

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with Micki and Jim George

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I am Hetsy Pickard representing the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas, and I will be doing an oral history today with Mickie George who is going to give us her real name, but she is affectionately known as Mickie. We are in the State of Texas, at the Nimitz Musuem on Main Street in Fredericksburg, Texas. Mickie, it's just my pleasure to be able to be with you this afternoon and to hear your story. I'll just ask some generic questions to begin your story. Where and when were you born?

MICKI: October 5, 1927, in Seminole, Oklahoma. My Father was working on an oil rig on the reservation there for the Parker Drilling Company in Oklahoma.

HETSY: So you, actually, were you living on the reservation?

MICKI: No, we lived in Seminole, I think. I don't remember.

HETSY: How long were you there, Micki?

MICKI: I left there when I was eighteen months old.

HETSY: You would not have any memory of that.

MICKI: No.

HETSY: And then where did you move to after that?

MICKI: We moved to Dallas, Texas. My Mother left me with her eldest sister, and she went into training as a nurse there in Parkland Hospital in Dallas, and I lived with my Aunt and Uncle there in Dallas.

HETSY: Wonderful. And then the names of your parents?

MICKI: Carl Campbell and Josephine Spruill Campbell.

HETSY: And did you have any brothers and sisters?

MICKI: No, I'm an only child.

HETSY: Where did you go to school when you were in Dallas?

MICKI: I went to graduated from Sunset High School in Dallas, and then I went to the University of Texas, I graduated when I was fifteen and went to the University of Texas and had a year and a half there. And then went back into nurses training in the Cadet Nurse Corps.

HETSY: And where was the training in the Cadet Nurse Corps?

MICKI: At Parkland where my Mother graduated.

HETSY: In Dallas. So you first entered the military as a nurse in training.

MICKI: Yes, and I got in it sorta of in an odd way. In 1941, I was a fourteen old high school student listening to a symphony concert in Dallas when Pearl Harbor occurred, and the announcement was made. And very shortly after that, the first Red Cross Camp and Hospital Tour was organized in Dallas and I became the resident accompanist and a vocalist with pianist and vocalist with that troop. When Congress passed the bill enabling the formation of the USO, then this Company was assimilated into a USO Troop. And I traveled out of Dallas during my high school years. When I went to the University of Texas, I traveled with the unit in Austin. And then when I came back to Dallas and the unit that I had been traveling with was invited at this point to go to Tokyo and entertain at the Imperial Japanese theater which was just after the shooting had stopped, and my Mother would not let me leave the States, and I was only seventeen. So the next day I said "Okay". I went down town and enlisted in the Cadet Nurse Corps because I knew

that would be acceptable to her since she was a nurse. And during the time I was training in Dallas, I traveled still with the same USO unit, or with a USO Unit out of Dallas on my time off, and after I graduated then I went to Fort Miley. We were not required, but we were encouraged to do Federal service of some sort. So Fort Miley was a VA hospital that had been taken over by the armed forces as a receiving hospital from the Pacific War area. It was in San Francisco. And I worked three to four days a week with the Nurse Corps and then two to three days a week, depending upon what my hours were, with Special Services.

HETSY: And what did you do with the Special Services?

MICKI: Well, I was sorta of a chauffeur and chaperone and squire and pianist and substitute performer and all that sorta thing. We had quite an influx of Hollywood personalities who came in and they usually wanted someone who could be with them all the time from the nursing service and sorta pad the association that they had because a lot of these shows were done in the wards. We had small pianos that we would push around and we went from ward to ward or would bring patients in, you know, and congregate in a rec room or something like that. We did have a theater and performing area, but it was sorta of far away from some of the wards and sometimes we couldn't get the bed patients out.

HETSY: And the focus in this instance was to entertain the troops who were recovering.

MICKI: Who were in the hospital.

HETSY: And you would have some who were bed ridden who couldn't get up.

Would they just roll the beds into the areas?

MICKI: Right. We'd push the beds in together, and gotta bunch of beds in one big ward.

It wasn't private rooms sorta thing. About the only private rooms we had at that point and time were on the isolation ward and that was the ward that I was three to eleven supervisor of. And we had isolation rooms in there so that we could carry out isolation procedures. But most of them were like fourteen, sixteen bed wards.

HETSY: And were they mostly full? Occupancy was almost one hundred percent.

MICKI: We usually ran quite full. We had a lot of head injuries and gunshot wounds and

that sorta thing. We did a lot of plastic repair work, surgical plastic repair on skulls, facial

surgery reconstructions, and that sorta thing.

HETSY: So you would have patients for a long period of time. This is a long recovery, that type of injury. On the isolation ward, were these isolations carried out because of communicable diseases or were they behavior?

MICKI: Both. We had, I remember several patients we had with ?????Bar A

Syndromes, and at time it was a relatively new diagnosis and they weren't quite sure what

caused it, so they were isolated and we used the respirators for them. And we had a

courier for the Motor Corps who was caught between a bus and a truck on his

motorcycle and lost a leg and had gas gangrene, and we had him isolated for that. So it

was just, you know, anything that came I that needed to be isolated.

HETSY: Really like an ICU.

MICKI: We had quite a few leprosy patients.

HETSY: Interesting. From the Philippines?

MICKI: From the Philippines.

HETSY: Did you send them to Louisiana ultimately?

MICKI: No, there was an isolation hospital up in the hills outside of Livermore,

California, that would take these patients and I remember one particularly hair-raising trip

carrying a patient there. My chauffeur was a race car driver who was driving an ambulance and we made the trip from Fort Miley to Livermore in about 55 minutes. It's

about 68 miles and you have to go across the Oakland Bay Bridge and through Oakland and up into the hills. So, it was interesting!

HETSY: Now this was when you were stationed in California?

MICKI: Right.

HETSY: Obviously.

MICKI: In San Francisco.

HETSY: In San Francisco. So to try to track your career because you've had a dual career, as a USO entertainer in your early teen years and then as a professional nurse.

MICKI: Right.

HETSY: In your early adult years. The years, as you have stated that you were entertaining with USO were basically around Texas, the Central Texas area, Dallas.

MICKI: There and in California when I was stationed there.

HETSY: And in California when you were stationed there. Then getting back to some of your early USO experiences, at age fourteen you said you...

MICKI: I started when I was fourteen.

HETSY: What do you remember as a young fourteen old? You had to have been very

impressionable at that age, and you said there were stars who did perform with you.  
What

were some of the memories that you have of that period?

MICKI: Being so busy that there wasn't much time to do much of anything. We went from ward to ward, and I was usually, you know, shepherding my piano along with someone pushing it along for me. And I was the resident accompanist for the entire show.

And I had discovered about two years before hand, that I could play anything I could hear.

So we rehearsed the shows in Dallas, and then my music was usually written on a single sheet of paper with the name of the performer and the songs and a key up there, and that

was it because I got tired of hauling all the music around. And we'd sometimes have sing

songs in the ward and things like that, you know, and just visit. It was a very loosely structured show because you reacted to the or with the patients and it was pretty much what they wanted to hear. We did our little numbers that were planned out, and then if they wanted to sing, or one of them wanted to perform or something of that sort why that was what we did. And we were usually bussed from Dallas to, oh, we did Mineral Wells quite frequently, Camp Walters at Mineral Wells. We did the air base at Sherman quite frequently. We did Camp Polk in Louisiana. We did, of course from Austin we did Bergstrom Field and what's the one in Temple? Hood. Camp Hood. And places that were around in the area that we could get to and get back in a weekend, because most of us were either in school or working or that sort of thing. So it was not the sort of troop they had when they did overseas work. We were doing principally weekend shows.



HETSY: My next question was going to be how did this interfere with your schooling? It obviously didn't, it enhanced your life.

MICKI: It didn't. No.

HETSY: Do you remember any stars or any particular incidences from this early period as

a teenager?

MICKI: Not really. When the USO troop out of Dallas was first getting started there, it was pretty much of a local thing. So our stars would have been like disc jockeys who went along to emcee the show, or people that performed locally and that sort of thing, and

there were quite a few of us who did overseas broadcast recordings. The Eighth Army building in Dallas, a business building that was taken over by the Eighth Army as their headquarters, had a recording studio on the top floor. And we cut records for overseas broadcasting up there.

HETSY: That is wonderful. Was that just done on a come if you can and we'll all get together and cut the record, or was it scheduled?

