

**Oral Memoirs**  
**of**  
**George G. McGuire**

An Interview Conducted by

Rose Marie "Judy" Scherer

April 1, 2014

Community Veterans History Project

*University of Central Florida RICHES of Central Florida*

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## **Interview Histories**

Interviewer(s):           Rose Marie "Judy" Scherer

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the RICHES of Central Florida Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

## **Project Detail**

The Community Veterans History Project, a RICHES of Central Florida Project at the University of Central Florida, includes interviews with Central Florida veterans from all branches of the United States military. Beginning in 2010, the UCF Community Veterans History Project is collecting, preserving, and making accessible to the public the experiences of Central Florida's veterans so that future generations will better understand the realities of conflict. It is a collaborative endeavor supported by multiple departments and offices at UCF. The histories, which are collected by students and faculty, are archived and made digitally available through the UCF library. The UCF Community Veterans History Project will also contribute selected veterans' histories to the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

## **Legal Status**

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with George G. McGuire is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on April 1, 2014.

## **Abstract**

Oral history interview of George G. McGuire, who joined the Air Force in 1963 and served until 1983. He was born on Summit, New Jersey, on October 17, 1941. A veteran of the Vietnam War, McGuire achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

This interview was conducted by Rose Marie "Judy" Scherer on April 1, 2014. Interview topics include McGuire's background and family, his college education, join the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), Whiteman Air Force Base, McCoy Air Force Base, duties as a procurement officer and a contract administrator, the Defense Contract Administration Services, serving in Bangkok during the Vietnam War, the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations (USAFOSI), the Rock Island Arsenal, military retirement, U.S.-Thailand relations, and his many travel experiences.

## **George G. McGuire**

Oral History Memoir  
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Rose Marie “Judy” Scherer  
April 1, 2014  
Orlando, Florida

0:00:00

### **Introduction**

**Unidentified** We’re ready.

**McGuire** Are you saying go?

**Scherer** *[laughs]* Today is April the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014. I am interviewing, uh, Lieutenant Colonel George G. McGuire. My name is [Rose Marie] “Judy” Scherer. Uh, please call me Judy. Um, his interview is being conducted at UCF [University of Central Florida] in Orlando, Florida. It is part of the UCF, um – the whole title is – is Community History Project – [Community] Veterans History Project. Um, so we are going to start with, um, the early days. I would like to ask you where you were born and grew up.

**McGuire** Alright. Well, I was born in New Jersey – Summit, New Jersey. And When I was, uh, a few weeks old, my family moved on to Baton Rouge[, Louisiana].

**Scherer** Wow *[laughs]*.

**McGuire** Where my father worked in the oil refinery at Baton Rouge during World War II, and where I managed to acquire twin brothers and a sister.

**Scherer** Oh *[laughs]*.

**McGuire** Um, Shortly – well, not shortly. When I was about eight years old – eight or nine years old – we moved to England.

**Scherer** Oh.

**McGuire** Where my father was building an oil refinery at Fawley, near South Hampton, for Esso in England. After we had been there about three years, we moved to Durban, South Africa.

**Scherer** Wow.

**McGuire** Where he was again a resident engineer for construction of an oil refinery – first one on the continent of Africa – and where I acquired a brother. I had acquired

another sister in England, and now I had a brother in South Africa, so there are six children.

We sailed back to the United States. This is now approximately 1954 on a ship called the *African Enterprise*, which was a, um, freighter – combination freighter and passenger ship that carried a few passengers. And we were the only children, so we had the run of the ship.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** And that was great fun. We got back to, uh, New York in the middle of the wintertime. And my memory says it was in February, but that may not be right. And of course, being good loyal little Americans who had been out of the country for so many years, we had to stand up on the ship and watch Miss [the Statue of] Liberty as we came into New York Harbor.

Uh, following that, we lived in New Jersey for a number of years.

0:02:33

### **College years**

**McGuire** And then I went off to college at the University of Notre Dame. And shortly afterwards, my father quit his job and moved to Massachusetts.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** And, uh, the bane of my life was that when I would go home for vacation to a place in Massachusetts surrounded by girls' colleges, they all had vacation break at the same time as we did.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** So there was nobody there.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** And of course, Notre Dame at that time was all men, and there were no women there, unless we found some in the local community, which was a very difficult thing to do.

0:03:06

### **Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps and Whiteman Air Force Base**

**McGuire** Uh, At Notre Dame, they had three R – all three ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] programs. This is 1959 when I started there. There's a shooting [Vietnam] War going on in Asia. People are being drafted. I had no interest in being drafted and being given a rifle and go shoot people, so I said *Okay. I'd rather be an officer. And no, I don't want to walk around in the mud, and I don't want to sit on a boat bobbing up and down in the ocean. And since you have Air Force, I will go Air Force.*

Um, so I did. And when I was graduating Notre Dame, I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force and promptly sent to Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri.

