I have a feeling that he'll call us in three days," and he did offer to bring the slides to show us since Ray's in Vietnam, "But if he doesn't call in three days, I'm doing the calling. And I have a good alibi, Id like o see your slideshow. Come over and we will fix some enchiladas and all that." [Laughs]

BT:

Better than the mess hall. [Laughter]

LT:

As it ended up—

BT:

Much better. [Laughter]

LT:

As it ended up, he went— now Brown is a very common name, like Smith and Gonzales and Garcia, and so my grandmother was Amy Brown, so she was in the front part of the Browns in the telephone book. He went through the telephone book, was going to call every Brown until he got to me. My grandmother had already heard about Bill from all of us. How impressed we were, what a nice guy, and on, and on, and on. So, when Bill called her asking to speak with me, she says, “Oh you must want my granddaughter,” and she gave Bill my telephone number. [Laughs] Even Father Francis Smith came over to meet you. [Laughs]

BT:

Yeah. The next time I went to the house, Father Smith was sitting next to her.

LT:

Yes. This was like the third date, wasn't it? I don't know. I felt horrible because the questioning. Hijole.

DS:

There was no pressure, huh?

BT:

[Laughs] Yeah, he asked everything he could possibly ask or whatever, and at the end—I mean it was at least an hour that he was questioning me.

LT:

I was like, this, “I'm just going on a date with this guy, you know.” [Laughs]

BT:

Well, he turned over to her father and he said, “Well Ray, I can't ask him anymore questions he's answered everything I've said.”

LT:

“Can you think of anymore?” My dad was shocked. We were standing there and my dad did not put him up to it either. [Laughter] But we started dating.

BT:

yeah.

DS:

Did y’all date for quite a while or was it a pretty sort courtship?

LT:

Short.

BT:

Real, real, real short.

LT:

We met the seventh of August, on the twenty-eighth of September I was on a plane—then you left to go to New York, and I got on the plane to meet you and your family in New York.

BT:

Um-hm, that’s right.

LT:

Got engaged, and the fifth of October returned to El Paso and then you took off to Okinawa.

DS:

Wow.

LT:

And we got married on the sixth of February in Okinawa.

DS:

Wow, so six months?

LT:

In the catholic church. Yeah.

DS:

Six, seven months after you met.

LT:

I knew I better catch him. He's a good thing, I better not let him go.

DS:

Hmm. Wow. So, what did both sides of the family think about the whirlwind?

BT:

Oh, my parents thought it was great. When they met her, they thought she was great.

LT:

My parents thought he was just the best ever, and we had their blessings.

DS:

Wow. So what was it like going from El Paso to go live in Okinawa?

LT:

It was my first time I encountered a situation that I did not understand what people were saying because I grew up in Chihuahua. I was born and raised there until I was ten. Went to **Colegio del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús** [0:54:32] It was a Catholic girls school, and I knew Spanish very well. And my first time to be around individuals I couldn't understand. I think one thing that shocked me was when I saw a truck that had three wheels. One in the front and two in the back. I had never seen anything like that. That was surprising. As far at the Okinawans, the ones that I got to meet and know, they were just wonderful. Lovely people, very nice. They fortunately the ones knew some English, but I thought it was neat. I love people from different countries. It's interesting to meet them and go and see how they are. Yeah.

DS:

How many years were y'all over there together?

LT:

We got back, in what? Seventy-three?

BT:

At least three.

LT:

Well, he was there longer than I was.

DS:

So, you came back—

BT:

She came over and we got married.

LT:

He was there in 1970.

DS:

So you came back and you stayed there doing your—finishing your service?

BT:

Yeah.

LT:

He finished his service—last time of service was in Okinawa, and then we flew back to the states. And he fortunately got a job with the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, and he was the Editor in Chief of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce Magazine.

DS:

Tell us about the Bill. What was that like? Working for the El Paso Chamber of Commerce?

BT:

It was very easy. They were trying—there was a point in time where they were trying to make a point that El Paso was a great place to live in, and they were trying to build it up to make it a good place to live in, and of course, in collaboration with the Mexican government across the river.

