THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
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# AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE MASSEY

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KURT PIEHLER: This begins an interview on August 1st, 2003, in Knoxville, Tennessee with Kurt Piehler and...

BOB GRACIA: Bob Gracia.

PIEHLER: And, let me begin by saying, you are actually a Knoxville native. You were born, you were born in Knoxville, Tennessee ...

GEORGE MASSEY: Yes.

PIEHLER: On January 6th, 1940. So you're a pre-Pearl Harbor ...

MASSEY: Pre-Pearl Harbor, right.

PIEHLER: ... baby. Could you, could you tell me a little bit [about] your parents, their names were...

MASSEY: Con Massey and Dorothy Massey. And my mother was a native Knoxvillian; she grew up here in Knoxville.

PIEHLER: And your father, sounds like he didn't grow up too far from here, Lincoln County.

MASSEY: Down in Middle Tennessee ...

PIEHLER: Middle Tennessee.

MASSEY: About 220 miles away.

PIEHLER: So you have deep both Knoxville roots and just Tennessee roots in general. Could you tell ...

MASSEY: Right. Well, he came to school here and that's where they met, and then he stayed in, he stayed in East Tennessee until 1948 and then moved back to the home place in Middle Tennessee, back to the old home farm.

PIEHLER: So, he moved back to the farm?

MASSEY: His home place, right.

PIEHLER: Well could start by talking a little bit about your parents, maybe how they met.

MASSEY: My dad was in the Ag [Agriculture] school here at UT and my mother was a secretary out at the Ag College. And as they say, the rest is history. They met and I guess started dating, and they got married, interestingly enough on April the 1st, (Laughter) 1932 I believe was their. So they got married on April Fools Day and didn't realize it. He was teaching at this time up in Tazewell, Tennessee; he was an Ag teacher. And they came in, it was a Friday afternoon, they made their plans and got married, didn't realize it was April the 1st.

PIEHLER: So it was a very quick wedding?

MASSEY: Quick wedding after they had, I guess, I don't know how long they had dated, but they had known each other for a while. They were married in the Church Street Methodist Church next to the campus here. My mother had a very beautiful voice. She was operatic and sang at all the churches here in Knoxville and I've run into folks a few ago that remembered her.

PIEHLER: Her voice?

MASSEY: Her voice, because she sang in all the Christmas programs and things like that, that were put on. *Messiah*. She sang the *Messiah* real well.

PIEHLER: Your mother was a Knoxville native, what high school did she go to?

MASSEY: She went to Old Knox High. She was the first female cheerleader. Uh, she was a little bit of a women's libber before her time. She did a lot of things that, I think she smoked before women were...

PIEHLER: So she was a smoker?

MASSEY: She was a smoker unfortunately, I say that, unfortunately, but she started when she was young and I think she was the first female cheerleader for Old Knox High.

PIEHLER: Because before then it was only male cheerleaders?

MASSEY: Only male cheerleaders.

PIEHLER: You said she was a little bit of a women's libber, anything else that she did?

MASSEY: Well she drove like the wind, and [in] later years, she had the CB radio and that was a fad. And her call sign was lead foot mama. (Laughter) I can remember one time I got caught for drag racing, and she said, "Well, what's the big deal?" So, I knew at that point I was not in too big of trouble. (Laughter) So like I say, she was a little different.

PIEHLER: She—it sounds like, of, I might use the term, your mother was something of a character.

MASSEY: She was a character.

PIEHLER: You know, it sounds like she did the commercial course when she went to high school.

MASSEY: I would assume so, 'cause she was—and in later years she worked at Redstone Arsenal, for NASA. And she was one of the, I guess you would say for want of a better term, she was one of the top secretaries for the guy who ran part of the NASA program at Redstone Arsenal, so she had quite an interesting career. This was after we got out, out of the nest ...

PIEHLER: Yeah. So she returned to the work force?

MASSEY: Yes.

PIEHLER: When you were growing up, was she working or did she ...

MASSEY: No, not really until we got into high school. See, I'm the youngest of three boys, and when I got into high school, she started working again and she went to—see we're located where we grew about twenty-five miles from Redstone Arsenal. So, a lot of people worked at the arsenal that lived in Tennessee. Fayetteville, Tennessee. She became one of those and worked there I don't know how many years, 'til she retired.

PIEHER: Uh huh.

MASSEY: Like I say. A lot of guys that I've run into that knew her said she would blow 'em off the road comin' home. (Laughter) So she had a reputation, I'll put it that way.

PIEHLER: And your father, he was a, he taught at ...

MASSEY: He taught agriculture, and of course we moved back to the farm so we farmed as well. Growing up you know, we got up at 0-dark-thirty and fed and did all that and then went to school. I rode a school bus for two hours to get to school. We lived out in the country and by the time they made the whole route, you know...

PIEHLER: That's a long ride.

MASSEY: It's a long ride, and I was the second one on the bus, so we would actually go back in the rear and lay down and sleep on the way, I mean you know, bunch of high school kids.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Sleep anywhere you got a chance to. And then, yeah, we—my older brother still has the farm. He moved back.

PIEHLER: So the farm is still in the family?

MASSEY: Right. He retired out of the military as well, and he moved back when he retired and ... that was in '78 so he's had it now twenty-five years.

PIEHLER: And how old is—how far does the farm ...

MASSEY: How far does it go back? The original farm was bought by my granddad in 1906. So my brother, you know, he said, "We're gonna hold it at least for a century and then longer in piece." I mean he's not gonna leave the farm.

PIEHLER: Your grandfather's name, what was his name?

MASSEY: His name was John. John Massey.

PIEHLER: John Massey, and he, and just so I can definitely know the name, and the farm is located again in ...

MASSEY: In Lincoln County.

PIEHLER: Lincoln County.

MASSEY: In a—It's between Mulberry and Kelso, out in the country.

PIEHLER: Okay. And it's still somewhat isolated it sounds like.

MASSEY: Yeah it's, for a long time we were five miles from the nearest paved road.

PIEHLER: That's pretty far.

MASSEY: So we were—yeah, and just in the recent, I'd say the last five or six years, they've paved the road. It was country gravel road up until...

PIEHLER: Yeah, yeah. Five miles is a, you're really off the road.

MASSEY: Well, and what used to be interesting, there would be times when I was in high school playing football and basketball. I'd get a ride up to Kelso which was five miles and then I would walk home. (Laughter) And you know this is the old well "I walk uphill, you know, both ways to school," but I literally would do that sometimes, which was not a big deal. I mean walking five miles ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, you just ...

MASSEY: You know, just did it. Usually somebody would come along and pick me up and take me on home. But if my dad had already gotten home and my mother was coming in from Redstone Arsenal, so it was just the way we did it. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: Okay, you were born in Knoxville and you lived in Knoxville during World War II as a small child. Where did you live?

MASSEY: Well, actually we moved from Knoxville when I was about a year old and moved to Greeneville, Tennessee.

PIEHLER: Okay.

MASSEY: So, I remember growing up in Greeneville, and I remember World War II. I remember the blackouts. I thought that was a big deal we put, you know, things over the windows. I remembered, at the time I didn't realize what it was all about, but we had a hutch of rabbits that we raised, of course, we ate 'em. But I didn't, you know, as a kid, five years old, I played with 'em and ...

PIEHLER: You didn't realize ...

MASSEY: I didn't realize they were being contributed. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: You didn't realize you were playing with supper?

MASSEY: That's it exactly what it was, I remember the victory garden. You know, in later years I knew the term victory garden, but at that time we had a garden in the back yard. Plus, as a kid, my older brothers and I had a little wagon and we went around and collected tin cans, aluminum foil, string, paper and did the, you know, the recycling bit at downtown, where everybody was contributing to the war effort. As a kid I was allowed to go along with it. I was younger but I have those memories. But they were reinforced in later years when I studied history. I'd say, "Well golly, I remember doing that as a kid." So yeah, I can remember World War II.

PIEHLER: Were you ever scared during the blackouts?

MASSEY: No. As a kid I was never, you know, we didn't know the gravity of it, I guess. ...

PIEHLER: Yeah. So that didn't scare—yeah, that was just something you did.

MASSEY: We just thought it was a fun thing to do. You know, and then—but I do remember, my granddad who lived here in Knoxville, of course, was a railroad engineer for Southern Railroad. So we rode, my mother and I, road the train from Greenville to Knoxville periodically, 'cause I wasn't in school. And I do remember the number of soldiers on, you know, the trains. And that was the thing for a kid, you know, to see all these guys in uniform.

PIEHLER: Oh, particularly for a four or five year old that must have ...

MASSEY: And of course, back then the trains were used extensively, as you well know, as history has proven, for the transport of troops and everything else. So yeah, I have vivid memories of that. And the station was right down here off of Depot Street, and we'd come in there, and then my grandparents' house was over one block away from old North Knoxville High School.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay.

MASSEY: On Third and Lamar. So we would walk from the train station to their home because it was, you know, back then it was not a big deal. I can remember also, Gay Street being the street. And we'd get on the streetcars and ride downtown. Back then they'd turn kids loose. And there was no threat or problem, you know, you just get on the streetcar, and they told us which ones to get on or off. We'd ride, go downtown and go to the five and dime store. I can remember the ...

PIEHLER: What about the movie theaters?

MASSEY: Interesting there. The movie theaters, the Bijou was there, and of course the Tennessee. I remember goin' to those. Early on—and this is where I guess my mother got some of her musical prowess. My grandmother, early on in the 20's, played the piano for the silent movies.

PIEHLER: Oh wow! (Laughs)

MASSEY: It was in one of the, and I don't think it was the Bijou; I think it was another theater downtown. But I remember her playin' the piano. She played the, you know, the music to the silent ...

PIEHLER: And she said, you know, "This is what I used to do?"

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: I'm curious. How often would you come into Knoxville when you were living up in Greeneville?

MASSEY: 'Course we were here for all the holidays and we came down some during the football season. I remember that.

PIEHLER: So you went to games very early it sounds like?

MASSEY: The first one I went to [was] in 1948 before we moved back to the farm. And I—here again , giving you a little history. I can remember we played North Carolina. Uh, Charlie "Choo-Choo" Justice was the tailback for North Carolina. And Hal, course, I've studied this since then, Hal Littleford was the tailback for Tennessee. But I can remember that.

PIEHLER: That game?

MASSEY: That game, you know, that that was the first one, 1948.

PIEHLER: And when's the most recent game you've been to?

MASSEY: Whenever they played at home last year. (Laughter) The last home game. Actually, no unfortunately, we went down to the Peach Bowl this year in Atlanta, so that's the last game we've been to.

PIEHLER: Oh okay. So you've been up to day from eight to ...

MASSEY: Oh yeah. Eight to sixty-three, yeah.

PIEHLER: In Greeneville, would you go to the movie theaters in Greeneville?

MASSEY: Yeah,. 'course, back then you could go to the movies for a quarter. That got you in the movie, bought your popcorn and coke. We'd go on Saturday mornings and see the western andof course they always had the, what was it called? The serials?

PIEHLER: Yeah, so Tom Mix.

MASSEY: Tom Mix and then you had Charlie Chan and, you know, all that group.

PIEHLER: So it sounds like were a fairly regular moviegoer.

MASSEY: Yeah, we went a good bit as a kid, usually on Saturdays, on the weekends.

PIEHLER: Your father, what led him to move to Greeneville?

MASSEY: At that time, like I say, he was an Ag teacher, but he got a job with Purina Feeds, and he was a salesman. And he sold for Purina, and I'd make the circle with him sometimes out in the country. He would go out to, you know, all the little local places at the feed stores, hatcheries and things like that. And then, right about, I guess a year or two before we left Greeneville, he became the Ag teacher in Chuckey, which is north of Greeneville. It's now called Chuckey Doak, I think. But he became the Ag teacher there, and I remember goin' out. He built, or had to help build, the Ag building for the high school. I would go out there as a kid and watch the construction. And he also coached, he coached basketball, he was the basketball coach, 'cause I remember going to basketball games. So it was kind of an interesting history, when you think back on the things that you remember as a kid. I can remember sittin' on the end of the bench holdin' the ball. (Laughter) The gymnasium, they weren't anything like we have today of course, little old country gymnasiums.

PIEHLER: And your brother, how much older was your brother?

MASSEY: Let's see, I'm '40 he's '34 so he's was six years old. Five and a half years older and then my middle brother was about fours older.

PIEHLER: So you're the young—are you ...

MASSEY: I'm the youngest, right, three boys.

PIEHLER: Three boys.

MASSEY: And my older brother retired as a lieutenant colonel as well. He never did really—of course we both came to UT. He ended up back at Middle Tennessee State; he graduated from Middle Tennessee State. He was in the ROTC program there. When I came to UT I had not really thought that much about the military, but at that point it was mandatory you took either Air Force or Army ROTC. So I went Army ROTC. It was one of those things I kinda liked doing.

PIEHLER: So before ROTC you really had no thought of [the] military?

MASSEY: I hadn't really thought about it. And my brother had not, yeah he had retired. That's right had graduated and was on active duty but had never really talked much about what he was doin' in the military. And I was in college at that time and of course, I got involved with it.

PIEHLER: So it sounds like your brother also had some influence in thinking about it, the fact that he was active duty.

MASSEY: Yeah. And then once I got into it and got into the advanced program, at that point we started discussing it. By this time he had gone to Ranger School and he had already been assigned to Hawaii.

PIEHLER: It sounds like the Hawaii thing must have really like ...

MASSEY: But it was before Vietnam, of course, but it came along pretty soon there after.

PIEHLER: Yeah. But the initial Hawaii ... (Laughs)

MASSEY: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: 'Cause your father hadn't served in World War II.

MASSEY: No, he, you know, he was in that category, I guess by the time World War II came along, he had children and he was ...

PIEHLER: Well yeah, I mean he had three, three sons.

MASSEY: Three and his age would have been let's see, trying to think ...

PIEHLER: He was born in 1907.

MASSEY: 1907, that's right.

PIEHLER: So he would have been relatively [old], for the military ...

MASSEY: Yeah, thirty-three.

PIEHLER: Thirty-three.

MASSEY: Yeah. Now, I do remember him talking about that they in fact, he did go down, he went somewhere and was examined, but they classified him due to his children I guess, at that point he was not draftable.

PIEHLER: You mention your mother working. Did she work at all during the war?

MASSEY: Well, she did, as matter of fact; she worked with the Red Cross. That's exactly right she ...

PIEHLER: As a volunteer or as a paid ...

MASSEY: I would assume paid, I know she worked in an office and did secretarial type work.

PIEHLER: Oh okay, so she ... was work—I mean paid?

MASSEY: She wasn't rollin' bedding or nothing like that, no, she was actually in an office, I remember that.

PIEHLER: How many hours? Was it a forty hour week or ...

MASSEY: It was, yeah I guess. Of course, then I was what, four or five years old. I do remember this; this is interesting, I think part of this. I remember the ration cards and tickets that you had for gas and sugar and tires and all that. One of the things, of course, rationed was sugar. And I remember one day I got in the kitchen and found the Hershey's, you know, the box of Hershey powder (Laughter) and a bowl of sugar. Of course, then, you know, candy was not a big item because all of it's goin' ...

PIEHLER: Overseas, yeah.

MASSEY: Whatever, yeah, goin' overseas. Well I mixed the Hershey's and the sugar together and ate it as a powder. (Laughter) Of course, a kid, you know, sugar and chocolate together. My mother came in and, of course she just wore my little butt out (Laughter) 'cause I wasted sugar , is what I had done. It was rationed, you know, so ...

PIEHLER: And a lot of it.

MASSEY: So that was a lesson learned: do not eat the sugar. She was not one to say, "Wait 'til your dad gets home." I mean, she was a fairly large, she was five-eight and pretty good sized lady and ... And I, of course, I learned early on too, don't make her too mad 'cause I've seen her, you know, whip my brothers. But she caught me on that one and she let me know that that's not the thing to do.

PIEHLER: Where did you live in Greeneville? Do you remember?

MASSEY: We lived, and interestingly enough, we lived I think the name of the street was Highland Avenue. But what I do remember is that the front of our house, we looked straight to the mountains.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.
Biddle, and I remember the names, the Biddle sisters were the two old ladies that lived there. Of course, it had been their family that owned it. And the reason I remember the Bittle sisters is that they made cookies or, you know had pastries in the window. Of course kids, you gravitate to that. And then on the other side of us was a family, they owned the jewelry store in downtown Greenville. Across the street was a gentleman by the name of Lindsey. I don't remember his first name, but I called him Mr. Lindsey, but he always had the kids over there. He was a tinkerer and had an erector set and I remember bein' in there watching and helpin' with that, but I think he worked with the post office, I believe. So it was kind of a nice neighborhood. But our house literally was up on a hill, Highland Avenue. But we looked straight at the mountains, and I can remember that. You could see snow, you know, just like here sometimes, the snow would get on the mountains. But we went to a little grade school.

PIEHLER: And you could walk to your grade school?

MASSEY: Walked to our grade school. I started when I was five years old. Of course, January the sixth, though, they said, "Well, we'll let you start because you were gonna be six by the end of the school year." So I started school when I was five.

PIEHLER: And did you start kindergarten or did they ...

MASSEY: They did not have kindergarten.

PIEHLER: So you started first grade at five.

MASSEY: Started first grade at five, yeah. Of course, I had—my middle brother was still in grade school at that point. My older brother, I think had already gone to the junior, downtown. So yeah, I started when I was five years old.

PIEHLER: And so you were in the, what some might say an advanced track. How did that ...

MASSEY: Well, interestingly enough, my middle brother, who's the smart one of the family, actually, he skipped a grade. And I don't—you know, back then I don't know if that was a common thing or not but he literally, I think, he skipped the second or third grade. They just said, "He's gotta go on." And we both, looking back on it, of course, I started when I was five, he skipped a grade, so we both finished high school early. And our growth and a lot of maturity, I guess, you know, we've talk about this in later years, you know, it might have been a good thing had we been with our peer group. But, you know that's life as they say. But my brother, middle brother, was a very bright individual. He did not go in the military. Now, he served with the National Guard, reserves, Air National Guard. 'Cause he had gone to ROTC here, and he got out. He didn't get into the advanced program, but when he got out of school he said, "Well, you know, the draft started kickin' up and Vietnam started kickin' up." So, he said, "Well I'll get in

the reserves." Come to find out, the ROTC department had left him kinda on the rolls, so he got four years of, maybe not credit, but in any event, when he signed up for the National Guard he already had a leg up on most people there.

PIEHLER: Your brother, had he applied for advanced, you mentioned that he wasn't—everyone had to be in basic, but had he tried to ...

MASSEY: No he didn't, he did not try.

PIEHLER: He did not try to get ...

MASSEY: No he, what he did, he actually opted for the co-op program. He was in a quarter and out a quarter 'cause back then we only had quarter based here at UT. So consequently he was not in school full time, he was in and out. He worked down in Chattanooga. Although he was a business major, he worked in a foundry, which was kind interesting. So that proved to him that he did not want to be a factory worker. (Laughter) He got into, he got over, actually he ended up bein' with Sears, got into their program, their management program. He ended up, if I can brag, he ended as the vice president of personnel for all of Sears when he retired.

PIEHLER: That's a good career.

MASSEY: Yeah, he was up in the big house in Chicago when he retired. So, he did quite well with them.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, before we talk about moving back to the family homestead. What other memories do you have of Greeneville and then Knoxville, East Tennessee, you know, growing up until you were eight?

MASSEY: Well just, you know, the normal things. Of course, in Greenville, there was a neighborhood, of course I described a little bit of it, but there was a neighborhood of kids, and in the summertime, you know, we played all the outdoor games that you played like "kick the can" and "no bears out tonight." But, of course, you didn't have TV.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: At that point kids could run freely in the neighborhood because everybody knew who you were and where you belonged and all that stuff. So, we played I don't know how late it was. I'm sure it's not as late as it seems, but we played well up into the dark during summertime. So at least it'd be nine o'clock or ten o'clock or so. And the backyards, of course, looked to be very big, we'd play football. You know, a little backyard football all the time. There was nothing. There were no little leagues, there were no, you know, organized sports per say, but we played all of those different sports growin' up. Being one of the smallest and youngest and smallest as well, of course, I got just pounded, (Laughter) frequently, but that's all part of it.

PIEHLER: There was one game I never heard. I've heard of "kick the can," but that "no bears out tonight."

MASSEY: It was very similar to "kick the can," but "no bears out tonight," I guess it was, you would go hide, and if I remember, they would come and try to find you and it was, you know, there was no bears out, I forget exactly how that all came about, I just remember it was always fun to go hide in the honeysuckles, and, you know, try to keep quiet and, you know, other kids are out lookin' for you. It was kinda fun. One of the things we did do, it's probably not kosher, well it wasn't at all. They had the street lights back then were just kinda open bulbs, you know, not anything sophisticated like we have today, and that was the thing that we would throw rocks and try break, you know. (Laughter) Shouldn't have been doin' that, but that happened, and every now and then, somebody would get lucky and knock one out, and we'd all run.

PIEHLER: So that was your ...

MASSEY: There was a little bit of juvenile delinquency there but nothing more than that. We didn't do a lot of stuff like that.

PIEHLER: You mentioned not having TV, but what about radio?

MASSEY: Had radio. We had radio.

PIEHLER: How often were—did you—any favorite ...

MASSEY: Afternoon, well the afternoon programs, and this was more after we got moved back to the farm. There were a lot of the afternoon programs, you know. *Straight Arrow*. I remember that was one, the Indian would get the bad guys, and *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*. The kids now, they say, "Oh golly, here he goes again." I don't know if you remember that program or not, it may have been a little before your time.

PIEHLER: Yeah, it is.

MASSEY: *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*. Well, he had a dog named King, and, of course, they were half hour programs. They would go through the, catch the bad guy, and all the sound effects and everything. They had, of course, the guy doin' the sound affects for King, the dog. Well, at the end of every program Sergeant Preston, you know, they would catch the bad guy, and they would bring him to justice and all this. His tagline, if you will, leaving was, "Well King ... " Let's see, how was it? *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*, "Well, King, our job is done." Or something like that, to that affect, and then the dog would go "Bow wow, wow wow wow." (Laughter) That's that the way, and I've always, with the kids I'll go through that, and they'll say, "Oh, my God. what kind of program ... ", you know. *Sky King*. You know, these were all radio programs that we listened to. The thing about it, and when you think about it, all the sound effects and all the word pictures, you had to imagine that stuff. And you could. *Straight Arrow* was one that they started out the program with "Out of the deep dark caverns comes Straight Arrow." And you'd hear this cloppity, cloppity, cloppity, and it'd sound like it was in a cave, and then it would come outside. So, it was kind of, and you think back on that, and, of course, the

night, those were afternoon programs. The nighttime programs were *The Green Hornet*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, and all, you know, I'm drawin' a blank on some, but these were programs that, you know, were on the radio. *The Shadow*. You know, "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow does." But you would listen to those programs, and you had to use your imagination. So, it was just that time frame, like I say there was no TV. And of course movies. Of course, I do remember going to the movies and they always had the newsreels, and that's when you would see the war going on. But it still, it was not like it is today, you know, so graphic and so in your living room. You literally had to go down to the movie theater to see this. So it was not quite, and the papers, of course, at that I was not learning to read the papers yet, cartoon, or the comics maybe.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, while you were growing up in Greeneville, were there any black families that lived nearby?

MASSEY: There was an area, and that's an interesting question, you know try to think back, there was kinda down, over behind, you know, there was an area that's was for blacks. I do remember this. Part of the collection effort for the war was cardboard. I remember a black family, I guess, I assume that they were all older blacks, had an old truck, and they collected cardboard. And I can remember, that it's one of these thing, you start think of these things and images pop back in your brain, that, I guess they were kids, they were older but they were still kids, would lay on top of the cardboard to hold it down as the truck would go through the neighborhood. And I'm sittin', you know, you think back on that, it was totally against all kinds safety. OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] would have had real fun with this, you know, but I do remember that they would be up on top of the cardboard holding it down.

PIEHLER: And they were part this sort of scrap and ...

MASSEY: Yeah, but they were, of course, the schools, you know, were ...

PIEHLER: Were segregated.

MASSEY: Segregated, yeah, segregated big time. But there were not that many blacks in Greenville, as I remember as a kid.

PIEHLER: They were not part of your playmates.

MASSEY: No, no. You know, the first time I had black playmates, of course, was when we moved back to the farm, and we had tenant farmers.

PIEHLER: So you had tenant farmers when you were ...

MASSEY: So, oh yeah, yeah. Of course being five miles from the nearest paved road, and a mile or two from the nearest neighbor, the tenant farmers' kids were our playmates. We, you know, we got along well. We played and, I'll tell this, and this may make sense to people who have been around a farm, but a lamb, you know, a sheep and a lamb, you know, kind of the real

close feel of the lamb. One, and I'm trying to think of his name, but one of the black kids that lived on the place, we raised sheep, and I remember one day he was pettin' a lamb, we'd call it a lamb, and, you know, had 'em layin' there in the barnyard. We used to put rubber bands on their tails to cut their tails off, and that's what we were doin', catchin' lambs and put this rubber band on. It was a real heavy rubber band and it would just cut the circulation and it would fall off after a few minutes, but I never will forget it; God, what's his name, Willie? Jessie or Willie. Anyway, he was rubbin' this lamb, and he looked up at my dad, and they called him Mr. Con, you know, they call, and that was interesting, I was called Mr. George.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm. Even though you ...

MASSEY: We were the masters of the manor so to speak. Although we were the same age or, you know, kids, they would call me Mr. George and call my dad Mr. Con, just kind of the way of the Old South. But I remember he looked up and he said, "Mr. Con", he said, "this feels just like hair". Well, when you think about it, his hair was close knit and felt like a lamb. And I remember Dad. I said, "Well, I guess to him to him it does feel like hair." 'Cause, you know it ... (Laughs)

PIEHLER: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MASSEY: But, no, we had ...

PIEHLER: How many tenant farmers did you have?