So one of the first things I did was I bought myself a car. I didn't have a car at that point, so I brought a brand new, shiny red Valiant convertible. And that was a neat looking car. I shaw — showed up on base, and went into my first assignment, and the people I'm working with — one of them takes one look at that car and says, "I give you one year."

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** Uh huh. And, uh, he turned out to be right. Because a few months later, I met a young lady, and less than a year later, we were married. All fault is directed at that shiny red convertible, I suppose.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**0:04:42** **McCoy Air Force Base**

**McGuire** About a year or so after we were married, I got orders to transfer to McCoy Air Force Base, which, of course that's a hardship tour to come to McCoy Air Force Base, which is now Orlando International Airport, where I was the base procurement officer here.

Now, they had assigned me to procurement when I went to Whiteman, and I didn't know what "procurement" was. I only knew one meaning for the term, and it had more to do with what you did after hours than it did with buying anything the Air Force wanted. Anyway, I became procurement officer. "Procurement" just simply means that you're the guy in charge of going out and buying stuff.

So I was stationed here in McCoy, and, um, about that time, is when what was then called "Orlando Air Force Base" is transitioning to the Navy. And the last Air Force unit to transition out from Orlando Air Force Base was the hospital. So my two sons have the distinction of having been born in an Air Force hospital on a Navy base.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**0:05:42** **George Washington University, Defense Contract Administration Services, and Bangkok, Thailand**

**McGuire** From here, the, uh, Air Force sent me up to Washington, D.C., to go to George Washington University for a Master's Degree in Business Administration, as my assignment for a year and a half. And then from there, to go to Seattle, Washington, to the, uh, Defense Contract Administration Services management area Office, otherwise known as DCAS.

**Scherer** Excuse me. What was it known as?

**McGuire** DCAS. D-C-A-S.

**Scherer** S.

**McGuire** Judy had a problem with this one earlier.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** Which was at, um, Sand Point Naval Air Station, which was a little pimple on the side of the wealthiest area of city—city of Seattle, a few blocks away from the University of Washington. Not very far from it. It no longer is a military installation. It's now high-cost residential.

Um, let's see. from there, the next assignment was to Bangkok, Thailand, to be the, uh—one of the officers assigned to the Air Force's Procurement Center in Downtown Bangkok, which was supporting all of the Air Force and some of the Army units, uh, throughout Thailand and, uh, Vietnam. And this is at the tail end of the Vietnam War.

0:07:05

#### **U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations**

**McGuire** From there, I went back to the United States—came back to the United States to go to uh, Norfolk, Virginia, to the Armed Forces Staff College.

And then from there, to the, uh, Air Force OSI—Air Force Office of Special Investigations—in Washington, D.C., to act as an in-house consultant on procurement matters. Air Force OSI had been founded many years before, in the very early days of the Air Force, because of scandal having to do with contracting. And then they had gotten away from that and they had forgotten had to spell “contracting.”

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** As they got mostly interested in chasing drugs. But in, um—somewhere around 1970, there was another big scandal that came up that didn't have anything to do with the Air Force, but it did with the Navy. And the Air Force decided that it would be smart to get back into that business and pay attention, because we are spending just huge sums of money. We ought to be paying attention to it. And the first thing they needed to do was to find somebody who knew something about the procurement system and could come in and act as an in-house consultant to them, and so they chose me.

**Scherer** Really?

**McGuire** So for two years, I taught OSI agents how to spell “procurement” and the kinds of things to look for. The big thing coming out of it was to find out just how

honest the system really is at that level. There may be corruption at other levels, but at the level of the working people doing the job, it is a very, very honest system.

Um, now what did I skip? Somewhere in here, I skipped something. No. I guess not. When that was finished, they sent me to Japan to be the Deputy Director of the Air Force's Procurement Center in Tokyo – actually, at Yokota Air Force Base,<sup>1</sup> which is just in the western suburbs of Tokyo – in which I had the responsibility for all of the, um, in-country support for Air Force and Army, and staff responsibilities towards the, uh, Army Center – similar to it in Korea, that took care of Air Force and Army in Korea.

And, uh, let me think for a moment. Oh, yes. One of the, um, cases that I had run in the OSI had been an accusation made against the Lieutenant Colonel who commanded the Air Force Procurement Center at Yokota Air Base – that he was corrupt, and that he was accepting bribes from, uh, one of the car companies, which the, uh, U.S. had a contract with for small engines.

Well, the truth of the story – it turned out, that the man was an elder of the Mormon Church,<sup>2</sup> as well, as being a[sic] Air Force officer. And he had led a church group on a visit to the plant. Just a visit to go see what the plant looks like. And his big mistake: when he got back to his office was he had written the thank you note on Air Force letterhead, rather than on Mormon Church letterhead. And that had kicked off all of these accusations that he was, uh, a corrupt and on the take from this car company, which of course, he was not. But we had spent a bunch of time going and checking it out, so I knew all about it [laughs] before I got there.

