

Marcy G. Beyer interviewed by John Ernst on May 31, 1997

Q: Graduated from Univ. Minn. What led to club and program director in the Korean Conflict?

A: In 1951 after graduation I was looking for a job I applied-- one place was the service it was the Air force-- they were looking for people to work in service clubs over seas and I thought it would be exciting and I applied to work in a psych hospital as a recreation person-- I was asked for an interview for a service related job, went through a physical and every thing was fine and I was hired-- 1951, I went to Japan during Korea and went on a troop ship out of Seattle and it was all cloak and dagger we were told that the people charge could visit Seattle but had to tell were was going and told to be ready--we were taken to ward after big ship quite large only seen a rowboat before went from Seattle the northern route to Japan--Upon arrival I put on my service club uniform which was blue jacket shirt and pink cap with the insignia of the service club on cap--I came on deck early morning and looked toward shore and a wonderful welcoming omen was distance clear day and crown was almost golden when hit by the sun and I just gazed and wondered at this beauty I hadn't known to much about Japan before coming --all the cliches about the mystery of the Orient people who hid their feelings our enemy don't trust them--this is what I had read and I want to tell you that this was all turned around once there and became citizen on foreign soil--On Yokohama harbor close to a hotel I got up early and I remember all the dirty renelles-- we were embellished a big room, dormitory style they went out to party I was too tired and went to bed--I was awakened about 12 by a whistling or a flute got to window I do wear glasses looked down there was two people I don't know whether they were men or women and they were standing there with a baskets over their heads and one of them was playing a flute and I didn't know what it was and I watched it a little while and then went back to bed--I later

found out that they were beggars who beg for certain charities prob. religious people not the sense that ours are like monks that cant marry or something or priests but they did belong to some religious order as to not embarrass the people who might later see them without the basket and know they gave too little-- I thought this was very interesting from Yokohama I was shipped to the island of Kyushu which is the closes one to Korea and I was stationed at Ashiya air force base --- and I worked the service club to start, recreation then programs and then club director-- that's how I got to Japan the first time that's 1951 I got married after serving two years to a service man and I got pregnant the morning after I got married and my daughter born 9 months later and we waited till she was 3 months old because the doctors wanted us to wait until she was 3 months old and then we went back by ship to Us--My husband got out of service and became a tech-rep so when my daughter was 14 he got a job with ???? back to Japan as a tech-rep to representative he was electronics a trouble shooter a layzeeon between the service and his company to make things easier to get repair parts repair people who were not the service but could teach the service men how to do things so that's an all around tech representative and ??? (name of company) was a big company at the time-- So when my daughter was 13 and my son who born Virginia we went back to Japan but this time we went to an Air force naval air station Atsugi name near Yokohama and camp Zama so that's how I got to be a part Vietnam and that's what happened it was 1967 we stayed three years 67,68,69 then returned to US on new year's 1969--and they were three years which I kids enrolled Japanese school, I worked again at the service club camp Zama name and camp??? had a big hospital where many of the people who would gone through MASH hospitals Vietnam were then brought to camp Zama for further surgery, observation, patching up some were returned to Vietnam and some to the States for treatment--I worked at that service club part-time for 39 hours per week and (laugh by both individuals) just enough so they didn't have to give me benefits-I had to do something I'm not the

club women-type I wanted to keep my self occupied something I knew how to do very well and that's what I did I worked as a recreation and program director and that's what I did I assisted the people that were there and I did two tours and ?? and I listened to the servicemen and --- I remember crying with them because I remember one especially a very young man this is his third time back at the hospital he is was a helicopter gunner he was shot up from the bottom, his butt was torn apart--we would patch him up and send him back to get injured again--He never complained just wondered why (laugh) this was happening so many times and that they were sending him back this was to be expected he was the service-- and I tried to have some programs were the guys would go the kitchen and we would supply what they wanted and they could cook something it was as good as mom or wife but just the attempt and the comradeship how do you say together with the other guys and me and e some of the other service women-it just made for a real nice homelike evening kitchen doing something familiar with how --when I had been conn with the service during the Korean operation the first year I was there I was staying with service men but the second they had families coming over and I would take them on tours and shopping trips and things-- when I was the Vietnam situation with service people it was the men I cant remember any of the service women it's been a long time--most of them were recovering they weren't up to doing much sight seeing they would come to the club and sit on the couch and sometimes would fall asleep and we let them because sometimes they needed a place away from the barracks for some quiet and I was very lucky that the service director was very compassionate and she understood that she couldn't be gunhoe military and say that no you can't sleep the service club she was very nice about this and it didn't happen very often but once awhile you get tired while you are recuperating-- While I was working as a service club director I didn't do to much with the military-- but after a while I realized I wanted to see more of Japan I had begone to make friends among the wives because as a civilian we were supposed to attend the wives of the

officer club and the officer's club I became involved with them and planned many activities as person in charge of setting up programs so after a year I resigned as a service clerk and began working more with the military on the base and their families--this was very rewarding and interesting and I got some (interesting???) speakers to come talk to the wives and also the imperial hotel Tokyo was going to be torn down they felt the imperial hotel had been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and it had withstood all the bombing raids and in fact the swimming pool water had been used at times to put out fires-- but the land is very valuable Tokyo. As all large cities in Japan and they needed a hotel that was larger, more modern and they just felt they had to tear down the imperial and when I heard about this I thought this would be a good idea for a tour to show the Americans what Frank Lloyd Wright had done a lot of service wives officers wives they didn't --travel around with the curiosity I did and I came back to the club I would talk about a place I had been and they would say "gee we have never seen of this" and some of them were very interested and that's how I planned some tours and talking to them they said yes we would like to go --so I thought of a way to make them more interesting so I talked to the manager about creating a luncheon which would have been the last luncheon they would serve at this hotel and I liked to have a program and many of our people had not seen a real Japanese wedding and could we arrange that? Because when I had walked the hotel prior to making all these plans they had shown me a room which was used for Japanese weddings it was very different and we got that all together I got one of the servicemen to be the groom and one of the Japanese ladies who was married to an officer to be the bride and we had a real (???) priest to perform the ceremony and we had another interpreter to tell the people what was going on as it progressed --and it was a sell out crowd it was not only the officer's wives from our bases but people from many of the surrounding smaller bases and I remember a president from one of the smaller bases saying "remember we're officer's wives too please let go it sounds so interesting"so we squeezed some

