

Interview with Lloyd McCarney

December 15, 1989

Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection

St. Cloud State University Archives

Interviewed by David Overy

Overy ([00:00:03](#)):

Mr. McCarney, when and where were you born?

McCarney ([00:00:06](#)):

Well, it's Meeker County, Manannah Township, about 40 miles southwest of St. Cloud.

Overy ([00:00:14](#)):

What year?

McCarney ([00:00:15](#)):

1916.

Overy ([00:00:15](#)):

1916.

McCarney ([00:00:16](#)):

March, March 21st.

Overy ([00:00:18](#)):

What were you doing when the war broke out?

McCarney ([00:00:21](#)):

I was on my way from Minneapolis to visit my folks in Litchfield by car and, of course, naturally I knew that I would be in it with all the rest of them and I really wanted to go, but it was two

years later before the draft caught up with me. In the meantime, everything I tried to enlist in, my left eye was too weak to pass the examination, so I had to wait for the draft.

Overy ([00:00:52](#)):

I see. What were you occupied in?

McCarney ([00:00:56](#)):

I was in recreation, in the dental clinic and ward attendant at the VA Hospital in St. Cloud from 1940 to 1942. Prior to that, I taught school for four years in Stearns County.

Overy ([00:01:09](#)):

I see. You were inducted at Fort Snelling. Right?

McCarney ([00:01:12](#)):

Right.

Overy ([00:01:12](#)):

Then where did you go?

McCarney ([00:01:14](#)):

I stayed there for two months in X-ray. There were three stations in the X-ray machine. Every 15 minutes you'd change, and then you had a 15 minute break. I always went to the reading room with the major and got to learn X-rays pretty good.

Overy ([00:01:33](#)):

You were engaged both in taking X-rays and examining them?

McCarney ([00:01:36](#)):

Yes. Unofficially examining-

Overy ([00:01:36](#)):

Unofficially.

McCarney ([00:01:39](#)):

--just with the Major. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Overy ([00:01:43](#)):

When did you get your first unit assignment?

McCarney ([00:01:45](#)):

In Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, I was sent from Camp Grant where I took basic in medics and then sent to Fort Benjamin Harris in Indiana with 12th General Hospital, which had already formed a unit and getting ready to ship overseas as an X-ray technician.

Overy ([00:02:03](#)):

What kind of training did you have at Camp Grant?

McCarney ([00:02:06](#)):

Well, it was regular basic training except without arms, mostly in the medical field, but you also learned the ground rules of to dive for cover and stay low in case that you did have to carry arms.

Overy ([00:02:22](#)):

You had no weapons training at all.

McCarney ([00:02:24](#)):

No.

Overy ([00:02:29](#)):

Then, you went from Fort Benjamin Harrison overseas.

McCarney ([00:02:33](#)):

To Camp Kilmer, New Jersey for over two weeks waiting for-- I don't know whether it was assignment or ship or what, so we were more or less quarantined, but we did get passes on occasion. I went to New York City twice in the blackout.

Overy ([00:02:47](#)):

I see. Describe the trip over from New Jersey to North Africa.

McCarney ([00:02:53](#)):

Well, the second day out, we hit a storm, and if you wanted to go to the head, so to speak, there was no room. I never did get seasick, but I stayed on deck as long as I could until they forced me to go below because that's where you got a lot of the stench. I never did get seasick. I was too scared.

Overy ([00:03:15](#)):

Why do you say that? [crosstalk 00:03:17]

McCarney ([00:03:16](#)):

Well, the waves, you see the convoy one minute and the next minute you wouldn't see any of it, so it was kind of scary. I thought we'd never make it to-- We thought we were going to Africa, and that's where we went.

Overy ([00:03:30](#)):

Was it rough pretty much all the way over?

McCarney ([00:03:32](#)):

No. No. Just while that storm lasted, two days out from camp, well, Hoboken, New Jersey.

Overy ([00:03:43](#)):

Was there anything to do on the way over?

McCarney ([00:03:45](#)):

Not really. You lined up to eat and it took you so long to get there you only got two meals a day, and by the time you ate, you started lining up again. That was just about it to get there.

Overy ([00:03:57](#)):

It sounds like pretty cramped quarters, too.

McCarney ([00:03:59](#)):

Well, yes, it was. It was just a converted boat of some kind.

Overy ([00:04:03](#)):

You landed, well, I'd say that looks like Oran or near Oran.

McCarney ([00:04:12](#)):

Yeah. Side harbor.

Overy ([00:04:13](#)):

On Christmas Day 1942?

McCarney ([00:04:15](#)):

No. The day after. The day after Christmas.

Overy ([00:04:20](#)):

I see. Then, you spent most of the year in generally that same area.

McCarney ([00:04:27](#)):

Right, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Overy ([00:04:28](#)):

With the 12th--

McCarney ([00:04:29](#)):

General.

Overy ([00:04:30](#)):

--General Hospital. Describe your duties there at the hospital.

McCarney ([00:04:34](#)):

Well, I never did get into X-ray, so when I found about an opening in physical therapy, I went and talked to the ladies in charge of it. They were civilians then, three physical therapists, and I got in as their helper in there. They taught me everything about it, so there wasn't really anything that I couldn't do that they did. I got real good training and they were good bosses. They were commissioned shortly after the hospital opened.

Overy ([00:05:02](#)):

As nurses?

McCarney ([00:05:02](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Overy ([00:05:03](#)):

Nurse corps.

McCarney ([00:05:03](#)):

One of the head one was first lieutenant and two second lieutenants. We had a good rapport. I still write to two of them because they're alive and they write to me.

Overy ([00:05:16](#)):

Did you have any particular feelings about being under the command of women?

McCarney ([00:05:21](#)):

No, because working in the hospital, working with nurses, I had no qualms about it. Not at all.

Overy ([00:05:30](#)):

What kinds of things did physical therapy involve? What kinds of specific things were you doing?

McCarney ([00:05:36](#)):

Well, actually, heat, massage and exercise, and that consisted of both wet heat and dry heat, ultraviolet treatments, exercise, well, whatever part of the body needed it and walking, of course, was a good one, and massage, well, whatever part. I got a lot of back and leg massages, but while I was getting the training in that, the head therapist would watch me without the patient knowing it and any mistakes I made, she'd call me in the back room. Never criticized me or correct me in front of patients. That spoke for a good teacher, which I thought I was when I was teaching school, so it worked out good.

Overy ([00:06:21](#)):

What kinds of injuries were you dealing with?