MASSEY: We had two families. Of course, lookin' at it from a, if you really get down to the brass tacks of it, it was basically one step away, and I say this not in any—just I think, the fact of the matter, it was about one step away from slavery. We provided for 'em, and I'll tell you a story about that, but—and you know we let 'em, I say we let 'em, we had a home for 'em, a house for 'em. Very meager, now that I look back on it and go back and see it, but they're still there, the old houses still there.

PIEHLER: The houses are still there?

MASSEY: They're falling down, and we don't have any tenant farmers. I guess the last tenant farmer left in probably the late fifties, after I got into college.

PIEHLER: But still, pretty late into the ...

MASSEY: Yeah, oh yeah.

PIEHLER: While you were growing up, they were ...

MASSEY: While I was growin' up. But like I say, we provided for 'em, you know, we let 'em, we had 'em a cow, and they raised hogs for killing and chickens and all that. Then at the local store they ran a tab, all year long, for sugar, coffee, you know, the basic staples. And at the end of the year, they would sell the corn, and my dad would pay them for the corn that they had

raised, ‘cause they raised the corn. Of course, took his cut, and paid them for the rest. The tobacco—and if they raised hogs, we would take ’em to the market and, you know, sell ’em for ’em. Well, I remember one year, they settled up at the store, and this black guy’s name was Gene Blair, a big tall black guy. Of course, he kinda took a shinin’ to me, I guess. I don’t know, we got, and I say this, he had one cross eye which was really bad. But in any event, they went into the store and settled up, at the end of the year, right around New Year’s, right after Christmas, and he walked with five dollars in his pocket.

PIEHLER: That’s what he’d really made.

MASSEY: That’s what he had made.

PIEHLER: Which this is the 1950’s, so ...

MASSEY: This is 1950’s. Of course, you know, all during the year, and I guess my dad was probably—and you say, “Well, that’s pretty graphic.” They had run the tab all year long and, you know, we provided—and if the children got sick, you know, my playmates if you will, Dad would take care of ’em. You know, he’d get ’em to a doctor. So that was kind of a ...

PIEHLER: That was the understanding?

MASSEY: That was a medical insurance program, if you would. Of course, back then, you know, the doctor didn’t charge that much and you could get the basic stuff done. But thinking back on it, and when my dad passed away, my brothers and I were home, and we were goin’—and he kept very meticulous journals. And I hope that my brother still has ’em.

PIEHLER: Yeah, those are really, I hope, yeah, those for historians, that’s ...

MASSEY: Oh yeah, you know ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, yeah, that’s exact ...

MASSEY: ... what they call ... first source, or whatever you call it ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, oh yeah, those are ...

MASSEY: ... in his handwriting. But any event, he had kept meticulous records, and he had it listed by date, what they did, and he paid a dollar-fifty a day for their labor. Now, if they were working their crops, like if they were working in the cornfield or tobacco or something; that was on their time, so to speak. But if they cut fence rows, or if the brought in hay, or, you know, anything like that, he had this listed in there. It was a dollar-fifty a day for the wages.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I’m hoping all those records are, those are just wonderful.

MASSEY: But I, you know, you think, and at the time we didn’t, I do remember this on Saturday mornings a lot of times. One guy in particular: Arthur Lee Wilson. See, these names I

just, they kinda come back to me. We called him Ott, but it was Arthur Lee Wilson. Ott would come up to the house on Saturday morning about mid-morning, and he said, "Well Mister Con, I'd like to get my pay, I want to go to town." My dad said, "Well Ott, what'd you do this week?" Well, this became kind of a routine. Ott would go to town on Saturday night and buy him jug of moonshine whiskey and get drunk. He would come back home probably late Monday afternoon or sometimes on Tuesday before he could get back to the farm, 'cause we lived twelve miles out in the country. So he'd work maybe Wednesday and Thursday and possibly, he might work three days a week. They'd say, "What'd you do this week Ott?" "Well, I cut the fence" or "I helped put up the fence" or "I cut some wood." "Well, okay, that's about four dollars" or whatever it was. Pay him four dollars, and then he would get on the road and start walkin'. Cause he knew that the local people, a lot of 'em went, and we did too, we'd go down on Saturday afternoons. It was a ritual.

PIEHLER: What was the town that you would go to?

MASSEY: Fayetteville, Tennessee.

PIEHLER: Fayetteville.

MASSEY: About six or seven thousand, you know. It hadn't grown, or it's about that now. It's maybe nine thousand, it's a little old town, had the square and the whole bit.

PIEHLER: But that was the big town?

MASSEY: That was the big town. But in Fayetteville, there was a, if you grew up there it was "Fevul", a little Southern way of saying it was Fayetteville. Of course, they had a black part of town, and that's where he'd go down and get the moonshine whiskey and, you know, have him a good time on Saturday night. And he'd leave his wife and kids home (Laughs), you know, 'cause that was his—and we had another family. And now, to show you the difference, to flip that a little bit, we had another family, the Hardins. Charles Hardin and his wife Emma, I can remember if I see 'em today. They had three children. They work, they save their money and, I'll tell you a real interesting story later on. But in any event, they, I mean, they were neat, clean, their house was spotless, and they eventually left the farm and went into town and they were able to, I don't know if they bought a place, but they were able to move to town and get off the farm. Their children all went to school. My brother, who went on active duty in '58 down at Fort Jackson, South Carolina was a basic company commander, basic training company commander. And Willie, their oldest boy, enlisted in the military, and my brother was out on the drill, you know, somewhere out in the company area, and he heard this "Hey, Mr. John." And of course, here my brother's a first lieutenant ...

PIEHLER: (Laughs) Lieutenant.

MASSEY: And here's a private over here hollerin' "Hey ,Mr. John" and it was Willie. (Laughter) And of course, you know, I guess, two or three sergeants just jumped all over him. "What the hell you mean callin' a lieutenant ... " And so my brother called him in and he said, "I'll take this private with me" and took him into the office and they had a visit, so to speak.

And we don't know, and my brother told me about that, he said, "You're not gonna believe who showed up. " And he was not in his company which was ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, but just ...

MASSEY: He was close, he was the next company over I guess at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Now we don't know if stayed in the military or not.

PIEHLER: So you don't know what happened to the Hardin family?

MASSEY: Well, we do know they moved to town and eventually their, they had Willie and two daughters, I remember that, I think the girls married, and, you know ...

PIEHLER: But you get a sense they became a very successful family?

MASSEY: Yes, yes. They got out of the sharecropping.

PIEHLER: Yeah. What happened to the other family?

MASSEY: Well they just moved ...

PIEHLER: They moved to another ...

MASSEY: ... moved to another area or moved to another farm and then, in later years, I did run into Gene Blair, the tall, black guy I was telling you about. He had moved to town and was kind of living, I guess, on welfare, 'cause he was older. And I remember, my wife, of course, she grew up around there, although she grew up in town, she was a town girl. She wasn't a country girl. But we saw him one day, and he leaned into the car, and I said, "Gene, it's good to see you, this is my wife and ... " Two daughters at that point. "I sure am glad ... ", you know, the old, southern black, you know, "I sures am glad to see you." And (Laughs) my wife is kinda, you know, leanin' back, of course he, you know, he, I'll just say it like it is, he reeked, if you will. But he, you know, he was very proud, and I was proud to show him my family, and he was proud that I took the time to stop and talk to him. But when we drove away then, she said, "My God, did you know ... ?". I said, "Yeah I, he was on our place." And so, you know, it's kind of a different situation.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, you had sharecroppers on the farm until the 1950's, what led to the decision not to keep ... ?

MASSEY: I think my dad, at that point decided not to do the farming anymore, 'cause it was a hill farm, it's not—and it was, you couldn't really use, you couldn't mechanize. You had to use mules to, and ...

PIEHLER: So you had to use mules?

MASSEY: Oh yeah, I mean ...

PIEHLER: So grew up with mules?

MASSEY: Oh, I grew up with mules, no tractor. I mean, now we had a tractor, we had some bottoms that we used the tractor and to cut hay and do things like that, but the basic row crops, as you call 'em, were up on hillsides. Now, I do remember this, we had a guy who came out to test a track tractor, not a tractor but one with tracks on it like a tank or something like that. He said, "Oh yeah, Mr. Con",everybody called everybody mister, you know, Mr. Con. He said, "Oh yeah Mr. Con, this", and this is a black guy, he said, "this thing will," he said, "Man, you can plow this hillside, so let me run a test." He said, "You can bring your neighbors in, and we'll just show who this things gonna work." (Laughs) Well, my dad said okay. He took him up on the steepest hill we had, I mean this thing was, you had to almost hold on to keep from falling. And he put that, and he started around there where the back end would go downhill, it wouldn't stay, it couldn't stay in the ground, it wouldn't plow. And he wrapped that thing up and went back to town and we never ... (Laughter) I mean, of course he knew him. He was the guy that ran his equipment company there in Fayetteville. But, you know, Daddy gave him a chance to test his equipment, and it didn't work. And all the neighbors, you know, they're sittin' there chewin' on their tobacco spitin' on the ground "That damn thing. That damn thing ain't gonna work." You know, they knew right away what was comin'. But no, the mules, and I don't know if you're familiar with the term, we called it a Syracuse plow.

PIEHLER: No, I've not heard that.

MASSEY: It was Syracuse, New York where these things were made, but they were a hillside plow. And this may really sound weird, but we've got one at home, my wife and I. Our son bought it for us. But it's called what they call a hillside plow, and you literally plow this way. (Gestures)

PIEHLER: Which direction? How would you describe that direction?

MASSEY: Well, it's kind of a circular. You go around the hill, you know. Then when you got to the other end, you had to come back. Well this plow, you had a lever on it, you would kick it, and you would roll it and you could come back the other way. And that's how you plowed hillside, an old Syracuse hillside, they were called hillside plows. And they've got a lever on it that you could roll the plow horn over this way, (Gestures) goin' this way, and roll it coming back the other way and that's how you plowed. And you have two teams, we had two teams of mules, and they'd plow all, I mean it would take them a long time to plow. And then, of course, they'd then go back and plant the corn, and then it'd take, of course, a lot of people laugh at that. They say, "Oh yeah, your wagons, the old wagons you used to gather corn had one set of wheels were this big and one set this big, you know, goin' around the side of the hill," which was not true, but we'd laugh at that.

PIEHLER: The wheels were the same size?

MASSEY: The wheels were the same size. (Laughter) But I can remember goin' out and helpin' pick corn, as I say, with my hand. Of course, now you've got your corn pickers, and it's all done on flat land.

PIEHLER: But you said your father, what other reasons did he decide to abandon sharecroppers or tenant farmers were?

MASSEY: I think it was economics as much as anything. And plus, I think from a, and I feel this as a kind. We never really discuss it, but from a social view point, he just said, "You know, this is not a right system, and I'm not gonna participate in it anymore." And I think economics too, 'cause hillside farming was tough, and he got out. We had tobacco, he stopped raising it with corn, and it went strictly to cattle.

PIEHLER: So it's now a cattle, today it's just cattle strictly?

MASSEY: Cattle farm. Just cattle. And my brother, he's got it, as we say, in good shape as far as clear and got good pasture and all that, and he runs cattle.

PIEHLER: I should have asked you earlier. How big is the farm? How many acres?

MASSEY: We had 300 acres.

PIEHLER: And is it still 300 acres?

MASSEY: Well, what has happened through the years, there was a neighbor who had younger, who had kids and he wanted to increase the size of his place. So my dad sold 100 acres; so it's 200 acres.

PIEHLER: 200 acres, which is still a substantial ...

MASSEY: It's a, yeah it's a nice size. And it's a good cattle—nice size. It's divided by the road so you got one side that he'll pasture for a while, and he can swap and pasture the other side. Of course he's got the barns and stuff to run 'em into in the wintertime. Although, they don't come inside, you know. He feeds 'em down at the barn.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Other than that they're all outside. And he got the ponds and springs and creeks. So water, the watering, it's up in the head of a holler as we call back home, but there's a lot of springs and creeks comin' out so the water has never run dry.

PIEHLER: It sounds liked to play outdoors, this must have been a great place to ...

------------------------------END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE------------------------------

PIEHLER: ... brother and the farm ...

MASSEY: Yeah, he was always into hunting and even today, he's got—I've always said if we ever have a war here in our borders, I know where I'm goin' to get outfitted, 'cause he's got all kinds of weapons, loads his own ammunition. I know, just in line with that, our middle brother just recently called him and said, "Hey do you have any hand guns that you might be willing to sell me one?" And, I don't remember the conversation per se, my brother said, "Well, yeah." And so he came up and bought a handgun from him. He lives in Savannah, Georgia now, my middle brother does that retired from Sears, and he said, "I've got a permit to start carrying a handgun." And I said, "Well what the hell you need a handgun for?" And he said, "Hey, we've had problems in Savannah, Georgia with muggings," and he said, "I'm going to even up the playing field." He said, "I am not going to be held hostage in downtown Savannah." And I thought, okay. And this may sound interesting: I have never owned a weapon.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: You know, I grew up around them, I was in the military, but I have never owned a weapon. And I told him, I said, "Well let me tell this to you." From a little brother telling to a big brother. I said, "If you pull that thing out you better be willing to use it." And he said, "Aw hell, that ain't no problem." (Laughter) (Unintelligible) So anyhow, to get back to, I digress, we grew up, you know, out on the farm and hunting, and we did that. And it's interesting. I would go hunting, and it really was not a thrill to me to hunt.

PIEHLER: Yeah. So you don't hunt today?

MASSEY: Do not hunt today. My hobby I guess is golf and running. You know, things like that. So I never really got into the hunting.

PIEHLER: I'm curious thinking back. You had sort of grown up in town; initially you were in town. What was your initial [feeling] moving to this farm, which was much more isolated?

MASSEY: Well we went back there every summer for visits. So it was not like a new thing.

PIEHLER: Oh so you weren't shocked, like one day ...

MASSEY: No, and back then we went home in the summers. You know, my dad came from a big family; he had eight brothers and sisters. And usually all of the cousins would come to the farm. And you think back on it, this was a big ol' farmhouse but it was not that big. It had one, two, three bedrooms upstairs. Early on did not have indoor plumbing, although they did finally get one bathroom. I think there was a bedroom downstairs. Then there was a porch, a screen porch. So when you brought all the cousins and the uncles and aunts, to the farm house,'cause at that point when we moved back to the farm, my grandmother and an old maid aunt were still living there. And so we moved into the farm. My dad took over the farm. Started because she just couldn't handle it. My grandmother couldn't. But when you think back on it, where did we all sleep? And of course all the grandkids, the cousins, slept in the same room. Just on the floor, palettes, and whatever else. The majority of us were male, if you will. There were three female

cousins. So they kind of had to fend for themselves, you know, sleeping in the same room, which back then was kind of an interesting thing.

PIEHLER: So you grew up, in a sense, in a very large family.

MASSEY: Big family.

PIEHLER: So there were trips back to Knoxville, then. You weren't ...

MASSEY: Well, now this was my dad's family down in Middle Tennessee. So to come back up to Knoxville, we would come up probably at Christmas once we moved to the farm. 'Course we'd come up to see football games. But my mother had one sister that lived in Chattanooga, and she only had one child. So from that side of the family it was fairly small. But we would all get together here in Knoxville during Christmas primarily. Then my grandmother finally moved to Chattanooga with my aunt in later years, but , yeah, but the farm was not a shock to us, 'cause we had been there. And we enjoyed it. You know, you could go swimmin' in the creeks and corncob fights and all that stuff, you know, do the things that you do on a farm.

PIEHLER: You mentioned about indoor plumbing. When did the farm get indoor plumbing? Do you know? Was it when you were living there?

MASSEY: No, it was before we moved back. But I do remember as a kid, they did have the "outhouse." But they put in running water first. The running water was from a stream way up on the hillside, and they build a catch tank, if you will, to catch it in. And then they put in a water line, and it was a gravity flow. And that's the system they have today.

PIEHLER: Still?

MASSEY: It still works. Spring still runs, they've got the catch basin there ...

PIEHLER: And the water's still clean enough to ...

MASSEY: Yep. Now my brother has, and I think my dad did to in later years, they put just a filter on the line. But the water is still good to drink. And as my brother says, he says, "Man I go to town, I have to drink that old water that's got all the crap in it. You know, I don't like it." So it's spring water, but it's still gravity-fed. But I guess the indoor plumbing, if you will, the bathroom was put in probably when I was four or five years old because I can remember that. And when we moved there, it was there.

PIEHLER: It was there. So you didn't, that was ...

MASSEY: Yeah so we had already done away with the outdoor privy.

PIEHLER: When did the farm get electricity, do you know?

MASSEY: I do remember that, that was in the, we had big kerosene lamps and all that.

PIEHLER: So you initially didn't have electricity?

MASSEY: The electricity came in about forty, after World War II, '46 maybe. It was there when we moved in '48.

PIEHLER: But you remember going to the barn and there were ...

MASSEY: I remember. But early on, prior to the kerosene lamps, they did have a system, and I didn't see this because I wasn't born yet, but in the 30's, late 20's, 30's, they had a carbide system. I don't know if you ...

PIEHLER: I've heard people describe that.

MASSEY: And it basically was you used the carbide, and I don't know the process, but it made a gas. They had pipe into the house, these carbide lamps. And it was like you, the line would come out of the wall, and you'd have the flame there, if you will. It was carbide. But the old carbide building was there for years, and it was kind of a little storage shed. But they had that system and then they went to the kerosene lamps for some reason. And of course they finally got the electricity and TVA. But I also remember the telephone system we had. The old crank party line. And you literally would crank this thing and you would ring three rings for so-and-so. And of course, I don't think we could get through to town. This was just kind of out in the neighborhood. You could talk to your neighbors. That was about it.

PIEHLER: Just to the neighbors but not long distance?

MASSEY: Not long distance.

PIEHLER: And how long, through high school?

MASSEY: Ah, no, no, no. We got the phone system in, probably early 50's. I do remember. And the big thing when that happened, as you can imagine, number one, we could call the town, or they could call us. And my uncle, at that point he had some cattle on the farm. My dad and him shared, I guess, whatever. It became a Sunday ritual; he would call and say, "You all need anything? I'm coming out. Come out and check my cattle." And he would also bring a big block of ice, and we'd make homemade ice cream. 'Cause we milked our own cattle and have a rich cream on it that thick you know. Butter fat content probably, you know, fifteen percent or whatever. (Laughter) But in any event, that was a big deal. He'd bring the ice and—and it was the old hand crank. It was not electric at all. So that was the big Sunday afternoon thing with all kids.

PIEHLER: That ice cream must have been very good.

MASSEY: Oh, I can taste it right now. (Laughter) But in any event, the phone system came in probably late 40's, early 50's. But what I was getting ready to say, what happened then of

course was that not only were you able to talk to people in town, then we as kids could talk to, you know, other people. You know, that became a big thing.

PIEHLER: So you were able to really stay in touch with, say, friends you had in high school. Once you had the phone. Even though you lived far out.

MASSEY: Far out, yeah. It was also a ritual; we went to town on Saturday, during the summertime, particularly, and all through the year. Well, my older brothers and I, we had a pickup truck. And that was our transportation. We would ride into town, and they would meet up with their friends and we'd go to the movies. We'd go in the afternoon, we'd go to the movies. Then we had an aunt who lived in town, and she was a Corker, too. We'd go over to her place, usually, for Saturday nights. And then of course they would get with their buddies. And they would let me tag along. The big deal back then was not unlike today's situation. They'd buy 'em a case of beer. You could always, I mean, they had bootleggers. You could buy hard liquor if you wanted to.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: But the guys that my brother ran around with, they'd buy beer. Well then of course they would have their, they'd do their drinking. Well every now and then they'd get a little tooted up. And they'd tell me, "You're gonna have to drive home tonight." (Laughter) So I learned how to drive out of necessity, driving them.

PIEHLER: You were the designated driver.

MASSEY: I was the designated driver.

PIEHLER: How old were you when you ...

MASSEY: Thirteen or fourteen.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay. (Laughs)

MASSEY: They were still in high school. I was twelve or thirteen. And of course we never, and I think my mother figured out early on, you know, because they would come in. And she was, like I said, she was pretty liberal about things like that. As long as you didn't, you know, do something, you know, get in trouble per se, tear up something, or something like that.

PIEHLER: Yeah, but if you wanted to, if you, on the sly, got a little bit of beer and came home ...

MASSEY: She sat up. She read. She was a voracious reader. And she would—I never came home that she wasn't, you know, she would be in her chair, you know. She just didn't sleep that much. So if you came in a little tipsy it was not a big deal. (Laughter) But that was the thing, if you drove ...

PIEHLER: Then you'd be in trouble.

MASSEY: Yeah, you were in trouble. So we'd usually wait 'till we kind of sobered up a little bit to come home. But when I was young, you know, with my brothers, I would drive them home. I think she figured out what was happening. She never really said anything about it. Of course, my dad, he may have known it, too. But as long as we didn't, you know, get in trouble. And, you know, knock on wood thing. We never had any wrecks. But I ran over a guy's mailbox one night. (Laughter) And early the next morning we were down there putting up a brand new mailbox. That solved that problem, because I had hit it and I came home and I went in and told her, I said, "Hey guess what, I ran over mister, the gentleman three or four miles down the road, I ran over his mailbox." She said, "Well, you better tell your daddy in the morning." Of course, I was up bright and early, and I told him what I had done. He said, "Okay, well let's go get him a new mailbox." When we got there the gentleman was out. An older gentleman, he lived by himself. "Somebody ran over my mailbox!" "Well sir, we know exactly who ran over your mailbox, and we're putting it back up." (Laughter) And that was, hey, you fixed it, that's the deal. And there were no repercussions...

PIEHLER: You mentioned early about, you know, you had done some drag racing once. Was that ...

MASSEY: That was it. That was the one time; that was in town.

PIEHLER: Yeah. But your mother also didn't seem ...

MASSEY: Not, well, the tale was, of course, you know, a bunch of kids. There was a little place called the Dairy Delight. I mean it was, it's the equivalent to Sonic or McDonalds, you know. (Unintelligible) A little ol' hamburger joint. And that's where we all congregated. And the guy that ran it, he understood, hey, these guys buy hamburger stuff here. This is where they bring their dates. So he didn't care that we would congregate there. And we'd just sit around talking. So one night, one of our buddies had just gotten a new, for him it was new of course, it was a re-made '39 Mercury. All supped up. I mean customized. Of course, his dad owned the insurance company, and he had money. Still run into him when I go home now. But in any event, he ran it up. We had, it was the family car, had a '55 Chevrolet. He said, "Let's see how this handles." So we pulled out into the street. And they did the old, just drag race, you know, "One, two..." Man, we spun off. we maybe went a hundred and fifty yards, and there was a service station. We passed that service station, and here's that patrol. (Laughter) Clicked the lights on and, well, we just pulled over, you know. I mean it was no ... All the policemen knew us, we knew them. But this was the highway patrol. He pulled us over, and he said "Massey, you live out in the country, don't you?" "Yes sir, I do." He said, "You got anybody that can drive you home?" I had one of my guys, you know, in the neighborhood, not the neighborhood; he lived out on the farm. Temple Ward. He was with me. He said, "Well does he got a driver's license?" 'Cause I had had my license maybe three months, I had just gotten it. I said, "Yes sir, he's older, he's got his license." And he said, "Well he's gonna drive you home. You're not driving. I'm taking your license." (Laughter) And literally, I handed it to him.

PIEHLER: And he took it.

MASSEY: He said, "Have your daddy call me tomorrow." (Laughter) So, I drove out into the country and of course, soon as we got on the country road I took over, and I took Temple home. And I drove home. That's when I went in. I didn't know this at the time, but later on—and this thing came to me from General Abrams. Creighton Abrams. Vietnam, kind of thing. He had a saying, "Bad news does not improve with age." (Laughter) The way General Abrams used it was, man, if you've got a screw up don't try to cover it. Bad news does not improve with age. For this situation, like I say, bad news doesn't, so I walked in, and I said, "Hey, I got my license taken away from me." Momma said, "For what?" I said, "Well we drag raced down the middle of Fayetteville." "Well, I don't see anything wrong with that." (Laughter) I said, "Well the patrolman, the highway patrol got me." She said, "Well, the only thing I can see, you might tear up the car, so you shouldn't be doing that. That's a little rough on it." I said, "Yeah, okay." She said, "But you tell your daddy tomorrow." I said, "Oh yeah, he wanted me to call him. Or wanted my dad to call." So in any event, bright and early I'm in there, "Hey, guess what?" And dad was very, he was not one to, you know, you could tell when he was upset by his terminology. He said, "Well what kind of monkeyshine was that?" I knew he was upset at this. And he said, "Well I'll call him." So he called, you know, and about two days go by and I'm still on pins and needles. But he never said a word. So he came walking in one afternoon, and he handed me the license. 'Cause he'd gone to town, and he had met with this patrolman. He said, "This is the last time this is gonna happen." That's all he said. (Laughter) I breathed easy. Didn't get a fine, but he handed it, he said, "This is the last time this is gonna happen." And I said, "Yes sir." And that was. (Laughs) Through the years, though, I've gotten speeding tickets. But as far as ...

PIEHLER: Drag racing.

MASSEY: Drag racing or doing anything like that as a kid.

PIEHLER: But it sounds like discipline in a lot of ways was very low-key. There was a lot of—a sense of—you have to be responsible for your actions.

MASSEY: Well, and I think part of that was the fact that my dad was a schoolteacher, and was well thought of. Plus, and I know you've heard this and heard people talk about it. Your neighbors would police you up and discipline you if they had to. And the school system. I went to school, of course, they knew my dad was a school teacher. Of course, I had older brothers that had kind of paved the way one way or the other. But, to indicate that, when I started high school—'cause my dad taught at a county high school out in the country. Well, they didn't play football. The city school, Fayetteville, played football. I wanted to play football. My older brother had gone in to play football, and after my freshman year I said, "Well I want to go into town to play football." My dad said, "Okay, you can do that. Change schools." But I had to sit out a year, you know, back then. My middle brother stayed out; he stayed at the county school. But in any event, when I ended up down in the city school, the principal of the school and my dad were classmates. They'd gone to high school together, and had played football together. A burly, big guy. I remember he dida , "Well we got another Massey with us this year." I said, "Oh my god." (Laughter) 'Cause I had cousins, and my older brother, and you know, the

Massey name. So consequently, there was, as you say, there was a responsibility to not get into too much trouble.

