

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Art Bergeron

COLLECTION: 4700.0935

IDENTIFICATION: Vietnam veteran

INTERVIEWER: Paul Moore

SERIES: Americans in Vietnam

INTERVIEW DATE: Feb 23, 1974

FOCUS DATES: February 1969 - January 1971; July 1969 - July 1970

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1361

Growing up in Alexandria and Lecompte; sugar cane in Lecompte area; education at LSU Alexandria, PhD program at LSU; getting drafted while in grad school; training at Fort Polk; first duty was cleaning pots and pans; shocked when drafted, didn't expect it so soon; unsure whether he would be sent to Vietnam or to Korea; Vietnamese style village set up at Fort Polk for training purposes; sent to Vietnam, assigned to 4th Division; he was one of 5 out of 200 soldiers who were made clerks instead of infantry; orientation at Cam Ranh Bay; duties as clerk; helped start Civic Action Newsletter; Kit Carson Scouts, former NVA and VC soldiers who worked for Americans; propaganda operations; transferred to a mechanized infantry battalion because the NCO didn't like him; moved to An Khe; personality problems with NCO; almost got put into infantry after six months as a clerk; NCOs getting people transferred without their knowledge; contact with Vietnamese civilians while on K.P. duty; Vietnamese prejudice against black soldiers; accommodations in barracks south of Pleiku City; showers; supply of books to read in Vietnam, base libraries; types of books available; went to Vietnam as newlywed, frequent correspondence with wife and parents; movies and radio; bars on base with entertainment by Vietnamese bands; abominable housing and living conditions of Vietnamese civilians in Pleiku; montagnard villages; workers pilfering fruit on K.P. duty; marijuana use in the mechanized battalion; prostitution in Pleiku; availability of wares in PX; discounted merchandise at the PX; rockets fired into their camp at Pleiku; satchel charges (bags full of explosives) thrown into camp; being sent out on base camp patrols with people who weren't adequately trained for combat; duties as correspondence clerk at An Khe; his efforts to get a presidential unit citation for his battalion; access to top secret documents; procedures for body counts; people who headed propaganda organizations and projects; propanda leaflets dropped from planes; readjusting to the US; student protests in US against war in Vietnam; ambivalence over whether US involvement was justified; attitudes of Vietnamese toward US soldiers; inefficiency of Army; not interested in returning to visit Vietnam; concern regarding fate of montagnards; oppression of montagnards by South Vietnamese; experiments with rice to improve yield; volunteering for civil affairs duty;

TAPES: 1 (T1361)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 30 pages

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