McCarney ([00:06:23](#)):

Well, you had injuries from falls, from jumping off trucks, also a lot of wounds and after the wounds, they were hospitalized and bedridden for so long, you had to really get them back into some kind of physical shape, but we had a lot of back cases in Africa. Some of them you'd get one side of the back worked out pretty good, and then the other would go into spasms. You just have to work whether it was an arm, a leg, a back, even hands.

Overy ([00:06:58](#)):

You were talking in the case of wounds, you're talking about the necessity of physical therapy to get those limbs functioning again, was that-

McCarney ([00:07:08](#)):

Yes. The wound itself was not our care because they couldn't come to the clinic until that was relatively healed, but if they've been bedridden for quite a while, they had to get muscle tone back and it's amazing how fast it disappears, even in youth.

Overy ([00:07:25](#)):

You'd begin, say, with someone who'd been in bed for a long time. What would you start doing?

McCarney ([00:07:32](#)):

Well, first the massage, and at that time, we didn't have any weights, we didn't have any bicycles, stationary bicycles, but you'd get them to work either passive exercise while sitting on a chair, a highchair or table and raising their leg first without any holding against them, which you hold pressure with your arm. We're speaking of legs now. The same way with arms. Have them squeeze something to get the hands working again, raising light weights, exercising the arms like they have in some of the places now, these aerobic-- Not really aerobics, but any of these places where people go for that exercise.

Overy ([00:08:21](#)):

When you were treating these men, were there many instances of these fellows being psychologically damaged, too?

McCarney ([00:08:31](#)):

Yes, but I never got to that ward except to give one treatment where you used what they call galvanic faradic stimulus to see if the muscles were working and if that particular patient, a GI, was faking or if the muscles weren't working. You use certain points, like for a leg or an arm, you put the stimulus point against the skin and if the muscle that you're trying to get to work, works, it will bring your arm up towards your face or you put it on the leg, it will bring your foot up, so you find out then that the muscle does work rather than it's completely damaged and the patient isn't faking.

Overy ([00:09:21](#)):

I see. I see.

McCarney ([00:09:22](#)):

We also used that on one fellow for his face. His whole face was paralyzed, and he was in our clinic in Africa for quite a few months. He was from Florida, and when he left there was only one little muscle most people wouldn't know, right between the lower lip and the chin that didn't function, so it was practically a complete recovery.

Overy ([00:09:45](#)):

How in the world could you get him to exercise his face? Was this by massage or--

McCarney ([00:09:49](#)):

Well, no. This was done with the stimulus, galvanic or faradic current.

Overy ([00:09:53](#)):

I see.

McCarney ([00:09:54](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Then, you'd have him squint and move his lips and scowl and grin and all that stuff.

Overy ([00:10:03](#)):

Did the guys ever talk to you about things when you were massaging them or supervising their therapy?

McCarney ([00:10:12](#)):

Oh, yes, yes. Usually. The strange thing about it was most everyone, sometimes they'd forget, they'd thank you when you go through, especially giving them massage because it naturally makes you feel good.

Overy ([00:10:24](#)):

Sure.

McCarney (00:10:24):

Yeah.

Overy (00:10:29):

What were conditions in the hospital like? Were they pretty up to date?

McCarney (00:10:34):

Yes.

Overy (00:10:35):

A good facility?

McCarney (00:10:37):

Yes. Even the equipment we had in physical therapy over there, I was amazed when I came back. We had better equipment over there than they had here. Of course, it all went to the military, and I'd go to wards also with what was called a heat cradle, similar to a loose-leaf notebook. It [inaudible 00:10:57] shut, but then you opened it out and you had light bulbs where you have the fillers for a loose leaf notebook. You put that over the patient's leg or a bigger one for over the back and gave it heat for a certain length of time. Then massaged it. Unknown to me, a boy that I served on the altar with when we were kids was wounded in the invasion of Africa, who was in our hospital, and he recognized me when I went by. I used to go and visit him. I was going by to give a heat treatment to the back of one of the officers that had injured his back and I don't know. It was the Battle of Kasserine or someplace up there.

Overy (00:11:43):

Was it sometimes difficult to motivate these people? I mean, were they so discouraged that it was very difficult to get them to work and to-

McCarney ([00:11:51](#)):

Not really. No. A lot of them hated to go back, but then they wanted to see their outfit again. They didn't like going back to begin with, but as soon as they were ready to go, they wanted to go. There were rare occasions where they didn't want to. Of course, there were occasions where some never wanted to go in active duty anyway.

Overy ([00:12:12](#)):

Did you have any people who were obviously faking?

McCarney ([00:12:23](#)):

Well, I don't know what the consensus was on the one where I took the galvanic faradic machine to the psych ward. I don't know what ever happened to that. I know we gave him the test and I knew how to run the machine and the major in charge of the psych ward was there with me. I never knew what his findings ended up.

Overy ([00:12:45](#)):

Did you ever have any really hopeless cases that the people just weren't going to get better?

McCarney ([00:12:50](#)):

Well, they probably did on the ward and we-- Well, they did, but we never got to see them because all the patients were ambulatory. We didn't have any elevators.

Overy ([00:13:03](#)):

I see. You had what? What was your duty day like for example in the hospital? Did you work different shifts, or did you pretty much work the same periods all the time?

McCarney ([00:13:16](#)):

No. It was Monday through Saturday, never worked on Sunday, and was all day work, so you went to work at-- I imagine it was about 8:00 to 5:00 and time off for lunch, so it was almost

what you would call military banking hours, but there were days when things got pretty tough. If something like the furnace wouldn't work and you couldn't get hot whirlpools filled for hot water treatments, well, then you had all your other equipment tied up and it kind of bound things up. Basically, it was about as good of duties you could have and be in the military and not be in combat.

Overy ([00:14:04](#)):

It sounds like you were very satisfied--

McCarney ([00:14:08](#)):

Yes. I was.

Overy ([00:14:08](#)):

--yourself in that kind of work.

McCarney ([00:14:10](#)):

I thought, well this is just temporary when the war's over, hopefully. We had ran into bombs, both in Africa and Italy, but we didn't expect to be killed that way because it was always a non-military zone. Red Cross flying all the time.