PIEHLER: Because ...

MASSEY: Because of the, you know … But we didn't have, you know, I think back on it. We just didn't have any bad actors. Or kids that were, you know, juvenile delinquents. We just didn't have any.

PIEHLER: 'Cause when I'm reading this, you know, some of this seems very tame. Like, your brothers would have a few beers.

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: But they wouldn't drive home. They'd have you drive.

MASSEY: Well we'd go out and tear up stuff. We never stole anything.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Now, well we stole watermelons. (Laughter) Out of the food stands, you know, that they had on the squares. I think of the funniest cases in that situation was, one of our friend's dad was a policeman. He'd go up and say, "There's, you know, a bunch of blacks fightin' down, you know, in the part of the black town." Well, he'd take the patrol car, and he'd go down there and see what it was. Well they had the fruit stand right on the public square. We'd get in there and get two or three watermelons. We'd go out and cut them open and of course we'd just eat the hearts out of it. We wouldn't eat the whole watermelon. And that was stealing, you know, when you get right down to the nitty-gritty of it. Well one night, we were at the fruit stand, and the guy that owned it drove up. "My God, we've been caught!" He said, "Put those damn watermelons..." and you know he was all blustering up, "Put those watermelons..." We had a bunch of them, you know, in the floorboard of the back seat of the car. So man, we started putting watermelons back. Well, we kept two, but he never saw 'em. We put all these back, and he said, "You boys get out, don't you ever come back!" I mean he was raisin' hell with us. "I'll call the police on you!" "Yes sir, yes sir!" We drove away, and we still had two watermelons with us. (Laughter) I don't know if he had a count on them or not. But still. So that was about the extent ...

PIEHLER: That was the extent of your ...

MASSEY: Yeah, you know, watermelons, stuff like that. Or you'd go out in the country, you'd go out in a watermelon patch and steal some. And that was done, that was not a major deal.

GRACIA: Boys will be boys.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, what music did you listen to?

MASSEY: Oh, rock and roll.

PIEHLER: So you were listening to rock and roll.

MASSEY: Yeah, that was the, the doo-wop, bee-bop, you know, all that stuff. 'Cause that was in the 50's. We laugh about it now, with our kids and our grandkids. You know, you can't hear the words. You don't know what they're saying. And it's all loud and everything. We just laughed about it. We had organizations, I guess you'd call them. These were female organizations that teenage girls belonged to. Somewhat like a sorority. Of course, you had to be invited to belong and they, each year, would have a summer dance and then have a winter dance, you know, around Christmas time and then again in the summer. Well all these little towns around there had the same groups. When Fayetteville had their dances, of course, you got a date, and you went and you had your girlfriend there. Then all the other towns, the stags would come over. You know, the guys would be invited to come over and be a stag, as they called it. And they would,and it was very seldom, every now and then there would be a little, tempers would flare, if you will. Some guy would try to make a hit on your girlfriend, or something like that. But basically, they were just good times where we had black rock and roll bands.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: That would play this ...

PIEHLER: White-only audience.

MASSEY: White-only audience. A black band. There was one group called, golly, you're bringing back a lot of memories here. One group called The Jets. And their lead singer wore dark glasses. We had it in the Elk's ballroom, you know, it was a big room, and the lights were low and everything. Had tables around it. But in any event, he'd wear these dark glasses. I remember one night they were on break, and then, of course, we'd go up and talk to them. And as it ended up, a lot of times we'd bring them a half a pint of whiskey. You know, we'd go out, and we knew where the local bootlegger was. They'd give us money, and we'd go buy it and bring it back to them. I remember asking him, "Why are you wearing the dark glasses? It's dark in here." He said, "That gives me class." (Laughter) "Okay, whatever!" But that was what was interesting about it. The black bands, the real rock and roll kind of bands played for the white dances. I know there were probably, the owner said, if you will, the parents probably had the swing bands, and they were usually white guys.

PIEHLER: So in many ways your parents were listening to different musicians. They were listening to white musicians, and you were listening to black musicians.

MASSEY: Yeah. There was a little black club. I don't know if you call it a juke club, not, but that's what we used to call 'em down South, you know, the black clubs. There was one outside Fayetteville called Bobby and Jean's On The Highway. It was an all-black club. Well we would go out there, the white guys would go out, and we would stand along the wall. They would bring

their black bands in and play and dance and they didn't, as long as you came in and didn't [cause problems and] you just kind of were there, they didn't have any problems. Well Little Richard, you remember Little Richard?

PIEHLER: Oh yeah.

MASSEY: He's still playing today. He would come there and play. He was from Huntsville, Alabama. Or down in Alabama somewhere. We remember listening to Little Richard way back then before he ever became, you know, really famous. He would come to Bobby and Jean's On The Highway. And we'd go out and listen on Friday nights or Saturday nights. So it's kinda—like I say the schools were segregated. We played football, and we had our team. Central High, we called it. West End High was the black school, and they had a better ball club that we had. I mean, I'm just saying it like it is, they had a better ...

PIEHLER: And it sounds like they won more.

MASSEY: Oh, they were undefeated year in and year out. They played on Thursday night on our field because they didn't have a football field. They would play on Thursday nights, and we played on Friday nights. Our home game. We would go to their games on Thursday nights, and they would come to ours on Friday. And, you know, we cheered for each other. We'd see each other around town, and we'd talk about the games, you know, stuff like that. But it was totally segregated.

PIEHLER: You probably were in college when the desegregation occurred.

MASSEY: Yeah, they started, I remember my dad talking about it. And this is interesting. This is another graphic thing that I remember. 'Cause I went to a four-room schoolhouse in grade school. Two classes in each room. We drove by the black school, which was a square cinderblock building. One room. Had a single light bulb hanging down in the center of it and had outdoor plumbing. That was the black school.

PIEHLER: And you had indoor plumbing.

MASSEY: We drove a mile or two down the road closer to the highway. Four room schoolhouse, indoor plumbing, lunch room and a gym. And this was separate but equal. I mean, that really brings it down to the bottom level when you hear that term "separate but equal."

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: That's the system we had. This was in the early 50's. I mean, I was in grade school.

PIEHLER: I'm curious how the desegregation went, because it sounds like in some ways under the segregated system there was some real give. The fact that you would go to their games, they would come to your games.

MASSEY: Yeah. Unfortunately, of course, like you say, by the time it really got into effect I

was already up in college.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: I was kind of out of it. But I do remember my dad talking about it, and he said, “It’s unfortunate.” I think in some of the systems, and I think Nashville in particular, they tried to do it starting first grade, you know, stage it in over a twelve-year period. But I think the courts said, “No, you gotta do it now.” They did that in Lincoln County, my home county. They just put ‘em together. “You gotta go to Clinton, you gotta go here.” You know. There weren’t that many blacks out in the county. Most of ‘em were in town. Well, they kept the West End High School segregated for a number of years before they finally [integrated]. And what prompted it, they consolidated the high schools in this county. They put them all together in one big, consolidated high school in town. At that point they did away with West End High. That had to have been, well my dad was still living then ‘cause he was on the county board that made that decision. It was not one that a lot of people looked on with a lot favor because it did away with the county high schools and their neighborhood high school and they consolidated it.

PIEHLER: So consolidation was a major fight.

MASSEY: Oh, it was a big fight. Big fight.

PIEHLER: So your father served on the school board?

MASSEY: Well, the county commission.

PIEHLER: So the county commission for the whole county. Not just the schools.

MASSEY: Yeah. And he voted for it. He said, “I think it’s the signs of the time, and it’s gonna happen.” But I do remember they had integrated before that happened out in the county, which is kind of interesting. But he said, “I remember when the black kids came to his high school. They were just so ill-prepared.”They couldn’t read. And he said it was not fair to them, because they were put in a very tough situation. A lot of ‘em I guess dropped out, or they had to have the term “dumbed down.” And that’s unfortunate.

PIEHLER: Did your father teach out in middle Tennessee?

MASSEY: Yeah he taught out in a place called Flintville.

PIEHLER: So even though he had the farm he could teach?

MASSEY: Yeah, he was an Ag teacher. Farming. Of course, I was part of his, you know, kids. All the guys out in this area—it was a farming area, anyways; so all of the guys took Ag. That was a given. And it was not a real large-sized school. Two hundred and fifty students, something like that. Spread over four years It was not a big school. But talking about discipline earlier on, he was a strict disciplinarian, but very, as you indicated early on, kind of low-key. But one of the things he would do, and I mean, this became a ritual. The freshman year you got

all new freshman boys in there in the Ag class that he taught all four years. About the first two weeks of school he would do this, and it would set the tone for the next four years. And everybody knew it was coming eventually. But in any event, what he would do was—he had a favorite saying. It was, "Get in the game." If you were acting up, you know, "Boys, get in the game." And that meant "zip it" or "shut it" or whatever you want to call it today. And if you continued to act up, that was the only warning you got. "Boys, get in the game." He'd kind of walk around doing whatever he was doing, teaching, or whatever. And if a kid was still, you know, jabberin' or doing whatever, he would just walk up behind 'em and just smack him. Just open-hand smack him. Of course, he couldn't get by with that today. But, you know," pop!" He said, "Son, I told you to get in the game." Of course everybody else would see that. (Laughter) So the next time they heard the term, "Boys, get in the game," they knew what, well, the famous story was, and I know the guy that it happened to. He was doing whatever and my dad said, "Get in the game." He just continued to do what he was doing and my dad walked up and just smacked him. He said, "Son, I told you to get in the game." He said, "Well what's the score?" He hit him again and said, "It's two to nothing, my favor!" (Laughter) This guy to this day, he said, "I tell you what, your dad made a believer out of me." And I say, "Hell yeah, I grew up here. I know you're talking about." (Laughter) The principals were, I ended up going to play football down in Central High. Had two principals, like I say, one of them my daddy had gone to school with. They did not have any problems with grabbing you up or just wearing you out or smacking you, whatever had to be done to get you out trouble. To get sent to the principal's office was not a fun thing. I mean, they didn't play games. So everybody knew that, and you had good discipline. If guys got into fights—every now and then you'd have that happen, well, stop what you're doing, get all the boys and go to the football field, put they boxing gloves on. The two guys that were gonna fight. The principal would make them fight until they literally couldn't stand up. You know, fighting or boxing is taxing anyway.

PIEHLER: Oh yeah.

MASSEY: They'd just wear 'em out. And said, "Next time you boys wanna fight, this is what's gonna happen." That was kind of a neat way to get your frustrations out. (Laughter) But one thing I will tell about this principal I was talking about that was my dad's classmate. Their high school football team, back in the 20's I think, unscored upon and undefeated. And I've got a picture, you know, old leather helmets, no facemask. They were just all big ol' raw country boys.

PIEHLER: When you were going to high school was it expected you were going to go to college? What was the sense of that?

MASSEY: With our family, yeah.

PIEHLER: Yeah. Because both your brothers went to college.

MASSEY: They had already gone. But that was never in question in our family.

PIEHLER: But you also mentioned everyone took Ag. Did you take Ag?.

MASSEY: I took Ag that freshman year that I went to where my dad taught. And then when I changed schools and started going to Central, they had Ag in Central, but I didn't take it. I was never into farming.

PIEHLER: Yeah it sounded like wanted to get off the farm.

MASSEY: Yeah, I was never into farming. I mean, I enjoyed it. Thinking back on it, it was good experience and good training and all that. My older brother now, like I said, he's back there right now. He really enjoyed it. And my middle brother never did really enjoy it.

PIEHLER: So you went to college prep when you transferred. Was that one of the reasons for transferring to Central, the college prep?

MASSEY: Not necessarily. I mean, of course my middle brother went to the country school, as we called it, the county school. He went to college without any problems. But he was a hell of a lot smarter than we were. I mean, innately, really. I say that, but he was. But they didn't have back then like they do today, college prep courses or co-op or whatever type course. We just all took the same thing. I can remember, I guess we took the SAT or whatever those were back then. I remember going over to Columbia, Tennessee and taking this test. And then, just rode up here and enrolled, and there I was in school.

PIEHLER: But your older brother, where did he go to college?

MASSEY: Well, he started at UT. He came up here. And like I say, you learn from your older brother's mistakes, I guess, or transgressions. But in any event, he started up here, and he joined a fraternity. Well, after the first year he did not have good grades, and my dad said, "Tell you what, you're comin' home. We'll put you to work." So he knew the guy that ran the cheese plant, the old Kraft cheese plant. They made cheese there. Well, they got all the milk from the local dairy farmers, and my brother ended up being the unloader of these dairy trucks, these big milk cans. You seen those ten gallon milk cans? Those things were heavy. And he unloaded those and put 'em on the conveyer belt that would go into the plant. Well he worked there about, I don't know how long, I was still in high school, but he worked there awhile. I guess all through the summer. So that fall, then, my dad said, "Well are you ready to go back to school?" And he said, "Yeah I am." (Laughter) He said ok. So he went to Middle Tennessee State and walked on, and he played football at Middle Tennessee State. And then he got into ROTC at that point, and he ...

PIEHLER: But that year, back in the ... back home ...

MASSEY: He was probably, I guess he came home, he may have worked for a full year. That's right, he worked for a full year. And the next summer he said, "Hey, you ready to get back to school?" He said, "I am."

PIEHLER: (Laughs) And your middle brother, you're the youngest.

MASSEY: Right.

PIEHLER: Did he go to UT?

MASSEY: He came to UT as well. And uh, the interesting story about that. He came to UT and went in the co-op program. He was taking business even though he was working at a foundry down in Chattanooga. Well, he got a part-time job or started working, I guess, his last year in school. At that time the department store, where Miller's used to be and where the UT conference center is now, was Rich's. Which is a store in Atlanta. I think they still have a store or two in Atlanta. Rich's chain. Well that was the store here in Knoxville at that time. He started working there and got into their management program and liked it. And either got contacted by or contact Sears. I don't know if they put out the word that they were looking for management trainees. So he applied for it and got accepted, and he lacked six hours on his degree. Well he left school without getting his degree and worked his way up through Sears and at some point in time they said, "Wait a minute, you need a college degree to go on up in Sears." So he wrote back to the university and said, "Can I do this through correspondence?" And they worked out some kind of program, so he literally, so he would have graduated in the late 50's. Well I graduated in '62. Well he didn't finish his degree until '66, officially.

PIEHLER: Officially, yeah.

MASSEY: To get the diploma. But he did in fact get his diploma. Kind of interesting.

PIEHLER: Before we move onto college and then ROTC, Bob, did you want to ask anything before growing up before we move on? I just want to make sure.

GRACIA: I don't really have anything, no.

PIEHLER: Yeah, no, I just wanted to ... Well, your brothers, both of them would start at UT, though one would finish at Middle Tennessee. And your father was an alumni. And you mentioned there were other UT connections.

MASSEY: Well, I had an aunt that had a degree here, and of course, my great uncle was the dean of students, and his wife was a history professor.

PIEHLER: And their names again were, 'cause you mentioned them ...

MASSEY: Felix Massey and Maria Massey. And I don't remember her maiden name. I did not know her, actually. I mean, she was still alive when I was a kid but I never ... And he had passed away in '39, I believe. Took a trip to California and contracted some type of fever or something, and got back to Tennessee. Of course back then they didn't have the medicine they do today. And he passed away. They never really did know what to do. And Dean Dunford. The dean, Ralph Dunford, that this building is named for, was the dean of students when I was here. He knew my great uncle Felix. And I talked to him about it. You know, of course Dean Dunford had followed long behind him in later years. He said, "Oh yeah, Dean Massey was well thought of."

PIEHLER: I'm curious, because we are in Dunford Hall. I see the plaque outside with a little sculptured portrait. What was Dean Dunford like?

MASSEY: He was a very gentleman-type guy. Low key. You know, he was just a, for the want of a better term, a Southern gentleman, as I remember. Of course I didn't have that much ...

PIEHLER: Yeah ...

MASSEY: I kind of kept my nose clean. But the time or two that I did he was a very fine gentleman, as far as I know of. I guess I'm trying to think who followed him. Of course, I mean he was still the dean when I left school.

PIEHLER: I'm just curious, before coming to college, or even during college, before joining the military, what's the farthest you had traveled? East, west, south, north?

MASSEY: North, we'd gone to Detroit, Michigan. I had an uncle who lived up there. That is an interesting question. I'd never thought about it. Went to Florida as a senior in high school. That was a senior trip. A bunch of us guys ...

PIEHLER: Got in a car.

MASSEY: Got all our stuff together and went down there. And of course, as you can see my fair skin just got totally burned down there, just like a crisp. (Laughter) But as far as west, I guess Nashville, Tennessee.

PIEHLER: Was the farthest west.

MASSEY: We'd go to. Now, I didn't take Ag, but I was in grade school I was in 4H Club. And we'd show cattle and stuff. Hogs and stuff like that. But Nashville, I guess, was about as far west. East, East Tennessee, and I guess we got over into North Carolina. But the longest trip, and farthest away from home, would have been Detroit, Michigan.

PIEHLER: And you did that once.

MASSEY: Went up to visit my uncle. Went up with a cousin and an aunt and uncle. And I went along with them.

PIEHLER: So it sounds like your family really didn't take regular vacations.

MASSEY: No.

PIEHLER: I mean they would come to Knoxville for Christmas, and ...

MASSEY: And of course, the farm was the focal point for all the cousins and uncles and aunts. So we stayed there. So, we didn't take vacations to Disney World or something like that.

PIEHLER: Yeah. Now, when you came to UT what did you plan on majoring in?

MASSEY: I started out in business. And I may have got, I think I stayed in a quarter, I'm not sure. And of course I got into ROTC and I kind of liked it. And then I got into, of course I had walked on to play football, and I found out I was too small and slow. So that kind of went to the board. And during that—right before that fall quarter starting school, I got married. I married my high school sweetheart, and we're married today forty-five years later. So ...

PIEHLER: And it was your high school sweetheart, was she going here as a student, or ...

MASSEY: No, no. She got her, as they say, the PhT, "Put hubby through." It was impetuous, and we were young. You know, but we did it. So, when that happened, my dad, you know, kind of, "Hmm, okay." He said, "You're gonna have to work." And so that kind of... Like I said, I was too slow and small for football, so I started working. He said, "I will pay for your school. But all the rest of it you're gonna have to get on your own. That's what I did for your brother." So that's what we did.

PIEHLER: So your father wasn't exactly pleased that you had gotten married at this point in time.

MASSEY: Probably not. But he never ...

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: ... he would have never let my wife know that.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: My mother, she just said, "Hey, he's a young kid. You know, what the hell. You're gonna have to make the best of it." She was not, again, not that upset about it. She said, "You've taken on some responsibilities."

PIEHLER: When did you get married? 'Cause you said it was impetuous.

MASSEY: Yeah, we went to Georgia. That was the deal. You could run to Georgia or Mississippi back then and get married.

PIEHLER: So this was a real ...

MASSEY: Yeah, it was a quick marriage. My wife at this point had moved to Lawrenceville, Georgia, outside of Atlanta. And I came up here, and like I said I went down there one weekend and it just kind of developed, and we said, "Hey, we're gonna get married." And her folks were kind of like, "Okay. if that's what you want to do." You know, it was just one of those ... We didn't run off per say, but we kind of let them know and we came up here. See, my grandmother

was living up here in Knoxville at that point, and I was staying with her before school started while football practice was going on.

PIEHLER: Right.

MASSEY: We came back into town, and of course she was a good deal older and, "You kids, you just..." You know. She said, "Well, you better go home." And I said, "Okay." So we came to Knoxville first and then we went home. She said, "You better get home and tell your parents."

PIEHLER: So you were married and then told the parents.

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: Both sets.

MASSEY: Yeah. And so we came back up here and got a little apartment over on Clinch. Across from Fort Sanders Hospital. Of course it's no longer there; it's a parking lot now. But the house, the first apartment we got was a basement apartment. And we moved in and had a few pieces of furniture and our clothes with us and whatever. Of course school was just getting ready to start, so I had already applied over at the university for some jobs. You know, whatever was available, student work. And probably one of the best things I ever. I worked in the alumni mailing room. The Alumni Association had a mailing room down in the bottom of old science hall. Marion Lawhorn was the guy, and he was here for years. Finally retired. I think the building down here off of,over behind ...

PIEHLER: Actually, hold on. I have a feeling this is a long story coming so hold that ...

-----------------------------END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO-----------------------------

PIEHLER: This continues an interview with George Massey on August 1st, 2003 in Knoxville, Tennessee with Kurt Piehler and ...

GRACIA: Bob Gracia.

PIEHLER: And you were saying you worked in the alumni mailing room.

MASSEY: I worked in the alumni mailing room. At that time it was at the bottom of Science Hall, and then through the years it ended up, they actually named the building for Marion Lawhorn down there off of, I don't know the streets any more, down on the back side of campus where they in fact had moved the printing and mailing section. So, in any event, I got that job, my wife got a job at Rich's, you know, the department store. And so we settled into that life. But this apartment that we rented, basement apartment, basically one room, had a little kitchen area and a little bathroom. And of course school started then. The quarter started in September. So we got moved in, started the school, and then it started getting a little cool. And I remember thinking to myself, you know, "I don't see any heating." 'Course, we didn't have air

conditioning there. Of course, it was a basement apartment so it was kind of cool down [there]. So when it finally turned cold, they cranked up the furnace, which was downstairs in this big apartment thing. And that's when we found out what our heat was. There were two pipes running through the ceiling, bare pipes that ran to other parts of the house. That was our heat. I mean it was just like you were in an oven. And the first night they cranked those furnace, we literally were in the nude almost.

PIEHLER: 'Cause you were so, it was like summer.

MASSEY: Oh, it was so hot. And this was probably the end of September, first of October. You know, when it started getting cooler. And at that point, having been married probably about a month and a half, my wife looked at me and says, "We're moving, or I'm going home." So we went out and got us a little apartment up on Highland at that point. A nice little two bedroom apartment; living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom; it was a shotgun. We moved in with this older couple who lived upstairs. And they had two apartments downstairs. And that was a heck of a lot better living conditions. They had a little heater. But anyhow, and across the hall was a graduate student. Nancy and GarrettYanagi. He was here getting his doctorate degree in psychology. To this day we still correspond.

PIEHLER: Really?

MASSEY: They're back in Hawaii now. They were from Hawaii.

PIEHLER: They were from Hawaii?

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And you've maintained that relation.

MASSEY: We've maintained, we've fortunately been able to go to Hawaii three or four times. Or more than that, I guess. I'm not sure. Vietnam. And then we've been back over there. The latest time was two summers ago, and we see them every time we go. Maintain contact. But they had a little daughter, and of course he was in psychology. He was majoring in psychology, getting his doctorate. So they kind of took us under their wings. I mean, they were a little older because he was already in grad school. So we, you know, had a really good relationship with them. And one story I will tell. Unfortunately, our landlady Miss Brown passed away. And we didn't know this, but her husband was an alcoholic. I had never, I'd been around alcoholics. I'd worked on pipelines and stuff like that when I was in high school, and construction work. I had seen alcoholics, but I never knew he was. He was a science major. You know, the science majors a lot of times ended up eventually drinking a lot. But in any event, when she passed away, he just went off the deep end. He had a son living here in Knoxville who would come over, and we had met him. Then all of a sudden at night we'd get these knocks on the door from Mr. Brown just drunk as a skunk, wanting to borrow money to go get beer. Well I said,I had learned this early on: you don't give an alcoholic money. You know (Laughs)? Or you don't go buy some booze for him. I'd just tell him, "Mr. Brown, I'm a poor college student. I don't have money to give you." Well, he'd go across the hallway, and he'd knock on the Yanagis' door,

Garrett. And I'd hear this conversation. "This will be the last six pack I'll drink. I won't drink any more." (Laughter) "You buy me a six pack, give me money. I won't drink any more." Well Garrett would give him the money. Well this went on, I guess, for a week maybe. Finally one Saturday I said, "Garrett, let me tell you something. Mr. Brown unfortunately is an alcoholic." And I said, "He will continue to drink as long as he can get beer, whiskey, whatever." And I said, "You..." Of course, I'm sitting here thinking because he's a psychologist, you know. I said, "You don't need to be giving him,just tell him you don't have the money to give it to him. You gotta refuse him." 'Cause I said, "He's an alcoholic, that's what they do." So we've laughed about that through the years. He said, "Here you were, a young kid, and you had to tell me the psychology of an alcoholic." Anyhow. So we had friends who were up here in school, and there were one or two married couples that we knew, so we kind of paled around with them. Then we started going to the Church Street Methodist Church where my mother and dad had married. They had a youth group there, which was all college students and married. It was a married class.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: This afternoon one of those couples that we met at this Sunday school class is coming to visit us. And another one of the couples, we get together periodically. All three of us get together, and we went to Hawaii together. We call ourselves the big chill group. Or big chill bunch, actually. So we maintained those relationships for forty-five years. And around home, as we say, when a couple ran off and got married like we did, you know, after six or seven months they'd have their first child. That's kind of one those things. Well that was not our situation. We just got married, and I was out of college and already on active duty before we had our first child.

PIEHLER: If you don't mind me asking, was that by design or was that just the way it worked out?

MASSEY: No, we just kind of said, "Hey, you know." And about the only guidance, I guess you could say, that my mother gave me, she said, "You've taken a lot of responsibility, and one of the things that you really need to be aware of is having children." She said, "That's a big responsibility." And my middle brother also kind of talked to me about that. He said, "Oh, you ..."

PIEHLER: (Laughs) "You don't need a child."

MASSEY: "You've bitten off a lot here. So you better make sure, you know, you kind of think about it." (Laughter) So, you know, we did. It worked out. Then I got on active duty and got established in my career employed in the military and had medical benefits and all of that for our first baby.

PIEHLER: Now I had asked you how,you know, you had originally started a business. How did getting married affect that?

MASSEY: Yeah, I kind of digressed here and got off on the wrong ...

PIEHLER: No, it's a great story.

