

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Patrick L. Villars

COLLECTION: 4700.0991

IDENTIFICATION: Vietnam veteran

INTERVIEWER: Dudley R. Meier, Jr.

SERIES: Americans in Vietnam

INTERVIEW DATES: 5/10/75

FOCUS DATES: Feb. 1971-Jan. 6, 1975

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1447, Side A

Father's military service; early experience with military; comparison of Air Force and Marines; going from college environment to military; reasons for joining Marines; severity of training, disciplinary aspects of training; expectations of commanding officers; boot camp; use of cursing to wear recruits down; term "unauthorized absence"; no advance warning of what they'd do next; Vietnam-specific training; ten days leave after boot camp; infantry training regimen at Camp Pendleton; aviation electronics training; psychology used on Marines; rocket attack; first impressions of Thailand; American sense of entitlement; arrival in Nam Phong, Thailand; description of base in jungle; worked on electronics test equipment; description of Nam Phong airport; few amenities besides electricity; primitive toilets, bathing facilities; fungus from water there; worked seven days a week; bombing missions; sophisticated planes and electronic equipment used; racial problems; reactionary squads to quell race riots; mess duty.

Tape 1447, Side B

Low morale; unpopularity of mess duty; R&R on Air Force base in Thailand; bombing Cambodia; morale better in Vietnam than in Thailand; heroin addiction; how military changed people; fear of black soldiers; addicts; how leaders are chosen; public's pity for Vietnam veterans; American soldiers' loss of innocence; helpfulness of religion; watching addicts suffer from withdrawal; confusion about patriotism; happy to leave Thailand; Japanese standard of living; the regimented life of Marine Corp; rebellion when Marines tried to regiment their hooches; animosity between troops and leaders; no reason to be in Vietnam; fragging; communications with home; Thai prostitutes; living this existence changes a man into someone hard and callous; poor leadership led to animosity; drug addiction; bugs in the food; separation of officers and troops in mess hall; jail at Nam Phong; pilots; privileges of officers denied to enlisted men; differences between pilots and enlisted men; prostitution in Thailand; availability of drugs; corruption; Stars and Stripes newspaper; military equipment left behind in Vietnam; contact with Thai people; favorable impressions of Southeast Asians; Filipinos; Vietnamese struggle for nationalism, independence; Thai love of independence and freedom; correspondence with Senator Fulbright about Thai revolution; Thai student riots against military; communism in Thailand; uselessness of US involvement in Vietnam; opinions about military; volunteering for

Vietnam for adventure; voted for McGovern; Villars is Catholic, believes in respecting human beings.

TAPES: 1 (T1447)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 30 minutes

PAGES INDEX: 4 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None