

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Jerome "Jerry" Schmidt

COLLECTION: 4700.0982

IDENTIFICATION: Vietnam veteran

INTERVIEWER: Paul K. Moore

SERIES: Americans in Vietnam

INTERVIEW DATE: 2/18/74

FOCUS DATES: 1966-1969

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1435

Upbringing and education in South Carolina and Texas; professions of parents; continuing ROTC to avoid being drafted as enlisted man; basic army training at Fort Knox, Kentucky; training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina; getting news that he was being sent to Vietnam; adequacy of training for Vietnam; keeping up morale of officers; bad reputation of the 4th Division, which operated in the Central Highlands; company commander who reassured him; jungle training in Panama; prostitutes who lived on bridges and serviced American soldiers; American soldiers with Vietnamese girlfriends; mamasans who pimped Vietnamese girls; rates for prostitutes; English speaking abilities of prostitutes; attempt to legalize prostitution to control spread of venereal diseases; how mamasans operated; case where group of prostitutes overthrew mamasan, replacing her with more popular senior prostitute; Western dress of Vietnamese prostitutes; Americans' dislike of Vietnamese civilians; Vietnamese people's love of apples; black market traffic in cigarettes, beer and soda, C rations, and expended ammunition; using up ammunition to produce expended ammunition for black market trade; use of speed and marijuana in his unit; supply and price of drugs; denies homosexuality in his unit; movements of tank in his tank unit; sleeping arrangements inside and outside his tank; bathing while in the field; receiving mail in the field; travels in Asia while on leave; people in Asia only wanting his money, not concerned about him; seeing American movies in Thailand; boring days between combat; tanks getting ambushed; deploying tanks while serving as commander; going to find a missing tank; spending his birthday inside tank stuck in swamp; getting tank out of mud; targets they shot at; getting assigned to be a scout; group of men in his unit who felt like a family; black soldiers he worked with; home states of members of his unit; lack of respect for Army policy and leaders;.

TAPES: 1 (T1435)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 32 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None