

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with John Metzger

Part of the Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))
Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project

Interview # VRV-V-D-2015-077

John Metzger, a chaplain's assistant in Vietnam, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 6, 2015

Location: WILL Studio, Champaign, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: H. Wayne Wilson

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): WILL Staff

Transcription by: Illinois Public Media staff

Edited by: Illinois Public Media staff

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

John Metzger, *Veterans Remember*, VRV-V-D-2015-077

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: John A. Metzger was born on January 13, 1946 in Paducah, Kentucky. He grew up in Metropolis, Illinois in the 1940s and 1950s, part of a large Catholic family. After graduating from high school in 1964, he attended University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University to keep from being drafted. He later changed his mind, enlisted in the Army in 1968 for two years and was sent to Vietnam in 1969, where he became a chaplain's assistant. He began his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. After he completed six weeks of clerk typist school at Fort Dix, New Jersey, he was sent to Fort Hamilton, New York at the base of New York City where he completed his chaplain assistant training. He shipped to Vietnam in January of 1969 and was assigned to Support Command at Camp Granite in Qui Nhon. While in Vietnam, he assisted a Catholic priest, accompanying the priest on outings to other military locations in Vietnam. His duties ranged from assisting the priest at mass or helping him administer the last rites to fallen soldiers. As a chaplain's assistant, Metzger often accompanied the priest when he made visits to a leprosarium in Qui Nhon. Because of his assignment as a chaplain's assistant, Metzger's working quarters were relatively comfortable, with hot showers, air conditioning and flushable toilets, luxuries to most soldiers in Vietnam.

When he returned to the United States in January, 1970, Metzger was based at Fort Gordon, Georgia for six months working as a safety NCO. Upon his release, he continued his education, receiving a Ph.D. in history in 1982 and eventually becoming a school superintendent, finishing his career in Johnson City. He occasionally looks through the letters he and his family wrote to each other during the war, and hopes to collect more information about this time through these records.

Subject Headings/Key Words: John Metzger; chaplain's assistant in Vietnam; military deferment; Southern Illinois University; Qui Nhon, South Vietnam; Metropolis, Illinois; Communism; Fort Dix, New Jersey; Fort Hamilton, New York; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Camp Granite, South Vietnam; Fort Gordon, Georgia; Pleiku, South Vietnam; An Khê Pass; Agent Orange; leprosariums in South Vietnam

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