

# Oral History Project: Rick and Judy Hershey



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History 300: Historical Methods

Professor Birkner

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## **Richard and Judy Hershey Interviewed by Lance Tennenbaum**

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**Lance Tennenbaum:** Today is November 10th, 2018, and I am Lance Tennenbaum. We are located on the second floor of the Alumni House. I will be interviewing Richard Hershey and his wife Judy about their experiences in relation to the Vietnam War. What are your earliest memories Mr. Hershey?

**Richard Hershey:** Well, I was born in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. I do remember when I was born, it was February 25, 1946. The reason I was born here was because my father was a graduate of the Gettysburg class of '32. He had come back from World War II. He was in the Pacific. In fact he was going to be in the invasion forces into Japan, Operation Olympic, if you know your history there.

**Tennenbaum:** Was that the invasion of Kyushu?

**Mr. Hershey:** Exactly right. And so I was in my mother's belly, she was pregnant with me when my dad was going to go fight the Japanese, and then they dropped the bombs and that was it. He did go into Japan, into the occupation. In fact I have a whole scrapbook of the pictures he shot which I should probably bring in for you guys.

**Tennenbaum:** That would be awesome. I am sure special collections would love that. We can certainly discuss that more later.

**Mr. Hershey:** Right. Anyway, so I was born here, and he [Hershey's father] got his job back at the national park.

**Tennenbaum:** What was your father doing with the national parks?

**Mr. Hershey:** He was the chief engineer, and we lived at the Weikert House<sup>1</sup> on the battlefield. If you know the battlefield there is the Weikert House out there. I lived there as an infant, and then he [Hershey's father] got recalled to active duty as Lieutenant-Colonel in the Corps of Engineers.

**Tennenbaum:** Do you know approximately what year that was?

**Mr. Hershey:** That was the year 1946. And eventually moved ourselves out to Spokane, Washington. I don't know why we went to Spokane, Washington. But eventually we went up to Alaska. My dad took a battalion of engineers, about 600 people, up to Ladd Field,<sup>2</sup> which is at Fairbanks. And my mom and I went with him. I was an infant, and he [Hershey's father] built a railroad spur (which is still there today) from Fairbanks down to what became Eielson Air Force Base, which is one of the sack bases we were building in the late 40s because of the Russians and everything. So Eielson Air Force Base was built because my father built a rail line down there.

**Tennenbaum:** How long did you spend in there?

**Mr. Hershey:** That was two years I lived in Alaska for the first time, 1947-49.

**Tennenbaum:** So you only stayed there as long as his deployment lasted?

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh yeah. It really wasn't a deployment. He was was in the United States. Alaska was a territory at the time.

**Tennenbaum:** Right. I understand now.

**Mr. Hershey:** We went back to the States, then he went to teach ROTC at Auburn University. I attended the kindergarten at Auburn. I remember learning to play a violin at age four, something

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<sup>1</sup> The Weikert House is a witness house to the battle of Gettysburg that served as a field hospital for both sides during the battle.

<sup>2</sup> Ladd Field is a military base and airfield located at Fort Jonathan Wainwright, located in Fairbanks, Alaska.

like that. It was maybe the Suzuki Method<sup>3</sup>. Anyway, I remember my sister being born. She was born in Auburn University. She now lives in South Carolina. My sister Lindy, or Linda Hershey. From there we went to Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Then he [Hershey's father] got called to the Korean War.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh okay.

**Mr. Hershey:** So we came back to Gettysburg, and he [Hershey's father] bought a house which became the West Cottage. Used to be right over there, [points out window] across from what we call the [sub], torn down now. And we owned the West Cottage for several years.

**Tennenbaum:** Not to cut off your story, but I was wondering if you could describe your mother a little bit? We have not really heard about her.

**Mr. Hershey:** Mother? Okay. Dorothy Troxel Hershey, a real feisty lady. Never went to college, but she could have gone to college. Married my dad in 1935. She had several miscarriages, and then I came along. As my sister said, I was called the crown prince. And mom lived here in Gettysburg. Well, she died in 2007, hun? [Asks Mrs. Hershey, she nods]. 2007 she passed away. Lived up at Woodcrest, 80 Woodcrest Drive was the house that we had there for years and years. Bought that in 1962. Anyway, my momma was a very feisty lady and I get my singing ability from her. What was that? [Asks Mrs. Hershey]

**Mrs. Hershey:** Driving to Spokane.

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh yeah. No no no, this is the other thing that happened. So my father was in Korea, he gets reassigned to go to Okinawa, this is early 1954. My mother sold the house here, got my sister, actually she [Hershey's mother] drove to Spokane too and got four flat tires. She

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<sup>3</sup> The Suzuki Method is an internationally known music curriculum created in Japan by Shinichi Suzuki.

was by herself, no interstates or anything like that. She did the same thing going cross country. I don't know if we took a train or whatever, to San Francisco. We get into San Francisco in the Embarcadero area, which is all built up, it is a fancy place, they have restaurants there now, have you ever been to San Francisco?

**Tennenbaum:** I have.

**Mr. Hershey:** It is the Embarcadero area, and that is where we got on the USS Mitchell, which is a troop ship. And it was not a cruise ship. The three of us went across the Pacific for 17 days.

**Tennenbaum:** So you went to Okinawa with your father?

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh yeah, yeah. And my sister. I remember on board the ship just outside of San Francisco, the waves were like this [makes big waving motions with his hands]. So the state room went up and down, up and down, and my sister and I would run up and down, and my mother was getting sick when we were doing this thing. I still remember that. It was 1954. So we went to Okinawa, my father met us there, we lived in the Zukeran area.<sup>4</sup> The school I went to is still there. You can google elementary schools in Okinawa and that same place is there. I still remember it. I was in the fourth grade by that time. I had spent the third grade here in Gettysburg. We were there for about 15-16 months, then we came back (the whole family now) across the Pacific, we didn't have planes to do it at that time. So we took the troop ship back to San Francisco. We bought a car and we drove cross country, I remember going through the Mojave Desert.<sup>5</sup> No A/C by the way. No radio, no A/C, oh my god. And we went across country back to the Gettysburg area to see family. And then back to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, which is in San Antonio. And he [Hershey's father] was the post engineer there, he was in charge of the

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<sup>4</sup> Camp Zukeran is now known as Camp Foster. It is a Marine Corps base located in Ginowan City.

<sup>5</sup> The Mojave Desert is located in Southeastern California Southern Nevada.

facilities on the particular place there. So we were there two years, I took the fourth grade again, my mother wanted me back in the same age group. And the fifth grade there at Fort Sam Houston, and we moved from there to Long Island, New York.