LT:

With Juarez Chamber of Commerce.

BT:

Yeah, well There was great intermingling. Okay that was while I was while we were down there. Still working in El Paso I was very, very happy to have that job, and I enjoyed it, and actually back at the house I still have some of the magazines that we did over the years. We put out a good bunch or whatever. I got a telephone call and they said, “Are you William Tynan?” And I said. “Yes.” They said, “Well we’re from the U.S. Air Force, and we’re looking for a public affairs officer,” and that was caught—part of my resume or whatever. “Well, we’re looking for somebody to come down and be the public affairs officer at Reese Air Force Base.” And I said, “Where’s that?” And they said, “Well, it’s in Lubbock, Texas.” And I said, “Okay. I’ve never been there.” And they said, “Well we’ve seen your resume that you made when you left the Army and we’d like to come down and talk to you.” So, I said, “Okay what do you want to do?”

They said, "Well, I can drive up.", "Where are you guys at?" They said, "Lubbock, Texas." And I'd never been, they said, "Well we'll come down and show you how to get there but if you're interested we want to come down and interview. We're not going to say you're going to get a job, but we would like to visit with you and see if you would like to work for us." I thought, Well I've always enjoyed the military, so come on down. So, there were three of them that flew down and went out to the airport. and I told them where I was working, okay? And so they came in the building and I thought, Oh what do I do now? These guys are coming in. I said, "Can I help you?" And he said, "We're looking for Mr. Tynan." I said, "Well that's me." They said, "We'd like to talk to you." I said, "Well, I don't want to talk right here because I have a good job right now. Are you down here for anything else?" They said, "Well really we're down here because we're having a big affair in a day or two or something like that and we came down to get some liquor because we can't get any liquor in Lubbock." [Laughs] I said, "Well why don't we go over to El Paso and have lunch."

LT:

No, Juarez.

BT:

Oh, well I'm sorry, Juarez.

DS:

Yeah, Juarez.

BT:

"Why don't we go over to Juarez and have lunch?" They said, "Great. And I know there's a great place to eat over there and there was. It was a super great place."

LT:

Yeah, what they had said was— when they— when you saw them you took them to Juarez and they had said to you they were sure happy that you had mentioned going out to Juarez because they were planning to ask you in a way if you would take them there. [Laughs]

BT:

To get some liquor for the— because they couldn't get liquor up here. At that point in time. So we went over and had lunch and then I said, "Well there's another great place to eat and drink or whatever a little bit farther down from— across the border where we had gone," so we went over a second time. Which like, I would not be able to do as— because the police would've taken me to jail by that point in time But anyhow, they packed them up and said— I said, "Do you need more liquor? Well, I know a good place to go over in Juarez." So, we went over and cleaned out the place.

LT:

You went to San Elizario.

BT:

Oh, where ever it was. And they said, "Well that's great, we'll come back— we're going to fly back to Lubbock and we will call you in a couple of days if you would like to come up and work with us." So, she didn't like the idea of leaving El Paso.

LT:

Not at all. Did not want to go.

BTL:

So, I thought, Well working for the military it's a good job that a lot of people— what I was doing then was trying to find jobs for the people that had come back from Vietnam War. And that was what my job was for the City of El Paso, getting people in and getting a good job. That was the big thing that the City of El Paso wanted.

LT:

The Job Alliance, right?

BT:

Yeah, yeah. So, anyhow I thought working for the Air Force would be a little bit better than working for the Army or even working for El Paso. So, a couple of days later they said, "Would you like to come up here to Reese, we think we might have a job for you." I thought, yeah. Well, where is Reese and they said it's in Lubbock. Okay, I don't know too much about it but I can get a map and figure out my way to get up there or whatever. So, it took us a day or two to get up there, and we drove on base, they asked me what I was doing. I said, "I've been asked to go meet—"

LT:

Colonel Baxter, your—

BT:

Yeah, the Commander of the base at that time, Baxter. Anyhow I went in and they said, "Well come on over to the O club, the officers club," and went over there and had lunch— or I guess it was dinner. I think it was the end of the day when we got there, but we went over there and had dinner and they said, "Why don't you come by my office in the morning and we may have a job for you." So, I thought, okay. So, the next day I went by and they said, "We'd like you to be our public affairs officer, we don't have a public affairs officer here, and we've seen your records and sounds like you could do a good job for us like you did down in El Paso."