Overy ([00:14:28](#)):

I wouldn't imagine there was much in the way of standard military discipline in the hospital. Is there, I mean, the spit and polish on the yes sir and no sir and the kinds of thing you might expect in--

McCarney ([00:14:41](#)):

Well, when an officer came through, whether they were on inspection or just came through to do some checking, you had regular inspections and you had to keep the place clean. You had to be neat, so in reality, you did follow--

Overy ([00:14:59](#)):

Military [crosstalk 00:15:00]

McCarney ([00:15:00](#)):

--basic, mm-hmm (affirmative), rules and regulations, but during the time you were on duty, you can't stop your work to salute someone.

Overy ([00:15:12](#)):

It doesn't sound that there was a really strict kind of military atmosphere, was there, among the-- Say the officers versus the enlisted men in this kind of thing that--

McCarney ([00:15:25](#)):

Well, you couldn't associate with the officers and when we would-- Like, when we closed up in Africa, we had to wait to be shipped to Italy. Then, I had to stand Reveille and Retreat, even go on marches, so we had the military right down to the same as in basic training while we were waiting to be shipped.

Overy ([00:15:52](#)):

I see.

McCarney ([00:15:52](#)):

Once we got everything packed up.

Overy ([00:15:54](#)):

Coming from central Minnesota and probably not traveling much beyond this area when you were young, what was it like to be in Arab country?

McCarney ([00:16:06](#)):

Well, you kind of took them as they were because having Sunday's off, I would hitchhike, and I had a camera and the whole Brownie box camera, I wanted to take pictures because I was

interested in wherever I went. Having taught school and liking history, I wanted to get as much information as I could. We got to know quite a few of them, especially those right around [inaudible 00:16:33] Turk. They got to know us because we were there for so long. Naturally, they begged a lot, but you expected that, especially cigarettes or candy bar and candies. Children especially for candy.

Overy (00:16:50):

Did you find any hostility toward you there?

McCarney (00:16:53):

No. Not really. No. They actually, they were glad to see us wherever we went. I don't know if that's-- Probably not the same if you're in the front lines. That, I don't know.

Overy (00:17:08):

Did you find it a strange place to be?

McCarney (00:17:10):

Africa was, yes. Their habits are so much different and having been born and raised on a farm, to see the way that they work, and I have pictures of it, where they have one little animal pulling a single plow and the clothing that they wear and the women, of course, all having their face covered, just one eye peeking out. Yet, the rags that they wore when they were up in the mountains gathering brush to heat up the-- For the fire in their-- You'd almost call them tents, but they're little buildings, so their culture was naturally different. I wouldn't want to go back there, not to Africa.

Overy (00:17:55):

What were your general impressions then, kind of poverty?

McCarney ([00:17:58](#)):

Yes, yes. I assume that there were a lot of rich Arabs who were in Oran, Algeria, and where we had our hospital was a resort town, like all the rich had nice villas there, and it looked like two classes, the rich and the poor, there's no in between.

Overy ([00:18:21](#)):

Did you make any friendships really among the Arabs in the area?

McCarney ([00:18:23](#)):

No. No, not really. Just a French family at a pumping station where we checked the water, another fellow and I worked nights, and then they had two in the daytime. We'd have to take a sample every hour and we were on duty for 12 hours. We'd split to six hours. Each one would go through the Arab huts, as we call them, and to the tank and drop a vial down, get a sample of water, and then, each day we'd-- We were working nights, we'd take it in, send it to the lab, so there was no poisoned water, which--

Overy ([00:18:57](#)):

What were you concerned with? Somebody would poison?

McCarney ([00:18:58](#)):

Yes. Yes. It was a precaution.

Overy ([00:19:03](#)):

Was this the water simply serving the hospital? Is it--

McCarney ([00:19:06](#)):

Well, the whole city. The Arabs and the civilian population and the hospital personnel, too.

Overy ([00:19:13](#)):

Was it treated water?

McCarney ([00:19:14](#)):

Yes, mm-hmm (affirmative). They checked the [chlorine 00:19:17] every day and checked for anything else.

Overy ([00:19:24](#)):

I see. Not much contact then with the people and such.

McCarney ([00:19:27](#)):

No. No. Once in a while on a Sunday, well, every Sunday somebody from our outfit went to a town. I can't even remember the name, I have it somewhere in my notes, about 10 kilometers away, we always hitchhiked or if a truck come by, give us a ride. We'd stop at this one place and have them kill a chicken. We'd go to this wine joint and drink wine. Then, come back and they'd have the chicken all cooked for us. Paid very little for it, but it was a lot of money to them.

Overy ([00:19:55](#)):

Sure.

McCarney ([00:19:55](#)):

It was American occupation money we gave them, and they liked that. Francs, because that's French, it was French controlled Algeria.

Overy ([00:20:05](#)):

Is there anything that particularly irritated you about or frustrated you about being in that area, things that were unpleasant for you when you were in North Africa?

McCarney ([00:20:13](#)):

No. I guess it was because I had nice hours and could do what I wanted to. Then, I got to be trainer of the ball team and I was attached to them. I liked sports, so it was a good thing to take

up your time. You looked forward to the weekends or evenings during the week you'd play games. Then, of course, I was free after 5:00 and how chow, so I made the best of it.

Overy ([00:20:41](#)):

Which was probably fairly good except for being in a strange place [crosstalk 00:20:48]

McCarney ([00:20:48](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, but we knew we had a goal. It wasn't something like what happened years later. We were-- Our country was attacked, so to speak, and we wanted to preserve the freedoms that we had.

Overy ([00:21:04](#)):

I was noticing earlier in your narrative you said, made something, a comment about there were a couple days when you arrived, and you survived on English rations. What was that about?

McCarney ([00:21:18](#)):

Well, we didn't have the American rations there yet. Then, we were living on British rations and two meals a day it was pretty much hot tea, and, of course, I like tea, that part was all right, and biscuits and not much else in the morning. A lamb stew and then, for the other meal, you'd get stewed tomatoes. Now, I'd never eaten tomatoes in my life until I got over there, but I ate them and liked them. Then, tea again and Queen's pudding and-- So, we didn't have too much.

Overy ([00:21:54](#)):

That's pretty strange food for an American.

McCarney ([00:21:56](#)):

Yes. To a degree it was, not the tomatoes, but I never had a taste for them. Now, I-- Ever since then I like them.

Overy ([00:22:03](#)):

Did you have any contact with foreign soldiers when you were there?

McCarney ([00:22:10](#)):

Only a few British that had a radar, so to speak, station nearby. We got too close to them, and they came down and stopped us from getting any closer, but we got to know them pretty good.

Then, we had a few British patients in our hospital that came to physical therapy. Not too many.

Overy ([00:22:30](#)):

Not too many. What about enemy soldiers, did you have any of those come through your hospital?

