

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: David F. Hull, Jr.

COLLECTION: 4700.0956

IDENTIFICATION: Vietnam veteran

INTERVIEWER: John Davis

SERIES: Americans in Southeast Asia

INTERVIEW DATES: March 11, 197?

FOCUS DATES: May 30, 1969-June 30, 1973, Aug. 30, 1970- July 28, 1971

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1393, Side A

Born and raised in western Maryland; attended LSU for undergraduate work in political science; early education; offered golf scholarships; involvement with ROTC; got Army scholarship junior and senior years; father worked as aeronautical engineer in space program; Hull also interested in flight; graduated in 1969, sent to Fort Bliss, Texas; assigned to missile site in San Francisco; protected San Francisco from enemy aircraft; learning tactics on missile site; high caliber of enlisted men and officers on site; rigorous qualifying exams; security clearance, background investigations; Russian MIG landed in Miami during presidential visit, causing international security alert; practice alerts, staged surprise attacks to keep you in shape; threats of radical students and communist plots; everyone had to follow security procedures; size of battery; three areas: radar, launcher and administrative; on-site accommodations for men; got orders for Vietnam after six months in San Francisco; special training in El Paso, summer, 1970; training to be duster platoon leader; description of duster, a WWII armored tank; thought his talents could have been better used than riding around on a tank, shooting at people; how Army decided Hull should go to Vietnam; went back to Maryland for a month of visiting and golf before shipping out to Vietnam; wanted to get a position in Vietnam that would help people, not be destructive; flight to Vietnam via Hawaii; visiting Waikiki Beach in fatigues; arriving in Vietnam; processing; Hull called friends in-country, one came to pick uim up to go for drive; quieter than he expected in that area; visiting friend's barracks in area; became interested in civil affairs unit; dispersion of civil affairs units; work was similar to Peace Corps; top notch people in civil affairs unit; specialties of members of civil affairs teams; working in conjunction with civilians; weapons carried by members of civil affairs unit; size of units; helping villagers start a pillow-making business; starting fishery for village; ingenious people who could turn nothing into something beautiful; Hull was administrative officer for the entire unit; influencing what projects got done; some soldiers became part of the community; many soldiers in civil affairs wore civilian clothes; feels that these were very worthwhile programs, devoid of political aspects;

worked to better Vietnamese people's basic human needs; interference from other American units that didn't understand civil affairs work.

Tape 1393, Side B

Description of an average day; overseeing 19 different teams in 19 areas; worked six or 6 ½ days per week; played volleyball and basketball for recreation; preparing reports; amenities of headquarters; few security problems in area; headquarters at Long Binh had 30,000-40,000 Americans, pizza parlor, golf driving range; base camps less comfortable; his people seldom carried weapons; visiting remote areas; believes that VC in area left them alone because they helped community, would be bad press for VC if hurt the villagers' helpers; friction between combat units and civil affairs units; building pipe for montagnards; building bridge; building TB ward; impressions of Saigon; barbed wire, security precautions in Saigon; differences between city and country people in Vietnam; rich and poor dwellings; comparison of dwellings to those in the provinces; prostitution on Tu Do Street; 1970 general election in Vietnam; Vietnamese nation politics; civil affairs unit worked fine with Vietnam government; visit to Hong Kong; found Hong Kong a beautiful and modern international city; travel within Vietnam; mountainous landmarks in region; opinions on if America could win war, what we were doing there; war was beneficial to high ranking military people; access to information about what was happening in the US; worked as postal officer; accuracy of reporting in US on Vietnam; visits from high ranking government officials who were only shown what the military wanted them to see; opinions on ARVNs; was in sympathy with questions of anti-war movement; supports rights of demonstrators to dissent; opinion on bombing in Cambodia and Laos; lack of emotional involvement when dropping bombs or shooting missiles; easier emotionally to attack from air than face someone on the ground; mismanagement of Army personnel, Hull trained for missiles, but no missile units there; found his experience extremely worthwhile on a personal level.

TAPES: 1 (T1393)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 30 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 40 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None