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Interviewee: Lionel Galvan
Interviewer: Steven Wiltz
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Transcriber: Lauren Penney

[Transcriber's note: The majority of the interviewer's backchanneling has not been transcribed for the purposes of readability.]

Ethnographic preface:

Mr. Lionel Galvan was born and raised in Texas. He went to Texas A&M for about a year and then, not wanting to be drafted into the Army (this was after the Korean Conflict), volunteered for the Marine Corps, where he served as a mechanic/crew chief for four years. After serving, he got his Airframe and Powerplant license from Spartan School of Aeronautics and, in 1961, got a job with PHI, Incorporated in Lafayette. He started out as a mechanic, but worked his way up to crew chief, and is currently a pilot mechanic. He provides a detailed description of some of the work he has done serving the oilfield as a helicopter pilot.



TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer initials: [SW]

Interviewee initials: [LG]

SW: Okay, this is an interview with Mister Lionel Galvan. It's uh, June third, 2003 and in the OCS office. And I'm glad you came. Glad you came up, came today. It's uh, Mister Lionel Galvan.

LG: That is correct.

SW: Are you uh, are you originally from Lafayette?

LG: No, I'm from Texas.

SW: From Texas.

LG: I was born in Texas and raised there and then I came in 1961, I came to Lafayette. I've been here ever since. Off and on, I mean. [Pause]

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SW: And what brought you here?

LG: Uh, I was a helicopter mechanic. Uh, and I worked for PHI, so I came here to, in '61. I worked for about five years as a mechanic and then I got to be a pilot mechanic. Then I, I've been a pilot mechanic ever since. For uh, petroleum helicopters.

SW: Now, you, you, they hired you at Texas, they had PHI in Texas?

LG: Oh no.

SW: Or you came here for the job.

LG: No, I, I got out of the Marine Corps, [Chuckling] let me start. I got out of the Marine Corps and uh, uh [Slight pause] I decided to go to Tulsa and get uh, Spartan School of Aeronautics and get my A and P license. I already had a, my private license, so [I know?] flyin'. And then I was waitin' for a job and um, this letter came in and says that uh, I guess they, Spartan must've send 'em a letter or somethin' their graduates. And it says if you're interested, come on down for an interview, and here I am.

SW: Oh, so they were, PHI was already located here in Lafayette?

LG: Oh yes. Uh hm. They've been here since nineteen... what, '49 I think. No, '40. Nineteen forty-five or somethin' like that. I keep forgettin' the history on [Laughs] on PHI.

SW: So you went to, you went to that aeronautics school and then that's how you ended up here.

LG: Right.

SW: At PHI. Okay. You-

LG: I had Airframe and Powerplant License. That's what I, that's what it was about. [Chuckling] Maybe I better explain, you're not, you're not up to par on the aviation stuff, right?

SW: Not m-, somewhat. [Chuckles]

LG: Okay. Well I went to the Spartan. It's in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And I spent about 14 months gettin' the A and P, that's Airframe and Powerplant License. And I came home, visit my folks in uh, Texas, and I received the letter, invited me over to, for interview. And uh, at that time, I was lookin' for a job. I wanted to go overseas first, but I went, came over here and [Pause] interviewed with PHI. With a guy named, maybe you don't, haven't heard this expression, "sam hill." "What the sam hill want?" [Chuckling] His name was Sam Hill. [Both laugh] The first, my dad used to use the expression all the time.

SW: All the time.

LG: And that's why I remembered him all the time. On that. But uh, I started out uh, as a mechanic. And uh, it was, it was different in those days, for PHI, than it is right now. You started out on a, what they call the "strip shack." I started strippin' uh, well, paint and what have you from uh, the airframe of the aircraft. Overhaul shop. And then uh, since I was in the Marine Corps and I was already experienced in S-58s and S-55s, that's a type of a helicopter they had. They um, I wind up as a crew chief on one of those. At that time you had a mechanic and a pilot and fly back and forth along the coast, doing crew changes for the oil companies. You know, you go to Venice, Empire, Morgan City, um, Cameron, Intercoastal sometimes, and then all the Galveston on that and make the whole trip. And in those we had a, 'bout a 10 and five. Work 10 days on and five days off. And I enjoyed it, I really enjoyed that. [Pause] And uh, I went to South America, the first time for six months. And about 14 months uh, the second time. One of our guys got

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hurt, so I had to go and replace him on an S-58 job down there. 'Course at that time I was unmarried and fancy free and [Chuckling] everything. Uh, when I came back, I started crew chiefin' again out of New Orleans. We had a big uh, keep forgettin' the uh, hurricane, the name of it, but it went through the river. We [Inaudible] uh, New Orleans. And all the power, um, poles, electrical poles were down, so we went down to the marsh, started, we were workin' out of Gretna. Just puttin' the poles in, in the marsh.

SW: Usin' the helicopter to-

LG: The helicopter, yes.

SW: Oh okay.

LG: Singular. [Pause] And uh, pretty soon, one of the guys, I went over there and got my helicopter rating. Already had a commercial rating, [fixaline?]. And they fin-, they thought I was gonna quit, PHI thought I was gonna quit. And I says, "No, I happy what I'm doin' right now." Had a good deal, a good deal goin' on. I mean, nobody bothered me, I had one helicopter to take care of and I usually answered to somebody by phone. [Inaudible] [Laughs] And uh, no, they, they said they didn't want me to quit. I said, "Who's quittin'?" Says, "We want you to get checked out." So they put me as a pilot mechanic and I've been since, pilot mechanic ever since.

SW: Oh okay.

LG: So I fly and maintain my own aircraft.

SW: That's what, that's what Ben had told me. Is that uh-

LG: That's the way he started, too.

SW: That's what he-

LG: He was a pilot mechanic.

SW: You guys would fly out to the rig and then they wanted you as a pilot mechanic 'cause is that right?

LG: Right.

SW: Because if you had to do anything on it while you were sitting on the rig out in the Gulf you, you had to have the skills to-

LG: Yeah, uh hm. That was the uh [Clears throat] that was a routine we learned that uh, normally you fly four or five hours a day, normally. You know, sometimes on crew change days you wind up with eight hours. Not all the time. And you're sittin' two or three hours on a platform, doin' nothin', just waitin' for the customer, for the air-, either the pumper or the production hands or somebody to do somethin'. So you go out there and clean your own aircraft and, at those days, take out a spark plug or two, check 'em out. You know, just, 10, 15 minute jobs. It's because you had to be ready when they called. So they usually, normally would give you about 10 minute head start, you know, "Okay, we're gonna be ready in 10 minutes or so." So, you put the aircraft back together. And in those days it took a lot of grease to keep the aircraft running, there a lot of bearings and what have you. And keepin' it clean. That's just keepin' it clean, that's what we did. So we go away with that. You know, we, we could do our maintenance at the end of the day, we do a good day on that. And uh, our inspections, it's a good thing the maintenance, we had some good supervisors for maintenance. And they uh, oh what I say, they planned our maintenance so we can do it in pieces instead of all at once. So during the day I, you know, grease the, the, the tail rotor, I'd grease the tail rotor. Check this, check the bearings, I'd check that, and I can sign it off right there. By the end of the day, I have five or six or maybe even 10 items checked off on the darn thing. And they give you so much time to do it in. So, I only got 10

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hours to do everything else and in two days I can finish up a 50 hour, 100 hours, or 150 hour inspection. Everything except what required uh, heavy lifting, like maybe changing a blade, changing an engine, uh, or special tools that you needed on that. Then you go to the base and have it done there, have the other mechanics in the hanger there give you a hand. Other than that, the simple stuff we could do. Plugs, [magnetos?], anything like that.

