

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Veterans Project, Korea

Personal Experience

O. H. 917

RALPH P. PETRUCCI

Interviewed

by

Dale J. Voitus

on

December 6, 1982

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: RALPH P. PETRUCCI
INTERVIEWER: Dale J. Voitus
SUBJECT: bootcamp, discipline, Korea, military law
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V: This is an interview with Ralph P. Petrucci for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Dale John Voitus, at Home Savings & Loan building, on December 6, 1982, at 9:35 a.m.

To begin the interview I would like you tell me something about your childhood and your family background.

P: I was born and raised on the south side of Youngstown. I have lived my entire life in Youngstown. My dad was a first generation immigrant from Italy; my mother was a second generation Italian. I have one brother. I was what you would refer to as a Depression baby. We grew up during the 1930's. The war started in 1940. I continued on through public schools going to Bancroft, Princeton, South High School. I graduated in 1949 from South. I attended Youngstown State University--at that time Youngstown College. I graduated in 1953. I went to Ohio State Law School from 1953 to 1956. After graduating I was drafted into the Army. My brother followed about the same path. He was a year older than I was. When he graduated from Youngstown College in 1952, he joined the marines instead of going to law school as I did.

V: What were the circumstances about your being able to go right from high school to college which was, I don't think, normal circumstances at that time or was it?

P: The Second World War was over. The Korean War hadn't

started yet. I got out of high school in 1949 and it was the thing to do. As I said I was raised during the Depression. My dad worked for Sheet & Tube. His lifetime ambition was that my brother and I would not work in mills but get an education. I think that my brother and I were probably the first two in our family clan who actually went to college. When I got out of Youngstown College in 1953 the war in Korea had started. My brother chose to go join the Marine Reserve unit in an attempt to stay out of the Army. Of course, it didn't work. He went to Korea anyway.

V: You said the circumstances upon entering the Army was that your draft number was picked. Is that the case?

P: When I got out of Youngstown College with a degree in political science, my dad wondered what I would do with political science. He gave me the approach that I had gotten a degree that really didn't mean anything. My brother was already in the Marines. Fighting was in Korea. I applied to go to law school. I already had a deferment to graduate from college. I got another one to go to Ohio State Law School. I continued to get deferments to stay in law school. In 1956 when I got out of law school and I came home, unfortunately I did not pass the bar exam the first time I took it which was the summer of 1956. I went down and asked for another deferment so that I could take the bar exam again. They looked at the list and said that my name was on the top. They said that I had to go. I had gotten seven exemptions to continue school. At that point I was done; they wouldn't give me anymore.

V: How old were you at the time?

P: I was twenty-four. They said that I was going.

V: Then it was just a matter of gathering things.

P: That would have been in July of 1956. In September I got my notification that I was going. I went to Cleveland and went into the Army.

V: Where did you receive your basic training at?

P: I went to Fort Chaffe, Arkansas. I had never been to Arkansas before. I have been there since. I didn't mind it then. We were at Fort Chaffe which I found out later was outside of Fort Smith. Arkansas was the jumping off point for all the movement west from that

part of the country. Wyatt Earp and all these guys at one time in their career went through Fort Smith on their way to Dodge City and other places. Fort Smith had quite a history.

V: What was your basic training like? What are your recollections of basic training?

P: When I went into the Army, I didn't know what to expect. The best advice I got was from my uncle. He told me that I was going to have inspections and that they were a pain in the neck. He told me to get myself all of the equipment I needed and to mark it and tag it and put it all where it should be. Then he told me to go down to PX and buy the stuff I was going to wear and never move what I put in my footlocker. I did that. It was about the best advice I ever got because it really made basic training a lot easier than it was for a lot of guys. They always seemed to be rushing around trying to get organized for the inspections which they seemed to have all the time.

I didn't mind basic training. I just took it; I didn't fight it. I just went along and rolled with the punches. I had some bad feelings about basic training, and one of them was that I remember one of the kids in my barrack was a Puerto Rican. He didn't speak very good English. Finally, there was so much harassment there with him. He should have never been in with us. I think he ended up in a psycho ward or something. They took him away.

I didn't particularly like Fort Smith. At that time we were not fighting in Korea. Even way back then it seemed that when you went down to Fort Smith if you had a weekend pass or something, they were locking up their daughters and looking at you sideways. That part I didn't like. You had to wear a uniform; they took your civilian clothes away from you. You had to wear your uniform. As soon as you went into Fort Smith your uniform was on. You were a second class citizen even back in the 1950's.

V: It sure was a turn around from the Second World War veterans.

P: I really think so. The guys coming out of the Second World War were treated a little differently. I can sympathize a great deal with how these guys from Vietnam were feeling because I had the same feeling at Fort

Smith. Sure, they brought the local people up on the buses from the local church to dance with us on Sunday night, with one girl and three chaperones. You couldn't leave the building. They counted them coming in and counted them going out. I didn't particularly like that part of the Army. On the whole, I kind of took basic training pretty much in stride. It didn't affect me one way or another.

V: What were the backgrounds of some of your soldiers in basic? You mentioned about the Puerto Rican. Were you older than most because you had the deferments, or were there other people in similar situations?

P: I had a couple of fellows from Youngstown who I knew. That may have made it easier because we went together. This one kid I went through the whole thing with; he went all the way to Korea with me, and there were some others from Youngstown who got on the bus together here with me and went to Chaffe together. I knew them there. I was not isolated with a bunch of people I didn't know. Although in the barracks I was in--the group that I was assigned to because they did it either by the numbers or alphabetically--we were not in the same barracks, but we were in the same unit. I would say that I was a little older than most of the guys who were there. There were some college people there. The ones I was older than it was probably their first time away from home. Maybe that was why it didn't bother me as much because I could see they were having a lot more problems than I was. Having been away at Ohio State on my own it didn't really affect me that much.