Um, then that was followed by an assignment back in the United States to go to Rock Island Arsenal [in Rock Island-Moline, Illinois] to be the Deputy Director of the ammunition procurement division for U.S. Army Armament Material and [the U.S. Army Military Intelligence] Readiness Command, functioning as something called "Single Manager for Conventional Ammunition."

Army buys all the ammunition used by the military – all production ammunition, not development, but production – ammunition used by the military, of whom the Air Force was the second largest consumer. And therefore, the Air Force, to help with that mission, sent six officers to Rock Island to participate. And at th – this point, I am a Lieutenant Colonel. And so I became the Deputy Director of that division. We spent in that one division – and this is 1980 – one and a half billion...

**Scherer** [gasps].

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<sup>1</sup> Correction: Yokota Air Base.

<sup>2</sup> Officially the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church).



**McGuire** Dollars a year. This is peacetime. One and a half billion. Buying bits and pieces of little things, most of which costs less than one dollar a unit, and the most expensive one was ten dollars a unit. All over the country. And then, the things we bought would flow to the Army load plants to be made up into rounds of ammunition – most of them. And they spent another billion and a half or so putting the stuff together as ammunition.

Okay. So I'm making decisions every day about how am I spending one and a half billion dollar budget. I've got a hundred people literally working for me. Uh, we are loading plants all over the country. We are making decisions about which factories we keep in business and which ones we don't, and which communities stay in business because the factory's there, and which ones don't. And then I go home, and I have to be concerned if there was enough money in the checking account for my wife to go grocery shopping.

**Scherer** Whoa. A great[?] contrast.

**McGuire** This got a little bit mind-bending at times.

**Scherer** Quite a contrast.

**McGuire** Hm?

**Scherer** Quite a contrast.

**McGuire** Quite a contrast. Yeah. And then, uh, I retired.

**Scherer** Yes.

**McGuire** At this point. I had been in the Air Force for 20 years and three weeks

**Scherer** [*laughs*].

**McGuire** And I decided it was time to go. I had three kids that needed to go to college, and they weren't going to do it on Lieutenant Colonel's pay, so I had to go do something else.

And another interesting thing, to me at least, was that I had joined Air Force ROTC back there in college, because I had no desire to be anywhere near the Army or the Navy, but especially the Army. And so for my final tour of duty, I am winding up serving with the Army

**Scherer** Oh.

**McGuire** As one of their officers [*laughs*].

**Scherer** [*laughs*].

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**McGuire**      Anyway, so that's it.

**Scherer**      What – when were you serving for the Army? Was that duty procur – procure – procurement, or was that when you [inaudible]?

**McGuire**      No. That was with the Army. I was Deputy Director...

**Scherer**      Yeah.

**McGuire**      For Ammunition Procurement.

**Scherer**      Yeah.

**McGuire**      Deputy Directory of Ammunition Procurement Division of that Army command.

**Scherer**      Well, it all is very impressive, and I'm sure it was most important, but it sounds to me like your career was drug[?] running and buying guns [*laughs*].

**McGuire**      Uh, no. actually...

**Scherer**      Just joking.

**McGuire**      I might have bought some drugs along the way.

**Scherer**      To find out where [inaudible].

**McGuire**      But they would have been legal ones.

**Scherer**      [*laughs*].

**McGuire**      Um, Never bought any guns. Never bought an airplane, but I bought just about everything else.

**Scherer**      Well, when you were doing procurement, the rifles – what were you actually...

**McGuire**      Oh, I didn't buy the rifles. I bought the ammunition that went in the rifles.

**Scherer**      Oh, you bought the ammunition. Sorry. Yeah.

**McGuire**      Somebody else bought the rifles.

**Scherer**      Oh, you [inaudible].

**McGuire**      There was another group doing that.

**Scherer**      Yes.

**McGuire**      And there was another officer.

**Scherer** Mmhmm.

**McGuire** Other officers assigned to that.

**0:14:55** **Assignments in the United States**

**Scherer** So you said you were in Bang – so – so you said you were in Bangkok

**McGuire** Mmhmm.

**Scherer** And then you were in Thailand – I mean, Thailand is Bangkok.

**McGuire** Yes.

**Scherer** And other places, but um, did you – did you do anything in the states? How long were you in the states at the end of the career?

**McGuire** Well, it was three years in, uh, Rock Island.

**Scherer** Yes.

**McGuire** It was three years at McCoy Air Force Base.

**Scherer** Yes.

**McGuire** So two years in Whiteman's. So that's at least eight years of doing procurement there. And it was two years in the OSI, advising the OSI people about procurement – participating in, uh – in their actions.

**0:15:33** **Bangkok and Mom Rajawongse Seni Promoj**

**Scherer** Could you enlarge a little about your stay in Bangkok, and tell us more about what you did, and how difficult or easy it was? Because of the place, of course, it is always very hot there. [inaudible].

**McGuire** Yes. As we were talking earlier, if you got a, um, weather report for Orlando and a weather report for Bangkok, for the months of July, August, and September, you could not tell the difference as to which city you're reading the report on. It's the same.