**Tennenbaum:** Yup.

**Mr. Hershey:** I was in the sixth grade there, I was in the West End Elementary School, still remember it. And I spoke like a normal person while the local folks spoke like they were from Long Island.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Mr. Hershey:** So they called me Tex. I didn't have a Texas accent, but I had been from Texas and I was there from the sixth grade, and I remember seeing the Leonard Bernstein young people's concerts on TV. I remember having Jewish friends. First time I had ever met Jewish folks. I knew Jesus was a Jew and all that but I didn't know anything about that. But we had a bunch of Jewish friends there. Are you Jewish?

**Tennenbaum:** I am, yes.

**Mr. Hershey:** Okay, that name there too.

**Tennenbaum:** Yeah, it is a giveaway name.

**Mr. Hershey:** We went to Israel twice by the way.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh wow, well we can talk about that later. I am happy to talk about that though.

**Mr. Hershey:** [Laughs]. Cool. Anyway, we were there sixth grade, then my father was involved in the Corps of Engineers so he worked on Church Street in downtown Manhattan. The building he worked in was right next to the hole from 9/11. Right next to it, because he told me about that.

He was up in Greenland, and up in Canada building bases (either SAC bases or radar sites) because of the Cold War.

**Tennenbaum:** If we could pause for a second, I just wanted to know what sort of influence did your father being in the military have on you as a little kid? What did you think of your father's job? What did you really know?

**Mr. Hershey:** I didn't know much about it. He wasn't in a troop unit. He was never in a troop unit that I knew of. He was a commander of an engineer battalion in Alaska, and I was a kid. And then when he was in Korea I think he was involved in a unit there, but I never was involved in that. I figured the military might be a good place for me to go when I grew up.

**Tennenbaum:** Just because your dad was in the service?

**Mr. Hershey:** Because my dad was in the service. I didn't know anyone else who felt like that. Now we move to Buffalo, New York. I was in the seventh grade there.

**Tennenbaum:** Wow, more moving?

**Mr. Hershey:** We moved to Buffalo, New York. Actually it was Kenmore, New York. We were right across from Kenmore Elementary School. I don't have too many memories about that. It was cold. Buffalo is cold. And from then, he [Hershey's father] got reassigned to Alaska.

**Tennenbaum:** Again?

**Mr. Hershey:** Fort Greely, Alaska, which is 100 miles South of Fairbanks. It was a test and evaluation place for the Army, and also cold weather mountain school. So I went there, I was there during the eighth and ninth grade. I had a ball as a Boy Scout, out in the woods and everything. You walk out the door, you're in the middle of the wilderness. We had bears on post and there were buffalo all over the place.

**Tennenbaum:** And being outdoors, being a Boy Scout. Was that something you did before as a child? Or did you just start then?

**Mr. Hershey:** On Long Island I was a Scout. And then I was one up in Buffalo too. So two years in Alaska, he [Hershey's father] goes back to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, which is just South of Washington D.C. Where we lived off post and moved on post, and we had these nice quarters. That was what they called them. It's where you live when you are assigned on post. And it was actually five doors down from some place he lived when he was a First Lieutenant. He was still a Lieutenant-Colonel at this point. He retired a Lieutenant-Colonel. He taught at the engineer school there, and we went to Gettysburg, bought a house in Gettysburg, and I finished high school, I went to four different high schools.

**Tennenbaum:** So you were still moving around?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yep, still moving around. So I ended up in Gettysburg, finished high school here, then I said, "What am I going to do? Well I think I wanted to be in the Army so I knew I could get in here [Gettysburg College] because I was a legacy. So I got in as a legacy, as a biology major and a chemistry minor.

**Mrs. Hershey:** I thought you wanted to go to West Point?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, I did want to go to West Point, but I did not get selected. My grades were not high enough. But they were good enough for Gettysburg, which I guess was okay. I don't know what that means.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Mr. Hershey:** Didn't cost as much back then as you guys are paying right now.

**Tennenbaum:** You are definitely right about that.



**Mr. Hershey:** And eventually I joined Sigma Nu Fraternity.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh okay, so you were a Sigma Nu brother?

**Mr. Hershey:** I was a Sigma Nu brother. In fact, if you go over to the library and look at the exhibits of the guys who were killed in Vietnam, that is one reason why. One of my brothers was Andy Marsh, and there is a picture of our fraternity there, and you will see me in the middle of it too. I was the pledge marshall at the time. See, I tortured the pledges. [Laughs]. Anyway, we were here, met Judy. I probably knew of her my Sophomore year.

**Tennenbaum:** So you went to Gettysburg College as well?

**Mrs. Hershey:** Yes.

**Tennenbaum:** So that is how you guys met?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, we met here on campus. And then we started dating when I got dumped by her best friend. Her name is Marsha Walker Boot, and we saw her at the 50th anniversary. We are still good friends. And we graduated on the 2nd of June-

**Tennenbaum:** I don't want to rush things. So if we could-

**Mr. Hershey:** Sure, yeah, no problem. Let's go back, I am hopping around too much.

**Tennenbaum:** Not at all. You guys are doing great. I just have questions about your college time, and perhaps the end of your high school.

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah.

**Tennenbaum:** So you said you did a biology major and chemistry minor? Is there any reason you chose those subjects?

**Mr. Hershey:** I was stupid. [Laughs]. Somebody should have slapped the crap out of me. [Makes slapping motion]. What are you doing you fool?

**Mrs. Hershey:** He should have done a history major.

**Mr. Hershey:** I should have done a history major, maybe economics and stuff like that. Because eventually I would get a masters degree, an M.B.A.

**Tennenbaum:** In history?

**Mr. Hershey:** No. Eventually I got an M.B.A from the College of Saint Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota, with specialization in contract management. That is a whole different story right there, we will go back to that.

**Tennenbaum:** Yes of course. So while you were on campus, how big of a part of your life was Sigma Nu? What was the fraternity life like on campus back then?

**Mr. Hershey:** It was huge. Big.

**Tennenbaum:** And approximately what year was that when you joined Sigma Nu?

**Mr. Hershey:** '64. Until '68.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay, so you would describe the influence of the fraternity as large on campus? Could you go into that a little bit? What was it like for the average frat brother?

**Mr. Hershey:** I lived at home my first two years, then I moved to campus. I washed dishes for my board, and my parents helped cover my room.

**Tennenbaum:** So you financed yourself while you were here?

**Mr. Hershey:** I financed myself. Actually I got a loan which totalled--when I graduated I owed \$3000 on my loan.

**Tennenbaum:** That's not bad.

**Mr. Hershey:** [Laughs] That's about a month right now.

**Mrs. Hershey:** But he didn't tell me about it.

**Mr. Hershey:** I didn't tell her about that too. I had a negative net worth at the time.

**Tennenbaum:** Like most college students today I suppose.

**Mr. Hershey:** Like most college students.

**Tennenbaum:** And where did your siblings end up going to school? Your sister?

**Mr. Hershey:** My sister went to Cahaba College down in North Carolina. She met her husband there too.

**Tennenbaum:** And what was your relationship like? Was it hard to be away from your sister?

**Mr. Hershey:** No.

**Tennenbaum:** No? You guys were good at that?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, we were good like that.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay. Is there anything else about your time at Gettysburg that you want to talk about?

