

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

PERCY BLOUNT

AUGUST 10, 1991

NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

INTERVIEWED BY BOBBY H. JOHNSON

ORAL HISTORY #440

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Megan Morgan transcribed this interview in April 2008. Perky Beisel reviewed the draft of this transcript. Her corrections were incorporated into this final transcript by Megan Morgan in May 2008.

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ABSTRACT

Percy Blount, a Nacogdoches High School graduate of the class of 1941, talks about his life experience during World War Two and the impact that it had on his aviation career. He talks about what he was doing the moment he learned of Pearl Harbor and his immediate reaction as well as his involvement in the Navy and the air reserve program.

Persons Mentioned: Edwin Gaston, Rayford Wilson, Bubba Wilson, and Jim Wilson.

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BOBBY JOHNSON: Alright, now I'm talking with Percy Blount. B-L-O-U-N-T. Mr. Blount, you graduated in 1941, is that right. What'd you do after that?

PERCY BLOUNT: Started to college, Stephen F. Austin.

JOHNSON: Oh, really? How long were you there before you went into the military?

BLOUNT: Well, we, uh, December the 7th, uh, right after you had started to school there, well the war started. And then, finished that year, and then I guess, probably, what, seventeen years old at that point in time. And then uh, went up and got in the V-5 Aviation Cadet program.

JOHNSON: Let me ask you this. Were you, I understand they had an assembly at SFA on December the 8th. Were you in that assembly?

BLOUNT: That's right, I certainly was.

JOHNSON: What's your memory of that day?

BLOUNT: It was very sunny. Uh, I remember. I was with Rayford, and Bubba the day before.

JOHNSON: Bubba?

BLOUNT: Bubba, Wilson.

JOHNSON: His brother?

BLOUNT: Yes, his brother. We were in a pick-up truck going to pick up the people for a baseball game, on Sunday afternoon. The rest of us, uh, or all of us, were really more interested in baseball than anything else. We went to pick up Edwin Gaston who is at the university now, up here. And Edwin, even back in those days, was more of a...

JOHNSON: Scholar.

BLOUNT: ...scholar is a good word, than the rest of us were. [laughter] And he came out of the house...

JOHNSON: This is on the 7th of December, the day that the war started.

BLOUNT: And Edwin's eyes are big and he comes down and he says, "The Japanese have just bombed Pearl Harbor!" And we said, "Edwin! Come and get in the truck! We're late for the baseball game! Don't bother us with this type of stuff!" [laughter] And probably myself, and Bubba and Rayford and Jim Wilson and I don't know who else was in that truck. And, uh, and just a few months after that all, well, of us were in the truck, you know...

JOHNSON: Were you at the assembly the next day at SFA?

BLOUNT: I was there.

JOHNSON: Do you remember Dr. Birdwell's talk, what did he say?

BLOUNT: I don't remember. I'm sorry. I don't remember that.

JOHNSON: Was it a moving time though? Were people aware, you think, of what was about to happen?

BLOUNT: It was a dynamic time. And uh, I knew at that point in time what I wanted to do and that was to fly.

JOHNSON: I see. And did you fly in the war?

BLOUNT: Uh, I went through training in the war and I was in a replacement air group when the war ended.

JOHNSON: I see.

BLOUNT: I stayed, I got out of the Navy and went back and finished college here at Stephen F. Austin. Graduated in '48, worked for the Texas Company for six months, got back in the Navy. Uh, I, uh, put in a request to be recalled into active duty and I did because I still loved to fly. And I, then I flew all the way through Korea and Vietnam and after that, and uh, twenty-seven...

JOHNSON: A carrier pilot?

BLOUNT: Yes, yes. Twenty-seven months.

JOHNSON: I see. And you flew in...

BLOUNT: Twenty-seven years.

JOHNSON: Flew in Vietnam?

BLOUNT: Yes, yes.

JOHNSON: And you ultimately, I guess, retired?

BLOUNT: Yes, sure did.

JOHNSON: And where do you, you live in New Mexico today?

BLOUNT: I went to work for Teledyne Ryan Aeronautical Corporation who had a target services contract at White Sands Missile Range. So I continued to fly in the drone programs out at White Sands for seventeen years.

JOHNSON: What do you think the impact of that war was on your life?

BLOUNT: [laughter] Well, it's, uh, it certainly is, it would track you, you know. A major impact on everything that followed for myself because aviation has been my life ever since then, you know. So, unless the war had come along, I probably would never have gotten involved, probably, in aviation.

JOHNSON: I see. Well, thank you very much.

BLOUNT: Alrighty.