SW: Do they, do they still do it like that today? Do you, have you-

LG: No. [Clears throat] Uh, it's gotten a little more complicated now. Uh, on that. You can have it, as long as, at that time, too, it was uh, the PHI came out and says, "You will be a pilot mechanic as long, you have a job, you know," if they requested a pilot mechanic, a customer did, uh, "as long as you don't fly over four hours a day, we feel that you don't have enough time, if you fly more than four hours a day, you don't have enough time to keep up with the maintenance." And more or less, that was right, was true. Now there was several days like crew change day, you had to go and take the crews in and bring another crew on that particular day. You wind up with seven, eight hours. Instead of two or three trips, you ran five or six trips. And I remember those with the 47, we were only doin' 65, 70 miles an hour [Chuckles] at that time.

SW: And this was in the '60s you said?

LG: Yeah.

SW: So the, the rigs weren't that far out yet?

LG: No. Um, some of 'em were, but uh, depends on the depth of the water. See you can have uh, 100 feet, 200 feet 'bout 50, 60, 70 miles out. And considered that was long, that was a long travel [burn?]. A long flight on that. But uh, it was, anyway, I think it was 35, 40 miles [inland?], 50.

SW: So how much on an average day, if you were doing a crew change or something like that, how much air time would you, I'm just curious about, you know, how much time in the air you'd actually be flying?

LG: We were limited, the, the uh, federal government, really the FAA, limits us to eight hours a day. So we, we, we flew up to eight hours. On some jobs, like uh, I remember a couple of jobs, I never had this job, I flew, I relieved 'em for awhile, but I never had as a permanent job, they used to have two pilots assigned to a helicopter, because they were flying more than eight hours in the, in the summertime. So you got 14 hours [Chuckling] of daylight time, so they just flew the heck out of it. So they would go ahead and request two pilots.

SW: You could fly, then you can give it over to him-

LG: Yeah.

SW: And that was legal?

LG: The guy was flying, let's say, six o'clock or, in the morning, to about 12 and then 12 to about six or eight. And uh, both of 'em get about seven hours, six uh, six, seven hours each. It's not so bad flying, it's the takeoff and landings. I had a job on-, my takeoff and landing were about 30, 40 takeoff and landings a day and then later on the highest I ever had was about [Chuckling] 118 takeoff and landings in one day. And that was surprising to me. 'Cause we were uh, matter of fact, it was right here at Vermillion, Vermillion 26 for UniCal. And uh, platform was so close, you know, you could just barely pick it up and just move to the other side. You go less than 100 yards. Vroom! You set her down there. You got there and by the time you wrote [Slight pause] at, at that time we charged a minimum of two minutes and then we took about 45 seconds to or a minute to, to get there. So we write two minutes. Now by the time you start writin', here they come back up. The guys, all they're doin' is checkin' the pressures. They go downstairs, run up there, check the pressure, come on back into the helicopter, and I rev it up. Pooh!

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SW: That's it. Just bringing 'em one, from one to another, hoppin'.

LG: You do about 20 or 30 in about two hours. [Chuckles] Then you shut down for a little bit. Then you start all over again. But they had a lot of s-, little toad stools. Had little bitty platforms, 20 by 20 platforms. Just to have 'em, just enough to land. About the size of this room here, I mean, this floor right in here. We'd just land and guy would go downstairs, check it. And they, and uh, they want, they uh, changin' charts 'bout once a week. That would take about four or five minutes every time. So you had a chance to rest. You roll it back, they go down there, take the chart out, put another one there, and calibrate it and what have you, and they come back up. Change charts, once a week they did that. It's a seven day chart.

SW: Now I'm sure they have dif-, they have equipment where they can monitor it from a different spot-

LG: Yes.

SW: Without having to go in a helicopter.

LG: They, they might. They don't do that too much now. Uh, all you do is, they monitor everything and if a s-, a well is slow or, or too fast, is flowing too fast, then they go down there and adjust it, the rate on that.

SW: They also-

LG: Or, and then there's maintenance on it. That takes, if they're gonna change a valve, anything, it takes four or five hours, you just, the guy either goes and shuts down and waits for 'em, or just drops 'em off and he goes about his business, goes someplace else and pick up some more people. On that. In those days they had personnel [Pause] 20, 30 people on the platform was normal. 'Cause I remember, especially if you were just [Pause] was the uh, let's say the um [Pause] the area was just coming into production. You had about 10, 10 people, what they call uh, the company men. They worked for the derrick. Then you had contractors all over the place. S-, in the summertime it was worse. You had sandblasters, you had painters [Chuckles] you had everybody, construction people, wireline people. They had 'em all over the place and you were just constantly [Inaudible]. And that's where you find out where you had the best foremans. If they could plan everything at night, you know, and tell you the, the night before, tell you what to do. And once you had a good foreman to do the planning, it was a snap. [Makes a sound as if whizzing back and forth] Just fly around and come back and you can take about an hour break. Then you start all over again.

SW: And you were mainly working a 10 and five you said?

LG: Well, in those days, then we went uh, 10 and five and then they tried five and five, I never did like that, and [Clears throat] I never did like 10 and five either. Then it went to seven and seven and that's the best schedule.

SW: Seven and seven.

LG: Seven on, seven on and seven off.

SW: Wh-, why didn't 10 and five work very well?

LG: Well, 10 and five you'd probably wind up [Clears throat] on a different day, going to work on a different day. Instead of going to work, right now I'm work, I'm going to work on Thursdays. Most everybody else is on Fridays, but I go on Thursdays and break on Wednesdays. Then I know I have a regular schedule on that. Well, 10 and five you might go to work on a Thursday and break on a Sunday. Then come back and go to work on a Wednesday, you know [Chuckling] you had to really keep up.

SW: Doesn't give you any, any uh, continuity.

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LG: Well, not continuity. You could still, at that time, I used to fly home. You know, I had a little airplane and I'd fly home and come back, it was no problem for me on that.

SW: Fly home in Texas?

LG: In Texas.

SW: So you were workin' for PHI at the time, but living, still living back home in Texas.