MICKI: Well, there was a group of us who performed, and we would practice and do certain, we'd work up certain numbers and certain arrangements, and it was sorta of a loosely jazz quintet sort of thing, you know, because we'd play together so frequently that we just sorta of knew what we were going to do.

HETSY: You just improvised.

MICKI: Right. It was a lot of improvisational work. And we had certain members in the troop, who were vocalist principally, who would come and do the recordings. And we just cut a lot of these records which were used for overseas broadcasting. And a lot of

them were sent overseas to be used there with the Army radio and overseas radio services.

HETSY: Do you have any of those records?

MICKI: No, they were never put out commercially. They were done just especially for that.

HETSY: Archives. See if we can find out if they're any residing in the Army archives.

MICKI: I don't have any idea whether any of 'em are still in existence or not. They'd all

be either 78's or 33's.

HETSY: Right. Of course. And it was Eighth Army that you were using their headquarters. So it'd probably be through the Eighth Army that we could discover that.

MICKI: I would imagine.

HETSY: So then you went on to the Nurses Cadet School and graduated. In what year did you graduate?

MICKI: 1948. I went in in 1945, graduated in 1948, and went directly to California and was out there until the Summer of 1950.

HETSY: All right. And during the period of '48 when you were in California, and you were head of the Isolation Ward, you were in charge of the Isolation Ward...

MICKI: Three to eleven supervisor up there.

HETSY: You were also involved with USO.

MICKI: Right.

HETSY: And as California seems to be somewhat of a hub for stars in the United States, did you have any exposure there?

MICKI: Yes, fortunately I did. I think the funniest thing that ever happened to me was that Alan Ladd and Arthur Treacher and Sophie Tucker came to the hospital one weekend and were gonna talk and talk to some of the patients and sorta visit, and that sorta thing. And I had gotten everybody headed over. From the patients' wing, our main story building was about seven or eight stories high, and that was where the patient and all the surgical and all the medical facilities were housed. And then adjacent to us was a building that had the chapel and the theater and the movie projection area and that sort of thing and the offices. And there was sorta of a runway going across, that was only a two-story building, and there was a runway that went across from the second floor of the hospital to the theater wing and all that sorta of thing. And this was an open-air thing that was facing the Golden Gate Bridge. And up one front was a glass wall that was canted almost to form about a 45 degree angle and had sorta of a half roof on it. Well, if you've ever been in the Golden Gate area you know it is just a hair windy and a little foggy. So we decided that we would take the short cut across the runway and we were going across there and, bless her heart, Sophie Tucker's wig blew off, and she is as bald as any billiard ball or was then. And we couldn't catch the thing. So I went down to surgery, or went up to surgery as it were from there, and got a scrub cap and showed her how to wind a scrub-cap turban which we wore at those times. So she did her show in her fancy gown with a hospital scrub cap on her head.

HETSY: I think that's wonderful!

MICKI: And the thing with Alan Ladd, the thing that amazed me is I had seen him in the movies, and I always thought he was such a tall handsome leading man. I am five four and

I could look him square in the eyes and so I know why he was telling me he had to stand on a large telephone book or a box when they did love scenes with him because he was so

short. And they always shot him from slightly underneath his angle so that he would look taller, but he was a delightful gentleman. And Arthur Treacher was an absolute jewel and

one of the funniest men I have ever met in my life!

HETSY: That is amazing. Now Alan Ladd, back to Alan Ladd, in that I never think of him as a song and dance man. How did he perform?

MICKI: He just came and talked to them and they'd sit down on the beds and go through the wards and just visit with them.

HETSY: So much of the star visiting was not necessarily performing as much as it was one on one visiting.

MICKI: Just chatting with them.

HETSY: As you were doing your Special Services work and you mentioned that you were chauffeuring people around, did you ever have a chance to chauffeur some stars around? Or dignitaries?

MICKI: Well, dignitaries who would come through, the mayor and different people in the USO would come out and stars who were Bob Hope with his troop would make a swing through Fort Miley and Presidio. And they might come out and it was sorta my responsibility to shepherd them through the hospital because I knew the layout. And say,

you know, I think you would enjoy seeing this or these patients would probably enjoy talking to you, and these people are from so and so, and they were injured in such and such a theater and you might enjoy talking to them.” We’d get to know them fairly well and know what some of their special interests were, hobbies and that sort of thing. And try to shepherd the men and give them an entree to conversation with the patients, so that both the people who were visiting and the patients would feel more comfortable talking.

HETSY: I know you must have felt a great sense of enjoyment in doing this work, and then the response of the patients, you must have seen some sort of a positive response. Can you talk about that?

MICKI: Oh, sure. Well, music has always been, we were practicing music therapy at Fort Miley before music therapy ever became a medical entity. And it was a question of finding out what their likes were in music and seeing that sort of music was acceptable to them. And we noticed that the recuperative rate was usually markedly higher with these patients. In one instance, a comatose patient responded to the type of music that he had liked to listen to and came out of the coma.

HETSY: Amazing!

MICKI: He’s in the National Archives here and is in this Museum. He was a young man who was on the submarine that went into the harbor outside of Japan to scope out or to take pictures of the cities that they were going to drop the Atomic Bomb on. And there was some dispute as to where it was going to be and he happened to go into the Tokyo harbor and their submarine was depth charged and they barely got out alive. And when he got back to the island base that they had started out from, he went into a catatonic coma

and was sent back to the States.

HETSY: Do you remember his name?

MICKI: Robert Emmit Stewart.

HETSY: Sent back to the States and that is where you met him.

MICKI: No, I met him at the University of Texas.

HETSY: Did you really?

MICKI: Yes, and he was in school down there and I met him. He later married one of my

best friends, and I'm Godmother to one of his children.

HETSY: Amazing! That is amazing! Well, as you were in the California area and certainly dealing with the recuperative efforts of the men and women who were coming back from war, do you have any special memories? You've just shared with us the wonderful memory of the man in the coma who actually recovered due to the resuscitation through music, more or less. Are there any other memories that you have, or stories that you have, that relate to your medical profession as well as your USO?

MICKI: Well, part of our job in working with Special Services was to chaperone patients and to accompany patients into places like we were given, we were always given tickets to

the San Francisco hockey team, to their home games there. And we would chaperone patients and go to the hockey matches. We'd take them to football games and take them to the race track to the races, to Tan Foran and places like that and sorta chauffeur, just chaperone them we were not chauffeuring them then because we'd have motor pool personnel who would take us, you know, by busloads. But we chaperoned them and

be there just in case there was a medical necessity, but we got it was certainly an entree into many places. I became very good friends with several performers who were performing there in San Francisco. I suppose the most famous one now who is still alive is Dave Brubeck. He was performing in a little club called the “Nighthawk”, the “Black Hawk” down on Turk Street in San Francisco. And there were several of us, who were interested in the theater and music and that sort of thing, who would go down after we got off duty at eleven. And after they closed the club there where he was performing, and the musicians who were performing there would sorta congregate and we’d have a jam session, sometimes until five or six o’clock in the morning. And I was there while he was working on Take Five which is one of his better known arrangements now, and we’d sit and chat and he’d say, “Micki, how do you think this sounds?” “Well, I think that sounds, no, I like it better like the first time you played it”, or something like that. But it was a nice place to meet people and to become familiar with people in the entertainment field. I met Mel Torme several times and he told he never did a song the same way twice, and I believe him having listened to him. And it was just a nice place to meet performers and it’s really nice when you can have careers like music and nursing because when you get burned out on one, you can do the other one for awhile and they both stay new.

HETSY: And they’re changing!

MICKI: Right.

HETSY: They’re always changing.

MICKI: So that it’s been very enjoyable doing both.

HETSY: Well, we need to mention here, just as an aside, that Micki is very involved in the music programs at the high school and in the community and that she is President of the Arts Council here, are you not, Micki?

MICKI: No, I belong to the Pedernales Creative Arts Alliance, and this is an organization

of about a hundred and fifty people who foster all of the performing arts in Gillespie County. My husband has served on the Board as both President and Vice President and he's been Treasurer for about seven years now. And my job has been working as a liason with performers for Octoberfest, which is our annual festival, and in planning and announcing the Summer Concert series which we do every Summer. I prefer the, I really am not into organizational politics. That's not my bag. I prefer associating with the performers and with audience.

HETSY: Which you do so well.

MICKI: Well, thank you.