McCarney ([00:22:30](#)):

Not in Africa.

Overy ([00:22:35](#)):

Not in Africa. Okay. We'll talk about that in few minutes. After about a year in North Africa, you left for Naples in December of '43.

McCarney ([00:22:47](#)):

Yes.

Overy ([00:22:47](#)):

Then, you pretty much spent your time there until the end of the war.

McCarney ([00:22:51](#)):

Not at Naples, no. We got to Naples, and we thought we'd be going on to Rome because they expected Rome to fall, but Rome didn't fall until June, so we were in an area called-- It was the fairgrounds. Mussolini had built this place for the World's Fair in 1939, but I guess that's when they were at war, Mussolini was at war with Ethiopia and they never did hold the fair, so it was

taken over by the medical corps of the Fifth Army, and they had station hospitals, and one general hospital, and other aspects of it, plus supplies and all that. We were just sort of bivouac there in tents. We had our own mess tent, and then I was sent out on detached service to another general hospital right in the fairgrounds area. Two of the girls from our own clinic, Billie and Helen, were also there as registered physical therapists, and I was sent there as a technician. Just the same work that I did in our own hospital. Then, when Rome fell, we went to Rome. Rome fell I think on the fourth of June and if I'm not mistaken, in my notes, the 11th we entered Rome by truck convoy up highway six.

Overy ([00:24:24](#)):

Was there any substantial difference when you were in Italy with your working conditions, your patients, your procedures, as there was when you were in North Africa?

McCarney ([00:24:37](#)):

Yes, quite a difference. We were getting patients that were wounded in Anzio back at this 21st General Hospital where I was on detached service, on the wards and then some of them would end up in PT, but they'd be flown back from the front after they were taken care of in a field hospital to 21st General or a station hospital. Then, when they were well enough, why we'd get them in physical therapy. We had more contact with fresh wounds there than we did in Africa because the front lines were quite a bit farther away.

Overy ([00:25:19](#)):

In Africa they [crosstalk 00:25:21]

McCarney ([00:25:20](#)):

In Africa than they were in Italy.

Overy ([00:25:24](#)):

What kinds of specific differences were there in the patients?

McCarney ([00:25:27](#)):

Well, there was just more of them because of the stalemate at Cassino and the severe fighting at Anzio.

Overy ([00:25:36](#)):

The nature of their injuries were different.

McCarney ([00:25:39](#)):

Yes. They were relatively new, almost within hours they'd be back in the hospital, but like I say, we didn't get them until after the wounds were healed in physical therapy. One thing I found both there and when we did get to Rome and get set up, a lot of cartilage cases. I assume that that was because of the mountainous terrain, so many knee cartilage cases.

Overy ([00:26:07](#)):

They were dislocated and torn?

McCarney ([00:26:09](#)):

Well, yes, damaged, torn, and then a lot of who got shot. Not only any part of the body, a lot of leg wounds, too.

Overy ([00:26:22](#)):

You got them about the same stage in their treatment as you would have--

McCarney ([00:26:29](#)):

Yes, but they got back into the hospital a lot faster.

Overy ([00:26:32](#)):

Did you find any significant difference in the attitude of these soldiers as they came in to you in Italy as compared to Africa?

McCarney ([00:26:43](#)):

Yes. Especially until Cassino and Anzio worked out because there was a lot of discontent about somebody wasn't doing their job or they miscalculated the opposition and so on.

Overy ([00:26:57](#)):

There was a lot more griping.

McCarney ([00:26:58](#)):

Yes, especially those from Anzio. They said they sent us in there as dead ducks, so to speak. They were outnumbered and outgunned. That was the whole place and there was no place for them to hide on the beach.

Overy ([00:27:13](#)):

Whom were they criticizing?

McCarney ([00:27:16](#)):

Well, a lot of it was aimed at the general, Mark Clark, but that was his orders to try and take it, so it'd have to come from higher. Whose fault it was, I don't know, but it was just one of those things in war, just like the Germans outguessed themselves, too, later on.

Overy ([00:27:37](#)):

They were pretty angry at their leaders as they came back [crosstalk 00:27:41]

McCarney ([00:27:40](#)):

At that time. Mm-hmm (affirmative), yes.

Overy ([00:27:44](#)):

Was it here that you began to have some contact with German soldiers?

McCarney ([00:27:52](#)):

No. No. That didn't come until Rome.

Overy ([00:27:54](#)):

Until Rome.

McCarney ([00:27:54](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Overy ([00:28:00](#)):

What was living in the fairgrounds' area and the vicinity like as far as the countryside and the people and so forth?

McCarney ([00:28:09](#)):

Well, I made the best of it because it's so historic around there. The ruins of Pompeii, Mount Vesuvius, the Isle of Capri, although I never did get the Isle of Capri, but I do have pictures of it. I climbed to the top Mount Vesuvius. I think it was in February 1944, and you went through snow at that time of the year to get to the top. I looked right down into the crater. Then, in March, it blew up and I have pictures of that, too, but I wasn't close to it. That was a site to behold because one of its eruptions in 79 AD, it buried the town of Pompeii, plus another one that they didn't know about called Herculaneum. They did excavate Pompeii and I went through all those ruins with guides. They told us all about it. Then Herculaneum, they had a story on it on TV. That's just a few years ago and I captured that on a video cassette.

Overy ([00:29:17](#)):

I saw the same one, fascinating, wasn't it?

McCarney ([00:29:19](#)):

I have it. Yes. They did start excavating that, and especially after World War II, the Italian government appropriated, I don't know, I think it was something in the millions, 80 million to excavate that and they started excavating. They got to where a town was built over it, so they can't go any farther. They found and they knew that all the people were fleeing towards the sea by the pieces, and they could tell whether it was a baby, could tell whether the individual was right handed or left handed just from the bones. That brought back a lot of history to me, especially Mount Vesuvius and the ruins of Pompeii. Italy and Naples itself, a harbor city, it's quite dirty. The fairgrounds was nice because it was all new buildings without elevators.

Overy ([00:30:11](#)):

What was Naples like?

McCarney ([00:30:13](#)):

Well, it's a big city and a harbor city. Excuse me. The people there were friendly to at least us. We don't know how they were to combat groups, but they should have been relieved to get the yoke off them from the-- Because there again, we were good to the little kids that were begging and so on, giving them candy and cigarettes and many things like that. Being in the fairgrounds, most of us found an Italian family that did laundry, and we'd take them our laundry. They were glad to get the money. Film was hard to get, though I made a connection so that I could trade a carton of cigarettes for film. It wasn't the best film, but at least I've got the pictures. They aren't the best quality, but I've got them.