As I look back on it now I didn't really dislike basic training. I pulled some bad detail because there was a feeling among the NCO's and people there because I was older and because I did have two degrees that I found myself and not only me but the other guys like that being singled out. I remember we got to Fort Chaffe on a Sunday. Everybody lined up and got clothes. Everything was new. Then the fellow says, "How many of you people here have college degrees?" That would help to organize us. There would be maybe eight or ten or twelve of us. I forget the exact number. Immediately we went forward, and we all ended up on KP the first day. Right from then I learned that I should not have volunteered. If there was some animosity, it was to the guys who had degrees, not necessarily by the fellow I was serving with but maybe more from the stand point of the regular Army people. I found out later that they had some reason to believe in that--some reason to feel that way.

V: After you got out of basic training, let's go in now where your career led you. Let's start with you leaving basic.

P: Let's backup to basic. I want to tell you something else why basic training did not affect me. When I was down there to get clothing issued, I ended up at the end of the line because they could not find a pair of boots to fit me. I sat there in that chair with thoughts going through my mind that they were going to send me home. No boots, home; it is all over. Well, they found the boots. That put me like a half an hour behind everybody else going through that line, by the time I caught up. At which point nothing they issued me fit. The rest of the time I was in the service nothing fit.

I remember in Fort Chaffe going in for a weekend pass. The sergeant or whoever it was said that I was supposed to stand at attention. I said that I was at attention but that the uniform was at ease. I didn't get the pass. That is just an aside as the manner I went through. It was more of a detached feeling of amusement in all the carrying on.

V: Would you contribute that to your maturity compared to the others?

P: I think maybe. I remember another incident. We went on bivouac. It was the first time in my life I was going to sleep in a tent. They showed us how to put the tents up one day. That day I was on KP. They assigned me with a young fellow by the name of Palmer from New York City; he had never been camping in his life. We got out there, and they gave us our tent. I said to Palmer, "How do you put it up? I was on KP." He said that he was on sick call. Here the two of us had never put a tent up in our lives. We got this tent up. You had to get down on your belly to get in. It was so low to the ground. Everybody else's tent was up. They could have put sofas in their tent. Our tent was like parallel to the ground. It was so ridiculous that we laughed. We had to camouflage everything. That was what the sergeant told us. We spent time cutting branches to camouflage the whole tent. The captain came by and said, "What in hell are all of these branches doing around here? This is a cook area. You can't camouflage the cook's stove and all this other stuff. What are you camouflaging these tents for?" So, we had to throw all of the stuff back. It was that kind of feeling that these guys were crazy and that they didn't know what they were doing

either. It gave me a feeling that I would get through it and it was just a lot of fun. Maybe had there been fighting and maybe had I worried about going overseas and things like that I may have taken a different approach. At that point it was just a million laughs there; it really was. I enjoyed it very much.

V: That is different than most people's feelings when they go through that in the sense that they are awed and shocked. When the sergeant says, "Jump", they say, "How far?" kind of attitude.

P: Our basic training platoon leader was a PFC Brooks. They didn't even have enough sergeants to give us a sergeant. This guy had been a sergeant. You could see the outline of where the stripes had been on his uniform, but now he was down to a PFC. He was a colored fellow and funnier than a crutch. He had been in the Army all of his years. Just watching him and hearing him bark out commands and orders just broke me up all the time. It really did. I got to know him. We played ping pong during the day when we were together. In that I didn't really dislike basic. As for crawling in the mud and doing all of that stuff nobody really liked it but it didn't bother me.

V: We see movies on television now sometimes of when they show the basic training segment where the sergeant finds the person who had the attitude that is somewhat similar to what you had who they try to break and use that person for an example. Did you have any problems?

P: No, not really. I was not the only one there with a college background and a little older in that point in time. We did catch it later on with a sergeant who was assigned to us who was in Korea and had seen some fighting. He took Brooks' place. He was a little more hardnosed, but it was too late to really affect anything that had gone on. We had a lieutenant there. He was one of those guys who said, "Any talking in this line, you will do push-ups with me," and all that stuff. What I found out later was that he was an ROTC kid who was as green as we were and just bluffing his way through. I found out later because one of the guys in my barrack had been in college with him. He had told him not to say anything. That was his first assignment too, right out of college. And he was putting on a big show, the marching and the rest of it.

What really colored my experience in the Army was Jones'

book From Here to Eternity. I had the feeling that Robert E. Pruitt wanted to be the best soldier there and all that jazz. I looked at all this stuff as a real experience that maybe some day I would write a book about it. I never did. As far as basic was concerned that is really all. That was primary basic. Then we went on to even a more ridiculous situation to a typing school.

V: That was your job assignment out of basic.

P: Because of my degrees in education and everything I had a shot at everything. They gave us the testing and everything. CIC was there and all those different units. I rejected all of them because it compelled me to sign up for additional service time to get into one of those schools. So there was nothing really left except your artillery which Fort Chaffe was artillery or clerk typist school or stenographer or something like that. I went to clerk typist school because I could type when I went in. I thought that would be a pretty good deal for me at least. That was where I was assigned right at Fort Chaffe. I never left Fort Chaffe. They had a clerk typist school right there.

V: How long was that training?