**Mr. Hershey:** Loved the fraternity, we did a lot of dumb things. We would make movies. We made 8mm movies, we made one of a Bonnie and Clyde knockoff that we shot out in Caledonia. The dumbest thing we did-- you'll love this one. The dumbest thing we did, we made a World War II-- kind of a Hogan's Heroes<sup>6</sup> German Nazi thing. It was called "Ambush". So it starts out in the back of the house-- this is 44 West Broadway, this is the old fraternity house, not the one they have right now.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay.

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<sup>6</sup> Hogan's Heroes is an American comedy television show that premiered in 1965, and centered around the escape attempts of the Allied pilots captured in a German POW camp.

**Mr. Hershey:** And one of the brothers, Dave [Shutter], he is still around-- he is still in the Pittsburgh area. He made a giant Nazi flag with a swastika. He hung it down from the balcony-- and he pretended to be Hitler.

**Tennenbaum:** Right.

**Mr. Hershey:** We were the acolytes, just cheering and everything. Unbeknownst to us, one of our neighbors was a survivor of the Holocaust.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh my god.

**All:**[Laugh]

**Mr. Hershey:** We didn't have to go see the Dean of Students the next day-- our President did.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh my god. I'm sure that was a fun meeting.

**Mr. Hershey:** [Laughs]. That was kind of a poor taste thing. We wouldn't have done it if we knew it, but you know.

**Tennenbaum:** So you guys were just normal college kids?

**Mr. Hershey:** We were normal college kids. We were college kids, had good times. You know, usually Sunday we would have our dates over to the house, have dinner-- have dinner in the basement, that's sort of where it was.

**Tennenbaum:** Were classes difficult for you guys? Would you describe them as hard or easy?

**Mr. Hershey:** It was hard.

**Mrs. Hershey:** It was hard. One interesting thing, can I throw this in?

**Tennenbaum:** Absolutely.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Okay so we came in '64. There was a difference in the requirements for men and women.

**Mr. Hershey:** That's right.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Women had to have a much higher high school grade point average, and had to be in top ten percent of their class. I don't know about the men. So the ratio was two men to every woman.

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah. That's right.

**Mrs. Hershey:** So the admissions requirements were totally different.

**Mr. Hershey:** Totally different.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Which I don't think they could do today.

**Tennenbaum:** No, definitely not.

**Mr. Hershey:** For the guys now, they had a little thing called the draft.

**Tennenbaum:** Yeah, so you registered for the draft?

**Mr. Hershey:** Well no, we were 2-S<sup>7</sup>. We had a deferment because we were going to college.

**Tennenbaum:** Right.

**Mr. Hershey:** I went to ROTC<sup>8</sup> here, so I knew I was going to go into the military. I would probably go wherever I have to go. Vietnam really hadn't started up until '65.

**Tennenbaum:** So when you joined ROTC you were not aware that there was going to be a war? You did it because you thought it was a good career opportunity for you, and because your father had been in the Army?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, and then it kinda started to happen and yeah.

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<sup>7</sup> The Selective Service System defines 2-S as, "Registrant deferred because of activity in study."

<sup>8</sup> Reserve Officer Training Corps.

**Tennenbaum:** I did not mean to interrupt your story, please continue.

**Mr. Hershey:** We would drill right in front of Plank Gymnasium. It started there, and then they built a facility across the railroad tracks at that-- near the little pond they have over there?

There's a building they have next to it?

**Tennenbaum:** Quarry Pond?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, that was the ROTC facility. That's where we drilled and went to classes, over there too.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh, okay.

**Mr. Hershey:** Went to classes twice a week there too. And then between our Junior and Senior year we had a summer camp at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation up in Pennsylvania-- just outside of Harrisburg, I think.

**Tennenbaum:** Were there a lot of guys in ROTC at that point?

**Mr. Hershey:** A number of them.

**Tennenbaum:** A number, okay.

**Mr. Hershey:** Not a lot.

**Tennenbaum:** So most people were not interested in the military?

**Mr. Hershey:** Not really. They didn't get interested in the military until they started drafting college students. How about that? Oh we can't have a war now because us precious college students-- they might get hurt. Well, to hell with the high school, the riff-raff, the trash at the high schools. So there is a little bit of-- I don't know-- a cultural thing there--

**Tennenbaum:** Maybe like a class element?

**Mr. Hershey:** A class element there. The lower classes get to go and die for their country but us upper classes, “oh, we are too much more valuable. Our families are too much more important. They have more money than the riff-raff down here.”

**Tennenbaum:** So that affected you?

**Mr. Hershey:** A little bit. I remember when LBJ<sup>9</sup> made those announcements-- there was an announcement made on the television at the fraternity and all the guys who were not in ROTC kinda got nervous then too.

**Tennenbaum:** Because they realized they might but up at the plate at that point?

**Mr. Hershey:** That’s right. I do remember that one. Anyway, so we graduated on the 2nd of June, and then I see something didn’t happen on the 2nd of June. See, something was supposed to have happened. On the 2nd of June before the actual graduation we had the commencement ceremony. They had all of the ROTC folks get their rank pinned on, because we were made Second Lieutenants. Judy pinned one on one shoulder and my mother pinned the one on my other shoulder, and then we had graduation. Then the French ambassador came to speak, what a piece of crap that guy was.

**Mrs. Hershey:** [Laughs]. We couldn’t understand him.

**Mr. Hershey:** Couldn’t understand him.

**Tennenbaum:** So that is the only reason you say that? Because you couldn’t understand him?

**Mr. Hershey:** Well I could understand him, he was speaking in English, not French. Now fast forward, about ten years after this I was going through a box, and I come upon a beer mug. I say,

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<sup>9</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson- 36th President of the United States.

“Honey, what is the beer mug for?” “Oh, that is what I was going to give you on graduation as a graduation gift.” “Well why didn’t you give it to me?” “Well, because I didn’t get my graduation gift.” She didn’t get her ring. She got a ring about a month later.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Everybody got engaged at graduation. Anybody that was serious.