more extra seats and we go them the luncheon and I rem the luncheon behind each person there was a server and I rem the table length which was solid silver and it was massive pieces-- the table spoon were like serving spoon size everything was so big compared to what I would use our own homes the linen was spotless and there wasn't a wrinkle they had ironed it beautifully and I mean you just touched an eyebrow and there was someone there to serve you something (laugh) I felt like royalty absolutely --After the luncheon was the wedding ceremony and it was fabulous I got pictures of all that and after that it closed the imperial hotel

E: the last function there

B: yeah and I understand there is a new imperial hotel where the old one was standing I haven't seen it I haven't been back to Japan since 1969--when I was Japan that time I belonged to two friendships clubs one was Japanese wives and American wives now we had officers wives and sergeants wives that club- we would meet each others homes this is unusual because most Japanese entertain if not their family outside the home and the ladies would go to lunch during the afternoon and the men would entertain at night-- by going into each other's homes I had the rare opportunity that most Americans or foreigners did not have by going into their homes and I would go their homes and do what they did if they sat on the floor or a seat and we ate the food they served and they ate the food we served and I am a very adventurous eaters thank goodness and I rem I ate tublo fish and squid and octopus and liked it and liked it!! and formed friendships with these ladies which endure to this day --- the period 1996 the children of those people one of them particular had been the states several times due to her husband's position a chemical company and a couple two three years they visited here with their children-- the grandchildren of the people I met 1969 were here my home and my daughter came down because she had been a very good friend of Yoko as she came the airport-- we all cried at this reunion they all stayed here and we had a wonderful three days together--When I was Japan I learned from the women

how to work on a special kind of doll that is a ??? and then you get material and you would dress the doll by pressing the material into the forms-- the doll into it comes out into a splendid doll--It was most unusual I had never seen it the states before and haven't seen it since but I did bring back the ones I made after being taught by the Japanese ladies and I rem one time I went on a tour of pottery and he had a real big kennel made out of bricks and he let us experiment making something and what I made was awful but I kept it for many years-- When the ladies would come to our homes they always loved the ice cream and I would try to keep several flavors although I knew what they were going to say "Would you want the chocolate, vanilla, strawberry?" and they would say "Yes" (laugh) so I would give them scoops of all three--We took them to the officers club and they would always order meat because meat is very expensive Japan and so they would order steak-- I mentioned the women not too many of the men wanted to socialize when I gave a party I gave party's often and the Japanese ladies always attended and one husband attended and spoke excellent English as did his wife and some of the wives said that there husbands did not come because they did not know enough English and they would be embarrassed and others were very truthful they were still thinking about the war and their dislike for Americans and instead of wanting to meet us we understood their hurt but could they understand ours? Could we still be friends? They couldn't bring themselves to do that---and it's too bad I hoped they changed over the years, maybe not if you don't have contact with somebody there is no way of getting over that hurdle but the Japanese ladies and their children were very open-- we tried at first to have an interpreter he was male interpreter from the base but it didn't work out according to one of the ladies who could speak pretty good English he was not interpreting the words the way we were saying them or they were saying them so we got rid of him and we just went through the two ladies who could speak English none of the American women spoke Japanese so the two ladies who could speak English were our interpreters and we got through together we had Christmas

and Halloween parties we taught them all the customs we had the states and they tried to teach us their Japanese customs they taught me how to do dances for the (???) festival which is a festival where you honor the dead it is usually aug.15 the evening there is a huge bonfire and you dance around circles and then the drummers Have you ever heard Japanese drums? They are mag. And they are huge and they go on for hours and different music would be pumped through the loud speakers and as a group, we got the same kind of summer kimonos pattern, we performed on the high platform, we danced with the drummers then we went down and danced around the bonfire with the Japanese people--and the other Americans who had come or just observed as other groups would dance and this goes on and on and finally you light a candle which goes on a little floating piece of paper and you put the river or the sea and it floats out to sea and it guides the spirit of the dead back to where they live until next year and you do it all over again--I went with them to a lot of different festivals shrines, (pause) and seeing it through their eyes and then seeing it through my eyes was good for both of us

E: Yeah

B: I told you I belonged to another group which was friendship, fun, and food and that was Tokyo and it was started by a young Japanese man who got the help from his parents he only lived a little apartment Tokyo, but he started this group because he felt that only through knowing people can peace eventually come and a lot of people from the different emissary belonged so from belonging to this group I met people from all over the world working there Japan as civilians and this young man, somewhere my archives I probably have his name, he and his mother would plan trips for us--we went up into the mountains for skiing I don't ski I went up on the lifts and came down on the lifts my children tried to balance themselves on skis and that was an overnight trip and another time he took us to the (???) festival and you get on large boats and you float flowers all over and another time we went to a starlight festival which was about

two lovers who were not allowed to be together and once a year they are allowed to come together and the rest of the year they are apart and there was one small town who celebrated better than any other town the area there was loads of colorful artificial type hanging flowers it was very colorful and full of lights sights and smells and fireworks I was exposed to so many Japanese customs I was very lucky that respect.

E: Did you ever get a sense about what the Japanese thought about the Vietnam? Was that ever discussed? (Pause and sigh from Beyer) Or did you discuss it with the American servicemen wives?