P: Yes, that was another bummer. We were going through clerk typist school as 710 which was a clerk or you could get a 711 which was a clerk typist, whatever, but you had to type a certain number of words a minute to get the 711. I think it was forty-five words a minute to get the 711. I think it was forty-five words a minute with three mistakes or less, something like that. They told us that the 711's got all the soft assignments depending on NATO headquarters in Paris. Everybody else got the crummy assignments. So I busted my butt to get this 711, and I ended up in Korea. They gave you the shaft on that deal.

V: You already mentioned what happened once graduation came. You got orders for Korea.

P: Yes. A friend of mine at that time when I went to clerk typist school was assigned to some other school. He was assigned down there to personnel. I put a lot of pressure on him to try to get me a soft assignment but we were sent to Korea anyway. We flew from Fort Chaffe to Seattle nonstop in an Army plane. People were throwing up all over the place. Some of these guys had

never been in an airplane. It was really a horrendous flight. It was terrible. I can't remember the name of the base in Seattle that we went to.

V: Was it an Army base?

P: Yes.

V: Fort Louis?

P: It could have been Fort Louis. I was there maybe for a week or so waiting for a boat to go to Korea. I remember that. We got on the boat, and everybody was there. They were passing out coffee and doughnuts, and the Grey Ladies were there; the band was playing. They made a big production out of it. The boat ride was interesting.

V: Yes? Tell us about that.

P: We went across on the U.S.S. Man. Oddly enough we came home on the U.S.S. Man too. We took this boat ride. Again, what you think is going to happen and what happens are miles apart. We had envisioned this boat ride across the Pacific on deck in the sun and stopping at Honolulu and all that stuff. They took the short route which means you go by way of Alaska. It never got warm enough to go on deck. We were on there. I met some people on that boat that I got to know pretty well because I was on that boat for a month. It took us almost four weeks to get to Korea. We stopped at Yokohama to let off some guys who were lucky enough to get Japan assignments. Then we sailed over to Korea. On the boat I pulled KP on one day, off one day. When they posted that assignment, I thought it was a bummer. Because of the route we took the weather was terrible in March. It rained. The one day I was on KP it was really a break. You got to go downstairs and be warm. The days you were not on KP it meant going upstairs having to stay on deck because the day room was not big enough for fifty of the 2,000 guys who were on the ship.

V: You weren't allowed to stay where you stayed.

P: No, everybody had to get up. You had to get out up on deck; you couldn't stay below. That was one of their crazy rules. You had to go up on deck. When it really got bad, of course, you couldn't. I remember two things on that boat. Number one was when I left Fort Chaffe, you had to pack everything in your duffle bag. I had

the hardest time cramming everything in there. There was a kid there at Fort Chaffe who was from Germany. He was a rollerskating star or whatever. He had rollerskated when he was in Germany. He joined the Army to get in America. He had his roller skates with him at Chaffe. He got everything in his duffle bag including those roller skates. I was wearing about four sets of clothes because I couldn't get everything in that duffle bag. This kid was so meticulous; either he threw stuff away, or he was able to get it in that duffle bag plus his roller skates. On board ship he got so sick that he never left his bunk for about four days. I was bringing toast and feeding him toast and watching him throw up at the same time. I got to know him pretty well because of that.

That was one of these strange things about the Army. Here was this kid from Germany who only wanted to go back to Germany to see his family, and he went to Korea. There were guys there from Youngstown who drew assignments in Heidelberg. Yet that kid they sent to Korea. You never understand why they didn't send him back to Germany to see his family. He ended up in special services roller skating in Korea.

The other think about that boat ride was that we used to go up in front as far as we could get and ride the waves. That was really exciting. In my estimation people like Sir Frances Drake and Magellan and those guys went up about 400%. To think they sailed across that ocean in those little ships. That Man, was big as it was, but it would dip down into those mountainous waves; it looked like you were never going to come up. At the last minute the brow came up. Water would spray over the ship and then you would be on top. Down you would go again. It was quite a ride.

I remember when we left Seattle. When we left Seattle we went out the Straits of Juan de Fuca. That is an inlet, but you can't see the sides. It is very calm. You think this is great and that the ocean is nothing. The next day we hit the ocean. People were just sick. It was terrible. I remember they forced you up on deck. You would not get sick; you would not throw up, but they forced you up on deck. I remember I was looking for a place to stand out of the weather. I found a spot which was under a little overhang. I was standing there with a bunch of other guys. Every once in a while one of them would run over to the rail and throw up. He would come back and get back in line again. I found out later that I was in line to sick bay.

V: You probably thought that everybody on that ship was sick.

P: I was standing with all of the guys who were sick. Finally it settled down. After about two days out most guys got over it. The funny thing about that is coming back nobody got sick.

V: You were going home then.

P: Either going home or the fact that they had already been on an ocean voyage, but I don't recall any of that throwing up business or devastating illness like this kid from Germany coming back, like going over.

I pulled KP coming back too. I pulled KP the last day I was in the Army.

V: You must have been good at that. Now we are back into that question of where your career led you. We are over to Inch'on now.

P: Before we went to Inch'on. . . One more time I had reevaluated my thinking. When McArthur invaded Inch'on I read about it in the paper in what a great military manoeuvre that was invading Inch'on. I really didn't understand it, landing here or landing there. Inch'on is a bay where you can not get to the land from the ships. I could see why no one would ever suspect that he would try something like that. Even when we landed as troops, we had to get off on a little floating thing out there onto a landing craft which then took you into a long pier that was out there. It seemed like a military amphibious landing in that area there. It was the last thing anybody would have thought of doing. No wonder he caught everybody by surprise. It was not like hitting the beaches; there were no beaches.