**Mr. Hershey:** I wasn’t smart enough to figure that out, so--

**Tennenbaum:** So that was standard practice at the time?

**Mrs. Hershey:** Yeah, pretty much. If you were-- I mean--

**Tennenbaum:** If you were with somebody?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah.

**Mrs. Hershey:** If you were with somebody, generally.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay.

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh by the way, the fraternity-- after we got pinned and everything-- they would go serenade the couples. I don’t know if they still do that. It’s a song called Sigma Nu Girl, and they serendaded that. That was kind of neat. Wasn’t it? [Asks Mrs. Hershey].

**Mrs. Hershey:** Yeah it was neat. Yeah.

**Tennenbaum:** I’ll have to ask my friends who are Sigma Nu brothers.

**Mr. Hershey:** Ask them if they have done the serenades. If you can tell them I’m Zeta Sigma 194, that’s my number. Tell them you talked to Zeta Sigma 194. [Laughs].

**Tennenbaum:** I’ll have to do that.

**Mr. Hershey:** Anyway, on the 5th of July 1968, I go down and propose, and we got engaged. And then on the 20th of July I’m off to the Army.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh wow, that soon.



**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, off to Fort Sill<sup>10</sup>, Oklahoma. I drove out there, and spent the next twelve weeks learning to be a field artillery officer. In the meantime, Judy is planning the wedding. I graduate in October, we get married on the 26th of October '68. And then we were off to our next adventure. Eventually we end up-- after our honeymoon in Gatlinburg<sup>11</sup> where they didn't have any food because it was the end of the season, and Gatlinburg before isn't the way it is today-- there wasn't much out there. And we end up in Fort Campbell, Kentucky.<sup>12</sup> And we were there in an army training unit-- I'm a Second Lieutenant helping train civilians to become soldiers in a basic training unit. They had me there to get me in a troop unit before I go to Vietnam.

**Tennenbaum:** So at this point you knew you were going to go to Vietnam?

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh yeah. If you were in the military-- if you were an officer, you are going to Vietnam. Period.

**Tennenbaum:** Right.

**Mr. Hershey:** Highly probable, highly probable. So from there we then go back to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for the Vietnam orientation course-- a six week course-- and we lived in a trailer out near the airport, and Judy opened the door of the trailer one day, and what popped? [Asks Mrs. Hershey].

**Mrs. Hershey:** It was a horse, standing there.

**Mr. Hershey:** [Laughs]

**Mrs. Hershey:** I grew up in the suburbs, having a horse at my front door was--

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<sup>10</sup> US Army post about 85 miles southwest of Oklahoma City.

<sup>11</sup> A city located on the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.

<sup>12</sup> US Army base located on the border between Kentucky and Tennessee.

**Tennenbaum:** A bit of a surprise?

**Mr. Hershey:** She was a city girl, over here too, so the city girl did that, too. Anyway, then we go back to Silver Spring, Maryland, and Judy gets an apartment there. And then you had a job with the postal service, right? [Asks Mrs. Hershey].

**Mrs. Hershey:** Right.

**Mr. Hershey:** It was actually a good job. In GS-7? She was GS-7 in the postal service, and I'm off to Vietnam.<sup>13</sup> I ended up with the 2nd Battalion 2nd Field Artillery, actually-- Charlie Battery. You can see my little thing here [Refers to a patch on his uniform].

**Tennenbaum:** But at the time you didn't know this would be a big part of your life?

**Mr. Hershey:** I didn't know anything like that, so one of the things I did-- I shot a lot of pictures, and if you would like to get my pictures I will send them to you.

**Tennenbaum:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Hershey:** I have them on Shutterfly. Can you write down your email address?

**Tennenbaum:** We can do that after if you would like. It's no problem.

**Mr. Hershey:** Okay, in fact I sent the pictures on Shutterfly to your professor.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh, I'm sure he loves that.

**Mr. Hershey:** He'll love that. There are 722 of them, and I put a comment on each one of them. And Judy is in a couple of them too.

**Tennenbaum:** And just out of curiosity, what made you take those pictures?

**Mr. Hershey:** I was a photographer. I had my own darkroom in the basement and I shot slides-- full frame slides-- And I'd have half frame slides. I didn't do anything with them for years, and

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<sup>13</sup> According to the Postal Service, GS-7 is, "is the 7th pay grade in the General Schedule (GS) pay scale."

then I said, if I don't do anything with them myself, they are going to be gone. So I scanned them. You can have somebody now scan your slides or pictures, because now that is all digital.

**Tennenbaum:** Right.

**Mr. Hershey:** Like when I went to Israel I took four thousand shots. It was pretty hard to scan four thousand things.

**Tennenbaum:** That's a lot.

**Mr. Hershey:** That's a lot. Anyway, that was kind of neat. So in Vietnam I was at different fire bases, I was at an 8 inch, 175[mm] heavy artillery battery, it was four guns--

**Tennenbaum:** I don't mean to interrupt, but there are certain things that Professor Birkner would find remiss if I didn't include in this.

**Mr. Hershey:** Sure.

**Tennenbaum:** So when you first arrived in Vietnam, do you know the military base you arrived at?

**Mr. Hershey:** Sure, I arrived in Cam Ranh Bay, and that is where everyone flew in to.<sup>14</sup> I was sent down to Tan Son Nhat air base. Then I went to the 90th replacement organization. They replaced the guys coming out. So they had to find out what I did and put me in a place. I didn't have any idea what I was going to be doing as an artillery officer.

**Tennenbaum:** Were you nervous at that point?

**Mr. Hershey:** No.

**Tennenbaum:** No? Were you excited? What were you feeling?

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<sup>14</sup> American base during Vietnam located in the Southeast of the country.

**Mr. Hershey:** Eh, just part of the thing. Actually, when I was going over there they were landing on the moon.

**Tennenbaum:** So was that the big--

**Mr. Hershey:** Blast off?

**Tennenbaum:** Right.

**Mr. Hershey:** We were in her [Mrs. Hershey] sister's basement watching the moon rocket go off.

**Mrs. Hershey:** The last night.

**Mr. Hershey:** The very next day I went to Vietnam. That was on the 20th of July 1969.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Talk about not being in a unit.

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, I wasn't in a unit because I was in the replacement process. So eventually I ended up with the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery.

**Tennenbaum:** Right. So what were your main objectives when you were with that unit?

**Mr. Hershey:** Survive.

**Tennenbaum:** Survive. That was everybody's objective, I imagine.

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, that was number one: get to go home. Get to go home.

**Tennenbaum:** While you were there were there any friends you made that stick out to you? That you want to talk about?

**Mr. Hershey:** Not really.

**Tennenbaum:** No?

**Mr. Hershey:** No.

**Tennenbaum:** How would you describe your time in the Army when you were in Vietnam?

**Mr. Hershey:** Busy. I started in base camps, but then I was in a bunch of fire support bases, and when I look back on it I'm saying, "Oh my god, how dangerous that was." I didn't realize at the time how dangerous it was. We could have been overrun at any time; some of the places I was at.

