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FORM C
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Lindsey Chamness — Scholar

Kurt Piehler — Mentor

Same Side of the 38th: A Comparative Oral History Project — Project Title

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:

A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

MAJOR: COLLEGE SCHOLARS
EMPHASIS: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, EAST ASIAN STUDIES, MILITARY STUDIES

EXPECTED GRADUATION: MAY 2005

Same Side of the 38th:
A Comparative Oral History Project

BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

Thesis

Application for Review of Research
Involving Human Subjects
(Including Interview Questions)

3	Informed Consent Form Deed of Gift Form
4	Interview with Hyun-Mi Kim
5	Interview with Sherman Taylor
6	Interview with Juhee Kim
7	Interview with Youngha Woo
8	Interview with Jinhee Shin
9	Interview with Jungeui Lee
10	Interview with Yoon Hye Young
11	Interview with Korean Male- "Kim"

Interview with Bumseok Park

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
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Thanks to all those who helped along the way.
You made the oceans seem smaller and the work
load seem easier.

Also a special thanks to Jin-Hyuck for my new Sony recorder
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Introduction

"I think Koreans must try to understand [that American soldiers are not all bad]...But I think Americans should also try to understand Koreans."[1]

It was somewhere between singing in Korean at a *noraebang* and my father trying to order a coffee at a McDonald's in Seoul that I realized how very strange the relationship is between South Korea and the United States. After spending almost a year in Korea, I knew that Koreans lives were touched every day by some American influence. Whether it was American movies and music, or running into American soldiers or the few American students in Korea, Seoul was brimming with changes of globalization.

At the same time, I recognized that most Americans do not know much about Korea. My relatives in East Tennessee warned me to stay away from eating dogs and the notoriously rancid kimchee, while my relatives in Mississippi asked, "Where's Korea again?" I wondered: How can two countries on opposite sides of the globe be so different and still have worked well together for so long?

Before I got off the plane at Incheon I took care to read every book I could find on Korea. Then as a student for two semesters in Seoul, I tried to learn the Korean language. Despite my attention to the many cultural and language differences though, I still had many frustrating (and often embarrassing) misunderstandings. I saw that many other Americans were also having issues dealing with this new culture. These Americans were soldiers.

While our men and women were making an effort to live in Korea, Koreans were struggling to accept our forces. In the summer of 2002, two Korean girls were killed

[1] Interview with "Kim," (2 July 2004) p.22.

during an American training exercise. Although much of America was unaware of the accident, the Korean population was deeply disturbed and angered. I wanted to know: Does this happen every time an American GI does something wrong? How far does this resentment run? How much do our troops affect the average Korean? And how are our troops affected by being in the midst of increasing opposition?

The United States has approximately 1500 military installments outside the continental U.S.[2] As the world changed at the Cold War, our objectives and foreign policy also changed. The U.S. has already moved many of its military installations and within the next few years, more could follow. Most Americans are not concerned with these extensions of our country and are quite unaware of how the military works. Some people also assume that America is represented abroad only by our diplomats and the President. They probably also believe that American culture is distributed throughout the world only by movies and television. However, other countries, especially those with American military bases, have face-to-face contact with Americans every day. Each person becomes an ambassador of America and every action is seriously scrutinized by the host country. Any "problem" could become a problem in the relations between the two countries.

While important research has been done on changing Korean attitudes in particular, I do not think it is enough. Many books and essays only recite Korean public opinion polls or criticize the American military for its actions. There is little work being done that gets at why individuals are increasingly negative towards the U.S. Forces Korea

[2] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases : Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) p.66.

(USFK). There is also little in print about how our soldiers perceive Korea and the Korean people and if they enjoy or only suffer through their tour in South Korea.

My goal was to create an oral history project comparing the experiences of Korean citizens with that of American soldiers stationed in Korea. I felt that it was important to examine the attitudes and opinions of both groups toward one another, how these attitudes formed, and how it is dealt with. I also wanted to identify the sources of conflict between Koreans and the American military, not from governmental or intellectual opinions but in the eyes of average men and women living on the Korean peninsula.

I firmly believe many things can be learned from personal accounts. From the Korean perspective, we can gain more information from open-ended questions. I allowed the interviewees to qualify their answers instead of asking, "Do you hate America? Yes or no?" In addition to that, we can compare individual views with the larger public opinion polls to see if the responses are related.

I also think learning the American soldier perspective is essential. When we better understand how they think and feel, the military can start to address these issues. If a soldier is bored and unhappy, his low morale is likely to affect others, whether it is Koreans on the street or other soldiers around him. We should find out what problems our men and women have and how to resolve them so that our soldiers can live in Korean society with greater cooperation and mutual understanding.

Methodology

Preparations

The original plan for this project was to travel to South Korea during the summer of 2004 and interview Korean citizens residing in the vicinity of Seoul and American soldiers stationed at the Yongsan base in Seoul, or in the surrounding area. The goal was to conduct audiotaped life history interviews with 15 to 20 participants. Each interview was to consist of a list of pre-planned questions but also allow for follow-up questions. The purpose of conducting life interviews is to gain insight as to the background of each participant to better understand why they feel and think the things they do. I also knew that the participants would possibly feel more comfortable answering any controversial questions if I gained rapport with them.

Because oral history involves human subjects, I had to obtain permission from the Office of Research's Internal Review Board (IRB). I submitted the Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects and was approved prior to starting the project.[3] Before every interview each subject had to sign an Informed Consent form and had the option of signing a Deed of Gift form, which gives permission for possession of the tapes and transcript to myself and the Center for the Study of War and Society, and allows for public access to the interview transcript.[4]

Before leaving for Korea I also identified several potential interviewees, both Korean and American. Many Koreans were interested in participating. Those men and

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[3] See "Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects."
[4] See "Informed Consent Form" and "Deed of Gift Form."

women were in their twenties and were acquaintances from my first visit to Korea or were referred to me by those acquaintances. They seemed excited about being involved. I also tried to find American soldiers of the same age but this proved to be more difficult. Friends put me in contact with soldiers, who in turn introduced me to their friends stationed in Korea. I had three contacts with GIs before leaving.

Importance of Selective Sample Group

For the purpose of this project, I chose to limit the type of person I would interview.

On the Korean side, the focus was more on college age men and women. The main reasonthat I focused on this age group was the significance of their answers. Most reports and polls acknowledge that there is a difference in the way people under thirty view the U.S. military presence and how their parents and grandparents do. This age group is certainly the most vocal with their opposition to the USFK. I wanted to explore personal views from this group to see if they line up with the larger impression of the group in opinion polls. College-age men and women are also becoming increasingly politically active. Their vote helped elect Roh Moo-Hyun to the presidency. Roh was the staunchly liberal candidate that favored Kim Dae-Jung's "Sunshine Policy" towards North Korea and still highly critical of the U.S. military's presence in Korea now that he is in office.[5]

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[5] During the election, Roh constantly stoked anti-American sentiment by criticizing the USFK and demanding equal status to the U.S.on many issues in relations between the two countries.
Norman D. Levin, *Do the Ties Still Bind?: The US-ROK Security Relationship after 9/11,* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2004) p.21-22.

While it would have been interesting to look at the greater population, the nature of oral history (and qualitative studies in general) leads one to a more focused group with elaborate descriptions, rather than more participants with focused answers. Another reason I chose college-aged students was convenience. I already had many contacts within this age group and there would be little problem finding enough people that could speak English.[6]

On the American side, I wanted to focus on enlisted men and women that were newcomers to the Korean peninsula. Because the majority of soldiers stationed in Korea are enlisted and serve one year tours, I thought this would be the most representative of how the greater part of our soldiers felt about Korea. I saw these GIs as more exposed, given their lower military status, young age and less world experience. Generally speaking, Koreans mostly criticize the behavior of the enlisted personnel. I wanted to talk to these soldiers about their reactions to the drastic lifestyle change and if they felt threatened by harsh Korean criticism. I also initially wanted to limit my sample group to soldiers stationed in or around Seoul because my Korean interviewees were going to be from Seoul. I felt it would help clarify the differences between these urban college students and the U.S. military to hear both sides of the same story. (I will discuss later how I had to change my sample.)

Obstacles

[6] My Korean skills are not advanced enough to conduct interviews in Korean and translation was possible, it would have caused more problems with logistics and interview accuracy.

The first problem I ran into was technical. I brought extensive equipment loaned to me by the Center for the Study of War and Society to record the interviews but it had to be plugged in. I had brought a transformer but finding a quiet place with electrical outlets in Seoul was challenging, to say the least. I continued to explore the city and finally found a few reasonable settings. I was also given a smaller, more portable recorder during my trip that allowed me a little more freedom in choosing interview locations.

Next, interviewing Koreans was more difficult than I anticipated. The first problem was that I arrived during the school year. For the first month no one wanted to meet with me. They took their school work very seriously and I had to wait until the end of their exams.

Finally their schedules were open but there was another problem. Living in Korea previously taught me that Koreans are private people but I did not fully understand this until I interviewed them about life experiences and their views on the U.S. It took a lot of persuading to get the interviewees to open up about their life and their true feelings about the States. I had to assure them that I would not be offended by what they said before they would talk. I felt like their answers were open and honest on all questions except on the issue of race.

Finally, it was most exhausting finding American military personnel to talk to because all of my original contacts fell through. It was unfortunate timing that I arrived in Korea when 3500 troops were being redeployed to Iraq within the month. In addition to that, thousands more were being relocated within Korea. When a few contacts did reemerge, I was told I could not interview enlisted men until Legal Affairs approved it. I

to that, thousands more were being relocated within Korea. When a few contacts did reemerge, I was told I could not interview enlisted men until Legal Affairs approved it. I made more than twelve phone calls to Legal Affairs and Public Affairs but they continued to refer me to the other offices to no end.

Because of the time constraint, I decided not to interview enlisted men. Through other contacts and friends at home, I found five officers and NCOs willing and able to be interviewed. I also originally intended to interview GIs stationed in Seoul, but three of the five men interviewed were stationed in Kunsan, a southern city three and half hours away from Seoul. The number of the sample is small, but I was constrained by extenuating circumstances and I did what I could do.

Interview Methodology

In preparation for the project, I was able to take Dr. Kurt Piehler's class "Oral Histories of War and Peace" at the University of Tennessee. For that class, I read *The Oral History Manual* by Barbara Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan and got a better understanding of conducting an oral history project.[7] I also had the opportunity to interview two Korean War veterans with Dr. Piehler for the class and in connection with the Center for the Study of War and Society.

Preparation is an important step in the interview process. As I learned with the Center, a great deal of time is usually spent reviewing the participant's background to ask more informed questions and recognize discrepancies. This was not the case with the interviews conducted in Korea, however. In some cases I had knowledge of part of the

[7] Barbara Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, *The Oral History Manual*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002).

person's background but for the most part, the interviews were conducted with little preparation in advance. Not only was I in a country where I did not have access to proper research materials, I often did not know who was going to be interviewed until the last minute and sometimes had several interviews in one week.

By the end of the summer, I was able to conduct twelve audiotaped interviews with Koreans and five audiotaped interviews with American GIs. I also had two non-recorded interviews with Koreans. The interviews generally lasted between forty-five minutes to two hours. Each interviewee was asked to talk about their family history, their own childhood and education and military service (if applicable). They were also asked, among other things, for their opinions on the state of the US-Korean relationship and related problems, whether the U.S. military should remain in Korea, and how Koreans and GIs perceived each other.

Transcript Production

I know that all transcripts are accurate and true to the interview because I transcribed them myself. In doing so, I followed the current guidelines used by the Center for the Study of War and Society for transcribing and editing.

After transcribing and editing each interview transcript, the respective interviewee was sent a copy. They were able to review the document, correct misspellings of proper names and places, and clarify any questionable statements. Only after the interviewee was satisfied, the final transcript was printed.

Observations and Expectations

Observations and Background

During the time I was studying in Korea from August 2002 to June 2003, many events occurred that upset the relationship between the United States and Korea. I also saw that these events were having an effect on how my Korean friends and a lot of the population thought about the American military and the American government.

The first major incident transpired in June 2002, before I set foot on Korean soil. On June 13, 2002 an American armored vehicle on a training exercise ran over two junior high Korean girls. For the next several months, massive demonstrations took place all around Korea, but mainly in Seoul and around the U.S. military base in Seoul, Yongsan.[8] Many people were outraged by the accident but they were further incensed by the fact the U.S. military would not turn over the soldiers responsible for the two girls' deaths to the Korean authorities.

Legally speaking, the U.S. was not obliged to release the soldiers to the Korean government. The U.S. has a treaty with eighty-five countries where American soldiers are stationed, including Korea.[9] This Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) covers everything from entry into the country to base facilities to criminal jurisdiction. According to the agreement, the U.S. military has jurisdiction over its members when the crime committed is "solely against the property or security of the United States," against

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[8] Lee Soo Jeong, "South Korea: U.S. Military Driver Didn't Hear Warning," (July 02, 2002, ArmyTimes.Com).

[9] Jinwung Kim, "Ambivalent Allies: Recent South Korean Perceptions of the United States Forces Korea (USFK), (*Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Winter 2004, Vol. 30 Issue 4) p.275.

a U.S. citizen or their property, or if the alleged crime happened while on duty.[10] But while the agreement is clear on the course of action that had to be taken, most of the Korean population did not agree with it.

The emotions from the summer incident had only just begun to calm down when the United States invaded Iraq in the spring of 2003. Again, many people were incensed. Demonstrations began to appear again, flyers and posters covered college campuses, and the news carried nothing but news about the war.

I will also admit that my first impression of American soldiers in Korea was not a good one. Whether it was on the street or in bars and clubs, I found many GIs to be unreserved and somewhat boisterous. While I was studying Korean and trying to fit in, many soldiers spoke none of the language and a few were even contemptuous of Korean culture and customs. Most of the young GIs I met were extremely courteous and friendly to me, but I understood how Korean women could mistake their flirtations for aggressiveness and how Korean men could get easily irritated with their forward nature.

Background Research

Before I even began this project, I wanted to be as prepared as possible and gain enough information to be able to carry it out without any major problems. To do this, I took three classes in the spring of 2004. As I already stated, I took "Oral Histories of War and Peace" and gained valuable information on the importance of oral history, and interview and transcribing methods. "History of U.S. Foreign Relations since WWII"

[10] "US-ROK Status of Forces Agreement," Article XXII, (July 1966, Amended 2001, United States Forces Korea Website). (See "US-ROK Status of Forces Agreement")

allowed me to do more in-depth research into the relations between the U.S. and South Korea since the 1970s. I also took "U.S. Military History" and learned more about the armed forces, including facts I would later need like structure and rank.

To better prepare for this project, I wanted to explore what kind and how much academic material there was on the subject of American military influence on the countries where bases are present, and more particularly the South Korean case. Not surprisingly, it was difficult to find a lot of information about the relationship between U.S. Forces and the Korean population.

The first book I read was Catherine Moon's *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution In U.S.-Korea Relations*.[11] Her book is primarily focused on military prostitution but I found her interviews with Korean prostitutes to be invaluable. The account loosely traced the history of the relationship between the two countries and gave a more personal consideration to that history.

I also consulted three monographs by Cynthia Enloe: *The Morning After: Sexual Politics At The End Of The Cold War*; *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*; and *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*.[12] Her research in the area of the American military's power over local women was interesting in all three books but there was not much specific information on the Korean peninsula. Most of her research has been done on the

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[11] Katherine H.S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution In U.S.-Korea Relations*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[12] Cynthia Enloe, *The Morning After: Sexual Politics At The End Of The Cold War*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers : The International Politics Of Militarizing Women's Lives*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

Philippines, Great Britain, and Okinawa. Enloe's facts on past crimes committed by servicemen and other general military actions were well documented but her generalizations and conclusions were misleading. Her arguments continually criticized the American military for oppressing women but did not take into fully take into account cooperation from other governments or the military's recent progress in resolving many of the issues.

I found a rather unusual source of information while I was in Korea in the form of a fiction novel. *Fox Girl*, by Nora Okja Keller, is a novel about a young girl driven into prostitution in a military camptown.[13] Although it was a fictional account, the book represents how a large part of the Korean population feels about the U.S. military and its effects on Korean society. It also gave me an idea of how deep racism ran in Korea in the past.

Outside of these resources focused on military prostitution and rape, there is even less research on the relationship between the U.S. and the U.S. military and South Koreans. Fortunately, the situation in Korea has gained more attention in the last few years and new research has emerged. One essay in *Asian Affairs* explicitly describes South Korean perceptions of the USFK as reported by several major recent polls. Two other books published within the last year spell out further how Korean polls indicate that Koreans are increasingly negative towards the U.S. military. None of these really described the personal effects on Koreans and certainly left out the views of the American soldiers.

Expectations

When starting this project, there were several things that I expected to hear from the interviews. The participants were in no way representative of the entire Korean population or American military personnel in Korea, but there were still opinions I anticipated on hearing from most of the participants.

Because of the recent inflammatory events and the amount of bad press the American military received during my stay, I imagined that my Korean interviewees would not be favorable towards the military. Numerous demonstrations took place during my time in Korea and most of these occurred around college campuses. I had also heard from many sources that the younger generation of Koreans was more likely to be opposed to the U.S. military presence in Korea and dislike the American GIs. I could not help but think that many of my interviewees would feel this way. In addition to that, most of the research available at the time criticized the military's "imperialistic ambitions" abroad and its treatment of women. I thought that this too could have a negative affect on Korean perceptions.

I had also planned to interview college age men and women in the military in Korea. Just from my own observations and conversations with enlisted men in the past, I speculated that about half of the military population would not be happy with their tour in Korea and the other half truly enjoyed their time. I also expected to hear most GIs say that the U.S. military did not need to remain in Korea. As far as NCOs and officers, I had no idea what they would say because I had never had any contact with these groups in Korea prior to completing the interviews.

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[13] Nora Okja Keller, *Fox Girl*, (New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc, 2002).

Korean Interviewees

"Korean people really like Americans. And also, Korean people really like soldiers…But Korea people don't really like American soldiers."

Background on Interviewees

The Korean interviewees range in age from nineteen to twenty-six. I interviewed eight Korean women and six Korean men. Seven of the interviewees have lived and/or studied in the United States for at least one semester and three have studied, interned, or traveled extensively in other countries. Two of the Korean men have done their military service, one serving in the Marines and one in the Air Force, and two other men served in public service as an alternative.[14] At the time of the interviews, three of the women and one man had graduated from college and the other ten were still working on their undergraduate or graduate degrees. (Since then, several have graduated from their respective universities.)

After asking the participants about their own lives, the next question I asked was when they start to learn English in schools and if they are taught American history. Most of the responses indicated that in the past, the English language was introduced in middle school but currently is being instituted as early as elementary school. But as the interviews were conducted in English, each participant was quite fluent in the English language, even if they did not want to admit it. They also said, unsurprisingly, that no specialized teaching on American history takes place unless the student chooses to take it at the college level.

[14] Military service is required of all Korean males. The only exceptions are made for physical disabilities or exceptional skills that can be used in public service. The required length of military service is currently twenty-four months and approximately thirty-six months for public service.

Problems between the U.S. and Korea

One of the next questions I asked each interviewee is if there are problems between the U.S. military and Korea. Although I asked a very open-ended question, I received many of the same responses. One of the problems I heard from five different people is crime committed by GIs in Korea. They said whether it was the accident that killed the two Korean girls or violence towards prostitutes, the soldiers often cause problems. Hyun-Mi Kim said that they have free reign in Korea and don't respect the law.

The most popular answer I received was not about the crime, however. Eight people responded that it was not the crime but the punishment given, as laid out in the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), that causes the most problems between the U.S. and Korea. They explained that Korea should have more jurisdiction over American soldiers in Korea. Every time a soldier is tried and acquitted by American courts, more people become outraged and suspicious of the system in place. Even those few GIs who are convicted in Korean courts and serve their sentences in Korean jails are a matter of disagreement.[15] According to Faye Kim, it makes people furious that the U.S. demands from Korea "very good housing and excessive luxury facilities" for its citizens. These "luxury facilities" include air-conditioning and physical activity facilities.[16]

Another problem that five people mentioned also had to do with SOFA. These people stated that the agreement is condescending in itself. They said that SOFA allows the U.S. to treat Korea as inferior, almost as a conquered nation. In Yoon Hye Young's

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[15] According to *Stars and Stripes,* there are six U.S. servicemen currently in prison in South Korea. Their crimes range from drug dealing to drunken vehicular homicide to first degree murder.
Seth Robson, "For U.S. Inmates In S. Korean Prison, Time Feels Like It's Standing Still," (*Stars and Stripes, Pacific Edition.* 13 March 2005).

opinion, the American military presence symbolizes how Korea is not a free country.[17] Along the same lines, a few people mentioned that the military's move out of Seoul and the DMZ is causing problems. The U.S. is demanding money or not paying for things as the plans progress, they said.

And finally, five people mentioned that some problems are being caused by political and media issues. One interviewee pointed to the war in Iraq and President Bush as causing anti-Americanism. Another four stated that Korean politicians use the United States Forces-Korea (USFK) for their own political gain. The politicians condemn the American military in public, but quietly support U.S. initiatives in the legislature. The Korean public only hears criticisms though, and they begin to formulate opinions based on that. Many people admitted that the Korean media only gives bad press to the U.S. military. Some media outlets reported that the tank incident was not an accident, but done on purpose. As Faye Kim said, the media "encourages the public to be indignant."[18] Jun-chan Yoon also says that though the military demands more land and pollutes the Han River in Seoul, these are only secondary issues.

Camptowns

Seeing as how the issue of military camptowns might be sensitive, I tried to get at the participants' opinions without any implications of my own. Almost half of the respondents concluded that prostitution is a problem around bases, but also said that it is widely ignored by the public and the Korean government. One person replied that

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[16] Interview with Faye Kim, (21 July 2004) p.15
[17] Interview with Yoon Hye Young, (30 June 2004) p.4

prostitution is not a problem and two others said that the public is not aware of what goes on around U.S. military installations and they do not care. But in almost all of the cases, whether they saw prostitution as a problem or not, the interviewees vehemently stated that it is not solely Korea's issue; prostitution happens everywhere. I was surprised at how defensive some people became at even the implication that prostitution is a Korean problem.

Camptown areas around the bases are sometimes notorious for the bad behavior that goes on there. Sam Lee explained that a lot of guys go to "entertainment clubs" almost every night. He said that they go to drink alcohol and to "hang out" with girls.[19] When prodded further, he would not elaborate on what "hang out" means. I asked Jinhee Shin if she saw GIs off the base and she responded, "Sometimes they are with Korean girls. I don't know if they are prostitute or just girlfriend."[20] Five people told me that soldiers could only be found around the base or, if they ventured out, it was only to bars and clubs.

The camptown areas were described to me as being old and unclean. It seemed like they made an automatic connection between military bases and camptowns, saying that when the bases move, new areas will spring up around the new bases, driving down the cost of land and bringing other problems like crime. Jungeui Lee said that Korean police have no control over soldiers in these areas. She also sees camptowns as a symbol of how the U.S. and its military have ruined the innocence of Koreans.[21]

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[18] Faye Kim, p.13
[19] Interview with Sam Lee, (15 July 2004) p.16
[20] Interview with Jinhee Shin, (26 June 2004) p.18
[21] Interview with Jungeui Lee, (28 June 2004) p.4

Should the U.S. Stay in Korea?

When asked if the U.S. military should stay in Korea or leave, the overwhelming majority of participants answered that the U.S. should stay. Six unequivocally said that USFK is imperative for the security of South Korea. They said that the U.S. troops make the peninsula safer and more stable because North Korea would not attack the South as long as American troops are present.

"Kim" and Lee Jin-Hyuck stated that the troops should stay, but security is not the only reason. They both said that the U.S. military presence is important for economic reasons and for assuring a strong US-ROK alliance, as well as for the security of South Korea. Because of USFK, the Korean government can spare money on defense spending. "Kim" called the American military a "necessary evil."[22]

Jin-Hyuck also stated, along with four other interviewees, that the U.S. should stay but should alter their behavior in some way. Jin-Hyuck, Jinhee Shin, and Jungeui Lee replied that the U.S. and Korea should renegotiate SOFA. Jin-Hyuck also said, as did Faye Kim and Roy Kim, that the American GIs need to change their behavior and their attitude towards the situation. "I think we need the protection, but while being generous, why not be nice too?"[23] Bumseok Park added that the U.S. military is necessary but that it hinders the development of military technology in Korea.

Faye Kim expressed one thought that many of Koreans may be thinking. She said that Koreans "don't want to be ignored all the time by the U.S. soldiers. So even though ...it can be dangerous if they leave, we don't want to be pulling their legs...We will die

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[22] "Kim," p.21
[23] Interview with Roy Kim, (12 July 2004) p.30.

proud." At the same time, she also said having American soldiers is like having air. South Korea needs the American military but it is easy to condemn and complain about the situation.[24]

Yoon Hye Young was the only person interviewed to say that USFK should leave Korea. She believed that the U.S. military presence made ROK Forces look weak. She also told me that the U.S. was trying to be like "Jesus" saving the world but she felt that it was the destiny of the Koreas to be reunited, even if that meant North Korea defeating South Korea.

Korean View on Soldiers

One thing I wanted to ascertain during this project is how Koreans and American soldiers view each other and how they think the other group views them.

When I asked the Korean interviewees how the Korean population views GIs, their responses did not surprise me.

Two participants said that Korea is split on the issue. These two people maintained that the older generation (their grandparents and perhaps their parents) is far more sympathetic to the GI presence in Korea because they were present during the Korean War. At the same time, they said that their generation is becoming increasing aggravated by the U.S. military and they generally do not like soldiers.

Another three people also said Korea is split, but not particularly by generation. They mentioned that many people have no particular feelings about soldiers and are quite indifferent towards them. The rest of the population, they claim, hates American soldiers.

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[24] Faye Kim, p.18.

Interestingly enough, none of these people refer to any part of the population actually liking GIs.

A much greater number of people, however, said that Koreans do not like American soldiers (in general). Three of these people did not qualify this answer but four people pointed to crimes committed by soldiers and a lack of punishment as the reason they do not like our military personnel. Although one person said that Koreans are not scared of GIs, three of the women admitted that they are sometimes frightened. One of the male interviewees said, "American soldiers, they are kind of rough, kind of not like normal people … pretty violent."[25] Jungeui Lee says that even though the "educated" officers are personable and trying to fit into Korean society, the enlisted men are far less educated and more likely to cause trouble.