Anyway, we got off of that landing ship and went to this long pier carrying our duffle bags off these little landing crafts onto the pier and walking down this long pier. We remember going under this sign that said, "Welcome to Korea." Then it said underneath, "You will be sorry." As we were going in, there was a line coming out the same pier--the guys who were going home. They, of course, were going as civilians; they were leaving. We had a repo-depo which was a replacement area. We got in there, and they put us in these temporary bunks. Then they were calling people out by number. I guess it was your dog tag number or something. On board ship

everybody had a number; that is how they posted things. When we got to Inch'on, you had to remember your number from the ship because that was how they were calling people to be reassigned somewhere in Korea. Well, they called my number out all by itself. I thought I was going home. I went down. they called out three or four of the numbers by themselves. I met these guys. We all had the same background; we were all graduates from law school. There was like four of us. I was the only one who had not passed the bar exam. One by one these guys were interviewed and disappeared to different places. I was there by myself. I thought they didn't have any place for me because I didn't pass the bar exam. I wanted to go home. They came down then and said that I had an assignment and that I was going to Seoul to serve with the Korean Military Advisory Group. The only thing I remember about that was that the director said that I really got lucky. He said, "If you would have passed that bar exam, you would have been up with the second army on the line." I went to the Korean Military Advisory Group. Their headquarters were in Seoul which was really neat.

V: How long were you stationed with that organization?

P: I was there until I came home which would have been probably from April of 1957 until June of 1958; it was a year and three or four months.

V: Then when you left there that was your time.

P: Yes, I served there. I got assigned to the Judge Advocate Section as a clerk typist. There was a jag section down at Eighth Army, but they were different headquarters. The Korean Military Advisory Group were the only soldiers in Korea from the time the war started. They were the advisory group advising the Korean army. We had special arm patches which I kept because they were really fancy. They were shaped like a big blue bell with an eagle on it and KMAG underneath. When I went to Japan on R and R, or any place I went with that arm patch, very few people knew what it was. When I came back to the States wearing that patch, guys set you apart because it wasn't connected to anything. Everybody was wondering what that KMAG stood for.

I served there in that advisory group with a bunch of guys, at that point with most of the people who had college degrees. We were top heavy with officers. There must have been one officer for every two enlisted

men. We were on the side of a hill overlooking the 8th Army compound. We were up there by ourselves, but we used their facilities--tennis courts, theaters, and PX's--but we were a separate unit with our own generals. We had two generals up there. I served under three different bird colonels while I was there. They got rotated out. In the section I was in there was a full colonel, a captain, and a sergeant. I went in there to replace their clerk typist.

This was a coincident. The kid I replaced was from Boardman, named Don Martin. I didn't know him except through association. He was about a year or so older than I was. He lived within eight to ten blocks of where I lived on Maywood. I was his replacement. I served at first for a while under a Colonel Fernandez and a Sergeant Grigsby. Sergeant Grigsby was the highest ranking master sergeant in Korea. He was in that section. It was through Sergeant Grigsby that I got to really respect the regular Army people. I could really look back then and see why they had so much resentment against people like myself with college degrees looking at everything as if it was a big joke, and all the other people drafted who didn't want to be there. Grigsby was a colored fellow from the south. He was a super, super person. If I regret anything it is that I didn't try to keep in touch with him. I served with him for about a year or more until he rotated back. He finally rotated back to the States. It was through Grigsby that I got to really appreciate regular Army people because he did everything by the book. He knew what he was doing. He had a lot of pride in his work. I can see why he would resent people like me coming in thinking the Army was a big fun time to have.

I remember when Grigsby rotated back to the States. He got his orders to go to some place in the south. At that point he wrote to his colonel there, Colonel Williams. We wrote to Pentagon and some other places for Grigsby to get his orders changed. He would have gotten out of the Army before he would take his family back to the south. As a colored man he said he was not going to do that to his family. It was really the first time I had close contact to someone who felt that strongly about being a Negro living in the south. Fortunately for him, and probably for the Army too, they got his order redone. He went to the city of San Francisco. He was adamantly opposed to taking his daughter back into the South. Since I never had the experience in the south I really was not aware of that.

He felt strongly about that. he was a great guy, great guy. He ran that JAG section.

The Korean Military Advisory Group was there to advise the Korean army which was also stationed there with the 8th Army. They had their headquarters there too. We were the people between the Koreans and the 8th Army and whatever what was going on. The Koreans had a real sense of rank. A Korean colonel would not talk to an American major. That is why we had all the officers. You had to either outrank them or be equal to them, or they wouldn't talk to you. It didn't mean anything to them. You could not send a captain over there to tell some colonel what he should or should not be doing. Our job in the JAG section in KMAG was to advise the Korean army concerning military justice. Their division was being run by a colonel. Our was being run by a colonel. We had a colonel running motor pool. Any area where we had to advise the Koreans we had to hve rank equal to their rank; so we had two generals there. General Timms was one of them. I can't remember the other guy's name because they came and went. There were all of these other colonels. Almost every personnel, everything, was headed by a full colonel.

Fernandez was the first one. The way it worked was when Fernandez left KMAG, he went to 8th Army. It was kind of a channel. He came to KMAG first. 8th Army was over KMAG; so then your next move up was that you became a JAG officer in the 8th Army. Fernandez went there. A great guy named Colonel Williams came in. If you could do this interview with Colonel Williams, it would be absolutely fantastic. Williams served with JAG section at the Nuremberg trials. He was assigned an interview specifically with Herman Goring. That was his until Herman Goring killed himself. That was where he was associated with an interview with Goring. He could tell you some stuff about Nuremberg and what was going on over there. It was unbelievable.

