

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with James F. Perry, Jr.

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember-Vietnam Oral History project

Interview # VRV-A-L-2014-002

James F. Perry, Jr., a Field Artillery lieutenant who served in a searchlight battery while in Vietnam in 1968-69, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember-Vietnam* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: 29 & 30 Jan, 2014 Location: Perry residence in Port Byron, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: Susan Burke, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Roberta Volkmann & Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 119 pgs Total Time: 2:30 + 3:33/ 2.5 + 3.55 = 6.05 hrs

Session 1: Childhood as an army brat and initial training in the military

Session 2: Service in South Vietnam in 1968-69 and readjustment once home

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 25, 2014.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

James F. Perry, Jnr., *Veterans Remember-Vietnam*, VRV-A-L-2014-002

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: James F. (Jim) Perry, Jr. was born in November, 1946 in Frankfurt, German and grew up in a military family that moved frequently. Jim's father (who was interviewed as part of the *Veterans Remember - Korean War* collection) was an infantry officer who earned two Silver Stars in the Korean War. Jim Jr. attended Irvin High School in El Paso, Texas, then joined his father shortly thereafter in the Quad Cities area of Iowa. He was working at J.I. Case and had just married in August 1966 when he got in trouble with the law and enlisted in the Army. While attending basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri he scored high enough on tests to qualify for the Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. He was commissioned in September, 1967 and was assigned to a school support battalion at Ft. Sill.

Lieutenant Perry arrived in South Vietnam in September, 1968 and was assigned to the 5th Battalion, 2nd Field Force. His specific assignment was with I Battery, 2nd Field Artillery, where he served as a platoon leader for a searchlight platoon. He spent the bulk of his tour checking up on his men, whose sections (two searchlights) were attached to maneuver units throughout the III Corps sector of South Vietnam. Perry talks at length about the tactical employment of searchlights, his personal combat experiences, the use of agent orange, the decline in morale and the public's reaction to the war, back in the states. He discusses his return to the United States in September, 1969 and his return to school and to work, all while coping with the challenges of readjusting to civilian life.

Subject Headings/Key Words: artillery officer during Vietnam War; use of searchlights during Vietnam War; difficulties adjusting to civilian life; a soldier's reaction to anti-war protests; growing up as an army brat; Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma; race relations during Vietnam War; agent orange; Cuban Missile Crisis; assassination of John F. Kennedy; 1968 Democratic Convention;

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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