Lee Jin-Hyuck summed it all up in this statement: "Korean people really like Americans. And also, Korean people really like soldiers…But Korea people don't really like American soldiers."[26]

Soldier View on Korea/Koreans

I next asked the Korean participants how they thought American GIs viewed Korea and Koreans. Most people were reluctant to answer this question and expressed doubts about it but speculated as to what they thought nevertheless.

The majority of people supposed that American soldiers do not really like being stationed in Korea. When asked if GIs like Korea, one person simply said no. Another

[25] Interview with BumSeok Park, (4 July 2004) p.21.
[26] Lee Jun-Hyuck, p.30.

two people said that soldiers do not like Korea and do not like Koreans. Three more people said that soldiers do not like being in Korea because of bad sentiment against the troops and Koreans' treatment of GIs. Similarly, one person responded that it would be difficult for American military personnel to live or have fun outside of the base.

Two interviewees estimated that part of the military population enjoyed being in Korea and part did not. One person guessed that fifty percent of GIs like their assignment in Korea and the other person estimated that only thirty percent did.

Three other people had different ideas. They thought that soldiers could have a lot of fun during their tour in Korea because soldiers are paid a lot of money and there are many places to party and drink around Korea, especially in Seoul. Two of the women said that Korea is a dangerous assignment but it is still not a bad place to be.

One Korean man and one woman did not directly answer whether or not American GIs like Korea. Rather, they commented on how soldiers acted towards Koreans. They felt like American soldiers were condescending toward Korean people and this probably made their tour uncomfortable or aggravating at times.

When asked if soldiers like Korea, Juhee Kim believed that they probably did. Her last comment of the interview simply added, "I hope."[27]

Differences of White and Black Soldiers

Another issue I wanted to examine was if Koreans view soldiers differently based on race. This was perhaps one of the most sensitive questions I asked during the interviews. Although I felt some of the responses I received were not completely truthful,

I did not continue to push the issue on tape. In some cases, the conversation continued after the interview officially ended.

The majority of interviewees said that Koreans did not view white and black GIs differently and did not offer anything else on the subject. Lee Jin-Hyuck offered that Koreans often view immigrants as secondary and treat them as such, but that race makes no difference in how they treat soldiers.

Four people disclosed (on tape) that the Korean population may look down on black men and women, soldier or not. Jasmine Lee said that Korean perceptions form about African-Americans because of crime. "I heard … some of the black soldiers are not well educated in America. So some of them tend to ignore the rules in Korea and they tend to behave badly."[28]

Jun-chan Yoon, however, had a different opinion on the situation. He described how his friends on the American base felt black soldiers were more amicable. "Black soldiers are more friendly … because white people are more … arrogant."[29] But at the same time, he said, Koreans are prejudiced against black people and explained why:

> Common people think black people are inferior to white because all that they know about America is white people and they saw the movies, the white people movies, and in the movies, black people are bad guys and they make problems in the society.[30]

Some people have expressed different feelings after the interview was concluded. Some of the girls mentioned that they are more intimidated by black soldiers than white. One said that she crosses the street when she sees a black man. Several of them expressed that they would never date a black GI, even though they might date a white GI.

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[27] Juhee Kim, p.17.
[28] Interview with Jasmine Lee, (17 July 2004) p.13.
[29] Interview with Jun-chan Yoon, (19 July 2004) p.20.

In my experience, Koreans find dark skin very unattractive, even within the Korean community. People with darker skin are looked down on and are sometimes called "black."

[30] Jun-chan Yoon, p.21.

American Interviewees

Chamness: "They like you or they just deal with you?"
Gunderson: "Both."

Background on Interviewees

The five American interviewees range in age from twenty-six to forty-four. Sherman Taylor was a Staff Sergeant in the Finance Corps of the Army in the late 1990s. D.J. Yi is a Nuclear Submarine Commander in the Navy. Steve White was a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force at the time of the interview and is now a Technical Sergeant. Steve LaRue is a Master Sergeant in the Air Force and Ramon Gunderson is a Sergeant in the Air Force.[31] White, LaRue and Gunderson are all in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC).

Taylor, Yi and Gunderson spent two tours of duty in Korea at various bases around Korea. LaRue is currently on his third tour and White is serving out his first tour at Kunsan Air Base.

All of the interviewees were born in the United States except D.J. Yi. He was born in Korea but moved to the United States at the age of thirteen.

White and Yi have completed post graduate studies and various levels of military technical training in their respective fields. White, LaRue and Gunderson have high school educations and have completed Air Force technical school in their field.

[31] See "Military Ranks by Service."

Training/Preparation for Korea

After asking the American interviewees about their youth and early careers, we discussed their first assignment to Korea. I asked them what kind of training or preparation they received from the military for their overseas assignment.

Sherman Taylor said that in the 1990s (when he first went to Korea), the Army gave him almost no preparation for going abroad. The only training he went through was a one hour session on the basics of Korea.

D.J.Yi said that the Navy currently has a more extensive program for sailors stationed abroad. Not only is there an overseas screening process for everyone going overseas, there is also a sponsor program. Men and women are given a sponsor from the base they will be going to and they can get information on the base and the country. Similarly, the Air Force also has a sponsor program where an airman can request a sponsor from their assigned base and the Army now has this option as well.

In Ramon's case, he said that he learned a lot about Korea from his father before leaving. His father was also in the Air Force and had done a one-year tour in South Korea at Osan Air Base. He found out upon arrival though, that the situation had changed dramatically since his father had served.

No one mentioned it, but there is also the USFK website that provides links to the major military organizations present, personnel units and information on SOFA. This website also contains a welcome guide and South Korean fact book. After spending time

on this website, I found advice on lifestyle, the history of Korea, and tips and phrases to get started with the Korean language.[32]

Best/Worst Thing about Korea

Judging from the way all the men spoke about their time in Korea, all of them have enjoyed their tour(s). I asked them what the best and worst thing about serving in Korea was.

Although they all like Korea, they had different answers of the best thing about it. Sherman Taylor said the best thing for him was meeting his fiancée, who is Korean. He also mentioned his financial freedom due to the low cost of everything in Korea. Steve White mentioned that the best thing was becoming closer with his family during his time away. He said that they talk more now than ever. Steve LaRue greatly appreciates the rich culture of Korea and the long and interesting history of the country. It is much different than what we are used to in the States, he said. And Ramon Gunderson said the best thing about Korea was the people he has met and built relationships with. He also declared that Korea is "a single man's paradise."[33]

By far, the overwhelming response to the worst thing about Korea was separation from family. Taylor, White and Gunderson said that it is difficult to live so far away from your family, i.e. on the opposite side of the globe. Korea is largely a non-command

[32] "US Forces Korea" Website.
[33] Interview with Ramon Gunderson, (25 July 2004) p.28.

sponsored tour, also known as a hardship or remote tour. Only three thousand personnel are command sponsored out of the 32,000 currently serving on the Korean peninsula.[34]

Steve LaRue said that the worst thing about being stationed in Korea is being a soldier and having to abide by so many rules. He has really enjoyed his time in Korea but dislikes many restrictions like where soldiers can and cannot go, curfews, and other limitations. LaRue and White told me that all soldiers must go with someone else whenever they leave the base. In the Air Force they call it the "Wingman program." Another rule requires a G-7 rank or higher before soldiers are allowed to drive. After the interview, LaRue added more details about more limitations for soldiers. Barbershops, *chimchilbangs* (saunas), *noraebangs* (karaoke), massage parlors, and certain bars and clubs are off-limits to military personnel and in some cases, DOD civilians. Although USFK tells the men and women that these places are restricted because of sanitary conditions, he speculates (and I agree) that this is not the real concern. All of these places can sometimes be a front for brothels and there have probably been problems in the past in these types of establishments, so now they are all off-limits.

Similarly, there was problem with littering after people bought food from food stalls on the street. Now newcomers are told that there are serious health concerns with food stalls like salmonella contamination and they could die if they consumed tainted foods. Evidently, the littering problem has since ceased. Soldiers are also not allowed to be on or in "open bodies of water." Again, sanitary conditions are the excuse GIs are

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[34] Non-command sponsored means that the military does not pay for family members to relocate to that location and does not offer full benefits to those who choose to relocate anyway. There is also a restriction on the number of family member in country for "security and evacuation purposes."
"US Forces Korea" Website.

given but I believe there have been problems at lakes or at the beaches, perhaps alcohol-related incidents.

D.J. Yi also told me after his interview about the curfew for all GIs. Currently, the curfew is midnight Sunday through Thursday and one o'clock on Friday and Saturday nights. Although there have always been restrictions, it is only recently that they are being enforced; military police often go out after curfew and to off-limits areas to round up soldiers breaking the rules. LaRue was in Korea during the accident in the summer of 2002 and he said that all bases had a curfew of seven o'clock every night for three weeks after the occurrence. During protests and demonstrations, the bases are always locked down and no one can leave the premises.

Problems

As opposed to the Korean interviewees, all of the American interviewees did not come up with a laundry list of problems between the USFK and Korea. The problems that people named were also not the same as the ones Koreans identified.

White, LaRue and Gunderson all stated that there were no major problems between the United States military and Korea or the Korean people. The two Steves mentioned that there were small peaceful demonstrations around the Kunsan base but they never caused any trouble. There have also been violent protests in Seoul, but LaRue said that these were instigated by Koreans and did not involve American soldiers.[35]

[35] The protests took place outside Yongsan base, where Korean guards and riot police are in charge of suppressing disturbances. In some cases, Korean policemen were injured by protesters throwing stones and Molotov cocktails.

Two people mentioned that there have been problems with soldiers getting out of hand, and this often involves alcohol. Taylor said, "You have youth, inebriated, and lots of women and they have money. So I don't think I would like that living in my town either." When pressed further he added:

> It's not necessarily the soldier, it's the type of person...I've never once heard a criticism of a thirty-five year old lieutenant colonel...The only problems you hear are generated by youth.[36]

Gunderson also felt like some individuals cause problems for everyone. "Just typical American—or any country—get drunk, get stupid. They make bad images of everybody." But in these times, he said, the military makes "a pretty good example of you." LaRue added, "They'll fry you. For real."[37]

Taylor and Yi also see more political issues between the two countries. Taylor pointed out that there are problems between the Korean government and people that stir up resentment for the American military. The Korean government's negotiating position is weak, he said. Yi said something similar and included that Korea needs more educated and capable negotiators in the international arena.

Yi went more in depth about the Korean political situation as well. One problem he said is the increasing nationalism in Korea and that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the labor movements are increasingly powerful in setting the national agenda. He also suggested that the media is too critical of the American soldiers' behavior:

> The media is unfair and I think American troops...are doing their jobs here. Are they going to be crime free? I say no. Are they going to do stuff in town? But overall, I think they are well behaved.[38]

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[36] Interview with Sherman Taylor, (15 June 2004) p.29.
[37] Ramon Gunderson, p.26-27.
[38] Interview with D.J. Yi, (18 July 2004) p.34.

Yi went on to say that SOFA is always an issue, but his view was different from that of the Korean participants. He stated that Koreans do not know what SOFA is or what it is for. In addition to that, they don't appreciate the military's situation:

> Korea says that SOFA is unfair and the Korean government is providing for a large chunk of presence here. But U.S. is not getting much out of Korea by having our troops here…We are helping Korea. I don't think the Koreans understand that.[39]

Yi pointed out that there are also cultural differences on the definition of justice. In the U.S., a person who kills someone in a vehicular accident, for example, usually does not serve time in prison but in Korea, such a person would be convicted and would serve many years in prison. The two countries also view prison sentences and benefits differently.

After his interview, LaRue also mentioned a few smaller problems that have since been dealt with. In one situation a DOD civilian was caught dumping illegal chemicals down the drain at Yongsan base, where the drainage system connects to the Han River. The military was fined and the man was sent home; he could not be arrested at the time because of his civilian status. There has also been an issue of personnel dependants and underage drinking. Though he did not specify how, LaRue stated that the problem has been resolved.

U.S. Stay in Korea?

Of the five American participants, only two of them said that USFK should remain in Korea. Steve White said that the U.S. presence is really important, although

[39] D.J. Yi, p.39

remaining on the demilitarized zone (DMZ) is probably not necessary. Steve LaRue stated that the U.S. should stay "until the armistice actually becomes a peace treaty."[40]

The other three interviewees did not feel that the U.S. military should still be in Korea. Sherman Taylor thought it was more important that Korea is supported by more U.N. troops, not mainly U.S. troops. D.J. Yi felt like the U.S. has no real interest in Korea and the involvement is more of a symbolic gesture. He also said that the USFK should not stay if Koreans continue to complain about our presence. And finally, Ramon Gunderson said, "Obviously we are here to protect our own {economic} interests and not Korea's." He emphatically added, "I'm sorry, we're not the world's police force."[41]

Soldier View on Korea/Koreans

As I stated before, each one of the men I interviewed truly enjoyed their tour(s) in Korea but they speculated about how the general military population felt about Korea.

Each one of them expressed that they were apprehensive about going to Korea in the first place. It was also difficult getting off the base at first. For a few of them, it took months before they were ready to travel and interact with the Korean population. D.J. told me after his interview that his men did not have a lot of time to get off the base and when there was time, they sometimes did not want to go anywhere. Many of the soldiers have not been away from home and are intimidated by the language and cultural differences, not to mention the "stories they have heard about guys who go out." Yi explained that there are some groups whose purpose is to make the military look bad.

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[40] Interview with Steve LaRue, (25 July 2005) p.29.
[41] Ramon Gunderson, p.28.

These groups try to start fights with soldiers and are waiting with cameras in the event of a soldier striking back.[42]

Even with the language difference and disturbing tales, Yi explained that once soldiers get away from the base more, they find that they really like Korea. White told me that no one really dislikes Korea and most people are pretty happy during their tour. Similarly, Gunderson made it clear that he loved Korea and that Americans do like the country and the people.

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation Office (MWR) organizes trips within Korea and these tours are always full, Gunderson said. White and LaRue have taken advantage of a language exchange class on base and there are also other classes, including Korean cooking, on all the bases.

Taylor said that immediately following 9/11 soldiers liked assignments in Korea because it meant they would not be deployed to Afghanistan but the situation has now changed. Soldiers in Korea can now be directly re-deployed to Iraq so it is no longer "safe." Deployments and curfews are two reasons why GIs may no longer like a tour in Korea. LaRue mentioned the restricting rules as well and said that separation from family causes many people to want to do their time and leave. But he also said that many soldiers like Korea by the end of their assignment and want to return in the future.

Korean View on Soldier

When asked how Koreans feel about American soldiers, most of the responses I received indicated that they thought Koreans did like GIs for the most part. Although

[42] D.J. Yi, p.29.

several of them have had a confrontational Korean approach them, they felt like the general population still wanted the American military to remain in South Korea. After Gunderson responded that Koreans want the American military, I asked, "They like you or they just deal with you?" He responded, "I think both."[43] The Americans stationed at Kunsan indicated that the local population is extremely friendly to them. When LaRue was in Pyeongtaek, the community sponsored an "American Soldier Appreciation Day."

Sherman Taylor said that Koreans do not get along with younger, enlisted soldiers but older NCOs and officers are less problematic.[44] D.J. Yi indicated that the older generation is more appreciative of the American forces because they lived through the Korean War and fully understand the North Korean threat and importance of USFK in keeping peace. He said that the younger generation generally has bad impressions of soldiers until they meet them and their feelings become more positive. He did not say this, but it seemed like he was saying that interactions with Koreans make a soldier more of an individual in the Korean's eyes, not just a part of a greater military.

Yi has also heard complaints from KATUSA members about U.S. soldiers.[45] Because KATUSAs are usually older and more educated that the American GIs, they sometimes find it difficult to live and work together.

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[43] Ramon Gunderson, p.29.

[44] Though many people think this, two of the soldiers serving time in Korean prison are actually officers. Robson, "For U.S. Inmates In S. Korean Prison, Time Feels Like It's Standing Still."

[45] KATUSA is a program set up by the Korean and American governments for Korean males of military service age. If men pass a physical and have a certain score on the TOEIC, then they may apply for KATUSA. A drawing is held to pick those who can join. Members become members of the American military for two years—they work, eat and live side by side with U.S. service members.

Analysis

"The United States has never and should never promise to go to war on someone else's terms. If South Korea wants America's aid, it must accept the conditions under which such assistance is offered. Real equality is simply impossible."[46]

The Korean Side

It is clear to anyone who has recently been to South Korea that tensions are again developing between the two countries. Up until the end of the Cold War, the United States and South Korea have had the same goals for the Korean peninsula: defense of South Korea, deterrence of another North Korean attack and a stable economy for Seoul. Even so, while Korea had its own security as first priority, the U.S. had much larger objectives. South Korea was one pawn in the greater chess game between the two Cold War powers. Throughout the Cold War, Washington and Seoul were able to overcome difficult issues because of both countries' defense priorities and because the more powerful U.S. largely took control of the agenda and prescribed solutions to the much smaller Korea. Diplomatic concerns like Koreagate developed but were eventually pardoned.[47] Other problems in Korea like the Kwangju Massacre were largely overlooked.[48]

For decades the Korean people lived under oppressive authoritarian governments and were unable to express any dissenting views they might have had. National security was used as an excuse to silence individuals.[49] The North Korean threat was of

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[46] Ted Carpenter and Doug Bandow, *The Korean Conundrum: America's Troubled Relations with North and South Korea,* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004) p.135.
[47] In the 1980s, several Korean dignitaries tried to bribe many U.S. congressmen to push issues in the legislature favoring South Korea. This became known as Koreagate.
[48] The U.S. military (and government) has long been criticized for "allowing" authoritarian regimes to take control of the Korean government. They have also been blamed for the violent crackdown on various group of protestors, like at the Kwangju Uprising.
[49] Moon, 159.

immediate concern to everyone and there was no question that USFK were there to protect South Korea, even if they did not (or could not) protect Koreans from their own government. But now the Cold War is over and South Korea has become an increasingly liberal society.

South Korea's development of democracy and liberal ideas has created several of the factors leading to growing anti-Americanism. One of these factors is the growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), stimulated also through Korean economic development. In his *Asian Affairs* article, Jinwung Kim comes to the same conclusion that D.J. Yi did in his interview that NGO activists continue to push for complete withdrawal of troops and gain public support by focusing "on issues that reduce the political credibility of the alliance."[50] The NGOs, like American lobbyist groups, have become increasingly powerful in influencing not only the public, but the national agenda.

Other factors that may contribute to the increase in anti-American feelings are also a direct result of the democratization of South Korea. There has always been some degree of resentment towards American troops since the initial occupation of the peninsula. This resentment grew during times of conflict like the Vietnam War and during the authoritarian regimes of the 1970s and 1980s. But now citizens are allowed to express their discontent publicly. In addition to that, the democracy movement has advocated equality and sought to "dismantle the privileged few." Frustrated with the Korean economic structure, they originally intended this to mean *chaebol* owners and politicians, who possessed the wealth and continuously took advantage of the laws.[51]

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[50] Kim, p.270.
[51] *Chaebol* is the Korean word for a conglomerate of smaller companies connected to one larger company. Korean *chaebols* include Hyundai and Samsung.

More recently it has come to include the USFK. No longer are people, especially in the younger generations, willing to tolerate giving American troops a free ride, regardless of their role in the defense of South Korea.[52]

The Koreans that I interviewed were all born after the Korean War and largely began their educations at the end or after the Cold War. They have also matured through an increasingly liberal education, especially at the college level, and listened to increasingly liberal media outlets. This college-age group is the section of Korean society that polls have shown as the most anti-American.

The most publicized incidents that have caused problems between the two countries in the last decade are almost always individual soldiers breaking laws. To be sure, there have been American soldiers that have broken Korean laws. One of the most famous incidents happened in 1992 when a soldier murdered and dismembered a prostitute. In 1995, a fight broke out in the subway between four GIs and several Koreans. In 2000, another soldier killed a bar maid for refusing to have sex. These are not the only crimes that military personnel have committed but they were the most publicized at the time. Having said that though, there has been very little crime overall with Americans in the military. NGOs often cite large numbers of crimes by soldiers to outrage the public, but the majority of these are traffic crimes and other misdemeanors.[53]

As I stated, several of the Korean interviewees commented on the issue of American soldiers committing crimes and often pointed to the murder of prostitutes or the vehicle accident that killed two schoolgirls. But again, the main issue that the majority of the participants has is with the punishment given to these "criminals". They

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[52] Kim, p.270.
[53] Carpenter and Bandow, p.13-14.

expressed that Korea is being treated as a second-rate partner because the U.S. is only concerned with protecting its own people, not working together with Korea to achieve "justice."

Other incidents also occur that test the relationship between the ROK and the U.S. and these events have nothing to do with American soldiers. Two such obstacles have been the past two Olympic Games. D.J. Yi mentioned that the 2002 Winter Olympics were controversial. BBC News reported at the time that a Korean speed skater was disqualified and an American took the gold medal; this "caused widespread anger in South Korea."[54] More recently, the 2004 Summer Olympics produced another controversy concerning a Korean athlete and again, Koreans were outraged when an American received the gold medal in men's gymnastics. Other disputes of concern are more political, like America's invasion of Iraq and the decision to send Korean support troops.

Public opinion polls generally show that anti-American sentiment is growing within the younger generations of Koreans. Two polls produced by Korean newspapers in 1996 and 1999 indicated this. In 1996, twenty-eight percent of the population wanted to decrease the number of American troops and four percent wanted a complete withdrawal. By 1999, these numbers had increased to thirty-five and half percent and five and half percent, respectively. The same poll also asked which country was the most "threatening country" for South Korea's security. Six percent of respondents said the United States in 1996 and in 1999, nineteen percent said the U.S.[55] The poll was

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[54] "Koreans Lose Speed Skating Appeal," BBC News, February 23, 2002.

[55] Norman D. Levin, *The Shape of Korea's Future: South Korean Attitudes Toward Unification and Long-Term Security*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999) p.18, 25.

conducted again in July 2003 and reported that one-third of the general Korean population and one-half of college students saw the U.S. as the greatest threat.[56]

Similarly, a poll conducted by Yonsei University found that forty-one percent of the participants considered themselves "anti-American" and twenty-one percent were "pro-American." At the same time, half the students felt the U.S. military is necessary while thirty-one percent were against the USFK presence.[57]

Polls have also stressed that Koreans feel that they are not treated equally by Americans and this is most obvious in SOFA. In the late 1990s, polls showed that sixty-seven percent of the population thought Americans looked down on them and eighty-six percent believed that Korea has become secondary to the dominant U.S. role in relations between the two. Another survey in 2000 indicated that seventy-six percent of the respondents thought SOFA "is unequal."[58] Judging from the published polls and from the interviews conducted for this project, it is clear that Koreans want to feel like they are being treated as equals. Many have also expressed that the U.S. government and military should be more sensitive to Korean culture and societal norms.

There are many challenges in addressing these specific issues. If the United States wants to maintain the status quo, then the long-term goal should be to improve Korean impressions of their standing the relationship and accommodating the rise in nationalism and Korean "self-confidence" by creating a larger role for Seoul to play.[59] The U.S. must first decide, however, if maintaining troops on the Korean peninsula is still necessary now that the Cold War is over. There is no need to contain Soviet expansion

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[56] Carpenter and Bandow, p.17.
[57] Kim, p.271.
[58] Levin, *The Shape of Korea's Future*, p.27.
Kim, p.274.

and/or communism any longer so Washington must reassess the need for the American military around Asia, and more specifically Korea.

Despite the harsh criticisms and popularity of anti-Americanism, the majority of Koreans still want USFK to remain in South Korea. Although the sample group for this project was not representative of the general population, the fact that thirteen out of fourteen people want the U.S. military to stay still says a lot. These participants are from the group that are supposedly the most critical and several of them studied at Yonsei University, which is one of the most liberal campuses in the country. Still they felt the troops should remain.

The reasons given for their opinions are the same things researchers point out. First, Korea has neither the manpower nor the technology to defend itself from a North Korean attack. Bumseok Park recalled that one newspaper reported that Seoul would be conquered within hours if USFK left the peninsula. Others also mentioned that Korea needs the U.S. military for economic reasons. It is estimated that if the U.S. withdraws its troops, Korean defense spending would go from 2.7 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) to six percent of the GDP.[60] The required military service of South Korean men would also undoubtedly be longer than two years without U.S. soldiers on the peninsula.

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[59] Levin, *The Shape of Korea's Future*, p.xvii.
[60] Levin, *Do the Ties Still Bind?*, p.13.

The American Side

While Koreans are beginning to question the presence of American troops in Korea, Americans are also reevaluating the situation. After the fall of communist Russia, some started to wonder if it was in the United States interests to remain on the frontlines of the "Bamboo Curtain." Diplomatic relations with China have also strengthened within the past decade as China turns toward a more capitalist society.

In 2002, it cost the United States three billion dollars to keep troops in South Korea. Seoul's financial contribution amounted to less than $490 million.[61] But the costs of U.S. involvement on the Korean peninsula are not only economical. The Korea Defense Veterans of America estimate that since the end of the Korea War, more than fifteen hundred Americans have died on duty in Korea.

At this time, more military personnel and even scholars are beginning to question the necessity of U.S. troops in Korea. Two researchers conclude that it is not in the interest of the United States to protect South Korea anymore. Carpenter and Bandow accuse Seoul of "defense free-riding" and say that the relationship is based on a "one-sided guarantee."[62] While they tend to draw more neoconservative conclusions, their arguments are growing more popular among many traditionalist and even some multilateral Americans. Another report (that was originally prepared for the Air Force) acknowledges that many American military and political officials feel like the ROK "can afford to do more, and pay more, for their own defense."