LT:

And Vietnam with the ARVN.

BT:

Yeah. So said, "Okay." We wound up staying. We're still in the same house where we had gotten a house.

DS:

S0 what was going on at Reese when you first got there as far as what were they doing? Were they training pilots still or—

BT:

They were training pilots, yes, at that point.

DS:

And as a public information officer, what was your main duty?

BT:

Well put out a newspaper— was it monthly?

LT:

Monthly. Weekly, isn't it? I didn't think monthly.

BT:

I want to say it was— we did it bi-weekly.

LT:

Yeah.

BT:

Twice a month we'd have a newspaper for the base and we'd come down here in Lubbock—

LT:

Betty Kimbro's husband had the printing company.

BT:

Betty—

LT:

Betty Kimbro.

BT:

Had a printing company, so I would come down here and have it printed and either I or the troops after they knew where to go would go down and pick it up. And we had a number of military housing out there, so every house got a paper, and—

LT:

You wrote speeches for the Colonels.

BT:

Oh, yeah. Basically it was—

LT:

You dealt with the dignitaries that would come in the public relations part with their public relations person.

BT:

Yeah.

LT:

And then anytime there was an accident or something going on at Reese you had to be Johnny on the spot there.

BT:

Yeah. Well I lived in our house where we still live.

DS:

Yeah. Yeah, well I'm assuming you were the liaison between what was going on at Reese and then, for example the AJ and the news people wanting to find out what's going on. So how did you balance, you know, the stories you could put out, you know, as to what was classified, What you could say about, for example, an incident or something?

BT:

Well there were certain things that we couldn't do. One of the most interesting things was at Reese we rehearsed the attempt that we were going to make to go over to Iran to break into Iran and take the prisoners that Iran had taken out of the public affairs office over in Iran.

LT:

The hostages.

BT:

The hostages.

LT:

Not many people knew that was going to happen except you and who else?

BT:

The President of the United States.

LT:

The base commander.

BT:

The military. We actually, here in town rehearsed— we had maps that were, as it turned out, were very close to where the people were being kept in jail in Iran. So, there was a night when I told Lolli to go to bed, get a long nights rest or whatever.

LT:

You told me not to worry if I heard strange sounds above the house. And I would always hear booms at Reese and I'd call them the war games whenever he'd take off in the middle of the night.

DS:

Yeah.

LT:

[Coughs] But that night, it startled me so much I went outside to look. I could not see anyone but they saw me. They used the house as one of the places to hoover over before they made their attack into the base. S, that's the sound I heard.

DS:

So, y'all were doing a night [MT coughs] rehearsal.

BT:

It came down basically right down to around here.

DS:

Wow.

BT:

And we rehearsed it, and they were rehearsing out in Utah for another— a backup.

DS:

Do you need a water? [LT leaves the room, a door opens and closes] Just, you can keep talking about it. So, where were they rehearsing?

BT:

We rehearsed the— what we were going to do to break into Iran to get the people out of Iran. And unfortunately there were three people that were killed here in that. We were coming all the way downtown to where—it was down to right about here for the rehearsal.

DS:

All the way down to Tech campus?

BT:

Yeah.

DS:

Wow.

BT:

And nobody knew it. And we never said that it had ever happened. But in Utah there were people that were kind of back up force that if the first force that went in ran into problems, the others were going to follow up. And I guess the way it worked out, we didn't have to break in. I don't know why. We had other people that helped from other countries that backed us up and that were willing to fight to get them out if we had to. But we were able to bring those prisoners that they had here back to the United States.

DS:

You know— were you involved with any of the relationships between like the officers that were at the base and, you know, anything they might be getting into while they were in Lubbock and stuff like that or—?

BT:

Getting into?