Overy ([00:31:09](#)):

What was the city like? Was it pretty badly damaged?

McCarney (00:31:11):

Only around the harbor that I saw anyway. Then, there was another, besides the one I was detached service with, there was another general hospital there, and a friend of mine that went in the service about the same time I did, worked at the VA that I knew before, was there. I got to see him. One thing I should mention about Africa, too, coming out of Mass one Sunday, I met a fellow that was a good friend of mine, worked at the VA in St. Cloud and we both came back to the VA. We were actually distant cousins. We met several times in [inaudible 00:31:48] Turkey and Africa, then we met again later on in Italy after we came to-- Well, no, it was before we went to Rome because I hitchhiked up towards Cassino right at the time it was being taken over by the Americans. I got to see quite a few people that I knew before.

Overy (00:32:07):

Was it your impression that the GIs got along pretty well with the people in Naples and Italy in general?

McCarney (00:32:13):

Yes. Now, I can say that for our end of it. We didn't seem to have any problem, whether we appropriated buildings that they would like to had, they welcomed us as their savior, so to speak. Now, I assume that it was different in Germany. Although I was never there, but I would assume it would be different.

Overy (00:32:36):

You said when you went to Rome, you began to treat some German soldiers. Is that true?

McCarney (00:32:50):

Not at the beginning. This was after we'd been there probably three to four months before we got the German prisoner patients. We had an enormous building there. Our total capacity after we

got at full strength at Rome, was 3,000 patients, and then I would say pretty close to four months before we got any German prisoner patients and several floors of the large building we had were filled, so you have not only physical therapy clinic, you had the dental clinic and operating rooms. Well, just like any general hospital, then you had two other buildings for quarters. The German prisoner patients were housed in tents, but we got several of those in physical therapy and here again, here's where we ran onto so many cartilage cases. They come to physical therapy, and like I said, we didn't have the right equipment, so just by chance, I had a chance to use a bicycle when I was visiting in town, in Rome, not Rome proper, outside the old wall city, and riding an Italian bike. At that time, they had the brakes on the handlebars, unlike US bicycles. The first time, I kind of went-- Took a spill when I saw something pulling out of an alley and I squeezed it and I practically went off over my head, off over the handlebars. Anyway, I got the idea, well, gee, that would be good for these knee cases, these cartilage cases. I got the-- Talked to the girls in charge of physical therapy and they got the special service officer to appropriate about six or eight bicycles. I'd take these patients when they were capable of riding a bicycle, because most kids rode a bicycle, and I'd take them on first tours around the grounds because we had big grounds, then we'd go through the suburban areas. They started keeping data on it in the clinic and we shortened their stay, just these cartilage cases I'm talking about, from three to five days until they could return to their outfit. Again, when you see them out in this country over there and where they climb them and climb back down them, I assume mountain climbers have the same problem, that they have a lot of cartilage problems.

Overy ([00:35:29](#)):

The bicycle represented exercise without the stress of walking or running. Was that possibly it?

McCarney ([00:35:35](#)):

Yes. If you're going up a grade, well, then it's even better.

Overy ([00:35:38](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

McCarney ([00:35:39](#)):

I'd increase the distance as they got used to it and make it a little longer. I got in shape, too, that way.

Overy ([00:35:48](#)):

Well, I imagine for them, too, it was [inaudible 00:35:50] when you see all kinds of different things when they're getting the exercise.

McCarney ([00:35:54](#)):

Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative). See some of the city outside the old wall city, anyway the suburbs of Rome. I enjoyed Rome. If any place that I could ever go back and visit, it'd be there. I met an Italian girl that spoke a lot of English and between the two of us, I helped her with English, and she helped me with Italian, I got along real well.

Overy ([00:36:15](#)):

Did you have more contact with civilians in Rome than you did in Naples?

McCarney ([00:36:19](#)):

Yes. Yes. This girl and her family, they were from an educated family. The father was a professor of political science, she was a professor of some music, and her brother was a professor of music at the University of Naples before they got shoved north in Rome. She had been shot through the knee by a German-- Or shot through the knee and a German doctor operated on her.

Overy ([00:36:46](#)):

Did they talk about the German occupation much to you?

McCarney ([00:36:49](#)):

They didn't like to. They just were happy to see the Americans. Another aspect of Rome that I'll never remember-- Or never forget, is visiting St. Peter's Cathedral so many times and climbing all over that and the old Roman Forum and the Colosseum, Victor Emmanuel Monument and the balcony where Mussolini used to rant and rave. We saw thousands of people there. Well, I've got pictures of that. It was just all that history, the Tiber River and the whole works.

Overy ([00:37:30](#)):

Was your contact with German prisoner patients, was it one in which you got to know anything about them or anything of this kind?

McCarney ([00:37:38](#)):

No. The language barrier was there. You'd get to understand yes and no, and that was about it, but one of the girls could speak German. Mostly was just like the cases I'd have would either be back or a leg and massage. That was it. The conversation was usually between one of the others, the girl who could speak German and understand German. They seemed appreciative of the care.

Overy ([00:38:13](#)):

Was the poverty in Rome as bad as it was in Naples?

McCarney ([00:38:17](#)):

Well, food was a shortage. They all seemed to have clothes, but there's still the children that do a lot of begging. Again, candy bars and cigarettes were the things that they wanted, the adults.

Some young ones would like to have cigarettes, too, but we never gave them to them. I spent a

lot of time being off every Sunday, and a lot of evenings in the outskirts of Rome, and then, weekends I'd be right downtown and out to St. Peter's Cathedral.

Overy ([00:38:49](#)):

Was there any danger in being out and [inaudible 00:38:52] in the city at nights or was there any-

-

McCarney ([00:38:55](#)):

Not to my knowledge because one of the first times we, after we had two weeks quarantine, three of us, we got lost and we ended up we don't know how many miles from Rome. A GI truck come by and hauled us back in. Then we had a hard time finding our way back to camp because we were quite new there then.

Overy ([00:39:14](#)):

Did your travelings around ever put you in any trouble?

McCarney ([00:39:18](#)):

Danger, no.

Overy ([00:39:18](#)):

Danger?

McCarney ([00:39:19](#)):

No, mm-mm(negative). No.

Overy ([00:39:20](#)):

Just wonder if you might not have gotten in some area where you really shouldn't have been.