This same report for the Air Force found that several other issues are causing long-term problems. One factor was inadequate housing and poor conditions for military

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[61] Levin, *Do the Ties Still Bind?*, p.12.
[62] Carpenter and Bandow, p.123.

personnel in Korea. Another issue was South Korea's insistence on changing SOFA.[63] While none of my interviewees mentioned housing as a problem, they did mention the strict rules they have to abide by and random words and acts of hostility from Koreans. One person stated that though Koreans complain about SOFA, it can never change because it is there to protect our troops. He made the same point as the quote I used to begin this section. It cannot be clearer. When it comes to treaties and agreements like SOFA, "Real equality is simply impossible."[64]

The U.S. will never agree to station troops where they are not protected by the law. For example, under Saudi Arabian law a thief can be punished by having their hands cut off but under our laws, that would be considered cruel and unusual punishment. Military personnel stationed in Saudi Arabia are protected from this law. D.J. Yi stated that the U.S. is not intending to treat South Korea as inferior in its interactions but rather, trying to protect itself. Whether the ally is Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Germany or Korea, the U.S. will have to act as a larger power (at least in the military context) because it is the larger power with more to lose.

Judging from the projected effects to South Korea if the USFK were to withdraw, it is fair to say that Seoul is dependent on the U.S. military for protection. However, there has not been a great deal of concentration on shifting more responsibility to the Korean military. Only recently has Korea pursued greater military technology and capabilities and more leadership roles for its forces. The primary reason for the recent shift is almost certainly that both sides are no longer assured that U.S. troops will stay in Korea in the decades to come.

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[63] Levin, *Do the Ties Still Bind?*, p.61-62.
[64] Carpenter and Bandow, p.135.

But in the past, the ROK and the U.S. saw the need for American troops in South Korea and the USFK has taken some steps to make the relationship more amicable. Even though the U.S. has not changed the basic principles of SOFA since its creation in 1966, the military has made many other efforts to improve and secure its relationship with Korea and the Korean people. One such effort was the Camptown Clean-up Campaign from 1971 to 1976. This campaign was initiated by the Joint SOFA Committee for the purposes of lowering venereal disease rates among prostitutes and soldiers, environmental clean-ups around military installations, and ending racial segregation and tensions in the many camptowns' clubs and bars.[65]

Another larger and more recent effort began in 2002 with the Land Partnership Plan (LPP). The LPP was designed to minimize the number of U.S. bases on Korean soil and reduce the total amount of American land by forty-three percent. In June 2003, the "Future of the Alliance Policy Initiative" furthered the plan by transferring more defense responsibilities to ROK Forces and beginning to relocate troops away from the Yongsan base in Seoul.[66]

The USFK has also taken other steps to try to develop friendly relations with the local populations. Though these measures are not as publicized as bad press, I feel that they are still important. As I have already mentioned, soldiers are severely restricted by curfew and many off-limits areas to reduce the chances of problems arising. USFK also created the Good Neighbor Program that sponsors numerous events and community outreach programs every month involving hundreds of soldiers. The Good Neighbor

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[65] Moon, p.57-72.
[66] Levin, *Do the Ties Still Bind?*, p.32.

Program also recognizes Korean individuals or organizations that have made "exceptional contributions" for Good Neighbor Awards every year.[67]

[67] For more information on the types and numbers of Good Neighbor Programs, see the USFK website at: <http://www.usfk.or.kr/en/good/efforts.php>

Conclusion

"같이갑시다!"

The USFK website exclaims "Katchi Kapshida! We Go Together!"[68] This is only one of symbols that the U.S. military has tried to be a more courteous (and friendly) neighbor to Korea in the past few decades. These actions on behalf on the military are often not widely known and anti-American sentiment continues to increase among the Korean population, and the college-age group in particular. So the question is: What does all of this mean for the USFK and for Korea?

Many things can be taken from the information in these interviews and other studies. First, we can look at what both sides can do to foster more understanding and a better relationship. And finally, we can determine if the relationship will ever be the same as it was in the past and what needs to happen in the future.

There are several things the U.S. military and Korea can do (and must do) to reverse the anti-American trend in South Korea. The primary goal should be to increase sympathy and better understanding between the two groups. Koreans obviously feel like they are treated as inferiors while Americans sometimes say they feel used and unappreciated, but more commonly are just anxious about being in a country that is so entirely foreign to them.

First of all, the American armed forces have done a much better job of screening and preparing our troops for tours abroad in recent years. This, however, is not enough. It regularly takes a soldier months before he feels comfortable enough to get away from the base. This says that he is not equipped with enough knowledge of Korean society and

culture to feel at ease. The U.S. military needs to provide more information to its men and women about the foreign culture they are going to, give more cultural or language training if possible and have more open discussions for those with foreign deployments. When I went to Korea, I read books like *Culture Shock: Korea* and *Lonely Planet Korea*.[69] Whether the military makes books like these required reading or can produce its own updated and more practical versions for military personnel, every soldier that steps onto Korean soil should have basic knowledge about Korea and its people.

In addition to improving the quality of life for its own personnel, I cannot stress enough the need for better public relations with the Korean community. Two people said this during their interview, one Korean and one American. D.J. Yi indicated that USFK need to work on its PR skills. Even more telling was this from Jun-chan Yoon:

> I want to advise the American troops' headquarters...They have to communicate with Korean common people because we don't know many things about American troops. Even if they cannot communicate and talk very well with Korean people, they have to share activities and they have to appear to Korean people...because we have to be favorable about American troops if we have to be together in Korea.[70]

The USFK Good Neighbor Program is a step in the right direction. It serves as the model for what Korean people want to see change in the military. Whether it is through a language exchange session or volunteer work, many people are trying to break down the stereotype of the inconsiderate American soldier. But the Korean community does not know about these programs. The U.S. military has to do more information sharing, sponsor community discussion groups, do more community service and appeal

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[68] "USFK, 주한미군" Website. United States Forces Korea, 2005.

[69] Sonja Vegdahl Hur and Ben Seunghwa Hur, *Culture Shock: Korea*, (Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 1992).
Robert Storey and Alex English, *Lonely Planet Korea, 5th Edition.* (Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications Ltd., 2001).

to the Korean media so that a wider audience can see that the American military does not intend to play the role of conqueror in South Korea.

At the same time, the responsibility of the Korean people is to get informed on the issues surrounding the U.S. military presence on the Korean peninsula. Those that claim to be anti-American need to look at the situation on more than just a personal level and try to understand it. If people want to criticize the U.S., they should research the facts about SOFA, find out about American soldiers and crimes, and understand the role of their own government in relations with the U.S. military. The population only hears negative news about USFK but like most other countries (including the U.S.) few actually make an effort to find out more information on critical points. Koreans should also make an effort to become less emotional when considering international affairs. Time and time again, the interviewees said on and off tape that Koreans are emotional people. But there is little room for feelings in politics and Korea should not take events personally, especially things like the Olympic Games.

Youngha Woo noticed that the situation is quite ironic. "They always say, 'I have some bad feeling for America,' but I know they want to go there and study...and they always watch Hollywood movies."[71] In general, Koreans really do enjoy American culture and respect American people; it is just the U.S. military that they have problems with. They also see soldiers differently than other Americans and have a difficult time separating them from the greater military entity. Instead of generalizing and assuming the bad things they hear about soldiers are true, they should try to withhold judgment

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[70] Jun-chan Yoon, p.22.
[71] Youngha Woo, p.15.

until they meet a several GIs. Then they can decide if soldiers are the rough, violent and scary young men that so many Koreans think they are.

Even if the USFK implemented extreme measures for the sake of strengthening relations with the local population and the Korean people became more informed on the issues, the relationship still could become what it has been in the past. But this is not to say that that is a bad thing. In the past, the ties were entirely dominated by the needs of the United States, which also carried the entire economic burden. Severe racism and segregation, sexism and military prostitution were also issues that plagued many years of the relationship. It would not benefit anyone to return to any of these things and because of the democratization developments in South Korea, it never will return to this condition.

At the same time, the situation is deteriorating and anti-Americanism continues to increase among not just college students, but the population as a whole. If U.S. troops are going to remain in Korea, certain issues need to be addressed so that the two populations can coexist peacefully. In peace and compromise, both sides can leave satisfied. Koreans can feel like full-partners of the U.S. and be assured that their culture and norms are respected and the U.S. military can be more efficient if military personnel are content and the local population is accepting of the bases.

At the beginning of the introduction, I started with a quote from the interview with "Kim." What he said was extremely significant because it makes clear the answer to many of the problems facing US-ROK relations. There are some issues that will probably never be resolved but many such problems begin with understanding each other's cultures and respecting differences. It is my hope that this project will allow more

people to see the importance of tolerance and cooperation and can change at least one mind and heart.

Interviews by Lindsey N. Chamness:		
Hyun-Mi Kim	5 June 2004	Seoul, Korea
Sherman Taylor	15 June 2004	Seoul, Korea
Juhee Kim	20 June 2004	Seoul, Korea
Youngha Woo	22 June 2004	Seoul, Korea
Jinhee Shin	26 June 2004	Seoul, Korea
Jungeui Lee	28 June 2004	Seoul, Korea
Yoon Hye Young	30 June 2004	Seoul, Korea
Korean Male- "Kim"	2 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
Bumseok Park	4 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
Roy Kim	12 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
Lee Jin-Hyuck	12 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
Faye Kim	14 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
Sam Lee	15 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
Jasmine Lee	17 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
D.J. Yi	18 July 2004	Yongsan Base, Korea
Jun-chan Yoon	19 July 2004	Seoul, Korea
Steve White	25 July2004	Kunsan AFB, Korea
Steve LaRue	25 July2004	Kunsan AFB, Korea
Ramon Gunderson	25 July2004	Kunsan AFB, Korea

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Form B: Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

IRB #_____ Date Received in OR_____

Principal Investigator:
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I. IDENTIFICATION OF PROJECT

Project Classification: College Scholars Senior Project and Other (Internship Project for the Center for the Study of War and Society)

Project Title: Same Side of the 38th: A Comparative Oral History Project

Starting Date: May 2004

Estimated Completion Date: I intend to conduct interviews through August 2004. I will continue to transcribe the interviews and finish the project in early Spring 2005.

External Funding: There is no external funding for my project (at this time).

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

My goal is to create an oral history project comparing the experiences of Korean citizens with that of American soldiers stationed in Korea. I will examine the attitudes and opinions of both groups toward one another, how these attitudes formed, and what is being done, in anything, to overcome this. Once completed, I hope to identify the sources of conflict between Koreans and the American military so that these problems or misunderstandings may possibly be resolved in the future.

III. DESCRIPTION AND SOURCE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

As stated before, I intend to interview Koreans and American Soldiers stationed in Korea. I will travel to Korea this summer to carry out this project. The Korean participants will be acquaintances I made while I was in Korea (during the 2002-2003 school year) or friends of those acquaintances who have volunteered. The American participants will also be volunteers. I have made several contacts within the military in Korea and will locate participants as they are referred to me through those contacts.

Because I will be working with a small number of interviewees, approximately between 15 and 20, my project will be confined to Seoul and the surrounding area. Aside from this limitation, I will try to obtain the most diverse group possible. The Korean participants will range in age from 22-29; some are still attending university, some have completed Korean military service, and the rest are now working. I will try to find Americans from different parts of the country, with different backgrounds. They will range in age from 19-29. The interviews will be completed before I return to the States in August 2004.

IV. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Interaction with each participant will consist of the original contact, scheduling, and the interview itself. A list of preplanned questions will be the basis of each interview (Appendix A and B), but I may have some follow-up questions based on the responses. Each interview will try to be kept between one and two hours and will be spoken in English

After finishing the interviews, I will transcribe each interview verbatim. If possible, I will allow each interviewee to review his/her transcript and revise or delete statements from the transcript. Each interviewee will also receive a final copy of the transcript. With the permission of the participant, I will donate his/her original tape and transcript to the Center for the Study of War and Society.

Each person will be asked to sign an Informed Consent form (Appendix C). In addition, they will be asked to sign a Deed of Gift (Appendix D), which allows for possession of the interview tape and transcript by the Center, and for public use of the transcript.

V. SPECIFIC RISKS AND PROTECTION MEASURES

Every oral history interview will be set in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. This will create an extremely low risk of stress or discomfort. Each person will have the opportunity to take a break, go off the record, or end the interview, however, in the case any distress develops. Each interviewee will also have the opportunity to replace their name with a pseudonym if they wish to remain anonymous.

VI. BENEFITS

Many people assume that America is only represented abroad by our diplomats and the President. However, other countries- especially those with American military bases- are face-to-face with Americans every day. Each man or woman becomes an ambassador of America. Every action is seriously scrutinized by the host country; any "problem" could become a problem in the relations between the two countries.

My project focuses on an aspect of U.S. foreign affairs and international relations that is greatly overlooked. Although my project is a small case study in Seoul, I believe the results may be relevant to not only other American military bases in Korea, but in other countries such as Japan, Turkey, Germany and more. It will identify sources of conflict between American military and the host country. Hopefully the project will shed light on how these differences can be overcome to not only improve the military's efficiency in other countries, but to improve American foreign relations with countries where there is an American military presence.

VII. METHODS FOR OBTAINING "INFORMED CONSENT" FROM PARTICIPANTS

Following the practice of the Center for the Study of War and Society, each subject will sign an Informed Consent form and a Deed of Gift.

The Informed Consent form (Appendix C) will inform the subject they have the ability to remain anonymous, to restrict access to the interview, and to decline any questions or end the interview at any time. The Deed of Gift (Appendix D) allows the subject to limit public access to their tape and/or transcript. It will also give permission for the subject's interview to become property of the Center for the Study of War and Society. While the Informed Consent form is necessary, signing the Deed of Gift is strictly optional. Each person has the option to use a pseudonym but if they sign the Deed of Gift, both their tape and transcript will be given to the Center.

VIII. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATOR

In preparation for this project, I am taking Dr. Kurt Piehler's Oral Histories of War and Peace class this semester. For this class I have read The Oral History Manual by Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan and numerous interviews at the Center for the Study of War and Society. In addition, I have, for Dr. Piehler's class, already completed one interview with a Korean War veteran who was a POW for two years in North Korea. I will also complete another interview before the end of the semester.

IX. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO BE USED IN THE RESEARCH

I plan to borrow recording equipment from the Center for the Study of War and Society, with permission of Dr. Piehler, who is the Center's Director. I will either transcribe the interviews with my own equipment or at the Center.

X. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

By compliance with the policies established by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee, the principal investigator subscribes to the principles stated in "The Belmont Report" and standards of professional ethics in all research, development, and related activities involving human participants under the auspices of the University of Tennessee. The principal investigator further agrees that:

1. Approval will be obtained from the Institutional Review Board prior to instituting any change in this research project.
2. Development of any unexpected risks will be immediately reported to the Research Compliance Services section.

3. An annual review and progress report (Form R) will be completed and submitted when requested by the Institutional Review Board.
4. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for the duration of the project and for at least three years thereafter at a location approved by the Institutional Review Board.

XI. SIGNATURES

Principal Investigator
Name: Lindsey N. Chamness

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Advisor
Name: G. Kurt Piehler

Signature: _____ Date: _____

XII. DEPARTMENT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The application described above has been reviewed by the IRB departmental review committee and has been approved. The DRC further recommends that this application be reviewed as:

[ ] Expedited Review – Category(s): _____ OR

[ ] Full IRB Review

Chair, Departmental Review Committee

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department Head
Name: David W. Tandy

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPROVED: Research Compliance Services
Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions for Korean Interviewees

- Where was your family during the Korean War?
- What happened to them during and after the war?
- Do you have family in North Korea?
- How did your parents meet? What do they do for a living?
- Where and when were you born?
- Tell me about growing up: family, hometown, friends, etc.
- In school, what subjects did you study? What was your favorite? How were discipline problems taken care of? Did you play any sports? Did you go to a co-ed school or all-boys/all-girls school?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What was high school like? What was the college entrance exam like?
- What college do (did) you attend and why?
- What is (was) your major? What extracurricular activities did you do? Did you have a lot of time to have fun? How much did you study?

** What branch of the military did you serve in? Why? What was basic training like? How were your instructors? What was your job? Give me an idea of what your daily routine was like. Where did you serve and for how long? Did you have any joint exercises with the U.S. military? How much free time did you have?

- How does your family feel about the U.S. and the military?
- How did you feel about the tank accident two years ago?
- What was the media's reaction? Politicians' reactions?
- Did it change your views of the U.S. or the military?
- How did other students feel?
- How much contact do you have with foreigners? American soldiers?
- Where could you run into soldiers?
- How do they act? Are they the same as any other foreigners?
- Do you think the U.S. military should remain in Korea?
- What problems exist between the military and the Korean government/people?
- Have you ever been to a camptown? What did you think? What do Koreans think about camptowns?
- Do you think prostitution is a problem?
- Do you think American GIs like Korea/Koreans?
- Do you think Koreans like American GIs?

Questions for American Military Interviewees

- Where are your parents from? How did they meet?
- What do they do? What are they like?
- Where and when were you born?
- Tell me about your childhood: siblings/family, hometown, friends, etc.
- What do you remember about elementary school?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What was middle school like?
- Tell me about high school: sports, extracurricular activities. Did you do JROTC? What is most memorable about high school?

** Where did you go to college? What was your major?

- When did you join the military? What branch did you join and why? How did you enter?
- Did you have any family that served in the military? How did your family feel about you joining the military?
- When are when did you go to basic training? How long were you there? What kind of training did you go through? What was daily life like? Do you remember any instructors or friends you had?
- Did you receive advanced training? How did you choose your job? Where was advanced? How long was it? What training did you do there?
- Where was your first assignment? What was your job? Did you like it there?

** Other assignments

- How did you get an assignment to Korea? How much time did you have before departure?
- What was your initial reaction? Family's initial reaction?
- What did you know about Korea?
- Did the military provide any special training or other information to help you prepare?
- When did you arrive in Korea? Where? What was your first impression?
- What was is your job in Korea? What is a typical day like?
- Where do you live? How is it?
- How is the food on the base?
- How much free time do you have? What do you do and where do you go?
- How much interaction do you have with Koreans off base?
- Have you had a good or bad experience with KATUSA?
- Do you have Korean friends?
- What do you thin about Korean culture? Food?
- Can you speak any Korean?
- Do you like living in Korea? Do other soldiers feel the same?
- Have you been able to travel around Korea?
- Are other bases the same as yours or different?
- What is the camptown like?
- With the recent incident involving a soldier, what happened to that guy?

- What kind of problems exist between Korea and the U.S. military?
- Do you think U.S. troops should stay in Korea?
- What's the best part about being stationed in Korea? The worst part?
- Do Koreans like America? American GIs?
- Do American soldiers like Koreans/Korea?
- How much time do you have left in Korea?
- What is your next assignment?
- What are your future plans?

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY
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KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE 37996-0411

SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH: A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

We invite you to participate in the gathering of an oral history about your experiences in the military and your general life experiences. Your participation will consist of one or more interviews that will be audiotaped. You will be identified on the tape and credited as the source of information provided by you, unless you wish to remain anonymous, in which case you may replace your name with a pseudonym. The tapes will be donated to the Center for the Study of War and Society for deposit in the permanent collections of the University of Tennessee Library which will make them accessible to scholars, students, and others studying American military history. A transcript may be made of your interview in order to make it more accessible to scholars, students, and others studying American military history.

A separate "Gift Form" is attached which will give them permission to control future use of our interview.

Your participation will be voluntary, and you may decline any questions or withdraw from participation without penalty or prejudice. The interviewer in this project will be happy to provide answers to any questions you may have about this project.

I have read and understood this explanation of the oral history project and have had my questions about it answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate.

_____ _____
Name Date

_____
Signature

Lindsey N. Chamness
Interviewer
Undergraduate Student, Senior
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Contact Information:
(865) 310-9020
lchamnes@utk.edu

DEED OF GIFT
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH: A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

_____ (Interviewee) residing at _____ and Lindsey Chamness residing in Knoxville, Tennessee do hereby give to the Center for the Study of War and Society, Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville the tape recordings and any transcripts of my interviews conducted on _____ at _____. I understand that the Center for the Study of War and Society will use my oral history interview and any edited transcripts made from this interview for such historical and scholarly purposes they see fit and that by this conveyance I relinquish:

1. All legal title and literary property rights which I have or may be deemed to have in said work.

2. All my rights, title, and interest in copyright which I have or may be deemed to have in said work and more particularly the exclusive rights of reproduction, distribution, preparation of derivative works, public performance, and display. Right of reproduction and distribution will explicitly permit the posting of edited interview transcripts and audio tapes by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville on the Internet for use by scholars, students, and the general public.

I herein warrant that I have not assigned or in any manner encumbered or impaired any of the aforementioned rights in my oral memoir. The only conditions which I place on this unrestricted gift are:

1. If an edited transcript is made of my interview, I will receive a copy of it free of charge.

2.

AGREED:

_____ _____
Interviewee Date

AGREED:

_____ _____
Interviewer Date

The Center for the Study of War and Society, University of Tennessee, Knoxville hereby accepts the above described gift.

AGREED:
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE.

By:_____ _____
Director, Center for the Study of War and Society Date

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH HYUN-MI KIM

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JUNE 5, 2004

TRANSCRIPT BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CHAMNESS: This begins an interview with Hyun-Mi Kim and Lindsey Chamness on June 5, 2004 in Seoul, Korea. Now Hyun-Mi, the first question I'd like to ask you is where your family was during the Korean War.

KIM: My father's and my mother's side, both grandparents, were in South Korea. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And what—during the war what happened to your family?

KIM: Mm ... I guess my father's side, both grandparents, and my father and my father's sister, they were pretty safe. But my mother's side, my grandfather, he went to the war. He was chosen. He went to the war and unfortunately, it's very sad to say, but he died in the war.

CHAMNESS: And after the war what happened?

KIM: At first, my mother's family—it was very hard for them to live. But after ten years, maybe five years, they could get pension. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And when were your parents born?

KIM: 1946 and 1949. My father was born in 1946.

CHAMNESS: Do you have family in North Korea?

KIM: No.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So how did your parents meet?

KIM: My parents? Not grandparents?

CHAMNESS: Your parents.

KIM: My mother's brother, he introduced my father to my mother. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And what do your parents do for a living?

KIM: Now?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: After retiring, my father owns a store with my mom.

CHAMNESS: And what did he retire from?

KIM: He went to the GM/Daewoo Motors Company.

CHAMNESS: And where were you born? And when were you born?

KIM: Me? I was born in Hongsong, which is in Chungchong Province, and I was born in 1980.

CHAMNESS: Do you have siblings?

KIM: Yeah, sure. My older brother, who is three years older than me, and my older sister, who is two years older than me.

CHAMNESS: Okay, so I'd like to ask you a little bit about growing up, about your family or your hometown. What was it like growing up?

KIM: When I was young, we were a big family. We lived with my grandparents, my father's side. And I was really, really happy. I wish I could go back there to that time. And I could remember that is the happiest time in my time. It was kind of small town and I used go to the market with my grandfather. He used to ride me on his bicycle and it was really fun.

CHAMNESS: And how about your friends? What were your friends like when you were little?

KIM: My friends? I still remember one of my best friends. Her name is Jin-Sook and after, when I moved to another city, Chonan, I couldn't see her. So that's a really sad story.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. What kind of games did you play when you were little?

KIM: I don't know if you have that kind of game. We call it paper doll game. So we just cut the doll, which is printed in the paper, and we played with it.

CHAMNESS: Right. With make up clothes and you put on ...

KIM: Right, right. We didn't have Barbie when I was little.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Okay, so when you first went to school, what grade did you start in? Do you start in kindergarten here?

KIM: Sure, but I started my kindergarten in Hongsong but I couldn't finish it because my family, my father and mother and my siblings, they moved to another city, except me because my parents were worried about my grandparents. They thought maybe my grandparents would feel very lonely if they take me so they left me. But I missed my family so much, so I couldn't finish my kindergarten and I just went to Chonan.

CHAMNESS: So how long were you with your grandparents before you went with your family?

KIM: Just me?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: I don't know. Maybe seven months.

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay. So when you started school, what kind of subjects did you start when you were little?

KIM: All kinds of subjects. You know, in Korea we learned a lot of subjects so ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah. So when did you start other languages, like English? When did you start learning English?

KIM: I knew—when I was in elementary school I knew the alphabet, but I started officially in middle school.

CHAMNESS: So tell me about discipline in Korean schools. It's different than the United States, so tell me how teachers are disciplining students.

KIM: Now when I look back, I couldn't imagine even—because when I was in elementary school, in one classroom I had fifty classmates. That's a lot, yeah.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: And ... In elementary school there wasn't too much rules or discipline.

CHAMNESS: But if a child acted up, did the teachers spank?

KIM: Yeah spank, but it was quite reasonable, I think.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Alright. And did you play sports when you were little?

KIM: Sports?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Did you have a P.E. class? Like a Physical Education class?

KIM: Sure, yeah. Every—maybe three hours a week we had class. I don't know I can call it sports, but I used to go out and play with my friends.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And can you tell me a little about in elementary school and in middle school about girls and boys, about different—I've noticed that girls and boys don't play together here when they are little. I noticed that they sort of separate the sexes. Is that right?

KIM: Yeah. I also went to girls' middle school and girls' high school and when I was in middle/high school, it wasn't so common. There was not so many both middle/high schools. Most of the schools were separated, the boys and girls so ... I heard it originated from when Japan conquered ...

CHAMNESS: Okay.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And what was your favorite subject when you were little?

KIM: Little?

CHAMNESS: Sure.

KIM: Maybe, I don't know, math. And after I went to high school I liked science a lot. And English and French.

CHAMNESS: So what did you want to do when you grew up? What were you thinking? When I go to college, I want to be ... what?

KIM: Actually, I wanted to be a dentist or in architecture. But suddenly, I don't know what happened but I made up my mind to be a teacher.

CHAMNESS: Sure. So tell me a little bit about high school.

KIM: High school?

CHAMNESS: About being in an all girls' school. Did you have uniforms?

KIM: Sure, yeah. We all had uniforms and we had rules. In middle school, I couldn't grow my hair longer than three centimeters from my ear. And sometimes they checked our stuff, like what's in our bags or things like that. And we couldn't wear make-up, never, or we couldn't grow our nails, or we couldn't have earrings and things like that.

CHAMNESS: And this was in middle school?

KIM: Middle school.

CHAMNESS: And high school?

KIM: High school we can grow our hairs but we have to ... (Makes motion)

CHAMNESS: Pull back.

KIM: Yeah, pull back.

CHAMNESS: So did you have a lot of time to play in high school or did you study a lot?