**Tennenbaum:** And there is nothing that sticks out to you that you remember thinking, "Wow, this is really dangerous."?

**Mr. Hershey:** Most of the time. [Laughs]. Yeah.

**Tennenbaum:** I guess you were usually handling live ammunition and explosives and--

**Mr. Hershey:** Well, I was the executive officer. I'm the guy who essentially got the guns to be aimed at the right place.

**Tennenbaum:** So you learned how to use a radio? Were you a radio operator? Did you have somebody to do that for you?

**Mr. Hershey:** I had somebody do that for us.

**Tennenbaum:** Right. So you were just directing the fire that you were--

**Mr. Hershey:** I wasn't directing the fire, that would be a forward observer. I was the guy kinda running the whole thing. I was running the firing battery. There was other things going on. It was a fire direction center and we had a big old computer-- handheld like slide rolls to calculate everything. And that's all done on something like you have right there in front of you. [Refers to my cell phone].

**Tennenbaum:** So you weren't in the thick of it? In the front lines.

**Mr. Hershey:** There were no front lines but I was in the front lines.

**Tennenbaum:** You were?

**Mr. Hershey:** We had artillery coming at us, rockets coming at us--

**Mrs. Hershey:** You weren't in the hand-to-hand?

**Mr. Hershey:** I wasn't in the "bush" so to say. I didn't go out on patrols.<sup>15</sup> I stayed in fire bases.

**Tennenbaum:** That was your job, to be there?

**Mr. Hershey:** That's was my job to be there. And then go back and forth on roads which is kind of dangerous too.

**Tennenbaum:** And just out of curiosity, did you consider joining the engineers like your father?

**Mr. Hershey:** No.

**Tennenbaum:** It wasn't something you were interested in?

**Mr. Hershey:** No, I didn't want to do it. I wanted to be in the combat arms I think. Field artillery is what I chose.

**Tennenbaum:** So you chose that specifically? Any reason you chose that?

**Mr. Hershey:** No.

**All:**[Laugh].

**Mr. Hershey:** I didn't want to be infantry.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay, fair enough.

**All:**[Laugh].

**Tennenbaum:** So approximately how long were you in your artillery regiment?

**Mr. Hershey:** I was in an artillery battalion.

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<sup>15</sup> A common slang word in reference to the jungle.

**Tennenbaum:** Battalion, sorry.

**Mr. Hershey:** In my battery (a battery was about 150 people), we were in it for a year. I was in Vietnam for a year.

**Tennenbaum:** So in total you were in Vietnam for a year?

**Mr. Hershey:** Most people were in Vietnam for a year. A tour of duty is one year-- 365 days.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay, that makes sense.

**Mr. Hershey:** One of the things the guys would do is they would fill out a calendar with 365 little slots on it, and they would fill in each one.

**Tennenbaum:** Did you have a calendar like that?

**Mr. Hershey:** No I didn't. Other people did, because you got real nervous when you got under 100 days; you became a two digit midget. And you heard all these stories about guys who bought it, or bought the farm with a couple of days to go. Like I was at this one place, fire support base Devon, and a guy was going out to place claymore mines. It's a directional mine that shoots all these ball bearings out to stop a human wave attack, and he didn't ground himself properly and the thing went off below him. He was messing with it when it took him out-- killed him immediately. He had eight days to go.

**Tennenbaum:** Wow.

**Mr. Hershey:** You heard stories like that and you said, "During these last couple of days-- I made it this far, just be careful about this whole thing too."

**Tennenbaum:** And during this time what was communication with your wife-- communication back home like?

**Mr. Hershey:** That's a good question. Back then we had free letters. We could mail anything out free, and we used 3.5 inch tape players.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh, so you recorded messages?

**Mr. Hershey:** We recorded messages. Now the problem is-- [to Mrs. Hershey] wanna tell him the problem?

**Mrs. Hershey:** We did this really dumb thing. We recorded over-- he would send me a tape and I would record over it.

**Tennenbaum:** That's a shame, but there is no way you guys could have--

**Mrs. Hershey:** When you are at that age you don't think about, "Oh in fifty years I'd love to have this."

**Mr. Hershey:** I have a picture of me with my microphone recording one of my things.

**Tennenbaum:** So that was how you guys communicated rather than writing letters?

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh, we wrote letters too.

**Mrs. Hershey:** A few, but not much.

**Mr. Hershey:** A few letters, but most of that Judy sent me a Christmas tree-- packed up a Christmas tree. It got lost somehow. Sent me a bottle of sparkling wine-- but it wasn't alcohol wine, for our first anniversary. I have a picture of that and a big old candle. Some of my mother's pictures are in my photos I got.

**Mrs. Hershey:** There wasn't a lot of communication. I mean, obviously there is no Skype.

**Mr. Hershey:** Right. There was no Skype, no internet, no nothing. Guys over in Afghanistan, they can be on Skype and whatever talking to family. We couldn't do that.

**Tennenbaum:** Yeah.



**Mr. Hershey:** There was something called MARS.<sup>16</sup> I think we attempted it once and it didn't really work out, using a short wave. You would have to say, "I love you, over." "How are things going? Over." And then the other person had to say "over" too between the radio communications.

**Tennenbaum:** Just another quick aside. How did your parents feel about you serving?

**Mr. Hershey:** They were fine.

**Tennenbaum:** Was your mother worried?

**Mr. Hershey:** Probably was. What do you think? [To Mrs. Hershey]

**Mrs. Hershey:** I don't think it was like today. First of all the deployments were not over and over and over again.

**Tennenbaum:** It was just the one, right?

**Mr. Hershey:** Maybe two.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Yeah just one or maybe two. I don't think she was worried too much.

**Tennenbaum:** I guess she was used to it with your father having been in the service already?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, a little bit. They had an idea of what to expect. And that was part of my duty. That's what I was there for.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Yeah, it was hard to tell about his father because he was very quiet.

**Mr. Hershey:** My dad was extremely quiet.

**Tennenbaum:** So you didn't hear a lot about his thoughts on the matter?

**Mr. Hershey:** Nope. He kept a lot of stuff to himself.

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<sup>16</sup> MARS- Military Auxiliary Radio System. This was a program run by the Department of Defense to have radios on standby for global communications.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay, so moving on towards the end of the war, you talked about other people as the days were winding down trying to keep safe, and going home.

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, that was normal for anybody.

**Tennenbaum:** Emotionally for you, how was that process? As you were getting closer what was your thought process like?

**Mr. Hershey:** Eh, okay. Just to get home and take care of the guys that were still there, because you had friends there. You have guys there for a short period of time. And among that whole thing is-- one of those things you were able to do is go on a rest and recuperation trip, which is called R&R. If you were married you could go to Hawaii, you couldn't go back to the states. You could go to Hawaii, and so I flew out to Hawaii about nine months in.