**Scherer** Interesting.

**McGuire** The difference is, of course, that Orlando does cool down – some. Bangkok doesn't. The, uh – Bangkok only has, um, three temperatures – hot, hotter, and hellacious.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** Uh, Bangkok was a very interesting and very, very different, uh, type of assignment. At that time, the Air Force's procurement office was in a building in the center of Bangkok. It was called the "Chokchai Building," and it, uh—it wasn't terribly tall. My memory says seven floors, but it might've been more. Uh, the city was built on swamp, so the building was constructed such that it floated. And its basement was a big concrete barge, and it was floating. Now, the technology has progressed, and you go to Bangkok, and there are skyscrapers all over the place. It's a fairly modern city, but at that time it was not.

And, uh, so I was there as one of the officers assigned to that position. My memory says there were four of us, at that point, and I was the fifth one kind of detached. And, um, we just bought all the goods and services that the U.S. Air Force required in Thailand. And at that time, we had several bases scattered all over Thailand. And we had, um, people working for us—enlisted, uh, men—working for us at each base, also during procurement, but they were doing it as our subordinates for the stuff that had to come really from the local community. But otherwise, uh, we would buy the stuff in Bangkok—things in Bangkok. And this would be stuff—oh, it would be food, it would be entertainment, it would be the gas for the propane heaters, uh.—you name it. We would be buying it in Bangkok.

Um, We lived in a, uh compound, which was very much like a park, that was a little ways away from the, uh—from the office. And, uh, you walked in there and it was a beautiful little park-like area. It was lined with houses, all of which are rented to, uh, foreigners, like ourselves. Either American or Australian or somebody else, or the, uh, members of the diplomatic corps. And at the front of the—of the property, there was a very old, interesting Thai gentleman, and at the back of the property was his son and his family. And the fellow at the front—named [Mom Rajawongse] Seni Pramoj.

**Scherer** Seni Pramoj? [*laughs*].

**McGuire** Seni Pramoj. Now Seni Pramoj is rather important in Thai-American relations. In World War II, the Japanese moved into Thailand, and Thailand declared war on the United States.

**Scherer** I never [*inaudible*].

**McGuire** Seni Pramoj was the ambassador in Washington, D.C. He refused to deliver the declaration of war. United States chose to ignore it. When WWII ended, the United States chose—says, "Thailand was not an enemy combatant. They were an occupied country." Other Allies had different opinions, and there's[sic] arguments about it. And so the United States agreed, "Okay. We would take a little, tiny bit of reparations. We 'll take one house." And it became the residence of the American Ambassador.

**Scherer** That's a fascinating story.

- McGuire** Seni Pramroj later was president of Thailand...
- Scherer** Oh, really?
- McGuire** At one time or another.<sup>3</sup>
- Scherer** Oh.
- McGuire** But at the time we met him, he is the landlord, sitting up at the front of the compound.
- Scherer** Oh[?].
- McGuire** And we didn't see him very often, but we did – knew who he was. But, um...
- Scherer** I thought you were going to say he was the watchman. You know, because [inaudible].
- McGuire** No. We figured that the – there was very little obvious security in that compound. There was no real guard at the gate or noth – but there were gardeners all over the place, and we figured they were all Thai CID [Criminal Investigator's Department].
- Scherer** [laughs] Well, one of them was very important.
- McGuire** And, uh...
- Scherer** And I – I think that's a story that is well worth recording, because it shows how a war was, uh – was, um, avoided by simple, you know...
- McGuire** Yeah, um...
- Scherer** Aimple contacts.
- McGuire** So, America has been – had a treaty of friendship with Thailand since 1835, or something like that. It was the first one we signed with anybody in Asia.
- Scherer** Oh, that's interesting. [inaudible].
- McGuire** 'Course, at that time, I think Thailand was probably about the only independent Asian country that we could get into. Japan was closed. China was, uh, occupied by several people. The – the British had Burma<sup>4</sup> and Malaya, And Dutch had Indonesia, and the French had Cambodia and Vietnam. And Thailand was in the middle. And we signed a treaty of friendship with those folks.
- Scherer** Yeah.

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<sup>3</sup> September 17, 1945-January 31, 1946.

<sup>4</sup> Also known as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

**McGuire** which I think has paid off very handsomely for us.

**Scherer** Too bad it's so unique.

**McGuire** And it's very unique.

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** During the, um, Vietnam War, Thailand actively participated in the war. And Thailand provided us with access to their facilities, and that's the only time they have ever done that for anybody that's not Thai.

**Scherer** Yes[?]. [inaudible].

**McGuire** So, um, [inaudible].

**Scherer** I wish— wish they had done the same thing in Vietnam.

**McGuire** Well...

**Scherer** You know, after [Ngô Đình] Diệm [inaudible]. But I'm supposed to ask you questions, and you answer at length

**McGuire** Yeah. So...

**Scherer** And I ask very short questions, but you're asking at length very well [*laughs*].

**0:21:42** **Duties as a Contract Administrator**

**McGuire** One of the...

**Scherer** So I don't have to ask you many questions.

**McGuire** One of the jobs I had, while I was there in Thailand, was to be the Contract Administrator for the Thai security guard contract. We employed...

