

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Colonel T. O. Blakeney

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0938

**IDENTIFICATION:** Vietnam veteran

**INTERVIEWER:** Bert Magruder

**SERIES:** Americans in Vietnam

**INTERVIEW DATE:** 4/30/74

**FOCUS DATES:** 1963-1964

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 1367**

Growing up, family life; commissioned into Army through Thomason Act; choosing Army over Marines; chose armor division; trained at Fort Knox, KY in 1940; no military tradition in family; winter task force in Alaska called "Task Force Frigid"; plane crash in 1946; recovery in hospital; offered retirement at age 27 due to severity of injuries; continued military service until 1967; first assignment in Germany; due for hardship tour, offered choice of Korea or Vietnam; chose Vietnam; went there in 1963 to command Army Concepts team; serving around Quang Tri, close to the demilitarization zone; use of tanks in Vietnam; death of President Diem and ensuing turmoil; build-up in Vietnam by 1964; beauty of Vietnam; three sections of Vietnam — delta, rice country and central highlands; Vietnamese attitudes toward American military personnel; murderous deeds of Viet Cong; attitudes of Vietnamese peasants toward Viet Cong; religions of Vietnamese; fragmentation of Vietnamese people; Vietnam 1,000 years ago under leadership of Trung sisters; demography of Vietnamese people; montagnards; overseas Chinese who settled in Vietnam; terrible behavior of American troops in Vietnam; Vietnamese people fleeing North Vietnam because of religious persecution after 1954 Communist take over; Japanese influence on Vietnam; hydro-electric generating system in Da Lat; inflation and the black market; disconnection between government and small farmers; Vietnamese love and respect for education, their yearning for information on the outside world; effects of protest against war on the war effort; invasion of Cambodia.

**Tape 1368**

Making recommendations to US government about efficient use of troops and weapons in Vietnam; Viet Cong use of land mines detonated by pull strings; recommending troops sit on top of personnel carriers to lessen effects of mines; officers' knowledge of drug use within their ranks; black market; soldiers' savings plans; prostitution; Red Cross has been unfairly maligned; half-breed children of soldiers.

**TAPES:** 2 (T1367, T1368)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 1 hour, 15 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 24 pages

**RESTRICTIONS:** None