MASSEY: Well, like I said, "I'm gonna major in business." Started football. That didn't, you know like I said, it just didn't work out. I'd hurt a knee in high school, and then I hurt my shoulder. And you know, as a walk-on I mean, you're cannon fodder. And I figured that out early on, too. (Laughter) Although I knew some of the guys who were here on scholarship. ... But in any event, so I had to start working. My dad, you know, when we got married, ran off and got married, he said, "Well, you're going to have to start working." So I took the first quarter of business, it was just basic courses I took. ... There was a term they used for them. Basic courses.

PIEHLER: General education.

MASSEY: General education. Yeah. And I had taken a phys ed [physical education] class. And had gotten out of phys ed department because that where a lot of football players were. Guys that I knew. And I met Dr. Plotnik, although I called him Dr. Venable. You know the newspaper columnist, Sam Venable? It was his dad. He was not a doctor. Now, he was a phys ed instructor in the university, and everybody called him doctor. Dr. Sam. But in any event, I kind of got into that and for whatever reason I said, "Well, I'll get into education." Now, they coach. At this point I though about it, you know, I always liked it. I said, "Well, maybe I'll coach. I'll be a teacher, and I'll coach." I started looking around for a second major, if you will, or a minor, in history. I'd always liked reading and historical things. I had one of my teachers in grade school, Ms. Lucy Crawford. And I don't know if she—and of course we always had magazines, books, and everything in our house. Reading was a big thing that you did. So I got with this Ms. Lucy Crawford who was my fifth or sixth grade teacher. She kind of got me off into reading historical biographies of all the famous Americans. So it was just kind of. ... And I still do that today. So I got into history. I minored in history and majored in phys ed. And then of course by the time I got involved in the ROTC then that became my major.

PIEHLER: So you didn't just drift into advanced ROTC. That was a very conscious decision.

MASSEY: Yeah, once [I was] in sophomore year, then I really kind of got into it. And the instructors we had then were a real dynamic group. And I remember seeing some, Captain Lazell, he made general, as a matter of fact. I ran into him in Vietnam. It was back then, Lower Hudson Field, where the baseball stadium is now, Lower Hudson was that time the parade field for Army ROTC. Then the Upper Hudson was for air force. Army ROTC, we had 2500. It covered, I mean when you fell in it was a big brigade. We were down there and you had Thursday afternoon drill, and you had inspections. Then we went out and did dismounted drill or whatever during drill period for two hours. Learn how to march, and all that stuff. And we'd do some weapons stuff here. But in any event, I remember Captain Lazell came up in front of me one day. I'm all standing up at attention. Shoes shined and everything, my brass shining, and all that stuff. He just said, "You're the sharpest looking cadet out here." I mean he really gave me a, you know, an "atta boy" type thing. (Laughter) So at the end of the sophomore year they put out a letter, and actually you were invited. It was not a matter that you just automatically went into the advanced ROTC.

PIEHLER: People were invited to it?

MASSEY: Yeah they were invited to it. So I got that letter and I said, “Okay, I think I’ll go into the advanced ROTC.” And then when I came back to school that fall, you know, they had to do the cadet chain of command. They had the hierarchy there, if you will. Captain Lazell called me into his office, and he said, “You’re gonna be the brigade’s sergeant major.” And this was my junior year. ‘Cause I had good grades, and, I guess impressed somebody. I don’t know. I wasn’t doing it out of you know, I was just doing what I thought was right. He said, “You’re gonna be the brigade sergeant major for the ROTC brigade.” ‘Cause the juniors were the NCO’s and the seniors were the officers at that point. So I was in a high, rarified air being the brigade sergeant major. So in any event, I rolled along, and then between the junior and senior year you went to the summer camp. What they call the advance camp, way down in Ft. Benning, Georgia. And at the end of the school year they called me in and said, “Hey, unless you just go down to summer camp and fall all over yourself, you’re going to be the brigade commander next year.” Golly.

MASSEY: And again, it wasn’t a design. It wasn’t anything I was shooting for. You know, I didn’t politic for it or anything like that. So, went to summer camp, did okay.

PIEHLER: Where did you have summer camp?

MASSEY: Fort Benning, Georgia. Home of the Infantry, the Queen of Battles. (Laughter) I’m an infantry officer.

GRACIA: Yeah, I just remembered reading in your book how you got in charge of doing drill and taking them on their marches and runs and everything.

MASSEY: Yeah. But that was one of the things. The ROTC department here at UT, they prepared us well. As well as you could for an ROTC program. But I literally graduated, our graduation was on a Sunday afternoon, June ... Tuesday morning. My wife and I left here, and we drove straight to Fort Benning. Because I had orders to report Tuesday morning. (Laughter) To the 2nd Infantry Division. I wasn’t going to the schools. They brought me right into a unit.

PIEHLER: You were like the young second lieutenant with no ...

MASSEY: I didn’t know ... So Tuesday we got into Benning, reported in, and the next Wednesday morning went out and took my company, A Company of the 38th Infantry. And met my executive officer. Young, he was a first lieutenant. He was old to me. Black first lieutenant. So this was, other than summer camp, ‘cause we had blacks there from Florida A&M. Some of the schools were still black schools. That was the first black officer that I had ever seen. He was about this tall (Gestures) and mean as a bulldog. And he grabbed me as I walked in, and he started chewing on me as I walked in the door. And he said, “Lieutenant, tomorrow morning, you get PT [Physical Training]. You’re in charge of PT in the morning.” It wasn’t will you, can you. We did what was called the Army daily dozen back then. Went on runs. Well, I knew that in my sleep, I could do it, ‘cause we had done it so much here at UT. So the next morning we fall in for PT. Lieutenant Randall ...

PIEHLER: That was your ...

MASSEY: That was the XO [executive officer]. Lieutenant Randall. Marshall Randall. We called him Randy, once ...

PIEHLER: Once you got ...

MASSEY: (Laughs) Yeah. So not for awhile.

PIEHLER: So some of this was the, sort of, getting you, you know, the toughness did not ...

MASSEY: Well, I didn't call him Randy 'till I was a first lieutenant, and he was, too.

PIEHLER: So he ...

MASSEY: But he says, "Lieutenant Massey, front and center!" 'Course, the troops didn't know who I was. I had met my platoon sergeant, and had seen the platoon bay, but I really hadn't met my troops, you know, my platoon. So we go out, and he said, "Front and center", so I got in front of the formation. He said, "You're in charge of PT." I do an about faced and went through the open ranks march, you know, and all that stuff to get them going. And then, this is a story I tell in the book, I took them on a run. That's what we were supposed to do. That's what we do up here. Once you got through with the daily dozen you went on a little run. I fell back in, you know, right face forward march. We'd double time march and start singing cadence. And, of course, we went by to brigade headquarters and sang, you know onl the left sick call, and made a few comments like that. By the time we got back to the company, I guess somebody had called. Of course, I fell them out, you know, and dismissed them. And ol' Randy started chewing on me. Then when it was all over he chewed me pretty hard, and when it was all over he said, "That was a damn good show, Lieutenant." He kind of had to chew my butt out, but then at the same time he understood that, "hey, we got us a lieutenant here with some pee and vinegar. " So we got along well. But my first platoon sergeant, when I met him the first afternoon I got in there, he said, "Well sir, let's go down to mess hall and get us a cup of coffee." Well I don't drink coffee, and I said, "Well Sergeant Poole, I don't drink coffee." "Sir you'll never make it in this man's army." I said, "Well you, know, I'll try." (Laughter) We kept in contact, and Sergeant Poole died two years ago.

PIEHLER: So you stayed in touch, and he was career army? (Tape garbled) Oh no, that's fine. Well let me before we continue on the Army, because I know we're gonna be there quite a bit, I want to just back up a little more to UT. One thing I wanted to ask about UT and ROTC is— because I've done a lot of interviews particularly with the 40's and 50's. Everyone was in ROTC for the first two years. But it's something in except in places like VMI (Virginia Military Institute), and a few other [places] like the Citadel, you no longer have situations where the whole freshman class is in ROTC. And shortly after you leave college, I mean it's in the 60's that this starts to fade out. Now stepping back, looking as a career Army, as a regular. What were the benefits and what were the limitations, say, of the whole freshman class being in ROTC?

MASSEY: That's an interesting question. Of course, later on I became a professor of military science in the ROTC program down in Washington State.

PIEHLER: Which was very different because then it wasn't the whole ...

MASSEY: The thing with the large group like that, you could do a whole lot more.

PIEHLER: Like what could you do that you can't do when you have the small groups now?

MASSEY: Well, more particularly, in the advance course we had field maneuvers. And you were able to, I guess, if you will, lead larger units. You know, back then you had, as a company commander in the brigade, you had a full company of troops out there in front of you. You know, three or four platoons. And of course, as a brigade commander I had all this hierarchy down under me. I had a full staff, and I think you really got a better feel for what the military organization is. But as far as having a, what the effect, being large as opposed to small, I guess it became a little more competitive. At the time though, I didn't realize I was in competition.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: I just came in and did what I thought was right. Tried to keep my nose clean and my brass polished and all that. And then you were selected. Now they're begging you to go in.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean I've been struck by that.

MASSEY: That's the big flip I see.

PIEHLER: Well another question is—because you were saying that you didn't enter college with the notion, "I'm going to be a regular." You said in fact that you were going to be a coach. Do you think if you hadn't been required to take ROTC, what are the chances, and it's always hard to speculate, but do you think you would have joined ROTC if you hadn't been required to take it initially?

MASSEY: Probably not.

PIEHLER: Yeah. Then it was very significant that you had to, and you did well at it.

MASSEY: Well, of course, I don't know if I liked the structure or if I kind of got ... And back then,and I think they still do, to a degree. A lot of the things we did were hands-on, physical type. More particularly in the advanced course. I mean, you taught classes and you gave dismounting drills and you instructed people how to do this, that, and the other. And the physical training. Our physical training program, this Captain Lazell that I referred to earlier on; he was a physical [guy]; he was a VMI graduate. Short and stocky. He just—you had to be physically fit, or else. You know. Later on it came back to pay tremendous benefit to me in that, like I said, the second day with the unit I had to conduct the PT formation for the company. And had I not done that, it would have been brutal. And there was no question, like I said, it was, "You handle

PT tomorrow morning." So from that viewpoint, that just kind of appealed to me. 'Course, I'd played sports, and I was always into physical things. We did a lot of that in the ROTC program. But whether or not I would have, I might have gone into ROTC, but I don't know ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, something about the hypothetical, I mean there was no option.

MASSEY: Yeah, there was no option. So I don't know if I would have or not. And once I got into the, you know, where I said, "Well, I'm going to be a coach and be the physical ed [teacher]." Even when I went on active duty I was not sure that I was gonna stay for a career.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Ultimately I said, you know, I'll get out. Maybe go back and teach and coach and do all that. Get my certificate and all that. So when I got on active duty, then, the unit I got with was the 2nd Infantry Division. Did a lot of fieldwork. I mean, my first tour of duty was a "state-side tour", as they say. Non-hardship tour. Well I was gone from home for nine months out of that first year. I mean, literally away from Fort Benning. Now, a big chunk of that was six months to Europe on a plan called Rotaplan, which they swapped battle groups. But, we were out in the woods. We were out in the field. I mean, we were training hard because we were a "strac unit". It was one of the strategic ...

PIEHLER: So you were not a garrison.

MASSEY: Not a garrison troop at all. And back then, unlike now with the brigades or their companies, you know they'll go out and do their training for six weeks and then six weeks they're garrison duty. They do the police call, and they make the billets and all that. Back then, the Army was structured a whole lot, and it had a whole lot more civilian support. We trained. We didn't fool with taking care of the police call. I mean, we did the basic stuff that we had to do around the company area. But as far as doing the, what they call "post detail" now, we trained. And of course, during that same time I was able to go to the jump school and learn how to be a paratrooper. That was one of the things my mother chastised me for. She said, "I have raised a complete idiot." (Laughter) You know, you've heard the old story, jump out of a perfectly good aircraft. What were you thinking? And I said, "Hey, it's a lot of fun." And she said, "Okay, whatever." (Laughter) But like I said, I went to my unit first after getting on active duty. And then a month or two later I finally went to a basic course. And then right out of the basic course I was on orders for jump school. And then I was on orders for Ranger school. And our unit got tabbed to go to Europe for six months so I got pulled off of the Ranger school. So we went to Germany for six months. Without families, you know you had to, back then families couldn't, and we weren't on post anyway. As a lieutenant I didn't qualify for post housing. So we were in a little apartment outside Benning, so she had to come home. They just kind of uprooted her for six months, and she stayed with her parents.

PIEHLER: Until you got ...

MASSEY: 'Til I got back to Benning. And I got back to Benning and we basically set our duffel bags down, and two weeks later I was on orders to Ranger school. So I left Benning

again, and she was sitting in an apartment for nine weeks while I was in Ranger school. And then we get back from there and we'd go to the woods again for swift strike, and all these big training exercises. So the wives back then really had to fend for themselves, and there was acohesiveness. And not many of the wives worked. Very few of the active duty ...

PIEHLER: Your wife didn't ...

MASSEY: She did not work in a job, per say. Now, they had the thrift shop. The wives kind of ran the Red Cross stuff that she helped with. But as far as going out and working in a department store like she had done while I was in school, she ended up working in Dr. Milton's office over here at UT in the psychology department. She was a secretarial type. But a lot of the wives did not work and started having children. That was ...

PIEHLER: That was ...

MASSEY: They were stay at home moms, so to speak. That changed as the years went on. By the time I reached major, lieutenant colonel, you had your captains and lieutenants that the majority of the wives worked. So the whole fabric of the military family, community kind of got dissipated a little bit. Because the wives' clubs, you know, they'd go to the teas, and put on the hats and the gloves. There was some real tradition there that they did earlier on in the 60's. Vietnam contributed to that, too, 'cause that kind of blew everything out of the water 'cause there was so much turbulence. Reassignments and turnover and people going to schools, and then back to Vietnam. Units just didn't have that same, you didn't stay in the same unit for three years.

PIEHLER: Like you did when, I mean you came in, this was your unit.

MASSEY: Oh yeah, this was your family, so to speak. The captains took care of the lieutenants, and the colonels took care of the captains. You know, that type of thing. And the colonel's wife, although we never did, my wife and I have talked about this a time or two. We never met a colonel's wife who wore the rank. You know what I'm saying? She was the colonel's wife but she took care of her girls. She never lorded it over them that, "I'm the colonel's wife, and you've gotta bow and scrape to me." We were fortunate that we never ran in ...

PIEHLER: Because that power did exist.

MASSEY: There were, oh, a bunch of them around. And the general's wife, you know, sometimes you'd run into some generals' wives who were ...

PIEHLER: The "General Wives."

MASSEY: Yeah. But again, as far as the actual unit I was assigned to, we never ran into one of those. And we felt fortunate. But we know of people that did, and we knew others were like that. You know, that happens.

PIEHLER: I want to try and ask a few more UT questions.

MASSEY: Okay, yeah.

PIEHLER: No, but this is all great. You really did want to play football. It sounds like ...

MASSEY: Yeah, you know, that was ... But I found, and I understood earlier on. I probably could have continued. But, as I said, I took on a responsibility, and I basically was told, “Hey, you gotta get on with it.” And football was ...

PIEHLER: That was something that had to go.

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: Who was the coach here when you ...

MASSEY: Coach Bowden Wyatt was the head coach. Johnny Majors was the freshman coach at that point. He was here as a graduate assistant. Golly, I’m tying to think of some of them, ... Ralph Chancey was here as one of the coaches, and Beetle Bailey. He was a line coach. Beetle Bailey, Coach Bailey was probably five foot five. He literally was—‘course back then we didn’t have all the big facemasks they have now. They had a single bar, and I think maybe they finally came out with a double bar. But it wasn’t like they’ve got now. And he would have to reach up and grab these big tackles, and pull them down to his eye level to chew them out. (Laughter) But Bowden Wyatt, Coach Wyatt was the head coach. And see, at that point General Neyland was still the athletic director. He came here in ’58.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And then I guess he retired, I can’t remember when he passed away, but yeah he was still here as athletic director and Coach Wyatt was head coach. We played, and this is interesting, at that time Tennessee was one of the few schools remaining that played the single wing. The old single wing offense. That probably doesn’t make a bit of sense to you, but you basically had a tailback, fullback, blocking back, and a wingback. (Indicating positions) Well I had played single wing in high school football, and I played pulling guard at 155 pounds. Well when I came up here at about 160 pounds, although the linemen were not that big back then. 190 pound, 200 pound lineman was a big, pretty good-sized guy. And you’d have some at maybe 220 and maybe six, three or six, four. But nothing like today. I mean, it’s just unbelievable. I had a little speed although I had had a knee operation by this time. So I still had pretty good speed. And we were all white. We didn’t, you know ... So anyway, they put me in at wingback. The first scrimmage we had after we started the fall two-a-days, “Everybody get your pads on. We’re gonna scrimmage this afternoon.” Of course, you know, we were all looking forward to getting to hit somebody rather than blocking dummy. So they threw me out there as wingback and I came down and one of them, and of course, very basic plays, although single wing plays are pretty well same all over, you know. And I knew a little about what wingback was supposed to do, although I had played guard. One of the things you do, you come down and block on a linebacker. Well I came down the line, ‘course as a guard I had always used my forearm. ‘Course back then you had to hold in and block this way. You couldn’t push out. You had to

hold in. You couldn't do like they do today. But I used my forearms a lot in high school, and I popped somebody in the side of the head with my forearms. 'Cause back then we didn't have the facemasks. I mean, you could get to somebody pretty good. Well in any event, I came down the line, and this linebacker turned around and I hit him and knocked his nose. You know, blood. Coach Procter was the freshman coach and Coach Johnny Majors and Bronson, Tommy Bronson who had played ball here. They were the assistants, or graduate assistants or whatever. But I popped him and oh, Procter, he just, "Oh! We got blood! We got blood!" That was the go-get-em mentality type thing. You know. But payback's hell, as they say. (Laughter) But it was interesting, and like I say, I did hurt a shoulder. And old Mickey O'Brien, we called him Mother O'Brien, was a trainer then. I don't know if you know any of the Tennessee history, but I mean, he's revered as trainers go. He was here for years. You know, he kind of looked at it and said, "Well son ..." You know, they were kind of rough and gruff back then. 'Cause they didn't do a lot of, you didn't get sympathy much, you know, when you went in hurt. But in any event, like I said, I went off on a weekend. They gave us the weekend off for something. Got married and came back and that kind of ended it up.

PIEHLER: Though it sounds like you were an avid fan, as a student that was one of the things ...

MASSEY: Oh yeah. Well see, back then you got your football tickets with your student activity card. You got a pack of football tickets. And they had the student section over there somewhere similar like it is now, and of course not near as big a stadium. But all the games were afternoon games. You didn't have any lighting, you know, and T.V. I don't even know if they televised it or not. So your games started at one o'clock. Back then we had classes six days a week under the quarter system. Well, working the way I was, I took all morning classes. I mean I had, I don't know that I did not have an eight o'clock class every day of the week while I was at school. Maybe in the summer. I went to summer school as well. Maybe in summer school I might have had a ten o'clock class. But every day, six days a week, I had an eight o'clock class. And I'd get out by noon so I worked in the afternoons. So Saturday morning, although classes stopped at noon on Saturday; you had Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday classes in the mornings. So we'd jump out and get over here and get in line and go to football. You know, that was a big treat for us 'cause it—and you could get a spouse ticket. My wife, of course, got her ticket, and we'd go together. And like it is today, you know, you weren't supposed to drink, and of course we'd hide our booze in a little half bag and go in, and you had that going on. (Laughter) 'Course, I was not a fraternity guy. But I had a lot of friends, primarily from ROTC, that were fraternity guys. So you know, they'd have their little groups. So we kind of were independents, but we got invited to a lot of the fraternity parties and stuff going on. And, I mean, we knew a lot of the football players too. So we kind of had a good little group to run around with. But then, like I said, I worked in the alumni mailing room all through school. Up until my last year. My last year I started working at the Tennessee farm, at that time the Ag campus or the Ag school had a dairy, an on going dairy. You know, made cheese and butter and milk and all that stuff.

PIEHLER: And so you worked there?

MASSEY: I worked there. I delivered to all the campus. You know, the Sophie Strong cafeteria, and at that time the University Center had just started. The ...

PIEHLER: The cafeteria?

MASSEY: The Caroline Brown Center down here. And delivered to the UT hospital, the nurses' quarters. Interesting tale or two there. (Laughter) You know, you'd go out on the floor with those little carts, you know. "Man on the floor! Man on the floor!" Because all the student nurses [were] female student nurses. And they had a community kitchen, and I'd restock it with milk and orange juice.

PIEHLER: But you'd hear the shouts and be greeted, "Man on the floor!"

MASSEY: Yeah, well I was supposed to shout that. But I didn't shout it real loud. You know, "Man on the floor. Man on the floor." But they could hear my cart coming and, you know, it was interesting. Most of them, they would be in their pajamas and robes and stuff like that. 'Cause I went in there early in the morning. But the first, and I'm digressing again, but on the first day I started my deliveries out here, they'd give you a ticket and you'd say, "Okay I've got five cases of this going there." You know, delivery schedule. And they'd show you what goes where, and they'd load this up in a reverse order. I mean, it was done pretty well. And you'd pick up the empties. So I'm doing all this stuff and swapping it around in the delivery truck with a metal floor to it. One of these old type delivery trucks. So I get through and I've got this, about a half case of four or five chocolate milks, two or three sweet milks, and two or three orange juices. And I'm looking and I said, "Man, where does this go? I don't see where this goes." So I drive back to unload my empties over at the UT dairy, and I run this back up through there. I go inside, total up, show them, you know, get my ticket in. The guy that loaded me up says, "What the hell? This is yours!" So what they would do every day was they would load about half a case of milk for me.

PIEHLER: For you?

MASSEY: Yeah. That was ...

PIEHLER: That's like your bonus.

MASSEY: Yeah, that's your little, yeah. And so the first day I though, well this is part of the order I missed somewhere. And the guy said, "Oh no, that's yours." So from that day forward, you know, I'd drive along drinking milk, and I'd take some of it. And they said, "Hey you can do whatever you want to with it. Take it home or whatever." So I took some home. And I did get fat as a tan yard dog, as they say. 'Cause this was chocolate milk, and the sweet milk was full fat. I mean, it wasn't two percent or skim or anything like that. So anyhow, that was part of that experience. But I did that my last year in school.

PIEHLER: You mentioned, before we started the interview, some of your professors like Ruth Stevens, who's come up quite a bit in interviews. Any remembrances of her?

MASSEY: She was a very opinionated, should I say? And very dynamic. I mean, she wanted you to speak up like you had a set. She'd probably tell you that if you didn't speak up. (Laughs)

Dr. Hoffman, he was the European history. Dr. Hoffman would come in, and he'd start writing on the board and start lecturing. And he could just go. And all of them, I remember—and of course maybe it's because I like history, but they were all very interesting and they brought in extra, 'course they had been teaching forever, so they had their script, so to speak. But they were very interesting. I didn't have any that I just said, "Oh, I've gotta go to this class," or something like that. Dr. Graff …

PIEHLER: Oh yes, Leroy Graff.

MASSEY: Leroy Graff.

PIEHLER: Yes, I've heard quite a bit, a lot of my colleagues have talked about him. I never knew him.

MASSEY: I enjoyed his classes. As a matter of fact, I wrote back to him, or actually, had to get a letter of reference. I forget exactly what it was for. I know what it was for, as a matter of fact. One of the programs we had in the military, and I'm sure we still have it, I don't know if it's called the same thing, but it was called APRID. Advanced Degree Program or something ... I forget what the acronym means. But I went to Vanderbilt, where I did my graduate degree. And it was in the history department, and they wanted some references. I got in touch with Dr. Graff, 'cause he was one of the few ones left at that point. This was in the early 70's. I remember calling him first. I introduced myself, you know, and he didn't remember who it was. And that's understandable. But I told him the time frame I was here taking his course and he was like, "Oh, okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'd be more than happy to write it." So he wrote me a recommendation to the history department and Vanderbilt. And I of course appreciated that. And Dr. Hoffman, I think, in order to, well in any event, Dr. Stevens had already I think passed away by then. She was ...

PIEHLER: When you decided to get a master's in history as part of the Army's program, it sounds like you really did enjoy history as a minor.

MASSEY: Well yeah. And what this program was, you would select a series of universities. Of course, I put down Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia. There was an ulterior reason there. They play good football. (Laughter) If I want to go back to grad school, number one I want to be in the South, and I want to be at UT if I could, or Georgia or Alabama. And you know, I said, "Those would be three good schools to go to because they play good football." Well, I get this letter back from the Department of Army, and of course it's based on the needs of the military. And what you did, you would go get your master's and then you would stay there as an ROTC instructor two to three years after you completed your master's program.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: And at that point there were no openings at the three schools I put down. And there was one at Vanderbilt. So I called the Department of Army, and I said, "Gentlemen," you know, I was talking to some lieutenant colonel and I was a major at the time. I said, "I don't know if I can get into Vanderbilt." I said, "I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer and my undergraduate

record is not all that great." I just barely eked out a B average, you know, and I said, "I don't know if Vanderbilt will let me in or not." [They said], "Oh, yeah, yeah, no problem. No problem." So they contacted them, and I had to go over to Vanderbilt for an interview with the admissions people and everything. They looked at my undergraduate record, what courses I had taken and everything. They said, "Well, you're gonna have to take an additional six hours." They normal was twenty-four hours. "You need thirty hours to kind of round you out a little bit." I said, "Okay." And you were gonna do a thesis. Select a thesis. And of course, when I talked to the ROTC department guy, you know, you kind of sign into them and then you're assigned to them, but you're a student. And they had people in various stages at Vanderbilt anyway doing that. And he said, "Well, you're gonna be the military history instructor in the ROTC department when you get to us." And I said, "Yeah, okay, that'll be great." So I looked at the courses that they had in the Vanderbilt history department. So I kind of weighted myself toward the military, although they did not have, and this is interesting. They did not have a military history course, per se. But there was a Dr. Fleming who was there, who had taught in, and I'm trying to remember ... he had written a book or two on naval history, so I knew he was military-oriented. There was a Dr. Boorman, who was there, who was primarily Far Eastern, you know, China, Japan and that area. He was a navy guy, but had always liked the marines. When you walked in his office he had this big Marine Corps poster, and "Semper fi!" and all that. It was great, you know. So I kind of, in any event I majored in history with the idea that I'd ultimately stay there in Vanderbilt and teach military history. Well, that was the only military history course on campus at Vanderbilt. Prior to that it had been kind of a, and this was when the ROTC programs were kind of being held in some pretty dim light. And the PMS [Professor of Military Science] prior to the PMS I was under, he had put the guys in civilian clothes. They didn't wear their uniforms. The PMS that I served under, Colonel Macintire, he said, "We're in uniform. We're in the military." And we got back into uniform, which I thought was totally right. Now, as a student I went to school as like, you know, a student would go. Although they figured out early on I was older and they would figure out I'm military. And a lot of the kids would come up [to me]. I mean, we had a lot of discussions about it because Vietnam was going on, and all this stuff. 'Cause this was in '70, it had just actually ended.