LG: Oh no, I lived here in Lafayette. [Clears throat]

SW: Oh, you'd go home to visit or-

LG: Yeah, I'd go to visit my folks.

SW: I see.

LG: Yeah, when I first came here, the first night I came here, I almost got arrested. [Both laugh] I, I came here by the bus, at the bus station right there. So, it must've been about two o'clock in the morning. [Laughs] And just across the bus station there was a, like a hotel there. So I said, well I, heck, I'm having only 13 dollars in my pocket, I wasn't about to spend it on that, you know. And then I have to do an interview at seven o'clock that morning. So I decided just to grab my bag, my tool box and my bag, and I walked downtown, down to Jefferson. And I was just window shoppin'. So [Clears throat] here comes the police. "Stop," they says, "what are you doin'?" Said, "Well I'm just walkin' around here, waitin'." Then he asked me this and that questions, you know, where I'm from [Inaudible]. And then he found out I was in the Marine Corps and he was, too. To this day I don't know his name. Said, "Well, heck, come on." Now, took me someplace, we got some coffee. I never drank coffee before. I was, even in the Marine Corps, I didn't even drink coffee. So I started learning how to drink coffee. And then he, uh, he told me how to get to um... [Gardner?] Street. No, no [Pause] anyway, we walk all the way to the airport and then he dropped me off. He dropped me off on uh... water plant, no the uh, power plant right there. Dropped me off there. [Pause] [Chuckles] And I walked, you know, walked down there and the interview and everything else. And uh, then I used to live, it's an old couple, used to have a room for rent and I stayed there, right underneath the underpass uh... was it, there's a big uh, garage now. Big truck.

SW: Uh huh. Right by the old po-, [Inaudible] post office. Well, it's still a post office nowadays right now.

LG: I believe that's what it is. It's some out on Gardners I think it is. And uh [Clears throat] the only thing I didn't like about that room was they used garlic for everything. [Laughs] But I put up with it.

SW: So you, that's when you first moved to town? That's where you stayed for awhile?

LG: Yeah, when I first, that's the first, when I moved to town, they told me about that place. And it was easy. I could walk in about 10 minutes I could be in, just walk to, I didn't have no automobile, now. So I walked to it every morning.

SW: Walked to work.

LG: Yeah, walked to work.

SW: And uh-

LG: Then pretty soon they asked me if I had vehicle, you know, I had transportation. I says, "No, not yet." So uh [Clears throat] the biggest surprise is when they gave me 36 dollars. That was my, they paid my expenses [Laughs]

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from in Texas to Lafayette. I says, "What's the 36 dollars for?" They says, "Well," I think it was six cents, uh, six or five cents a mile or something like that. And [Clears throat]

SW: To get here?

LG: Yeah, to get here. Or seven cents a mile I believe it was. And, shoot, I was rich in those days, in 1961 you were rich with 30 dollars in your pocket. [Pause] Yeah.

SW: So you uh, obviously you got the job, too.

LG: Oh yeah-

SW: You stayed-

LG: I interviewed, everything else.

SW: You got in at two a.m., you stayed up all night-

LG: The only thing he says is, "If you accept this job, you will work on anything that has a PHI stamp on it." Truck, fuel trucks, uh, helicopters, a tractor or a mo-, lawnmower that had PHI written on it, [Chuckling] I would work on that. That was the only stipulation.

SW: [You the company man?].

LG: Right. [Both laugh]

SW: And so uh [Clears throat] [Pause] so that, that was when you got the job, you got the job.

LG: I got the job.

SW: [After?] you went back and took care of your affairs, and then you more or less kind of started-

LG: No, I started right there.

SW: You started, you stayed in town from that point?

LG: Yeah, I stayed on. I was off that time and they told me where to find me a room. And I walked back-

SW: To that house.

LG: Yeah. I left my toolbox and everything else in a hanger. I only had a small toolbox, you know, 'bout 28 pounds or 20 pounds, somethin' like that. Basic, just basic. And then uh [Pause] the tools were a little expensive for [Proto?] and uh, all those companies that sell tools, so I used to go to Sears and Montgomery Wards and got my tools. Then pretty soon I started getting good, good tools. And I had to buy me a rollaway, bit rollaway for that.

SW: Okay. And you started workin'-

LG: It was fun.

SW: You started working for them. But uh, I guess you didn't stay, it was that little [red?] house, you didn't stay in there for long. Did you eventually get your own place or?

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LG: Yeah, uh hm. Uh, I stayed there for about a month I think it was. Yeah, about a month, less than a month.

SW: Smellin' the garlic.

LG: And then I went to, there was a, there was a bunch of guys that got hired on at the same time I did. Uh, and we all got together and there was about five of us and about four, three bedroom apartment on [Benjamin?] Thruway. Which is, Benjamin Thruway, it wasn't a thruway yet. And that was, oh, just a street. There used to be a lady, Cor-, Cor-, [Corvete, Cromer?]. There used to be, across the street there used to be a um... a laundry service. Dry cleanin' and laundry, but mostly laundry. That's where I had all my laundry done. 'Course, you know, remember I was in the Marine Corps and I always thought of dressin' up [Chuckles] everything.

SW: Starched shirts and all that.

LG: Yeah, starched shirts and everything else. But I was hot over here. [Laughs] But anyways, we stayed about four of us in about a three-bedroom. Somebody on the couch and then they use the other beds there.

SW: And y'all got together-

LG: We all got together and we paid our [Pause] I think it was 200 dollars a month, somethin' like that.

SW: For the whole place?

LG: For the whole, for the whole place right there. It was really nice. And the good thing about it, none, none of us were there all the time. We come and go, we had different places. [Clears throat] The guys that had vehicles, they would go work Morgan City or uh, Empire or somethin' like that. They used to hate goin' to Empire and Venice, 'cause remember there was no Interstate 10 at that time. You had to go to Opelousas all the way to New Orleans and then down U.S. 90.

SW: Wow. I bet it makes the trip a lot longer. [Chuckles]

LG: Oh, it, well you would have to take off around 10 o'clock at uh, in the mornin' just to be there around four o'clock, five o'clock. So you can relieve the other guy. Hell, it was about six hour dr-, drive, I think.