**Scherer** That sounds like a Chinese title. It's so long.

**McGuire** Almost.

**Scherer** Can you say it again?

**McGuire** Thai security guard contract. To be the contract administrator. We had a contract, and it was written as a regular Air Force Procurement contract, between ourselves and the [Thai] Ministry of Defense, whereby they provided, uh, Thai military reserves to act as the security guards for all of our forces— our locations, rather— all over the country of Thailand.

**Scherer** Interesting.

**McGuire** Every little—every U.S...

**Scherer** [inaudible].

**McGuire** Space. Now, some of those were big. They're big air bases. There're lots of people. And some of them were little tiny listening posts...

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** Out in the jungle...

**Scherer** Wow.

**McGuire** With maybe one or two Americans—well, usually more than that—maybe four Americans, and four or five Thai security guardsman to take care of them, to keep them safe, and literally keep the tigers from coming into the, uh...

**Scherer** [inaudible].

**McGuire** Into the post.

**Scherer** Mmhmm. That's unusual.

**McGuire** Yeah, and part of my duties were[sic] to go and inspect every one of those installations all over that country to make sure people are doing the job right.

**Scherer** Well...

**McGuire** Which I did.

**Scherer** Yes. I'm sure you...

**McGuire** Which was a very interesting [inaudible].

**Scherer** I'm sure you did it very arduously, but it sounds very interesting.

**McGuire** It was. It was very interesting.

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** Uh, so where do we go next?

**0:23:24**

**Interesting people and stories from Thailand**

**Scherer** I want to ask you if you, in all—in all these different places you've been, if you met any characters that stay—stayed in your mind as being particularly interesting, either, you know, um, good, bad, or eccentric, or whatever?

**McGuire** Hm. Strange...

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- Scherer** Because your experiences are so different from other people's in the military.
- McGuire** Yeah.
- Scherer** Usually[?], they're in a unit, or they're on some ship, and so on. But you were all over the place with all kinds of people, from the important ones to the not-so important ones.
- McGuire** Yeah, but some of them were just ordinary folk. Uh, like[?] I was. [inaudible].
- Scherer** But you had to find people who spoke English, I presume.
- McGuire** Yes. And in most of the world, you can get by on English.
- Scherer** That's true.
- McGuire** Most educated Thais could speak some English.
- Scherer** Mmhmm.
- McGuire** The, uh, officers on the Thai side, with whom I interfaced – one was an Admiral, the other was an Army Major, uh – spoke – spoke beautiful English.
- Scherer** Yes[?].
- McGuire** Um...
- Scherer** That was – your stories are so interesting.
- McGuire** That...
- Scherer** Can you tell another story that – of interest...
- McGuire** From that...
- Scherer** [inaudible].
- McGuire** Well, there is one other one of interest from that. I went to one of the bases, and the, uh – the guardsmen work on the base. They work for the American, uh, military police chief, whoever he is. And so, I was talking to him one day, and he was telling me about a young airman who wanted to get married. Now, before a serviceman can get married overseas, especially in a warzone, his, uh, bride has to be vetted through the American Embassy.
- Scherer** Mmhmm.
- McGuire** And most Americans, when they look at a Thai woman, cannot tell how old she is...



**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** Until she is elderly, and then it's obvious that she's elderly. But as long as she is fairly young up through middle age, you've got no idea how old she is, when you look at her.

So there was this, uh, one young fellow, who wanted to get married and this — this is, um — now, this is 1974 time period — to, uh, his Thai honey. And when they started checking on her, they found out that she had been a prostitute for the Japanese forces, when the Japanese had occupied this particular base 30 years earlier.

**Unidentified** [laughs].

**Scherer** Very interesting turnaround[?].

**Unidentified** [laughs].

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** [laughs] So our 18 year old — 18 year old...

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** American G.I. couldn't tell she was probably 45.

**All** [laughs].

**Scherer** Interesting. That's interesting story.

**McGuire** Yeah.

**Scherer** Do you have friends around the world that you made at that time?

**McGuire** We did have for a long time, but then, um, over the years...

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** They're gone. The Admiral that[sic], uh, had been in charge from the Thai side — I kept in touch with for a long time, but then he died.

**Scherer** I'm not supposed to add anything to this, but I have to say that a prostitute who was a prostitute for the Japanese was[?] — was, uh — was quite often recruited and kept as a slave for soldiers.

**McGuire** Oh, more than likely.

**Scherer** What did they call them? There's a name for them. But anyway...

**McGuire** Uh, comfort girls.

**Scherer** Comfort girls.

**McGuire** Or comfort women, rather.

**Scherer** She – that could have happened to her. I mean, but still, she was old.

**McGuire** It might have been.

**Scherer** [inaudible].

**McGuire** But the point of the story wasn't so much that she'd been a prostitute.

**Scherer** That she was old.

**McGuire** It was that she was at least 45 years old...

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** And our 18 year old airman couldn't tell.