V: What is the background of this?

P: Grigby was a lot older. Williams, Fernandez and finally Berkowitz--the other one who showed up--were all attorneys. The captain was a lawyer. Maybe this is why Grigsby in all his spit and polish was a little standoffish from the officers. I never really got to know him as well as I thought I should have. The guy who took his place was Sergeant West. He was more the image. . . He was the kind of guy who would spend

fifteen years trying to get into a master sergeant slot so that he would get that stripe. When he found out he was going to get it, he went out and celebrated and wrecked a jeep. That was the kind of guy he was. He and I got along a lot better socially but he was not the soldier that Grigsby was. I got along with the colonels. All of them were encouraging me to go for a commission and stay in the Army. It was not my cup of tea. In fact, when they did rotate out, they had a little party for me. Grigsby was already gone, so it was Sergeant West, Captain West, Colonel Williams, Colonel Fernandez, Colonel Thompson, Colonel Berkowitz, and me. That was how nice they treated me over there--those guys. It was really neat being in that section.

Then some interesting things happened. What we used to do was we would review all the military justice cases that the Korean army had done with their own people to see what they were doing as far as giving these people their rights and one thing and another. At the same time we were court-martialing or whatever anybody who was involved in any problems in KMAG. Our division of KMAG was the headquarters. There were maybe eight or ten different units of KMAG throughout Korea. If anybody in the KMAG area got into trouble, they would be sent down to the JAG section of headquarters.

We had some special court-martials. I was involved with special court-martials. I was a defense council for some kid who took some money from a Korean and didn't buy for her what she expected him to buy at the PX and she turned him in. I defended him. We got him off on a technicality. That was an interesting experience.

V: Oh, really? Then you actually were able to defend. . .

P: One of the big problems we have with the Army--with our section--was the general read an article in the magazine that said that military justice was not fair because the expense involved in a general or special court-martial was so great that they were always doing what they call in civilian life as plea bargaining. By doing that the defendant's rights were being abused because they would threaten him with a special court-martial. Maybe they could not convict him with a special court-martial, and maybe they knew they could try him in a special court-martial, but they would get him to accept a lesser punishment than to stand for a court-martial. They knew all the time that they were not going to go with the

special or general. If the man would have insisted on the court-martial they probably would have dropped the charges. The General having read this article which appeared in some legal magazine had us working on our project through a couple of colonels to find out if that was really true.

I'm a little hazy now on how that punishment worked. But there was company punishment. Then there was something else, section something. Then there was the special and general court-martial.

V: Is this Article 15?

P: That's it, Article 15. Rather than taking the special court-martial they would try to get these people to take an Article 15; it was some lesser punishment. Maybe the truth of the matter was that they could never convict them like this kid that I defended. They offered him the Article 15. He said no. When I talked to him, I told him he was crazy and that he should take the Article 15. I told him that if they could convict him with the special court-martial, he could go to stockade for what he did. What we did very simply, a Korean woman gave him money to go to the PX to buy her a shotgun. You could buy shotguns because there was hunting. I went pheasant hunting myself. They would leave shotguns in the supply room that you could sign out for and then get a Korean guide and go pheasant hunting. Any hunting was a dangerous occupation only from the standpoint that any vegetation that could have been burned for fuel was cut. They cut them with some kind of a weapon or instrument that cut the little trees off at sharp angles to the ground. You had to be careful walking. You didn't even want to step on one or trip over one; so I spent most of my time on that pheasant hunt looking at the ground, worrying about hitting one of these little stumps. The fellow goes into the PX to buy this woman a shotgun. He went out the back door with the money and doesn't buy the shotgun. His thinking was that she wouldn't do anything. Number one, she was not supposed to have American money, and she is not supposed to be on the base getting some soldier to buy her anything at the PX. But unfortunately for him, she did turn him in. When they came to pick him up, they searched him. In the search they found a couple of extra ration books. You had to have a book to buy certain things at the PX like tape recorders and anything else they sold. You had to have a coupon, and he had a couple of extra books

because he worked in personnel. They dropped the charge about taking the money from the woman, and they charged him with having extra ration books. Some kind of a jailhouse lawyer was convinced that that search was not legal. He wanted me to defend him on those grounds because of the special. He had the special court-martial. The major heading the court-martial was from one of the units and we had people like Doug who ran the mess hall and was captain. Then there was another one from the motor pool. These fellows made up the court-martial. I was getting help from my own unit which really wasn't crooked--the JAG section--as to how to prepare this thing, plus they were the guys who were going to charge him. Under a special officer, not one of the JAG people, is the prosecuting attorney. I forget where he was from. It was from some unit there.

V: He wasn't a lawyer?

P: No, in special court-martial we didn't have anybody assigned to do that kind of work, not in a special. Now in a general court-martial Captain West would have prosecuted. He was helping this fellow telling him what to do. We were going by the book, Uniform Code Military Justice. In my reading of the book and in looking back because I had more to go with being in the section I found cases backing up what this kid said that he was illegally searched. They were not to be looking for things out of the area of what he was supposedly being charge for having this money. When we got to the court-martial, it got to be kind of a fiasco because when we first went in there, they read the charges. I leaped to my feet like Perry Mason and moved that the charges should be dismissed. That just blew their minds. They had a twenty minute recess to find out whether that could be done. Then they came back and asked me why. Well, I told them why. It was according to such and such a case and out of the justice book and the whole thing; they had another recess. They came back and said no. They were going to try this kid, and so they did. I continued to object along the same lines to the point where this major who was running that special court-martial threatened me with a court-martial. At that point I shut up. We went through the thing. When it was over, they found the kid guilty. I went back and told Colonel Williams that I was going to appeal. I told him what this major had done. Of course, he went down to see the General and the charges were eventually dropped. As a direct result of that we had to have classes on military justice for

all the officers. I got to teach one. I remember all those officers who were on that special court-martial in that class. I felt like a real jerk standing up there telling these guys what they did wrong at that special court-martial. It made me a bit of celebrity there for a while at the base.