SW: Was it difficult for you guys to all find a place to live at that time? Or was there enough uh, enough room in Lafayette or was the city too small? [Pause] I know it's-

LG: Oh-

SW: It's growing now, but when you guys were-

LG: Well, let me, let me, let me back up. When I went down, down Jefferson, they still had bricks [Chuckling] on the, on the street, you know. You read about it all the time, you still had red bricks all over the place. And uh [Pause] no, after that uh, I bought a, I forget what year Ford it was. [Pause] Nineteen... 58, '56 station wagon. Ford. And the guy that sold it, he just wanted to get rid of it because he's been haulin' sand in the backseat and all that, and it was full of sand. So I parked it up on a hill like this and I got the water hose and started, but it still got sand. I used to drive, okay, my first job was to go to Cameron, drive to Cameron and, and work out there. On that, but I still had sand all over the place in the back. I only used the front seat, nobody else drove with me, so I could care less. [Laughs] It was full of sand. He'd haul sand with the darn thing. [Clears throat] [Pause]

SW: In a station wagon? [Both laugh]

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LG: Yeah, I know, that's, I uh, I spent maybe two months here. I stripped some, uh, I stripped some, and I worked in the metal shop, and only for about two or three weeks, because they would keep changing me all the way around. In other words, I worked on a project. Fix this box or somethin' like this, and I would do the [machine that part?]. And then I would go and help on the overhaul. If it was my aircraft, it was assigned there, and the transmission was being overhauled, I would get to strip it. Take it apart. Then the inspectors would come in there [Clears throat] or the guys that really knew what they were doing, work on it. Either change the gear, do this or do that. Put it back together and I would put it back in the helicopter. And that's all I did. Then I take off from there or I'd go someplace else.

SW: You, you had mentioned too that after awhile, how, for how long did y'all work 10 and five? How many years? Was that a good while or? [Pause]

LG: Well, let me think about it. [Slight pause] Actually [Clears throat] a 10 and five I worked maybe a... maybe a year. Year and half, because I went to South America after that. I went to South America. And I don't know when they changed, when I came back they were changed. And also they tried to [Clears throat] some people would f-, work a... 20 and 10 or somethin' like that, you know. Go 20 days on, go 10 days off. The guys that were livin' North Carolina, mostly from over there. That had a long drive. They let 'em do that. But I only heard about one or two guys doin' that, on that. And then you figure your... you figure out your uh, time off when you went on a l-, on a job. Let's say you went inland or you stayed someplace where the job stayed there say 20, 30, 40, 50 days at a time. Then you figured out your own time, your time off from that. And at that time we had the little sliding scale. [Clears throat] They put, paid on a sliding scale on that. So any time you went over eight hours, you would get time and a half, I think, I'm not sure, not, not too sure about this. But after you went over 12 hours, it was not worth even [Clears throat] even puttin' it down as, in the pay record on that, because you would get less and less as you did that. One of these days I'm gonna make a research on that. [Both chuckle]

SW: And was the, was the pay very good at that time or?

LG: For me it was. For me it was very good. I was gettin' about... 85, 90 dollars a, a week on that. And it was good.

SW: What else, what else could you have done at that time that would have paid as well? Was there anything, were there any other options?

LG: I didn't have any other desire than to be a helicopter mechanic. I mean, that was, that was what I was trained for. I was in the Marine Corps, I was a mechanic. And, and uh, I didn't, and I never even considered going offshore, that would have paid more, twice as much. And I liked helicopters. [Inaudible] So I never did consider goin' into uh [Clears throat] roustabout or production, drillin'. I didn't even, didn't even dawn on me even to this day. That's, it doesn't uh, ah, I don't want to use "appeal" to me, but uh, just I'm not interested.

SW: But, but those were jobs that did pay well at that time?

LG: Oh yes.

SW: You could definitely-

LG: They paid well.

SW: Um, so you could-

LG: They, now the guys that were workin', roustabouts, they didn't think they was payin' well. [Both laugh] But they were makin' twice as much as I was. That's why-

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SW: They were makin' good money and you guys were makin' pretty good money, I was just tryin' to think, what else, what else could you have done either in, at your home in Texas or in Lafayette at that time that, that paid well. I guess there wasn't much else.

LG: At home, my home, no, there was nothin' else, except maybe if you wanted to be a farmer or a rancher on that. And uh, I not bein' raised, I mean, I was raised in a farming uh, community and all that, but I never paid particular attention to be a farmer. [Pause] After I went to um [Clears throat] after high school on that, I went to Texas A and M and then I was just about to get drafted, so I didn't want to go into the Army, and so I went into the Marine Corps for four years. I only went to A and M for about a year. [Pause]

SW: Was that where you, you, uh, I guess you got to fly in the Marine Corps. Did they teach-

LG: Only, only because they were short of pilots. Uh, I was a crew chief. I, I made rank pretty fast in the Marine Corps, which was unheard of on that, all meritorious, all my ranks were meritorious. And uh [Clears throat] I really liked it. And uh, I started out as a clerk because I knew how to type. That was my mistake, too, tellin' that I knew how to type. [Chuckles] Stuck me an engineering clerk. But after awhile [Clears throat] I guess I didn't mix the coffee right for Captain, Captain Hayes. So he got rid of me and threw me out on the flight line, so I was a mechanic. And I really enjoyed that. We were so short of pilots, this is right after Korea. We were so short of pilots that the crew chief had to fly up in the copilot's side. So eventually you just get checked out. Well everything except emergency procedures. Takeoff and landings and, you know, stuff like that. Just takeoff, land, takeoff, land. But emergency procedures and everything else, and a little bit of navigation on that. And we picked up our time. Matter of fact, we had some more time than the guys right out of Pensacola. The guys were comin' out of flight school. And they happened to uh, wind up uh, or bein' picked for helicopters. They would give 'em some, well, I don't know how much time they give 'em helicopter time. You know, 50, 60, 100 hours or somethin' like that, then they send 'em to the, to the outfits. [Clears throat] To the squadrons. And they would start flyin' again. They were considered new guys when they came in. And, heck, by that time I was flyin' two or three hours a day.

SW: And you learned just because you were sittin' up there in the copilot's seat.

LG: That's right. Then after awhile, they got, you know, the old guys, we had a problem there that they were gettin' people out of the Marine Corps right after Korea, but they wouldn't let 'em out when they wanted to. And they were all mad and everything else on that. So they could care less, they crank it up, "Okay, you got it." And I take off and we'd fly circles. And now the reason that was for the, the, you had to fly certain hours so you could keep your gas money. The squadron was allotted so much money to buy gas with. If you didn't use it, you lost it. Also, there was a lot of helicopters pilots, I'm sayin' "helicopter," a lot of pilots, either fixed wing or helicopters. They had to fly their four or five hours a month to get their pays, their flight pay on that. That's, so they flew. You know, once a month or two, uh, twice a month they come down there and go around the pattern. And they try to, you know, either hover, pickin' up uh, a load or somethin' like that on the sling. And then [Pause] uh, we, we stand guard over the runway for the aircraft. [Catchin'?] [Inaudible] and what have you. Once in awhile we have a crash or somebody missed one, we go and pick 'em up. But most of the time it was just, and guess where I was flyin' all this time? In Hawaii. [Chuckles] So we flew all over the islands and back all that time. But we were slow, we were 75, 80 miles an hour at the most we could do with the durn things. And it's always windy over there, so we were practically hoverin' goin' someplace on there.

SW: You had to be careful, huh. [Pause]

LG: We just had head wind was, you know, all the time. [Pause]

SW: After you got out the Marine Corps, when you went to the school and then got out of the school's when you got your job. Did a lot of the guys that you were in the school with, did you, did you become coworkers with them at PHI?