**Scherer** [laughs] That would've been an interesting – or a – have made a rather easy decision for the superior to make [laughs].

**McGuire** Yes. I don't think she got her clearance.

**Scherer** [laughs] So do you – yeah. Do you keep in touch with anyone that[sic] was posted in those places with you?

**McGuire** No. By now, I have lost – well, with all, except one. I still keep in touch with the man I worked for when I was in Japan.

**Scherer** Oh, yes.

**McGuire** But, uh...

**Scherer** [inaudible].

**McGuire** The rest of them, time has gone by.

**Scherer** Tell us about more colorful characters you've met.

**McGuire** Like, I don't, uh – Well, one of the most colorful characters was a fellow out there when I was a Thailand – American officer, who had lost the, um, first two joints of[?] one of his fingers, through some kind of accident. He cut it off with a saw or something. It wasn't – it wasn't particularly interesting. But the thing was he only had that much. Now in Thailand, you bargained at that time. You bargain for everything, and – but the currency is baht. So we would go and we would

say, “Four baht,” and “Five baht,” “Ten baht.” whatever. Well, he could bargain in half baht.

**Unidentified** [laughs].

**Scherer** [laughs] I see why you remember him.

**McGuire** That’s my main memory of him, is he could bargain in half bahts.

**0:28:06**                    **Communicating with family**

**Scherer** I’m going to ask you a two-step question. Number one: did you ever keep a diary or make notes of what you were doing? Um...

**McGuire** No.

**Scherer** Oh, that’s [inaudible] – that’s more or less the answer then. Because, uh, it would be interesting, and you probably would have forgotten by now some of the things. Some of the [inaudible].

**McGuire** Oh, I’m sure I’ve forgotten probably most of it by now.

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** But no. I did – never kept any diary. I got movies and slides and stuff like that, but...

**Scherer** So what about your family, that were in the states whilst you were doing all this? Did you keep in touch with them fairly well?

**McGuire** Well, my family was with me.

**Scherer** No. Not your immediate family. I mean, your...

**McGuire** Oh.

**Scherer** Parents and siblings[?].

**McGuire** My parents, and my brothers and sisters and siblings?

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** Oh, yeah.

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** I still do keep in touch with them.

**Scherer** Yeah.

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- McGuire** Now, my parents are long gone, but yeah. My brothers and sisters and I still keep in touch.
- Scherer** Well, of course, we didn't have email or anything, so what did you do? Write to them?
- McGuire** Yeah. We write – wrote letters. And every time you circulated that through the country, you would, um, go and see people. Um, yeah. My wife's, uh, parents lived in War – in Warsaw, Missouri, which, uh, is kind of south and west of Kansas City[, Missouri] – a couple hundred miles out in the country at the head waters of the Lake of the Ozarks in the Missouri countryside – hill towns. And it was amazing how Warsaw became on the way to everything.
- Scherer** Oh [*laughs*]. Via Warsaw [*laughs*].
- McGuire** Yeah. It didn't matter where we were going.
- Scherer** [*laughs*].
- McGuire** It was always by way of Warsaw...
- Scherer** [*laughs*].
- McGuire** Missouri. It could have been – it was Washing – Florida to Washington, D.C., is by way of Warsaw, Missouri. Uh...
- Scherer** [*laughs*] Oh, that's good.
- McGuire** Seattle to Alabama for Squadron Officer School is by way of Warsaw, of course. That's not too bad.
- Scherer** [*laughs*].
- McGuire** But, uh, everything was by way of Warsaw.
- Scherer** Wow[?]. That's funny.
- McGuire** And then...
- Scherer** Does your wife like traveling?
- McGuire** Did she – yeah. She did.
- Scherer** Oh, I [*inaudible*].
- McGuire** She's now passed, but, uh, yeah.
- Scherer** Oh, I'm sorry.

**McGuire** She did.

**Scherer** I didn't know. Um...

**McGuire** Yeah.

**Scherer** Well, you've had a very interesting life.

**McGuire** Yeah, 'cause that particular – That first wife died about six years ago, but then she sent along a replacement, who ordered me up off of Match.com as her souvenir of her visit to America – the United States. And, uh, she's Thai.

**Scherer** Oh, really?

0:30:23

**Communicating with Thais**

**Scherer** Well, how is your Thai? [*laughs*].

**McGuire** My Thai is good enough...

**Scherer** [inaudible] mai tai [*laughs*].

**McGuire** My Thai – Yeah. I can order one of those. Um...

**Scherer** Mai tai [inaudible] [*laughs*].

**McGuire** My Thai is probably good enough to tell you "Hello" and "Goodbye."

**Scherer** [*laughs*].

**McGuire** All of which is the same word: *sà-wàt-dee*. And to ask, "*Hông náam yòt têu nãi?*" "Where's the toilet?" in Thai.