PIEHLER: So just as Vietnam was ending.

MASSEY: Just as Vietnam was ending was when I went to grad school. Came out of Vietnam, my last tour, to grad school.

PIEHLER: I'm curious because, I mean, I normally would ask this later, but since we're on it. Did any students, you mentioned a lot of them were actually quite interested in your experiences. What would they ask you? What kind of questions?

MASSEY: Well, they, you know, they just wanted to know what was the, and I never did really discuss the gory details. But they just wanted to know how I reacted to the protests back home and things like that. I said, "Well, you gotta understand, 'course I'm a career soldier. I was sent there to do a job, and I went there and did the best I could." And I tried to explain to them what we did and some of the things, 'course I was in Special Forces, so I was not with the "main line unit." So that was a little different viewpoint, and they were all interested in that. You know, "You worked with the indigenous?" I said, "Oh yeah, we worked with them, the Montagnards

and the Cambodes, and what we called the C.I.D.G., the civilian irregular defense group soldiers. So it was not like we were working, you know, with the main line units.

-----------------------------END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE-----------------------------

PIEHLER: You had said, you sort of had worked with an irregular unit.

MASSEY: Yeah, so we were not out with the main line units. But I never felt, from the students that I talked with, I never felt any animosity. 'Cause Vanderbilt is a fairly conservative campus. I think. If you're familiar with ... overall they are.

PIEHLER: But still, it was a pretty contentious era.

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And I think, the reason I ask is because I think, you know, we read a lot about veterans being mistreated. You know, coming home and being mistreated. And I'm very curious that you never had an incident at Vanderbilt where someone really ...

MASSEY: Not at Vanderbilt. And I think part of that was that the administration backed ROTC. And of course, they had a—their naval ROTC at Vanderbilt was probably stronger than the Army ROTC, that's kind of a general background. Interestingly enough, the PMS I had—like I said, we got in the uniform. And of course I had some professors—I had a younger professor at Vanderbilt, Dr. Leffler, that...

PIEHLER: Mel Leffler?

MASSEY: You know him?

PIEHLER: Oh yes. Oh yes, he's quite, he's had quite a career. Or is still having quite a career.

MASSEY: Yeah. Is he at Vanderbilt now?

PIEHLER: No, he's at Virginia. He's a dean, I think, now.

MASSEY: Oh, is that right?

PIEHLER: Oh no, he's really a hot ...

MASSEY: He was just out of, I think he graduated Cornell. He was from that part of the country, so to speak. Well I had a ... and I forget, it was a history course under him. It was a paper I did for him, was on the Mexican war, and he chewed me up and spit me out. (Laughs) And we had some pretty good conversations. Because he was interested from the viewpoint of here is a veteran from Vietnam. And we had some real conversations. Very good professor. I enjoyed his classes. And Dr. Graham, Grantham.

PIEHLER: Lewis Graham.

MASSEY: Grantham

PIEHLER: Grantham.

MASSEY: I think that's right. Or is it Graham?

PIEHLER: I'm not sure actually. I know the name.

MASSEY: Yeah, he was interesting. And had a lot of good courses with him. They kind of picked my brain, if you will, and tried to, you know, get a perspective from my view, if you will, of what ...

PIEHLER: You convey the sense that there was a lot of openness. That they were genuinely—

MASSEY: Well, what I was getting ready to say, our PMS, we were war gaming. You know, how are we gonna get students in and how are we gonna get ... Although there were some on the faculty, and I never really did get that close into 'em; they were somewhat anti-military. And you know, that's going to happen in any situation. So what we decided to do, we divided the faculty. There were seven or eight ROTC instructors, and so we each took fifteen to twenty professors. And what we were trying to sell to them, for want of a better term, what we were trying to educate them to or sell them to, was about the scholarship program. The Army ROTC scholarship program. So we took these fifteen to twenty professors, called them, made an appointment, went and sat in their office, and just presented the ROTC program to them. The scholarship program. 'Cause Vanderbilt at that point lived on the scholarship program. None of the students in the student body, not that they were violently anti-military, but they weren't there to be in ROTC. So I'd say ... I don't know what percentage, but the majority, the vast majority, were scholarship.

PIEHLER: Scholarship.

MASSEY: Yeah, that was it. We got in with the admissions and the Vanderbilt recruiting office. The admissions office. And presented our programs, and they let us mail out packages to all these kids who were coming to Vanderbilt to show them about ROTC. And more particularly about the scholarship program. So we sat down with all these different professors, and I ended up just talking to most of the guys in the history department. Well what we found was that once you got one-on-one, face-to-face, and they saw that you weren't a three-headed monster or a warmonger and all this, some real rapport starting being built up on the campus there at Vanderbilt. I think that was one of the best things that we did. This was in the early 70's when things were really in turmoil.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: So that really worked to our advantage 'cause a lot of the professors had no—I mean, when we would tell them, you know, this scholarship pays full tuition. All this, you know, I

think at that time a hundred dollars a month, maybe. They were just astounded. They said, "Well golly, that's worth $20,000 a year." We said, "Yeah, this is a good scholarship." And the payback was not that much. You know, three years active duty. But also, and of course Vanderbilt being the medical school that it is, there was the military medical scholarship program. We sold a lot of those. I keep using the word "sell", but ...

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And we were able to—and a lot of the kids said, "Boy, this is ... I mean full ride to medical school?" Help momma and daddy's pocketbook. We used to laugh about it. Some of the guys who were on the scholarship who were there at Vanderbilt were also from affluent families. I mean, that's just part of it. They would drive up to pick up their monthly check. (Laughter) We'd literally have to put out a word. You know, "Scotty, come and get your check." You know, we'd have to give them direct messages. Come down and pick up your hundred dollar check, or whatever it was. And they'd drive up in their little sport car. You know, to them a hundred bucks was a good night out, I guess. But that was the atmosphere when I left there.

PIEHLER: So you arrived in Vanderbilt what year? '72? '73?

MASSEY: '72 I guess. I'm trying to remember when I got out of ... No, it was probably '71. ... Yeah, '71. 'Cause I only stayed there two years as an instructor, and then I got selected to go to Command General Staff college at Fort Leavenworth in '75. So, I went in for about four years.

PIEHLER: So from '71 to ... Really in that transition period from the Vietnam War winding down, to the post-Vietnam. Did you know of any Vietnam veterans who were in Vanderbilt as an undergrad or graduate. Did you encounter any Vietnam vets who were going on the G.I. Bill that you can remember offhand?

MASSEY: Yeah. There was one or two. And there was a big contingent of active duty students there. Vanderbilt had a program in Portuguese. I don't know what the studies were, and these guys were there to get their degree to go teach at the Point. At West Point.

PIEHLER: Oh, yes.

MASSEY: So there was a pretty good contingent of "active duty" who were students, and then as far as veterans, actual students?

PIEHLER: Yeah, students who you might have encountered?

MASSEY: Yeah, there were ... I took a political science course in one of those summer courses from an English ... I can't remember his name, but he was funny. Had a very English wit. Very laid back. And that was a summer course that met two hours or three hours a day 'cause it was accelerated. And we had a lot of fun in it. But it was interesting. And I think there were two guys there who—we never really got—

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: —we didn't really swap war stories, per se, and stuff like that. But no, I don't think ... I don't know if there were that many there. And they were probably in the different areas of the college.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Basically I just took history courses.

PIEHLER: Yeah. Yeah. So there were no graduate students that were ... that had been ...

MASSEY: No, not that I remember.

PIEHLER: Because some of the professors you had at Vanderbilt were World War II veterans.

MASSEY: Mm hmm.

PIEHLER: And I'm just curious, were there ever any questioning about comparing different wars? Did that ever come up?

MASSEY: Dr. Bohrmann, who like I said, had been in the Navy in World War II, and he was more with the Marines. He was very pro-military. I mean, not that there were any that were real anti-military ...

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: But, we would have conversations. And he was kind of my mentor because he was my thesis professor.

PIEHLER: And I should ask, what was your thesis on?

MASSEY: I wrote on the, golly I can't even remember the name of it now. The title of it. But it was on Vo Nguyen Giap, the Vietnamese general. General Giap. Basically it was his history, biography.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: I can't even remember the title of my thesis. That's interesting. Made a real impression on me. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: And Dr. Boormann kind of kept me on line to keep me from going too far out of base. But it was basically a biography. And of course the war had really not ended by the time I had finished it. We pulled out in '73. And '75 was when it all ended.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And I basically, and I have an uncle who thought I knew what I was talking about, 'cause he asked me when I came back, or he asked me when we got out of Vietnam in '73, he said, "What do you think is gonna happen?" (Laughter) This uncle of mine, he was very interested in current events and history and everything else. And I really felt this, and it was not like I knew. I said, "Uncle Charles, I would be surprised if the South Vietnamese hold on more than two to three years."

PIEHLER: That was your ...

MASSEY: That was my assessment. And that was in '73 and '75. He reminded me of our conversation. He said, "You called it right, George. You said two to three years, and you were right." I said, "Well, there was the South Vietnamese were just not passionate enough about unifying their country under their rule, and the North Vietnamese were." The ones that I worked with in the South that were really good, the officers and kind of the groups that I worked with, and I worked with small groups, being Special Forces and working with Vietnamese Rangers ... they were from the North. And they were good. But across the board the South Vietnamese ...

PIEHLER: So they were the exiles?

MASSEY: Yeah. So they knew what they were fighting for, if you will. The South Vietnamese—and of course there was the corruption, there was the whole malaise, if you will, of the South Vietnamese that, when I came away from there, I said, "You know, man, we've expended a lot of time and good men, but I just don't think they'll hold onto it." It's not like I'm sitting here thinking, well, I knew what I was talking about.

PIEHLER: Yeah. But that was just your ...

MASSEY: My Uncle Charles is dead now, but he can verify it. I told him two to three years.

PIEHLER: It also sounds like, I mean, I was surprised by your thesis topic in some ways, because I thought you would have picked something safe on, you know, the civil war or something. It sounds like you were also using this master's program to sort of reflect a little on what had been going on in Vietnam.

MASSEY: Yeah, and of course the fact that it was kind of biographical, I didn't really get into the tactics, per se, or the actual fighting of the Vietnam War, 'cause I had to bring him all the way up from where he started out as a young guy. Coming all the way through and fighting the French. And then here is; he's the guy fighting the battle with the United States. But Dr. Boormann and I kind of, we fished around for some topics and he ... kind of guided me into that, I guess you'd say. Not knowing what kind of resources we would run across.

PIEHLER: Well that was my next question. I mean, what resources were you able to use?

MASSEY: Oh, a lot of them were on, you know, Bernard Fall had written a lot of the history of Southeast Asia. I was able to get into some of the writings of Giap, and some of his tenets. Of course, Ho Chi Minh. I kind of had to study his background a little bit. So as far as firsthand resource documents, there weren't that many out there. And then of course, I guess I put a little bit of my experiences in there as to how I reacted to it.

PIEHLER: Now did you read—were you able to read Vietnamese, or did you have to work with translations?

MASSEY: As a matter of fact, I went to language school twice. One time, Czech. (Laughter) The second time Vietnamese. But I went to the Vietnamese language school, Defense Language Institute at Monterey between my first and second tour. So the first year when I was working with Special Forces I had to go through interpreters. Which is usually ... if you've had to deal with an interpreter ...

PIEHLER: Oh, I can imagine.

MASSEY: You never know what has been said to them, you don't know what you're getting back. Of course, you try to work that out. And one of the things I found out with the Vietnamese, you could not, I mean, I never did. I never got a yes or no answer. (Laughter) I mean, I would phrase questions that the only way you could answer them would be yes or no, and they would not give you a yes or no answer. (Laughter) I'd tell that interpreter that all I wanted was yes or no. So once I got the language, then I went back in. I was working with the Rangers, and the first counterpart I had in the Rangers was from the North. Thieu Ta [Major] Bao. He was Major Bao. He was part Chinese, I think. Very good officer. And we were able—so, he would speak English, and I would speak Vietnamese. And that's how we conversed. I could get a yes or no out of him, and that was one of the first things I told him. I said, "Major Bao, I've never been able to get a yes or no answer out of one of you people. Can I get a yes or no answer out of you?" He said, "Yes." (Laughter) He had a good sense of humor, but we got along well. That was up in the central highlands near Pleiku. Then I went down, they had a camp near Duc Lap that just really had some problems. Our team was screwed up. And what we had done, we converted from Special Forces camps, you know, like I had built the first time around and I had dealt with, to Ranger Battalions. So really, you had Special Forces guys going out and these Ranger guys coming in. Well, I'm Special Forces, so it was like old home week, you know. But by this time the Special Forces had really kind of … their mission and use of them had kind of dwindled away, other than the S.O.G. The Study and Observation Groups, they called them. They were still very heavily involved going across the border. But as for the Special Forces camps, they kind of outlived their usefulness, so they turned them into Ranger Battalions. So the first battalion I had, of course, with this Bao, was a good camp. He ran it straight, ran good operations, the whole bit. So as far as advising, I didn't have to do much there. And we were reduced from twelve-man Special Forces teams to four-man Ranger team. So your assets were less, and your ability to get assets was less. But anyway, we had this camp down at Duc Lap that was having some real problems, and they through me in there kind of as a, put out a fire kind of thing. And it was abysmal. But the big point. I walked in and talked to my counterpart in Vietnamese.

PIEHLER: That sounds …

MASSEY: I took him in an office about half this size, one-on-one. He was a young captain. And I was a major at that point. Of course that kind of , I was senior in rank to him. And they, you know, they kind of looked at that. But I just sat him down and told him what we were going to do, and how we were going to do it, and when we were going to do it. Like, right now. The first thing I said was, "We're gonna clean this damn shit hole up. We're gonna get this place cleaned up, we're gonna get supplies out to the troops." 'Cause they were living in hovels. So it was that kind of thing. Once they saw that I meant what I was talking about, and the soldiers were willing to do this. 'Cause I went into the supply room and handed out all these uniforms and boots and stuff that they hadn't put out to them. They were walking barefoot. So we started out fitting the troops in new uniforms and shoes and stuff, and they thought, you know, this guy's the second coming of the Messiah. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: You could also just talk to a soldier. I mean you ...

MASSEY: Yeah, I didn't have to have an interpreter. Although some of them were ... Well, actually, the first camp was predominantly Montagnards, the mountain people. These were Vietnamese. So yeah, I could walk out right into the trench and start conversing with them. Unfortunately I've lost; I mean I can say a few things in Vietnamese.

PIEHLER: Yeah. But when you were doing your thesis, were you able to use Vietnamese?

MASSEY: Uh.

PIEHLER: I mean, it's also been awhile.

MASSEY: Yeah, there were some of the sources that I could read and maybe get a little bit with it. But the language school, it's more of the verbal. The reading became a little difficult. And I was not, I didn't get the interview any direct sources.

PIEHLER: Yeah. Well, I mean the war's still going on. I mean, this is, well I think we should probably break for lunch, because it's one o'clock. (Tape Cuts Off and Resumes) ...break, and let me. I have some follow up questions I keep meaning to ask, but let me ask—let me have Bob jump in and take over some questioning. Make sure he gets a chance to ...

GRACIA: Yeah, most of my questions are all pretty much related to your tours of duty in Vietnam. I was wondering, like, once you found out you were going to Vietnam, did you have any anticipation of what it was like? And then when you got there, did it turn out to be something totally different than you thought it'd be?

MASSEY: Well, 'course I knew when I left Germany I was going to the 5th Special Forces, so I knew I would still be in kind of the same element that I was in Germany. The big difference was, and I knew this going in, of course, our mission in Germany was more of a counter-insurgency. I mean, we would be the guerillas, if you will.

PIEHLER: Or the insurgents. (Laughs)

MASSEY: The insurgents, yeah. Of course, in Vietnam, our mission was counterinsurgency. We were trying to fight the guerillas, which is what Special Forces camps did. But as far as what my assignment was going to be, I knew it was 5th Special Forces, I knew I was a captain, I knew I was A-team, which is the lowest unit level in SF. But I didn't know I was gonna get a team. And what ended up happening is I was assigned to a B-team, which is the next level up, as the funds officer. The term is kind of interesting. As the funds officer we had what we call operational funds that supplied all of our camps and paid all of our troops. And this funneled through me as the funds officer in the B-team. We were talking, I forget the ... a hundred thousand piasta, maybe. Which is equivalent to ... a piasta is about equivalent to a dollar. So it was a big, bunch of money I had to control and dispense, and know where it went and what it was for. So I did that for about the first two to three months, and then I was tabbed to build a Special Forces camp. So, we were establishing camps all along the Laotian and Cambodian border. So they had an area that was due west of Saigon, right off an area called the Parrot's Peak. The way the—if you see the map it looks like a parrot's beak sticking out there. That was a salient into South Vietnam out of Cambodia. Well the Ho Chi Minh Trail, we knew was up north, and the central highlands was being used quite frequently and quite effectively. It spread south, so we needed to put some camps along the border to kind of stem that tide, so to speak. The way they organized this was you would have a Special Forces camp, and they were about ten meters or so apart, which was about the effective artillery range of a 105 howitzer. So you had overlapping fires, if you will. You had to try to pick a piece of ground that would lend itself to a camp. Plus, the regular U.S. units in these areas had what they call overwatch of these Special Forces camps. So for instance, our particular camps had the overwatch by the 25th Infantry Division, which was located at Cu Chi, which is kind of north west of Saigon. So that was the overwatch—and our B-team initially was established in an old French villa. A place called Hiep Hoa. And this French villa, we called it the Villa; this village of Hiep Hoa had a sugar mill. This area was sugar cane, and the French had developed it for sugar. And they had an airstrip and the whole bit. So we moved then back—we left an A-team there—we built a camp and left the A-team at Hiep Hoa, and the B-team moved back to another place called Duc Hoa. Then they said, "Okay, we need to build a camp in this general vicinity." Well I took my—you know, I was able to pull together a team. I didn't have a Special Forces team at that point. But I was able to go out and recruit guys, some that I knew from Germany, some that I knew from Fort Bragg. So I kind of pulled together a team, and we went out and did what we called a ground assessment, and went into the area and figured out where we felt like the camp ought to be established. Then at that point we started planning what the camp was going to look like, getting the materials in to build a camp. And then I sent some of my guys out to recruit the local indigenous forces, what we called the Civilian Irregular Defense Group, to recruit these guys, who were like a militia, really. Or a national guard. A little bit lower than a national guard. But in any event, we recruited these guys, and we sent them to—we had a training camp in a place called Trang Sup, which was secured, and we'd bring them in there and teach them weapons and, you know, basic military tactics and stuff. Then in the mean time we were getting all the supplies and everything marshaled in one area in Duc Hoa to go in and build a camp. Basically how it ended up being is that we made a heliborne assault, put our feet on the ground, started filling sandbags to make bunkers, and started bring in supplies. And started building the

camp. Literally cutting down trees and laying out the barbed wire ... We had an engineering team with us, what they call a KB team. KB ... I don't remember what that acronym meant, but they were actually engineers. It was a captain and three enlisted guys with him. And they kind of designed the camp and made sure we did things, you know, built the camp. The problem we had where we were going into, a little place called Luong Hoa, which was a village—it was near that village, it wasn't right in that village—but it was a village that was established by a Catholic priest who had come south out of North Vietnam in 1954 when the French, you know, pulled out, and they divided North and South Vietnam. These people came south. So he brought his flock, so to speak, down to a little place called Luong Hoa. This area was a pineapple-growing area. There were—where a built my camp there were rows of pineapple fields. And still growing, of course, it was in the wild. But in any event, we went in and that was kind of the highest piece of ground. There had been at one time a French villa, I call them villa, it was a French house, had been built right on this canal that the French had dug. It went straight into Saigon. But through the ensuing years the bridge had been dropped, so it was no longer useful. The road, of course, had kind of dissipated away. But we were on this canal, and it kind of gave us a little bit of transportation where we could go up and down the canal in our boats. But the little village of Luong Hoa, we were about two kilometers south of it. So they were glad to see us come in because it gave them some security. So we basically started building the camp, and in about a month's time we had the walls up, … the mortar pits in, and everything else. And of course, all while this was going on, we had brought our troops in and had been trained, the Civilian Irregular Defense Group soldiers, if you will. Vietnamese soldiers. And families. That was not part of the bargain, but that's how they did it over there. So, we brought them all in, and then we started running operations. Basically kind of being a tripwire, if you will, of supplies coming in through ... out of Cambodia through this area into the Saigon area. Well this was in the spring ... May of '67. And to set it in a historical perspective, this same time frame in June of '67, we had the Six Day War in Israel.

GRACIA: Oh yeah.

MASSEY: The Israeli Six Day War. We went in right before that kicked off. The first Stars and Stripes, which is the Army's newspaper, we get a Stars and Stripes out there about two weeks later, and this war is coming on. (Laughter) And we're sitting there, "Wow, the Israelis kick some butt over there." You know, and of course, we were out there in the middle of our own little thing going on. So, we built a camp and operated at the same time. We just kind of kept our security up, primarily. So this was in the spring of '67. Well, toward the summer and toward the fall, of course, I was getting ready to leave. You know, I had already had my year's tour up in September. We noticed there was reall, they would avoid contact. You know, we'd go on operations, they would break contact, and just didn't really want to fight that much. And later on, looking back on it, what we felt was happening, they were trying to reposition their supplies around the Saigon area for Tet in '68.

GRACIA: Now these are the irregulars, or ...

MASSEY: These are the Vietcong, primarily. We never did run into any North Vietnamese. We were strictly the local Vietcong-type units. But we did, we interdicted them to a large degree 'cause we would—you know, we would find a cache of weapons or we found a, we called it a

munitions plant, but it was pretty unsophisticated. But they were making rifle grenades; they were loading, reloading their ammunition. It was so camouflaged, if you flew over it—and we tried to go back, believe it or not, with a helicopter, and it took us forever to find it again from the air. But of course we had an operation, ran into it, and it was all under canopy and it was also, all their huts and everything had the regular foliage on top of it. I mean, you really couldn't see it from the air. They didn't make any trails or anything that you could pick out and see. We finally kind of re-sectioned, and said, "Okay, we were here, we know. We were here." And we kind of came down on it and got it from a helicopter. But the operations ... when we ran operations, usually two Americans would go with a company, for instance, of about a hundred or so of the CIDG. And that's basically how we ran our operations. We turned up a good bit of stuff. We had one incident ... to build a camp, the water table was such that you couldn't dig in. In other words, you couldn't dig a bunker, per se, seven feet under ground like a lot of the camps set up in the central highlands. So we basically came by, and this is where the engineer team came in. We came in with an idea, they came up with an idea to use CONEX [Container Express] containers …

GRACIA: Oh, yeah. I read that in your book.

MASSEY: … which is the metal containers they ship supplies in. So, we rigged those things up as machine gun bunkers, and we could put them down maybe two to three feet down in the ground. That was as deep as you could go or you'd have water in them. Then we sandbagged them, capped them over with concrete, and I've got some slides, they look like the Maginot Line in France from World War II. But in any event, we had these CONEX container firing ports periodically all the way around the perimeter of the wall of the camp. So, we were doing all that while we were running operations. But one of the things that we ran into—General Westmoreland came out to the camp, and of course he had all of his, as I called them, horse-holders with him. That's a little term from Civil War times. Dr. Piehler knows what I'm talking about. (Laughter) They had choppers flying around, secure, you know, they were flying all around. But anyway, I gave him the briefing, one of the problems we got is that we had requested sand to cap the concrete to cap our bunkers. We haven't been able to get that sand in here." He looks over his shoulder to some colonel, you know, and says, "Check on this sand for Luong Hoa. We need to know where it is." Well what had happened, they had loaded a barge of sand in Saigon and they were trying to figure out how to get it to us. Of course there was a river, the Sông Sài Gòn River ... a river coming up out of Saigon area. We could go down our canal ... we were located right next to the canal. So in any event, they bring this barge of sand up. Big … not an ocean-going barge, but a pretty big-sized barge. And we had cut down the palm trees along the edge of the canal there, and we tied, we had them all tied away and secured. Well the tide came in and out. We were affected by the tide. It would come up three to four feet when it came in, and it would float up and then go down. Well one night, the tide goes out and it pulled the barge loose. And it floated down the canal, and we didn't have a warning it was gone. 'Cause the guards came up waking us up saying, "Oh the barge is gone, the barge is gone!" Oh man, it's pitch black, you know, middle of the night. Two or three o'clock in the morning. So I called back in and I said, "At first light, I want a bird dog down there." Which is an observation plane. I said, "We need a bird dog down here to see where our barge is. We lost our sand barge." Well, of course, this report gets all the way up to the C-team ... and I had a good friend up there, and we laughed about it in later years. He said, "Yeah, I remember the night the damn

message came in about, they'd lost a sand barge at Luong Hoa." Well he knew where I was. He said, "Ah, it's damn Massey down there. What's he doing there?" So the next morning the bird dog comes over. Now this is, you talk about a small world, this guy comes over and he flips his wings at us and says, "This is Bird Dog Three," or whatever, and I said, "This is Ugly Ambush Six," 'cause that was my call sign. I said, "We've got a sand barge, it broke loose last night and we don't know where it is." And it wasn't that far, and he said, "Hey, I got it in sight. It's out in the middle of the river." The tide was coming back in, and he said, "It's floating back." And I said, "You have got to be kidding me." So we had some engineer boats. Sixteen-foot engineer boats with forty horsepower motors. So we go roaring off down the ... Well let me back up. During the night we jumped in our boats to see if we could see the barge. Well we got down in the river, and we were going along the river, and all of a sudden here's a bunch of sand pans going across the river in front of us. And it's the VC taking supplies across the river in the middle of the night. And we had this meeting engagement, and I had a sergeant with me on the bow of the boat, he had an M-79, which is a grenade launcher. It's a 20-millimeter. And he goes, "boom! He shoots one of the Sam pans. I mean, shit's blasting and you lose your night vision. I said, "Man, I don't know what we've run into." But there wasn't but four of us in this boat, and we turned that thing around and went back to camp. You know, fired all the way to lay down a base fire. So we had run into a supply going across the river. So that happened that night before ... But in any event, the next morning the bird dog gets up and he said, "Yeah, I see it coming up the river." So we jump back in our boats, go back down, and of course it was all secure. And we tied into it and very gingerly pulled that barge all the way back into camp. I don't know if I mentioned earlier, there was a bridge, had been a bridge that crossed this canal that had been dropped down into the canal in times past had blown it up. So we latched into that bridge. I said, "If this thing goes out, it's got a big anchor it's gotta take with it. So that's how we secured our barge. But in any event, we were able to unload it and they said, "Well how are we going to unload this sand?" And we tried pulleys; we tried all different kinds of ways. And finally we ended up filling sandbags and carrying them one at a time across a ramp to the camp. And we got our Civilian Irregular Defense Group, Coolies, to carry sand over there, and we were able to use it. And we had brought in a small concrete mixer by helicopter, and we were able to make some concrete, and there we went. So we ended up building the camp. So that was my first tour. And like I said, by the time we got the camp built, we were complete and my tour of duty kind of ended. So that was the ... So as far as knowing what I was going to do, I had no idea, and I ended up building. Which was really kind of a unique experience because there were only so many camps built, and I got to build one.

