

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: William E. Mayfield

COLLECTION: 4700.0965

IDENTIFICATION: Vietnam veteran

INTERVIEWER: Dale Jenkins

SERIES: Americans in Vietnam

INTERVIEW DATES: 11/16/75

FOCUS DATES: April, 1969-Dec. 1970; Oct. 1969- Dec. 1970

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1410, Side A

Introduction to history interview with Vietnamese helicopter pilot and military intelligence; aircraft carrier; was in Vietnam until the fall of Saigon; getting out of Vietnam; using connections to get out of country; something happened with girlfriend on April 27; felt like he needed to stay and fight for his country; caught ride on Marine chopper to Midway Island; then got ride on ship; last few days before Saigon fell, people were scared and excited about Communists; most people from South are more relaxed, people from North more uptight; people who had moved from North to South when country split were the most worried; father didn't want to leave, they had a good house and a good store; building up weapons to protect himself?; father stayed in Vietnam; things didn't get too wild in Saigon, still under control, until very end; air support, US involvement; felt deserted by US; thinks if US had sent more air support they wouldn't have had to leave; Mayfield had never had much contact with Communists; Mayfield likes US, finds the people friendly, hopes he can repay American people for saving his life; would like to return to Vietnam if things could be better like they were before; when he sees families all together, he gets sad; brother and cousin stayed in Vietnam; felt especially endangered because he was involved with military intelligence; background checks; people from south Vietnam are especially friendly, will do any favor for you; differences in regions of Vietnam; I Corps is way up north, II corps is from Pleiku down, III corps is near Saigon, IV corps is Mekong delta; people in I Corps speak a bit differently, have different slang; people in south are the best; love of his people; farmers and city folk of Vietnam; Buddhism and other religions in Vietnam; says he doesn't know enough English to explain differences in religions; efforts to learn English; went to language school, found English very difficult, wanted to give up; was smarter than his classmates, had to carry whole class; difficulty of Vietnamese language; people in Saigon who had to get out of the country; security, checkpoints, hard to find excuse to get into airport; troops moved into Saigon; last presidents of Vietnam had little power; leadership in Vietnam, military leaders; last big offensive was over quickly; connection with US; people getting out any way they can, if they had connections with Americans, easier to get out; military abandoned Cam Ranh Bay so quickly, left helicopters and B 52s there; CBU bombs; bombs in

April; working in military intelligence; they look at photo album together; pictures of pilots; picture of Buddhist temple; picture of Lambretta that they piled 12 people into; picture of Boy Scouts, description of Boy Scout activities; attended language school for three months; locations of language schools; staff headquarters of language school.

Tape 1410, Side B

Photos; picture of Army newspaper man; former Vietnamese leader who is on US lecture circuit; more comments on people in photo album; losing track of people; some sort of diploma; got married three weeks ago; look at more pictures; some sort of monument; people disappearing, being killed; enemy ambushes; how people live in Vietnam, close together, few private cars; Mayfield is from countryside; did intelligence work in Saigon; people who suffered bad treatment from communists were good candidates for informants; communists burn different kind of incense; using passwords to identify contacts; other security precautions; Mayfield worked for the military, not the government; checkpoints; black market trade in PX items; Vietnamese didn't have American laundry soap, big black market item; feelings that American stuff was better; could buy a cassette player, use for a few months, then sell at a profit; Vietnamese government charged 300 percent tax on perfume; Mayfield never owned a car in Vietnam, rode motorcycle; relative power of military intelligence, police, government; training for police; carrying gun constantly, sleeping with gun on pillow; never visited Laos or Cambodia, but has been to Thailand; only get out of army by dying or being thrown out; interpreter that the Green Berets killed, possibly a double agent; picture of a guy shooting another guy in the head; American troops separate people; keeping any one person from knowing too much; collecting information; people who make up stories to tell intelligence people; contact with American soldiers in Vietnam; Americans lived like kings there; feelings about living in America; interest in working with FBI or CIA; attend English classes two nights per week.

TAPES: 1 (T1410)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 23 minutes

PAGES INDEX: 3 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None