**Scherer** [*laughs*] Good one[?]. Good phrase [*laughs*].

**McGuire** And I could say thank you: *kòp kun mâak*. And that's about it. Uh, fortunately...

**Scherer** [inaudible] If you were in procurement, people must have been saying, "Thank you" to you often.

**McGuire** Oh, they were.

**Scherer** Okay[?]. Were you bribed at any time? Or tempted to be bribed?

**McGuire** No. No. Though, uh, some people had trouble with the U.S. standards on that. And in one particular instance in Thailand, uh, the contractors just could not understand when we said, "No. We cannot take anything." So one Thanksgiving or Christmas or something, they showed up with a lot of turkeys and stuff. "No.

we cannot take it." "But I can't take it." "Well, okay." we gave it to the orphanage.

**Scherer** Oh, that was a good idea.

**McGuire** But no.

**Scherer** You must have come across a lot of interesting situations like that. That's a— that's...

**McGuire** We came across a lot of things that were cultural differences.

**Scherer** Yes, but I mean in the actual process of what you were doing. First of all, you had to find out who to start with to ask for what you needed. And then you had to choose between them.

**McGuire** You had to choose between—yes. You have to define what you need. You have to find the people that can fill your need. And then you have to make a choice as to which one is going to fill it, and you have to pay attention to a whole long list of social things, as to which person can have this particular contract. Um...

**Scherer** So you had to do a lot of hard work?

**McGuire** Yeah. Yeah. Well, this is all goes with part of the job.

**Scherer** The job. Yeah.

**McGuire** Government procurement and commercial are not the same.

**Scherer** Oh.

**McGuire** And the big difference is the rules that, uh, the government person has to follow. And people that[sic] I was—when I was teaching at OSI, one of their frequently raised complaints was: "Well, it would be so much cheaper if we did this, or if we did it that way." And I would have to explain to them that the, um, military procurement regulations, which fill a space like this, were not designed for the efficient and economic acquisition of goods and services for the military. They were designed to fill the social aims of Congress first. And after you fill the social aims of Congress, then we do things to make sure we get stuff.

But we have things like—you have Buy American Act [of 1933]. You have a, um, law that governs the amount of money that must be paid to the contractors on the job, which often is very different than the local prevailing wages. You have to procure from minority-owned businesses. You want to procure from women-owned businesses.

**Scherer** They did that then? Back that far?

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- McGuire** Oh, yeah. They've done this for a long time. And it goes on and on and on. On certain type of business would be set aside, to be filled by only people who meet these social constraints. Whatever they were.
- Scherer** Yeah.
- McGuire** To fill the social aims of Congress. Um, I [inaudible]...
- Scherer** Tell me what was your biggest disappointment during this time?
- McGuire** Uh...
- Scherer** Something...
- McGuire** I can't think of one at the moment.
- Scherer** Go wrong after you went half way into it, or something like that?
- McGuire** Pardon?
- Scherer** Did anything go wrong after you went half way into it?
- McGuire** No. The only interesting thing was I never intended to stay there.
- Scherer** [laughs].
- McGuire** I intended to do my first tour of duty, and then get out.
- Scherer** Yes.
- McGuire** But by the time that, uh, point came up, Air Force requirement is four years of service after commissioning. And the point I had four years of service, and I had three little children. And I knew I needed a Master's Degree, and there wasn't any way that I was going to be able to support four little children and a wife and go get a Master's Degree on my own. And the Air Force says, "We will send you to, uh, George Washington University for your MBA [Master's of Business Administration], if you would like. All you have to accept is an extended service commitment of three times the length of that year and a half of school." And then every time I did that, or I got promoted, or I got sent somewhere, there was always a service commitment attached to it. It wasn't until I had 18 years of service in, that I could've get out if I wanted to. At that point, I stopped accepting any offers for anything that had a commitment on it.
- Scherer** I see. That's understandable. And I think you [inaudible]...
- McGuire** But by then, I was at Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois.
- Scherer** I think—I think you've your judgments in order.

**McGuire** Hm.

**Scherer** Because I—I admire what you put first[?].

**McGuire** [laughs].

**Scherer** But you certainly had an intering — interesting career.

**McGuire** Yeah.

**0:35:50** **Visiting South Korea with his wife**

**Scherer** Tell me about something that — funny that happened whence you — when — when you were in one of these places.

**McGuire** Well, alright. Well, uh, the one we were talking about at lunchtime. Military people on active duty, and as a retiree, are entitled to fly space available on military aircraft from one point to another. 'Course you have last priority.

So we were in Japan, and my wife wanted to go to [South] Korea, which there were frequent flights between Yokota Air Base in Japan and Osan Air Base in Korea. So we went over to Korea, and on the way over we rode on a chartered airliner. And this just like riding in any other airliner, except this one is under charter with the [U.S.] DOD [Department of Defense].