McCarney ([00:39:29](#)):

Well, there may have been that, but evidently, we never got to it. No. We usually went to this one area, it was called Piazza Bologna. We got to know shopkeepers and even a streetcar driver.

The streetcars were similar to ours. These piazzas are all circles so cars will come from downtown Rome and make a circle. Others would come from further outskirts and come in and go around the circle and go back out to the outskirts. It's sort of a dispersal station area. You can all around that circle, and then they branch out like spokes on a wheel, the streets and-- Then, of course, the streetcar tracks are only on occasional ones.

Overy ([00:40:15](#)):

Did you sense, when you were in Italy, a considerable cultural gulf between you and the Italian? Did you feel that you were really in a strange land?

McCarney ([00:40:27](#)):

Not so much in Rome or further north, but in-- There's a difference between night and day between the people in Naples, southern Italy, and the people in Rome. That's where your educational line starts, from Rome north.

Overy ([00:40:43](#)):

Talk about that [[crosstalk 00:40:44](#)], will you?

McCarney ([00:40:44](#)):

Well, the people in Naples, were more like the Sicilians we got to know more about while we were there. They were lower intellect and about all that you could find around there was vineyards and olive, day palms, olives, olive trees, it was more or less agriculture. I don't know, I assume they had other industries, but then when you got to Rome, you run into the culture, higher standard of living, although, the one thing that they were all short of us was food supplies. I assume clothing was in short supply, too, but there was a difference there between Naples and Rome, too. The people dress nicer in Rome. You did have your suburbs. One suburb not far from

our hospital, it was more or less on the type of people that lived in Naples. Like a slum suburb in one of our cities.

Overy ([00:41:52](#)):

Of course, both of them [inaudible 00:41:53] probably much more familiar to you than the people in North Africa were.

McCarney ([00:41:57](#)):

Yes. Yes, and especially that I could speak some Italian and understand quite a bit of it. You could tell by the way they dressed and the way they spoke, even the language, the dialects are different, too, between Rome and Naples. Then, you go north, you get the Leghorn, Florence, and up there it's even higher. That's where you get to the more educated and higher cultured. Of course, there was more-- We all know that Rome is so famous for the Cathedral and the rest builds off, the University of Rome and more intellectual.

Overy ([00:42:36](#)):

Did you notice any physical difference in the people from Cicely and southern Italy and those of Rome further to the north? Did they look about the same?

McCarney ([00:42:45](#)):

No. The only difference is they seem neater and not so unkept as they did most of them around Naples. I assume the business offices in Naples would probably be pretty much on par with Rome, but too much difference overall that-- You didn't get to see the people in offices there, but you saw well-dressed people all over Rome and suburbs, except the slums.

Overy ([00:43:11](#)):

You saw no anti-Americanism at all?

McCarney ([00:43:13](#)):

Oh, they were happy in Rome. They were glad to see us.

Overy ([00:43:18](#)):

There was not much destruction in Rome [crosstalk 00:43:20]

McCarney ([00:43:20](#)):

No. A little bit at the rail yards, but otherwise Rome was saved, they saved that.

Overy ([00:43:29](#)):

Apparently, the Allies made some attempt not to bomb it like they did to Cassino.

McCarney ([00:43:32](#)):

Yeah. Of course, that was a necessity.

Overy ([00:43:32](#)):

Yeah. They thought it was at the time. Sure.

McCarney ([00:43:39](#)):

Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Overy ([00:43:39](#)):

Did you see Cassino?

McCarney ([00:43:40](#)):

Yes. I saw it when there was nothing standing as tall as you or I if we stood up on a wall in any building there.

Overy ([00:43:48](#)):

How did you get up to the top? Did you [crosstalk 00:43:50]

McCarney ([00:43:50](#)):

I didn't go to the top.

Overy ([00:43:51](#)):

You didn't?

McCarney ([00:43:52](#)):

I didn't go up to mount. No. I was in Rome, hitchhiked up there when the Germans has swept through, but the Germans were still shelling it, and one of the shells landed not too far from where this other fella and I were. I just happened to have my camera headed that way. Looks close, but it isn't that close. There was nothing in Cassino itself and Mount Cassino Abbey, Monte Cassino, is high up on the hill overlooking it. Never got up there, but then when we came through by trucks and so on to go to Rome, we went right through there at the outskirts. It was totally destroyed. Then, when I came back through there, the rebuilding had started, and they had done it at a tremendous pace. They were building up real good there in Cassino.

Overy ([00:44:56](#)):

What experiences that you had in Italy really strike you most vividly after these years?

McCarney ([00:45:05](#)):

Well, Italy is really a nice country and having been so acquainted with the land of the country in the shape of a boot, it always brought fascination to me all through my life by teaching and even before I went over there. The people are nice. Just like any other country, there's good and there's bad and there's areas that aren't as nice as others just like in this country. It's a beautiful country in the mountains. Of course, almost every place we went, the bridges had all been blown and you had to use temporary bridges, the towns were all destroyed by artillery fire or bombs, and having this camera and having every Sunday off, more than once another fella or two guys and myself would hitchhike somewhere as far north as we could go, which was dangerous. We could have been walking where there were mines, but we'd get rides with trucks. We got sent back. More

than once we got too close to the lines. I have pictures of a lot of the coastal towns up to Gaeta and Formia and then up the highway six, the main route to Rome, to Capua where there was the headquarters for quite a while, then on up to Cassino. Got as far as Cassino hitchhiking. We weren't supposed to be in there, but we got out fast when that one shell landed. Then when we got into Rome and got to know a lot of the people, being in Rome so often, evenings and Sundays when I had off, I got to know a lot of people there. Then, when we went on to Leghorn, the stage of their intellect seemed to be on a par or even greater and Florence was the same way. Another thing that I'll never forget is climbing to the Leaning Tower of Pisa, which is not far from Leghorn, Livorno as the Italians call it. 294 steps and it was the steps were chipped and crumbling then. If they halted it now, I can understand why. There was a story in the paper not too long ago about it. The countryside is prettier up as you go further north, Rome and north. The fountains in Rome, the old Roman Forum. The area we had at Leghorn was where they shot all the movies in Italy at that time, the Hollywood of Italy, right on the coast. We were always on the Mediterranean, but it was a nice city. Then, the surrounding area, little towns in the mountains and a lot of the things were run by electricity. The trams and-- I don't know about the trains, whether they were electric or not, but they have a lot of electricity over there because of the mountainous area and the waterfalls.