B: I can't remember ever discussing it with the Japanese- there are certain subjects that are better not tread on and we still finding our way as friends it was very tentative (long pause) I went through sadness with people who husbands were killed-- at a luncheon at the officer's wives club and there was a lot of talking among the women and two officers appeared at the door and everything became very quiet and all eyes looked at them-- they went and got one of the ladies and you know immediately there was a gasp and one of her closer friends went out with her and they left ---and then you try to go back and do what you were doing, you have to be very stalk about this I don't know why but you have to be very stalk you don't say anything about what just happened until later when you find out that her husband was killed Vietnam--what happens is that they get her and her children moved out so fast there is not a trace left, they are gone--they sent back to the states I rem one woman who I correspond with to this day she was out of Washington state and her husband was shot down out of a helicopter (pause) and they moved her out quickly but she insisted on coming back so her children could finish school with the friends that they knew because their lives have been disrupted enough why disrupt it anymore, let them finish school -and finally the service people gave and they came back so the children could finish the school year with familiar people and familiar surroundings (long pause) it was my Korean time and Vietnam



time sometimes they blend together my head— I think it was the same plane were several they were all lost and (pause) (low utterance?) one was a young woman she had a young girl she lost her husband-- they were very much love that was their first child and she laid around Florida and got her doctor Education and remarried and had two more children --there was another woman who had no children who returned to the states and completed her masters -kept touch for a number of years and then things slipped by the way side--I remember then he was such a nice man and a wonderful officer and it all seemed so senseless

E: Was he a pilot? Or ...

B: He was a pilot so was Red? the others were navigators or whatever they do on planes, I don't know They were shot down by mistake that's (low utterance?) They ended up the water-I think they later recovered a couple bodies but that's all blurred my mind now too.

E: I am curious do you remember any distinct differences between the soldiers who served Korea and those that served Vietnam? Do you remember any?

B: Well when I first Korea I was single and where I was stationed Kyushu the soldiers from Korea would come for rest and RandR -When they came there they had not seen many American women and nurses were off-limits to enlisted men and officers so they did not have too much to do with American women--when they came into the service club most would just sit down and stare at me (laugh by both) they just stared at me it didn't make me uncomfortable I understood I thought they wanted to talk to me but were afraid so I would approach them and sit down and talk to some of them and have coffee or tea with them-I remember walking into a small town with one of the men who had come for a little R and Rand being approached outside the gate by a Japanese woman who said "you come with me I give you something American won't, American no put out" I am glad I had that kind of reputation at the time (laugh) but he said no, no I can't remember what he said but we left her--that was Korea, we had a wonderful chat on our walk and

he was very understanding of why women became involved prostitution, to get enough money to feed themselves and their families and he tried to help as we all did at that time Korea our BOQ bachelor officer quarters there all women there were two, four, six- two bedrooms and six women one bathroom and one small living room which can be difficult living with six people because we were all of different temperament (laugh) but two of us shared a little cleaning lady who would wash our clothes and clean and there was only a certain amount of money we could give her which was set by the Japanese government so things would not become inflated unevenly between those that worked on the bases and those that don't but we did get them gifts and mementos-- I remember one time I got our cleaning lady some panties and she put them all on one over the top of the others (laugh) because she said if she took it out of the package the guards would take them from her so that's why she did that--My roommate who was a librarian and I also shared a seamstress we had some clothes made over there because there was nowhere to shop and because I was very tall, I was about 5 3/4 my socking I was very tall for an American women and compared to Japanese women I was very very tall and compared to the Japanese men I was very tall— This is on the island of Kyushu which is different from ??? where the men are very tall and there was no where to buy clothes unless a catalog was sent-- so this Japanese seamstress made clothes for us over the two years I was there I needed something new I was very pleased of course some of the dyes they used were lousy you would wash them and they would fade and run-- so I learned what to buy and what not to buy through trial and error-I did finally have some materials sent over I had had it with the Japanese stuff but they have improved quite a bit (pause)

**E: Flips over tape // End of Side 1 of Tape 1**

**Beginning of Side 2 of Tape 1**

One of the nicest people I went out during my single period was the Catholic Chaplin because he

did not try to paw me

E: This was during the Korean period

B: Yes, he was such a nice man and I would call him and say Chaplin there is movie at the base theater and he would ask what was playing and he would say "sure let's go" and he would round up three, four, six guys who helped him around the chapel and we would all go the movies-- there was no place to go out afterwards to get coffee or something unless I brought it back to my BOQ-- it was very difficult because as a service club women I was not supposed to fraternize with the enlisted men, they couldn't come to the officer's club and I couldn't go to their club it was the afternoon we might go to the snack bar but everything was closed after the movie was over so I went home-- they always made sure that I was escorted back to my BOQ even on a base with the military there, some things can get out hand --I remember also this isn't very nice but I'm going to tell you anyway, (laugh) I had been up the Chaplin's office and for some reason he needed some information and had to leave the office-I wondered around his desk and read a letter on his desk addressed to whomever his boss was back the states and it said "Get me out of here I am going crazy I put my time, please transfer me" That was the first time I realized that he was unhappy over here- I may have had some unhappy period, I don't know you know personally but overall my experience was wonderful as a single person I traveled a lot--I remember some time May we planned a trip to ???? which is the largest island of ???? near our base and I was told not to go because this is the Japanese May Day and the communists would be out marching and I said but this is my three days off a row and I was going to spend one night a hotel and I was going to do some shopping and sightseeing, mostly sightseeing --and I'm going --I'm tall and stick out of course I wore civilian clothes and not my uniform- the train was wonderful, transportation Japan the trains, the buses,-even back 1952 I remember it was crowded and a Japanese man got up and gave me his seat this was most unusual Japanese men don't do that even for Japanese women you

have to be very, old or sick or lame before they would get up from their seats -face it Japanese men are spoiled, by their wives and their mothers and girlfriends so I went into ??? there had been rioting there were some cars turned over and some fires-It didn't bother me I went about and did whatever--I observed-I wasn't upset by what I saw-(laugh)This was it, it was heaven and had a nice time by myself and went back by the train they had a dinning car this time so I sat down and had something to eat ---

E: Was it very different during the Vietnam experience?

