

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Richard "Dick" Post

COLLECTION: 4700.0977

IDENTIFICATION: Vietnam veteran

INTERVIEWER: Bailey Vinson

SERIES: Americans in Vietnam

INTERVIEW DATES: 3/3/77

FOCUS DATES: June 14, 1963-Sept. 30, 1969; March 1965-Oct. 1965; Nov. 1967-Dec. 1968

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1426

Born in St. Cloud, MN; parents' occupations; childhood, playing ball; graduated from Catholic high school; joined service voluntarily to avoid draft; joined Marine Corp; boot camp in San Diego; advanced infantry training; was in first Marine outfit to be sent to Vietnam in 1965; learned on the job; felt he had adequate training; lock on training to sharpen infantry skills; arrival in Vietnam, amphibious landing; took Freedom Hill; was infantryman, did reconnaissance; camping in the bush; altercation with a sergeant who never went into field; "Seven Days of May" battle near Dong Ha; maiming Vietnamese corpses because Buddhists believed this would condemn their spirits to wander eternally; cutting off fingers and pulling teeth from corpses; US soldier killed old man for charging him \$1 for a Coke; Marines operated in free fire zones where all Vietnamese were fair game; training Vietnamese troops in Hue; ARVN nearly as good as US army; high opinion of NVA and VC as soldiers; half the problems in Vietnam would be solved if they used soap; his father's pigs have better shelter than Vietnamese villagers; too scared to mess around with prostitutes; no drug use during his 1965 tour; prevalence of drugs in 1968; change in attitude between 1965 and 1968; not many drugs in his unit, they relied on each other too much to chance using drugs; if men in his command used too many drugs, he found a non-field position for them; his unit, Marine Recon, was elite; got whiskey through his uncle in Da Nang; black market money exchange; playing poker; combating boredom by writing letters, listening to music, playing poker; opinions of superior officers; enlisted men were lazy, tried to avoid field, but once there they were good; never saw a black person until he was 17, and that was on TV; had never met a black person until he joined the service; blacks were lazy, always at sick call to avoid going on an operation; blacks just as good as whites in the field; US soldiers better than Vietnamese soldiers; quotes Chesty Puller of the 3rd Marines on concept of limited war; US strategy in Vietnam was senseless; war forced him to grow up; his wife didn't grow up during war; criticism of interview questions; Vietnam entirely different from previous wars; cared only about surviving his year of fighting; critique of Fire In the Lake by Frances Fitzgerald; reviews other books about Vietnam war.

TAPES: 1 (T1426)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 32 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 14 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None