Overy ([00:48:23](#)):

Being a Catholic, it must have been particularly exciting to be in Rome.

McCarney ([00:48:27](#)):

Yes. I spent so much time there and, when you think back of Michelangelo's work and whoever was in charge of the construction of the pillars that surround the semicircle, it's fabulous. There's a fountain in the center. This is not only a square, but a semicircle, too, but in the center of this

huge semicircle, there's a big fountain. On two sides of the fountain is a circle that you stand on. You look at the row of pillars in a semicircle, and there's 150-200 feet from you at least. You see one pillar and you step an inch or two to the left or an inch or two to the right, and you can see the pillars behind. That's how perfect the architecture is. Then, you go to the other side where the mark in the circle is in the base of the-- In the floor, so to speak, of the circle, it's all some kind of ceramics, and it's the same thing. The architecture back then was perfect and of course, the architecture of this was just perfect. Then, all the paintings by Michelangelo and his pupil, Bernini, and the St. Peter's Cathedral itself is just something to behold. I climbed to the top of St. Peter's Cathedral as far as visitors can go and have pictures that we took, fellas from my outfit and myself up there many times.

Overy ([00:50:06](#)):

Did you feel, as you attended mass for example in Rome, did you feel comfortable, did you feel at home? Was it completely familiar to you?

McCarney ([00:50:17](#)):

Yes, because at that time, Mass in this country was in Latin, so it really was just like being at home. They have about six, seven masses going on all the time there, so many side altars.

Overy ([00:50:30](#)):

Was there anything different going to mass there from in the United States?

McCarney ([00:50:34](#)):

The big thing that I noticed, especially it was a Catholic church right near where I'd go a lot of times on Sunday with this girl that I was helping with English and she was helping me with Italian, but the thing that I noticed was they only had pews for the crippled and the elderly. Otherwise, you more or less mingled right with each other, talked and visited. Now, at St.

Peter's, unless they've changed it, all they had then was pews for the College of Cardinals.

Whether it's different in any of those churches now, I don't know.

Overy ([00:51:06](#)):

Did you have a feeling people weren't really listening to the Mass that as going on or was it a social hour or what?

McCarney ([00:51:13](#)):

It was a little bit strange. I was doing more paying attention than a lot of them, but a lot of them would be roaming around. They seemed to be religious, carrying rosary beads and all that stuff.

Overy ([00:51:27](#)):

Did you say you had an audience with the Pope or that numbers of you GIs [crosstalk 00:51:32]

McCarney ([00:51:32](#)):

Not personally, no. It was a whole group, it was scheduled, and I purchased enough rosaries for everybody in the family and held them up. I was close to the rope as he was carried through and held them up and as he went by, he touched them. I still have the one that I kept for myself. I still have that blessed by Pope Pius the--

Overy ([00:51:32](#)):

12th.

McCarney ([00:51:52](#)):

--12th in 1944.

Overy ([00:51:55](#)):

Did you find in Rome, for example, if there was a lot of-- Well, let me put it this way. I've talked to people who were in France during World War II, and one of their complaints was the French are always trying to cheat us, to get something out of us, to exploit us. They'll charge eight times-

- Did you sense any of that when you were in Italy, that the people there tried to exploit the greater wealth of Americans or this kind of thing?

McCarney ([00:52:30](#)):

No. I didn't. I ate in restaurants in Rome. A lady that worked, an elderly lady that worked at United States Embassy in Rome got talking to us one day, she was either shopping or visiting someone in this Piazza Bologna area where we were so frequently. She'd come and started talking to us. We told her that the one thing we could eat at their hospital mess hall, but we wondered if there was any decent restaurant. She guided us to a restaurant, and we had what turned out to be a pretty good meal. We ate there more than once. The prices, they were higher than they were before the Americans came there, but the Italians evidently pay the same price. We had American printed GI liras, so to speak. It was just converted money. The Italians could get the same amount in their own currency when they turned it in. I know that when we took a cab anywhere, they didn't seem to overcharge us. We never did ride any of the streetcars because they were always jammed. I didn't see it and I went to an alabaster mine near Leghorn. We had a tour; it was official, granted by our outfit. It was on a Saturday. I think I got off from work and this alabaster mine, they made all kinds of nice things. I bought a set of horse head bookends. My father raised horses and I always liked horses, but they could have statues and anything. It's a soapstone this alabaster. I have those bookends today, fortunately I got them in barracks bag, put socks around them and they weren't crushed or anything, so I have that. I have some other souvenirs, too, but I have to clean them with an oil cloth. You can't use water on them, or it will erode them. Now, I didn't pay an exorbitant price for those. They'd probably be worth a lot more, but I have something that's worth a lot more than that I forgot to tell about in Naples. I

have Irving Berlin's autograph on my NCO card. Now, that's worth a lot of money since he died not too long ago.

Overy ([00:55:14](#)):

That's right.

McCarney ([00:55:15](#)):

We sat at a table with him and a friend of his at the NCO club in Naples and one of the fellas from my outfit and myself visited with him and he sang a song, signed our cards, autograph.

When I was at our reunion in '88 in Detroit, a suburb of Detroit, another fella had his NCO card and he had it with him with Berlin's autograph on it. It will be worth more money in years to come.

Overy ([00:55:45](#)):

Was there anything unpleasant about your stay, about your time in Italy that you find unpleasant?

McCarney ([00:55:53](#)):

Well, about the only thing was, and that goes with war, we were so close to the harbor in Naples, and also Oran, and Oran was bombed after the Germans were defeated there. One dud landed not too far from us, but they weren't after us. It was just misguided. In Naples, we were closer yet to the main harbor, but the whole area was lit up with Red Cross. Again, they came pretty close.

That was scary, but we never-- They didn't have that at Rome. Excuse me. Then, at Leghorn, the Germans counterattacked, and they got very, very close to us. We were issued new cards and we would be treated as medical personnel if they captured us, but they got some reinforcements in and stemmed the tide and turned it, so we were safe again.

Overy ([00:56:53](#)):

When you think back to your job in the hospital, were there any things within your working experience that were frustrating? Any shortages or something about the way the hospital operated, its routine or your supplies that wasn't really good that you--

McCarney ([00:57:20](#)):

No, I really can't complain. The only complaint I'd have would be about the English rations. No, I had nice bosses and nice working conditions. Joining the outfit so late before it went overseas, I didn't know many people, but getting to be trainer of the baseball team, then that was the thing that turned the tide. I got to know practically everybody.