HETSY: We enjoy the concerts. They are just marvelous. What was it that brought, were you transferred from San Francisco back to Texas, or how was it that you left San Francisco?

MICKI: When I completed my government service, I came back to the University of Texas to finish out my degree, and while I was there, the first day I was working also at a hospital in Austin while I was going to school, and Jim and I met. And he is sitting here beside me saying "Don't forget the coffee." It was at the Brackenridge Hospital in Austin, and I was three to eleven supervisor again, only this time it was the emergency room, which at that time was the emergency room open in Travis, I think that's Travis



County, isn't it?

HETSY: Yes, it is.

MICKI: And Jim was the medical technician. He had been discharged for the first time from service, and was back working on his degree. And we were, I think it was my first day on the job, I had gone into the dining room to have dinner. And there was a ninety-degree angle in the serving line, and in the corner of this ninety-degree angle was a coffee urn, and I was coming down the long leg of the ninety degrees with my tray and Jim was coming back from the opposite end to get a refill on his coffee and I rounded the corner and knocked his coffee out of his hand, soused his white uniform with hot coffee, and that

was our introduction. And that was on the first of September, 1950, and we were married on November the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1950.

HETSY: So you just christened your own courtship.

MICKI: Well, I got his attention!

HETSY: That's wonderful! So basically, just to clarify your commitment when you went

into the Nursing Cadet Corps, you said that there was no, did you sign a commitment for a certain number of years?

MICKI: There was sorta of an unwritten commitment that you would serve if possible at least two years in a government facility. If not, that you would be employed in a hospital in your area wherever you were doing nursing jobs. But, at that point in time, they were extremely strict on physical requirements, and at age six I had had scarlet fever and had a mastoid operation and only had, I just have a rim of an ear drum in my right ear. And they

would not let me enlist in the service as such, so I worked at the VA Receiving Hospital there, and we were dealing with service personnel who were coming back as a receiving patient, hospitable patient, but I was not actually in the Army or the Navy or the Air Force.

HETSY: Right. How many, do you remember how many young women and possibly men, too, were there any men in the program?

MICKI: Very, very few in the Nursing Corps and in the Cadet Corps at that time.

HETSY: Do you remember how many or approximately how many women were going through this program with you?

MICKI: Well, there were about thirty in each class that Parkland had, and they took in a class each year, so they would have anywhere from ninety to or seventy to ninety, some of them dropped out, but there would be approximately a hundred students training in Parkland at any one given time.

HETSY: So it was a three year program basically.

MICKI: Yes, three-year diploma program.

HETSY: Right. And so when you graduated you had an RN designation.

MICKI: Yes. And unlike what they do now, we worked eight hours a day in the hospital, went to classes five days a week and slept when you could.

HETSY: Right. And you were on call I would imagine. Were you ever on call on weekends?

MICKI: Oh, yes, when we were in surgery we were on call. And we were staggered. We were not always off on the weekends. You went to school. If you happened to be off on Saturday and Sunday, or Saturday or Sunday, you would have the weekend off, but

otherwise if you were working, you know, you went to school and worked and did your time in addition to everything else.

HETSIE: Now, you mentioned 311. Was that like the 911 designation that we now use, when you supervised 311 wards?

MICKI: Three to eleven wards.

HETSI: Oh, excuse me. Three to eleven time sequence.

MICKI: Yes.

HETSI: Okay. And what does the three to eleven stand for?

MICKI: It's from three o'clock in the afternoon to the eleven o'clock shift.

HETSI: Okay. Very good. Not that's clarified for the records. When you were going through the program, were you encouraged to specialize in any particular area of nursing or were you expected to generalize?

MICKI: There was a standardized curriculum that you rotated through, and fortunately Parkland was a big enough hospital, it was City/County for the Dallas area, and it was a big enough hospital that we had all of the services on one campus. It was on the same campus with Southwestern Medical School, and we had enough access to the specialties that we did not have to leave the campus at all. We had a great many students who rotated through Parkland from smaller schools, who are also in Cadet Corps training. So, it would not be unusual to have another hundred students on the campus who were from other schools of nursing but were rotating through for such things as psychiatry, isolation, emergency room service and that sort of thing.

HETSY: And you lived in the Dallas area.

MICKI: Yes

HETSY: Did you necessarily live at home while you were doing this or did you live in a dormitory?

MICKI: No, we lived in the dorms.

HETSY: So everyone was required to live in the dorms?

MICKI: That's right.

HETSY: Well you were accessible all of the time and your hours were long.

MICKI: That's right. And when you were in surgery or on isolation, you were subject to call. I don't know whether anybody would remember when the basement of the Baker Hotel in Dallas exploded, the kitchens exploded. And we had dozens and dozens of burn patients who came into Parkland. And I was in surgery and we scrubbed for about forty-eight hours at a stretch there before we were allowed to do anything other than just take a short nap and stop and eat and change our gown and gloves and get going again. We were deb??? burn patients and dressing them and getting them going.

HETSY: Now, did you specialize in any particular area of nursing at this time?

MICKI: Not at that point in time. I later took a specialty in rehabilitation nursing when rehab. first came into popularity in the early 1970's. I went on a government grant to the Texas Institute of Research and Rehabilitation in Houston and the program was through the Texas Women's University Nursing School there and did a training program in rehab doing my clinical work at the Institute of Research and Rehab.

HETSY: So your specialization came later.

MICKI: I took a specialty in rehab nursing in 1980. I believe it was early '80's I did a

specialty and became nationally certified as a quality assurance consultant. I have enough

initials to make a bowl of alphabet soup behind my name.

HETSY: You have many caps.

MICKI: Yes.

HETSY: Which brings me to thought of closing, and during the period that you were working with the USO and you were doing these shows, were they costumed? Did you provide your own?

MICKI: The ladies in the show all wore evening clothes unless we were dancers and dancing in costume. If we were singing or performing with musical instruments, we wore evening clothes.

HETSY: And did the men do the same? Were they in tuxedos or were they in suits?

MICKI: No, usually the men who performed would wear a suit or if they were service personnel who were helping us with the show, they just wore their uniforms. We had relatively few men. Most of the able-bodied men had already been drafted or were involved in that sort of thing.

HETSY: Or were in recovery?

MICKI: In hospital gowns or pajamas.

HETSY: Micki, thinking about uniforms and the nurses uniforms, were those provided for you by the program, by the nurses program?

MICKI: O, yes, we had a Summer uniform which was a gray and white striped jacket and skirt and a white blouse with a little tie and a little gray beret. And our Winter uniform was a gray wool suit with a gray wool overcoat and we had a gray satin raincoat

and a little porkpie hat with a little brim that sorta hung out over your ears. And then our Service uniforms for the hospital, each hospital had their own distinctive uniform for their nursing students, and ours were black and white stripes with a white apron over them and black stockings and black shoes.

HETSY: Could you get stockings in those days?

MICKI: Yes, and we nursed them tenderly. Usually they were black cotton because that was more easily acceptable.

HETSY: Silk stockings were almost impossible to get by the end of the war.

MICKI: No, we didn't have those.

HETSY: Now when you graduated, was your only designating element that could actually identify which Cadet School you graduated from and which hospital you graduated from was that your cap?

MICKI: Yes.

HETSY: Or were there other insignia that you wore?

MICKI: At that point and time, all RN's wore caps. All nurses wore caps in hospitals. And your hair had to be up off of your collar confined into a hairnet or a very tight hairdo of one sort. And your school cap was very distinctive. That plus your graduation pin was the thing that designated where you were from.

HETSY: I would imagine that there was a very strong feeling of friendship among all of the nurses. When you went to San Francisco, did you go alone, or were there some other...

MICKI: No, I had a classmate of mine who went at the same time that I did and then we met other Cadet Nurses who had been there. There were several who had been in the

Indian service and had transferred out to Fort Miley to work there. And there was a sort of comradery of Cadet Nurses because there was a set curriculum that we had to satisfy. And Oveta Culp Hobby was the one who brain child the Cadet Nurse Corps.

HETSY: Really!

MICKI: And she specified what her preferences and what she would like, and she wanted a top notch, at that time, nursing school was a three-year diploma program. That was before the advent of the collegiate programs and the associate degree programs. And she sorta grandmothered the program and watched out to see that we all had a standardized program to meet.

HETSY: With doctors, I imagine, being at a shortage toward the end of the war, did you all find yourselves doing more than just nursing in that your responsibilities became a bit stronger than medically.