GRACIA: Yeah, I think I was reading there were only like two hundred and seventy throughout all Vietnam, or something.

MASSEY: Through the years.

GRACIA: Yeah, okay.

MASSEY: Yeah. And they eventually ended up primarily along the Cambodian and Laotian border. So I got to build one. Eventually, and not too far after I left Vietnam, they turned my camp over to a Ranger battalion and let them use it as a base of operations. So the SF, the Special Forces portion left there. But they moved in there the next year, 'cause I ran into a

Vietnamese colonel that I had worked with the first time. And the second time over, when I was in the Ranger command, he was in the Ranger command. And we remembered each other, and he said, "Oh yeah, you had the camp at Luong Hoa. The Rangers moved in." So he told me a little'cause I never did get back down to it again. I never did see it again. I was up in the central highlands and never got back to it. But we were, it was interesting, where our camp was built at night, looking due east, we could see the flares that they dropped around Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base ... in Saigon. And they dropped flares all night long as part of the security. We could see those flares going. I mean, we were that close, but we were that far away. 'Cause I mean the only way in was strictly by the water or by helicopter. So it was kind of an interesting thing. But overall, our overall operations you know, we kicked up a good bit. We lost a lot of people to, and I should have brought one, I just didn't think about it, CBU booby traps.

GRACIA: (Inaudible) booby traps, yeah.

MASSEY: Uh, down in the area where we were located, the Air Force used the cluster bomb units, CBU. These things were mounted on a pod, and they came about two hundred and fifty to a pod. And they were fin-stabilized, so the fins would flip open and they would come down and head down. And it made a good weapon to prep landing zones. Or if you caught units in the open, it made a real good weapon. But the area where we were located was so wet ... it was in the northern part of the Plain of Reeds, which is basically a big swamp. It had a high dud rate. I mean, they would hit the water and not go off. So the Vietcong would take these things and make them into booby traps, and they were ingenious. Like I said, I've got one at home. I brought it home with me. So we, consequently—and that was part of that, you know, munitions factory I was telling you about. That was the big part of what they were doing. Changing these CBU cluster bomb things into booby traps. And they actually would turn the fin around, which was a spring-activated fin, and they would rig those things up. And they would make a little striker, and it's kind of hard to describe this thing without having it in front of me, but it was a kind of a series of little explosions that finally would blow this thing up. They had a little blasting cap, and a little larger piece of explosive. Then the base itself was about as big as the palm of your hand. It had ball bearings in it. It was a pig iron type thing. And these ball bearings would blow up, 'cause it had TNT in the middle of it, and it would shoot out in shrapnel. It was a very effective weapon, really, and a booby trap, especially. So they would put these things—and that's why you never, I mean, it was not an unwritten rule, it was a rule. You do not use the same trail in and out. You varied the trails that you'd use. And you really don't walk on the tops of rice dykes or anything like that, or anywhere that normally people would walk. You just don't do that, 'cause they would booby trap them. They would set them at the base of trees, and they used fish line to tie them off, and you'd trip the trip wire and boom, it'd go off. Well, and this may sound callous, but we had what we called our booby trap trippers. We had the Civilian Irregular Defense Group points out, and unfortunately, you know, we had over a hundred casualties. I'd say ninety-nine percent of them were to booby traps.

GRACIA: Wow.

MASSEY: We had contact. We had firefights. But the majority of our casualties were these booby traps. 'Cause what would happen, you'd get in a firefight sometimes and you were trying to maneuver, and they would have had these things set out. So what we ended up doing in our

area, we'd call for air strikes from the Air Force. We would ask through the bird dogs, the forward air control, and he would say, "What's their ordinance?" And they would say, "Well, we've got napalm, we've got five hundred pounds, whatever, we've got CBU's." And we'd say, "We'll take everything but the CBU's. Do not drop the CBU's here." Well, when Westmoreland came out on his visit I had one up, and I showed it to him, and showed him how they had it rigged up. It was kind of interesting. He said, "Well, you know, we really need to check into that." He talked to somebody else. And he said, "Can I have this?" And I said, "Yes sir, it's yours if you want it!" You know, four stars looking at you, you can have whatever you want. (Laughter) I said, "Yes sir, that's yours." So he took it with him. Well about a week or so later another two star general, I guess, was on his staff. Think he was a G2. Came out, general ... well he was a big, tall guy. But he came out and I gave him the same briefing, you know. I showed him where we were operating, and I showed him the CBU and what our casualties were. You know, explained the whole thing to him. He said, "Well that's interesting. General Westmoreland's got one of those on his desk." I said, "Okay, he took it back with him." So that's kind of an interesting little sideline there. But what I started to say earlier on, this bird dog pilot that came over and found our barge floating up the river, he landed back at Duc Hoa, which is where our B-team was, to refuel. He goes over to the B-team and said, "Now who was this guy down ... what camp did I fly over?" And he said, "Captain Massey has the camp." And he said, "Is that George Massey?" This guy and I were classmates here at UT. Passmore, and he was a pilot. Army, bird dog pilot. He said, "Well golly, I went to school with that guy." So, he came back over and got on the radio with me. And of course he couldn't give names and everything, and he said, "Hey, we're big Volunteer fans." I said, "Yeah, okay." He said, "Talk to the guys back at the rear, they'll tell you who I am. So he was based somewhere else and just happened to get permission to come out. So here you got two UT guys talking to each other who didn't even know it. We were in class together.

GRACIA: At the other end of the world.

MASSEY: Yeah, we were in class together.

GRACIA: Did you ever have any problems with, like, when you'd go and get regular soldiers, like any of them being VC that would come into the camp and would kind of like ... you know, double agent kind of thing?

MASSEY: No. Now, that is interesting. When I was at the B-team, we were staging to put out A-teams and one of the companies, we felt, was VC controlled. And of course we got that through the intel from some of the people in the camps. You know, the other Vietnamese. So we packed them up and sent them home. But as far as getting in and doing any kind of "terrorist activities," we never did have that problem. But the Cambodians I had were ... it was very interesting how they meted out their discipline. If they got someone, a thief, for instance, unfortunately we had that happen at times in the camp. They would shave the guy's head and run him out of camp. I mean, out of camp.

PIEHLER: Sort of like the old Army.

MASSEY: Oh yeah, you're drummed out of the corps. And of course, what that did for the Cambodian—I mean he's got a shaved head, they knew this guy's a thief. So he had a hard road for a long time 'till his hair grew back out. We had another incident, and like I said, their discipline was pretty tough, we had a young soldier who got drunk, and he fired his weapon up in the air. And we heard it go off. He had a carbine. We outfitted our guys with World War II type weapons, initially. And this was an M-2 Carbine, which is automatic. We heard that thing go off, and I said, "What the hell was that going on at the lower end of the camp." Well, in about thirty minutes here's this soldier, Cambodian, one of our Civilian Irregular Defense Group guys, comes walking up and his arm looked like a snake. I mean, it was bent in about four different directions. And the company commander of this guy had taken his arm and had broken it with a stick in about four places. And that was his discipline. You don't get drunk and fire your weapon in the air.

GRACIA: Oh, wow.

MASSEY: So we had, you know, our medics had to stint this arm. And we medevaced him. We sent him back to Cuchi Hospital. The 25th Infantry Division, like I said, was overwatch for us. And if we got real serious—

------------------------------END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO------------------------------

PIEHLER: This continues an interview with George M. Massey on August 1st, 2003 in Knoxville, Tennessee with Kurt Piehler and ...

GRACIA: Bob Gracia.

PIEHLER: And you were just saying about the division ...

MASSEY: Yeah, if you got into real serious contact and you had casualties, the procedure was that you had to make a request for medevac up through both channels. The Vietnamese channel and then the U.S. channel. The interesting thing about this, of course, if we were in hot contact, the Vietnamese, that would be the first thing they would ask, and they would deny it. And of course at that point the U.S. would ok it and come out and do the medevac, pick them up. Plus, the Vietnamese, and they figured this out early on, if they were picked up by the Vietnamese medevacs, if we got them back to camp, if they were injured somehow and it was not a hot LZ or a not a hot situation, and the Vietnamese picked them up, they took them to the hospital in Saigon, which was called the Cholon Hospital. Which was in ... there's a part of Saigon called Cholon. And that's where the big hospital was. If they had any kind of extremity wound, they knew what was going to happen. It was an immediate amputation. They did not try to treat the wound. It was easier to treat the amputation than it was to treat the wound, either the gunshot or shrapnel or whatever. Now, if they went back to the U.S. hospital, they knew they would get treated and they wouldn't have the amputation. Now we had a, like I said, the Cochin Hospital of the 25th Infantry Division was our overwatch, but we also had a Special Forces hospital back in Bien Hoa, which was outside Saigon. Once they got them stabilized, then they would transfer them to our hospital. We had U.S. medics and U.S. doctors. And then of course they had Vietnamese medics and doctors there that we worked in our hospital. But that was one of the

little things that, I didn't know this initially, but we found out, like I said, if they were evac'ed to a Vietnamese hospital with an extremity wound, it was an amputation.

PIEHLER: Were your irregulars aware of this? Did they know that?

MASSEY: They figured it out.

PIEHLER: Yeah. 'Cause I can imagine guys saying they wouldn't want to ...

MASSEY: Yeah. Oh, they did not want to be picked up by Vietnamese medevacs. No, they may not have known it earlier on, but the word got out, so to speak.We were, like I said, the process was, we had to make the double request. We just got to the point where we said, "Yeah, it's a hot LZ." And very soon, I don't know, one or two times did the Vietnamese come out. The rest of it was U.S. medevacs, whether it was hot or not. Of course, they would have come out anyway. But we usually could secure it enough for them to get them in and get them out. And earlier on, this is interesting, during this time frame, this tour, the first tour, the medevacs and even just the regular helicopters flying through the area that were on a resupply mission, or whatever, you could get on air-to-ground to them and call for help and they would come in. They'd fly into the camp first, kind of figure out what's going on, and get us some security troops to go out with them. And they would go out and make pickups. They'd bring them back to the camp, and then we could get the medevac to pick them up if it was a hot LZ. I mean they would go into hot LZ's. Of course, the medevacs had the big red cross on the side, but hell that didn't make any difference. They still got shot at, you know. But no, it was an interesting system that they had. The troops figured it out. But the first time around, like I said, the regular helicopter units were more than willing. The second time around, younger warrant officers, and I'm not saying that warrant officers didn't do a good job, but they were not as prone to go out and do that. Their mission was to carry supplies. Going out and doing medevacs wasn't part of it. So, (unintelligible) we'd call them. So, it was a little change the second time around. I was up in the central highlands.

GRACIA: Earlier you talked about going to unconventional warfare school. Was that before your first tour, or was that in between tours?

MASSEY: No, that was after the Czech language in the city of Monterey. And then I went to unconventional warfare school at Bragg.

GRACIA: What was that?

MASSEY: Well, as the name implies, it was guerilla warfare, what we were taught. See, that was to go into Germany with the 10th Special Forces, where we would do unconventional-type stuff. So the overall mission of the 10th, in very simple terms, I guess, is that we were stationed down in the southern Bavarian Alps. We had target countries and target areas so that if the balloon went up, as we say in the military, if the war started, we would be infiltrating behind the lines to set up invasion escape routes for downed pilots, to set up guerilla bases, insurgents, and wreak havoc on any re-supply or supply lines. So we would be behind the line type stuff. Guerillas. Unconventional warfare. And like I said, conversely, in Vietnam we were on the

other side of that. We were fighting the insurgents and unconventional types. Of course, still using some of our unconventional stuff.

GRACIA: So then on your second tour, what really entailed that in your second tour in Vietnam?

MASSEY: Well, again being a "career guy," they said, "Well, we're going to assign you to Vietnam." And didn't really know where I was going to be assigned. It was just kind of an open assignment. So I went into Saigon. That's where everybody goes through. They had greeting officers, I guess you would say, there. They said, "Oh yeah, you're going into MACV headquarters." That's Military Command, Vietnam. And "Don't know exactly where you're going but we've got a real ..." (Laughs) The needs of the service took over at this point. I was not assigned to a regular line unit. So at that point, you know, say if I'd been assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, or something like that, their representative would pick me out of the bunch and taken me off, and I'd have been with them. But by this time I was a major, so they said, "Okay, we need majors to run teams with the Army Rangers. Since you're prior Special Forces ..." What we were doing, it was called the border camp conversion. And they were converting Special Forces camps to Ranger battalions. The only thing the troops did, the CIDG, they changed the color of their berets. They went from green beret to maroon beret. Now for the Americans, or you know, the teams, most of the Special Forces guys were moved. I mean, they were getting out of country, in other words. They were withdrawing the 5th Special Forces. In other words they were shutting them down. Like myself, a lot of the guys that came in there were prior Special Forces, or had been before, to include some of the NCO's. And they said, "Okay, you're going to become a Ranger." So we went out into these camps that were ex-Special Forces camps and did the same thing, like I said earlier, with fewer people and fewer assets. But the overall tenor of the war had changed and was phasing down at this point.

GRACIA: Yeah, Vietnamezation. Trying to get the Vietnamese to start taking over their own fight.

MASSEY: Yeah, and of course, they were withdrawing more and more. So I got assigned to Pleiku, which was what we called the MR2 Ranger Command. And initially I was up there and went into a Montagnard camp. The mountain people, French for mountain people. Montagnard. Good soldiers. And they were very loyal to the Americans. The Montagnards were somewhat like the American Indians because they had been mistreated by the Vietnamese. Had kind of been shoved off into the central highlands, not very well taken care of. So the Montagnards were not real keen on the Vietnamese. So we went in there as Ranger advisors, if you will, to Ranger battalions. Like I said, these guys had been Special Forces. Change the color of their beret and now they're Rangers. You ran operations, did the same things you had done before. Again, kind of as a forward force to keep the infiltration from coming out. 'Course the central highlands was a totally different ballgame as far as terrain goes. We were not in the swamps like I was the first time around. We were up in the central highlands, up in the mountains. Triple-canopy jungle and stuff like that. The level of operations was not as high. We didn't run that many, I mean we ran operations but we only had four Americans, so you really couldn't get many Americans out on the operations. And again, we're trying to get the Vietnamese to run their own show. Now we coordinated assets for them and got, you know, support and firepower and helicopters, stuff

like that for them. So it was a little different tour, to say the least. And then, like I was saying, later on, then, I got pulled down to a camp that was having some internal problems and got it squared away. They would usually try to bring you "out of the woods," the last month or two. So you'd learn how to eat with a fork. (Laughter) Learn how to eat with a fork, learn not to pass gas at the table, and stuff like that. But in any event, I came back up to Pleiku, and the operations job, and I worked there for the last two or three months. Something like that. Again, interestingly enough, when I went into the MR2 Ranger Command there in Pleiku, when I got off the plane, here's a guy who had been the brigade commander at the University of Tennessee two years ahead of me. Tommy M. Johnson. And I recognized him 'cause I'm junior to him. And he recognized me, recognized the name. So he was the XO of this MR2 Ranger Command. I became the S3, the operations officer, after I went out into the camps. And we were there, he was there about a month ahead of me, so we left about the same time. But Tommy and I, we had a good tour together there, so to speak. He's in the book. He was the guy that was a wheeler-dealer, and still is. He's now retired and is literally the world expert on edged weapons of the Third Reich. And he's got a business. He sells and buys daggers and swords and stuff from the Third Reich, from World War II. And he's written, I don't know, volumes on this. I've got, I think the last one I got was volume seven.

GRACIA: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: He goes into the description of all the different types of weapons and everything. He's a real interesting guy. But one of the things we did, it's in the book, we went down to get these ceramic elephants. That's a big thing. I don't know if you've seen, we've got two of them at home right now that I sent back. We called them BUFE's. Big ugly elephant. Big ugly fat elephant, big ugly friggin' elephant, whatever you want to put there. (Laughter) That's what we called them. So we sent a plane down near Saigon to a ceramic plant to pick up a bunch of these BUFE's, these big elephants. And it was a buffalo, I forget the designation aircraft, but it was a, you know, Army aircraft. And we loaded this thing up and just barely got off the ground you know, we laughed about it. He said, "How would you have explained that away? That all this ceramic stuff was in this aircraft." (Laughter) That's a side story. So again, you run across people you were either in school with or had known, because the Army's a small place.

GRACIA: And then when you were done with that you went to Command and General Staff College. Is that what happened?

MASSEY: Well I came back out of Vietnam and came to Vanderbilt to go to grad school. And then, with ROTC of course I got my graduate degree. And then taught two years in Army ROTC at Vanderbilt, and then was picked up for Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

GRACIA: With the "no hitchhiking" rule. I remember reading in the book.

MASSEY: Yeah, well. You picked up on a lot of points I put in that book. At Leavenworth, of course, the federal penitentiary Leavenworth, you know, there's Fort Leavenworth there, which is the old cavalry post, I guess, from way back when. At that's where the Command and General Staff College is located. But also in that same area is the Kansas State Women, and Men's

Prison. And that was the big joke. When you got there they briefed you and one of the things they'd tell you was, "Well don't pick up hitchhikers around here." (Laughter) Because they might be an escaped convict. But the Command and General Staff year, when you went out there and you heard this, you know, "It'll be the best year of your life." And basically what it is, as the name implies, it's for officers that will be on the command and general staffs of the Army in later years. They will become the division commanders and the brigade commanders, and they'll become the top guys. It's the school right before you get to the War College. But you also learn to be on what they call the General Staff, which is the G-level. G3's and G2's and all that, and divisions and units like that. But the biggest thing is, there were about a thousand of us there. Each class is about a thousand officers from all different branches. All the fourteen branches, I guess, we've got in the military. So you had a real wide range of people there of different backgrounds, different capabilities, and everything else. Of course you were put in a workgroup, and then you were at a section in the workgroup. A workgroup was about ten to twelve guys. So you really got familiar with those guys, 'cause that's where you did all your stuff. Facilities were really great. You had a lot of family time. 'Cause you were in school, but every day your schedule was from about eight o'clock to about three o'clock. And then from three to five they had on the training schedule "research and development." Well, our little cul-de-sac, there were six of us there and four of us played golf religiously. Well our research and development was you'd get out of class and our deal was the first one who could get home, or the guy that could get out on the curb first, the last guy out of the house had to drive to the golf course. (Laughter) So we'd go out and play golf 'till dark. That was our research and development. Now, there were days of course that we had to do things that we'd laugh about. So they gave you a lot of—and the weekends ... you had some studying you had to do, but most of it was hands-on in the class so that when you came to the weekend you had time with your families, and there was a lot of social activities going on.

PIEHLER: It sounds like, because you described earlier how the Army was not very friendly. You know, it was hard on families.

MASSEY: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: I mean, particularly, at regular, and it seems like the Army at this point said, "This is in part to train you but we understand, this is the time you're going to spend the weekend with your family. This is the time where you can spend some time on an afternoon and play golf and not ..."

MASSEY: Most of the schools, with exception of the real hands-on schools like Ranger schools out in the woods and jump schools where you were jumping out of planes, like the advanced course, when we came back to Fort Benning for the advanced course after the first tour of Vietnam General Wright, and there's a book, I think it's *How Hell Forged a General.* And he was on the Bataan Death March in the Second World War and survived it. And of course, this was in the 60's and he was still on active duty. Older gentleman, for sure. '68 I guess. A two star general. And he got up in front of us and he said, "Gentlemen, we have looked at this class." There was, I don't know, a hundred and fifty of us in the class, I guess, or maybe two hundred in the advanced class. He said, "Ninety-nine point six percent of you have been to Vietnam. And at the end of this year," it was about year long course, he said, "At the end of this year ninety-

nine point six of you will go back to Vietnam." Of course we just said, "Where is that point four percent? Why the hell didn't they go to Vietnam yet?" (Laughter) That kind of became the joke. But basically he said, "Enjoy this year with your family." So the point you're making is well-taken.

PIEHLER: There was some sense that this was, it was not completely accidental.

MASSEY: No. And now that may have been General Wright, but his pitch was, "Guys, enjoy your families. Enjoy your down time, as we would call it. Because at the end of this thing, most of you are going back to Vietnam." 'Cause this was '68 timeframe and Vietnam wasn't going to go away, it didn't look like. So with the Command and General Staff, 'course we didn't have a Vietnam thing going on, but basically it was also a year to make some new friends and learn your contemporaries and know that these are the guys that are eventually going to be running the Army. I never thought I was, and of course I didn't. But some of the guys, for instance, one of the guys who was in the first Desert Storm was a division commander of the 24th Infantry Division, Barry McCaffrey.

PIEHLER: Oh yes.

MASSEY: He eventually became ...

PIEHLER: The drug czar.

MASSEY: The drug czar. But Barry was a classmate of mine at Command and General Staff College. We were in the same section together. Bright guy. He was a class of '64, I guess. A West Pointer. Bright guy. I mean he had three distinguished service crosses, so he had been there and done that, as they say. And unfortunately he had a gimpy arm. He'd gotten wounded real bad and basically had no use of his left arm. But just a real brilliant guy. And there were others. Wayne Downing, who just recently was called back into active duty to do some , he was a four star general, I think. Barry retired as a three star. He got out when he became the drug czar. 'Course Barry's been on ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, he's had a whole other career. (Laughs)

MASSEY: Yeah, well he's been up with some of this war stuff that's going on. But in any event. So, those are the kind of people you met at Command and General Staff College. 'Cause it ended up Barry and I ended up in the same division, 3rd Infantry Division over in Germany. And he was a contemporary of mine, but he was a little junior in rank at that point. When I left as battalion XO he replaced me. 'Cause he was up in the division staff, and he came down and I went on up to USAREUR Staff, which is United States Army Europe Command up in Heidelberg. 'Cause I had gotten promoted to lieutenant colonel, so I moved on up into a higher level. Of course, it was a G-staff. I was in the G3 at USAREUR and dealt with a lot of operations stuff at USAEUR headquarters. Controlled all the units there in Europe. So you know, you just run into people like that and keep crossing them and keep meeting them. And he eventually, like I said, ended up being a division commander during Desert Storm. The first Desert Storm.

PIEHLER: And then we were just talking about in Germany, was that a return of forces to Germany kind of thing?

MASSEY: Yeah, re-forger type thing. 'Course that had been going on for years, but we at the USAEUR level staff, we kind of got involved. Well we got involved in it directly, you know, seeing ... We'd bring units over to test, if you will, the ability to bring a unit from the states in a hurry. They would come over and pick up their equipment there in Europe and then go out on maneuvers and stuff like that. But one of the things I worked on after I left the battalion down in Schweinfurt, Germany and went up to Heidelberg. I worked at Heidelberg. I was there about a year I guess before I got reassigned back to the states. But we ended up ... I worked on a handbook for NATO operations. The interesting thing about this was, as the name implies, it was a handbook to say, "Okay, this is how the Americans do it, this is how the Belgians do it, this is how the British do it, and this is how the Germans do it." Now the French were kind of out there. They had by this time pulled out of NATO, so we didn't work with them much. The Dutch, we worked with the Dutch. So what my job was, and we had another lieutenant colonel, we were pulling together all these tactics, if you will, or procedures of the way we did it and the way they did it and put it into a handbook so that if we got attached to a Dutch unit, we could kind of figure out how they do things. The terminology. The biggest problem we had with terminology was between the English and the Americans, because their terminology, you'd think, "Well, we all speak English." Well no, we speak American, they speak, you know, that's their joke. And that was some of the more fun meetings I had, was to go up to a place called Mönchengladbach where the British were located. We'd go up to do some coordinating meetings with them. The British are a funny bunch to work with, and they still do, you know, they start nine o'clock in the morning, they break for lunch, then they have a little tea time, then they work late in the evenings. Then they go over to the club and it's coat and tie and they're very, you know, they're very traditional about the way they do their mess, if you will. And they said, "You're Americans? We could put you on a desert island, put a chain link fence around you, and within a month you would have it filled with paperwork." They did not like paperwork, and Americans are just notorious for that. So that was one of the things.