**Tennenbaum:** Nine months into your tour?

**Mr. Hershey:** Nine months into the tour. Usually it is six months, but it was nine months. It was February of 1970, I think about that time. We went to Hawaii and Judy met me out there and we had our second honeymoon out there. And we stayed in a cabin at Bellows Air Force Station. While I was there, there was a big attack in our area. [Referring to back in Vietnam]. In fact you should write this down, check out Fire Support Base Illingworth. There have been books written on it too and everything else. There were about 23 guys killed. 'Cause one of the things we learned later that the military was doing was they put these fire support bases out there as a lure for the North Vietnamese to attack.

**Tennenbaum:** To try to provoke them to come out?

**Mr. Hershey:** Uh huh. And we would slaughter them, but they would kill a bunch of us, too.

**Tennenbaum:** And so this was while you were in Hawaii that you found out?

**Mr. Hershey:** While I was in Hawaii, yeah, that happened. Had different types of attacks. To another part of my battalion-- it didn't hit us, we had some rockets come in to where our battery was.

**Tennenbaum:** So you guys were mostly in the clear from that? You weren't in the firing bases for the most part?

**Mr. Hershey:** We were there, yeah. They just didn't attack us.

**Tennenbaum:** Would you say that a lot of the war was just getting lucky and being in the right place?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, part of it. It's a part of life too.

**Tennenbaum:** I would say so.

**Mr. Hershey:** Who said about forks in the road? Yogi Berra said if you come to a fork in the road, he said "take it", but you gotta make those decisions in life. You will be making decisions when you graduate. What am I going to be doing with the rest of my life? That kind of thing.

**Tennenbaum:** Yeah.

**Mr. Hershey:** Am I going to get a wife or something like that? I chose well, she chose well too I guess. [Refers to Mrs. Hershey]. Anyway, I chose well.

**All:**[Laugh].

**Tennenbaum:** Would you say your time in Hawaii was the best part of your deployment?

**Mr. Hershey:** Eh, that was okay. Probably was. It was fun, we have pictures of it.

**Mrs. Hershey:**Our car broke down three times.

**Mr. Hershey:** Our car broke down three times, we had a Datsun.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Japanese car manufacturer now known as Nissan. Once a Nissan was exported out of Japan it was called a Datsun.

**Tennenbaum:** A Datsun. I'm sure my grandfather would know, he is a big car guy.

**Mr. Hershey:** It is Nissan. That is what they used to call Nissan. Damn thing broke down.

**Tennenbaum:** And just for the sake of the interview, if Hawaii was considered one of the better parts of your deployment, would you be able to describe one of the worst parts of your deployment? Is there anything that sticks out to you?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, maybe Fire Support Base Fort Defiance. We split the battery up and I got two 8 inch howitzers, self-propelled howitzers, and I was attached to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. And we went up into the jungle, I mean going through triple canopy jungle, monkeys with teeth this long [shows approximate size with hands], bamboo vipers all over the place, nasty stuff.

**Tennenbaum:** Traps and stuff? Anything like that?

**Mr. Hershey:** No, they were going cross country. They were just making their own traps too, and eventually the place where we were at was attacked, but we had left there. But it was nasty, it was at Fire Support Base Fort Defiance, that's the name of it.

**Tennenbaum:** Did you ever see any Vietnamese soldiers at any point? Whether alive or dead.

**Mr. Hershey:** Dead ones.

**Tennenbaum:** Dead ones. I guess that was a common theme at the time.

**Mr. Hershey:** You know, they would sometimes-- if the Vietnamese would catch a Viet Cong, they killed him and left him in the street for a while.

**Tennenbaum:** If the Vietnamese would catch a Viet Cong? What do you mean by that?

**Mr. Hershey:** I mean after they killed him they'd leave his body in the street for a while.

**Tennenbaum:** I'm sorry, I don't fully understand.

**Mr. Hershey:** They would leave the body-- they would would shoot you and put you in the street.

**Tennenbaum:** I get that part.

**Mrs. Hershey:**He means Vietnamese versus Viet Cong.

**Mr. Hershey:** The South Vietnamese.

**Tennenbaum:** The South Vietnamese, okay I understand now, my apologies.

**Mr. Hershey:** The South Vietnamese, when they catch enemies, unless they shot the guy they would leave the body out in the middle of the street kind of as a warning to others.

**Tennenbaum:** Did you have a lot of interactions with the South Vietnamese?

**Mr. Hershey:** No, I didn't. Other people did, in my case I didn't.

**Mrs. Hershey:**I am going to ask a question. Talk about life in the battery, or in the fire support base.

**Mr. Hershey:** Well, we got up in the morning and we would have usually a hot breakfast maybe, and lunch time would be C-rations. We might have something at dinner. It was very boring. We usually fired all night, we'd fire H&I, firing means shooting the guns. H&I is harassment and interdiction fire. Somebody at higher headquarters would plot places out in the jungle and we'd shoot out there thinking that the bad guys might be there. We didn't know that. Sometimes we'd have hot fire mission where we were firing in support of an attack or something like that. We were very busy everyday. Then if you fired this ammunition you had to bring it in-- you had to hump it out.<sup>18</sup> The 8 inch [projectile] weighed 200 pounds a piece, the 175 weighed about 147

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<sup>18</sup> "Humping" is a US Army slang word in reference to long military marches.

pounds, and then we'd have the propellant which is in sealed canisters. So we had to move all this stuff out, it was just a lot of hard work.

**Tennenbaum:** So you weren't just firing the guns? You were doing other stuff too like--

**Mr. Hershey:** Doing the logistics and moving stuff around. And then we would have to move the logistics in, put fire in, we'd have guys out on guard duty and everything. We had to check on the guards to make sure they weren't asleep. People would do that, they would go to sleep.

**Tennenbaum:** Are we missing anything? I don't want to leave anything out.

**Mr. Hershey:** I don't think so. [To Mrs. Hershey] What do you think honey?

**Tennenbaum:** Actually, I have a question. How did your sister feel about your service? Was she just the same as your parents?

**Mr. Hershey:** Same as my parents probably.

**Tennenbaum:** So this wasn't a spoken thing? You didn't talk to your sister about being deployed?

**Mr. Hershey:** Not really, no. She was glad I was back. When I came back I showed all my pictures to everybody. Of course everyone was very nice and let me show them all my slides.