MICKI: Yes, particularly on three to eleven shift and the eleven to seven shift because the doctors were not as obviously present at that point and time. You had doctors there at Fort Miley who were on call, but also at Fort Miley we had ward boys who were the same set up as the function in the Army hospitals. You had ward Corpsmen who helped you and I had two very protective, very proficient, and very well trained Corpsmen who looked out for me like was a little chicken that they had to guard. But it was set up sorta like the Army hospitals where you had your Corpsmen and then your nurses and that sorta thing. And then if you really got in trouble and needed a doctor, you called the person who was on call, and there were usually maybe three or four who serviced the entire hospital during that eight-hour shift.

HETSY: Did you ever at any time, you mentioned the Corpsmen who were assigned to the ward, did you ever at any time feel that your life was in danger dealing with...

MICKI: No, but one of my Corpsmen and I found one of our patients hanging from the shower stall one night from the shower head. He was having some mental health problems and was not doing well physically and he hanged himself from the shower head with his bathroom sash. And for about two or three days after that we were crawling with

FBI agents around there investigating and questioning and all that sorta thing, and it got to

be kinda interesting. One of my Ward boys, incidentally, had been a jockey in private life,

and used to go over to Tan Foran to race. And he came in one afternoon and he said,

“Miss Campbell, I’m going over to Tan Foran. There’s a real good horse running over

there, and a friend of mine named Arcero is riding him. Would you like to put some

money him?” And I said, “Well, I tell you I’m not much for betting, but I’ll give you

two dollars and you can put it on me. The horses name was “Better Value” and Eddie

Arcero was up and he went on to become the racing horse of the year, won every race he

was in for years and years and my return was \$72.00 on \$2.00. So after that, the next

time he came in, I said, “You know, I think I’ll stop while I’m ahead.” So I never put

another bet on a horse.

HETSY: Have you kept up with any of the Ward personnel?

MICKI: No, not really. Most of them either enlisted in the Army and went to Korea

or went on to careers in other fields.

HETSY: Did you ever hear from any of the patients you had nursed?



MICKI: Oh, yeah. I still do occasionally.

HETSY: Do you?

MICKI: I still hear from Bob Stewart's family and they live in Dallas. Bob is not alive anymore, but his wife and his children still live there and we still hear them. And I still hear from several of my classmates who were in training and with me out there.

HETSY: Do you all ever have a reunion, or do they do that sort of thing?

MICKI: Yes, yes, I went to my twenty-fifth class reunion, and I looked around and I thought I have never seen a duller more stodgy-looking group of people in my life.

All they wanted to talk about was their ailments and their children and their grandchildren

and I was busy doing shows at my twenty-fifth reunion. After that I was doing, Jim and I were doing the entertainment for the Navy Relief Festival in Corpus Christi where we lived at that time. And, you know, I was bubbling over the fact that I had been made an honorary Naval Aviator, and all this kind of stuff, and the Texas Band Mother for the Naval Academy Band and I came home and I told Jim, "I don't think I'll ever go to another class reunion." That was so depressing.

HETSY: Well, you see, Micki, you're just so full of talent and life and vigor, that your life is always gonna be interesting and exciting to hear about it and to live. We have some pictures which Micki has brought and I would just like her to describe because they are going to be archived, and our archivist is not present today, so I would like Micki to start with the earliest first.

MICKI: The first one is a picture that was made when I was still in high school. This was used for publicity photos for the first Red Cross Camp and Hospital tour that I

went out with.

HETSY: This is a picture, a portrait of Micki, with a flower in your hair.

MICKI: That is a gardenia in my hair. This was my graduation photo in the annual when I graduated from school. You can see all those beautiful braids I had up on there.

HETSY: And this Micki in her full nurses uniform with her nurses pin showing and her cap.

MICKI: This was in the hospital where I trained. That was on the isolation ward and that

was the three to eleven staff. And that, incidentally, was the last year of the great polio epidemics in the 1940's, and that was the last year that we had a fleet of respirators being used in Parkland Hospital. And we had a thunderstorm one night and had to hand pump those respirators and that's an interesting exercise.

HETSY: How many people did you have on the respirators at that time?

MICKI: Oh, we'd run anywhere from ten to fifteen.

HETSY: And were the soldiers coming back having contracted polio?

MICKI: Now this was while I was still in training. We had at Fort Miley we had respirators going with people who had g????bar A syndrome. And one time I had ten going at one time.

HETSY: But when you were training in Dallas, really, this was for the hospital in general.

MICKI: That was the last big polio epidemic. And this is a picture outside the emergency

room with one of the doctors. That is Dr. Pepperjink, and then he went to China during

the time that immediately after hostilities ceased and he was allowed to go to China and observe. He at that point and time was head of the anesthesiology department at the medical school there at Southwestern. And he observed surgery being done under hypnosis. And he came back and was quite a renowned lecturer. He and Tom Shyers took care of John Kennedy when he was shot. Dr. Tom Shyers was the chief of surgery and I scrubbed for him while Jim was in Korea. And I went back to Dallas to work. And I was Tom Shyers' scrub nurse during that period. And they called us the "Soap Box Kids" because Tom was about five seven and I was about five four, and when we did chest surgery we used to have to stand on two coke boxes each to get up to the operating table. And this was our mascot at the hospital, our Collie dog. And this is a picture of me out in front of our society...

HETSY: What was the mascot's name?

MICKI: I don't even remember. And this was on the beach in San Francisco. That's the Cliff House in the background. That's while I was working there.

HETSY: The Cliff House is still there.

MICKI: Yeh, it's still there. This was in Corpus Christi after the hurricane in 1970, and I think it was Carla or Celia, one or the other, that presented about 85-percent damage to Corpus Christi. I was director of nurses at a rehabilitation center at that time. And that was early in the morning after the storm had blown out. That's one of the few windows that was still intact, and you can see I look a hair weary at that point.

HETSY: You still look in charge, Micki. And this is a picture of Micki sitting at a desk speaking on the phone.

MICKI: Okay. The hurricane blew in about nine o'clock at night and I had about twenty personnel with me. We had one hundred twenty-eight patients there, and part of them were bed patients and part of them were able to get up and walk around. But they were mostly elderly people who were having rehab, and it was the precursor to a nursing home. And the storm hit and our windows began to implode, and the next morning we were in water up to about almost to our knees from water that had come in. A truck from Houston came from a hospital where I had done some of my rehab training there and had made friends, and one of my friends that I knew from Fort Miley was there in that hospital as one of the directors, and they sent us barrels of water and cartons of food, you know, cases of food, so that we didn't miss any meals. So none of our patients missed a drink of water or a meal. But the only real complaint we had was that we had an elderly gentleman who was in his early seventies who had been a Greek merchant seaman. And had been a captain on one or one of the officers on a Greek merchant seaman during the first part of World War, the precursor of World War II, and then in WWII. And he came over here because he had family here and he was there following surgery and recuperating and became a resident there almost. When he got up that morning, I waked him up for breakfast, and he looked out and saw what had happened, he saw the water on the floor, and I explained to him what had gone on, that gentleman chewed me every way and turned me every way but. This Greek merchant seaman waked up the next morning and wanted to know why the water was all on the floor and why the curtains were all blown in and all that sort of thing, I explained him that the hurricane had blown through that night. The gentleman was very hard of hearing and when I waked him up and told him what had happened, he was most

unhappy, chewed me out, and was just furious because that was the only exciting thing that had happened in years and I let him sleep through it.

HETSY: Oh, my goodness. I'm sure you became friends though very quickly thereafter.

MICKI: Oh, yeh.

HETSY: I'm sure he forgave you.

MICKI: Oh, he did. He did. I let him get up and direct the clean up process.

HETSY: That's wonderful! He knew how to swab.

MICKI: You betcha. These two are made from V+50 which we did here at the Nimitz Museum. Jim and I were in charge of the entertainment for the V+50, and that is during some of the ceremonies that we had here at that time with, I think that is the Air force Band of the West performing there. And we had three days of festivities at that point and we're looking forward again to doing Pearl Harbor +60. We're serving in the same capacity and rounding up and I've tried to contact a lot of my USO people that I can find and the ones I can find that are still alive are not performing anymore. So I'm beginning to feel like something of a dinosaur, not only from the USO but from the Cadet Nursing Corps also.