B: During Vietnam, Japan was no longer licking it's wounds after a very terrible war which Tokyo was almost leveled I saw block after block of nothing--I also went to see the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki been there-- It was gone, nothing-nobody ever growled at me though I have been growled at Egypt I wasn't spat upon or shoved into me or unkind anyway, I was standing there looking at where a city once stood and now there was only the ruins of a church or another building or temple that's all--I always wondered whether I could have been that calm and compassionate I don't think so because when I went to Germany (buh!) They may have had ice there heart but they certainty controlled themselves or did anything rude-they tell me that by nature Japanese people are not rude-

E: Was it difficult for you when you said that your husband was a tech-rep Vietnam? Was he ever out the field during that time?

B: Well, he said that he spent a lot of time their foxholes or shelters I don't know what type of shelters they had because of the bombing and the shooting with rifles or whatever they do-He didn't talk about it much

E: Were you worried when you called though?

B: Probably, probably I was worried sure-but you try to keep very, busy through my workings with the officer's wives clubs, some of the other activities with the Japanese ladies, my children

taking them places the car I took them to their activities unless they could go by train- Here's an interesting episode- my children my daughter especially had braces on her teeth before she left the states I got a letter from the doctor the states to the doctor Tokyo a doctor ???? who had studied the states and he felt that this Japanese doctor was the best doctor for continuing work on my daughters braces-so I contacted him and we went for our first appointment by train and taxi and doctor ?? said he could continue the work and when I asked him how much the work would cost he said that he didn't want money but only wished that once while that I would bring him some whiskey or gin well it just so happened that I didn't drink and my husband didn't drink much either-and we coupons for two bottles of liquor per month so I would take two of the coupons by and bring him some Johnny Walker Red label it was good stuff I guess -it was very expensive Japan but on the base where I got the liquor it was two or three dollars a bottle so I paid for the work on my daughters teeth and my own and my sons with whiskey and it came to very little so I am surprised when I hear people saying that their braces are costing them \$1000 to \$1500 dollars when the three years I was there I got all our teeth done for \$100--and another time there was another dentist on base and I had a toothache and I can't wait to go to the Tokyo or another city because I was hurting so I went to the base dentist-he was a young Japanese man and he was nervous good grief he was nervous! And he had a little roll towel- Have you ever seen a roll towel? It is one previously white towel that you wipe on and the next time hopefully it has a chance to dry— When I came the office the towel was a dark gray and he washed his hands and dried them on that towel-he was very good about washing his hands but he dried them on that towel and I thought how many times has he wiped before on other patients but he did take care of my toothache- but I decided that we had better get another dentist a civilian dentist so I got a recommendation for a doctor ???? doctor ??? could do orthodontics and the other doctors did fillings and pulled teeth so we went to them --there were

two dentist who had been trained the states and come back and opened an American style dental practice and I mean it was the plushiest thing I had ever seen, I had never seen anything like it before and they took care of us for the remaining period we were Japan that was an interesting experience —

We went to the officer's club one night Tokyo and we went there for dinner and I came out front of the coat room and I heard someone say "Aren't you" and I guess I was talking but they mentioned my name and I turned around and it was someone from my high school Minneapolis, Minnesota Bernard Menstein and his wife and his children were having dinner at the officer's club Tokyo— he was some sort of representative there, so for the duration of their time Japan we spent Thanksgiving and Christmas with them— small world— very small world because I remember high school we were not buddy, but it was nice to have someone familiar around and the children enjoyed each other even though their children were much younger— nice family they moved to California and we kept touch for awhile but then that fell to the wayside

E: What were your personal feelings about the Vietnam War? Being there during Tet

B: (Cut Ernst's question) I think every war is stupid it's a heck of way to handle anything—a lot of body bags- I worked for the Red Cross as a volunteer-(long pause) I read the stories about us trying to cleanse my mind and my nightmares— there was a group of Red Cross nurses who were putting on a party, there were officers and enlisted men the hospital they were wounded but could come to the day room-(long pause and begins to cry) and I remember this one young officer who came and he had been injured his face and they were doing plastic surgery and they had taken part of his scalp down to put down over his face and his hair was still growing—cross his hairline down past his chin was the big section, they said eventually it would reeducate itself and the hair would be gone— I don't know how many operations he had (pause) and he joined the games and he was so (pause) happy to be with us (crying) and I was such a coward, I had

nightmares over that and years later when I wrote about it I finally came to the conclusion that many people are victims of war the physically wounded and the emotionally wounded, like I was (still crying a little) (pause) I can see that now just as I did then and the young man bed with ???glosimees--(pause) I remember Danny Kay coming through (laugh by both) he had a staunchy kind of walk- he was wearing boots with the laces unlaced and they were dragging behind him-he looked very sloppy(laugh by Ernst) big grin he had a long face and a long nose I don't know how tall the man was, he was slouching when he went over and talked to the guys(pause) and I remember Raymond Burr coming over during Korea-Raymond Burr always paid his own way, he never accepted a penny-- expenses that was his contributions-the other people the troop got paid by the government but Raymond Burr never accepted any money(pause)--there were several groups that came through I didn't see them perform I had to be at the service club but I could hear the roaring, the clapping, the whistles from the distance and what they did was wonderful, for a brief time, a very brief they took their minds of what they had been through-