GRACIA: They really commented, that was a point? The paperwork?

MASSEY: Yeah, they just said, "You know, you guys, everything's gotta be in triplicate." And it may have been a little bit of being facetious, but yeah they were very laid back about it. Like I said, they had their little teas and crumpets in the afternoon. One of the tales in the book was about the two colonels that regaled me about various sundry things. But they brought our food to us, and the one tasted it, and the other says, "You know, in World War II, that's how the Nazis figured out British spies. See, we have a propensity to taste our food and then salt it." Well we look around, you know. "I think we're quite safe now." (Laughter) British humor, you know. That's just something. But they did regale me with—these two guys, they were older British colonels.

GRACIA: They had been in World War II? It sounds like they had been.

MASSEY: Well ...

PIEHLER: Not quite World War II, but they had definitely been of that era, too.

MASSEY: Yeah, but they had been as they say, "posted". They're not assigned; they're posted all around the world. And one of them had been posted over in Borneo, I guess. The tale on him, his friend was telling us, "He was in a hotel with a little bird." They call them birds. A girl. And the hotel caught on fire, it shows him carrying ... and the picture was on the front page of one of the London papers, and it says, "Major So-And-So Is Rescued". And he was carrying his girl of the evening out with him. (Laughter) And the other guy knew about it, so they told me about that. It was funny to work with the British. But that was one of the things I did in Europe after I got over there.

GRACIA: I'm pretty much done with my questions, so if you want to ...

PIEHLER: Yeah, well you had this—you raised an interesting point about comparisons of hardship, which I ...

MASSEY: Well I kind of brought it up. That was off the record, but are we on now?

PIEHLER: Yeah, we're on now. Yeah.

MASSEY: Well what I was saying was that in my day and time, if you will, we had the turbulence of Vietnam. You know, your tours, back to school, back to Vietnam. And that was tough on the families. It was tough for a career guy, for sure. But it was accepted. You know, my wife today, I'll say this if you don't mind me saying it. When she sees a news program where they're interviewing the wives, "Oh, he's been gone for three months." She doesn't have any sympathy for them. She says, "Hey, this is an all-volunteer force we got. That's the one thing. See, back then we had draftees. We had a bigger force, so you could spread that wealth out a little bit as to how many tours you had. Now it's an all-volunteer force. And when you sign on, and you raise your right hand to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic, that's what it means now. If you get called on and you have to go over, hey, it's tough. And I feel for them, and the point I was making is that we've had such a draw down that these guys are starting to meet themselves coming and going. We're trying to be the world policemen. At some point we're going to have to back out of that.

PIEHLER: Well the other thing that I've been struck at, and I'd be curious as to your comments, I mean, in World War II guys fought for the duration. You were in until you got wounded, you got killed, or the war was over.

MASSEY: Or the war was over, yeah.

PIEHLER: And then in Korea and Vietnam we do the rotation, which is in part so guys don't get demoralized. But the only way out is to get killed or wounded, or, you know, maybe we'll win at some point. But the Army has sort of moved back, you know. The disadvantage of the rotation is that you don't go over as units. You lose the unit cohesiveness. I've been struck, in this current Gulf War we've had units come over but the problem now is we need these units

overseas, and we're sort of butting up to the problem of not having a rotation system that guys have to stay if their unit is needed.

MASSEY: Yeah, if the unit is needed there and there is no one there to replace them.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: I talked to a young lieutenant, as a matter of fact, down at Fort Gordon back in the spring. He said, I've read this thing since then. I didn't think about it until he brought it out, I think he was a military intelligence officer. He said, "I was assigned to a unit, went over, did the preliminary work, was sent back to the states, my rotation was over." He said, "I was reassigned to a unit that's getting ready to go back. Now I get back to the states and I'm not sure if I get back on this rotation that I'm going to get out." And that was the point. I think we're really going to run into a problem here if we don't get some kind of, you know, relief for these guys. 'Cause some of them had been in Bosnia, they've been in Afghanistan, they come back home and now they're in Iraq. I mean it's ...

PIEHLER: Well it's interesting about this question of rotation, because I feel like putting this on record. I've even told my class about the current Canadian army. When the university had a Normandy semester, a Canadian group was with us on their Normandy program, and at one point they gave us a little battle tour for the UT group. And they had done such a nice job, and I said, "You know what? Tell us a little about the Canadian army today." And he said how small the force is and how much they're trying to do, and he said, "Basically we have six brigades. And because of all this peacekeeping, all these duties ... We were with the Americans in Kosovo. Basically two brigades are going overseas, two brigades are coming home, and two are here. And you're constantly moving." So the average Canadian officer is six months home, six months there. And I thought, "My god." What a ...

MASSEY: That's tough. And of course, like I said, in Vietnam, you knew if you left here on September the first, unless you got shot up or whatever, next year on September the first you would be pretty close to getting on a plane and coming home. I mean, unless you volunteered to stay over there.

PIEHLER: Yeah. I guess the question I would have is, did people who thought they wanted to be regulars change their mind during Vietnam? Did you ever sense guys you knew, fellow officers, who just said, "I just can't. I want off this." 'Cause I think it must have really separated those who really wanted ...

MASSEY: Yeah. There were those who, like you say, were regulars. And of course, we were not a "volunteer force," although the officers were for the most part.

PIEHLER: Yeah, for the most part.

MASSEY: Of course a lot of them got on active duty and then went to OCS [Officer Candidate School]. And that was a little different thing. But say, for the ROTC guy ... there were those who said, when they ended their tour, "This is it. I'm getting out." So we did have that. But ...

for the most part, if you survived a year in Vietnam you knew, hey, I'm coming back to either a school, or an assignment to a unit that's not tabbed to go. Because then it was all individual replacements. So you knew, hey, I can go into a division and I should be there for at least two years, three years, whatever. For instance, I came back, I was home '67, '68, '69, and then finally got back over in '70. But in part of that, I was in school. So I would have gone back in probably '69 had I not gone to language school. 'Cause I was infantry, and that was where ...

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: There were a lot of guys in my contemporary age group who had the one tour. Artillery or ordinance. So it was not quite the same, because we had this big army. You know, a guy could get reassigned to Europe, and he knew I am going to be here, because they're not going to bring him out of Europe for three years, or whatever, if he was an ordinance guy or whatever. But in this day and time, and I told Bob a while ago, I can't remember our manning level. It was well over a million, now it's down to what? I don't know, 500,000 or ...

PIEHLER: I just know that the statistic always sticks in mind is that we had half a million troops in Germany at the height ... And now ...

MASSEY: Now we don't have that many probably in the total forces. 'Cause I know some guys that I've talked to have been to Europe and talked about how everything has shut down. In the NATO structure, we're starting to turn that over to the Europeans and shut down a lot of our bases over there. Drawing back. Because we've had to. I mean, we used to have so many people. So yeah, it's a different. I think we're really running a risk of losing a lot of good folks if we don't do something on this rotation thing. It was interesting, the other day I watched the CSPAN interview, if you will, they had the new Army Chief of Staff having his hearings. General Shoemaker. That was one of the points that we brought out. You've got these troops that are writing home, you've got the families who are complaining. "What are you going to do about that, General?" Of course, about all he can say is, "Well we're gonna study and be sensitive to it, and try to come up with a plan." But I don't, it's going to be tough. It's gonna be tough.

PIEHLER: Well, I have a feeling that we're definitely going to want to do a follow-up with you at some point. I have a new graduate student coming up in a year who specializes in Vietnam. So, it might be awhile, but I want to go way back because I have a bunch of follow-up. And so I'm going way back. This is sort of, growing up, when did your family get television?

MASSEY: Hmm.

PIEHLER: Do you remember? You've talked a lot about radio, 'cause radio left quite an impression. And movies. But when did television ...

MASSEY: Well, we had an aunt. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: So, that was your first ... ?

MASSEY: That lived in town. And this had to be , well I was still in high school, so it had to be mid-fifties. And the big treat for us was to go into town, go to the movies on a Saturday afternoon, and Saturday night we would go down to Aunt Mary's and watch whatever was on. You know, Uncle Milty, I think. Milton Berle was kind of the first program.

PIEHLER: Yeah, yeah.

MASSEY: But that was it. It was black and white, not much bigger than a monitor screen. But we would all sit there. But when we, I'd already left home.

PIEHLER: So you didn't have television ...

MASSEY: Didn't have television when I was at home, no.

PIEHLER: So you left home in '58.

MASSEY: Left home in '58, so I don't know when I first got it.

PIEHLER: So you really didn't grow up with television.

MASSEY: No. Even when we came to UT as a student, we didn't have a television set. Not early on. We may have gotten it later. I'm trying to think. My wife could tell you for sure, 'cause I can't remember stuff like that. But I don't think we had a TV while I was in school. I think we got on active duty Army before we ever ...

PIEHLER: Before you actually had a TV.

MASSEY: And it was black and white. (Laughs) I don't even remember when color came in.

PIEHLER: Earlier you talked about ROTC and how valuable it was. Could you talk a little bit about summer camp between your junior and senior years?

MASSEY: Oh yeah. Well, actually, I went to Fort Benning, Georgia in the middle of the summer, and it was blazing hot. We lived, of course, that was not uncommon even up into when I got on active duty, we still had the World War II billets. The old two-story billets that were built to last for four years or five years going into World War II. And here we are in '59, '60, or '61, and they're still using them. When I got on active duty, I went back to Fort Benning and we still use those. But anyhow, it was interesting in that you were thrown in with a bunch of guys from different schools. I remember, 'course we all had essentially the same training. I mean, most of the ROTC programs back then, it was all mandatory in the state schools or the land-grant schools. Then you had the Citadel graduates that were there, who were military schools. Then you had North Georgia Military College. We didn't have any, 'course West Pointers didn't go to summer camp.

PIEHLER: Yeah, they had their own ...

MASSEY: Their own thing going. So you had those kind of guys. But you had guys who were athletes, you had guys who were fraternity guys, you had guys who were engineers. I mean, you had a wide range of people. So consequently, you got to, and some of these guys I stared with, they stayed on active duty and I ran into them in later years. But our cadre, the officers, were ROTC instructors who were doing their summer duty down at Fort Benning, Georgia. Very seldom would you have one of your cadre members. In other words, I wouldn't have a UT instructor, I would have some guy who was, our guy actually was from the University of Florida, I believe. But this was also the first time that I remember being put into a situation with blacks. 'Cause we had Florida A&M, which was an all-black school, we had Tuskegee Institute. What was one or two of the other black schools? But anyway, we had a fairly large number of blacks.

PIEHLER: I guess Tennessee State would be one.

MASSEY: Tennessee State. Well ...

PIEHLER: I'm just trying to think of black schools.

MASSEY: Tuskegee and Florida A&M, for sure. And Grambling. That's right. We had some Grambling and Lincoln.

PIEHLER: And what about North Carolina? I guess it's North Carolina A&T?

MASSEY: Yeah, I might have to, I've got my old camp book. But in any event, that was the first time. So you ended up being thrown in, not thrown in, but you had blacks there. And it never bothered me because I was not, hey, they're put into position. Of course you rotated, what we would call the cadet chain-of-command. One day you'd be a platoon leader, one day you'd be a private. The next day you'd be a company commander. You know, they rotated that around. To give you experience and the frustrations of command, as they say. Some of the guys had problems when the blacks were in charge.

PIEHLER: This was summer of '61. I mean, this is the height of the civil rights movement in the South. I mean, that's summer of the freedom rides.

MASSEY: Yes. Oh yeah, we had, talk about freedom rides, I had a lieutenant I served with over in Germany called Bo Young. Big, black lieutenant, made captain, went to Vietnam with me. But old Bo went to Grambling. He was a football player, big kid. He said, "I tell you what, I got on one of those freedom rides." And I'll use the terms that he used. He said, "They came down there on those buses from up in Illinois and New York. Them Jewish girls, they came in there," and he said, "They'd blink those eyes at us". We'd say, "You oughta come ride down with us.'" So they came down to Georgia. He said, "We came and stopped right outside of Stone Mountain, Georgia. He said, "The next thing I know, some big, old white guys grabbed me off that bus, put an iron on my shoulder, a damn branding iron, and branded me, and said, 'Son, you don't ever come back to Georgia.'" He said, "I broke loose from them." I mean, he's a big, strong guy. There must have been some big guys on him. He was telling his tale, and he was just matter-of-fact. And he said, "I took off running, and I got to a place I could call my momma and said, "I ain't never coming back to the South." But he ended up down in Fort Benning,

Georgia, and he also ended up going to Fort Bragg in the Special Forces. And you're talking mid-60's by then, or after the early 60's. But he said, oh yeah, they branded him. Right out in Stone Mountain, Georgia, right outside of Atlanta. The way he'd talk about it, he said, "Those Jewish girls came with us on those busses for the freedom rides." So that was the time frame we're talking about.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean because this was even before desegregation of Old Miss. You're adding students from Old Miss with students from, say, Grambling.

MASSEY: Oh yeah. And it was, you could see that was not a good mesh.

PIEHLER: How were the cadres handling that? I mean, how did the military do that? I'm curious, because particularly given the time ...

MASSEY: Well as a student, or as a cadet, if they said jump, you jump.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And the cadre, they were meshed together. I would assume, and I don't know this, but I would assume that the predominantly black schools had black cadres. I don't think they had the cadre mixed.

PIEHLER: Yeah. But during summer camp they're all mixed.

MASSEY: Yeah, they're all together. And I remember we had, yeah, I can remember some of the black officers, and you know, they were professional. I mean they were just, you know, "hey we got a job to do. "We're going to train these ...

PIEHLER: So the cadres, you didn't sense a division among the cadres. Like if there was tension in the cadre, you couldn't tell that. But among your fellow students ...

MASSEY: And it really, it dissipated, though. By the time you got thrown together, and a week or two later you saw that, hey, these guys are trying to do, like I said, it never bothered me. As a matter of fact, we had cubicles in those big World War II billets, and there was a double bunk here and a double bunk here. The guy on the bottom over here was from Florida A&M. Now, he was prior service. Of course he was a font of knowledge because he knew how to spit-shine boots, he knew how to make beds, he knew how to cut the corners and clean the latrines and stuff. Because he had been there as a private, so we gravitated to him. I can't remember his name ...

PIEHLER: But he was really ...

MASSEY: Oh yeah. So everybody, and he kind of became for our little part of the platoon. He was kind of the font of knowledge. Hey, let's go talk to him. He'll tell us how to do it. There were those, like you say, in the Mississippi Schools and some of the other schools it was a [problem]. But by the end of camp, I think it had all dissipated. When I came back to Fort

Benning, or when I got to Fort Benning, Georgia in '62, or actually in '63, and the rides started in Mississippi and Old Miss and Tuskegee, we were on alert. Our particular unit, my battalion, did not have to go. But some of the units out of Fort Benning did come over. And you know, of course, we would do the riot control training. Bayonets fixed, and you'd get in a V, and you'd move forward. I'm looking at my platoon, and we were probably fifty percent black. And we had discussions about this with our units. We said, "Folks, we're the United States Army. If we're sent over there to do this mission, we're not going to become black and white. We are United States Army. Do we all understand that? We're not going to break ranks and run." And we had black NCOs, and they said, "Yeah." I mean, they kind of put it out to the black troops, "Hey, this ain't our fight other than the fact that we get over there. But we're going to go in and control things." Fortunately our unit never had to go, so I don't know how that would have worked out. But the units that went, there was no breaking of the ranks.

PIEHLER: No, I mean actually, we're having this drawing for Celebrate Freedom. William Doyle's going to talk about Old Miss and the military units that served. So that ...

MASSEY: Oh yeah, they did their job. And that's kind of how it worked out.

PIEHLER: So no one was washed out that you know of from your summer camp because they couldn't do it? You mentioned there was tension. Were there any fights or anything? Or was it more ...

MASSEY: Yeah, there may have been. But they kept us so damn busy that it really didn't happen.

PIEHLER: Yeah, but you're conveying a sense that it was very clear in the beginning, this air of tension for some.

MASSEY: Yeah, but it dissipated, I think. But as far as washing out of summer camp, there may, and I'm trying to think back. In our particular unit I don't know if we had any. And I'm sure there were some people who got hurt and things like that.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, your parents were Democrats, which is not surprising for Middle Tennessee. Where were you in say the early 60's? Let's say in the '60 election. You couldn't vote, I don't think you could vote because you were not 21, but who were you leaning toward? Nixon or Kennedy?

MASSEY: Kennedy. I was probably a Kennedy Democrat. And being a historian more so than I am, he was probably more conservative than most of the conservatives today.

PIEHLER: Oh yeah no, in some ways, I mean on a lot of issues ...

MASSEY: And of course when he was elected, and he started his term, of course, he was very pro-military. So I probably was leaning to Kennedy. Through the years, of course, I probably have become a conservative Republican. But I'll vote for the man more so than, but there again,

if I feel like these are the things I'm for. But that's one of the things, I've never missed an election.

PIEHLER: Since you could vote.

MASSEY: I mean, absentee, whatever I had to do. 'Cause I felt like, hey, I don't know if you can vote yet or not, but when you get the opportunity by God you better vote. Because that's one of our basic freedoms. And the other thing [is], of course you've heard this argument, "If you don't vote, then you really don't have anything to say about it. Or you can't express your opinion about the guy that's in there, because you didn't vote one way or the other."

------------------------------END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE------------------------------

PIEHLER: Now you had talked earlier about reporting to your first unit, and you had had no advanced training. I mean, ROTC was your training.

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And you've talked very warmly about your first lieutenant was not, you convey the sense it became a warm relationship but it was the least the first day.

MASSEY: First day. You know, what have I gotten myself into?

PIEHLER: And a very close relationship with your sergeant. What else do you remember about being a young second lieutenant?

MASSEY: Well, just, for instance, I got into Fort Benning on Tuesday, got into the unit on Wednesday. The next Monday we went into the field for a two week operation. And we were given, we went down and drove APCs, armored personnel carriers, which at that time were the old M-79s or M-59s, the M-59s. The big ones. Not the 113s. Of course they've got the Bradleys now. But in any event, I drove these big hulks of metal. Literally, we had nobody in our unit that could drive them. So they had assigned drivers with them. I mean, these guys were attached to us. And they drove the armored personnel carriers. We went to the field. On a maneuver against a—as a matter of fact, the 2nd Infantry Division at that time. And we maneuvered against the National Guard group that they brought to Fort Benning to do their summer training. So we were out there for about two weeks. And I guess the thing—number one, that first day that I conducted a PT formation, 'course I was the newest lieutenant in the company, the others had been there for awhile, that, I think, looking back on it, was probably the best thing that ever happened to me. 'Cause I got up there, and of course I sounded off like I had a set and I knew what I was doing, and took 'em on a run, and I think they went, "Hey, this lieutenant's not bad." Then I got hold of my platoon. And of course my platoon sergeant was an old-style platoon sergeant, and he ran the platoon, and that's basically what he told me. He said, "Lieutenant, just stay out of my way and watch."

PIEHLER: Well that's the advice that, I mean, how was World War II, a young lieutenant said, "They were told or they learned. Just follow the sergeant."

MASSEY: Follow the sergeant. So we get out into the field, and I was fairly good at orienteering and map reading and all that, so we never got lost. I mean, that's the first thing. You get your unit lost, and then they're like, "Oh, he doesn't know what he's doing." You know, you know, that type thing. We maneuvered real well and did ok with it. And it got back in. It just kind of, you know, progressed from there. Plus, and I think back on it, it would probably not, although it did kind of set the tone. When we got back in from the field, of course, we had to clean up and get everything put away, and then we had a Saturday morning inspection. It was a full field layout. 'Cause you'd come out in the field, cleaned your gear up, then have an inspection of it. Make sure everything's clean and you got all your web gear and all that stuff done up. There was a very set routine. You had to put your ID card here, your dog tags here. Everything had to lined up just so-so. Your footlockers and wall lockers and all that stuff. Well I was not and never was much of a spit-and-polish inspection type of guy. But in any event, I walked in at about ten o'clock on Saturday morning and the first bunk, I mean, it looked like somebody had slept on it. I mean, you know, it was screwed up.

PIEHLER: Yeah, it was really not just a little ...

MASSEY: I'm sitting here thinking, you know, the platoon sergeant … had been told by the squad leader, "Hey, we're ready for inspection sir." You know, all this, it had come up the chain. I walk in there, and I took that bunk and turned it over. Just pitched it in the floor. And of course I've got a fairly loud voice, and I kicked it up a few octaves. And I said, "I'll be back at one o'clock when you get this blank-and-blank shithouse straightened out." Then left. (Laughter) So at one o'clock, and I didn't go in a minute sooner, at one o'clock I walked in. You could have eaten off the floor. You could have bounced half-dollars off the beds. You know. (Laughter) And that's about the only time I ever had to do that.

PIEHLER: After that that was ...

MASSEY: So it just became a, and I never really asked the soldiers to do anything I wouldn't do. I mean, as far as the physical stuff and being up and being ready to go. Doing all that stuff. And tried to lead by example, if you will. I think a lot of that came right back to Captain Lazelle here at the University of Tennessee, on being physically prepared. Then of course not too soon after that I went off to the basic course and then learned more of the ins and outs of, supposedly, how you're supposed to be a platoon leader and all that stuff. Some of the tactics and everything. And got back to the unit and immediately we went to the field. And then I came back and went to jump school. And then right after that we got ready to start going to Europe, and of course we all kind of grew in that situation together. Once we got into Europe—and it's kind of interesting, you talk about me raising cane with my platoon, we had a Saturday inspection, we had a new company commander, Captain Kennedy. Never will forget. He was a good guy. We were in old World War II billets, German billets. So you had squad rooms, you weren't all in the same platoon. So you had to individually go to the squad room and inspect. Well, we walked into the first one, and they looked pretty good. Well my demeanor was not real good. Kind of like, "Hey, we've gotta get through this. It's a Saturday morning." You know. And he picked up on that right away. We went on through the inspection, and he pointed out a few things and I was kind of taking notes, you know. As soon as we hit the hallway after that fourth squad, he said,

"Lieutenant Massey, get to my office." (Laughter) I said, "Yes sir." So I wheel on down, and he followed me up, and he slammed the door behind him and he chewed my ass. And it was my demeanor.

PIEHLER: Because you were just not taking it ...

MASSEY: You know, and the platoon looked good, but it was my demeanor. And he said, "Don't you ever display that in front of me again." Which I never did. But it was a lesson learned. If you got an inspection, you ...

PIEHLER: It's interesting you tell that story, 'cause you said you're really not a spit and polish ...

MASSEY: No.

PIEHLER: Where I think there's some officers, there's a memoir I read, and I actually wrote a forward to, someone went to OCS at the height of the Vietnam War, and he said there was a group of these officers obsessed with spit and polish. I mean, just obsessed. I mean to the point where their senior officers were saying this is crazy. We don't want people spending all night spit and polishing.

MASSEY: Oh yeah. Well, that was never my forte. There was a French officer Jean Lauteguy and I'll have to paraphrase it, but basically he says, "If it was mine to have, we would have two armies. One to stand the parades, shine the boots, kiss the colonel's hemorrhoids," and he goes through all this, "and then we would have one who would dress up in the camouflage and fight the war." And that's paraphrasing. But Jean would be my type of guy. (Laughs)

PIEHLER: You stayed with this unit a long time, and you mentioned the unit group. Could you sort of explain that a bit more?

MASSEY: The 2nd Division unit?

PIEHLER: Yeah. Yeah.

MASSEY: Well I was there about two years.

PIEHLER: Yeah, two years. So you got ...

MASSEY: And like I said, when I volunteered to go to Special Forces, when I got out of the unit, yeah we had a lot of ... Thinking back on that two years with that division, which was a stateside tour, we were gone physically. 'Course, nine weeks of that I was in Ranger school, so I was gone to that. And then we were together in Europe, and then when we got back we went on, you know, I got back from Ranger school and about a week later we went on a big maneuver over in South Carolina, North Carolina. The 82$^{nd}$, the 101$^{st}$ Airborne Division, the 2$^{nd}$ Infantry Division, and the 5$^{th}$ Mechanized Division were trucked in from Texas or somewhere. We went freewheeling across the countryside. I mean you couldn't do that in this day and time. I mean,

we literally walked through people's farms. Of course, we were told, "Don't tear up stuff. Don't go raping and pillaging and plundering." But when you move those kinds of units and those kinds of people and vehicles, you're gonna tear up some stuff. But basically we ran operations against each other for about two weeks.

PIEHLER: Much like the World War Two maneuvers?

MASSEY: Yes, exactly. And one of the guys I talk about, Don Perdue, who was a West Point graduate, we met literally, his platoon was securing a road junction, and my platoon was sent out to overcome the road junction. We had our little battle. Well, of course in these situations you have umpires that will come out and say, "Okay, well you had this, you had that. You had this; you had that." We kind of got off to the side, and I said, "Well, you know, I called for artillery." You know, we did this, we did that. Well the company commanders came out. They got involved. The two lieutenants just went, we went over and literally sat under a shade tree and said, "Where are you from?" "Well, I'm from Nebraska. Where are you from?" "I'm from Tennessee." And we became friends. I mean literally, in about ... 'Cause the company commanders are over there arguing over who won the battle, and we didn't give a shit at that point. I mean, we were out, dirty and tired, and everything else. Well we ended up, Don and I ended up in the language school together taking the Czech language. Then we went to Germany together, and then we were in Vietnam together. We ended up, his last tour and my last tour, we were professors of military science. I was at Eastern Washington University, and he was at the University of Nevada, Reno.

PIEHLER: Oh, so relatively ...

MASSEY: So we had a lot of cross, you know.

PIEHLER: But the first sort of meeting was at this ...

MASSEY: First meeting was at this ... And the point I make in the book about that is that you were playing war and it was not that long afterward we were both in Vietnam.

PIEHLER: Now you volunteered for Special Forces.

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: When did you join? You went to Fort Bragg. When did you go to Bragg for your ...

MASSEY: Well the first year after I volunteered for this, you know, I was telling you about the, I was sitting with the 2nd Infantry Division, and G1 called in and said, "Your name's on a list."