KIM: No way! (Laughs) In high school, we have to study, study. But I don't know, it sounds weird, but I love studying. I love to study and when it was the most difficult time, I thought I was happy to have a chance to study and I thought I had so many chances to become whatever I want.

CHAMNESS: And what about the final exam to pass through high school. What was that like?

KIM: Mm ...

CHAMNESS: Was it difficult?

KIM: It was very difficult, yeah. Usually we have an old saying, "When you sleep over four hours at night, you will fail the college entrance exam."

CHAMNESS: Wow. (Laughs)

KIM: Yeah. So actually it happened when I was in third grade of my high school. Our school finished at eleven o'clock ...

CHAMNESS: At night?

KIM: At night and then I go to the library right away and I study until two or three o'clock. Then I go home and I had to wake up at 6:10 or something like that.

CHAMNESS: Wow. Okay so ... you did get into college.

KIM: Yes. (Laughter) But I wasn't good at the exam. I don't like the one thing because everything was decided only by one time exam. So it's not fair, I think.

CHAMNESS: What college did you go to?

KIM: I went to the National University of Education, so after the university, only the graduate person could be an elementary school teacher. It's kind of special college.

CHAMNESS: So by the time you exited high school, you wanted to be a teacher? Is that why you chose this college?

KIM: Half of that and another half of that from my parents because being a teacher is very—everybody in Korea loves to be a teacher.

CHAMNESS: So in high school you didn't have any time for fun, but in college did that change?

KIM: Sure, yeah. Like first year and second year in college we have a lot of time and we could enjoy our free time as much as we want.

CHAMNESS: And what did you do in your free time?

KIM: We joined in clubs. I joined the movie club so we made short films or we went to the movie together. And usually we went to rollerblade or things like that.

CHAMNESS: Now the next thing I want to ask you is what you've been doing after you graduated. When exactly did you graduate?

KIM: Last year, February.

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm. And what have you been doing since then?

KIM: Since then I prepared for the exam to qualify me as a teacher so I had to study really, really hard.

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm.

KIM: Yeah. And this year I finally passed the exam so now I am waiting for my appointment. And so ...

CHAMNESS: Alright, now the next topic I want to talk about is your ideas about America. So the first question I want to ask you is what exactly your family taught you about the U.S. or the U.S. military when you were growing up. Did you ever hear anything from them about the U.S?

KIM: From my family? No, not much. America is like any other country so we don't really talk about America especially.

CHAMNESS: And what about in school? What were you learning in school?

KIM: In school? We just learned about American history, like any other country's history and especially when we learned about Korean War or things like that. We learned the General MacArthur, he came and helped me a lot and also right after the Korean War the Americans helped me—helped Korea in a lot of ways.

CHAMNESS: And what about the American military?

KIM: The American military? They are—a lot of them are still in Korea and we think we need them but in some way, I think there is an affair ... I heard there is—we made an unfair treaty with America so I'm happy they send us a lot of soldiers to protect us from North Korea but some of them—not everybody, but some of the American soldiers—they commit a crime and they are not punished fairly, we think. Because after they are committing crimes, they escaped, just they go back to their country and there is no punishment.

CHAMNESS: Is that what you mean by unfair treaty? That the soldiers aren't punished?

KIM: Yeah. A lot of things.

CHAMNESS: A lot of things.

KIM: Yeah. I heard—I'm not sure if this is right information, but I heard U.S. military, they pay—in Japan, like the facilities or the lands they use, but in Korea they never pay or they ask a lot of money or ... yeah. They don't follow any Korean law. We think some of them don't respect at all.

CHAMNESS: Two years ago in the summer there was an accident where an American tank ran over two Korean girls. How did you feel when that happened? What was your reaction to that?

KIM: I have to say, during the time it was 2002 World Cup so every Korean was crazy about the World Cup at that time so we didn't hear about it much. But right after that we were so shocked because two Korean middle school girls were ran by American tank but it could not happen if they noticed well or ... And after that kind of accident happened, we Koreans have the right to inspect or right to survey what had happened, but they didn't give us the right information. And they just said we are going to take care of it and they never sent the American soldiers so we were very angry and we went to—we gathered and protested a lot. And then they sent two American soldiers but they didn't get any punishment under the Korean law and I think they are now back in the United States.

CHAMNESS: And what exactly was the media saying about it? How were they portraying the incident?

KIM: Media? I think they wanted Korean people—let them know about this. I think there was not much bias from the media. They just tried to expose what had happened. And not from the media but at the time I was in college and on the wall there was a picture which I couldn't watch from the media. It was the two girls who were run over by the tank.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: It was so horrible, I couldn't sleep for a few days after I saw it. The thing I really wanted was the truth what happened and if they made a mistake, they should be punished.

CHAMNESS: So did the event change how you felt about the military? Or not?

KIM: Not so much. I didn't change my mind a lot because I think not all of them are like that. And I just think there are some things that need to be changed.

CHAMNESS: How much contact do you usually have with different kinds of foreigners?

KIM: How much? I was in Canada for a year, the year 2000, so I met many foreigners from all over the world. So I still keep in touch with them and by email.

CHAMNESS: But in Korea, do you run into a lot of English teachers, American military, students ...

KIM: When I was a child it was really hard to see foreigners on the street. It was like an event, "Oh look at him!" Like that kind of event. But now, no. On the street, I could run into a lot of foreigners, a lot of—I believe most of them are students or English teachers.

CHAMNESS: Do you run into a lot of soldiers that you know of?

KIM: Maybe, but not much because I live in the school district, so not many American soldiers compared to students.

CHAMNESS: How do you—do you think that American soldiers act differently than other foreigners here?

KIM: Yeah, I guess so. (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Try to compare soldiers with English teachers or with students. What is the difference in your mind? How do they act?

KIM: It really depends on the person, but most—we think maybe more than half of the soldiers—when they are free, they go to clubs or bars and they just do whatever they want and they don't follow any rules. I think they do what they want. But I think after the accident two years ago, it's changed.

CHAMNESS: How has it changed?

KIM: There are media always watching them. They'll follow whenever there is an accident, which are related to American soldiers—the media reports very harshly, or something like this. And also I think the American officers—they try to control them or do more discipline or something.

CHAMNESS: Now this is just your personal opinion, but do you think that the American military should stay in Korea or do you think that we should pull out?

KIM: I think—I like them to stay but as we know, I heard maybe forty percent of the American soldiers who are staying in Korea—they are leaving because of Iraq. They are moving to Iraq. But maybe some of the Koreans are really worried about it because after they're leaving, what's going to happen in Korea? Maybe North Korea attacks South Korea, things like that. We are concerned about it.

CHAMNESS: Right. So that's one of the problems. What other kind of problems do you see between the U.S. and Korea? You mentioned unfair treaties, right?

KIM: I believe most of Koreans want American soldiers to stay on the Korean Peninsula because we know they protect us and they help us in a lot of ways but we just want the equality between South Korea and America. When America have a treaty with Britain or Japan, they are more polite, we think. (Laughs) But when they are making a treaty with South Korea we think we are not ...

CHAMNESS: Treated as equals?

KIM: Yeah, right.

CHAMNESS: Have you ever been to a camptown, the area around any military bases?

KIM: I went there around camptown, but I couldn't get in because I'm not allowed to.

CHAMNESS: Right, not the base, but the area around the base, like the restaurants and the bars. Have you been there?

KIM: Yeah. In Korea there is one famous area named Itaewon and near Itaewon there is famous American military camp site ...

CHAMNESS: Yongsan.

KIM: Yeah, which is notorious for a lot of Americans' bad behavior. They drink a lot of alcohol and just—they want what they do. I don't like to go to that district.

CHAMNESS: When you go there, what do you think about what you're seeing? What do see and how do you react to that?

KIM: I think the first thing in my mind is it's a dangerous place so I just always take care of myself and I try not to touch anyone or anything.

CHAMNESS: What about other Koreans? What generally is the idea of what goes on around a military base?

KIM: Most of my friends said they don't like to go there because there are a lot of flyers and they don't like to run into American soldiers, especially in that district.

CHAMNESS: Okay, explain that a little more. You said that they don't want to run into American soldiers, so why?

KIM: Why? Because they behave without any rules and they just ...

CHAMNESS: So they're sort of afraid of them?

KIM: Afraid, yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

KIM: And maybe they choose—too rough or maybe we can see some prostitutes on the street so maybe the American soldiers hang out with the girls. Yeah, it's not nice due to watching that.

CHAMNESS: What do Koreans think about prostitutes that hang around the camptowns?

KIM: (Laughs) I don't know what to say. It think it's unfortunate. Yeah. Everybody doesn't want to go there, maybe even the girls. But maybe—I don't know what situation brought girls there. I don't know.

CHAMNESS: Do you think prostitution is a big problem in Korea around American bases? I mean, you said you can see them on the street ...

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Do you think it's popular?

KIM: I don't think so because every country or every place has prostitutes. But it's not too big problem only in Korea. I don't think so.

CHAMNESS: Not only in Korea, but do you think it's a problem around the bases?

KIM: I've heard many times from the T.V., especially the girls in the military district, they are treated very harshly. So we've heard many news. Not treated well. Many girls had to go to the hospital after ...

CHAMNESS: Now this brings me to my last questions.

KIM: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: This is only opinion so you can say whatever you want. The first question is do you think Americans, or more specifically the American GIs that are here, do you think that they like Korea and Koreans?

KIM: I was really curious about that because in Korea there are a lot of American soldiers. I thought, why they wanted to come to Korea? I heard they volunteered so ... And I read some article from the soldiers. They were undercover and there was no name but they said they don't have any specific feelings about Korea. They don't like Korea, they don't dislike Korea. But they feel very sad when Koreans shout, "We don't like Americans." In our store we never let Americans come in and things like that. They just want to be here, want to do there service in Korea and that is it.

CHAMNESS: And do you think it affects them and the way America and Korea relates, when an American soldier doesn't like Korea or when he hears somebody yell something that he doesn't like. Do you think that has a bad affect?

KIM: To American soldiers?

CHAMNESS: Yeah, to American soldiers.

KIM: Yeah, sure. I would feel bad if I hear ... So, I heard most of the soldiers are just like me. They are—they come from a family and they have siblings and they respect other people. Just a few of them made problems or commit crimes in Korea and ... So I don't have any bad feelings, especially for the GIs.

CHAMNESS: The last question is sort of the switch of that. Do you think Koreans like American soldiers? You've told me that you don't have any hard feelings toward them but I'm curious about the general population. Do you think that Korea generally likes American soldiers or not?

KIM: American soldiers?

CHAMNESS: Or the American military, either one.

KIM: This is very ironic. One day, in front of the government building there are protestors who claim the U.S. Army should leave right now. But the other day, the ex-soldiers, retired soldiers ...

CHAMNESS: Korean soldiers?

KIM: Yeah, Korean soldiers gather and they claim, "We need the U.S. military. We love them." (Laughter) Things like that so it's ironic. So ...

CHAMNESS: So Korea is split on the issue?

KIM: Yeah, split. And my generation—we have hard feelings for their bad behavior but we try to be without any bias. We try to be ...

CHAMNESS: I understand. It's okay.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: I heard that most older people like the American military because they were here during the Korean War. And then maybe middle age is half and half. And the younger generation is more against the soldiers. Do you think that's accurate or no?

KIM: Not so accurate, but maybe generally. Yeah. The young generation has more temper and when they hear the American soldiers committed crime and they didn't get punished, we are so easily getting angry.

CHAMNESS: Angry. What do you think about North Korea now that American soldiers—maybe 4,000 are leaving this summer? How do you feel about that? How do you feel about North Korea?

KIM: My personal opinion?

CHAMNESS: Sure.

KIM: I don't think there is war coming soon. I heard—my foreign friend said she would come last year but after two or three months, she said, "I'm scared. There could be war." But in Korea, staying inside of Korea, we don't feel any war, it's going to happen soon or ...

CHAMNESS: Because North Korea started its nuclear weapons program.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: But you don't feel unsafe at all? Because North Korea's always there, right?

KIM: Not at all but ...

CHAMNESS: But no imminent danger, I mean.

KIM: Lately, I heard one or two weeks ago both sides of the soldiers or generals, after the Korean War finished, they first met, talked about our military system and I think it's a good sign. We give them a lot of stuff like food and medicines and cows. And we try to help them and they started accepting the thing we give them. So I think it's a good sign

CHAMNESS: Good. Well, on that note, we'll end the interview. Thank you much.

KIM: You're welcome.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH SHERMAN TAYLOR

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JUNE 15, 2004

TRANSCRIPT BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CHAMNESS: This begins an interview with Sherman Taylor and Lindsey Chamness at Yonsei University on June 15, 2004. To begin, Sherman, why don't you tell me a little bit about your parents, where they were from, and how they met.

TAYLOR: Okay. My father was from Eastern Kentucky, Pikeville region. And my mother originally was from central Tennessee. My father was an automotive worker in Detroit and he kind of worked his way up, I guess when he was in his teens, and so did my mom. They both met at my uncle's restaurant. That's pretty much it.

CHAMNESS: And how long were they married before you came along?

TAYLOR: Ah. They were married for about four years before I was born.

CHAMNESS: And where were they living.

TAYLOR: They were living in Monroe, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit.

CHAMNESS: So tell me where and when you were born.

TAYLOR: I was born August 21, 1975 in Monroe Mercy Hospital.

CHAMNESS: So you have siblings?

TAYLOR: From that marriage, I have three brothers and sisters and then my father was married previously and I have a total of nine siblings from that relationship. So I'm the youngest of thirteen.

CHAMNESS: Wow. Okay. So growing in a family like that, tell me about having thirteen kids in the family.

TAYLOR: Well, since there's a big age discrepancy—the oldest brother is about forty-eight or forty-nine—and since I'm twenty-eight there was kinds of groups, two separate groups. But when I was five my parents got divorced so my father and I moved to Winstill, Missouri, so I actually grew up as an only child.

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay. So you lived with just your father?

TAYLOR: Just my father.

CHAMNESS: Did he remarry?

TAYLOR: He remarried when I was in high school.

CHAMNESS: And did you have any step-siblings from that?

TAYLOR: I have—no, no they had no children.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So tell me a little bit about being a kid. Growing up, elementary school, anything pops out in you mind that you remember?

TAYLOR: Um, let's see ...

CHAMNESS: Favorite teachers, best friends ...

TAYLOR: My father was my best friend, actually.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

TAYLOR: We did a lot—basically every holiday or every summer or every weekend we just basically did things together since we had no family in Missouri. And my father worked a lot so he really didn't have friends outside of work. So predominantly I just remember of my childhood spending lots of time outside hiking or biking or doing something with my father. And playing sports.

CHAMNESS: What kind of sports?

TAYLOR: I started playing football when I was like seven because my dad wanted me to stay busy. And then in high school I started playing tennis and cross-country and track.

CHAMNESS: Okay. That was all in high school, you said?

TAYLOR: That was all in high school. Then in college I ran on the cross-country squad, college team.

CHAMNESS: What about school?

TAYLOR: What about school? (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: Did you like school?

TAYLOR: I liked parts of school. I liked history and social studies and that's basically why I decided to study history and social studies in my undergraduate studies. Overall, it was okay.

CHAMNESS: And when you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

TAYLOR: I've always wanted to be a teacher so that's why I did a secondary education degree, and that's actually my long term goal—is to be a professor. So after my Ph.D. then I'll go into the academic field.

CHAMNESS: What does your dad think about that?

TAYLOR: He actually disliked it immensely because there was no money in it.

CHAMNESS: Right, right.

TAYLOR: So he was pretty much opposed to me being a teacher.

CHAMNESS: What did he want you to be?

TAYLOR: Anything that made more money. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: Okay, okay.

TAYLOR: He never really said.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So when you got to high school—tell me about being in high school. What do you remember about high school?

TAYLOR: Coming from a small town, the football team was basically everything. And so I was a member of the varsity squad since my freshman year, so that automatically got me, I guess you would say, privilege in high school and in the community. I just remember having friends and I made some every good friendships and I tried to stay as busy as I could doing other activities. I did Odyssey of the Mind and Quiz Bowl and JET and what other programs I could to actually just get out of class.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: So that was fun. It was a good four years.

CHAMNESS: That's cool. And you said you played sports in high school also.

TAYLOR: Right.

CHAMNESS: So you practically had no time. (Laughs)

TAYLOR: Practically I had no time but it kept me out of trouble. Basically.

CHAMNESS: Did you have a Junior ROTC program in your high school.

TAYLOR: We did not. It was too small.

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay.

TAYLOR: Because my graduating class in high school was about eighty-two students.

CHAMNESS: Oh wow.

TAYLOR: So I went from a very small school, located in the middle of nowhere.

CHAMNESS: So after you graduated high school, where did you end up going?

TAYLOR: After graduation, I chose to go to Williams Baptist College in Northeast Arkansas. It's a small Southern Baptist, very fundamental Christian school.

CHAMNESS: And what did you study while you were there?

TAYLOR: Initially, I started out in the history department and then my third year they created the secondary education program for social studies and I was the first graduate from Williams as a secondary education teacher.

CHAMNESS: Were you the only graduate that year?

TAYLOR: I was the only graduate in secondary education so ... But since then, the program has actually blossomed and they're getting a very good reputation for the teachers that they are producing.

CHAMNESS: While you were at college, what did you do for fun?

TAYLOR: I ran cross-country for my first two years. And then I discovered that I wasn't fast enough to run at the collegiate level. And then I actually got—at the same time I was the editor of the annual staff and I went from just a copyright editor to the full editor for the for layout of the book. At the same time, I was a member of the Student Affairs Office, worked with the Vice President trying to organize and plan events, concerts, and camps and ...

CHAMNESS: So you were really busy in college too? (Laughter)

TAYLOR: I always try to stay busy. Definitely stayed busy.

CHAMNESS: Is there any particular reason that you like to stay that busy or ...

TAYLOR: I get bored very easily so it's not good for me just to sit. I usually get in trouble if I sit, just to be honest.

CHAMNESS: Was there an ROTC program at your college?

TAYLOR: The fourth year we started getting an ROTC program but we were basically—our ROTC program was a part of Arkansas State's ROTC program. So there about a one year overlap. I did take paintball class. So that was a very hard A.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Tell me about that.

TAYLOR: The Arkansas State ROTC has a—their colonel is a Colonel Dougan and he's very famous in the academic world because he wrote a book called *The Art of Killing*, and he was analyzing what actually caused more deaths during certain wars. Was it actually the fighting, was it the poor medical? So he was very serious about everything. And even in paintball class the guy was ultimately serious. He would play games with you—you could only shoot people in the legs during a certain game because you wanted wounds instead of killing each other. So it was a pretty bizarre class.

CHAMNESS: Intense.

TAYLOR: Yeah, he was a pretty odd person.

CHAMNESS: Okay. But you got an A.

TAYLOR: I got an A. Hardest A I ever got.

CHAMNESS: Did you take any other of his classes?

TAYLOR: Nope. That was just because it was my last semester.

CHAMNESS: So while you were in college you were studying history and secondary education. So how did you get interested in the military?

TAYLOR: Oh. My fourth semester, excuse me my seventh semester—I'll just start at the beginning. Williams is very expensive, basically. Being a private school, it's exceptionally expensive and I got a lot of debt, about $60,000 of debt. And the Army sent me a little flyer saying, "Join the Army. We'll pay off your college debt." And so I said, "Okay."

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: So that's why I joined the Army. No profound answers, just pay off the debt.

CHAMNESS: That was a pretty good advertisement then for you.

TAYLOR: Amen. And they gave me a very easy job and so I just had to do a four year commitment.

CHAMNESS: Tell me about how you got in exactly. Did you just walk down to the recruiter's office and say, "Sign me up," or how did that come about?

TAYLOR: I made contact. I got the flyer and gave them a quick call.

CHAMNESS: The same day?

TAYLOR: Yeah, the same day. It was pretty quick. They said being a college student and getting ready to be a teacher, with teacher's salaries as low as they are, it would take me 20 years to pay off $60,000 in debt. So I literally walked in and I was the only person the recruiter ever got into the military because she actually went crazy. No kidding. She actually went—she got relieved of her recruiting assignments because she just couldn't handle it. Because there's a lot of pressure involved in ...

CHAMNESS: Recruiting?

TAYLOR: Recruiting. So it was an easy sell. I walked in and said, "This is what I want. I'm a college graduate." And then about two weeks later I went to the in-processing station, did my physical. And then they put me on nine months of wait until after I graduated.

CHAMNESS: Wow. So when you did graduate, where did you go from there?

TAYLOR: Actually, I did my basic at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and then my advanced individual training, AIT, was in the Finance Corps, which is actually also at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. So I went, basically, five months I was at Fort Jackson until October of '97.

CHAMNESS: How long was basic training?

TAYLOR: Basic training, at that time, it was right before they started the two weeks of mandatory equal opportunity and sex discrimination training so it was only eight weeks.

CHAMNESS: For somebody who's never been to basic training or anybody who's ever been in the military, tell me a little bit about what basic training is like.

TAYLOR: They give you an illusion your first two days, because it's the in-processing. You're actually not in basic yet. It's when you get all your clothes and stuff. And during that stage, it's pretty relaxed. You can eat what you want to eat, you have to be up at a certain time but you're not doing any training of any sort.

CHAMNESS: So you're starting to think this is going to be easy.

TAYLOR: Yeah. You're talking in line while you're eating, and it's very relaxed and casual. But all of that quickly changes on the morning that the drill sergeants actually pick you up. And then from that point on, you are in an absolute structured environment. They tell you, basically, at 5:30 you wake, you do your training, you do your P.T., you have usually twenty minutes to shower and then by 7:30 you're out of your barracks for the whole day. You don't get back until usually eight or nine that night. There is no erst during the day. Some of it's very good, you know, like basics-learning to fire your weapon or learning to march outdoors. Some of it's really bad-sitting in a classroom for eight hours listening to people tell you about military codes or military law or military finance or military this or military that. And you're literally sitting in a room for eight

hours doing nothing. And South Carolina is very hot during the summertime. No air-conditioning. So parts of it are very educational, parts of it were very boring. But all in all, I think it was a very good experience because it teaches you to control yourself and it teaches you to push yourself. So all in all I think it was a very good experience.

CHAMNESS: Are there any drill instructors you remember being exceptionally harsh or any that stick out in your mind?

TAYLOR: Well, in a later assignment I actually ran into one of my old drill sergeants, which was a pretty odd experience because at the time I had already made staff sergeant and he was a staff sergeant. So I made my staff sergeant in three years. And so to see him it was just very funny in that I had achieved the same rank that he had in a very short period of time. He was just pretty much shocked. Great guy. Very good drill sergeant. You have four drill sergeants in basic training and they rotate. So at any time you have two drill sergeants actually with you and then the two are basically—they have their other jobs and duties. So Drill Sergeant Ashley was the sergeant I met at a later point, was a very relaxed drill sergeant. And then conversely there was a very hard-core drill sergeant. I can't think of his name off-hand but I swear to God he was a Satanist.

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) A Satanist? Okay, you have to explain that.

TAYLOR: The reason why is, if you're familiar with Sepultura ...

CHAMNESS: With what?

TAYLOR: Sepultura. It's a very hard core Brazilian rock bank. It's a Satanic rock back.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

TAYLOR: Well, our seventh week our group had done exceptionally well. My platoon had done exceptionally well. We were basically coming together. We were very successful in what we were doing. And he rewarded us by letting us buy pizzas. And then after we bought the pizzas, he said, "Hey, let's watch something." And he pulls out his favorite video cassette, which was Sepultura. And here he is, listening to this Satanic rock back with sixty of us and we're all going, "We finally realize what kind of person you are." And he's like, "Hey, I am what I am." So ...

CHAMNESS: Well how was he when you were training?

TAYLOR: The guy was a rock. He literally, physically he could do everything. And he knew how to teach everything. So if you were willing to listen, you would learn. He put an edge to the entire experience. He didn't simply say, "Do this." He would say, "Do this," and then he would do something funny. For example, when he was teaching us to shoot the M-16, he said, "Look, there's no kick. There's no recussions from shooting this weapon." And then he took it and put it to his head and he takes a couple rounds. He said, "See, it doesn't hurt." And then about ten seconds later, he goes, "For the guys ..."

He stuck to his groin and did the same thing. "Look, there's no kick. You don't have anything to worry about." (Laughter) And we're just going, "This guy is a freakin' crazy SOB." And he literally was a crazy SOB.

CHAMNESS: So you learned a lot of stuff in the classroom. How much time did you spend in the classroom, would you say?

TAYLOR: Like I said, this was before you get all the EO training and sexual harassment, so we probably spent five eight hour days, five ten hour days in a classroom.

CHAMNESS: And when you weren't in a classroom, you were marching, learning how to use your weapons ...

TAYLOR: Marching ... Lots of marching, lots of drilling. You have like a two week period you're actually doing your weapons. You're learning to qualify for your weapons. And then you have ...

CHAMNESS: And what kind of weapons were you learning to use?

TAYLOR: Out of basic, all you qualify with is an M-16. And they you have to also qualify with your grenade. You have to throw three lie grenades. So that's the only weapons in basic. So two weeks with your M-16, you qualify. And then you have to qualify marching, PT tests. You do PT six days a week. So that's basically it.

CHAMNESS: And when you got out of basic, you were still there, in South Carolina to do ...

TAYLOR: Advanced Individual Training. And I did Finance Corps.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Tell me about that.

TAYLOR: Basically, because finance is an office job, it's a lot less strict in AIT just because you're basically taking the next step. So you're given more privileges. The dorm, the barracks—you have four man, eight man rooms, so that's a lot more relaxed. The drill sergeants are very much relaxed. They're specialists in your field so they're finance drill sergeants. The actual office—my job—classes started at nine and they go to five. So you had basically eight hours of classes and my AIT was ten weeks. So just basically learning the military finance system.

CHAMNESS: So that's all you did for ten weeks?

TAYLOR: Yeah. You have one week—you're still doing your PT. And you spend one week in the field. Basically you set up your tents and stuff. But other than that it was just class.

CHAMNESS: Tell me about being in the field. What's that like? For that one week, what do you do out there?

TAYLOR: Basically ... The practical experience for finance corps doesn't exists. Because when the finance go to the field, it's completely different than the infantry or the tankers or the armor. So you set up your tent. Basically we set up and then we just had classes.