HETSY: I must interject here that among the concerts that Mickie organizes is one that is a fabulous concert given by a group of physicians who are also musicians who call themselves "The Band Aids". And Mickie has gotten that group together from various areas in the Hill Country.

MICKI: Actually they've been performing in the Hill Country for about twenty-five years

now. They originally started in San Antonio. The trombone player is an orthopedic

surgeon. The trumpet player is an eye surgeon. The clarinet player is the owner of the Mission Pharmaceutical Company which is the largest developer of specialists drugs in the world. And there is an orthopedic surgeon who plays the drums. There are three other members in the band. The wife of the owner of Mission plays the piano, and then there is a banjo player and a tuba player who play with them both of whom are in allied medical fields. But they call themselves “The Band Aids”. They play absolutely wild Dixieland jazz, and they’re greatest characteristic is that they never charge for a performance. They request that you give whatever you would ordinarily pay them to a charity either of your choice or their choice whichever you prefer. But they never take money for a performance.

HETSY: Micki. I’ve seen them perform once and that was last year. What is the average age of the Band Aid musicians.

MICKI: Well, let’s see. I’d say early sixties. Dr. Lentner, who is the trumpet player, has recently retired and driving his wife crazy. And Dr. Dan Bacon is now the chief medical officer of the VA Hospital in Kerrville, Texas. Neil Wallstorf, who is the owner of Mission is still going strong and still developing specialty drugs right and left. and his wife is still along. And Dr. Richardson is still doing orthopedic surgery. So they’re still pluggin’ along.

HETSY: And they’re marvelous! They’re just fabulous!

MICKI: Oh, they’re great.

HETSY: We’re from New Orleans and we took my ninety one-year old Mother to hear them last year, and it brought tears to her eyes because she said it just made her think of

the wonderful jazz that she grew up with as a young girl.

MICKI: They're fine musicians!

HETSY: Micki, is there anything else that you can regale us with because your life is just

wonderful.

MICKI: This is a picture that was made and was used for publicity when Jim and I did the

entertainment for the Naval Relief Festival at Mainside Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi

which is sorta the Randolph Field of the Naval Air Force for carrier training. And, as I said, at that point we brought, it was a three-day celebration and the Blue Angels were there, and they do this each year to raise money for the Relief Fund for widows and orphans of Naval officers and personnel who had been killed in action or had died in service in some way. And they asked us that year if we would round up the entertainment

for them and do some of the emceeing and that sort of thing. And the Naval Academy Band was there from Annapolis and we sorta of adopted one of the members and we became the "Texas band parents of the band" and then later were given certificates being designated to an honorary Naval Aviator by Captain DeLorenzo, who was the commanding officer at that time.

HETSY: And this is a picture of Micki looking lovely as always in a turtle-neck sweater. We are also going to have the ability and the pleasure of chatting with Micki's husband who has a different perspective on the USO take in that he was in the service and he knows first hand what a treat it is to see performances such as Micki on the stage.

MICKI: He was also a medic.

HETSY: I'm going to stop now so that we can bring Jim to the microphone.

Transcribed by Eunice Gary, July, 2001.

### Interview with Jim George

This is a continuation of the interview with Micki George. We are now pleased to have at the microphone with us Jim George and he is going to begin his story with just some general background information.

**HETSY**: Jim, can you tell us where you were born and when?

**JIM**: I was born in Port Arthur, Texas, September the 18<sup>th</sup>, 1927, and I take great delight in telling people I was born in city hall. It had formerly been Mary Gates Hospital and then was converted to city hall, so I really wasn't born in the city hall.

**HETSY**: But the building was the same.

**JIM**: Yes, and the building no longer stands. That is now the port of Port Arthur. They excavated and enlarged the inter-coastal canal so that building is not there anymore.

**HETSY**: Who were your parents?

**JIM**: My Father was Charles Anderson George. My Mother was Sarah Sullivan George. My father was from Franklin, Louisiana. He was born on the Retreat Plantation south of Franklin and my Mother was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi. And my brother used to ask her "Where did you all hide during the siege of Vicksburg?" And she was something like forty years old at the time and she wanted to know "Just how old do you think I am?"



**HETSY**: Which brings up the question, Jim, you obviously had a brother, did you have any other siblings?

**JIM**: No, just one brother.

**HETSY**: And is he a younger brother?

**JIM**: No, he was older?

**HETSY**: And how much older is he?

**JIM**: He's three years older.

**HETSY**: Does he reside in the Hill Country?

**JIM**: No, he resides in Dallas. He's retired after about thirty-six years as a librarian in Dallas.

**HETSY**: At the Dallas Library?

**JIM**: Yes, it was at the main library.

**HETSY**: Which we know to be a wonderful library. Jim, where did you go to school basically?

**JIM**: I went to one school all the way through, St. James Parochial School in Port Arthur. And I graduated in June of 1945, one day, the next day I was in junior college.

**HETSY**: Was that in Port Arthur?

**JIM**: No, the junior college was Lamar Junior College, now Lamar University, in Beaumont, and I completed summer session and the fall session and by that time September 18<sup>th</sup>, I turned eighteen. I registered.

**HETSY**: For the draft?

**JIM**: Yes, I had to register for the draft, and I was summonsed in December for my physical examination and then was drafted, well that was part of the process, in January.

**HETSY**: You were drafted into the Army?

**JIM**: Yes. I do not volunteer for anything.

**HETSY**: And then as part of this drafting process, did you receive orders to report immediately?

**JIM**: I went to San Antonio where I was processed and then shipped to Camp Lee, Virginia, which is now Fort Lee, at Petersburg, Virginia, and that was the Quartermaster

Corps. In the meantime, my Father was diagnosed with cancer and my brother was coming back from the service, so they decided they didn't need me, so they let me out.

**HETSY**: So you were discharged?

**JIM**: I was discharged. They decided that there was enough turmoil at home and that there was need for my being there, so I was discharged and sent home. One thing, earlier you were talking about shows and so forth and so on. When I was about thirteen years old, I remember they had a bond, war bond deal, and I was just standing there just watching these celebrities and they were Janet Gaynor, Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, and Robert Stack were the stars. And my Mother says, "If Janet Gaynor comes here to this podunk center of Port Arthur, then I'm gonna go down and buy a bond."

**HETSY**: And she did then?

**JIM**: Yes, she did.

**HETSY**: She went down and she bought a bond.

**JIM**: Oh, she was a person of her word.

**HETSY**: Besides she had a son who was in the Army at that time, too.

**JIM**: Yes, too.

**HETSY**: And your brother served where?

**JIM**: He took basic training in Mississippi and from there they went as a unit. He was in the Signal Radio Intelligence. I think it was 136 Signal Radio Intelligence, stationed in England. They were quartered in a girls school but the girls weren't there anymore, and then on D Day, they weren't the first to go over but they did follow over and he went through the Bulge and all of that stuff. Oh, we didn't hear anything sometime for weeks at a time but he was where he was. When WWII shooting stopped, since he was single he didn't get to come early, so he went to the American University at Biarritz and took two graduate courses. He had never had a day of college yet. But anyway, that's what he was doing until he could come home. He came home and got home about two weeks before my Father died.

**HETSY**: And then you had been discharged?

**JIM**: Yes.

**HETSY**: And so you were home and then what did life afford you once you returned home. You had the family turmoil of course.

**JIM**: Yes, and things began to settle down, and then in '47 I went back to school. And I managed to get my bachelor's degree, and then I went to Vicksburg, Mississippi, and took training as a medical technologist at the Lutheran Hospital there in Vicksburg. And that was in 49-50. In 1950 I took a vacation in August and I found this job in Austin. I wanted to do graduate work, so that's how I got into Brackenridge Hospital and that's how I met my wife, Micki.

**HETSY**: With the coffee christening story?

**JIM**: Yes, absolutely, and then we got married in November, Thanksgiving day, and things were just moving very nicely, and all of a sudden here I get another notice from the SSS, Selective Service...

**HETSY**: Selective Service Board.

**JIM**: Selective Service whatever, and so, of course, I had to go for a physical down to San Antonio from Austin and then I got drafted again, second time. So this time, went from San Antonio to Fort Riley, Kansas, for basic training, eight weeks and then eight weeks at Fort Sam with the Medics because I had a medical specialist (MOS number).

**HETSY**: What was your speciality?

**JIM**: Medical Technology, ran a lab., so that got me classified as a Medic, you see, and so then I went to Fort Sam to have the Medic basic. And from there, I had Christmas off and then in January had to report to Seattle, Washington. I don't remember the name of the camp there. It was just a bunch of buildings with black tarpaper on the outside of them.