E: During Vietnam, what kinds of games did you play? you said you cooked them breakfast

B: At the service club? I can't really remember the meals that they had, probably table games you know pinochle, casino, probably had bingo-- for those who were able table tennis-- we always celebrated birthday parties with cakes and probably we gave them small prizes which could be a long distance phone call back home-- that wouldn't be too often because we never had a lot of money--And of course we had the Christmas tree, Valentine, Halloween, at Halloween season we would decorate and we would have appropriate games, like for Halloween we would have apple dunking and strings of apples and try to get them-- during that period also as I told you my daughter celebrated her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday Japan-my daughter dated Japanese young men Japan groups I never allowed her to go alone, strange country strange language but she picked up a lot of the Japanese language but they went groups and a lot of the Japanese boys she would go with

were college students(pause) they would go to festivals, shrines, parties, she went square dancing- she came from square dancing one night and said "Guess who I squared danced with?" and I said "I don't know" and she told me that it was the Emperor's brother (laugh by Ernst) she said momma "He is not a good square dancer" (laugh by both) so she had a really interesting time there because I allowed her to do as much as possible with the Japanese people as long as she followed certain guidelines— I was very happy because they were nice young men and one of them Tocow, his parents invited us to their home, the whole family over for lunch and his father was the cement business he made these great big pipes, I guess they were used for water to go through them or construction-so they had a big home outside of Tokyo they had the big dinning room, big kitchen it was a Japanese style kitchen, big baths and bedrooms upstairs and when we were there it was Tocow's father, Tocow's sister her husband and one child that Tocow's sister had-Where's Tocow's mother? the kitchen and she and her husband had prepared this excellent meal--the father spoke pretty good English and the sister and her husband spoke excellent English so we were able to have nice conversations-and sometime during the meal I asked if the mother would come and sit down and it isn't that he wouldn't let her it's just that she, finally she came out--and we had brought gifts whenever you cross the threshold of a Japanese home or they cross the threshold of your home, they bring you a gift that's mandatory--so if they are only coming to deliver a message they do not cross the threshold which is taking off one's shoes, they can just stand like a little ??? and no present, once they take off their shoes they have to bring you something even if it's just a flower-so when we went to the house we brought a couple bottles of whiskey and I think I gave the wife a nice scarf- and they gave us something too but I don't remember--anyway the mother came out and I gave her the present I had brought, she was very appeasing her thanks--I remember the father was very handsome and the wife was very beautiful, the sister was gorgeous and we had a very nice time— I don't know if it was before that or after it- I was home and one of



the children was home with me and there was a knock and Japanese man was there-and he couldn't speak English and he, I called a Japanese friend from the wives club and she told me what he was saying and it seems that he wanted information about our family and the only thing she could figure out was that someone was interested our daughter-marriage material I said "Who" and he wouldn't tell me and I asked my friend why he wouldn't tell me and she because he didn't have to, that was the custom Japan

E: Was he a marriage broker of sort?

B: I don't know so I said I would call you back-so I called base and explained what was happening to the information officer and he said that I shouldn't tell them anything, your husband has a very high clearance rating and you cannot tell them anything-so "okay, goodbye" and I never heard from them again (laugh by both) never heard from them again- I remember during that time, the princess who is now the queen mother, they were a young couple that got married and she had a son, a little girl and when she had her little girl, I believe she had some mental problems she was not very bright, anyway I was post exchange?? and I found a little dress that said "princess" on it, so I wrapped up the dress and sent it as a gift to the princess and her daughter and I never heard a thing not a thank you, nothing, probably someone the house staff who decides what daughter's name?? wears took it and gave it away to someone else- I do remember reading the Japan Times which I subscribed to about how unhappy the princess was that they had taken her children to raise and she had a nervous breakdown so they began to give her more control over her family and her life

E: You returned to the states 1969,

B: New Year's Eve 1969

E: Were you surprised at how Americans were coping with the Vietnam War?

B: No, no I heard very little about that, very little-- the Stars and Stripes and the Japan Times I don't remember ever reading anything about what was going on back the states as far as unrest,

discontent or any shootings, yeah I heard about Kent State but it was just so far away (pause) does it bother you? Yeah but what can I do about it?

E: I going to ask you, if you don't want to answer it's fine, you said you wrote stories when you were trying to deal with some of the things you had to see Vietnam or Japan, did you write journal type entries or stories?

B: Stories

E: You wrote short stories about it

B: Yeah

E: Did it blend fiction and real life experiences?

B: As far as the experiences with the officers wounded like that (pause) what we had gone through and what I had went through was defiantly not fiction-it becomes a fictionalized story when I tell it, but it was defiantly not fiction(pause) I just file them away- I don't try to publish them, I have read them to some of the groups I belong to but I have not tried to publish them--They're a catharsis

B: You've got to have that when you go through some of things --and when I said that I had wonderful experiences Japan-it's true but there was also some sadness— there was only one time that one Japanese person acted deliberately malicious towards me--only once six years- that was the service club camp Zama and I hadn't been working there that long and I had already made friends-- most of the Japanese people who worked there were custodial or took care of the game room like go get cards and things and help keep track or gardeners--this man was supposed to be the overseer telling people to do this and do that--and I had come into work about ten minutes early and he came into work a couple minutes afterwards and we were talking cordially like we had done many times and I heard a door behind me like somebody was coming from the outside and all of a sudden he began shouting and accusing me of something--I don't remember exactly what

about but it was something like I was trying to undermined him with the other Japanese people and I was trying to do his job, which had never really occurred--so then the program director came and I don't know to calm him down and I was just standing there not sure what had hit me--well you know things get heard a building like that and the next day two Japanese men came to me and explained that they thought that man was there friend and could I help-- the overseer was extorting money from them saying "if you don't give me any money you will be fired" and I asked them if they were the only two he was doing this to and they said he was doing it to everyone who was working there-I said "Alright"then let's get everyone together and go to the club director--and that's what we did and we got him fired--you've got that many people saying the same thing-I guess he felt threatened because I was their friend and that's why he attacked me, that's the only time-- And rudeness once, or I thought it was rudeness, maybe it was a Japanese custom I didn't know anything about--The cleaning lady had invited us over to her home and I tell you see was terrific, she would tear my house down every time she would clean it, and I tell you it was hard keeping houses clean Japanese because there was so much dust from the unpaved roads Japan it was quite difficult--don't let me forget to tell you about the house painting--so we went to her home and her husband was still on his futon which is Japanese quilt put over a totommy which is the Japanese word for shelf and you don't wear shoes on the outside shelf, you can wear slippers or go barefoot but he was actually still bed on the floor, his underwear and he knew he were coming--but he was going to show us that he didn't have too much respect for Americans--I thought that was rude, I don't think that was a very nice way to treat company--and we brought him a bottle of whiskey another Johnny Walker which he liked, he opened it up and took a shot right away--I was under the impression that he was not very nice to his wife and that was later confirmed by one of the friends I had at the friendship club--this lady confirmed that he was a wife beater (pause) that's the two instances six years--What did I tell you to remind me of?

E: The painting

B: The painting! Oh, we had lived two story when we first moved to this area--then we learned about a house another area, a nicer area on the hill that was to become vacant, so we got the house to rent- it needed painting and the landlord said he would paint it- it became the white house, my name was White so it became the white house on the hill (laugh by Ernst)--so he sent his son he had two sons and he sent the youngest one--I don't remember how young but remember my daughter was 15 and he probably wasn't too much older, maybe 16 or 17 he was a nice looking young man--and he did what all young men want to do to impress girls, like stand on their head (laugh) and showoff his prowess but he got tired of painting and didn't come back--so there is the house only half done or half finished which ever way you want to look at--so my husband said he would do it but I asked him when, when he was home he was so busy and when he was gone he was gone and my son Robby was only 11 or 12 and didn't think he was capable, maybe he was-- anyway he had told us that he would paint our house and I wanted him to keep his word--so I called up and talked to him on the phone and I used psychology and honored and said you gave us your word you are an honorable man--so he sent his son over the next day to finish the painting (laugh by both) Okay one night we went to a concert Tokyo, we drove our car and parked it outside the downtown area because parking the downtown area is almost prohibited, so we took the subway to the concert hall which is a new and beautiful concert hall--it had huge windows so you could look down at the street, a comfortable auditorium, very modern it was beautiful, we were watching some orchestra performance and when the show was over a man came out and announced that there had been some rioting, a labor party is rioting and for your own safety to sit and wait so we could ensure our safety--so we all pour into the lobby and look out the windows, we were observers to a very interesting scene--Japanese with sticks, they all had the same color headband maybe red but I'm not going to swear by it, men whose clothing was otherwise dark and

then the police with helmets, sticks, and shields because rocks were being thrown at them and tear gas which is what we were told I certainly couldn't tell by looking we couldn't smell anything inside--we met a couple from the American Embassy and after they said we could possibly leave the couple stated that we weren't going to be able to take the subway for awhile and that we should come over to the American Embassy--now I'm concerned my children are back ??? not on the base but not too far from the base--and my daughter was 15 and my son 12 and my neighbor next door was told where we would be and we were supposed to be back at a certain time if possible and I was concerned--they said we could call from the Embassy--I asked how to get there and they said that we go down to subway and then get to their house from there, supposedly the other subways were not as safe--well we started down the subway and tear gas had been thrown and we were holding on to each other and we can't see and we were standing there trying to hold on to something and it was awful--I was holding on to somebody front of me and my husband was the back--we were filed through whatever it was to a clear area and we did get to subway and to their American compound--and we stayed there for several hours did make a phone call to tell the kids we were all right--and she said do you want me to take the kids over to my house and I said I didn't think it was necessary just tell why we were late--we stayed at the American compound for about three hours and then they called a taxi for us which took awhile and the taxi took us to our car and we got home about four the morning--that was interesting

### **Beginning of Tape 2 / Side 1**

I'm looking at an invitation from the Israel embassy, inviting me and others to a bazaar under the patronage of the imperial princess Nocasa, princess Nocasa was married to the emperor's brother-- she and the ladies of the Israel embassy were holding a bazaar and the money raised would go towards some of the Japanese orphanages and also some of the money was to Israel--it was being held at the ????(18) center Israel

E: What year is it?

B: It says Dec. 3 but it had to be 1968, 1967 or 68 I went to that--it says some of the money would go towards the research institute of ??????(28) school for the mentally retarded and I remember the first thing at that bazaar, the kasmir sweater donated by the Imperial hotel and gift shop, I think I got it for five dollars, that was quite a bargain

E: Who was emperor during that time?

B: It was, it was the emperor during the war, Hirihito

E: It was still Hirihito

B: Yes, because it was his son that married ????(40) who was so unhappy

E: Did you ever meet emperor Hirihito

B: No, I never saw him person, I went to the imperial palace and I was very amazed at the army of volunteers that would come work on things on the grounds--they would have hand clippers and cut things out by hand, the grass, the bushes, whatever under the supervision of an imperial gardener, but they did all the cleaning up of the imperial grounds, this was volunteers it was a great honor--I never saw any person of the royal family

E: But your daughter (laugh)

B: I should say imperial royal family, but my daughter and the princess--but my daughter danced with him

E: Did you ever any of your service clubs go to Vietnam?

B: No, never went to Vietnam, it was war

E: I know, I just didn't know if you had ever went ever--

B: No, we had some nurses that went to Korea from Japan during Vietnam, we a lot of nurses over there and women officers that capacity

E: Did you become friends with any of the nurses or officers?

B: No, nope

E: I'm curious--the second time you went to Japan, you married and the first time you went to Korea the soldiers stared at you--did you have that same kind of--

B: Feeling?

E: Yes, with the Vietnam soldiers

B: No, no I didn't--First all we weren't for rest and relaxation--we were a service club for people who had been wounded that would come to recuperate at the base and then go where ever they sent them--so I didn't have the same relationship that I had Korea at all, I didn't have that feeling about being stared at or feeling apprehensive about them approaching me--I guess there were two different feelings about the war from the people who were them--To me, I really felt helpless that I really wasn't contributing a lot--even during Korea, when I was single, we had some flooding--and the base housing area families were out and being threatened by floods--and we formed a human chain and put sand bags and I remember going out into the water time after time and it being over my shoulders, I being only 5 foot 9 and I would carry cigarettes way up high and I would lite a cigarette and give a cigarettes to some of the men standing there putting down the sand bags and coming back for more and doing that all night long until they told me to go stay the house that it was not going to be that bad and they could get all the families out--it was quite an experience, I slept the almost the entire next day

E: Did you have anything similar happen during Vietnam?

B: Not our base but they had terrible typhoons and I remember that along some rivers, house were washed off into the river--but you know what would happen, after they were washed off, they would build them the same place again, like they do here the states--they tell people not to build here but they do it anyway

E: Was there any particular event that stands out your mind during the Vietnam period, or person

? You mentioned a couple soldiers--

B: There is an event that stands, it's not an event but a situation that I'm sure happened many times over but I happened to observe it--when you have people over seas and they're away from their friends and family, sometimes they act differently than they do when they when they are around those that might censor them--I remember being a train station and I was going to take a train or I was seeing someone off, someone returning to Yokohama(147) base--and a young woman was there saying goodbye, a Japanese woman saying goodbye to an American soldier or airman and he left and she got down on her hands and knees and began crying terribly, probably thought she would never see him again, she probably was his live--dictionary is what they called them--Ever hear that term before?

E: No, what year is this?

B: This was during Korea--live--dictionary--they would live outside of base and the Americans would move with them--you know some of the things we see the television series MASH happened it was not fiction--men who had there girlfriends and men who had older women--I remember this one man saying that I have an older woman because I know she won't play around with the other guys, she takes care of me, she does my laundry and is nice to me, whereas some of the younger woman might have another man on the side so they can get more money--that happened in a MASH episode to

E: Was it the same during Vietnam, did the soldiers have. . . when they came for R and R or based out of Japan did they--

B: When you're there as a married woman you don't hear the things you hear as a single woman--when you're married you hear about(pause)"Did my husband play around?" I didn't hear anything--you never know anything when you hear a question like that--you may have but you don't repeat because how do you it's true and if it is why hurt them, so you keep quiet--or you hear about "My



wife going home"--you never ask them why because they always tell--"She thinks I'm playing around" "You know I wasn't Marcy"there were probably other things that were happening, so they go back to the states--you don't hear about the guys on the base, you hear about the commanding officer (laugh) who is working late, has a change of clothing his office and he and the guys go out and have a good time--but you don't tell his wife that

E: Yeah

B: You get shipped out

E: Did the soldiers Vietnam, the American Vietnam soldiers did they behave themselves when they went back to Japan or Tokyo for R and R? Did you see any of these individuals? Did they behave themselves?

B: Let me tell you Ron K(212) did--there was only one time when I was treated disrespectful and I guess I made the mistake of going over to the beach, I was single at the time--officer's part of the beach and the non-comp(216) area --I was the non-comp area, swimming and had no business being over there and wasn't allowed--and one of them was feeling under the water where he shouldn't have and I got out of that situation and never went back--that's the only time I had any problem---- remember I was tall by American standards and sometimes I would wear a pump? with my uniform and I would stand up really straight--and they were having some work done the service club office by a carpenter and by Japanese standards he was short and when he walked he said ??? which means oh-my goodness he took out a ruler and climbed on the climb on and measured me and he was just confounded at how tall I was--whether you are at a base a foreign market or the states you live it is like a small town and they have markets where you could buy a pot to a dress, they have a market and you can buy canned goods, a doctor and dentist office, post office, the service and officer's club, the non-comp clubs, newspaper office, Red Cross, and you have all these things, and you had the girls and boy scouts, football, baseball whatever goes on a

small town--they make it as much like home as possible wherever you go--

during this time my son was the scouts and he received the Order of the Arrow and I can't remember if he got his Eagle there--And I also remember when my husband was gone, he was gone for two or three weeks and my son came to me, he had been on an overnight camp in some type of building and he told me that the scout master had put his sleeping roll next to my son and began to molest him and my son moved away very quickly and moved closer to the other boy's rolls(pause) this is back 1968

E: Was he Japanese or American?

B: American, he was an enlisted man--and had this ever happened before now--I don't know if this had ever happened to the other boys--I said what you are telling me is very serious, I wrote this up too by the way, and I want you to tell me again exactly what happened and he did--now I told him to tell me once more and we were going to write it down and after we write down you are going to read it and if it is exactly the same as it happened you are going to sign it and date it and then we will take it to the officer in charge of the group that oversees the Boy Scouts, and that's exactly what we did--and after he signed it I called the officer and he was home and I asked him if I could come talk to him about a very serious thing that my son had told me about the Scouts--and we drove there and we sat out in the car and he sat there and read the paper that my son had signed--(pause) and he was upset that this had happened--and he said "Do you believe your son?" and I said "I certainly do," "He has no reason to lie to me and I think he takes his scouting very seriously"--(pause) "I believe him, would you please look in to it"-- he said he would and they did and that scout master left that base and I remember during Christmas time we received a card from him saying that he forgave us for ruining his life (gosh!)--and we went and got another scout master and an assistant and they were wonderful and my son kept in touch with them for many years afterward and took a trip to see one of them--he was leaving in a trailer in Key West and it worked

out fine--now that guy could go to jail, I don't what happened to him, but I guess after much questioning they decided that my son had been telling the truth

E: Was he about twelve or thirteen at that time?

B: Yeah, he was about twelve or thirteen--and he knew it was something that shouldn't be happening--I'm so glad he told me and I'm so glad my husband was away, I'm glad he was in Vietnam because the situation would have probably been handled in a different way--he would have been outraged and would try to get the guy and shake him, but I think we handled it the right way--I hope we did

E: Sounds like it

B: That situation happened during the period we were in Vietnam--I remember I planned some trips for the officers and their wives, we went to see Oliver, the musical, in Tokyo it was done in Japanese

E: It was done in Japanese(laughing)

B: Yes, but you had a translator and also during that period I saw Fiddler on the Roof in Japanese and I swear to you that you would have thought that everyone in that play had come from the same village and that same tradition, that's how good it was--and their consultant of customs and such was from Germany and had come to Japan during WWII as refugees and she came to Tokyo with her husband and he deserted her--she had no money to support herself so she got help from the Jewish community and she opened up a deli near the Canadian embassy--and the deli wasn't as wide as this room--it had a place where you could stand and an order area for deli type food--

E: Bagels?

B: I can't remember if she had bagels, but she supported herself and she was used as a consultant for Fiddler on the Roof and it was so authentic and so beautiful it was 1968--and the man who acted the part as "Pivios" the owner of the house and the horse that goes lame, he was designated

as the Japanese living treasure due to his acting ability--it was a great experience--I would get the tickets and arrange for a bus which we had to pay for and I would take them--and also during that time we also gave English lessons in our home and my daughter and my son and I would teach English in a very practical way--we would use situations--we would teach them words for instance if they were walking into a restaurant to order and we would play the part of the waiter and the person that was ordering and we would teach them the words that fit the situation, or if they went into a beauty salon or were getting on a bus and we would be the conductor or the passengers and that's how we taught them English

E: Was this a voluntary thing?

B: Of course it was a voluntary thing--an interesting thing about that is that we would have the students come to our home and we would expect maybe two or three students to come and we would have fourteen or fifteen students come--and we didn't have a very big room and we would invite them to have dinner with us to before they went back to Tokyo or wherever they had come from--so how do you expand your dinner from two or three to almost fifteen students--well you cook a lot of spaghetti and you keep a lot of spaghetti and they didn't care, all they wanted was to be in an American style home and to learn a little bit of English, so that's what we did--and then I got to be friendly with the ladies at the beauty shop--and so when the different festivals would come around like Christmas and Valentines Day we would invite them to our home and we would have all the traditional games and at Valentines we made Valentines and we taught them all the silly rhymes that are associated with holidays--and I remember at Halloween we had cold spaghetti and they screamed (laughing) just like anyone else would have done in the States--we made a home where ever we went and they say your children will adjust if you adjust is true--and immediately got newspapers written up about what we could take part as far as sightseeing--my daughter and my son were in American schools overseas and my daughter wasn't happy in the

American school so I got her out of there and enrolled her in the Catholic school in Yokohama which was operated by nuns who were Catholic and lay people who were not, I mean they were not Japanese they were Americans or Canadians— she loved it I took her to the train at Yokohama and from there I'm not sure what she took to get to school—she learned how to make patterns still beautiful and she took the traditional courses but not the traditional Catholic religious classes, I don't know what she did during that period maybe read or something--I remember I went there for a teacher/mother conference and it was Winter and I kept my coat and scarf on I was shivering the whole time I was talking with the principle (laughing) about how well my daughter was doing and my daughter told me after I got home that the principle didn't think I was very pretty (laughing) red face, red nose, I was shaking the whole time--Japanese gave us nicknames and one of mine when I first got there was "long nose"

E: I've had that one myself

B: and another was ??? which means butterfly because I was single and dated so many of the men--and they thought if you dated more than one you were a butterfly--and of course I was a ??? which means foreigner--so I had different nicknames but nothing was said in a derogatory way and I remember one time when I was sightseeing and people would come up and take my picture--and I would be so surprised that they would send it to the base (laugh by Ernst)--they would send it to the base and then someone would recognize who I was and give me the picture--

E: Do you think they kept a copy for themselves?

B: It was fascinating, you could not get lost in Japan, you just couldn't, they knew where you were from and they would get you there, because you stand out

E: Sure

B: I loved the different seasons, rice planting and harvesting, I went through all that several times—the back breaking work, the homes that were so uncluttered--when I looked around mine when I

got back to the States and started putting things up I couldn't believe how serene these houses were compared to my clutter (laughing)--and their traditional are so different, like their spring cleaning is similar to spring cleaning done here, women who clean in depth once a year--they pick of their tatami and they beat them or get new ones and they pick these up and clean under them for the first time of the whole year--everything clean--and they fly a carp on boy's day for the sons of the family because the carp is the symbol of strength and determination so we flew a carp outside our home on a pole outside and then on girl's day they display the emperor's family in dolls and as a child grows they get one or two dolls as gift to add to their collection and they bring them out only on girl's day--so I bought my daughter some dolls, if the Japanese we going to celebrate I thought that we should to because we are part of that culture--you take advantage of the beauty and incorporate it in your own life--its like you taste the food and then from then on you want it--that's why you had such a proliferation of Japanese restaurants which happened after WWII not before--people came back and they had a craving for the Japanese food, they learned to like the a lot of the food over there and were happy to have it

E: Am I doing you O.K. on time

B: That's it