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LG: No. [Clears throat] Um. No. Uh, I don't, I don't remember one of 'em. I remember Marines, but from different outfits, but they were not with me, you know. Uh, I remember, we had a bunch of Marines. Most of the pilots were Marines, ex-Marines, or former Marines.

SW: Over here, over here at PHI?

LG: Yeah. And then I had some of my pilots that I met before. They weren't exactly in my squadron, you know, they were in other squadrons, but I knew of 'em and I crew chiefed for 'em. I met 'em here. There was about four or five of 'em. We all stayed to-, after awhile, after the uh, apartment that we stayed at uh, I came back from South America for six months and then I uh, I couldn't get back into the apartment, it was filled up. And one of the pilots bought a house on um... uh, what's the name of the street. [Pause] I fo-, I forget the name. The street name. [Surrey?]? Not Surrey. [Pause]

SW: Somewhere there on the-

LG: Way, way-

SW: Moss Street or [Inaudible, overlapping speech]-

LG: Moss Street, it's moff of Moss, Moss Street. All the way down to the end. And he bought a house and there was four or five of us stayin' there on that. And he had bought a four-bedroom I think it was. And plus the living room. I had a small bedroom, 'bout the size of this right in here. But all I did was store my, my clothes there. I was gone all the time. At that time I was crew chief, I was assigned to an aircraft [Clears throat] and all my expenses were paid: motel, meals, and what have you. So all my money went into the bank. All my pay check. And all my expense what I claim on that they paid, you know, that's what I lived on. That's why I liked bein' a crew chief. That's why, I didn't want to stop, start flyin'. When I got my commercial, helicopter commercial license, they wanted me to fly. I says, "No, I don't want to fly. I'm not gonna quit either. I wanna be, you know, just keep it like that." Well when I started flyin', I think I made about 100 dollars more a month, you know, 125 dollars a month than I think it was. Then after that pay increases keep comin'.

SW: Kept comin'. But you were just storin', you were just basically-

LG: Yeah.

SW: You were out all the time anyway.

LG: But uh, my money was goin' to the house and to my, I had a sister and brother at that time and put them through college. And then my sister I think already graduated. When I went in the Marine Corps, I would send money to the house.

SW: So a lot, that PHI was hiring all, a lot of guys out the military because they, did they already have the training or, well, what was the reasoning behind that? Why, why were-

LG: Well, we were expandin'. All the companies at that time, once PHI started, they started out in the marsh, because they didn't have, they, [a bunch of 'em usin'?] well they were too small. And, and they didn't carry enough people. Or not too s-, too slow, let's put it that way. And with the helicopter we could go from one place to another seis-, with a seismograph. And uh, everybody was askin' for it. But pretty soon they were askin', "Can you go offshore with the durn things? We'll put a platform on it to, to land on." And that's where it got started. PHI wasn't the only one, but he was the biggest. He was, Mister Suggs was the one that bought [Inaudible] [Chuckles] [got lots?], you know. He just bought by the hundreds. And uh [Pause] that's the way it started. It, it needed personnel, you needed pilots, you needed mechanics. [Clears throat]

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SW: And they could get 'em from the military.

LG: And you can get 'em, oh, not necessarily military. Uh, you got 'em from uh, other operators. Eh, of course, the Army, they had the um... oh, what would I say, they had their own aviation stuff. They had a lot of Army people, they were trained mechanics. Uh, the Navy, Navy had a lot of mechanics. The sailors. And um, but most of us were trained to be crew chiefs, not overhaul. And we needed those people more than anybody else. You could be trained if you wanted to. And a lot of guys well this is what they wanted. They didn't want to go out in the field. [Clears throat] So they transferred to the overhaul shops: transmission shop, engine shop, um, different shops on that in there. [Clears throat] Then we had a specialist like sheet metal man. They didn't want to go out in the field, they stayed [Inaudible]. Pretty soon we even had more or less like professional paint strippers. They'd know, knew how to handle and how to strip the, we do it, but we do sections at a time, you know. And at the time, we didn't care who, where the darn stuff would [Chuckles] [Inaudible]. And they cleaned up alright. We did everything. [Pause]

SW: So uh, where, where were these, you, you came from was it east Texas?

LG: Uh, south Texas.

SW: South Texas. What was the name of the town?

LG: Uh, Crystal City.

SW: Crystal City.

LG: Well, graduated, let me put it, I graduated from high school there. I was born in [Uvaldy?], Texas.

SW: Oh, okay.

LG: Uvaldy, I, I don't know if you've heard about it. It's about 100 miles south of San Antonio.

SW: No I haven't, I haven't. I've been to San Antonio.

LG: Uvaldy.

SW: Okay. So you came from, from south Texas. And your, a lot of people you worked with at PHI were not from Lafayette. Were they coming from, from other places?

LG: Oh, they were coming from all over. [Clears throat]

SW: What, where abouts were they coming from?

LG: New York uh, a lot of guys from New York, uh, and most of 'em uh, like a lot of people from either South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska. They, they were all over the place. You'd meet 'em all over the place. And at that time we used to be, in the Marine Corps you call your li-, your, your last, you only by your last name. "Hey Galvan," this or that. You know, "Hey Smith," or somethin' like that. And we still call ourselves [Chuckles] by the last name. Now here recently I noticed a change and everybody calls by first name only. They don't call, they don't go by the last name. I guess it's changes, you know. Just change.

SW: You said you, you came in '61 and-

LG: Sixty-one.

SW: Except, except for maybe goin' to the South America and here and there, you, you pretty much relocated here.

SW: There a lot of other guys that you worked with, did they come in from outside of town and stay here?

LG: Uh. [Clears throat] You mean Lafayette?

SW: Yeah.

LG: Okay. You gotta remember that in nineteen... when did this boom start? Everything went out of, out of proportion here, I mean the prices were [Pause] you couldn't live here. I was already here, that's why I can live here. But at that time, everything went up and a lot of guys started spreadin' out. Breaux Bridge here or just drove, Pensacola, Pierre, uh, San Antonio, uh, North Carolina, uh, Tulsa, Oklahoma. They just drove back and forth. And then after awhile Lafayette got to be expensive. But at that time, it was perfect. You could go anyplace around here, there 150 dollars, 200 dollars a month, and you get yourself a brand new apartment. It was nice.

SW: The town was pretty small at that time?

LG: Pretty small, yeah.

SW: As compared to now. [Chuckles]

LG: I'm tryin' to remember there used to be a Lafayette, welcome to Lafayette, population... what. I'm tryin' to figure. I don't remember. I don't remember what the, but the population was, was small at that time. Sixty-one.

SW: It was small community.