**HETSY**: Quickly put up for the Korean War.

**JIM**: Yeh, because you didn't stay there very long, and so we shipped overseas. It took fourteen days. We were on a liberty ship, one that the maintenance on it had been sort of neglected.

**HETSY**: It had been built for WWII.

**JIM**: Yes, and those ships are welded, they're not riveted together. We went through the North Pacific to avoid typhoons. Everytime the ship would go up on a wave (or swell)

and the water would disappear and you'd hit bottom, and the ship would shimmy and shutter. We landed in Yokahama Harbor and went from there to Camp Drake. There were a lot of us that had medical specialty, MOS numbers. They decided to send us to school so the Army could change our MOS number. There was one guy that had a medical specialty as a physiotherapist. We had one, named Herb Jacowitz. He was from Massachusetts. He had a pharmacy degree so he was classified as a pharmacist. The Army pondered, "What are we going to do with all these people?" What they did is they sent us to medic training at a place called Shinodayama which is south of Osaka which had been a military school. And we went through basic training again, this time so they could classify us as just general medics like litter bearers and whatever. And while in Japan, there was a USO show that, you know, on the weekends we had time off and we went to a USO show and this was mainly classical music type show. It was quite enjoyable. I hadn't been exposed to that much of it except from my brother and his records and radio. But that was quite enjoyable and it was sort of unexpected for these people to show up.

**HETSY**: So it was not given a great deal of advance notice. You did not know that the show was going to...

**JIM**: No, they just had special service representatives there that felt they had do something for these guys. We can't just turn them loose and we just can't leave them sitting, so that was one activity. The other one is special services took us, it was like a professional training school for performers at a place called Takarazuka, and this show lasted three hours. And it was rather uncomfortable because the Japanese people on their diets were small people. The seats were twelve by twelve, and even though I was much thinner than I am now and a few pounds lighter, I managed to survive.

**HETSY**: There wasn't much space.

**JIM**: No, not much space. So then, you know, the games are over. The training is over, my additional MOS is also now a basic medic plus this medical specialist, so now everybody has been changed. So we were all sent to Korea as just basic medics.

**HETSY**: And where were you sent?

**JIM**: I was sent by ship from Sasebo, Japan, to Pusan, South Korea. We got on a train in that took, it seemed to me like, two days to get to Seoul, and from there I was assigned to the 25th Divisions 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Medical Co. And we were shipped over to them and they were located in a place in reserve over on the Eastern part of Korea. And then we went back up on line and I was assigned to the collecting station. You know you have your different battalions, you have your aid stations, that's the first line of medical care and then evacuated back to collecting. They decided can we hold them here, or do we ship 'em back to MASH. Now, I would like to straighten people out on MASH because Korea was a static situation with the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel (MLR - Main Line of Resistance) most of the war. The collecting station where I was located was more like the TV "MASH". The Korean MASH was more like a permanent hospital because it was not mobile. They stayed in one place, so some of the things that you would see on MASH in the TV show or the movie, some of those things I lived through. I saw the movie and I said, "You know, I could have written this." So while we were stationed there, we would move from place to place, but the first place I went to was a place called the Punch Bowl. And it looked like a great big bowl and so there we were down in this place, and that's the place where, I'm not sure whether it was the Air Force or the Navy, I'm not sure who it was. I think it was the Air Force. They dropped bombs on our shower, so we weren't too happy about that because we had to go several days without hot showers. But then we pulled back and went into reserve and then you're supposed to be training and brushing up on your Shakespeare and then you would be reassigned to a new location. But we started off over on the East and moved through my tour of duty from early 1952 into June of '53. And it was on a point system. Rotation was on a point system. At one time because of the terrain of Korea, our collection station was up closer to the front than one of our battalion aid stations.

**HETSY**: I was going to ask you how close to the front were you all, and what was the closest that you ever were?

**JIM**: Pretty close, maybe a coupla miles or something like that.

**HETSY**: Were you all ever shelled, not by friendly fire, but by...

**JIM**: By both. We had patients come in that had been shelled with mortar rounds that were loaded with phosphorous and so you treat that...

**HETSY**: It must have really burned.

**JIM**: Well, no.

**HETSY**: Turns cold, doesn't it?

**JIM**: Yes, but if you have copper sulfate solution you soak and pack it so that it stops the action then you can evacuate the person into a place where they can deal with that. Now that was one thing that happened. The other thing was the Communists, the Red Chinese and the North Koreans, did not honor the with a red cross arm band. You'd be an idiot to wear one of those things that made a perfect target as did the Red Cross on the ambulances. So those were all blocked out, but I remember this one time we were close to this mountain called Papasan. There were two or three valleys there and down at the end of each valley was this tremendous mountain called Papasan. The Chinese and the North Koreans were tunneled into that mountain and supposedly they had something like forty years of rice supplies stashed in the mountain. That's maybe "hearsay", but the ambulances would come down the road and their artillery was firing at the ambulances as they were coming into our collecting station, and we were living, not in tents, but in bunkers there. And so our area got shelled pretty badly on occasion.

**HETSY**: You were mentioning tunnels. Of course, they were storage, they were used as storage units, but was there actually a tunnel system as we had in Viet Nam?

**JIM**: Throughout that mountain, yes. And then from that point we pulled back into reserve and this is the time when things were beginning to they were talking more and more with Pon Mun Jong. They finally had gotten settled on what the shape of the conference table was going to be. We had a Korean that was with us whose name was Lee Song Yong. When asked, "Lee, what do you think about this thing?" His only comment was, "Yabba di yabba di, nothing gets done." So we were back in reserve behind the place called "Heart Break Ridge" and that was the time they came and said there's going to see a USO show. So we all loaded on trucks, you know, and we were in reserve, they could spare us. It's not whose minding the front line, the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, who's watching it? Well, the people on duty were taking care of that. So we went back

further to the rear, but not too far back, and there was a group headed by a guy by the name of Johnny Grant. He is known as the honorary mayor of Hollywood and he was a disc jockey. He was a radio personality and he was heading the group. There was a young actress named Marie Windsor, there was Patricia Neal, and she said, “I don’t dance, I can’t sing, but she said they decided I needed to do something, but what I should do is keep my mouth shut” so they did a pantomime. Patricia Neal and an old vaudevillian named Pat Rooney did a pantomime routine and that was great.

**HETSY**: As a soldier now you really were on the front lines and you were getting shelled, your life was definitely in danger, your assignment was to help others recover, and as a medical man to render assistance. But your life was in jeopardy as well. So there had to be a great deal of tension just from the fact that your own life was in jeopardy as well as dealing with the intensive medicine that you’re practicing with fresh and deep injuries. What was your response to the USO show, and what was the general response?

**JIM**: That was great! And everybody wished Johnny Grant would shut up and let the girls come out. And let’s see, there was a couple of vaudevillians called “The Blossom Sisters”, and they did a little dance routines and one was like the dumb blonde and the other one was perturbed because they had a routine that they worked on, a comedy routine. And let’s see, there was some other people they were like chorus dancers, you know, and...

**HETSY**: Pretty girls all in a row.

**JIM**: Oh, yes, and singers and say, this is really nice because Korea is either hot, dry and dusty, or you’re bogged down to your appetite in mud.

**HETSY**: And cold, can be very cold.

**JIM**: Cold, yes. We were located in this place where we got shelled and we were living in bunkers and, of course, when they would shell, the dust would come down between the logs. And so I’d go out and I had just regular fatigues on and a pile-lined vest and then a pile-lined cap with the earflaps that you’d pull down, and I would go out and that is all that I would have on and then come back in. My buddy from the Chicago area, his name is Bob Roman, and he said, “You are an idiot.” I said, “What are you talking about?” and

he says, “You’re going to freeze out there. It’s minus twenty-five degrees. You’re gonna freeze to death.” And I said, “Well, you’re from Chicago, you ought to be able to take this cold.” He says, “But we have houses built for the cold.” But that was quite a deal.

**HETSY**: Did the housing that was built for you all, you said you all were...

**JIM**: We built our own.

**HETSY**: How did you do that? Were they Quonset-type structures or prefabricated structures?

**JIM**: Okay, we had in some areas what they called a “troop tent”, and if there’s snow or if it’s raining you don’t touch the inside of the tent.