Overy ([00:57:51](#)):

All the people on the baseball team were from the hospital group?

McCarney ([00:57:54](#)):

Oh, yeah. From our own hospital. They had a league in North Africa.

Overy ([00:57:58](#)):

I was reading, I think there was a little World Series and--

McCarney ([00:58:01](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Our pitcher pitched a no-hit, no-run game and I met him in '88 when we went to the reunion in Detroit. We hadn't seen each other since the end of the war. Both pitchers, the right-hander and the left-hander, they were glad to see me, and I was glad to see them because I used to work on their arms one of them between inning sometimes during the ballgame. Get behind the crowd and work on his arm.

Overy ([00:58:28](#)):

Did you have uniforms and everything?

McCarney ([00:58:30](#)):

I didn't, they did.

Overy ([00:58:31](#)):

Oh, they did?

McCarney ([00:58:32](#)):

Yeah. Oh, yes. I have pictures of them in uniform. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Overy ([00:58:36](#)):

Was it a pretty good brand of baseball?

McCarney ([00:58:37](#)):

Yes. For being overseas and on a makeshift diamond, of course they were pretty well taken care of, but it's nothing like here.

Overy ([00:58:45](#)):

Any of these guys have minor league experience or anything like that?

McCarney ([00:58:48](#)):

Well, this left-handed pitcher went to the St. Louis-- Played with St. Louis, but he didn't make it. He played a lot in the-- He even played for the Minneapolis Millers.

Overy ([00:59:02](#)):

He played in minor leagues.

McCarney ([00:59:03](#)):

Yes, mm-hmm (affirmative). He got as high as triple A for quite a while, but then he went into the used car business, and he just retired.

Overy ([00:59:14](#)):

That certainly was a pleasant experience if you like baseball.

McCarney ([00:59:17](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Overy ([00:59:20](#)):

When it came time to go home, were you anxious to get home?

McCarney ([00:59:24](#)):

Yeah. The strange part about it was I was sent home on temporary duty. We waited so many days in Naples for a ship to come back. Then, I was to be home for 30 days and rejoin my outfit at Leghorn. The war was winding down. Before the 30 days was up, I got a notice of a 15-day extension, so I was really nothing to do and just wait around for orders. Before that 15 days was up, I got another 15 day extension. This was temporary duty. Then, I expected I'd be going back. Then, the next notice I got was to reassignment at Fort Sam Houston in Texas. I went to Texas. Then, my name was on the board to go to Fort Louis Washington as the company aid man because they were dropping those fire balloons, the Japanese were dropping them on the West Coast. A fella that used to be in our outfit, I was telling him about it. I said, "I wish I was going back to Fort Snelling into physical therapy or something at the station hospital." Next day, my name was taken off the shipping list and two days later, was put back up to go to Snelling. I ended up my service in charge of the station physical therapy department at Fort Snelling station hospital.

Overy ([01:00:56](#)):

Were you as busy there as you had been overseas?

McCarney ([01:00:58](#)):

Yeah. There were only two of us and we were busy. We worked Saturdays, too, and the previous man in charge took every Saturday off. I changed that and I worked every other Saturday and

gave the fella that worked under me every other Saturday off, too. He was quite appreciative of that, so I worked six days a week one week and five the next.

Overy ([01:01:26](#)):

Looking back, do you have any regrets about your World War II service?

McCarney ([01:01:32](#)):

No. I wouldn't trade the experience for a million dollars. I wouldn't sell my album for a million dollars or my notes, but I wouldn't want to go through it again. Of course, at my age it would be unrealistic, but I wouldn't want to go through it again. You break up your life.

Overy ([01:01:59](#)):

How do you think-- Well, let me ask you first. Do you think the war changed you, your military experience changed you at all?

McCarney ([01:02:08](#)):

Well, it gave me a different career. When I came back, I went into physical therapy here at the station hospital. My teaching experience wouldn't have given me that. Then, I later transferred into another program, corrective therapy, that opened-- Well, I entered it in 1947, my boss opened it just before that. Then, I went on to school. I had a month at Topeka, Kansas at the Menninger Foundation, and then I had a couple of tours at the University of Minnesota. The last one was the one that I really enjoyed. It was on strokes, senility, and staggering. That taught me more about neurology and what parts of the brain were affected. I had stroke cases at the time, and I learned what I was doing and where I was doing it wrong and where I could improve. That was my favorite after World War II to work on stroke cases. I did two or three of them not at the hospital, privately, friends, through the doctor's orders, but I never charged. It was just on a friendly basis. Fortunately, both or three of them, two of them were successful. The other one

was semi-successful, but the lady was 90 and she got to do her own housework. Not as good as anybody young, but then she died two years later of a heart attack. It was success, too, in a way.

Overy ([01:03:52](#)):

So many ways the war really opened up a whole new career for you.

McCarney ([01:03:57](#)):

Yes, it did. Yes. I had a chance to go back teaching when I came out of the service, but the opening here was the same as the one on the VA in Minneapolis in physical therapy, so all I had to do was wait for my papers to clear Washington. In the meantime, I worked in the dental clinic where I'd worked before and waited for them to come back, and I got my assignment in physical therapy. I'm not a graduate. I'm a technician, but I am a corrective therapist.

Overy ([01:04:30](#)):

How did you feel during the Vietnam War when you learned of young men who were refusing to go into service or going to Canada, who were hiding? How did you feel, being a veteran yourself, about-- How'd you feel during those years?

McCarney ([01:04:49](#)):

I had mixed emotions. I was hoping none of our boys would get called and yet, I would advise them to serve your country like I did, although it was not a well-planned incident. Our oldest son did get called, but like me, he had one weak eye and you have to be in good shape for that, so he didn't have to go. I had mixed emotions. I thought that they had done wrong, but I would have tried to do something if I was that age. I would have entered, but taken limited duty, which many of them could have done instead of leaving the country.

Overy ([01:05:37](#)):

Were you angry when these men criticized the government [crosstalk 01:05:43]?

McCarney ([01:05:42](#)):

No. I think they had it just right.

Overy ([01:05:49](#)):

It was a different war from yours. Wasn't it?

McCarney ([01:05:50](#)):

Yeah. It wasn't a war. Well, as they call it, a police action, which you get killed just as dead.

They didn't go in there with enough training, they didn't go in there with enough of the stuff that's necessary to win a war, and the attitude. Of course, the attitude when I went in World War

II was to win at all costs. This was what the hell am I doing here in talking to so many of them.

You can't blame them.