LG: In '61, but, you know, depen-, when you go out j-, uh, Johnson, you see a Texaco station at [Compo?], Compo Texaco station, that was Lafayette right there. From there on to Labadieville was nothin'. I mean there was nothin', nothing but farm. Nothing. That stopped right there. Bendel Gardens and all this, you go up [Penhook?], that's it. [Chuckling] It stopped right there.

SW: It was Lafayette.

LG: That was Lafayette.

SW: Downtown, this box right here.

LG: Then you would go Penhook and you'd make a, a, on [Inaudible, street name], you know, make a right turn, then you started seein' some houses next to the river. It was up on the uh, um, west and east side of the river, you see. 'Cause I used to fly over it, you know, on that. But, uh [Clears throat] Acadiana Mall and all that there was nothin'. I mean, there was nothin', just trees.

SW: I was told that the, the Judice Inn, the hamburger place, that was the edge of town. [Laughs]

LG: That was it. [Inaudible] was right there, Judice's. You want the best hamburger in town, you go to Judice's.

SW: That's where you go. They still say that now. [Laughs]

LG: Yeah, no, it's, it's true. Whatever it is Mister [Julius?] did with the meat, that was it. I mean, it was good. You look at the little hamburger, you know, just a little bitty [pax?] hamburger in there. You says, "Well I'm not gonna get much for 15," what, 25 cents I think it was. And man, you wanted another one. [Laughs] It was good. It was good.

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SW: And then as we know the, the town grew. But uh-

LG: Not "grew," exploded. [Laughs]

SW: Would you um, connect it not only to PHI, but you, you said some of the guys went to the Breaux Bridge area. But when I'm talkin' about Lafayette, I mean Lafayette Parish, the whole area.

LG: Yeah, uh hm.

SW: Not only with PHI, but we had lots of guys comin' in to work in the oilfield.

LG: Oh yeah-

SW: And so, it seemed to me there was a lot of people relocating to this area.

LG: I-

SW: That helped to, to make it expand.

LG: Now you have [Clears throat] lot of people relocated but the people were already here workin' in the industry. I mean, at that time they weren't workin', but they started working at, in the boom time. All the people, the local people here, everything from Opelousas uh, Lake Charles, uh, just a little bit north of I-10 right now came down here and started working. You know, because they hired locally. They hired locals. You might have your engineers that graduated from another, you know, petroleum engineers or somethin' like that from someplace else come down here. But, I don't think USL ever kept up with graduating petroleum engineers. I think they fell right behind on that. Not only that, but the guys that graduated from here they wouldn't even come work here, [Chuckling] they'd go to Oklahoma, someplace else, California. [Chuckles]

SW: Everybody in Lafayette's leavin'.

LG: Yeah.

SW: Everybody's, everybody else is comin' into Lafayette.

LG: [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

SW: I just, uh, it's just interesting to me, like you said, yeah, you got here in '61 and you're pretty much still here, so there, there must have been more than if, more than just you doin' that. [Chuckles]

LG: Oh-

SW: To make the town grow like it did.

LG: Yeah. There's a lot of guys that uh, they been here 40, 50 years and [Clears throat] and they're not, they're from someplace else on that. But this is an easy town to live in. You got everything here. I mean, you have [Inaudible] you want to go to [Clears throat] [Chuckles] you want to go to uh, the cinema or the, a show or somethin' like that, you got 'em all over time. At that time you only had three of 'em I think. One down on a s-, uh, one out the Breaux, Breaux Bridge, and I can't remember the other one. You only had two, I think.

SW: And there was one downtown.

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LG: And then one downtown. One downtown. And uh, later one, myself, before I got married, I used to love to go to the opera and all the uh, all the shows they used to have here in auditorium. And I loved that. Loved that.

SW: So you, you, you liked it here.

LG: Oh yeah.

SW: I, I've heard of some of the people that said uh, and it may have even been one guy from PHI who said that uh, the reputation was people didn't want to come to Lafayette.

LG: People don't want [Clears throat] now-

SW: Or south Louis-, south Louisiana.

LG: Let me, let me explain, this is my experience, we used to have a lot of pilots come down here. I, I'm more uh, I deal more with pilots than I did with mechanics, [Inaudible] mechanics. The pilots would come down here and they'd love to fly, that's what they wanted to do and everything else, but if they were married, the wife, for some reason or another, wouldn't fit in. They, they wanted to go home. They wanted to go back home on that. And a lot, we had a lot of guys quit because of the wives wanted them. Now you got to remember a guy comes to work down here and he's single, he doesn't have to stay here, he can drive home. You know, seven and seven, he can, he can spend a day, a day and a half driving to and a day and a half coming back. That's a lot of driving, but they do it at the time. And uh, but I heard more complaints about the wives [Pause] I guess not fitting in [Sighing] and uh, not getting used to the local food and everything down here. But there's a lot of 'em that stayed here. Boy, more Cajun than [Chuckling] than Cajuns.

SW: Did you meet your wife down here?

LG: I met her, yes, I met her here. She was goin' to UL here.

SW: Oh, okay. And she was from this area?

LG: Yeah, she's from Gueydan.

SW: Oh okay.

LG: That's why I never can leave.

SW: Yeah.

LG: That's it.

SW: And, yeah-

LG: I'm stuck.

SW: If you, if you marry somebody from here, she doesn't want to go, you have to stay.

LG: Uh, naa. [SW laughs] [Clears throat] It depends on, you know, you know, the type of family you're gonna get into. There's some, some ladies that uh, they just want to leave. Explore and everything else. [Pause] No, she's from, she's from 'round, 'round here. All her family and everything else is around here.

SW: So you became a transplant? [Laughs]

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LG: You see, uh, I got two daughters and they not, they're not here. One is in Florida and one's in Texas. [Laughs]

SW: They went to school here, though?

LG: Yes, they went to school here.

SW: And then they took off.

LG: Yeah, one of 'em [Clears throat] my oldest one went to school here and then went to uh, Loyola. Got her teachin' certificate. Ti-, taught in uh, New Orleans. Got married. And he's a lawyer, so they went to Sarasota. They're livin' there now. Just had my first grandchild. And uh, my youngest one went to school here, then she went to Trinity in San Antonio. University over there. And all of a sudden decided that she, she didn't want to be a uh... didn't want to work in her field there, so decided to be an optometrist. She's goin' to Houston now, University of Houston to be an optometrist. I think it's because her boyfriend, boyfriend's goin' to Shreveport bein' a doctor. But he went to Texas A and M, spent four years some kind of a medical deal, then he's goin' to be a doctor. Matter of fact I think he's, by the end of the summer he's gonna take his uh, what, what do you call it there? Internship?

SW: Residency? Residence or whatever, yeah.

LG: And so [Clears throat]

SW: It seems like you became part of the, the, what would happen here, the people.

LG: Well, I wish I could say that, but I didn't spend too much time here. You can remember, I work a seven and seven, I used to go offshore all the time. And at that time, we used to do a lot of work on, spent more time offshore than I did at home here.