**HETSY**: It will leak if you do.

**JIM**: Yeh, we told this man that and he didn’t believe us. He always lived in a, well he was from Boston, and he didn’t believe it. So we made him sit underneath it. That was a troop tent. In some areas we had bunkers that a previous unit had built or maybe we remodeled it or something like that. Now for the collecting station, the medical facility, was a Quonset hut. Each section is a box four by eight. The box top and bottom form a floor section 4 X 16. So that’s four by sixteen and in the box would be this padded covering. It’s insulated and there were ribs that unhinged and made an arc or semicircle which made the top support. We could have a good-sized facility in no time at all, but had to know how to put it together.

**HETSY**: I would think so. You had to have had some experience in knowing how to put it together.

**JIM**: After you did it once, you knew how to do it. And then, of course, we decided that if there was a breakthrough, like there had been previously, that we wouldn’t be worrying about it, we’d just get out of there.

**HETSY**: How would you evacuate the troops, the wounded?

**JIM**: We had ambulances and normally the most serious cases were evacuated back to MASH via helicopter. Then we had some patients, we could hold as many as sixteen to twenty patients, you know, like a flu epidemic or something like that. They had the Asian flu and I was very conveniently not around when they were giving shots, but finally they checked the roll and they forced me into taking the flu shot (Asian flu) and I never



have been so sick in all my life. I would have been fine if they'd left me alone, but anyway orders are orders. And then there was another thing we had to deal with, hemorrhagic fever, and that was carried by rats (fleas).

**HETSY**: And there's no cure for that. You have to outlive the antibiotics...

**JIM**: Well antibiotics and you just have to work your way through it. We had some of that we picked up. But like in the bunker that we were living in in one place, there was a shelf over my bed, and somebody had set a rat trap, and I can tell you that Milky Way works very well as bait. I woke up one morning about 6:30 and I looked up and there was this hairy tail hanging down. It had been caught overnight.

**HETSY**: And you had not heard it.

**JIM**: I had not heard it.

**HETSY**: You were so exhausted you were sleeping through the catch.

**JIM**: Well, then, of course, I remember we were in another location pretty close to artillery unit and it got to the point where I couldn't hear anything. So when we weren't taking care of patients, we practiced on each other. So there was this ear syringe. They said we need to wash your ears out and they washed my ears out and got plugs of wax out of my ears. I couldn't sleep for a week for the artillery, you know, when the artillery would go off everything would shake, you know.

**HETSY**: And then you could really hear it. You were now hearing it.

**JIM**: Yeh. But, you know, all in all, most of us got through this with a sense of humor and there was pranks and stuff like that.

**HETSY**: So the MASH, that aspect of MASH was very realistic.

**JIM**: Yes, it was and I don't think I should retell some of the stories. I'll tell the one about down at the Infantry supply where we'd have to requisition everything, well, the supply Sgt. down there had a dog that had a broken tail and it wasn't very sanitary. So he really was quite fond of this dog and so he said, "Could you all do something?" So we had trunks of all kinds of instruments, and we looked in there and there were these orthopedic instruments and there was this one they call a bone rongeur which cuts through bones. Anyway, we amputated the dog's tail for sanitary purposes and for

consideration, the use of a vehicle to go down to Inchon to get some refreshments for a party. So see that's the sorta thing...

**HETSY**: Well, you have to have some levity, something has to break the tension and you

were always in a very tense situation.

**JIM**: Yeh, and it's kind of hard to see one of your buddies go through with a tag on his toe or dog tags in his mouth.

**HETSY**: Yes, I would think so. Now, did you see very much of that?

**JIM**: Yes.

**HETSY**: Because they were medics who were going, who had been on the front or...

**JIM**: Yes, and also the other GI's, you know. It's kinda rough. You deal with it, but you keep your sense of humor.

**HETSY**: So to keep your perspective you must have this sense of humor, just to balance off the tragedy of what is really going on around you.

**JIM**: And you try not to think about it too much.

**HETSY**: Well, I would think you were probably so busy dealing with...

**JIM**: But there were times when there were lulls and that's when...

**HETSY**: You need to pranksterish, be radically...

**JIM**: Oh, yes, and with this one Christmas, we went out, Bob Roman and I went out on the hillside and we were lucky we didn't get shot by a sniper. We cut down this little scrubby-looking pine tree, and, you know, over in the Orient, it's real funny you see these pictures of pine trees. It's like they're growing the needles sideways.

**HETSY**: Horizontal needles.

**JIM**: Yes! Anyway, it was about two or three feet tall. We decorated it with cotton balls and we took merthiolate and dyed swabs and sticks, you know, we had them hanging on the tree. What happened then, all of the guys opened their packages from home. Some of the guys didn't get very much in the way of goodies, but the rest of us got quite a bit so we put everything on the table, no reserve, put everything on the table and everybody shared.

**HETSY**: How frequently would you have mail?

**JIM**: Mail?

**HETSY**: And your package deliveries, I mean because you're on the front line.

**JIM**: Well, we would get, it depends on where you were located. You'd get mail at least every other day, and, you know, the packages would not come every day but about once a week and occasionally when the monsoons struck, then we might be without mail for a week or so until the floodwater goes down. But the biggest thing was when they were getting ready to have the big hoopla in Japan, you know, for the final signing of the final peace treaty with Japan, we didn't get mail for over two weeks and we were not happy about that.

**HETSY**: Why was that?

**JIM**: Because everybody could not be working on the mail. They were sprucing up gettin' ready for this big hoopla. It was like we had been forgotten.

**HETSY**: Well, temporarily. You were on the back burner.

**JIM**: Yes. But that's your only connection with home, you see, you just get real testy.

**HETSY**: You do. But then during that, you mention the USO, and, of course, this ties into what Micki had been doing in WWII. The general tenor of the men and the women who were on the front lines when the USO troops would come through, did it change after the performance or during the performance?

**JIM**: Well, I think during the performance, then they begin to feel like just for a little while they had left it all behind.

**HETSY**: All the war behind.

**JIM**: Yes. What was so frustrating it was you can't, we don't win, we don't lose you just hold the line and Pon Mun Jom is yabbitty yabbitty.

**HETSY**: Right. Well, of course, the Viet Nam was even worse because there was no line, you were constantly going back and forth.

**JIM**: Yeh. You could really see it on peoples' faces, that they were really, you know...

**HETSY**: Relaxed and happy and smiling and feeling good again.

**JIM**: And didn't want to go back.

**HETSY**: I guess so. There must have been that dread.

**JIM**: Well, if Marie Windsor wanted to take me home, I'd just explain, "Micki, you know, hey, I just had to go with this lady."

**HETSY**: Well, Jim, actually your responsibilities were a bit greater than you have really told us. You were responsible for the first blood bank, is that correct?

**JIM**: No, not the first blood bank, but we were able to take care of that. What I didn't say is that because of my medical training, that's the reason I ended up at the collections station is because they had changed my MOS to just general medic, but I still had the other MOS. If they were going to hold patients, they had to have some sort of a lab and so I was it.

**HETSY**: You were the lab.

**JIM**: Yes, and it saved my buns, probably.

**HETSY**: It probably did because it kept you at the collecting station.

**JIM**: Collecting station. I was not that far from the front, but I was far enough back that I could really do some good. I did some bacteriology, you know dealing with infections and stuff like that and, of course, identification of venereal diseases, and they did exist.

**HETSY**: And was there medicine there to handle all of this?

**JIM**: Oh, yes, we had penicillin and they had streptomycin and I'm not sure if they had erythromycin then. I don't believe so. But there were the drugs to handle it.

**HETSY**: And the supplies were there for you?

**JIM**: Yes, the supplies were there. We didn't have any problem with the supplies. There was no shortage of supplies.

**HETSY**: Were supplies helicoptered in or were they trucked in?

**JIM**: They were trucked in.

**HETSY**: Were definitely trucked in.

**JIM**: The only time we'd have problem is if we were under water, the monsoon, and they do have rainy periods and, of course, the patients that were so severely injured, we'd just do the basics, stop the bleeding try to treat the trauma.

**HETSY**: Is that Triage? Is that what Triage is more or less?

**JIM**: Yeh, sort of, but that's before they even had such a word. And they would come in and pick them up on a helicopter and take them back to MASH or further back depending on how serious it was.