And we went shopping in Seoul[, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea]. She bought all kinds of stuff. We got back down to Osan Air Base with the — almost a pick-up truck full of, um, things that she wanted to take, and found out there was no space available going back to Japan. There were lots of people like us and no space going back. And furthermore, there were no hotel rooms available in this little town outside Osan to spend the night.

So I called up my friend, who was the OSI boss in Osan, because this was shortly after my — my OSI tour, so I still knew the people. And he called around, and he called me back, and says, "Okay. Go down to this hotel," [clears throat] "and they'll take care of you and put you up for the night." We did. And the next morning, I informed her that she had just spent the night in a whorehouse.

**All** [laughs].

**Scherer** And how...

**McGuire** That's what it was.

**Scherer** And how did you get back? [inaudible].

**McGuire** So we went back to the base to wait along with all of these other people, and the, uh, wing at Yokota sent a training flight over to Osan. The Air Force flies training



flights all the time. They have to. To train the people. Keep their skills up. So they said, "Okay. Well, we got all these people waiting over there. We'll send this flight over today to Osan to, uh—to pick these folks up." And they did, in a [Lockheed] C-130 [Hercules]. The C-130 is a flying truck. You sit in the back end of this, and it's like sitting in the back end of a big truck, on a canvas seat with very little in the way of heat or any sort of comforts whatsoever. So we all filed in there, put all of our luggage in there in front of us, and then...

**Scherer** In front of you?

**McGuire** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. This is a...

**Scherer** All down the middle of the plane?

**McGuire** Down the middle. This is the bay of a cargo airplane. This is not an airliner.

**Scherer** Oh.

**McGuire** You—you've seen pictures though

**Scherer** Yeah.

**McGuire** Now, they're—they're...

**Scherer** In the movies.

**McGuire** There—they're about as—about like sitting in the back of a dump truck. Now, you load over the rear of that airplane. That's how its tailgate goes down. And they can drive tanks, and trucks...

**Scherer** Oh, I've seen

**McGuire** And things like that. So everybody's in there. We're all sitting down, and the loadmaster goes to life the tailgate, and it won't shut. Can't get the door of the airplane shut.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** So he takes a piece of wire, wraps it around the door, holds it in place...

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** Take off to go back to Japan.

**Scherer** All wired up [laughs].

**McGuire** And my brother-in-law, who is a—at that time, a paratrooper in the Army—uh, standard joke people ask him, "Why would you want to jump out of a perfectly good airplane?" And his answer is "Because the Air Force doesn't have any."

**Scherer** [laughs] Oh, really?

**McGuire** This was...

**Scherer** Very interesting.

**McGuire** A perfectly good airplane by Air Force standards. You could wire the door shut and fly.

**0:39:42** **Closing remarks**

**Scherer** Is there anything else you would like to tell us before we end?

**McGuire** Oh, I guess that's probably about it.

**Scherer** Well, you've been an easy person, because I was supposed to tell you at the beginning, that this is for you to tell your stories, and I'm just...

**McGuire** Okay[?].

**Scherer** Just there to ask the questions. But it was, uh—I didn't have to do that, because you had so many stories, and you told them so well, and it was really interesting, and I'm sure everyone who reads veterans' stories will like this story.

**McGuire** If we've got time for one more quick[sic] one...

**Scherer** Yes. We do.

**McGuire** This is a funny one—to me, a funny one. Seattle is bordered on the eastern side of the city by a 20-mile long fresh water lake called Lake Washington. And One particular day, one of my friends up[?] there and I decided to check out some sailboats, because we had a—a sailboat, rather—as the Navy base had sailboats, and do sailing on Lake Washington. And we did. And we promptly knocked the sailboat down.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** And we got it back up, and then we promptly knocked it down again. Now, the big lesson that I learned about doing that was that a can of beer, if it has not been opened, will float.

**Scherer** [laughs].

**McGuire** Because the beer we had, we can't—that hadn't been opened yet—all of it just floated every time we knocked the sailboat over, and so we got it back up, and we got out beer back on board.

**Scherer** Oh, really? That's interesting. Is it because there's air in the can?

**McGuire** Sure.

**Scherer** Or because there's not very much in it? [*laughs*].

**McGuire** There's air in the can, and a can of beer is sealed. It can't get out, and it floats. And I...

**Scherer** [*inaudible*].

**McGuire** Didn't know until then that a can of beer will float.

**Scherer** Is there anything else you'd like to tell us...

**McGuire** No.

**Scherer** We conclude?

**McGuire** Now that I'm thinking about it, I could go all afternoon.

**Scherer** Yes[?]. Well, you were the easiest person to interview, I must say. Um, let's see there was something I wanted to say to you, as well. Well, we – we thank you very much for being part of this program,

**McGuire** Sure.

**Scherer** And, um, I certainly enjoyed listening to your story, so I think you'll be a great contributor. And...

**McGuire** I hope so.

**Scherer** So thank you very much.

**McGuire** You're welcome.

**Scherer** Good luck.

**McGuire** Thank you.

*End of Interview*