As I said, West would have prosecuted had it been a general court-martial. We did have one general court-martial, not in KMAG, but in the 8th Army. A couple of 8th Army officers at one of the line units caught some kid in the PX stealing or in the barracks. They tarred and feathered this kid, put him in a crate, put him in a helicopter in this crate, took him up in the hills, and kicked him out.

V: Was this an American soldier?

P: No, this was a Korean.

V: Oh, Korean.

P: It was a major, a sergeant, and a captain who did this. They brought him back, and they were trying both of them. It presented some really interesting situations. They didn't know which one to try first. It was since they were going to convict the sergeant, but if they did that they were going to have to convict his officer. If they didn't convict the officer and tried him first, then they would not have a case against the sergeant. Captain West was the prosecuting attorney over at the 8th Army on that trail. Boy, there were people there from all over the Middle East. Reporters and people came in from Japan and Korea and Hong Kong. This was really a big deal trying these two fellows for what they did to this Korean kid. And they convicted them both. They had reduction and rank and stuff like that. West was in on that one.

My job was just to review what the Korean army had done for their people and what we were doing for them. It was an interesting tour of duty.

V: After your time was up you came home. Where did you get processed out? Is that what you came home for to get processed out, or did you have some duty left here in the States?

P: No, because I completed, I guess thirteen months or sixteen months--whatever the tour was in Korea--they cut

my two year tour down by three months. When I came home, again I sailed across that Pacific on the U.S.S. Man pulling KP one day off and one day on, but this time I had some rank. Before I left Korea I got the Accommodation ribbon with medal pendent which everybody did. I did make E5, I guess it was. This time on KP I was head count. I just got to sit by the door and count the number of people who ate at each meal.

I came back to Seattle. From Seattle I went to Chicago. One more time I pulled KP. We pulled into Chicago. We all lined up. It was late in the afternoon. They said that they were only going to process a certain group through that afternoon because it was too late in the day to take everybody. They read my name off, and I thought I was going to get out a day early. The next day they processed the rest of them and I was on KP. My last day in the service I was on KP. The same guys I had come in with from Youngstown were coming home from Korea. We met on the boat again. From Chicago we rode home on the train. It was the last train ride I ever had, and we came into Youngstown. Then I was out.

V: So, you pretty well covered what your job assignment was. Could you tell us what it was like to. . . A typical day, was it pretty much an 8:00 to 5:00 for you?

P: Yes. When I first got to Korea, I had misgivings about the Army. I told you about that business in Inch'on and getting assigned to KMAG. Then I went up there and I went to the day room with the officer of the day--the sergeant there. He sent me to the supply room to draw bedding and one thing and another. Then he told me to just wait there. While I was waiting there a Korean kid came in, picked up everything I had--my duffle bag, my mattress, everything--piled it on his back somehow, and that was the last time I ever had to make a bed, polish my shoes, or do anything. He took everything. The houseboys did everything. In that respect being over there was a pleasure. All of our clothes were taken care of; they did our laundry. I think we were paying them \$2 a month and a carton of cigarettes a week or something like that.

Cigarettes were black market, but that was the way it was done. The \$2 we kicked into the day room, and then they paid these kids, but they got the cigarettes too. The kid just did everything for us. There were three of them in our building. Each one just took care of his section; they did the mopping and the cleaning. We got

up in the morning and showered or whatever and went down and had breakfast and then went to the office and did whatever we had to do there. We would do reports that came in and would see what was going on. Then we went home at 4:00 and had dinner and fooled around in the evening and played softball, pingpong, went to the movies.

The other assignment I had while I was there was that I got elected to the board of directors of the KMAG EM Club. That was an interesting situation. We had our own EM Club. Everybody went down to the 8th Army EM Club. We weren't making any money. That is why I remember this General Timms because on a tour he came by one time. There was only a handful of us in the EM Club drinking beer. He called us in the next day--the members of the board--and wanted to know where everybody was. We had like 300 guys, and he wanted to know where they were. So we told him that they were down at the 8th Army because we didn't have any girls at our club. It was up on the hill, and the girls wouldn't come up. They would all go down to the EM Club down at the headquarters there. He wanted to see if we could do something about getting our own men to use our own facilities instead of going down there. Then we started getting a truck from the motor pool. We would take the truck out early in the evening and pickup a truckload of girls. We would bring them up and dump them off at the EM Club. Then we had all kind of guys hanging around our EM Club. The thing really picked up. It was interesting from that standpoint plus being on the board we met at different places to discuss EM Club problems with other KMAG Clubs. So, I got to go to Pusan. We went up there one time to have a meeting. We flew up there and took a night train to Pusan. What an experience that was going down there for these meetings. We had slot machines in there. What we did at the meeting was line up entertainment for the clubs. The Kim Sisters who were on the Ed Sullivan Show a couple of times entertained at the KMAG Club where I was at. They were very expensive to get. We had to pay each one, but we would get shows with them either Korean shows or there were American groups touring too--musical groups. You had to pay them, but they were there. This is not USO. I don't know what arrangements they were there under, but they went around and played at the different clubs. We would get them in on Saturday nights and stuff and had parties.