CHAMNESS: Really? (Laughs)

TAYLOR: Pretty much.

CHAMNESS: There's more rolling in the mud kind of stuff?

TAYLOR: No because we're finance corps. In finance you don't do that.

CHAMNESS: So you get a pen instead?

TAYLOR: (Laughs) Basically, yeah. So it was pretty basic.

CHAMNESS: Tell me where you went after that.

TAYLOR: My first duty assignment was Yongsan, South Korea.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And when exactly did you learn you were going to Korea? While you were still in training or ...

TAYLOR: Your sixth week usually of AIT. Well, another thing—the Army gives you this illusion that you have a wish list and your wish list you can choose the three places you want to go most. Well, they don't give it to you. So your sixth or seventh week, everybody comes down with orders. So the whole class finds out at the same time. Certain soldiers go certain places. So I found out the sixth, seventh week of AIT.

CHAMNESS: What were your—I'm interested in what your top three choices were. When you thought you could pick ...

TAYLOR: Once again—where did I want to go? Actually, I don't remember.

CHAMNESS: No?

TAYLOR: Just because the finance corps—people have to realize that the different corps of the Army—if you're in personnel command or if you're in signal, or in finance or artillery or whatever—each has its own bases that you want to go to, because you know what their jobs are there and it's a lot easier. But I really don't remember what my wish list was.

CHAMNESS: So when you learned you were going to Korea, what was your first thought?

TAYLOR: I tried to get out of it.

CHAMNESS: Really?

TAYLOR: You can—well, there are several reasons that I was trying to get out of it. It mainly was that my father had a terminal illness and not really knowing how long he was going to be around. But ultimately it's the needs of the Army. And reluctantly I had to just go. And prior to going they just give you basically a one hour quick run-down of what Korea is. They do nothing for actually preparing you to come to Korea. Or they really don't prepare you to go anywhere, to be completely honest. If I was to go to Japan, Germany, or wherever, the Army does not prepare you. Out of basic training, they don't prepare you.

CHAMNESS: When you got your orders, was it understood that you go right after you got out of advanced training?

TAYLOR: AIT? Yeah. You can take leave, usually, and I think I took maybe two three weeks. And then right, it's pretty much a quick turn-around.

CHAMNESS: So tell me about this one hour class? What kind of ...

TAYLOR: Ah, just the basics. This is where Korea is, this is what you should expect, and just—it was very uninformative ...

CHAMNESS: Really?

TAYLOR: Very uninformative. The Army—like I said, it's just across the board.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: Nobody really understands where they're going out of AIT. So it was—This is what to expect, this is what Korea is. It's very populated, it's very crowded. There's a war. The DMZ. That's about it.

CHAMNESS: What was your family's reaction at you going to Korea?

TAYLOR: Pretty much they were the same way I was. They didn't want me to go but ultimately the decision was made that I had to go.

CHAMNESS: And before you left, what kind of idea were you thinking about Korea?

TAYLOR: Absolutely no idea.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Had you ever been out of the country before?

TAYLOR: Ah, yeah. I've packed through Europe for six months on my own so ... Been to Mexico a lot of times. Going abroad—I wasn't feeling any kind of fear about going abroad, it was just Korea—actually when you think of the Orient you think of China and you think of Japan. Korea gets sandwiched in between. So you kind of think, "What is Korea?"

CHAMNESS: Yeah, yeah. Did you know other people—were there also other people in your group who were also going to Korea?

TAYLOR: Nope.

CHAMNESS: So you were the only one.

TAYLOR: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Was it kind of a ...

TAYLOR: Shock?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: Yeah. It was—I got the worst of all the assignments. Some people went to Fort Carson, Colorado and some people went straight to Fort Hood.

CHAMNESS: So you took two or three weeks off?

TAYLOR: Two or three.

CHAMNESS: What did you do in that time to get ready?

TAYLOR: What did I do? I went back to my college because I made good friendships with a lot of the professors. So I went back and spent a few days with the professors. That's about it. I mean it ...

CHAMNESS: It was kind of relaxing?

TAYLOR: Yeah, just relaxing so not really anything.

CHAMNESS: So then you went to Korea.

TAYLOR: Then I went to Korea.

CHAMNESS: When you landed at the airport, first reaction.

TAYLOR: Really no reaction just because you fly in Osan, which is a military airport. My first reaction was, we got on this bus and you discovered just how crowded it actually was. So driving from Osan on a bus to Seoul is just a crazy amount of traffic.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: It's overwhelming.

CHAMNESS: You were at Yongsan, in Seoul?

TAYLOR: Right. I could have went—the finance corps has bases starting in Area 1, which would be like Dongduchon and Panmunjom, and they go all the way down to Pusan. So actually in hindsight, when I found out that I was staying in Yongsan—I wasn't very excited. But after staying in Yongsan and hearing about the other areas you can go in Korea, it was like the luckiest moment of my life. It was, "Hey! Yongsan! Good!"

CHAMNESS: While you were stationed at Yongsan, what were your duties?

TAYLOR: Just since I came straight out of AIT, I went to the travel section, which is basically paying people when they travel from Point A to Point B, if they're on a TDY or if they're PCS-ing or something like that. So my first year, I had nothing other than doing travel section, just because I was straight out of AIT.

CHAMNESS: So a typical day ...

TAYLOR: Monday, Wednesday, Friday you have PT, I guess six to seven. And then from nine until to five, you have your office work. And after five your day is done. So finance, like I said, is like a normal job.

CHAMNESS: It's a pretty good job, sounds like.

TAYLOR: Right. Pretty basic.

CHAMNESS: Where did you live?

TAYLOR: At the time, we lived in these billets that were built in like 1955. Just two persons to a room. Pretty simple accommodations.

CHAMNESS: What was that like? Alright?

TAYLOR: I think it's very reflective of your roommate. My roommate was from Puerto Rico. Great guy. So he and I clicked really quick. The first day I got there, he and I—basically it was like a match.

CHAMNESS: Had he been there a while or was he new also?

TAYLOR: Yeah. That was—he had been there for a full year so he was very well understanding of the situation there so he basically provided me with a lot of ground work about-Hey, this is what you can do, this is what you don't do, blah, blah, blah.

CHAMNESS: Tell me about the food on the base.

TAYLOR: Just ... You have Korean cooks. Breakfast was, by far, the best because you could get ham and cheese omelettes. But basically for lunch and dinner you didn't eat—and I didn't eat in the cafeteria just because breakfast was enough. The food was okay. And since you have KATUSAs as well, they have an accommodation of Korean food and American food. But all in all, it's just normal cafeteria.

CHAMNESS: So when you got off of work, after five on the weekdays, or on the weekends when you weren't working, what did you do for fun?

TAYLOR: The first year actually—pretty much you just stay around the military base for the most part. They don't really—back then they didn't really push getting away into Seoul much. So most weekends were spent simply hanging out with your co-workers, with the people you work with, maybe having a barbeque or something like that outside, if the weather permitted.

CHAMNESS: Mostly on the base?

TAYLOR: Mostly—predominantly my first year. Just because they—not really being comfortable yet in the Army so you don't push your limits. So first year basically just stayed on base ninety-nine percent of the time.

CHAMNESS: The other people that you knew, like your roommate or your other friends, did they get off the base much?

TAYLOR: Similar. But this was a different time in 1997. It was—the Korean culture was a lot different. It was less forgiving. It was not common to see foreigners walking around Seoul in 1997. So—and a lot has changed from 1997 to now. So most of the time you were very close or you only went to very touristy areas, but you didn't get out into the city itself.

CHAMNESS: What did you think about Koreans? They're different from Americans? I mean, what were your first impressions of ...

TAYLOR: I really didn't see them any differently than anybody else. I can't ... In February of '98 is when I met my fiancée—she's Korean, but I've never seem her as being Korean, or I've never seen her as being yellow.

CHAMNESS: That's cool.

TAYLOR: Yeah. And so we've been together seven years, going on eight years, and I still don't see her as anything other than just being a person. So that's how I ...

CHAMNESS: Where did you meet her?

TAYLOR: I met her in an area called Taekwondong, some Korean friends of mine owned a café. At the time internet cafes were really popular. They were just starting, cyber-cafes. And a Korean friend of mine owned a cyber-café and she had just got back from Australia and my friend introduced us. And we were friends for about a good year and our friendship evolved into romance and it went from there.

CHAMNESS: What did you think about Korea food when you came here?

TAYLOR: Once again, just my first year I didn't eat much. On post you have something called a KATUSA canteen. I had this old Korean *ajushi*[1] I worked with that had been actually with the finance corps for about forty-five years. So once a week I would eat with him. Basically *chapchaebap* or maybe some type of chicken-cheese ramen, something very basic. But really the first year there was very little experimentation for me in eating.

CHAMNESS: After you spent your year here, where did you go and what did you do?

TAYLOR: I went to Fort Hood, Texas and I was with the 215th Finance Battalion, which is—at Ford Hood you have three divisions. You have the 4th Infantry Division, you have the 2nd Cav and then you have 13th COSCOM. COSCOM is a non-combat arms group. They're support, soldier support. And so to the 215th I was assigned and we supported the 13th COSCOM.

CHAMNESS: And how long were you there?

TAYLOR: I was at Fort Hood for about seventeen months. Sixteen, seventeen months.

CHAMNESS: How was that? Did you like it there?

TAYLOR: Ah, yeah because I got out of the finance corps. I got assigned into training and operations and it allowed me—it gave you ultimate freedom. If you knew what you were doing in operations division, you were untouchable. You could have captains, anything lower than a full (bird?) colonel—I was basically untouchable because I knew my job so well and I had people above me that supported me in what I was doing. So it gave me the ability basically to expand immensely within the military. And I started taking HazMat type courses and I got to take a lot of special life training courses. So going form just a normal job, nine to five, and then going to Fort Hood—my job was basically twenty-four hours, seven days a week. With that though, I had a lot of freedom. Some days I didn't have to do anything; other days I was up all night. And then ...

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[1] (Ah-juh-shi) Older man

CHAMNESS: So what exactly—I'm a little confused about what exactly you were doing. Can you explain it?

TAYLOR: Training and operations is your—basically you're responsible for a battalion or a brigade size element. For me, it was about two hundred fifty soldiers. And what you have to do is you have organize their qualification for weapons. You have to organize their—basically you're scheduling the soldiers' lives, everybody life. But along with that, also ammunition forecasting and creating risk management plans during the summer time, at Fort Hood for example, we have excessive heat so you have to develop training regimes that allow for the heat but not injuring your soldiers. And then along with that basically it's—operations is the backbone of the army. They do everything. It's kind of hard to put into words.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, yeah. But it sounds like you liked it a lot.

TAYLOR: Oh, I loved it. I was very good at operations and that's why I got my rank so quickly. I hit my sergeant at eighteen months, which is the bare minimum.

CHAMNESS: Wow, yeah.

TAYLOR: And then I hit my staff sergeant at thirty-six months, which is bare minimum. And I attribute that a lot to the job, because I got to work with some very important people and they saw, "Look, Sergeant Taylor. This guy knows what he's doing. Let's help him out." And I was able to get lots of fringe benefits from my seniors. And that was—I did excessively well on a XEval. And XEval is when you take your battalion to the field and you train—you get assessed on your mission. And the TOC, which is your Temporary Operational Control System, your TOC—I was in charge of our TOC and our TOC did exceptionally well. We got a 97 out of a 100, which is unbelievable.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

TAYLOR: So as a result of that, my colonel basically said, "Sergeant Taylor, I'll send you wherever you want. It's your choice." And he really meant it. It was a wishlist. And he had the ability because being a colonel in the finance corps—there's probably only ten. There's one general and ten colonels and he was one of the top eleven people in the Finance Corps.

CHAMNESS: And what was his name?

TAYLOR: Colonel Reagan and ... He's going to kill me.

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) It's okay.

TAYLOR: I just call him J.D. because like I said, I was on a very personal level with him. And so he said, "Look, Sergeant Taylor, pick where you want to go." And in the finance corps—most people, if you have a wishlist to go to, you go to Belgium because

you're attached to NATO and actually it's a civilian job. You wear civilian clothes, civilian house. It's ...

CHAMNESS: Pretty sweet.

TAYLOR: Yeah. Basically you live in the northern region of Belgium but you work in the Netherlands. It's the easiest—you have no TA-50, which means you have equipment, no guns, nothing. It's simply—that's where most people go or Vincenza, Italy, which is basically another sham job. I had had a working relationship with my commander still in Korea and as I said my fiancé was here so I was trying to make a deal with Korea saying, "Look, I'm going to come back. I'm a staff sergeant now. I know you guys need sergeants. I'll come back if you guarantee me Youngsan, South Korea again. Because DoBu-*shi*[2] lives in Seoul. And they agreed to it. I went to my colonel and said, "Look sir, I want to go to Korea." And he says, "Why??"

CHAMNESS: Yeah, why. (Laughs)

TAYLOR: I'm like, "Sometimes you just have to do what's best for your future." And he's like ...

CHAMNESS: What did he say about that?

TAYLOR: (Laughs) He's like, "Can't she go somewhere else?"

CHAMNESS: So he knew that it was all about this girl, huh?

TAYLOR: Yeah. But he agreed ultimately and my last day—actually you have two weeks that when you're leaving one place to go to another place. You have two weeks that you're not doing any military. You're basically clearing. But the last day that—the day before I was to leave I organized a very large competition for about three hundred soldiers and on that day he surprised me. He threw me this huge barbeque with everybody and he's like, "Sergeant Taylor is going to Korea for a woman. None of you out there do it. Don't do what he's doing!" (Laughter) But in all good humor, he said, "Go for it." So I went to South Korea again. I was very excited knowing that I was going to be in Yongsan. Got off the Osan airplane, so happy. Went to my command group in Korea and they said, "You're going to Camp Casey."

CHAMNESS: Oh man!

TAYLOR: I was freaking livid.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: Unbelievable. I was going, "You are kidding me! I come back to help you guys out and you're done this to me. This is (makes beeping sounds)." (Laughs) So ...

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[2] (Shee) Korean proper title

CHAMNESS: For those that don't know where Camp Casey is ...

TAYLOR: Camp Casey is in Area 1. It is real military. Camp Casey you have eleven o'clock during the day, twelve o'clock on weekends. You have no pass; you have to stay there. Camp Casey is the worst position in the entire army. No joking.

CHAMNESS: On the DMZ.

TAYLOR: It's on the DMZ so you are a soldier. Up there, even the finance corps is soldiers up there. You spend lots of time in the field. They do alerts any time and every time. You have no personal life. Where Yongsan you have a nine to five job, at Camp Casey you have a twenty-four hour, seven day a week job. But ultimately, just being a ...

CHAMNESS: Good person?

TAYLOR: Yeah. Just rolling with the punches, I simply said okay. I mean, that's what I needed to do so I said, "Okay. Go for it." And I talked to DoBu and they key was we're in the same country now again. And that's where it really mattered. We were in the same country and I could see her on occasion. So that was better than Ford Hood.

CHAMNESS: How long were you at Camp Casey?

TAYLOR: Another funny thing was I had to extend. I had to extend my contract out of Fort Hood to come to Camp Casey. So I was actually at Camp Casey for eighteen months.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

TAYLOR: Which was another thing. People do not extend to go to Korea.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Nobody does that.

TAYLOR: No. Nobody does anything that I did to get back to Korea. Nobody comes back willingly to Korea, to be honest. But ...

CHAMNESS: Take me through a normal day at Camp Casey with your job.

TAYLOR: Well, having the experience at Fort Hood and I basically—they initially tried to put me back in a finance unit, a finance job like when I was a young soldier. And I did that for about two months but because I never did the finance I had no idea what to do there, because it wasn't my job. So with a lot of negotiating and becoming friends with another colonel, my new colonel, and my new command sergeant major, I was able to get back into what I knew what I was doing, which was long-term, I think the battalion realized. But this time they actually put me in security, military intelligence with operations. So my day once again was controlling the functions of the battalion. But

being in a war-time situation I actually had a lot of war-time type jobs as well, which is managing our ammunition supply, transporting ammunition, security meeting. I had—we have something called a fill. And a fill is a little black box that gives you all your codes. Then from your fill you put that into your (syncguards?), which are your radio systems, which allows people to talk to each other, which prevents—and the black box is a very very secret piece of technology, which was basically my baby for a year and a half. But once again my job was—a normal soldier at Camp Casey would be from five until probably eight, PT training, job, then at eight o'clock you'd have the day off. But my job basically was twenty-four hours, seven days a week.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

TAYLOR: But I liked it because once again, with that job you are not constrained by this office. You're not constrained by sitting in an office for nine hours. With this job I was always going everywhere. I spent very little time sitting at a desk.

CHAMNESS: Did you get to see your fiancé a lot when you were at Camp Casey?

TAYLOR: I would come down every weekend and it wasn't that bad because it's actually pretty quick. It's like an hour and a half, combination of bus. So I'd see her every weekend. Yeah. It was good.

CHAMNESS: So it sounds like during the week, you've got no time off.

TAYLOR: Right, but see the weekends also because at Camp Casey you have alerts. An alert is where at any time, they're going to turn on the horn and you have to get accountability for everybody in your brigade or battalion. And at the same time you go get everything for war. You're literally fueling your vehicles, loading your vehicles, getting your guns, getting your ammunition and then you sit. Then they say, "Good job. Go back to work. Or go do something."

CHAMNESS: How often did these alerts come?

TAYLOR: Those were random. They could be—they liked to play games. They liked to do it some times ...

CHAMNESS: Wait. Okay, who is they? (Laughs)

TAYLOR: The powers that be.

CHAMNESS: Okay. I mean, is it some switch that someone turns on or ...

TAYLOR: General Onray was commander of the Second Infantry and he was very unique fellow. Ragin' Cajun. About six foot, seven and he befriended me because he and I had a run-in about—when he first got in the country, they sent me down to actually do all his finance work. One of the perks of my job—once again, I got to play with the

bigwigs. And he was not supposed to get a certain payment and I told him. And he said I was wrong and I said, "No sir, you're wrong." And he said, "I always get this." And I said, "You shouldn't get it," and I showed him the regulation. But by the time I got from Yongsan driving back to Camp Casey, my colonel had me at full attention, basically telling me, "You can't tell a general no." (Laughter) I was like, "You can tell a general no as long as it's the regulation. I gave him the regulation." The colonel was like—Colonel Field, he goes, "Sergeant Taylor, you were right by the regulation, but next time don't tell a general no. He's getting his money." But because I had stood up to this general, he and I became friends and about once a month he'd call me up and I've have to go down to his office. I would sit in his office and he would call me—his nickname for me was Dickhead. (Laughter) I kid you not. This is so funny.

CHAMNESS: Sounds like a great, fun guy.

TAYLOR: I would be waiting for him and I became friends with his secretary, which was a Sergeant First Class, female. Really nice women. And I would be sitting outside and he would be just cussing out other colonels and other captains, just freaking going postal on them. And then he said, "Sergeant Dickhead. I need to talk to you." And he would calmly call in and I'd have to explain something to him about finance or something about something. But we did that for about a year.

CHAMNESS: Wow, that's a good story.

TAYLOR: Sergeant Dickhead, yeah. The Ragin' Cajun General Onray. But he would call alerts at all times.

CHAMNESS: What kind of things would you do if you had free time?

TAYLOR: For six months I came to Yonsei KLI[3]. Five days a weeks, I would get off work around—I'd leave Camp Casey around three, three thirty, and then I would take a bus, train to get down to KLI, study for four hours, and then come back. So I did that for about sixth months. And then I actually started getting away from the military and I started actually getting out into the community. I didn't spend much time with soldiers. I didn't see soldiers as my future so I started making lots of Korean friends and slowly evolving into a good Korean man.

CHAMNESS: Is it—it doesn't sound like it's a very normal thing for a soldier to do.

TAYLOR: No. Most soldiers don't perceive Korea as a place they want to stay. And I think a lot of that simply is they lived—like my first year, they live in a small community and they stay away from meeting Koreans. The only Koreans that you actually meet are near the military base. And they're not Korean. They're Westernized. Something that pisses me off more than anything is a Korean that tries to become Westernized. And those people are—they're goal is to make money. They sell, they say what soldiers want to hear, they do what soldiers want them to do. So they're basically catering to the U.S.

[3] Yonsei University Korean Language Institute

solider presence. I didn't like that. I mean, I was—I hated it, truthfully. And so once I—and that's one of the reasons I stayed away from Americans because I knew long-term I was staying in Korea. And I knew the only way I was going to be happy or comfortable living in Korea was to become as Korean as I can and not trying to fall into those stereotypes of Americans or foreigners in Korea. So I set out to do that and I've been pretty successful so far.

CHAMNESS: How do you think about the language?

TAYLOR: I'm horrible at languages.

CHAMNESS: It's hard.

TAYLOR: Yeah. And it's misleading. They try to tell you that there are fifteen base sounds and thirteen vowel sounds but they forget to tell that when certain consonants end certain letters, you get whole new sounds. But ...

CHAMNESS: And the different levels of language.

TAYLOR: Yeah. You know, last weekend I was sitting—I'm moving to Ansan because I have a job with the Kyunggi-do government. And so I'm sitting and I thought I was very happy because I was talking to this *ajuma* and *ajushi*[4], old couple, and I was just sitting and talking with them using the formal tense but the *ajuma* got mad at me because I didn't use the senior formal tense of giving something. But I'm using Korean! So I can use my Korean to talk with people but ... You know, I was happy. I was—good conversation.

CHAMNESS: Very proud.

TAYLOR: And then she's like, "*Annyo. Tehshi-kyeseyoh. Teh-shi-kye-se-oh.*"[5] And I'm like, "*Ah. Meanhaeyo.* "[6] So the more I learn, the less I know.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, that sounds about right. So now you are eating more Korean food?

TAYLOR: Ah, I eat very little American food. Like I said, I knew that for me to live in Korea I had to adapt as much as I can. So I eat ninety-nine percent Korean food.

CHAMNESS: What's your favorite thing?

TAYLOR: *Dwenchang chigge*[7], which no Americans tend to like. It has a very pungent smell. And yeah, that's probably my favorite. I cook everything now. Living in an apartment, having my own kitchen and stuff, I was able to cook just about anything.

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[4] (Ah-joo-ma) Older woman; (Ah-juh-shi) Older man
[5] "No. Give that to me." (In highest form)
[6] "Oh. I'm sorry."
[7] Spicy Chicken stew

CHAMNESS: The other soldiers at Camp Casey while you were there, what did they do in their free time? You were studying ...

TAYLOR: Large quantities of alcohol consumption.

CHAMNESS: On the base or off the base?

TAYLOR: Predominately—well, Dogduchon has a very bad reputation.

CHAMNESS: The camptown around it?

TAYLOR: There's two. There's the front gate and there's Tokuri. And it was Tokuri that got the—I believe it was the ABC report about the human trafficking. That was one of the predominant areas for human trafficking in Korea. That was Tokuri. And that was predominately Russian and Filipino women. Once again, it's a camptown. All in Korea. I mean, anywhere there's a military base there is a camptown. And Camp Casey's camptown was like the wild wild west. You could see everything if you wanted to. You could do everything if you wanted to.

CHAMNESS: Can you explain maybe a little bit more for people who have never experienced walking through a military camptown? What did you see and what did you hear?

TAYLOR: Tokuri was a block city. Basically just concrete block buildings that have basically strip clubs, predominately—every club is some type of strip club. Each club might be Filipino or Russian. Ten years ago there used to be Korean, actually about fifteen years ago, but if you read Katherine Moon's book you'll kind of understand why there was shift between the Korean women working there and then why they had the shift into Filipino and Russian women and human trafficking. But it's a twenty-four hour sex show. Something that you would never imagine seeing and the people catered to the American desire. Just to keep it simple.

CHAMNESS: A lot of people go there? A lot of solders?

TAYLOR: A lot ...

CHAMNESS: Is that a question or a statement?

TAYLOR: I don't know it's ... There's regulars. Of course there's regulars. There's stories of soldiers buying the contracts of these women to get married. There's irregulars, like if there's—someone got promoted, you want to do something wild and crazy. So, they were always busy. That's the easy way to put it.

CHAMNESS: Tell me about interactions with Koreans in the American military, the KATUSAs.[8]

TAYLOR: The good side was, for me, I've still got friends that were KATUSAs. Actually, one of my best friends, SangMin, was my sergeant at Camp Casey. He and I are still friends. They have to do their mandatory military service. The problem with it though, is they try to use it as this chip, basically. They get all Korean holidays. They get all American holidays. They have English lessons twice a week, which means two days a week they're only working half of the time. On Wednesday is KATUSA training day. So in reality, the KATUSA is only working Monday and Friday. That's it. And they're still getting all the holidays. And they try to use this argument that, "We should get all these holidays. We should get all these benefits because we have to be in the Army and we only get 12,000 won a month."[9] And my response always was, "But you could be a ROK soldier also."

CHAMNESS: Yeah, which is far worse.

TAYLOR: "And a ROK soldier gets no holidays. And a ROK soldier isn't getting all the benefits you're getting here." But they never wanted to see it that way. Too often they wanted to see themselves as the victim instead of the positive. Look you're …

CHAMNESS: They're very lucky.

TAYLOR: They're very lucky. And additionally there's this higherarchy called the senior KATUSA, which every battalion has a senior KATUSA, and he's responsible for making sure the KATUSAs are okay. And then you have an *aggie*[10] KATUSA, which is the newest member. And an *aggie* is an *aggie* until a new *aggie* comes.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: And traditionally, the first day that an *aggie* shows up to the battalion, the senior KATUSA and all the KATUSAs are sometimes very physical with him. They get him drunk, they do a lot of bullshit to him. And once I got—my staff sergeant—I put a stop to that. KATUSA sergeants only a V5 but as soon as I got a V6, I got seniority, I made the point of, basically every time an *aggie* showed up, I would take him and, "Look, if you guys are going to do it? Good, I'll be with you." Because actually regulation says that they cannot do anything.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: And then the first time they tried to do something, I did the same thing to the senior KATUSA.

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[8]

[9] 1,200 won = $1 U.S. dollar

[10] (Ah-gee) Baby

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) So that pretty much stopped it.

TAYLOR: They thought I was joking and I was like, "Look, if you want to call the ROK command sergeant major that you're dealing with, then go ahead. Go ahead and tell him. I'll just say what you've been doing to the *aggie* KATUSA for the last three months." And so basically that was actually stopped in my time.

CHAMNESS: Are they in their own separate units or are they mixed in?

TAYLOR: No, they're all integrated.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

TAYLOR: Absolutely integrated.

CHAMNESS: So after your after your eighteen months at Camp Casey …

TAYLOR: *Neh* ...[11]

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) Where did you go from there?

TAYLOR: After eighteen months at Camp Casey, I ended up teaching English for one year …

CHAMNESS: Here?

TAYLOR: Yeah, in Seoul. I hate teaching English. Yeah, just to keep it simple. Americans—I have this theory that Americans or Europeans or native speakers come to Korea to teach English because they're running away from something or they're running away from many things. That's the reason why people come here, because it's cheap. You're getting an apartment and they're basically going to give you about $2000 U.S. dollars and that's a decent job. That's a decent job but I really didn't like that. I felt like I was a prostitute.

CHAMNESS: I've heard that actually from a lot of English teachers. They feel like that.

TAYLOR: Not a good experience.

CHAMNESS: So after you taught English then what?

TAYLOR: I went through like a mid-life crisis.

CHAMNESS: At the age of twenty-five?

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[11] (Neah) Yes

TAYLOR: At the age of twenty-five. (Laughs) Well, no I was … Well, I decided I was going to do my master's and initially I applied to Seoul National and then I went through a mid-life crisis and went to Thailand, which I think was a very bad thing to do.

CHAMNESS: How long were you in Thailand?

TAYLOR: I was only there about two weeks.

CHAMNESS: Two weeks? Okay … Should I ask about …

TAYLOR: No, I was sitting on an island for two weeks. I found a remote island that had this fifty-five year old German guy that was about two hundred and fifty pounds and an eighteen year old Thai girl that was about sixty pounds, which is common for Thai-old men, young girls. But I just sat on a beach for about two weeks.

CHAMNESS: Do you remember the name of the beach?

TAYLOR: Ah, the island is Koh Lamai, just a small island. You won't even find it on a map but I found it. I was very lucky to find it. I just needed to get away, kind of was going through, like I said, mid-life crisis.

CHAMNESS: Sure, sure.

TAYLOR: But then when I got back, I withdrew my application to Seoul National, which was a big freaking mistake, because I was still in my mid-life crisis.

CHAMNESS: Wait. So you had already left the military for good now?

TAYLOR: Yeah. I ETSed. And then stayed in Korea, did the English thing. At the end of my ninth month with English I decided I was going to be a student. I applied to Seoul National, went to Thailand, came back, withdrew my application to Seoul National, slapped myself in the head very hard a few times, deciding I was stupid. The girlfriend, fiancé, thought I was stupid as well. Then ultimately I concluded I would—decided I would go to Yonsei and I applied to Yonsei and started up at Yonsei.

CHAMNESS: And that was what year?

TAYLOR: That was August 2002, the same year you were here.

CHAMNESS: Yes it is. (Laughs) And what have you been studying since you were here.

TAYLOR: I've been studying in the International Cooperation Program, and my specialty is international law and organization.

CHAMNESS: And future plans?

TAYLOR: Future plans … I graduate—Well, I do my comprehensives in two weeks then after that I will take a month—actually, I'm just going to backpack in Korea, walk around, see what I haven't seen yet. I've basically seen everything though. And then I've got a job with the Kyunggi-do provincial government.

CHAMNESS: Okay, the next couple of questions are strictly opinion.

TAYLOR: You don't want to know my opinion.

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) I do want to know your opinion. Being in the military in Korea, being in the military in general, and then living the life of a student in Korea not in the military …

TAYLOR: And ex-pat.

CHAMNESS: Do you think the U.S. military should be in Korea?

TAYLOR: I think …

CHAMNESS: There is a debate, you know, among Koreans.

TAYLOR: I say ultimately no. The reason why is the international community now is—it's got structure, unlike the United Nations in 1952 when the broke out—'51, excuse me. The United Nations now is strong, stable. If there was a war on the peninsula, I'd let the United Nations come and defend. You know, it's the United Nations Command, Korea. But it's supported by ninety-nine percent U.S. Army. So in reality, I don't think the U.S. needs to be here. Another reality though is that Korea wants the U.S. here because Korea only spends about two percent of its national budget on defense, when, on average, you need to spend at least four. So then the question is where do they get that other two percent to offset their budget? The Korean government—Noh Mu Hyun speaks out of both sides of his mouth. During the election he said, "We're going to get Korea out." On the other side he's telling the Americans, "Please don't go." I think the U.S. doesn't need to be here. I don't think the U.S. needs to be in Japan, as well. Just my own opinion. The U.S. needs to fall back to probably Guam, set up a supply point there and if there is a war that breaks out, move your forces in. But there's no reason to be overseas.

CHAMNESS: Because I've heard a lot of the younger generation say the U.S. needs to go. But then I also noticed this summer when there was talk of moving four thousand troops to Iraq, massive outcries. "No, you can't move them. You can't make them leave!"

TAYLOR: Yeah. There'd huge ramifications if the U.S. leaves. I don't know if they're really thinking about, but by moving the bases—even moving all those bases south of the river …

CHAMNESS: Which is what they're planning …

TAYLOR: Koreans are losing their jobs. You have to remember how—there's probably 20,000 Koreans that work with the U.S. military as civilians. They're losing—20,000 jobs lost. And then you look at the revenue generated by the Americans buying stuff near the base. There is so much revenue and economics that I don't think a lot people understand. So …

CHAMNESS: What kind of problems exist between the Korean government and the U.S. military right now?

TAYLOR: I think a common answer is that the alliance is weakened or it's not—Korean is the lapdog of the American imperialists.

CHAMNESS: I've heard that, yes.

TAYLOR: But honestly, I don't really think that's a problem. I think the only problem is the Korean government is not strong enough in their position. That's the point. The SOFA agreement[12] has mechanisms that make the U.S. change. The U.S. joint committee, the U.S. joint sub-committees, but what happens is the Korean government doesn't want to do it. Ultimately the Korean government is not wanting to change. The Korean population wants change, the Korean government doesn't. So I don't think there's a problem between Korea and the U.S., I think there's a problem between the Korean government and its people.

CHAMNESS: Now we were talking earlier about the camptowns and stuff …

TAYLOR: Camptowns.

CHAMNESS: Do you think that's an issue or not?

TAYLOR: The U.S., I believe it was in 2002, started taking active steps to break down—to shut down human trafficking. I'm all for that. They should have done it ten years ago because everybody knew it was happening. But the point is, they're taking the steps to remedy that. Outside of that context, American—men are men and women are women. Men drink, they go have fun and there's going to be fights that break out. And I think sometimes they put too much emphasis on it was an American soldier and a Korean guy. Because you can go to Sinchon and see two Korean guys get in a fight as well. Or you can see two Americans get in a fight. It was a fight between guys that were inebriated.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

TAYLOR: But the media here likes to make it or people want it to be us versus them. But no, I really don't see it as a major problem.

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[12] Status of Forces Agreement

CHAMNESS: As a soldier the first time you were here, brand-spanking new, right off the plane, what was the worst thing about being in Korea?

TAYLOR: Just being in Korea?

CHAMNESS: Yeah, being stationed in Korea.

TAYLOR: Just the distance. I mean, just the distance from the U.S. I had no real qualms. Seriously, just not being able to see my family when I wanted.

CHAMNESS: Did you hear other people complain? Minor complaints?

TAYLOR: Um, no. The army and the army. There was complaints about the army but there was no specific complaints about being in Korea. Why did the army do it? But that's not Korea, that's just the army.

CHAMNESS: Right. What was the best thing about being in Korea?

TAYLOR: The first time I got here or just in general?

CHAMNESS: Both, actually.

TAYLOR: My fiancé.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

TAYLOR: Just to be honest.

CHAMNESS: Okay, and before you met her?

TAYLOR: Before I met her? Well, okay … Before I met her the won collapsed. It went from 680 to 2000 overnight.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

TAYLOR: So the U.S. dollar went from—basically a soldier's income just doubled. So what was the best thing? When that happened because you could go buy everything and you could just go eat and …

CHAMNESS: That was in '97, right.

TAYLOR: Right.

CHAMNESS: That was when the Asian market collapsed. Do you think American soldiers like being in Korea, in general?

TAYLOR: I think they liked being in Korea up until about two months ago because—there was a window, a two year window once 9/11 occurred because you knew when you were in Korea, you weren't being deployed anywhere. So you basically had a two year freeze and you knew you were staying where you were going to stay. During that period of time a lot of people reenlisted to stay in Korea. But now because the U.S. is going to start doing deployments out of Korea, and now the whole peninsula is like Camp Casey now, in the sense that there's curfews and things. So now I'd definitely say it's not one of the better places for U.S. soldiers.

CHAMNESS: Last question. Completely opinion. Do you think Koreans like American soldiers?

TAYLOR: Well, I'm glad you used the word soldier because if you think about people who come to Korea, U.S. army's composite is probably ninety percent high school graduates, right? So the majority of them, they couldn't go to college. So the reality is, they're not the most educated Americans in the world. And then put in the context you have an eighteen year old guy that now makes $1500 dollars, living in a foreign country with lots of girls. Now you can drink.

CHAMNESS: Because some of those aren't old enough to drink in the U.S.

TAYLOR: Right. So you now you have youth, inebriated, and lots of women and they have money. So I don't think I would like that living in my town either. I think there's—I don't know. I think that's the problem. And it's not necessarily the soldier, but the type of person.

CHAMNESS: Right.

TAYLOR: And I think that's the trick. It's the person. I've never once heard a criticism of a thirty-five year old lieutenant colonel. I've never heard a criticism of a colonel or a staff sergeant or sergeant major or something like that. The only problems you hear are generated by the youth. So that's just something.

CHAMNESS: Okay, great. Well, thank you.

TAYLOR: You're welcome.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JUHEE KIM

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JUNE 20, 2004

TRANSCRIPT BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CHAMNESS: This begins an interview with Juhee Kim and Lindsey Chamness in Seoul, Korea on June 20, 2004. Juhee, the first question I would like to ask you is about the Korean War. Where exactly was your family during the Korean War?

KIM: I think at the moment my grandfather was moving to Manju. Do you know, it is near to China. It's like the boundary between the North Korea and China. At the moment, he went there to work and I think he was not a soldier but he went there. He had to do that one, I think. But he was back and now they settled in Taegu, which is in the south of South Korea, so now they ...

CHAMNESS: Was that your father's father or your mother's father?

KIM: My mother's father. And I think—actually I don't know my father's father because he was dead before I was born so I didn't know everything about him. Yeah. And also my father had been a soldier. In Korea normally it's like low, so if somebody wants to be a soldier, they don't have any record of going to North Korea or their families culture, or something like that. Do you understand what I mean?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Yeah so, I think maybe my father's family hadn't gone there to North Korea so nobody was going there.

CHAMNESS: Did anybody in your family serve in the Korea War?

KIM: No, not really.

CHAMNESS: And when were your parents born?

KIM: My father was born in 1951, maybe during ...

CHAMNESS: During the Korean War.

KIM: The Korean War, yeah. My mother was born in 1954. Yeah, after the Korean War, I think.

CHAMNESS: And they were both born in South Korea.

KIM: Yeah, South Korea in Taegu.

CHAMNESS: Where did they meet and how did they meet?

KIM: Ah, they met in Taegu, you know just a blind date. Normally at ...

CHAMNESS: A blind date? Really?

KIM: Yeah. Blind date. Normally at the moment couples could meet like that, that way. Not other way, like just make friend or something. Not that way.

CHAMNESS: And what did they do at the time? What were their jobs?

KIM: I think my father was a soldier and my mother just worked for some company. Just like a worker, not high. Just in the office.

CHAMNESS: When did they decide to get married?

KIM: I think after—it's very funny. They got married three months after.

CHAMNESS: After three months?

KIM: Yeah. So it's very fast. You know, my father got married at twenty-seven or eight but at the moment that's very late to get married. So they have to ...

CHAMNESS: Hurry?

KIM: (Laughs) Yeah, hurry. So, you know, it's normal.

CHAMNESS: Did your grandparents approve of the marriage?

KIM: Yeah. So now they ... Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Do you have siblings?

KIM: Siblings? Yeah, yeah. I've got one older brother.

CHAMNESS: And how old is he?

KIM: Twenty-seven, in Korean age.[1]

CHAMNESS: And where and when were you born?

KIM: He was born in Seoul, 1978. And I was born in Pohang. Do you know Pohang?

CHAMNESS: Pohang?

KIM: Yeah. Pohang is very big military area. Hapyeong Marine.

CHAMNESS: Right, right.

KIM: Yeah. So I was born there.

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[1] In Korean age, a person turns one one-hundred days after they are born. They turn a year older every New Year's after that.

CHAMNESS: In what year?

KIM: '80.

CHAMNESS: '80. So tell me about being a child.

KIM: Ah. My childhood?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm. Yeah.

KIM: Actually I was not really happy because my father was a very strict solider so normally he called off—called off?—told me off and very gloomy and very ... Actually I don't want to remember my childhood.

CHAMNESS: Really? Was he that strict with your brother or just you?

KIM: Just me. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Really?

KIM: I don't know why but now I understand a little bit because he really believed me and expected lots of things of me so that's why he ...

CHAMNESS: Pushed you.

KIM: Yeah, pushed me.

CHAMNESS: What about your mother?

KIM: My mother is very—how can I say—very naïve and very ... My mother is very considerate and she really likes to care for somebody, I think. But she couldn't do anything for me because my father was really strict and very strong so she just ... Yeah.

CHAMNESS: After she got married and after you were born, was she working then or ...

KIM: No, now she just ...

CHAMNESS: Stay at home?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And what about where you lived when you were little? Did you live in Pohang?

KIM: Yeah, Pohang, until high school. But you know my university is here so I have to come here. But between university and high school, I had one year to study because I failed my university entrance exam. So I had to study one year.

CHAMNESS: So what is it like in Pohang? Is it a small city?

KIM: Yes, quite a small city but you know, I quite like Pohang because like a bay, you know, near to sea. So we can see the sea. And yeah, very small city but quite good I think. Normally I went to church at military area so I couldn't meet lots of soldiers there and my church was really beautiful. There is one lake and river and lots of beautiful natural things. So I think the best memories.

CHAMNESS: Was it all Korean military or Korean and ...

KIM: Korean military.

CHAMNESS: Was it American military also or just Korean?

KIM: Yeah, maybe there were American military as well, because my father regularly had some training—not training—Team Spirit ...

CHAMNESS: Right, Team Spirit exercises.

KIM: Yeah. So I think—my memory is not so good, but I think maybe May or June, maybe two months—quite a long time—he hadn't come to my house because of Team Spirit.

CHAMNESS: Did he have to go somewhere else or was he just in the area?

KIM: I think he was somewhere around.

CHAMNESS: That's okay.

KIM: Oh, my elementary school. You know, lots of things connect with my father's job so ... My elementary school is near to my house and there were lots of children of soldiers so maybe forty or fifty percent were ...

CHAMNESS: Wow.

KIM: Yeah, quite big numbers. I think, yeah, my elementary school was good. Actually, you know, it was very early years for us, very young, so I just played and not study. But you know, now Korean children have to study very hard. At the moment it's not good.

CHAMNESS: And what about discipline in school? How do they discipline children in schools here?

KIM: Yeah, you mean discipline is like rules or something?

CHAMNESS: I mean, like in America, they would put you in a corner to punish you. So what would they do to punish you here?

KIM: Ahh ... Here, you know, I don't know the name of exactly that kind of thing. If just one girl has some mistake at the moment, maybe all of classmates did some special activity, like stretch out the arms or we have to sit down like this way and hold our knees (Squats)—quite long like one or two hours or something like this. And also we had lots of—how can I say—beat? (Imitates hitting hand)

CHAMNESS: Oh right. Like a ruler, you mean, to your hand?

KIM: Yeah, a ruler, not just to hand—like a long stick, or sometimes like ...

CHAMNESS: Metal?

KIM: Metal, yeah.

CHAMNESS: Did you behave well in elementary school?

KIM: Not really I think. (Laughs) Very naughty at the moment but not now.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, okay. And did you go to a girl and boy school?

KIM: My middle school was girls' school but high school was co-educational school, but completely split.

CHAMNESS: Really? How does that work?

KIM: I don't know. (Laughs) It's very strange. You know, both groups are very—maybe they really want to study together but the classes are different and every activity is different so they try to split boys and girls. But why it is co-educational school, I can't understand.

CHAMNESS: Your middle school was all girls.

KIM: Yeah, all girls.

CHAMNESS: Did you like having an all-girls' school?

KIM: Uh ... Sorry, repeat your question.

CHAMNESS: Did you like having only girls? Did you want to have boys?

KIM: Oh, yeah. Not really want at the moment but I think it's really quite good because I could concentrate on my studies. Perhaps if there are some boys I think maybe we try to be beautiful or something like that so it's ...

CHAMNESS: Did you have to wear uniforms?

KIM: Yeah, uniforms, yeah.

CHAMNESS: What did they look like?

KIM: You mean me and my friends?

CHAMNESS: Your uniforms.

KIM: My uniform, ah.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, what did it look like?

KIM: It's very ... (Sigh) It's navy. The color is navy and very old-fashioned.

CHAMNESS: White shirt, navy skirt.

KIM: Yeah, white shirt and yeah. And also we have to wear tights. Yeah so ...

CHAMNESS: Did you have to keep your hair cut?

KIM: Yeah, yeah. Of course. Yeah, very short like the bottom of my ears, just three centimeter or five centimeter or something like that.

CHAMNESS: And when you were little what did you want to be when you grew up?

KIM: Ah.

CHAMNESS: What did you dream of?

KIM: Profession?

CHAMNESS: Sure.

KIM: Yeah, professor. I really wanted that one at the moment.

CHAMNESS: Of what?

KIM: I don't know my major at the moment, but just a professor. I think maybe just business.

CHAMNESS: Even when you were little you wanted to be a professor?

KIM: Yeah. Not professor I think, but teacher or teaching somebody.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So tell me about high school. What was high school like here in Korea?

KIM: Normal Korean high school?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm.

KIM: You know, normally six or eight classes a day but Korea has two or three extra classes more before the first class, after the last class. So normally I had to go to school at seven o'clock and then normally finish at ten or eleven o'clock. It's very late. Even though we have to go to school on Sunday ...

CHAMNESS: Even on Sunday?

KIM: And Saturday as well. Yeah, as well. So it's very strict, you know. I think it's not so very efficient, I think.

CHAMNESS: You get very tired, I think.

KIM: Yeah, yeah.

CHAMNESS: What was your favorite subject?

KIM: My favorite subject is mathematics because it doesn't need strong concentration. So I enjoy listening to music or radio with studying so if I study another thing like language like English or Japanese or other things, I couldn't listen to the music. But solving the mathematics questions I can do that.

CHAMNESS: That's true.

KIM: Yeah, so I like that one.

CHAMNESS: What about—I know in Korea you have to take a large test when you get finished with high school. So tell me about this test.

KIM: So you mean the university entrance test?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Ah, it's very—I think it's not really good because just one time. It's just one moment, can be changing our life, everything. So you know I failed my exam, that very

important exam, so I had to study one year more. That one year was really bad because, you know, normally people said, "You're just like ..."—how can I—loser?

CHAMNESS: Loser?

KIM: Yeah, like loser.

CHAMNESS: Ah!

KIM: Yeah, not strong but ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Yeah, they don't really want to talk with us or something. And also most of my friends were university students at the moment but I was not.

CHAMNESS: So you spent all year just studying for this test?

KIM: Yeah, yeah.

CHAMNESS: What kind of things are on the test?

KIM: On the test? That test has four sections. One is the Korean language, second is mathematics, and third is culture and ...

CHAMNESS: Social studies?

KIM: Yeah, social studies and other things. And the fourth is English. So four sections. Four hundred score is perfect and two hundred questions.

CHAMNESS: Your entire high school is leading up to this one moment?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay. So after you spent your year and studied and took the test again, what did you do after that?

KIM: I just came to my university.

CHAMNESS: You went to Ehwa[2] for your undergradutate?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: How did you choose Ehwa?

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[2] Ehwa Women's University

KIM: Ah, it's not my choice I think.

CHAMNESS: Really?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay, so how did you come to Ehwa then?

KIM: No, no, no. I mean not that meaning. You know, my test result was not really good enough. I expected to go to Sogang or Yonsei University but my score was not enough. Normally that kind ... When we go to university, we've got two stages. One is the first terms, like after entering exam, just maybe ten or fifteen days. After that, another term is coming so somebody who passed the first stage, they go to that university or they want another university as well. At first I chose Yonsei University but I failed so after that, the second stage, we can choose four university, different dates. So I chose Ehwa, Sogang, Hanyang, and Aduel University but other two universities were not really my future. Not my choice, so I just chose Ehwa, but Sogang maybe I have to wait for long time on some waiting list or something like that.

CHAMNESS: Oh right.

KIM: So that's why I came here.

CHAMNESS: And what did you study while you were an undergraduate?

KIM: International office management.

CHAMNESS: Office management?

KIM: Yeah and also my double major is business.

CHAMNESS: Business. What kind of stuff did you do outside the classroom? Did you have a lot of time to play?

KIM: Not really. I've got lots of homework.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, two majors.

KIM: Yeah, yeah.

CHAMNESS: Sounds difficult.

KIM: Yeah but I joined the English drama club and also I was intern at a center and also I had work for some company as a part-time job or something.

CHAMNESS: Did you spend as much time studying as you did in high school?

KIM: Not really. (Laughs) It's impossible.

CHAMNESS: So it was better, right? (Laughter)

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: That sounds good.

KIM: How about you?

CHAMNESS: No, it was much better.

KIM: Ah.

CHAMNESS: When you were growing up and your father was in the military and when you were at school, what did you learn about the U.S.? What kind of things did you learn about the U.S. when you were growing up?

KIM: Growing up?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: I think not any special education but we can feel something from the news or like the media or something. Actually, I don't really like American things, yeah, because I think they are very few to some bad way. Maybe other people are very good but some people did something very bad things.

CHAMNESS: You mean Americans here?

KIM: Yeah, yeah. Do you remember maybe two or three weeks ago the American soldier ...

CHAMNESS: In Sinchon.

KIM: Yeah, yeah. That one.

CHAMNESS: Explain it for the people who haven't heard.

KIM: Ah, I just heard from the news. They said he tried to take off the clothes and spoke very loudly and treated other people in a bad way and pushed somebody or something like that. Like a fight or something.

CHAMNESS: When you were in school, when did you start learning English?

KIM: From middle school.

CHAMNESS: And what about history? Did you learn American history?

KIM: Not American history, just ...

CHAMNESS: World history?

KIM: Yeah, world. But I heard the main focus is the American. Our world history was by the American eyes so we can—I heard.

CHAMNESS: That's interesting.

KIM: Yeah. Really?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. And also, what about your family? Did they ever talk about—did you talk with your family about things that go on in Korea with Americans?

KIM: Not really.

CHAMNESS: No?

KIM: Yeah, because you know, I lived here but my parents ...

CHAMNESS: They don't live here.

KIM: Yeah, very far.

CHAMNESS: Like with the thing in Sinchon last month and with the tank accident that happened two years ago—do you remember?

KIM: In Yongsan?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Yeah, I remember.

CHAMNESS: What kind of reaction happens in Korea when something like that happens?

KIM: Very—I think we can't consider our world with feeling a good way. Maybe some bullshit or something like that. It's normal.

CHAMNESS: Right.

KIM: Yeah, people are damaged and injured at the moment so maybe one boy was dead. I think Korean people don't have very good feeling for the American soldiers. Do you remember the *chopulshiwi*, the candle ...

CHAMNESS: Vigil.

KIM: Yeah, that one. Actually, I didn't join them but my mind or some of my feelings joined them I think.

CHAMNESS: Did you know people who went?

KIM: You mean my friends or something?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: No, not really.

CHAMNESS: How does the media react when stuff happens?

KIM: That happened? I think Korea and America is very close so I think Korean media, when something happens, just very small, but they say very loudly or very repetitively ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: So actually, it's very small so I don't think it's very important but people say lots of times so sometimes it was very boring and not the objective way. You know media has some objective thing but it's not.

CHAMNESS: What about politicians? What do they say?

KIM: You know, normally before the president's election, they say about those kind of things, I mean policy for America or something like that. It's like very essential tactic of them saying. So I think young politicians say—maybe they don't really like Americans, they say like that way, not just friendly way.

CHAMNESS: Right.

KIM: But older ...

CHAMNESS: More conservative ...

KIM: Yeah, they say ...

CHAMNESS: Do you think that when stuff like the tank happens or the guy in Sinchon, do you think that changes peoples' minds about America? If they think America is good, do you think that has an effect on the way people think?

KIM: I think, of course. Because it's very near to our way of life, our routine life. Even somebody who doesn't have any negative feeling for America, they say, "(Gasp) America did that!" or something like that. So maybe they change their mind.

CHAMNESS: How much do you interact with foreigners? Do you see a lot of foreigners?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What about soldiers?

KIM: Yeah, same as other foreigners.

CHAMNESS: Where do you run into them? Where is the most popular place you think you would see ...

KIM: Itaewon or Yongsan or ... And also you can—you mean, just American military?

CHAMNESS: Where would you see American military?

KIM: Yeah, just that place.

CHAMNESS: Those places. When you see them, how do they act? What do you think about them when you see them?

KIM: Nothing.

CHAMNESS: Nothing? Just ...

KIM: Just, "Oh, foreigners!" I don't have any feeling.

CHAMNESS: What problems do you think are there between the U.S. military and Korea? It's just your opinion.

KIM: Just in my opinion ... I know America is very strong nation and they've got big power and powerful but sometimes I feel they ignore—not ignore but look down on Koreans ... Yeah, they ignored and look down on us because one or two years ago there was an accident. An American soldier tried to ...

CHAMNESS: Rape?

KIM: Yeah, rape the Japanese girl in Japan ...

CHAMNESS: In Okinawa?

KIM: Yeah, maybe. At the moment, I think Japan's media really ...

CHAMNESS: Harsh.

KIM: Harsh, right. But compared with Korean—so I think at the moment some American military, they apologize and take some action but you know, two years ago the HyoSunee, MiSunee Accident, the tank. The two girls were dead because of the American tank and at the moment they didn't apologize and they didn't take any actions so I think that kind of attitude of the Americans was not proper way, I think. I think the relationship is really important to have nations and I think the relationship is based on belief but I think Korean and American doesn't have that kind of relationship.

CHAMNESS: Sort of unequal?

KIM: Yeah, unequal and that is the main reason. It's enough?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. It's perfect. What's the first thing that comes to mind when I say the word *kijichon*.[3]

KIM: *Kijichon*?

CHAMNESS: What do you think of? Okay, you're making a face. (Laughs) Describe that face.

KIM: Yeah. I think my first image of *kijichon* is the prostitution and American soldiers, like that kind of things.

CHAMNESS: What do you think about that kind of stuff?

KIM: I think it's normal because it's natural things for people to have some sex or that kind of things but I think—why I think sexual things connect with *kijichon* because maybe several years ago, one prostitute was dead by American soldier so it's very connected. That's why I think like that. I think most people think like that.

CHAMNESS: What do you think Koreans feel about *kijichon*?

KIM: They don't really like. It's not ...

CHAMNESS: It's not good?

KIM: Like disgusting or something. But I think people think like that.

CHAMNESS: Has there been any effort to clean up those areas or is it sort of left alone?

KIM: Left alone.

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[3] (Kee-jee-chon) Camptown

CHAMNESS: The first thing you mentioned was sex, so I have to ask do you think that's a problem between the U.S. military and Korea or is it just something that's ...

KIM: It's one factor I think because ... Just to have that kind of area it's enough, but happen some accident and some death, it's ...

CHAMNESS: Just one factor of a larger picture.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Well, the last questions are strictly your opinion, so give me the first thing that comes to your mind. Do you think that the American military should stay in Korea or do you think they should pull out?

KIM: I think they should stay here. I know Korea is an independent nation but North Korea is very dangerous. Even though they are like family or our brothers, but they have lots of atomic weapons and lots of things. And also I heard between South Korea and America had some special negotiations that is about staying in Korea or something. Now Noh Mu Hyun says maybe the American military have to go back to America, but actually I didn't agree with him because security and safety are not ...

CHAMNESS: It's better with the U.S.?

KIM: Yeah, yeah.

CHAMNESS: Do you think Koreans in general like the U.S. military or not?

KIM: I think they don't have any special feelings, like just a colleague or just same as a Korean soldier or other Koreans.

CHAMNESS: Do you think it's different between American soldier and other Americans, like students or English teachers?

KIM: Of course. Different. Just American—I treat them very friendly and I really want that kind of thing, but you know, soldiers, American soldiers, are not good, I think. Because that kind of ...

CHAMNESS: So you would be more apprehensive about talking to someone.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Last question. Do you think the American soldiers like being in Korea? Just what you think.

KIM: I think half and half. I heard if they come to Korea, they can promote very fast and they can have special career. But on the other end, they feel dangerous staying here because of North Korea, so I think half and half. But I think that they think a little bit good or better to stay here ... I hope. (Laughter) I hope.

CHAMNESS: Okay, great. Well that's it.

KIM: Thank you.

CHAMNESS: Thank you.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH YOUNGHA WOO

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JUNE 22, 2004

TRANSCRIPT BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CHAMNESS: This begins an interview with Youngha Woo and Lindsey Chamness on June 22, 2004 in Seoul, Korea. Youngha the first question I would like to ask you is what your family was doing during the Korean War. You grandparents—where were they?

WOO: During the Korean War, both sets of grandparents were in the South and my mom's father was police officer so he was in Seoul. And the other moved to the southern part of Korea, like Pusan or Taegu.

CHAMNESS: Was your grandmother with your grandfather in Seoul or did she ...

WOO: No.

CHAMNESS: She went to the South also.

WOO: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: What was he doing while he was in Seoul, do you know?

WOO: I'm not sure.

CHAMNESS: That's fine. And when were your parents born?

WOO: Parents? My mom was born during the Korean War, 1950, and my father was born 1947.

CHAMNESS: And how did they meet? Where did they meet?

WOO: Company. At the company.

CHAMNESS: Where they worked?

WOO: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: What did they do?

WOO: A salary man. He worked for a company.

CHAMNESS: And what did your mom do? Was she a ... secretary or ...

WOO: A company worker. She worked for Human Resource Department.

CHAMNESS: Did somebody introduce them or they just ran into each other?

WOO: Ran into each other.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And where were they living at the time? Where did they work?

WOO: In Seoul.

CHAMNESS: And how long did they date before they got married?

WOO: About a year.

CHAMNESS: And when did you come along?

WOO: Me?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: I'm the last one in my family. So my big sister was born right after the marriage.

CHAMNESS: How many siblings do you have?

WOO: Two. Two sisters.

CHAMNESS: And so you're the youngest?

WOO: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: And where and when were you born?

WOO: In Seoul, 1981.

CHAMNESS: So tell me about your family when you were a child. Did your mother still work after the children were born or did she stay at home?

WOO: She stayed at home.

CHAMNESS: So you had your two older sisters and you and your mom and home ...

WOO: And my grandmother.

CHAMNESS: And your grandmother also. Anything specific that you remember about ...

WOO: Childhood?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm.

WOO: I think I had quite normal childhood. Nothing special really.

CHAMNESS: And you grew up in Seoul?

WOO: Yes.

CHAMNESS: So tell me about elementary school.

WOO: Elementary school?

CHAMNESS: Anything.

WOO: Anything?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Favorite teachers, favorite thing to do at recess ...

WOO: I really enjoyed playing with my friends, so after school I always went out and ...

CHAMNESS: And what part of Seoul did you live in?

WOO: South.

CHAMNESS: Was your elementary school co-ed? Both boys and girls?

WOO: Yes.

CHAMNESS: And after elementary school you went to middle school. Was it also co-ed?

WOO: Yes.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

WOO: But separate classes.

CHAMNESS: Separate classes?

WOO: Only boy classes, only girls'.

CHAMNESS: What about recess? Did you have separate recesses?

WOO: Separate recesses?

CHAMNESS: Did you play together or ...

WOO: Ah. Yeah, we played together.

CHAMNESS: And when you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up? What did you always—you know, what was your dream?

WOO: I wanted to be a doctor or a businesswoman.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Did you want to stay in Seoul?

WOO: I always dreamed of going abroad.

CHAMNESS: Going abroad? Anywhere specific?

WOO: Hm ... maybe America.

CHAMNESS: Maybe America. Did you play sports when you were in school?

WOO: Yes.

CHAMNESS: What kind of sports?

WOO: Basketball, badmitton ...

CHAMNESS: Okay. And what about high school?

WOO: High school?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm.

WOO: High school was only girls' school. And it was a foreign language high school.

CHAMNESS: Oh really. Okay, I don't know what that means. Can you describe that?

WOO: We have to take special exams for entering that school. So it's not like normal school.

CHAMNESS: Do you have different classes than a normal school?

WOO: Yeah. We have more English and foreign language classes.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And it was only girls?

WOO: Yeah, only girls.

CHAMNESS: Did you have uniforms?

WOO: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What did they look like?

WOO: It was gray. And I think it looked quite good.

CHAMNESS: Yeah? Did you like it or did you ...

WOO: I really liked it.

CHAMNESS: You really did like it? Okay. I know American kids think, "I hate uniforms." But Korean kids seem to like their uniforms.

WOO: Yeah, I think it was pretty.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Did you also have to have your hair cut?

WOO: No. It was free.

CHAMNESS: What about jewelry? Could you wear earrings?

WOO: No. It wasn't accepted.

CHAMNESS: Did they say why you can't wear earrings or it's just the rule?

WOO: It was the rule.

CHAMNESS: So you said you studied languages in high school. You studied English. And what else?

WOO: German and Chinese.

CHAMNESS: What other subjects did you study in high school?

WOO: Other subjects?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: Mathematics, physics, and then ...

CHAMNESS: History?

WOO: Korean history. Social studies.

CHAMNESS: What was your favorite subject?

WOO: My favorite? I think my favorite was history.

CHAMNESS: Korean history or world history?

WOO: Both. I really liked both and I also liked German classes.

CHAMNESS: Really? German? Any particular reason?

WOO: No. I really like the sound, the tough sound.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. I do too. So in high school, with this foreign language high school, was it the same as others, where you were preparing for a final test, like the college entrance exam?

WOO: Mm. It was the same.

CHAMNESS: And tell me about preparing for this exam.

WOO: You mean, the college ...

CHAMNESS: The college entrance exam.

WOO: We have to take something like SAT, it's called *Suhakneunglyukshiheom* and it has four subjects. So Korean, English, mathematics, and social studies.

CHAMNESS: And I've heard that it's extremely difficult, this test. Is that true?

WOO: I think it's getting easier and easier.

CHAMNESS: Really? What about when you took it? Did you think it was hard?

WOO: It was medium.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: But when my sister took it, it was really, really difficult.

CHAMNESS: The oldest one?

WOO: Mm. My oldest one.

CHAMNESS: Did you have a lot of free time in high school?

WOO: Not really.

CHAMNESS: Did you study a lot?

WOO: (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: No? What did you do during the day?

WOO: I have to stay at school until five o'clock and then after that, it was my choice to stay at school and study or go home, so ...

CHAMNESS: So which did you choose?

WOO: I sometimes went out with friends and then went to movies.

CHAMNESS: In your high school did you have clubs? Like, in American high schools we have German club, or different sororities. Did you have clubs like that in high school?

WOO: Yeah. We had like club activity system, but it wasn't that active.

CHAMNESS: No? Were you in any clubs?

WOO: I was in badminton club.

CHAMNESS: But it wasn't very active?

WOO: It was only on Saturday.

CHAMNESS: Did you have school on the weekends?

WOO: Only Saturday and it was until twelve o'clock.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And what college did you go to.

WOO: Yonsei. Yonsei University.

CHAMNESS: And how did you choose to go to Yonsei?

WOO: I don't have special reasons, but when I was growing up, I really wanted to go to Yonsei because of—maybe because of basketball team or ...

CHAMNESS: Uh huh. (Laughs)

WOO: That was the reason.

CHAMNESS: Really? What was so great about this basketball team? (Laughs)

WOO: Actually, they won all the time. They looked kind of cool.

CHAMNESS: Good looking?

WOO: Mm.

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm. Interesting. Yeah ... So once you took this exam—or did you apply to Yonsei before or after you took the exam? How does that work in Korea?

WOO: After.

CHAMNESS: After. So you get your results back and then you apply?

WOO: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Was it the only place you applied or you applied other places?

WOO: That was the only apply ...

CHAMNESS: Really? So it was all or nothing, right? But you got in.

WOO: Mm. (Nods)

CHAMNESS: That's a yes, for people who can't see your nodding. And what did you study when you were at Yonsei?

WOO: For a year, I mean freshman year ...

CHAMNESS: Oh, when did you enter?

WOO: 2000. I have to study requirements like history, English, and other common sense classes.

CHAMNESS: Right.

WOO: Then after one year, I applied for my major.

CHAMNESS: Wait, how does that work? I don't think we have the same system that you do.

WOO: Ah. We have to choose our majors after one year, and then professors ...

CHAMNESS: They accept you?

WOO: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: So you have to ...

WOO: According to the ...

CHAMNESS: Your grades?

WOO: My grades.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So you apply and then you're accepted. So what did you apply for?

WOO: Chinese language and literature.

CHAMNESS: And you were accepted into that?

WOO: Uh no. The first time, no. So I applied for it after one semester and then they accepted me.

CHAMNESS: Okay. What kind of extracurricular activities did you do in college?

WOO: It was photography. Black and white photography.

CHAMNESS: Wow. Okay. Does Yonsei have a lot of clubs?

WOO: Yes, lots of clubs.

CHAMNESS: Did you have a lot of time for fun in college or were you mostly just studying and going to class?

WOO: During my freshman year, usually I spend most of time for fun. That's why I wasn't accepted after one year. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: I see. Okay.

WOO: So after freshman year, I studied, studied.

CHAMNESS: Now, you also traveled to the United States, to the University of Tennessee. So tell me how you decided to go abroad and how you got to go.

WOO: Yonsei University has an active exchange programs, so—and I really wanted to go abroad, since I was young.

CHAMNESS: What year did you go abroad?

WOO: Junior. 2003. So I applied for ISEP programs and then ISEP program put me there.

CHAMNESS: Which is the International Student Exchange Program.

WOO: Yes.

CHAMNESS: So, I know that you can choose maybe your top three choices. So what were your top three choices and why?

WOO: You mean the college?

CHAMNESS: Yeah, to go to the U.S. or to go Europe—or what were your choices?

WOO: It was U.S.A. Only U.S.A.

CHAMNESS: Did you choose—did you get to choose the place you went or did you just say, "Send me to America. Anywhere is fine."

WOO: I chose five, I think it was ten universities. And UT wasn't in it. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: Wow.

WOO: Because I didn't know UT when I applied for it.

CHAMNESS: Right. It's not exactly like the University of California. So they chose UT for you.

WOO: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: What did you think when you heard you were going to Tennessee?

WOO: At first I thought, where's Knoxville?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: That was my first question. And then I searched for UT on the website and then the first thing I looked at was the agriculture campus. I thought, it's really countryside. (Laughter) Yeah, I was kind of shocked.

CHAMNESS: So you thought you were going to a cow pasture.

WOO: One of my friends said UT has good system, especially like a sports program.

CHAMNESS: So then you went to Knoxville. How long were you in Knoxville?

WOO: For a year.

CHAMNESS: And tell me about it. What did you think about Knoxville and the U.S.?

WOO: I think Knoxville it pretty small but ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah, compared to Seoul.

WOO: Yeah, compared to Seoul. But it has almost everything. So I think it's quiet and the people were really kind so I really enjoyed Knoxville and I liked it a lot.

CHAMNESS: Did you like the school?

WOO: Yeah, I liked UT.

CHAMNESS: Did you find that it was more difficult at UT or at Yonsei?

WOO: Taking classes were much easier in UT. Yeah. I could have broad choices so I could take whatever I want. I took restaurant management classes ... and it was fun.

CHAMNESS: Good. Did you also get to travel while you were in the States?

WOO: Yeah, during summer break.

CHAMNESS: And where did you get to go?

WOO: I went to Philadelphia because my aunt lives there.

CHAMNESS: Really?

WOO: Yeah. And then I went to New York. And then the west side of U.S.A.

CHAMNESS: Like L.A.?

WOO: L.A. and San Francisco.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And what did you think about those places that you visited? Different from Knoxville?

WOO: Yeah. Different from Knoxville. It's kind of busy places like Seoul. Big cities. I liked both sides of U.S.A.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And then after you got finished at Knoxville, what did you do?

WOO: Came back to Seoul.

CHAMNESS: And how long have you been back?

WOO: Six months.

CHAMNESS: So now you're back at Yonsei?

WOO: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: Still studying Chinese?

WOO: No. I changed my major.

CHAMNESS: Okay. What are you studying now?

WOO: Business.

CHAMNESS: And when are you supposed to graduate?

WOO: 2006, February.

CHAMNESS: And what are you going to do after that?

WOO: After that?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: If I really like the business major, then I'll probably go to graduate school and then study more.

CHAMNESS: Do you want to stay here?

WOO: Maybe not. I want to go abroad.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

WOO: Or if I don't like it that much, I will go to—I think I have to work.

CHAMNESS: Now let me ask you a question about perceptions of the U.S. When you were growing up and then more recently, did your family—when your family talked about the U.S., was it generally positive or negative?

WOO: My parents were neutral, I guess, and then my cousins were in the U.S.A. at that time so they were positive.

CHAMNESS: What about your grandparents? Are they still alive?

WOO: Yeah, my grandmother.

CHAMNESS: What about her?

WOO: I think she's positive because she was alive during the Korean War and she thinks that U.S.A. helped us a lot. So positive.

CHAMNESS: In school, like in middle school or high school or even in college, how much did you learn about the U.S.?

WOO: I had only chance through social studies, and then history classes.

CHAMNESS: What did you think about what you were learning? Did it seem positive or did it seem just like America is like every other country?

WOO: Actually before high school, it was kind of positive because we are still at war and there was no anti-U.S.A. ...

CHAMNESS: Really? When you were in middle school?

WOO: Yeah. It wasn't there.

CHAMNESS: Wow. Just since you've been in middle school it's sort of developed?

WOO: Maybe through college.

CHAMNESS: Now, two years ago in the summer there was the accident with the tank and the two girls.

WOO: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Can you tell me about when that happened? Were you here or were you in the—you were here, right?

WOO: Yeah, I was here.

CHAMNESS: Kind of describe what was going on in Korea when that happened.

WOO: I think it's really ...

CHAMNESS: Don't be afraid. You're not going to hurt my feelings if you say something bad. So please do.

WOO: Okay. I think Hyosoon and Misun, that accident, was just happening, but there were political elections going on and then president's side uses that anti-American ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah, anti-Americanism.

WOO: Yeah, anti-Americanism.

CHAMNESS: Now, were both sides using this or just one side?

WOO: Just one side.

CHAMNESS: The president, Noh?

WOO: Yeah, President Noh's side. Because Lee Hoechang studied in U.S. and then his sons are born in U.S.A. And then President Noh ...

CHAMNESS: Never went.

WOO: Maybe went there but not like American sons.

CHAMNESS: What about the media's reaction?

WOO: I think media's reaction—media supported President Noh's side so it got bigger than it was.

CHAMNESS: And can you describe what was going on, on college campuses, especially around Yonsei?

WOO: They were huge *demohn* ...

CHAMNESS: Demonstrations.

WOO: Yeah, demonstrations, everywhere. In front of library, in front of the front gate, everywhere.

CHAMNESS: Do you think that one incident changed people's minds about the U.S. or do you think it was just sort of used by the politician's at that one time?

WOO: I think at least the young people's minds has been changed a lot after the accident.

CHAMNESS: Do you think it was just the military here or like America also?

WOO: America also. But ...

CHAMNESS: Because I know President Bush didn't apologize immediately so ... did that have an affect on some people?

WOO: The funny thing is they always say, "I have some bad feeling for America," but I know they want to go there and study there so ... (Laughter) And they always watch Hollywood movies. So it's ironic, I think.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. I think so too. So how much contact do you have with American soldiers in Seoul?

WOO: American soldiers? I learned English from American soldiers when I was young, I think elementary school.

CHAMNESS: Really? How did that work? They would come to visit your school?

WOO: No, I went to Hannam. It was tutoring.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: They were American soldiers' wives, usually talking. They were Korean and they could speak both English and Korean.

CHAMNESS: Korean wives, married to American soldiers?

WOO: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And now, do you see a lot of American soldiers around Seoul?

WOO: Hmm.

CHAMNESS: No?

WOO: No.

CHAMNESS: Are there ay particular places where you would see more than others?

WOO: Maybe if I go to Itaewon, then I could see them often but I don't go there. I don't have any chance.

CHAMNESS: Say that I wanted to meet an American soldier, what would be your advice where I could meet them?

WOO: Go to Itaewon or clubs around Hong-dae, Hongik University. You can meet them easily. (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: Do you think that they act differently than other foreigners here, from what you've seen?

WOO: American soldiers?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm.

WOO: No, I don't see any difference. I heard some bad happenings from the media, but I never experienced it.

CHAMNESS: What does the media say? What have you heard?

WOO: Like rape—raping Korean women.

CHAMNESS: Do you think that makes people afraid of American soldiers, when they hear that kind of stuff?

WOO: Yeah, maybe.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. What kind of problems do you think are between the U.S. or the U.S. military and Korea?

WOO: The military and Korea?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: I think the U.S. military is helping Korea a lot but there were unfairness in the contract when U.S.A. and Korea first ...

CHAMNESS: The Mutual Security Agreement?

WOO: Mm hmm. So it has to be changed, some point, but I think withdrawing the American military is kind of dangerous.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, and that was my next question. Do you think that the American troops should be withdrawn from Korea or not?

WOO: It's not the right moment. It's too dangerous.

CHAMNESS: In the last month or so, President Bush ordered three to four thousand American troops withdrawn from Korea. Can you describe how Koreans are reacting to that?

WOO: Reacting?

CHAMNESS: At least what people are thinking.

WOO: My parents think it's dangerous because we are still at war. But my—some of my friends said ...

CHAMNESS: They're happy to see them go?

WOO: Yes.

CHAMNESS: Okay. I'm going to say a word and then you tell me the first thing that comes to your mind when I say this word. What do you think of when you hear the word *kijichon*?

WOO: *Kijichon*? *Kijichon* ...

CHAMNESS: You have sort of a look on your face. (Laughter)

WOO: *Kijichon.* It should be ... *opda*?

CHAMNESS: Gone?

WOO: Gone.

CHAMNESS: Do you think of bad things when you think of that?

WOO: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Can you explain why you would think of something really bad when you hear that word.

WOO: Maybe I heard or read bad things about *kijichon.*

CHAMNESS: Like what, for example? For somebody who's never been to Korea or ever experienced a camptown, what kind of things do you hear about?

WOO: When I think about a *kijichon*, first thing that comes up in my head is prostitution. So ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah. That's what I would think of too but ... Do you think other Koreans think the same thing also?

WOO: Maybe.

CHAMNESS: Just prostitution, solely for the Americans or for anybody?

WOO: Yeah. For Americans.

CHAMNESS: Do you think—since that's the first thing you thought of, prostitution—do you think that's a problem with the U.S.? Is it America's problem or is it Korea's problem?

WOO: Prostitution happens everywhere so it's not particular American's problem.

CHAMNESS: But I mean the ones around the camptowns.

WOO: Oh, around the camptowns?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Like you said, you think that they should be there anymore, right?

WOO: Actually, my feelings are about all prostitution.

CHAMNESS: Right.

WOO: Not just *kijichon.*

CHAMNESS: Sure, sure. But say, Korea went on a mission to clean up prostitution, would it be only Korea's problem to clean-up those kinds of areas or do you think the American bases also should? Do you know what I mean?

WOO: But I think if they clean up that area, then the American soldiers will go to another place. And then it will be happening again. I think it's impossible to clean up that area.

CHAMNESS: I understand. I think that's one argument that some people have, that American troops should leave. But, do you think that or no?

WOO: I think we still need help from the U.S. military.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Now, I'm down to the last two questions, so it's strictly your opinion. But, do you think that most Koreans like Americans, or American soldiers that are stationed here, the American military?

WOO: Like?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

WOO: Hmm. Maybe not.

CHAMNESS: No?

WOO: No.

CHAMNESS: Is there any particular feeling or reason that you ...

WOO: The primary reason will be some accident happening in two years, like the Misun and Hyosoon accident, then lots of the raping and ... (Makes stabbing motion)

CHAMNESS: Stabbing.

WOO: Stabbing.

CHAMNESS: Fighting?

WOO: Fighting accidents. So I don't think most—I think most Korean people don't like American military.

CHAMNESS: You think that's all that they think about when they think of American soldiers? Like is it negative in their mind to connect?

WOO: Yeah, really negative.

CHAMNESS: And the last question. Do you think that those Americans, those soldiers, like being in Korea?

WOO: My opinion?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Just, you know, what do you think?

WOO: I think we still need their help so my feeling is mutual.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. But I mean, do you think that they like being here?

WOO: Maybe not.

CHAMNESS: No?

WOO: Because they also know that we don't like the soldiers, so maybe not.

CHAMNESS: Alright, well that's it. Thank you!

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JINHEE SHIN

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JUNE 26, 2004

TRANSCRIPT BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CHAMNESS: This begins an interview with Jinhee Shin and Lindsey Chamness on June 26, 2004 in Seoul, Korea. Okay Jinhee, the first question that I would like to ask you is where your family was during the Korean War.

SHIN: They both, my dad and my mom, they're not born.

CHAMNESS: Okay, well what about your grandparents?

SHIN: Maybe they were trying to avoid the war so ...

CHAMNESS: Were they in South Korea or in North Korea?

SHIN: South Korea. Absolutely.

CHAMNESS: And were your grandfathers in the Army at any time?

SHIN: I don't think so.

CHAMNESS: So after the war, where were your parents living? Or where were they born?

SHIN: Do you know Kyunggi-do, near Seoul?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm.

SHIN: Yeah, they were there.

CHAMNESS: Both of them?

SHIN: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: And both of them grew up in Kyunggi-do?

SHIN: Actually my mom grew up in Taegu. Do you know Taegu?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm. And where did they meet?

SHIN: Seoul.

CHAMNESS: And how did they meet?

SHIN: Seoul. And my mother and my father's younger sister, they were friends so ... just, you know.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

SHIN: She introduced my mom to my dad and they ...

CHAMNESS: Okay. When were your parents born? Were they born during the war or after?

SHIN: After.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And do you know if you have any family in North Korea or was everybody in the South?

SHIN: In the South.

CHAMNESS: What did your parents do when they met each other? What were their jobs?

SHIN: My father is just in the company. And my mother has a clothes shop. How do you ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah. She was selling clothing.

SHIN: Uh huh.

CHAMNESS: And after they got married, were they both doing the same thing?

SHIN: Yeah, and my mother just changed store, but she still sells something.

CHAMNESS: When you were born, was she staying at home or was she ...

SHIN: Oh, she was staying at home.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Were you—are you an only child or do you have siblings?

SHIN: No, I have a younger sister.

CHAMNESS: So when you were born, your mom decided to stay home with you?

SHIN: Yes.

CHAMNESS: And where and when were you born?

SHIN: Seoul.

CHAMNESS: Seoul. And what year and what day?

SHIN: 1981, September 29.

CHAMNESS: And how old is your sister? Or when did she come after you?

SHIN: Two years.

CHAMNESS: And tell me about your childhood? What was it like?

SHIN: Well, I was just a normal child. Not really studying, not really outgoing, just ... I just played and hang out with my friends. That's all.

CHAMNESS: What were your parents like? Were they strict or ...

SHIN: No, not at all.

CHAMNESS: No?

SHIN: No. They just let me free, whatever I want to do.

CHAMNESS: Sure, sure. What about elementary school?