DS:

Well like, you know, if they would come in— let's say somebody may have done something they shouldn't have and they need to call Bill to get out? Give excuse or anything like that?

BT:

Well, can't talk about that.

DS:

Okay.

BT:

The Prince of Iran.

DS:

Talk about the Prince of Iran and how that came about.

BT:

Well this kid wanted to be in the Air Force.

LT:

Well you knew the Shah of Iran.

BT:

The Shah of Iran's son wanted to be in the Air Force, and he came to Reese and my job was to keep the VIPs and their kids because everybody in Lubbock had a VIP daughter or son or something like that to keep the crowned prince away from them. Because he would—we were going to go in and storm the place in the end but it never came to happen. But he and about, I'm going to say about twenty, twenty-five members of the Iranian military were being trained alongside our troops right out on the base. I could show you the place where they were being shot—taught. It's still out there, you know, nobody goes out there now except walking around the running track out there at night or something like that. But anyhow that was the job that I had to do, was make sure that everything came off, and actually I wasn't able to tell you what had actually happened or whatever.

LT:

[Inaudible] [Clears throat] All I knew is that he dealt with the media, totake care of the media, and at the same time protect the prince from the media.

BT:

Funniest thing that I ever had, we went over to lunch and we came marching out and—

LT:

You had a media crew with you.

BT:

Yeah. I want to say Randy Sanders or somebody like that. He was working for TV at that point in time down here or video or something like that.

LT:

They wanted to see the prince and you took a crew of media people, not just from Lubbock, but from other areas that were together, and you said you'd take them where the prince is and you passed him in the hallway.

BT:

Yeah, well he was going—he was mixed in with the Americans that were out there. But my job was to make sure that he got to class on time and stuff like that. So, when he went to eat, I went over to the O Club to eat, took him back. But the crazy thing about it was, here's the prince and they've got these hats on, they go way up over their head. It's nothing American, okay. But we're walking along and all the media from Lubbock they were put there, and I don't remember what the event was that was going to be going on later in the day but they were out there.

LT:

They passed him.

BT:

And we walked passed the media. [Laughing] and nobody said boo.

LT:

They didn't recognize him.

BT:

Yeah. That's when we had— wasn't that when the President was coming in?

LT:

I don't know.

BT:

The President's son was coming in or something like that.

LT:

I don't know. You dealt with the— well anyways what it is that you told the media, you didn't want him to be bothered during his lunch time, so you had some reporters from out of town and you offered them the best chicken fried steak ever.

BT:

We took them out to—

LT:

Hutton's.

BT:

Hutton's.

LT:

In Shallowater.

BT:

In Shallowater, did you ever go out to Hutton's?

DS:

No.

BT:

Spike Dykes and his wife used to speak away—

LT:

They were regulars there.

BT:

They were regulars there. And Hutton and his wife just ran the place together, and Hutton was a hunter.

LT:

Fisherman, too.

BT:

And a fisherman.

LT:

Best chicken fried steak.

BT:

Best chicken fried steak ever. There were other people from the military that would come out

there and eat. It was the best food you ever had. Unfortunately—what happened? He was fishing in a lake somewhere here in the Lubbock area.

LT:

Well, no, it was near Breckenridge.

BT:

Breckenridge, okay. He went out fishing and his fishing buddy— Okay, it was cold, it was in the winter time kind of. It was cold and they were dressed heavily, and he and his buddy fell into the water—

LT:

They were out boating and had an accident. Yeah.

BT:

And to make a long story short, Hutton made it to shore—

LT:

He could not save his friend.

BT:

And the buddy didn't make it. And he blamed himself for not being able to— actually, he tried to kill himself. But he only injured himself and— well that ended it, the wife tried to keep running it for a year or two after that and that ended Hutton's of Shallowater.

DS:

But you know, we got there because we were talking about the Reese— you took the media out there.

BT:

We went passed the media folks.

LT:

That way he made the media happy and the prince got to eat his—not be bothered. He did that all the time.

DS:

And so, you know, the prince had a house here in Lubbock, how did you handle that portion of the of the stay?

BT:

I really couldn't get involved with it. That wasn't my job to do that. There were other— well we had secret service people out there with him, you know, that lived with him to make sure that he didn't get attacked or something like that. The prince sat in with the troops that were learning, and learned everything that he could from us. They would take off in the same aircraft or whatever with the prince and fly with him or whatever. The unique thing about Reese was the time when they decided they would let the women come into the Air Force to learn how to be pilots, and that was new. Nobody knew how that was going to turn out or whatever, but as it turned out I wound up meeting women that were the first women to be treated properly in the Air Force to go through training, so I got to meet many of them. Then at a point in time, when the base closed, I went down to Austin, right?

LT:

Right.

BT:

To Randolph—

LT:

When the base was going to close, yes.

BT:

The Air Force Base when Reese closed. When I was down there—well I remember the very first night that I went down there, it was new to me. I just went down on my own to find a place where we could live and work at that point in time. Well, it turns out that many of the women who had come to Reese to learn how to fly somehow learned that I had transferred down to the base down in Austin.

LT:

San Antonio.

BT:

In San Antonio.

LT:

Randolph Air Force Base.

BT:

Okay.

DS:

San Antonio, yeah.

BT:

Yeah. And the women would come by and they would say, Is Mr. Tynan still here? And they'd say, We want to visit with him. Well, I couldn't get my job done doing the newspaper because so many of them would come by and say—but some of them were able to give me clues on what was going on at other bases that I was able to put into the Air Force Magazine. And while I was down there, that's when we really started putting out Air Force magazines. My job as it ended when I left, was putting this magazine together on a monthly basis. So, it's still going today and I still get—

LT:

For the rest of his life.

BT:

Do what now?

LT:

For the rest of your life you'll get the free magazine.

BT:

Yeah.

LT:

Next time, let's bring the Chamber of Commerce from El Paso's magazine because that's quite impressive.

DS:

Well, you know—

LT:

For Daniel to see.

DS:

--You know, speaking of next time. How about if we stop now, that way I can have a chance to read the bio and stuff and read this. Then next time we can sit and we can do more structured and we can ask questions about, you know, your stay here and El Paso. That'll give you an hour before you have to get a haircut, maybe you can go— getting your chicken fried steak somewhere. [Laughter]

BT:

The chicken fried steak don't exist anymore.

DS:

Well, that's why— somewhere else, you know.

LT:

But, you know, one thing too that— while the Prince of Iran was here, is that the U2 [1:28:36.1] — I used to call it the Hubble [1:28:37.8] in Okinawa— see it land all the time. But it was our spy plane.

DS:

Um-hm.

LT:

And Bill knew it was there being worked on.

DS:

Yeah.

LT:

Didn't know anything about it. No one knew about it except for one time, I guess—

BT:

It had broken down.

LT:

Yeah.

BT:

Over Asia.

LT:

Yeah.

BT:

Going towards Russia.

DS:

Wow.

BT:

And they had a malfunction and nobody knew what was going on, but that's when I had to go in and work late.

DS:

Yeah, well you probably had a lot of those calls where stuff happened that you had to take care of, right?

LT:

Yes.

BT:

Yeah.

DS:

And stuff that was classified and—

LT:

Yes.

DS:

As an information officer, you had to make sure it stayed on base.

LT:

And you met—and it's amazing how the Presidents would fly into Lubbock a lot of time with their aircraft that we didn't even know about.

DS:

Yeah, well because we're in the middle of nowhere but they have to stop somewhere, right?

[Laughs]

LT:

But Bill took care of them. I didn't know this. Bill took care that—

DS:

So who did—

BT:

Their sons.

DS:

So, who did you meet while you were at Reese?

LT:

Oh, tell him the story about— with the black case being left on the ground. George Bush's.

BT:

Oh. George Bush came in and he'd get off the plane and I said, "Can I help you?" And he said, "No, I'm just going to— this is my records." I said, "Records for what?", "Well, just my records for my doctors." I said, "Oh okay," none of my business, but the kid came over and started—

LT:

George, the future President.

BT:

Started talking to me or whatever and they took off without us. The kid and me and we were left out there. So, we had to call and say, you know, we're still out here. You need to send somebody back out for us to get us downtown on time. The President was giving some kind of speech down here.

LT:

I think he was with the Chamber of Commerce.

BT:

Yeah, it was with the Chamber of Commerce.

DS:

Well, see and that's another thing, you know, after we finish talking about your— the Reese stuff, we need to also make sure we talk about the connection between, you have the El Paso Chamber of Commerce stuff but when you were at Reese, you worked closely with the Lubbock Chamber, right?

BT:

Yeah.

DS:

Yeah, like— well I guess we can get into that right now and that would take us about another hour. Let's talk—

LT:

It's twelve o'clock already.

DS:

Uh-huh.

LT:

Okay, could I leave Bill here? At one o'clock I have my meeting.

DS:

Okay, or do you want to just go now and come back in a— at the next—

BT:

DO you want to come back later today?

DS:

Well, no, I've got to build a fence this afternoon.

BT:

Okay, a fence? [Laughter]

DS:

My mom's fence, I'm doing some repair work for her, so yeah.

BT:

Jeepers, your mom is still going?

DS:

Yeah.

BT:

How old is she?

DS:

Eighty-five.

BT:

Is that all?

DS:

Um-hm.

BT:

I thought she was older.

DS:

No, no. But no, so why don't we stop right here because I have plenty of material to read and copy and the next time I'll give you back your original material.

BT:

Okay.

DS:

Okay.

BT:

Yeah, whatever.

DS:

And— here let's get you to sign this while you're here. You know, the release form. Should have a pen right here. And—

LT:

The story is that—

BT:

Do I print this first?

DS:

Yes, print on the top and then sign underneath it.

LT:

He took George Bush—

BT:

It's not working.

LT:

Walking to different areas for him to see at Reese—

DS:

Um-hm.

BT:

It's not working.

DS:

And that's how—

LT:

And then—

DS:

And it's a new one, I just got it out of the drawer. How about that one? Does that one work?

LT:

And then later on, when Bill was going back.

DS:

Oh, this one has a cap on it, Bill.

LT:

He saw the suitcase on the lawn. No one with it. [DS laughs]

DS:

And it was a Presidents records?

LT:

It was the Presidents records and Bill picked it up [Laughs] and took it to his son and said, "Here, these are your dads records, they were left there on the lawn."

BT:

What is today? October—

LT:

And George Bush—

DS:

Thirtieth. September thirtieth.

LT:

He said, well I'll take them because I'm going to see dad later, but he was getting ready to go and meet some friends. He has friends here in town that they get together. And I don't know if that's the same time but I do know that one time George Bush did talk to the Chamber of Commerce. And I don't know if that was the time you were involved because there was so many times that they came through.

DS:

Yeah, well because one thing I want to get on the record and, you know, because you did a lot with sports, and one thing you did at Reese, you were involved when they were doing the Cap rock Classic Eskimo Tournament.

LT:

We have magazines from that.

BT:

Christmas Classic.

DS:

The Christmas Classic.

BT:

Reese Air Force Base Christmas Classic.

LT:

And we have the magazines.

DS:

Yeah, yeah. So, we need to talk about that too, on one day.

LT:

Yeah.

DS:

All right.

LT:

We have a lot of the magazines for that.

DS:

Okay.

LT:

So, he's done a lot of stuff that I was not privy for, being, so classified.

DS:

Oh, yeah.

LT:

All classified.

DS:

That's the nature of the beast.

BT:

Huh?

DS:

That's the nature of the beast.

LT:

I even had to have Brendon's scheduled because they were going to—

BT:

Do you keep this?

DS:

So, Brendon's was born in what year?

LT:

Nineteen eighty-four.

DS:

Wow. So, y'all had been married fifteen years.

LT:

Forty-six years.

DS:

Before you had your first one.

LT:

Oh, no. I have ten years difference in my children.

DS:

Oh, okay.

LT:

So, anyways, Patricia came three years after I had—we were married and then—

[End of Recording]

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