As far as the daily work was concerned it was like

having a job really. It was very important unmilitary kind of a situation. The only thing we did in the military level was once a week or so they would line everybody up to police the area. We would just get in a long line, and we could probably line up enough guys a couple of feet apart to cover the whole area we had. We just walked right across from the one end which was the landing area all the way across to the motor pool and just pick up butts and stuff. But there was very little military. There was no marching, no training. I think we did go on one or two times up to the rifle range. We fired carbines or something up there. But that was the extent of the military part of it. We had Koreans pulling KP and doing all that kind of work. As far as being in the Army that was not like being in the Army.

V: Speaking of the USO did you get a chance to see any shows? Were you separated from. . .

P: USO was really great. I always had a soft spot for the USO to some degree. This guy named Johnny Grant came over there. He had some people with him. Someone like Jane Russell came over with the show which we saw; I can't remember her name. There was a group from one of the universities who came over singing and entertaining. Then the one Christmas I was there Bob Hope was there with Jane Mansfield and Vickie Haggerty and Jerry Colona. They could buy pictures with Bob Hope. I give Hope a lot of credit. People downgrade it a lot because they would show television shows of it. When he came over where I was, he did a show in the 8th Army--two shows, which we had our tickets to go to. They took us down on buses to the theaters and the whole business. He did a show there and then he went up the line further and did a show up by the front. On Christmas Eve he was there. He toured with Jerry Colona. There was a girl who I think was a Miss America or something about that time and another girl--maybe a couple of them. They went to all the EM Clubs they could get to. They had a schedule, and they said that Hope would be at our EM Club sometime Christmas Eve. When he showed up, it must have been later, maybe 12:00 or 1:00, but he and Colona and these girls came in. They sang "White Christmas" and joked around and shook hands. By that time most of the guys had left because they didn't think he was coming. I stayed and some of the other fellows were there. We shook hands and talked and joked around. We had pictures taken. Later, about five years ago, I was in Washington. I got to thank him personally. I remember Hope's particularly because it was on Christmas

Eve, but there were three or four shows that came over there while I was there.

V: You mentioned earlier your feelings for the people--officers--you worked for. You felt those people were professionals and knew their job and were just good people.

P: Yes, I think the group I worked for. . . Of course, they all were professionals. These guys had been in JA section for years. Like I said, Williams was at Nuremberg. Some of the officers were reserved people who were there. As I said before this feeling I got about the regular Army people, this group of transients that we were was really brought home in cases like inspections and things like that. They did have inspections, but they were nothing like basic. There was such a feeling of disregard on the part of this group called EM's who were basically college people against the regular Army. It is hard to describe because they looked down on all these regular Army people. There was one barrack where there were a bunch of them from New York. They were all college people. They seemed to find a way to antagonize the regular Army people. They would have an inspection on Saturday morning for some reason or another, and these guys would hang their laundry. They knew they weren't going to get any punishment for it. They just seemed to do everything they could possibly think of doing to make it worse instead of going along. When Grigsby was the master sergeant, he pulled one of the inspection tours. I can really see that the guy was irritated because of that feeling. These guys would never make it if ever we were attacked or something like that because they were just general goof offs. There was a lot of drinking. The drug thing I don't recall any of that like it was later in Vietnam, but there was a lot of drinking. There were a lot of kids there who eighteen and nineteen year olds who probably couldn't buy a beer at home. They would go down to the EM Club every night and get smashed. One kid fell out of his bunk; he was sleeping in the top bunk. He fell off and broke his leg. There was a lot of card playing and carrying on and stuff like that with the younger group. The other guys just seemed to take a great deal of pleasure in antagonizing and irritating and picking at whatever they could to make it worse than what it really was.

At that Korean Military group we also had several barracks of Katussa, Koreans who were signed in to live

with us, not in the same barracks but in the same barracks area using the same facilities to get a more close-knit arrangement to see how Americans lived. That was a bad deal from their standpoint as well as ours because there was a lot of prejudice against them on our part. They were not picked to serve in that area. I don't know how they got picked. Obviously, they were not trained. An example of that was that these guys didn't know how to use a toilet, and that really irritated some of the American boys. There were never any lightbulbs in the latrine. As soon as they put the light bulbs in these Koreans would steal them. There was never any toilet paper because they would take that. There was never anything that you could leave in the latrine that wouldn't get swiped. They would use the toilets like they would use a hole in the ground. They would stand on the seat and squat. It was hard to believe, but when you went in to use the latrine and you had to check the toilet seat to see that there wasn't some human waste on there from one of these guys squatting on the thing, and that really got the guys upset when that happened. That was a kind of running feud all the time to keep these Koreans out of our latrine, although they were supposed to be using it. What it did was that we had two latrines. One was theirs, one was ours. But they would still come in at night and take the light bulbs and the toilet paper and stuff like that. So you had to have your own toilet paper, and you very seldom went in there at night because you would take your life in your hands if you went in there without a flashlight or something to see what was going on. That was a bummer.

Again, in that regard, I didn't have too many problems. These guys were great ping pong players. They really were fabulous ping pong players. It was the only time that there was any feeling of camaraderie with them during that ping pong tournament.