**MICKI**: Tell her about your out house up on the hill.

**JIM**: Well, that was one of the things I've been requested to tell the story. In my office, I have a picture when it was frozen in Korea, and if you look you see this line there and you don't know what it is. You think, well, maybe it's an electric wire or something like that, but it's a rope. This is a rope you hold on to go to the top of the hill, and the latrine was on the side of this hill. And people would say, instead of "I'm going to the latrine.", they'd say "I'm going to make a deposit in the Korean bank." I had this other friend from Cincinnati, Bob Jennings, who is quite a jokester, had a thing going with a guy named Sgt. Hawks who was the supply Sgt. And they were always doing things to each other.

**HETSY**: Playing pranks on one another.

**JIM**: Yes, well, this was early spring, it was just as things began to thaw out. So Bob Jennings crept up the side of the hill, came in the back of the latrine, and this particular latrine had accommodations for four people. And Sgt. Hawks was sitting there reading "Stars and Stripes", I think that is what it was, looking out over the beautiful frozen countryside. Jennings opens the opposite side, picks up a boulder and throws the boulder into the thing. Hawk caught him half way down the hill, holding his trousers up with one hand, and he grabbed hold of Bob Jennings and ripped his shirt off of him and one of the officers says, "Hawks, you know that you're destroying government property." But anyway there were things like that that happened, so, you see, when I referred to it as being similar to what you saw in MASH there was stuff like that all the time. It's sort of levity. And, of course, one other interesting thing about situation, they sort of touched on this in MASH, our immediate medical officer, his name was Segal, and he was a urologist. So he was stationed at the collecting station. We had one whose name was Diamond, he was an ob-gyn specialist, he was up in one of the battalion aid stations, but all of these people were specialists that had gotten drafted. I asked Lt. Segal, "Well, how did you get here?" He said, "I got drafted, just like you."

**HETSY**: That's the Korean War especially.

**JIM**: So, these specialists were not utilized, well, they were utilized. They put them where the regulars didn't wanta go.

**HETSY**: You didn't need ob-gyn for sure at the front line.

**JIM**: No, but they could have used them in Tokyo because taking care of the family members and stuff like that. But there's nothing fair about war.

**HETSY**: Do you keep in touch with any of your old friends, comrades from the Korean War?

**JIM**: Last time was about fifteen years ago I went through Chicago and I stopped off to visit with Bob Roman. And he was a representative of Eli Lilly Pharmaceutical Company and he would call on the different drugstores. And in Chicago, I don't know if you're familiar with Chicago, but you have areas that are predominately Italian, and you have other ethnic groups. So he says, "My name is Roman. When I go over to the Italian area my name is Ramono." And he says when I go over to the area where it's predominately Jewish people, he says, "My name is Romansky." I said, "How does that work?" He says, "Well, they all think I'm a member of their group, you know their ethnic group."

**HETSY**: So his sales were very good?

**JIM**: Yes, he did very well.

**HETSY**: He was a tough salesman.

**JIM**: Yeh, he was very good. And then I did keep in touch with a guy from Cincinnati but I haven't had anything from him in a long time.

**HETSY**: Did you all ever have a reunion?

**JIM**: Never.

**HETSY**: Never.

**JIM**: No, because everybody was dispersed all over the States and there was a guy from Ypsilanti, Michigan, and I haven't heard anything from him. There was a guy named, who was the equivalent Radar, you know, in MASH...

**HETSY**: Yeh, he was communications officer, I guess.

**JIM**: No! His name was Robert. He was the clerk in the station, the collecting, his name was Robert McDonald, and, of course, he was a wheeler dealer to get things done.

And when he came back and got out of the service, he went and finished his college education, and he ended up doing publicity, PR, advertising, and stuff like that in San Francisco. All I know is that he grew up on a small farm in Cass City, Michigan, because he told us his

FAMILY CALLED IT THE MASTADON FARM (OLD BONES FROM PREHISTORIC ELEPHANTS).

**HETSY**: JIM, YOU WERE MENTIONING THAT YOUR SANITATION FACILITIES WERE SOMEWHAT UNIQUE. COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THAT A LITTLE MORE.

**JIM**: WELL, YOU KNOW, YOU WOULD TRAVEL FROM PLACE TO PLACE AND THEN YOU'D HAVE TO DIG YOUR NEW SANITARY FILL FOR YOUR GARBAGE AND THEN ALSO YOU'D HAVE TO DIG A LATRINE TO TAKE CARE OF OTHER BODILY WASTE PRODUCTS. AND SOMETIMES THEY'D END UP IN THE MOST UNUSUAL PLACES. THIS ONE TIME WE WERE STATIONED IN THIS AREA AND YOU WERE TAKING CARE OF YOUR BUSINESS AND YOU COULD LOOK OUT ACROSS THE AREA AND YOU COULD SEE THE ENEMY. THEY WEREN'T THAT FAR AWAY. WELL, IT WAS PROBABLY A LOT FURTHER THAN WE THOUGHT, BUT, YOU KNOW, YOU FEEL LIKE THEY'RE WATCHING YOU. AND THIS IS THE AREA WHERE THEY HAD A MULE, WHERE THEY USED A MULE TO SUPPLY THEIR TROOPS WITH AMMUNITION AND FOOD STUFF THAT THEY DELIVERED. THE MULE MADE A BREAK FOR IT, AND IT ENDED UP DOWN WITH OUR MEDICAL COMPANY. IT WAS IN THE MESS HALL HELPING HIMSELF WHEN HE WAS CAUGHT. AND THE COMMANDING OFFICER, CAPT. CLAY OF THE MEDICAL COMPANY, DECIDED THAT HE WAS GOING TO NAME THIS ANIMAL FRANCIS (AFTER FRANCIS THE TALKING MULE). THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT HAPPENS. BUT THE MULE DEFECTED, AND SO THEN THEY STARTED USING BICYCLES WHERE YOU COULD ACTUALLY GET BINOCULARS AND WATCH AND SEE THEY WERE RIDING UP AND DOWN ON TOP OF THOSE HILLS WITH THE BICYCLES.

**HETSY**: WAS THERE ANY SNIPER ACTIVITY GOING ON?

**JIM**: NOT OUR WAY. THE BICYCLE RIDER DIDN'T MAKE IT BUT A COUPLE OF DAYS. HE WAS SHOT. SO, ANYWAY, WE'VE GONE INTO A NEW TAPE.

**HETSY**: WE HAVE. I JUST REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR TAKING THE TIME TO SPEAK WITH US. I KNOW IT'S A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT SLANT FROM WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING HERE AT THE NIMITZ WITH OUR ORAL HISTORIES, BUT IT'S REALLY AN AMAZEMENT THAT YOU WERE DRAFTED TWICE, ONCE FOR WORLD WAR II AND THEN AGAIN ACTUALLY SERVED AT LENGTH OVERSEAS IN THE KOREAN WAR. AND YOU HAVE THAT USO PERSPECTIVE, TOO.

**JIM**: OH, YES.

**HETSY**: YOU WERE ACTUALLY ON THE FRONT LINES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LEVITY OF CREATING LEVITY IS EVIDENT.

**JIM**: YES. AND THERE WERE OTHER SHOWS BUT I NEVER GOT TO SEE BOB HOPE AND I WAS REALLY DISAPPOINTED, BUT I WOULDN'T HAVE PUT HIM INTO THE AREA WHERE WE WERE. BUT THOSE OTHER FOLKS THAT I TALKED ABOUT EARLIER, THEY WERE GREAT.

**HETSY**: AND THEIR LIVES WERE SOMEWHAT, THEY WERE AT RISK, WERE THEY NOT?

**JIM**: COULD HAVE BEEN, YES. NOT FROM SNIPERS OR ANYTHING BUT FROM THE AIR.

**HETSY**: FROM THE AIR AND THEN ALSO THEY HAD TO FLY IN, OR I DON'T KNOW IF THEY FLEW IN OR IF THEY TOOK TRAINS IN.

**JIM**: THEY FLEW INTO SEOUL, AND THEN THEY TRUCKED THEM TO THE SITE. IT WAS AN INTERESTING PLACE.

**HETSY**: WELL, JIM, THANK YOU SO MUCH.

**JIM**: YOU'RE MOST WELCOME.

**HETSY**: WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR HELP.

**JIM**: ENJOYED IT.

**HETSY**: VERY NICE HAVING YOU AND HAVING THE CHANCE TO VISIT WITH YOU.



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