SW: Half a year you're gone.

LG: I [wouldn't?] do it again. I'd go seven days and then maybe they call me for two, three days extra. You know.

SW: Oh okay.

LG: To, to work. And then I come back. And same thing all, always, all the time. Until here recently uh, oh, we had change of ownership. And it's changed [Clears throat] it's changed for the good now, you know. It's good. I bet the other, Mister Suggs did a hell of a good job startin' the company and what have you, but I think uh, PHI is more business-like now than it is like um, like they're tryin' to run it like a family deal. I have my [Sighs] what would call 'em, doubts or uh... I can't [Clears throat] it's alright when you started with PHI you knew everybody, when I first started. You knew everybody, you met 'em at least once. And now there's so many people that you just, you just don't know who. I mean, a guy can come in here and work for you for s-, six months, go someplace else and you forget about him. And then pretty soon either he quits or goes overseas and 10 years later you see him. Says, "Well I thought you quit or," you know, you haven't seen him in 10 years. Now it's just like that.

SW: Yeah, well that's the size of the company.

LG: Uh hm, the size of the company.

SW: I wanted to ask you, um, you talk about some crashes every now and then. What's, what's the danger involved in, in flyin' helicopters? [LG clears throat] Have you ever had any crashes yourself?

LG: Oh, I had several crashes. Yeah, I crashed uh, uh, had engine failures what have you, blade failure. Uh, the biggest danger [Pause] I think it's not payin' attention. Uh, and not listenin' to yourself when you hear a different

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sound, uh, and you're not sure, you want to please the customer so durn much that you get into trouble, you know, tryin' to land someplace where you don't, not supposed to land. I think uh, it's, it's not payin' attention. I think that's the biggest problem we have. You had uh, 'course you, when start out, you don't know what you're doin'. You know, you don't, hell, all you know is you take off and land and they show you, take off and land [there was no obstacles move?]. Nothin' to realize what the danger you're gonna get into. Weather used to be a problem, but [Clears throat] they, they, they claimed weather was, well, in those days you were doing 60 miles an hour. Uh, and you were 300 feet above the water on that and [Inaudible]. Visibility started gettin' less and less, then you started lookin' for a place to land. Now, you're doin' 120, 130 miles an hour or 40, you know, miles an hour. And that, and they're, you run into a fog bank or somthin' like that, it's too late, you know, you're supposed to slow down before that. The speed also has [Pause] it d-, creeps up on your. Well I think the guy that um... the biggest problem is uh... complacency, I guess. That's the word I think [Inaudible]-

SW: Comfortable.

LG: Comfortable, yeah.

SW: To fly in-

LG: Flyin' and uh, don't expect anything. You, you're not listenin', I mean, you're not, you're not listenin' to the engine, you're not listenin' to the airframe, uh, you, you get a little comfortable on that.

SW: And you said you had a couple of crashes. Obviously it wasn't very serious, because you're-

LG: Oh yeah. [Chuckles]

SW: Here right now.

LG: I had a-

SW: What do you mean by "crash?"

LG: The first engine failure I had with PHI, I was uh, in Cameron. [Laughs] I had a buddy of mine and uh, they sent me to Cameron on a, on a, a 47 model, a little bubble job. And I made a flight, matter of fact, for what they call now MMS. I made a flight for them and came back. And then they, telephone call says they wanted me back in Lafayette. They wanted the aircraft back, so for me to fly it back. So I told my buddy, says, "Ha, ha, ha, I'm gonna break earlier than you are, I'm gonna be in Lafayette." See break day was the next day. And he got all mad and he says, "I hope that engine quits on you," blah blah blah and all this. You know, he was, 'course he was gettin', "I hope you get lost," and all that. So I [Clears throat] filled it up with fuel and what have you, and I cranked it up, and I was just takin' off and durn thing just quit on me. Crrrh. I came in there. And I, 'course, I'd rotated, you know, tryin' to stay away from the, from the wires across, so I landed on that field with a bunch of tall grass and what have you. And as soon as I lowered my [collective?] down there, the engine started up again. Sputterin'. So I says, "Hey, what's goin' on here." So new regulator, everything else, and it ran perfect. Picked it up for a hover, perfect. Says, "What the heck's goin' on around here." And I open and close the throttle several times and throttle, you know, perfect. So I picked it up and I turned it around, go back to the base. And when I picked it up right there, that durn thing quit on me again. Must have quitted me about three or four times on the way down there, but I managed to get it on the. We troubleshooted and what have you. So we called the office over here and told 'em what the problem was. I already changed the plugs, I changed one of the magnetos. Just troubleshootin' it. 'Bout three o'clock in the afternoon. Says, "No, I'll tell you what, go pick up so and so aircraft and fly it back to Lafayette." So [Chuckles] I left the aircraft there, the mechanics were gonna work on it. I flew it back to Lafayette and my buddy was there. Said [Laughing], "Boy, I mean, didn't mean to for the engine to quit on you and all that." Accused him of a [greedy?]. At that time that was one of the words I heard was greedily. So. [Chuckles] So I flew on back. The next day another pilot picked it up and they fixed it basically. They

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flew it around, what have you. He was coming down here and around uh, [Forkin?] Island, he had an engine failure in the same thing, so he just set her down, you know. We changed the engine and everything else. And the engine shop opened it up, what happened was that they left a bunch of junk in uh, one of the pans, and every time you had high [menafor?] pressure, it would suck it into the valves and close the valves down. Then would give you that sputter, then you come down. So that was it. That was my first one.

SW: When you have engine failure that, that doesn't mean you just drop out of the sky and-

LG: Oh no.

SW: And blow up or anything like that.

LG: Well, I, you have to fast, I mean, you have to get, get your right rotation. You have to get your air speed, lower your collective, so the blades can still turn. The inertia of the blade stays on and if you flare everything due right, all you do is cushion your landing.

SW: Oh okay.

LG: With inertia of the blades, they, just open up your blades and come down.

SW: Because it's falling and the, the wind-

LG: Yeah.

SW: If the engine is not running the wind will keep those blades turning and you can set it down.

LG: Right. Uh hm.

SW: That's what you mean by "auto rotation."

LG: Auto rotation.

SW: I see.

LG: So-

SW: So did they train you for this?

LG: Oh yeah, uh hm. Let's say you're-

SW: So, they, they pull you up there and they cut the engine off?

LG: Well, they go to [ground idle?]. I mean, they don't cut the engine off. Uh, they just go ground idle where they uh, disengage the clutch from the uh, the transmission. And then you're free wheelin', blades are just spinnin' there. You have to be careful, you have to go be fast. Come on down, keep your turns, and then figure out way how you're gonna fly it down. You can make your turns, make a n-, a 180 degree turn, pick a spot where you're gonna put it, set yourself up at an angle and what have you, and then you're comin' down and do it. But you have to have your inertia.

SW: Okay. I, I just assumed that if the engine quits, you're, you're in a bad spot. [Laughs]

LG: No, no, no. [Laughs]

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SW: Well you kind of are, but-

LG: You're gonna have be har-, you're gonna have to pay attention, you know, you don't [Clears throat] and that's another thing, too, is in training you know they're gonna qui-, cut the engine, so you're ready, but in flight sometimes you get busy doing talking or make even a flight plan or somethin' and you lose consciousness of that that engine's gonna quit on you. [Pause]

SW: I have a couple more questions if you don't mind.

LG: Yeah.

SW: 'Cause we're gettin' ready to run out of tape. Uh, what about unions? [Pause]

LG: I never did like unions, I never did uh, I, I'll say this right now, I'm not, I'm not a union man, even though they, the um, company's now union, you know. You might say the pilots are on there. But I remember back way when, when they first started one. And everybody was concerned, I wasn't too concerned because uh, I was [speakin'?] because of the mechanics [needing one?] [Inaudible] union. The pilots at that time didn't want one. Uh, and [Inaudible], let me put it this way, everybody that was flyin', flyin' for PHI, the pilots, were ex-military. And a majority of 'em already retired from the military, so they were havin' a pay check comin', plus PHI time. See they're all in their 40s, no, in their 50s. And they're only flying for another 10 years, 15 years, and then they'll be gone. But they have enough, you know, they flew. So they, they could care less about a union.

SW: They didn't need it.

LG: Yeah. And most of the pilots already picked a spot. A guy says, "Hey, I like Morgan City, I like flyin' for Gulf Oil." The other guy says, "Hey, I like flyin' for Penzoil." And they stayed there. That was their job, it's just like goin' in an office, you know, that was it. But they're seven days in, seven days off, come back and they knew where they were goin' the next time. So they didn't want anything messin' with it. They didn't want nothin' to do with seniority and all that jazz. They wanted more pay, everybody wanted more pay on that, but they didn't want anybody messin' with their job and that. [Slight pause] And uh, we were gettin' some pretty good pay raises once in awhile. Uh, we didn't get 'em as... it wasn't keepin' up with inflation, but we would get a little [Clears throat] a little pay raise.

SW: But now with the way everything has changed, [Inaudible] unions now, but that's just because the work atmosphere is dib-, different everywhere, not just PHI.

LG: Well, right now they gonna unionize but I [Pause] let me put it this way, some of the guys that belong to the union, they voted for the union just so they can vote in the union to say no. You gotta remember if uh, if you got 1,000 pilots, and only 500 voting, 500 voted, and 251 voted yes, than the union is in. It has nothin' to do with the other 500 that didn't vote. [Slight pause] Know what I mean? Have to have a majority of the voters, it has nothing to do with the majority of the pilots. [Pause] So some of the guys says, "Well, we'll figure this out right now." [Clears throat] They all voted, and only about 51 percent voted on that. But they only have support about 40 percent. Some of the guys voted to say no. [Chuckles] They, I guess they can get away with that, I'm not sure. I never, I voted against it. I'm not, I'm not a union man. I had um, I'm not a union man because I'm a company man, and I always had my way. I always been, I spent 27 years as a uh, pilot mechanic on roving maintenance and all I did was fix helicopters offshore. More or less I was my own boss. I uh, I reported to a supervisor and all he'd make sure that I was doin' everything right, the forms were filled out right and what have you, and then I went offshore and I was on my own. I did my own scheduling, everything. And I had a hel-, I, 'cuse the word, but I had hell of a good mechanics backin' me up. That's the reason I stayed on so long. I had mechanics that were superb. [Slight pause] Really good.

SW: You want to be able to trust your mechanics because you're the one flyin' the helicopter.

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LG: Oh yes, uh hm. But uh, these mechanics were interested, motivated, and they knew the books, they knew the, everything. Which I could never [Clears throat] as long as I'm flyin' I had to trust them because I would have to leave 'em there by themselves. And if I had a chance to, to shut down and help them, then I would. But most of the time, I had to ease into the heli platform and they would walk off, pick up their toolbox, then I had to go wait someplace else. Or go fix another aircraft. Had two or three at the same time, I drop him off, I go and fix one, come back, pick him up, go someplace else, but it was like that. The other day I was readin' some of my notes, got stack of notes. And uh, all my logs. I keep logs of all my flight time and everything. And what occurred. So everything's [Pause]

SW: So, you ever-

LG: Everything good and everything embarrassing. [Both laugh]

SW: Yeah, maybe for your eyes only. [Laughs] Uh, you have any regrets about uh, your, your career?

LG: I wish I was just twenty-, 23 years younger, I'd do it all over again. There are some things I, I wouldn't do, you know, you learn by your mistakes, but uh, no, I, I enjoyed it. Matter of fact, I'm close to retirement right now and I don't want to retire. I ju-, just don't have anything else to do. Long time ago I played tennis, I uh, a little bit of golf, 'bout a year's worth of golf. And I'm not interested. Matter of fact, if I do retire, I'm gonna get me another job someplace.

SW: Could you maybe consult for PHI?

LG: I don't think I have [Sight pause] they got enough consultants already I think. I mean, I'd be happy to, to uh, discuss platforms and uh... stuff like that, you know. But I think they have enough consultants. [Pause]

SW: Do you think we have enough, enough uh, pilots in the area, with PHI bein' the home base right there, that they should have a flight school here in town? [Pause] You think that, that would work? [Slight pause]

LG: Uh, in, in the sense that you just give a flight school?

SW: Yeah, to have flight school to train pilots? Train helicopter pilots?

LG: I, I, you, you uh, you have one or two individuals here that give training on that, but there's not that much demand for it.

SW: No-

LG: Um, most of the time you go to these other uh, fixed base operators, and they have their schools and what have you. And uh, check 'em out. Right now the uh, Robinson Helicopter is the most popular right now, givin' everybody uh, flight training in that, that's the cheapest on that. Think PHI wanted to do that one time, but I don't think they ever come off the ground. At one time we used to have a program, a pilot mechanic program where we take some [Clears throat] on there, the mechanic would have to have his commercial license already and then PHI would train 'em, give 'em some time. The biggest problem would be uh, insurance on that. 'Cause you can get your helicopter rating in 50 hours or so. Commercial fixed, if you had a [fixed wing?] rating. All you do is add a, a rating to it, a helicopter. But [Clears throat] for you to fly, you're gonna have to have over 150, 200, 300 hours to satisfy the customer requirements. And also to cover uh, the insurance and what have you. Even though you got a commercial helicopter license, don't mean you can go and work for somebody. You're gonna have to meet their specifications. Their criteria on that.

SW: I see, so it's just kind of, it's not feasible. Not, not for what's, what's here in town. [Pause] Okay, well, that's about it. Did you want to add anything? [LG laughs] I, I thank you.

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LG: It was a pleasure. I haven't talked this-

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