**Mrs. Hershey:** 700 slides.

**Mr. Hershey:** It was more than that I think, but I only found 700 of them.

**Tennenbaum:** As far as your photography hobby, when would you say you got interested in that?

**Mr. Hershey:** 1960. I got my first 35, it was a Kodak Kony 4 camera. I think I still might even have it somewhere.

**Tennenbaum:** And you bought that yourself?

**Mr. Hershey:** I got it as a present for Christmas in Alaska.

**Tennenbaum:** Here's another question. What was Christmas like in Vietnam?

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh that is interesting. Oh yeah, one of our fire bases we were at-- Fire Support Base Elane which is outside of Cu Chi, it was Thanksgiving-- we had turkeys and everything. The military makes a big deal out of it. And then about that time we had some guys come in from the USO tour, and it was Jim "Mudcat" Grant the baseball player, Bowie Kuhn, and a guy named Joe DiMaggio.<sup>19</sup> You have probably heard of Joe DiMaggio, right?

**Tennenbaum:** Yes, of course.

**Mr. Hershey:** And he was going there and talking to the troops and everything so we got our pictures taken with him. That was kind of neat. Christmas, lets see, I was at Fire Support Base Devon at Christmas and there is a picture of me eating. I don't have my shirt on, I have my hat on, I have a can of beer in one hand and I'm eating a turkey leg on the other.

**Tennenbaum:** So Christmas was good in Vietnam?

**Mr. Hershey:** Christmas was okay. It was okay. It was just another day. Vietnam was seven days a week, 365 days a year. You didn't get off for the weekends. You didn't get to go home if you wanted anything. It was 24/7.

**Tennenbaum:** And as far as your comrades and the other soldiers you had around you, did you see a lot of African-American troops while you were deployed?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, we had a couple of guys in the unit. No officers, but we had a couple of NCOs-- non commissioned officers who were African-American. In fact, you will see them in some of the pictures I shot.

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<sup>19</sup> Commissioner of the MLB during the time of Mr. Hershey's deployment.

**Tennenbaum:** And forgive my lack of knowledge, but were you guys integrated at that point? That was in the 50s?

**Mr. Hershey:** The guy who integrated us was Harry Truman in the early 40s. In fact we went to a movie last night; we went to see Overlord yesterday.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh really? I have not seen that one yet.

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, I'm a big movie guy. And they have a black guy in the unit and this is 1944. That was not the case. They had not integrated the forces, African-Americans were focusing on logistics and driving trucks and stuff like that.

**Tennenbaum:** Was there anyone you knew that had a problem with African-American troops?

**Mr. Hershey:** No. When you were in a foxhole all the blood was red. It's your buddies, you know?

**Tennenbaum:** Yeah, certainly.

**Mr. Hershey:** And later on I had bosses who were African-American. I was a Captain in Fort Hood and my boss was a Lieutenant-Colonel. Eventually he made general.

**Tennenbaum:** And a similar question, what was your interaction with women who were in the service? Nurses and stuff like that, did you see many women?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, they had Donut Dollies there.

**Tennenbaum:** Would you mind explaining what that is?

**Mr. Hershey:** Donut Dolly was a Red Cross girl and they would come and be nice to us. Some people thought they were prostitutes, that they would sell themselves. The guys were very eager.

**Mrs. Hershey:** That wasn't true, was it?



**Mr. Hershey:** I don't know if it was true or not, but it was widely thought. [Laughs]. Because you have all of these horny 19 and 20 year olds. I was 23 when I went, I was the old guy. How old are you right now?

**Tennenbaum:** Twenty.

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh my god, you would be one of the old guys too. They had 17 and 18 year olds.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh gosh.

**Mr. Hershey:** Think of a guy your age over there doing that stuff, huh? [Laughs].

**Tennenbaum:** I can't imagine, honestly.

**Mr. Hershey:** You could. Eventually you would imagine. [Laughs] You'd figure it out. You know, that's who did it, the young guys did it.

**Mrs. Hershey:** And all of the women were nurses, right?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, the women were nurses. They didn't have women in army units until the mid 70s.

**Tennenbaum:** So that wasn't something you saw very much of?

**Mr. Hershey:** No, and the nurses stayed in the compounds where they should be, Protected and everything else too.

**Tennenbaum:** And just to get more of an all around picture, did you see many civilians? Vietnamese civilians? Did you ever go to one of the major cities?

**Mr. Hershey:** No, not really. I saw them along the road or at little villages. I saw them there too.

**Tennenbaum:** So just getting out of the way of the fighting?

**Mr. Hershey:** They might have been VC too, who knows?

**Tennenbaum:** Was that a concern?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, we had hootch-maids. Hootch was a word for the hut where you lived. And they polished boots and stuff like that, and we figured that they were supplying intel to the VC.

**Tennenbaum:** Did that worry you?

**Mr. Hershey:** No, it was a fact of life.

**Tennenbaum:** So it seems like a theme when you were in Vietnam was-- I don't want to say constant danger, but it was the constant realization that this was your situation.

**Mr. Hershey:** That's where you were. You just were careful where you were-- you had situational awareness, and if something bad happened you just hoped it didn't happen to you. You'd say, "Sin loi."

**Tennenbaum:** What does that mean?

**Mr. Hershey:** "Too bad" in Vietnamese. You'd also say "Sin loi m\*\*\*\*\*r."

**All:**[Laugh].

**Mr. Hershey:** That's what they said.

**Tennenbaum:** I get to transcribe this.

**All:**[Laugh].

**Mr. Hershey:** You can put some asterisks in there too.

**Tennenbaum:** I just might have to.

**Mr. Hershey:** But that is what the guys would say!

**Tennenbaum:** No no, this is what we want. We want to hear exactly what you would say.

**Mr. Hershey:** Eventually if you saw a lot of it you'd become inured to what is going on-- if you saw too much of it. Some of the guys did probably. I didn't.

**Tennenbaum:** What do you mean by that?

**Mr. Hershey:** You were used to bad things happening. You used to assume bad things were gonna happen.

**Tennenbaum:** But you said you weren't of that thought-- You just tried to stay positive.

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah. I wanted to get back.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Can I add something about the way I was feeling? This may sound kind of weird.

**Tennenbaum:** Absolutely! Please do.

**Mrs. Hershey:** Okay, we had been married seven months so we really didn't have a life together yet. But my concern was not so much that he would die, but that he would come back maimed, and I would have to spend the rest of my life with someone in a wheelchair.

**Tennenbaum:** So you had major concerns?

**Mrs. Hershey:** That was my big concern, aside from going to beat up the protesters I had to walk through when I went to work everyday. That was in [Washington] D.C.

**Tennenbaum:** What were your feelings towards those protesters?

**Mrs. Hershey:** I think they didn't understand, but I was angry. They're young kids mostly, and I don't think they knew what they were doing except that they didn't want to go fight.

**Tennenbaum:** And how into politics were you guys? Was that something you cared about? Or was it just about doing your duty and going home to your wife?