We had Koreans working at the EM Club. The waitresses wouldn't even talk to you. As far as getting to know any Koreans on a personal basis, the only ones you got to know were the girls who came in on the trucks--the prostitutes--because the girls who worked there as waitresses and who sold tickets for the drinks and things were a little more high class. We had a Korean girl working in our office. She was educated. She wouldn't be seen dead with a soldier. It was just like it was at Fort Smith; the same is true in Seoul. If a Korean girl was seen with a soldier, that automatically

branded her as a prostitute even if she wasn't. There was no way of bridging the gap to get to meet these people on a social level. Now the officers did. They would have parties. Even there it was on that level where they were not really getting to know these people, like going to their homes and stuff. They didn't do that. At least I was not aware of that.

V: I did an interview where somebody was invited to a Korean wedding. That didn't happen very often then I would assume.

P: No. Oddly enough I was in a headquarters unit with a lot of. . . We were not front line soldiers, and it was right downtown Seoul. I spent two and a half years talking to that Korean in the time I was there. Miss Chei sold those tickets, and I couldn't get to first base with her, either take her home or anything. She would not be seen off her post with a soldier. In fact some of them would admit that even working there was tough except the money was good. Just the fact that they worked on base made them a suspect.

The girls we would bring in, if you walked out to the gate, they were lined up and down the road as soon as you went out the gate all these girls were just waiting for the guys to come out. It was an amazing situation. I imagine prostitution ran the economy in that area. This was the way it was. I never met anybody, while I was there, who met anybody above the level of that type.

One of the guys from Youngstown married a girl from over there. I met him over there. He was up with the 2nd Army someplace. He was a mail clerk. He would come down to Seoul every once in a while for supplies or whatever. I ran into him a couple of times. When I came home, about a couple months after I was home I was at a dance someplace like Idora Park or somewhere, and he was dancing with a Korean girl, or an Oriental girl. I found out later that after he was discharged he went back to Korea. You couldn't marry a Korean girl while you were there. They made it very difficult.

One of the guys who was in KMAG group wanted to marry one of those girls. When I say one of those girls, I don't know the girl he wanted to marry. It could have been somebody else. On the outside chance that she was a prostitute, they did everything to him that you could possibly think of to keep him from marrying that girl--an interview with the general. I think they even

threatened to send him back to the States because somebody had written to his parents. We were there with forms instructing anybody who even thought about getting married that in certain states it was against the law. If a guy was from Mississippi, he could never take the girl home because marriage to anybody besides a white person was against the law in some southern states. We had to point that out to them. If they got that serious and they got married, they could be arrested when they went home because of this cohabitation between the races was against the law. I don't know how it was in Germany, but in other places where GI's were stationed maybe it was the same. It was similar to Fort Smith to a degree. The better people in Korea didn't want their daughters messing around with GI's.

That is the funny thing about that. When you first get there, you hardly imagine yourself talking to one. After you are there for a year and a half. . . I wasn't married at the time, so it was a little different then. There were a lot of cases of gonorrhoea and stuff there too.

V: They had big problems with that.

P: Yes. There was a lot of fraternization at that level. Even the officers had their girlfriends. Socially, there wasn't much.

V: That answered my question about your feelings about the Koreans and how you think they felt about you being there. Do you have any final comments? You can collect your thoughts about how you felt the Army did for you in your influence in your life either positively or negatively.

P: This is a strange experience because most people don't want to hear about what happened. I sometimes think it happened to somebody else. I have to really concentrate. One thing triggers another memory of something else, but I never really did think about it much that I was there. I'm glad there wasn't any fighting. I'm not glad I went. I got to see Seoul in Korea. I saw Sigmond Rhee, at least he came to mass at 8th Army headquarters because he was Catholic. Then, Sunday morning you would hear the motorcycles and guard coming in with him and his wife in his limosine. If you went to mass there at that point, he would be there. I got to go to Japan three times. I say Tokyo, I enjoyed

that. I probably would have never done that on my own. As far as any experience in the Army, I kept a few souvenirs. One of the things I liked about being over there was we wore OD's; we didn't wear a tie. You wore those little scarves, camouflage scarves. I had never been in the Boy Scouts or anything where you had to wear a uniform. Putting that kind of stuff on was kind of a thrill. I didn't dislike that, putting those things on. I kept some. I kept my KMAG patches. I still have my medals. I got the good conduct medal and the commendation ribbon with medal pendant and some other stuff they handed out for being overseas. To really say if it did anything for me personally, I don't know.

V: Is there anything else you feel you have to say for posterity?

P: No, it just was an experience that I'm not sorry I had. I guess when I grew up and my boyhood was spent during the Second World War watching John Wayne in all the movies about the war. Maybe I did have the feeling--and maybe a lot of people did too--you always wonder how you would behave in that kind of a situation. That was in the back of my mind, being in the Army to how it would really be. I guess I thought it was going to be more than it was. I was not disappointed in what it was, but maybe had there been fighting or something. . . My brother was over doing the fighting, but his experiences are almost the same as mine. He didn't see any action. He was just there serving his time and then coming home.

They took away everything that I really would have wanted to keep except some of those scarves and a few pants and a uniform that nobody else would want to wear anyway. I guess the only thing I can look back on and say that I was glad I was there was in situations like this. I'm glad to say I was part of something like that, even though it was a minor part at the time and it really didn't make any difference. It enables you to have a little more empathy toward soldiers for people who are in that kind of situation, even for Orientals, even for those people who live in those countries, as I remember how tough it must have been for those people. I think I had more feeling--I don't know for what reason--for their feelings than a lot of guys did. I met a lot of nice guys. I wish I would have kept in touch with them more than I did. I did write to some of them, but those things kind of peter out after a few years. I don't know where those guys are anymore, but I met some nice people and had some interesting times.

PETRUCCI

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V: Okay. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW