

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** John McCarroll

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0963

**IDENTIFICATION:** Vietnam veteran

**INTERVIEWER:** Bailey Vinson

**SERIES:** Americans in Vietnam

**INTERVIEW DATE:** 2/17/77

**FOCUS DATES:** Aug. 1965-Aug. 1968

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 1408**

Born Springfield, LA; farm family; got recruited by Navy during high school for special "Kiddy Cruise" program; wasn't ready for college anyway; basic training in San Diego; weapons training; received no advanced or Vietnam-specific training; wasn't told he was going to Vietnam, just told he was being sent to a ship stationed in Japan; didn't feel like he was adequately trained in swimming and survival at sea; flew to Japan via Alaska; assigned to supply on ship; ship was second oldest in Navy, had been at Pearl Harbor; describes typical day on USS Caster; ship was a cargo ship with six holds; worried about getting shot at in Vietnam; alcoholics on board ship; sent to North Vietnam to supply a light cruiser; re-supplying cruiser in middle of night while its 8 inch guns fired, lighting up the sky; hearing damage from guns; M-1 rifles they used; stevedores at the wharves; getting shot at by NVA; only met lower class Vietnamese, mostly those involved in black market; prostitution; prices of prostitutes; didn't know who ran the prostitution operations; prevalence of marijuana; drugs interfered with war effort; cliques of men divided along substance-use lines; price of drugs; theft of brass fire hose nozzles to sell on black market; black market trade in cigarettes; boredom; captain who was so bored he steered into typhoons; playing cards, betting watch duties; attitude toward his superior officers; supply officer he admired who died in car accident while on leave in California; new executive officer who punished them for not wearing hats; guys who went AWOL; guy who grossly mismanaged his money; segregation in military; Vietnamese were unconcerned about war, didn't seem patriotic; war effort accomplished nothing; uselessness of fighting a restricted war; before he went to war, pictured it more romantically, like a John Wayne movie; respects life more now, is less violent than before he went to war.

**TAPES:** 1 (T1408)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 37 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 17 pages

**RESTRICTIONS:** None