**Mrs. Hershey:** Yeah, I'd say that.

**Mr. Hershey:** The military is apolitical.

**Tennenbaum:** Would you mind explaining why that is important?

**Mr. Hershey:** You're not supposed to be involved in politics. You are supposed to be-- that's a civilian concern.

**Tennenbaum:** So that was a rule in the military?

**Mr. Hershey:** It's a rule.

**Mrs. Hershey:** You can't openly--

**Mr. Hershey:** You can't openly do it.

**Tennenbaum:** And when you were in Vietnam how did you and your buddies feel about the protesters back home?

**Mr. Hershey:** They're a bunch of pieces of shit.

**Tennenbaum:** Would you mind explaining a little more why you felt that way?

**Mr. Hershey:** Because we were getting shot at over here and those bastards over there were stabbing us in the back, literally. I have no use for them. I have no use for guys like [John] Kerry, I have no use for Bill Clinton. That little weasel became President of the United States.

**Tennenbaum:** But when you were in Vietnam politics were aside?

**Mr. Hershey:** Yeah, we did our thing and then got out of there.

**Tennenbaum:** What was coming home from Vietnam like?

**Mr. Hershey:** So I come home from Vietnam, we--

**Mrs. Hershey:** Alone, basically.

**Mr. Hershey:** Alone. Get on the airplane. As soon as the wheels leave the ground everyone cheers. I still remember that. Then I picked something up in-- we went from Saigon to Narita, Japan. And from Narita, Japan, we went to Hawaii. Then from Hawaii to San Francisco, and then from San Francisco to Dallas. And finally from Dallas to D.C. And I picked something up, I got sick. So, now this is interesting. I had a war souvenir which I still have, which is an SKS rifle.

**Tennenbaum:** Oh wow.

**Mr. Hershey:** I brought it on the airplane with me. [Laughs]. It was in the luggage. So I picked up my rifle and luggage and I saw Judy. I gave her a big kiss and I said, “Where is the bathroom?” [Laughs]. I had diarrhea, straight to the bathroom. And you thought I was sick. [To Mrs. Hershey].

**Mrs. Hershey:** I don’t know.

**Mr. Hershey:** And I had about thirty days leave so eventually I went to the 6th Armored Cav Regiment in Fort Meade, Maryland.

**Tennenbaum:** So after the war you stayed in the military?

**Mr. Hershey:** Oh yeah. Actually I stayed in it for 26 years, 1 month, 11 days.

**Tennenbaum:** Okay, well as far as the interview itself goes I am going to end it here. I know you guys want to get to Clark Field for homecoming and I don’t want to keep you. Thank you both so much for agreeing to do this, it has been a pleasure. We can even talk about the other stuff you guys wanted to tell me.

**Mr. Hershey:** It was our pleasure.

## Reflection

This is not the first time I have conducted an oral history, though it was certainly the most extensive and entertaining interview I have ever conducted. The first time I conducted an interview was in middle school. My brothers and myself were doing a holocaust survivor oral history project for the local holocaust museum on Long Island. We met with several men who had survived the Holocaust and happened to live on Long Island. Hearing about their experiences was an eye opener. It is one thing to hear about a story in a book or on a website, but to hear it from the horse's mouth is a different matter entirely. As for the interview I conducted with Rick and Judy Hershey, I would say it went rather well. At times it was difficult to keep the conversation on track, and I also had some problems getting Mr. Hershey to talk about his emotions while he was on his tour of duty in Vietnam. Though he was happy to talk about his emotions towards the protesters back home, the same could not be said for his own emotions when was serving in active combat. Of course this did not mean my interview went badly. Mr. Hershey is a fascinating individual with a great sense of humor. Mrs. Hershey is even funnier than her husband, and at times she would help steer the interview in the right direction with a well placed question to her husband. Even though it was a surprise to see Mrs. Hershey at the Alumni House for my interview, it turned out to be a great addition to have her there. I was very pleased with how things turned out, and even though my total interview time came up short, I believe that the content of the interview more than makes up for this issue.

The first project that comes to mind when I think about my interview with Mr. Hershey is my Hidden in Plain Sight project. History is truly hidden everywhere, and all you have to do in order to find it is look. The Memorial Gateway that I wrote about has not changed from the time

Mr. Hershey was my age all the way up to today. The students and faculty seem to change far more often than the campus itself, which makes the campus feel all the more rich with history. In some ways the interview I completed with Mr and Mrs Hershey reminded me that every student who comes on this campus creates special memories. The buildings may remain the same, but they are probably special to thousands of Gettysburg alums who all love something different about campus.

I was also reminded of the MAUS series of graphic novels. Art Spiegelman had a tough time interviewing his father, who was often distracted with things going on in the present day. Mr. Hershey wanted to tell me about many of his other experiences that were unrelated to the Vietnam War, and I had to do my best to kindly tell him that I could only discuss these topics after the interview. Some of the off topic statements made it into the transcript, but that is either because they were interesting or because they were very brief and in the end connected to the Vietnam War. Though I do not have the same relationship with the Hershey's as Art had with his father, I still felt close to them during the interview. I started to feel less like a student interviewing a Vietnam War veteran and his wife. Instead, I felt like a student interviewing two students from my school that graduated many decades ago. Of course that is indeed true, but the Gettysburg College spirit brought us closer together. Being privileged enough to be let into the inner thoughts of a man who probably shared few of his stories with anyone other than his own family was quite amazing. Although I am not working on a graphic novel based on the experiences of Mr. Hershey, there is definitely enough information to do so.

Part of the problem I faced with having two people to interview was how to balance the time I spoke to each of them. Of course I had only prepared questions for Mr. Hershey since I

did not know his wife would be with him. That is why Mrs. Hershey did not get a huge amount of speaking time. However, she did remind her husband several times of important stories or events, and proved to be more of an interviewer than an interviewee. As the interview wore on and I learned more about the Hershey's, I was eventually able to ask Mrs. Hershey a few questions about her experiences during Vietnam and how she stayed in touch with her husband. Overall Mrs. Hershey was not expected to be at the interview but proved to be an asset nonetheless.

There were definitely some things I could have done better to improve the interview. For one I wish I had more time to interview the Hershey's, or at least time to hear more of what they had to say. I left the interview without any more questions, but still feeling like there was more I could have asked. I will not make the same mistake again, and I will bring many more questions to my next interview. I will also say that it can be intimidating to interview an accomplished man sitting in his full Army uniform. It felt strange to set the pace of the interview because I did not want to be disrespectful. I felt quite bad when I had to cut off Mr. Hershey when he would try to tell me about an unrelated story. Of course I told him that I wanted to hear about it later, but I still felt bad for needing to do that, even though I believe he understood.