PIEHLER: Yes.

MASSEY: "Airborne-Ranger qualified. Do you want to go to Special Forces?" And I said yes, and, "We'll send you to language school, you'll take Spanish, and we'll send you to Panama."

PIEHLER: Yes.

MASSEY: So the next day I called them back and said, "Well, can I go to Europe? Germany?" "Well yeah, we'll send you to language school and you'll take Czech." And so I get a set of orders. So I go to the Czech language first, out of the city of Monterey. With Don Perdue and another guy by the name of Jules Bonovolonta. Now, Jules is one of the ones who got out, and he became the agent in charge of the FBI in New York City. So that was how he had,'cause he always said he grew up in the New Jersey area, he said, "One of these years," he knew he was not gonna stay on active duty, "I'm gonna get into the FBI, and I'm going to go back and fight the mafia in New York."

PIEHLER: That was his ...

MASSEY: That was, and he did that.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Jules Bonavolonta. He wrote a book called *Good Guys, Bad Guys*.

PIEHLER: Interesting. And that was what he was telling you right ...

MASSEY: Yeah, I mean this was early on.

PIEHLER: Did he say why he was so determined?

MASSEY: Well, yeah, I was gonna tell you the story behind it. His dad was a tailor, and he said, "I remember as a kid that they tried to shake him down." And I can't remember the town, there was some kind of pressure by the mafia.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And Jules said, "I've always thought," you know, he's as Italian as he could be, Bonavalota. I mean you couldn't get much more Italian. He said, "Here are these guys coming in trying to shake my dad down." He said, "Far as I know, he wouldn't be shaken down." But he was harassed, and Jules said, "I'm gonna fight against that." So he went through ROTC. Rutgers, as a matter of fact.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay.

MASSEY: Yeah, as a matter of fact. Yeah, Rutgers is where he went to school. And he got on active duty, volunteered for Special Forces, got all that training, and then when he completed his tour of Vietnam and completed his requirements, he got into the FBI. But anyhow, that's how I got into Special Forces. When I went to the unconventional warfare schools afterwards, on my way to Germany, we went to Fort Bragg.

PIEHLER: Okay, so that's where you got, in a sense, the Green Beret.

MASSEY: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: So what year was it that you were on your way to Germany?

MASSEY: It would have been '64.

PIEHLER: So you joined the Green Berets really when ...

MASSEY: Yeah, just when it was started.

PIEHLER: I always try to remind my students that Kennedy and his brothers are often thought of the Peace Corps. But they were also very much Special Forces.

MASSEY: Kennedy "gave us the Green Beret."

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean Robert was picking up equipment. I mean he was going over the ... What was your, that you mentioned off the record before we got started taping, there was a lot of controversy. The Green Berets became very controversial in general, but the Army was also very leery of the Green Berets. How much did you sense of that in '63, '64?

MASSEY: Early on, not that much. But when Vietnam kicked up it became, and there's no way that I can, say, prove this, and there's other guys in my same situation that feel the same way. I think the fact that I got into Special Forces when I did and had that on my record was probably a detriment, ultimately, to my career.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: 'Cause you get painted with the same brush.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Early on in Vietnam, I think we did a good job, and as far as I know the majority did a good job. But there were those who did not. They became enamored with the, "Well, we're the big tough Green Berets." And I think a lot of the regular line units did not like that. And the fact that we did get maybe some assets that they felt like we shouldn't have. And there was just that attitude that a lot of guys portrayed that a lot of the regular, 'course when I say regular Army, hell I was regular Army. But I think we really got a black eye in Vietnam. And then there was some of the assassination stuff that happened in Vietnam. The Special Elite Forces, a lot of the leaders just said, "Hey, this is not what we want."

PIEHLER: Well one of the things that struck me about understanding the original concept of the Green Berets, and your career in some ways was very much the model for it in terms of ... My understanding is the Kennedy brothers wanted them really to be very special troops in the sense.

Not just physically elite but also they had the language abilities, they had advanced first aid that they could go do this in a very sort of ...

MASSEY: Peace Corps manner.

PIEHLER: And also stealth. That it was not just force. It was also, you know, you could speak the language, you could go into villages, you could separate the enemy from the non-enemy.

MASSEY: Well, we used the term, and I think they still use it. We would become force multipliers. In other words, you could take the regular Special Forces team in a, what we called, unconventional warfare setting. You could split the team if you wanted to, 'cause you had the commo, the medic, the demolitions, the weapons, the intel and op, those five major areas. You had ten NCOs, you had a captain, you had a lieutenant. So you could split the team, go out and organize, train and develop an insurgent force. So you could become what we call a force multiplier behind the lines. That was the ultimate and the overall mission, if you will, of Special Forces when I got in it. Well, it changed with Vietnam, and then it's kind of fine-tuned and changed through the years. And now, like in Iraq, they were sent in way early before anybody got on the ground.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: As the human intel. or to kind of figure out who's where and what's what and that kind of, Afghanistan especially. But at the same time they've been sent on missions, you know, to go in and rescue people. Go in to do these "difficult jobs" that the average troop has not had the training to do.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And I think that's what the overall, so consequently, more and more, people are saying this is a pretty worthwhile organization to have around. But in the Vietnam timeframe, as Vietnam was drawing down, we were not considered that way.

PIEHLER: Well I'm struck though, in terms of the Army, 'cause I've read about the tension within the Army. But what's striking to me also is in popular culture, the Green Berets, that was very distinctive too, and I think of that song in '65.

MASSEY: John Wayne ...

PIEHLER: And yeah, the movie. But people, and I also tell my students who are really interested in Vietnam. You know, it was the number one pro-war song in '65 to the Green Berets. What did you think of this at the time? Both the song and the fact that people actually knew about the Green Berets?

MASSEY: Well, 'course we were in it.

PIEHLER: Yeah, you were in it.

MASSEY: So, and I say this not in any, you know, I went home for instance. I'd go back home. Guys I'd gone to school with, old high school guys. And of course they knew I was in the military, and it came about and I said, "Yeah, I'm in the Special Forces." Well the term Special Forces still didn't register.

PIEHLER: That didn't mean anything, yeah.

MASSEY: You know, that could have been Special Services. Taking care of the basketballs and tennis courts. And I said, "Special Forces" and they said, "Oh yeah." And I said, "Yeah, you know, we're the Green Beret." Immediately, and I mean just like (snaps), "God, you're a mean son of a bitch, aren't you?" I said, "I'm the same guy that I always was, I've just had a lot of training." But that was the perception. "You're a mean guy, aren't you?" And that was the attitude that a lot of the Special Forces guys started for training. "Well, I'm big and mean and macho thing." That was never my ...

PIEHLER: Well, and what's striking is that had been the conception when they established it. It was in fact not just physically tough, but also to have language abilities to go into villages. That's also a level of very intellectual ...

MASSEY: Yeah, I mean you couldn't be a ... And a lot of the NCOs that got into it early on, I don't know how to say this and be delicate with it, but I think they were pulled into it by the aura of, "Oh, we're big, you know, put this beret on and I'm a world beater." Well no, you're not. A good .45 will bring you down like it will anybody.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: So I think through the years that has turned so now you do have these very professional, very well trained, very capable individuals that are elite, if you will. And we were at that time probably as elite as you could get. I know Bob asked about the Navy Seals. They were an elite group at that point in their little realm. But we were all fragmented. Now we're joined. We're Special Operation Forces. SOF, as they call them. And they're all under one big umbrella. I think that's been a good thing.

PIEHLER: I once did an interview with a World War II veteran, General Crosin, and we mainly focused on World War II, but I asked a little about Vietnam. And one of his comments about Vietnam was, initially, that in many ways he thinks it was an extremely professional force. The forces that went in '64, '65, '66, he said, was a very professional army. It was far better than Korea, and even World War II in a lot of ways. That this was an army ready to go. That the problems only emerge as Vietnam lengthens. He was at that time a much higher, I think when Vietnam started, mid-60's, he was a colonel and you were a lieutenant, captain. What's your sense of that from further down the ranks?

MASSEY: I echo what he said.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And I'll say this, General Crosin was my division commander.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay.

MASSEY: 3rd Infantry Division in Germany.

PIEHLER: Oh, okay.

MASSEY: So he's an old dog-faced soldier. And that's kind of what I was saying earlier on, when I was talking about the helicopter pilots. Earlier on they would come out and do stuff, whatever. Later on, and plus, you had the protests back home, you had the soldiers who were not, I mean they were drafted in, they didn't want to go, "Hell no. I don't want to go." So earlier on we were all [professional], we had been in there awhile for the most part. Like I said, I had been with the division for two years and trained hard and kind of knew what we were doing. You got some good training in Germany, and then of course went to Vietnam. So yeah, I would echo what he said. He's right on, as they say.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, you had him as a division commander back, what years would ...

MASSEY: That would have been ... I was with the 3rd Infantry Division in '76 to '78. I was down in the battalion, I was battalion XO and he was the division commander.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, what was he like as a division commander?

MASSEY: Oh he was hard, but good.

PIEHLER: Yeah. I mean he strikes me as ...

MASSEY: He was a soldier. And that's how he approached things. We go to the field, we're going to the field to train, we're gonna go to soldier. He was for the troops. I think, and I may be wrong, I think he came up through the ranks.

PIEHLER: Oh he pretty much did. He ...

MASSEY: But one thing I do know about him, and he told us this one day in a big officer meeting, you know we had all the officers together, he said, "You know, I have commanded at every level in the 3rd Infantry Division from platoon leader up to division commander." And that's pretty significant when you think about it. I mean, to start out, all the different commands

that you could have, but in the same unit through his career. But interestingly, he had at that time; he had two assistant division commanders. One who, General Elton became assistant chief of staff of the army, I guess. Two or three stars. And another one called Charles W. Dyke. Now you talk about somebody who was hard as woodpecker lips, was Charles W. Dyke. He was a one star general and he was a soldier. Just amazing at what he could, I don't know if he ever slept.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: I mean, he was always everywhere. But one of the things he would do, 'course he was assistant division commander for training. And he would know what every unit was doing every day, and supposedly every hour. Woe be unto you if he came into your unit, and he pulled out the training schedule and you weren't doing dismounted drill or you weren't doing whatever at the time you were supposed to be doing it. I mean he was death on that, and 'course everybody knew that so we said, "You better be." But one of the biggest things he would do, and his aide did not know until the morning he called the aide and said, "Get the chopper cranked. We're gonna go have PT with 2nd Battalion of the 30th Infantry." And he would just show up. Again, if you weren't in PT formation, woe be unto your battalion commander. Because I mean he would just eat him alive. But he would come out, and he would do PT with you. I mean, he was a tall, slim guy, he was probably in his forties I guess.

PIEHLER: He would be out there?

MASSEY: Oh he would. We would take off running, and we'd go through the daily dozen or whatever, and he'd go right along with you. And we'd take off on the run, and whoever's in charge of the formation, myself or a sergeant, he'd say, "I'm gonna take charge of the run. Is that okay?" Of course everybody was like, "Yes sir! You the man!" (Laughs) He would say, "Now we're gonna run my pace." He did not run a hard pace. I mean, he ran a good, steady pace. Inevitably, in any formation you run, you're gonna have some that are gonna drop back. 'Cause I mean he'd take off and here we go. After about three miles, you know, there'd be some stragglers. You didn't wait for them to catch up, you circled, and you went back and you picked them up. You did that about twice, I mean hell you're having to run, I mean you're going out, and you'd say, "Man, when are we going to go back to the cantonment area?" He'd go back and circle them up. And about the third time doing that, you'd carry these guys. You had to, to keep them up with the formation. He'd take you back in, finally. We'd stop and he'd say, "Okay, I'm going to give you a critique on the run today." He wouldn't even be breathing hard. He would say, "We do not leave our soldiers on the battlefield. Hence we do not leave them in a PT run." I mean that was his point. Of course everybody knew that it was going to be made. He made it every time he came out for a PT session. Then he'd say, "Good run today." He'd jump on his chopper and fly away. But to show you how his whole thing operated, he was assistant division commander, and he was also a community commander. Over in Germany you had this different set of, he was the community commander in Schweinfurt. My wife got a speeding ticket. It happens. Well it comes down through the command channels, you know, and you as the sponsor have to make sure that your wife or whomever knows the speed in Germany. Well in any event, I get this letter down through the chain of command that read, "Your wife has received a

speeding ticket." Well General Dyke saw everything like that that came through the community 'cause he was community commander. Well he had written down on the bottom of it, "George, I know what you're going through. Ms. Dyke received a speeding ticket last week." Or something like that. I forget exactly how he ended it up. He'd write his initials, Charles W. Dyke, CWD. But now, he took the time to say, "Hey, I understand. Ms. Dyke got one of these too." So he was that kind. He was hard, but at the same time he could be very personal.

PIEHLER: Well, it's sort of interesting. 'Cause this totally fits the image I would have of Crosin as a commander. Once when he spoke at Rutgers, I had him do an alumni talk. And I sort of had had a little too much to drink at the dinner, so afterwards, after his question and answer, I said to him, "General, you would be one of the few people, if you basically threw me a weapon right now, I would follow you." Where for some people I interviewed, I had the complete opposite ... How far can I get away from you? But Crosin just struck me as a general's general, a soldier's soldier.

MASSEY: Yeah. A soldier's soldier. He called himself the dog-faced solider. And of course the 3rd Infantry Division has a song, you know, The Dog-Faced Solider.

PIEHLER: By the way, I should say, even on the record, his interview is on the web. And it is World War II. We spent a lot of time documenting his Rutgers experiences. I mean, I think it was his company, he said, "Every junior officer in the Battle for France and Germany except for him either got wounded or killed." And he said, "At one point," I mean the story that really stuck with me was he said, "I'm standing in a doorway at one point, there was machine gun fire coming through, the guy standing next to me lost his arm in this fire, I was fortunately not scratched." And I thought, "You've been through that. You've had your ... "

MASSEY: That's like, one of my NCOs got his earlobe shot off. Now you think about that.

PIEHLER: Yeah, that's ...

MASSEY: And he was complaining rightly so. "Shot my earlobe off!" And I said, "Sarge, an inch to the left and we wouldn't be talking right now."

PIEHLER: Yeah. (Laughter)

MASSEY: I mean, that is tough to get your earlobe shot off. That's getting close.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, when you first joined the Army who did you think your enemy was? Or would be?

MASSEY: Well, of course back then the Cold War.

PIEHLER: Yeah, so it was the Russians.

MASSEY: So it was the Russians. But interestingly enough, after we, you know, I was at Fort Benning, Georgia, 2nd Infantry Division. And we went on this Rotaplan deal. It was a six month

swap-out. Battle group would take our place and we'd go and take their place. And we went over to the armpit of the world. We used to laugh about it. But anyway, the cantonment area there in Baumholder, Germany, 8th Infantry Division. And we were able to make some trips up to the front lines, and we were able to go into, and this was right after the Berlin Wall had really gone up in what, '61? So this was in '62. The fall of '62. Well the Bay of Pigs was, or the Cuban Missile Crisis was going on, 'cause we were getting on planes to go to Germany in October '62.

PIEHLER: So you very well thought this could really ...

MASSEY: Well, I mean we knew we were supposedly going to Germany. That was our ... but at the same time our division was one of what they call "the garden plot" divisions, which was the plan for defense against invasion by Cuba. So we didn't know. We said, "Man, are we going to Florida? Where the hell are we going?" So we jumped on a plane, and well, we ended up in Germany. 'Cause it was just too much already in motion, 'cause they were already coming back, the other unit. We just kind of swapped. But, I lost my train of thought there. I've been talking too much.

PIEHLER: Well, you were saying , I asked you about your enemy, and who you thought ...

MASSEY: Oh, ok. So, we got into Germany, and we made these tours up along the border and we got into West Berlin. And then we took a very controlled trip through Checkpoint Charlie over in East Berlin and then came back in the dead of winter, cold and snow everywhere. And the grandmothers were out there sweeping the snow up in the East Berlin area. We got back, and after I left Germany and we came back to the states, I started thinking, "I don't think they'll ever attack us."

PIEHLER: Really, that was your thought at the time?

MASSEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: Why did you think that?

MASSEY: I just, when you saw East Berlin, and I did a paper on it when I was in the Czech language school, "Daylight and Dark". West Berlin, East Berlin, and it was daylight and dark. I mean you go out of West Berlin, it was booming. Things had been built back. You'd go into East Berlin [and] things still hadn't been built. And this was in '62, or early '63, I guess. [They] had not been rebuilt. Of course I was privy to some intel, and you say, "I just don't think they've got the wherewithal to come across." Then later on, even more particularly when I got into the 3rd ID [Infantry Division], I was out there again in what we called the LDA, local deportment areas, I really got some intel then when I got up to the USEUR headquarters and the G3 shop, and I'd go over and listen to the G2 intel briefings every morning. I mean, if they moved a jeep, we knew it.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And I said, “There’s no way they’re going to be able to mass their forces without us knowing it.” Plus, by this time some of the chinks in their armor were starting to come out, that they didn’t have the wherewithal to sustain. And I just never felt that they were ever going to be a threat to us.

PIEHLER: That it wasn’t realistic. That one day you were going to wake up and they were attacking.

MASSEY: Yeah. But even earlier on after that first tour of duty.

PIEHLER: Yeah. Whereas a lot of people, the Berlin crisis was a major ...

MASSEY: Oh yeah, but still you couldn’t not prepare. As they say at Leavenworth, you prepare for war in peace. I think that’s the motto.

PIEHLER: But you thought the chances were not as high as ...

MASSEY: Yeah, I didn’t think our threat was ... I just said, “I don’t think that they’re gonna have the wherewithal to sustain much.”

PIEHLER: Well, and in some ways it’s striking how much it was a façade. Because, I mean, particularly the first Iraq war, stuff was junk. I mean, I was sort of stunned at how ...

MASSEY: I was surprised at a hundred hours and it was over with.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: Then, of course, this friend of mine General Lutz, Joe Lutz, who I worked with in Vietnam, and I called him and he said, “You know,” he was two star when he retired, “George, we should not have let them go home with their mules.” You know, he kind of used the Civil War analogy. He said, “We should have turned left and gone to Baghdad.” And of course that’s hindsight, too. But we should have at that point, but our mandate if I understood it correctly was get ‘em out of Kuwait and reestablish. And that’s it.

PIEHLER: I think it was Norman Schwarzkopf who once said in his memoirs, he said, “When I got out of West Point I never expected to be deployed to these places.” Vietnam, Iraq, Kuwait. He listed several. When you were in the Army, did you ever expect to end up in a place like Vietnam, for example?

MASSEY: No. I felt Europe was where we’ll go, ‘cause I got in the Special Forces and went there initially. And then, of course, by then Vietnam was starting to heat up a little bit on the horizon. But earlier on I would have never through I would be in Southeast Asia fighting a war. I thought it was gonna be Europe. But, like I said, after that first Rotaplan tour of six months there, even in the back of my mind I said, “I don’t know if we’re gonna have a war in Europe. There might be some police actions or stuff. I never was really, you know, I had studied a little bit about Korea but I never really even considered that that would be a situation. Because by that

time South Korea had really become the stronger of the two. And of course we had our forces still there, so  Vietnam was never, you know, of course once it started cranking up I started reading Bernard Fall and a few of those to see what had really gone on over there with the French.

PIEHLER:  I'm curious,  one of the things I hope people do is think back to what they thought at the time. 'Cause I know hindsight has been ...

MASSEY: What you are is where ...

PIEHLER: What I like to say is it's hard to admit you might have been wrong.

MASSEY:  Well, it sounded like I knew everything was going on, but ...

PIEHLER:  Yeah, I'm curious, what were your thoughts, you know, when clearly Vietnam was heating up and that you were going.  What did you think of this all?  And you said you started reading up. What were your initial thoughts, not later on?

MASSEY:  Well, of course apprehension.  You know, hey, they're shooting real bullets over there.  But at the same time I felt like I had received some good training and I knew I was going over "as a young captain."  I knew I was going into the Fifth Special Forces but I had no idea where I was going to end up or what I would run into when I got there.  I remember the first briefing I had with the group commander, and there were three of us, three captains standing there, and they said, "Well, we're gonna send you guys down to Three Corps."  Well, you know, Three Corps didn't make any sense, I don't know where the hell Three Corps is. I said, "What are you talking about?"  He said, "Yeah, it's down near Saigon. We need to get you down there and get you on out into a camp."  Well, sounds serious.  It really caught my attention. I'd been at the B-Team, so they sent us to the B-Team first. Like I said, we had two A-Teams and a B-Team all in the same complex, if you will, in this village of Hiep Hoa.  They were getting ready to put the A-Teams out.  'Course we got there, had been there maybe a week still trying to sort out what's going on. Of course, the old guys had been there and they'd been running operations and stuff.  I remember the captain came in and he said, "Company Whatever is taking out a patrol." It was one of the Vietnamese companies.  He said, "We don't have Americans with them.  They don't have contact.  They don't have communications."  So this is an operation they just, the counterpart decided he wanted to run, and he was complaining to the B-Team commanders of Lt. Colonel.  He said, "They're heading out," and kind of gave the general direction, "I don't know what the hell he's going out there for. So we don't have any intel."  I mean he was kind of berating the fact that this guy decided to do this on his own or send out this company-sized force, or maybe half a company, forty or fifty people.  I'd say, thirty minutes later we hear this tremendous boom. I mean it just caught everybody's attention.  But we had no radio com.  We didn't know what had happened. You know, land mine?  We didn't know what it was.  Well, long story short, here come some runners back. You know, the ones that survived.  They came running in and they were just jabbering, and of course I couldn't understand a bit of the Vietnamese at that time 'cause I hadn't had the language yet.  They were jabbering and going on, and then of course things started stirring and our counterparts, you know, they started scurrying around.  What had happened, this unit was walking single file down a canal, and we found out

when we got out and made the assessment [that] there were seven 105 rounds command-detonated as this unit was walking along. And it just blew. We went out and literally, we got helicopters in and secured the area, and sent out a sweep to secure, and went out in helicopters, and literally, it sounds gory, but we picked up bits and pieces of bodies.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: And put them in body bags and took them back to the camp. They didn't know how many went on the operation. We don't know how many were killed, 'cause there were no Americans with them or anything like that. At that point I said to myself, "This is some serious business we got here." (Laughs) I mean, I didn't consider it funny at the time, but I mean it caught my attention, because from that day forward I said, "Man this is serious." You don't violate security, you don't violate a lot of rules that they violated. And that's what this captain, I can't even remember his name 'cause he left pretty soon after this 'cause his tour was up. And that made an impression on me. He said, "Man, they're asking for trouble." It was almost like it was set up.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: I mean they got into the killing zone and boy, they just waxed 'em hard. And it was almost like somebody led them out there to do this. It was really ...

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: But like I said, my thoughts going in is just try to watch what's going on and keep my head down.

PIEHLER: How did you feel, I mean Vietnam would become controversial, but I often say to my students, "Look, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed unanimously in the House." I mean there was, if you read the New York Times in '65, '66, it's actually pretty gung-ho for this. What was your sense about the support for the war, say, in '64, '65, '66?

MASSEY: Well I think earlier on there was, I didn't feel any negative. It was pretty well there. But when the battles and the scenes started arriving, and people have written about this, so it's not like it's profound on my part, but, when that all started getting portrayed in the evening supper table or dinner table. Then of course I think a lot of the protesters were really protesting out of, they didn't want their hide rendered unserviceable. I don't think they were protesting the war, per se, as they were their just by individual situation. But you could see that turn. I do remember the first time back, it was just, I went home, you know, back to my little hometown. And this was in '67. Went to a football game. Went up in the stands, and of course I waved at a few people that I recognized. I was just kind of, we were at home and I thought, well, the old team's playing, I'll go down and see what it's all about. No one, not one person, came up to me and said, "Welcome back."

PIEHLER: And these are people you knew?

MASSEY: These were people I grew up with.

PIEHLER: And that was in ’67?

MASSEY: And that bothered me. I thought then, I said, “You know, these people don’t understand what our troops have gone through.” I thought back on that, and I said, “I don’t know if they didn’t know what to say or how to come up and say it.” But literally not one person. And not that I was looking for a parade. That was not the point.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

MASSEY: I kind of waved to some people I recognized, and they kind of waved to me, but ... And I really thought that was odd.

PIEHLER: But also no one was sort of spitting on you or anything.

MASSEY: No. (Laughs) That little situation came later on coming through the LA airport.

PIEHLER: Yeah, but this was mainly just apathy, almost.

MASSEY: I don’t know if it was apathy. And like I said, I tried to think back on it later on, and I thought, well, maybe they just didn’t know how to. By this time, I know, there were other kids from that area that had been to Vietnam. Of course unfortunately some folks later on, young soldiers were killed. Of course my brother was over there. But that was the reaction I got on a Friday night at a football game.

PIEHLER: A place where people ...

MASSEY: That you would think , and they were people that I knew, so I was kind of ...

PIEHLER: It wasn’t like these weren’t total strangers.

MASSEY: No. Like I said, coming through the LA airport later on after my second tour I had one of these long-haired hippies come up and said something about the baby-killer thing. ‘Cause I was in uniform. And I just grabbed him. I said, “Son of a bitch, I’ll kill you if you don’t get out of my face.” And he left, and I went on my way.

PIEHLER: Well it’s interesting because I ask Vietnam veterans, and they’ll often tell me stories about how that happened to others, but you’re one of the first to have that actually happen.

MASSEY: Oh he came up to me, and I was not in any mood to, I was home and I was relieved, but I was not in any mood. And of course, by this time, this is ’70 I guess, when the real stuff was really fomenting. And I just wasn’t in any mood for that.

PIEHLER: Mm hmm.

MASSEY: And I don't if I would have killed him or not, but he thought I would. (Laughter)

PIEHLER: Well it's almost five o'clock, so ...

MASSEY: Yeah, I know.

PIEHLER: So there'll be a part two, though it may be awhile because I may wait until my graduate assistant, it may be a year because I have a new graduate assistant that should come out whose focus is on Vietnam. But also this will give—

------------------------------END OF INTERVIEW------------------------------