SHIN: Elementary school ... I don't know, how can I say, just—I have good memories.

CHAMNESS: If there any memory that you really like to remember? Is there something great about elementary school?

SHIN: When I was in elementary school, I usually hung out with the boys, not really girls.

CHAMNESS: Really?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: So your school was both boys and girls?

SHIN: Yeah. Because I don't want to play with girl things, just run and things. I liked it.

CHAMNESS: Wow. That's fantastic.

SHIN: Yeah. So that's why I have boy friends more than girl friends.

CHAMNESS: Did you beat up boys too or did you just play with them?

SHIN: Kind of. (Laughter) Some times, if they were really mean.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Was that common in elementary school for the girls to play with the boys?

SHIN: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: What about middle school?

SHIN: Actually, the middle school time is the best time for me.

CHAMNESS: Really?

SHIN: I met my best friend there. We didn't study a lot, just study and hang out with friends. It was really good.

CHAMNESS: Was your school all girls or both still?

SHIN: No, both.

CHAMNESS: Did you have boys and girls in the class or were you separate?

SHIN: Separate class.

CHAMNESS: So did you still play together or do everything separately?

SHIN: Still play together.

CHAMNESS: Tell me about if somebody got in trouble at your school—say if somebody threw something at the teacher—what kind of discipline would they have? What would happen to that kid?

SHIN: You mean, somebody has trouble with other friends or with teacher or whatever?

CHAMNESS: What would the teacher do to punish them?

SHIN: Some teachers, in fact they hit the student. Sometimes it's really serious. So my younger sister's classmate had a suicide. Because of the teacher.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

SHIN: Because he was kind of bully so he has lot of problem with the other friends. But maybe the head of teachers—I don't know how to say—he hit a lot so he just ...

CHAMNESS: Wow. What grade was that?

SHIN: Maybe junior or ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah. In high school?

SHIN: No, middle school.

CHAMNESS: And when you were a kid in elementary school or middle school, what did you want to be when you grew up? What was your dream job?

SHIN: Journalist.

CHAMNESS: Really? Like a reporter or like a writer for a newspaper?

SHIN: Reporter.

CHAMNESS: Really?

SHIN: But it's too difficult to be a reporter.

CHAMNESS: And tell me about high school.

SHIN: High school? Actually, I hated high school time because usually we go to high school—the government has a choice.

CHAMNESS: They pick your high school?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Really?

SHIN: Yeah, just random. But I wanted to be with my best friend but I just had to go to the high school that is the new one, so I didn't know anyone.

CHAMNESS: Was it close to your home?

SHIN: Yeah. It was really hard time.

CHAMNESS: What kind of subjects did you study in high school?

SHIN: Math, English, music, and science and ...

CHAMNESS: Social studies?

SHIN: Yeah, social studies.

CHAMNESS: What was your favorite subject?

SHIN: Uh, let me think. History, Korean history.

CHAMNESS: Korean history. Okay. Modern or ancient?

SHIN: Huh?

CHAMNESS: Modern—like now—or a long time ago?

SHIN: Both.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Did you play sports?

SHIN: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: What kind of sports did you play?

SHIN: I played skiing.

CHAMNESS: Skiing? Like winter skiing?

SHIN: Uh huh.

CHAMNESS: Where did you go to ski?

SHIN: There are a lot of ski slopes here, near Seoul.

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay. And tell me about when you went to high school. How many days a week did you go to school?

SHIN: Six days.

CHAMNESS: Six. Monday through Saturday?

SHIN: Mm.

CHAMNESS: Did you go all day on Saturday?

SHIN: No, for three or four hours.

CHAMNESS: And then, how much did you study in high school?

SHIN: Actually ... (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: You're laughing.

SHIN: I didn't study.

CHAMNESS: You didn't study?

SHIN: Just, when I had a class, I study. And that's all.

CHAMNESS: Okay. I know some Korean children study until early in the morning and then get up and go to school.

SHIN: Yeah. I hate it. Because ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah. I hate it too.

SHIN: I hated that high school time.

CHAMNESS: What were the school hours? When did you go to school and when did you get out?

SHIN: Maybe eight to five.

CHAMNESS: And then, did your high school have clubs?

SHIN: Clubs? Actually it was new one, so there are no clubs. It sucked.

CHAMNESS: So what did you do for fun?

SHIN: Just after school, I met my friends. They are not in the same school.

CHAMNESS: Your friends from middle school?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And what about the college entrance exam that Korean students have to take? What was that like?

SHIN: I don't understand—what exam?

CHAMNESS: Yeah, the test that you have to take to go to college, when you finish high school. What is that like?

SHIN: It's just questions I have to answer. It took me all day. It was long time so I hate it. Kind of SAT.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Did you study a lot for it?

SHIN: No. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: Okay. So when you finished this test, how did you decide on a college?

SHIN: Just when I have my score, I have to—how can I say—I had to fit the college for my score. So there was several choices and I took one.

CHAMNESS: So tell me what school you went to and—which college?

SHIN: College?

CHAMNESS: Mm hmm.

SHIN: Konguk University.

CHAMNESS: And there is a specific reason that you picked that one?

SHIN: Not really specific reason. Actually, it's not really bad school. It's kind of middle-high level, so—and the location is really good.

CHAMNESS: Did you know anybody else that was also going there?

SHIN: Yeah, most of friends.

CHAMNESS: Lots of friends? Okay. What did you study?

SHIN: Political Science.

CHAMNESS: Political Science. Did you study a lot?

SHIN: No.

CHAMNESS: No. (Laughs)

SHIN: Because I was interested in other subjects, not really political things.

CHAMNESS: What kind of classes did you have to take?

SHIN: For major?

CHAMNESS: Yeah, for either major or as a freshman.

SHIN: We have—how can I say ...

CHAMNESS: Requirements?

SHIN: Requirements. We have economics, political basis, and that's the requirements things. And other thing is international relationship or Oriental political science or relative political science.

CHAMNESS: Relative political science?

SHIN: Yeah. I don't know in English.

CHAMNESS: Like comparative?

SHIN: Yeah. And Western political science.

CHAMNESS: When you entered your university, could you declare your major when you went it or did you have to wait?

SHIN: I have to wait one year.

CHAMNESS: How does that work? Because in America we just say, "I want to be in Political Science." So in Korea how do you ...

SHIN: Actually, we have to apply for the major and if I'm ...

CHAMNESS: Chosen?

SHIN: No, they have to check my grades or something.

CHAMNESS: The professors of the department choose you?

SHIN: I guess so. A lot of people. I don't know really.

CHAMNESS: So you did political science. Does your college have a lot of clubs and stuff?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Are you in any?

SHIN: The basketball club.

CHAMNESS: Really?

SHIN: I like them, so that's why. I don't play basketball though.

CHAMNESS: Are you on a team or do you just watch?

SHIN: Just watch and scoring and ...

CHAMNESS: Okay. That's so cool. You also went to America. So tell me about why you chose to go abroad and how.

SHIN: Of course. In Korea, English is important for the job, so that's why I chose to go to America, to learn English.

CHAMNESS: How did you apply, or how did you go?

SHIN: Actually, I have an uncle at the University of Tennessee, so that's why I choose. But all that process—I did all that process for applying. I download the application and filled it out.

CHAMNESS: So did you do an exchange program or did you just do at a semester at the University of Tennessee?

SHIN: Just for language.

CHAMNESS: Right, like English as a second language?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And how long were you at UT?

SHIN: Four months.

CHAMNESS: And did you like it?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What kind of stuff did you do while you were in Knoxville?

SHIN: Actually I had a lot of food. (Laughs) I went to just restaurants ...

CHAMNESS: Which one was your favorite?

SHIN: Do you know Greenhouse Green?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

SHIN: I love that. Westside Tavern or something. Ah, Riverside Tavern.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And what have you done—when did you come back to Korea?

SHIN: Christmas Eve.

CHAMNESS: Did you get to travel around the U.S. while you were there?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Where did you get to go?

SHIN: Chicago, New York City, Atlanta, San Francisco.

CHAMNESS: Out of all those places, plus Knoxville, which one was your favorite and why?

SHIN: Oh, it's hard to decide. But San Francisco was great and New York.

CHAMNESS: So since you've been back in Korea, what have you been doing?

SHIN: I just back to the University and I have to study a lot because I forget all things about my major.

CHAMNESS: And when do you graduate?

SHIN: February.

CHAMNESS: Of next year?

SHIN: 2005.

CHAMNESS: Of that's right, because Korea's system is a semester ahead of us.

SHIN: Different.

CHAMNESS: Right. And what are your plans after college?

SHIN: Actually I want to apply to some advertising company so before that, I have to take an advertising thing, so maybe I have to go to institute something to learn about advertising.

CHAMNESS: Is there a test you have to take?

SHIN: Not really test, just I have no information about advertising so ...

CHAMNESS: I'm curious, when did you make the switch from journalist to political science to advertising?

SHIN: I don't know.

CHAMNESS: How did you switch?

SHIN: Because to be a journalist I have to study a lot and they—I just need to be fluent speaking English or another language. It's hard and I have to study all kinds of things, economics ...

CHAMNESS: So advertising ...

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: So, to switch the subject a little bit ... I'm curious about U.S.-Korean relations. When you were growing up or even now, can you describe a little bit about how your mom and dad or your family feels about the American military in Korea?

SHIN: I'm not sure. I think, just in my opinion, they think the U.S. Army is necessary, even it's no good, not helpful for Koreans, but it's necessary. I don't know why.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

SHIN: I think they think like that.

CHAMNESS: When you were going to school, middle school or high school or even college, what kind of things do you learn about the U.S.? Do you learn American history?

SHIN: Not just only for American history.

CHAMNESS: Like world history?

SHIN: Yeah, world history.

CHAMNESS: What about politics or government?

SHIN: No, not really. We don't have any subjects about America. But in college we have American history class and American political science.

CHAMNESS: Do you think those classes are popular? I'm curious.

SHIN: Not really. Just for students who has political science major.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Now, there was an accident two years ago where an American tank ran over two Korean girls. Can you sort of describe your reaction to that or your feelings at the time?

SHIN: At the time, I was really upset because we have no power to judge them. They absolutely did the wrong thing, bad thing, right? But I don't know it's because our country is—have no power or U.S.A. has—have really—how can I say?

CHAMNESS: Too much power?

SHIN: Too much power. I don't know why but it is really bad thing. A bad thing in Korea. So we have to have a power to judge them but it's because of SOFA.

CHAMNESS: What about other students, your friends? Did they react the same way?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What kind of things were going on in Korea when it happened? Was there a lot of reaction? Were there protests, for example?

SHIN: Yeah protests. A lot of people protested for having a judgment. And some people just—they are just upset and they blame government.

CHAMNESS: Korean government?

SHIN: Korean government and U.S. government. Both.

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay.

SHIN: Because we have no power because of government. I don't know.

CHAMNESS: Tell me about the media. How did they portray this?

SHIN: They blamed SOFA agreement and they just report—they were just reporting how the protests were going and something like that.

CHAMNESS: Were there a lot of protests?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. And what about the politicians?

SHIN: Politicians.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. How did they react?

SHIN: They were not really active. They just tried to hide things because it's really sensitive things. I don't know why they act like that. It's just some. It's not all of them.

CHAMNESS: Okay. There was also an incident last month in Shinchon.

SHIN: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: Do you know what happened there?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Can you describe it?

SHIN: U.S. Soldier just killed some innocent man.

CHAMNESS: Do you know what happened to him?

SHIN: Not really, exactly. They killed him.

CHAMNESS: What was your reaction to that?

SHIN: The same. Just upset. Why not—how can I say ... We have no way ...

CHAMNESS: Helpless.

SHIN: No way to express our ...

CHAMNESS: Feelings?

SHIN: Feelings and the right to judgment.

CHAMNESS: Was that event—did it spark the same reaction as the one two years ago or no?

SHIN: Not really same

CHAMNESS: Yeah? Why?

SHIN: Weaker than two years ago.

CHAMNESS: Why do you think it was different?

SHIN: Because the before one, the tank thing ...

CHAMNESS: Right.

SHIN: It seems like really big accident and just the two girls.

CHAMNESS: Were they middle school?

SHIN: Yeah, middle school.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

SHIN: This one seems like the same—what's that? Killing accident?

CHAMNESS: Like a fight?

SHIN: Yeah. Just normal ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah. What do you think those kind of things—how do you think they affect U.S.-Korean relations? Do you think they have any effect?

SHIN: I don't think so. They just—I think the American—they don't really care about what the Korean situation or something.

CHAMNESS: I think—you said it before that the government was sort of to blame too—the Korean government. So do you think that the Korean people and the Korean government are acting differently?

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Now, how much contact do you have with foreigners, or more specifically, American soldiers?

SHIN: No.

CHAMNESS: Never?

SHIN: Not really never, just when I go to clubs sometimes—do you know Uijonggu? It's in Kyunggi-do. Or Dongduchun. They have U.S. Army ...

CHAMNESS: Camps there?

SHIN: Yeah. Just passed, not really ...

CHAMNESS: Okay, then we'll come back to that then. The ones in Seoul, you only see at the clubs?

SHIN: Mm hmm.

CHAMNESS: Can you describe how they ... are, how they act?

SHIN: Actually, I don't really care about U.S. Army so ... (Laughs) I don't know ...

CHAMNESS: You sort of ignore them?

SHIN: Yeah, I kind of ignore them. Because I have friends so I just hang out with them.

CHAMNESS: Sure, sure. Do you think Korean girls—this is sort of a biased question (Laughter) and I know that—but do you think Korean girls are generally afraid of American soldiers?

SHIN: Not really afraid.

CHAMNESS: No?

SHIN: I don't think so because I'm not afraid.

CHAMNESS: If there a difference between white soldiers and black soldiers?

SHIN: Maybe.

CHAMNESS: Maybe?

SHIN: I don't know.

CHAMNESS: I don't know either. I was just curious. (Laughter)

SHIN: I'm curious too.

CHAMNESS: What kind of—this is just sort of your own observations or thoughts—but what kind of problems exist between the U.S. military and Korea, either the government or the people?

SHIN: Absolutely the SOFA things. I think it's unfair because if you have—just imagine—you have Korean soldiers in America and they commit some bad thing, then what do you think? Do you think you have to have judgment or do I have to have judgment? Just ... Yeah. I feel like it's just unfair but we have to follow the SOFA agreement because absolutely it's because of power. I don't blame American government. I don't blame Americans, just the SOFA agreement is totally ...

CHAMNESS: Unfair.

SHIN: Unfair.

CHAMNESS: Is there any thing else? Any other issues that don't get much attention like the SOFA one does?

SHIN: No.

CHAMNESS: And you mentioned before that you've been to some of the other camps and some of the bases around Korea. Can you describe sort of the area?

SHIN: Like Dongduchun or something?

CHAMNESS: Sure, what the area looks like or what it's like.

SHIN: If I go to that area, just I can see many of them, many soldiers, and they—I don't know. They just hang out with them or sometimes they are with Korean girls. I don't know if they are prostitute or something, or just girlfriend. Just same like Korean.

CHAMNESS: What about in Seoul? What is the base like in Seoul?

SHIN: In Seoul?

CHAMNESS: Have you ever been around the base?

SHIN: Yeah. Yongsan?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

SHIN: Yeah, but I'm not really interested in soldiers so ... (Laughter) But I heard that some of—that's not all—some of soldiers just going wild, going crazy.

CHAMNESS: What do you—Okay. Let's play a word association game. I'll say a word and you say the first thing that comes to mind.

SHIN: Okay.

CHAMNESS: When you hear the word *kijichon* ...

SHIN: *Kijichon*?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. What is the first thing that you think of?

SHIN: Soldiers.

CHAMNESS: Soldiers? Okay. Other people have said different things.

SHIN: Oh really? What did they say?

CHAMNESS: It's a secret. (Laughter)

SHIN: Oh! Tell me!

CHAMNESS: Well, you said earlier that you see them with Korean girls and stuff and they may or may not be prostitutes.

SHIN: Mm.

CHAMNESS: Do you think prostitution is popular here?

SHIN: Popular?

CHAMNESS: I mean, not with Korean but with American soldiers.

SHIN: I think so. Sometimes I heard how prostitute just hang out with American soldiers. And I don't remember when it happened, but the Korean girls, prostitute, they was just hurt by American soldiers. And it was really serious.

CHAMNESS: Like assault? Like hit or ...

SHIN: Hit and killed and they did some crazy things. I can't explain. It's really horrible.

CHAMNESS: Right. Okay. So ... in your opinion—this is just your opinion—but do you think that the American military should stay in Korea? There is a debate, you know, whether they should stay or they should go. So, you know, in opinion, what do you think?

SHIN: Actually, I haven't thought about it. But in my opinion ... It's difficult.

CHAMNESS: It is difficult.

SHIN: I think that American soldiers camp—basecamp or something ... But I need some time.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

SHIN: I don't know whether or not they have to stay in Korea, but my opinion, we—American and Korea—we have to arrange the SOFA agreement, a little bit changed to be fair.

CHAMNESS: So, let me make sure I understand. You want American military to stay in Korea, but it would be better if we had a more even agreement between the two.

SHIN: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Now this month, or coming up soon within the next month, somewhere between three and four thousand troops are being moved to Iraq. Can you tell me what some of the reaction has been in Korea to that news?

SHIN: First, we are just sorry for the troops. I don't think we have to send them to Iraq because this war is no meaning. It's of no value. Is that the right way to say?

CHAMNESS: Sure.

SHIN: I think Bush is greedy. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: How do Koreans—do Koreans feel like we shouldn't pull those four thousand American troops out?

SHIN: Mm.

CHAMNESS: They should stay here?

SHIN: (Nods)

CHAMNESS: Okay. There is also a plan to move our troops that are stationed at the DMZ and in Seoul down south. What do you think about that?

SHIN: I don't know much about the Iraq things so I don't know what it means they move to southern part or something. Yeah, I don't know.

CHAMNESS: Okay, the last two questions. These are also just your opinion. Do you think Koreans generally like the American military?

SHIN: Like?

CHAMNESS: Like.

SHIN: I don't think they like. Just we let them go.

CHAMNESS: And do you think—what do you think about American soldiers? Do you think that they want to be here or not? How do you—do you think they like being in Korea or ...

SHIN: They? You mean American.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

SHIN: I heard that the soldiers for Korea, they need money and they are not really rich so that's why they choose to come to Korea.

CHAMNESS: Because they get combat pay.

SHIN: Yeah, yeah, that's why. So I think they maybe stay more.

CHAMNESS: Okay. That's it.

SHIN: Ah ...

CHAMNESS: Thank you.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JUNGEUI LEE

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JUNE 28, 2004

WRITTEN BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

Jungeui Lee's family was located in South Korea when the Korean War broke out in 1950. Her father's father was forced into army service and without much training, was sent into battle. Fortunately, he survived.

Jungeui's father was born during the Korean War. Her father grew up in a poor family but was able to attend college and became a civil engineer. Her mother was born in 1955 and grew up in a rich and well-known family. After college, she worked in a trading office.

Her parents met each other after graduating from college in Seoul through a matchmaker. At the time, it may have been scandalous, or "naughty", for a woman to get her own boyfriend so most couples were usually set up through parents or a matchmaker.

Jungeui was born on March 10, 1981 in Seoul. She has one sister, who is two years younger. When they were little, their father worked for the director of Saudi Arabian projects and spent four years in Saudi Arabia. When Jungeui was five years old, her father returned home, this time for good.

Jungeui describes her mother as a typical Korean *ajuma*, or woman. She was an emotional parent and raised the girls by herself while her husband was abroad. She also has a love for spending money.

Jungeui grew up in Seoul, near Chamshil. Both the elementary and middle schools that she attended were co-ed and the classrooms were not separated by sex. She described the discipline as not too strict, really depending more on the teacher than on one standard. The thing she hated most was the uniform she had to put on every morning.

When she was little, Jungeui wanted to travel, just like her father. Because of her test scores and interests, she was able to attend a foreign language high school. The school demanded a lot from its students. School hours were 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. five days a week, and 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 on Saturdays. They did not have any clubs or sports teams. They were only supposed to study.

Jungeui said that the college entrance exam was "the worst." She studied many long hours but was not satisfied with her score. In her words, she "failed" it and decided to take the test again. The test only comes once a year so Jungeui spent an entire year studying for this one test. The second time she took it her scores were good enough to get her into the best university in Korea, Seoul National University. It was an easy choice as to which school she should accept. Before she entered college, she traveled to Hong Kong and Guam.

At Seoul National, she is studying Consumer and Business. She has joined her school's business club and the Latin Dance Club. She took Spanish and decided to study in Spain for two months during the winter, 2001.

While preparing for the TOEFL exam in November 2002, Jungeui's father passed away in an accident. She wanted to get away from Korea for a while, so her mother's friend offered to pay her way to the University of Tennessee for one semester. She was at UT for the Fall 2003 semester and really enjoyed it.

Jungeui believes her family is pro-American because they are educated and in the business class.

After the American tank accident in the summer of 2002, all of her friends quickly turned anti-American. There were many student protests at her university but she did not participate in any. She said it was the "cool" thing to do.

When asked if she had any contact with soldiers, she immediately described one of her friends. Her guy friend from Dongduchon is always intimidated by soldiers, she said. Since there is an Army base in the area, he does not think very highly of the Americans there. She told me that she occasionally runs into military personnel in clubs or in bars and she had decided that there are two classes of soldiers. The encounters she had with well educated soldiers have always been positive. These guys were generally friendly and often tried to speak some Korean. The other group—the less educated—did not leave a good impression with her. At clubs and bars, they were just "garbage."

Jungeui also said there is a long history of bad feelings between the United States and Korea. Korean politicians use the American army as a political issue, for either good or bad. She said it seems like more often than not, they try to push "bad ideas." The media reports these bad things and it evokes anti-American sentiment among people.

I asked her what she thought about camptowns and she grimaced. To her, they are scary places. Korean police cannot control U.S. army personnel so they are pratically free to do what they want. She sees camptowns as a symbol that the U.S. has ruined the innocence of Koreans. Prostitution is also a problem, but it is not only in Korea. The Korean government complies with the U.S. so it will continue to be a problem.

She also sees the military's move away from the DMZ and Seoul as yet another way to cause distrust between the Korean people and the U.S. The move will leave the North unprotected and it will be a major cost for the Korean government, who has to pay

for the new bases and buy back land where the current bases are. This will cost a lot of money, especially for the Yongsan base land.

Jungeui believes that the American military should stay in Korea but they should adjust their position. SOFA is a problem that needs to be addressed, not ignored. She said Koreans do not like American soldiers and there is no difference between white and black men. A soldier is a soldier. She also said that American soldiers probably do not like Korea or Koreans. They treat Koreans not as neighbors, but as a colonized people. They can be very condescending.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH YOON HYE YOUNG

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JUNE 30, 2004

WRITTEN BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

Yoon Hye Young's grandparents were living in South Korea when the Korean War broke out. Neither of her grandfathers were forced to serve in the war because they were older. Both of Hye Young's parents grew up in Seoul and they met each other in a café. After marrying, her father continued to work as the manager of a business and her mother became a housewife.

Hye Young was born on February 15, 1981 in Seoul, Korea. She has one older brother and they grew up in Yongsangu. She described her father as very strict, cutting out all snack foods from the children's diets. Her mother was also strict on her brother, but not on her. Evidently, her grandmother favored boys over girl grandchildren and Hye Young's mother tried to offset that favoritism by going easy on her.

Elementary school was a good time for her. Hye Young attended a private school and everything was "luxurious". While in elementary school, she took violin lessons, and learned how to skate and swim. She dreamed of becoming a diplomat because she liked to meet new people and she loved history.

Middle school, however, was not as fantastic as her first years in school. Her family had to move and it was very stressful for her to go to a new school. Her middle school was very rigorous and there was a lot of pressure for students to study hard. When Hye Young's grades started to slip, her teacher hit her.

High school turned out to be better than middle school. For the first two years in the all-girls' school, her teacher was "scary" and strict and Hye Young only studied. But her school had many clubs and she was able to join a social club. She said her favorite subject was sociology.

Hye Young took the college entrance exam at the end of her high school career and was not satisfied with her score. She considered the test to be too simple, but still did not get the score she needed to attend Yonsei University. She was very upset and wanted to retake the test, but her father persuaded her to attend Ehwa Women's University instead. Her father believed that Ewha was a more traditional route for girls and in a man-centered society like Korea, Ewha would give her more opportunities.

Following her father's advice, she attended Ewha University for her undergraduate degree. She decided to major in Economics because she described herself as a logical and rational person who enjoys and is good at math. Unlike high school, Hye Young did not study all the time in college. Rather, she liked to wait until an exam and review the information at the last minute.

Hye Young graduated from Ewha in February, 2003 and is now in graduate school there. She is still studying Economics and wants to eventually get her Ph.D., perhaps going abroad to Europe or the U.S. to study more.

She describes her family as conservative. Her family does not talk about the U.S. or the U.S. military but her mother favors America because she believes the country to be Christian.

Hye Young sees American GIs quite often. She mostly sees them around Itaewon and has also visited Yongsan base in Seoul. When she sees the soldiers, she thinks about the bad reports of soldiers abusing Koreas. She also wonders if those soldiers know that other soldiers are acting poorly and if they are happy in Korea.

When asked about the U.S. military tank accident in June, 2002, she said that the problem was complex. She didn't feel angry at the soldiers but was more upset and

asked why did it have to happen. It made her realize that Korea is not independent and that made her sad. She participated in one demonstration even though her friends did not participate. Hye Young believes that events like the accident can change people's minds to go against from the U.S.

I asked her if there were any problems between the U.S. military and Korea and she replied that it was not a military problem. It is a political and historical problem and it is very complicated. One problem she mentioned is that the Yongsan base is too spread out and they are now moving. The move will not be good for Korea because every military action has some reaction. It could leave South Korea vulnerable to the North and probably cause trouble in the South where the new bases will go. She described the area around the bases as not good, but also said that those things happen everywhere; it is "inevitable."

Hye Young believes the U.S. military should not remain in South Korea. The presence of American forces leads people to believe that ROK forces are weak. She said the U.S. is like Jesus, trying to save the world, but it is not the U.S.'s problem. It is Korea's problem. If the U.S. were to pull out of South Korea and the North invaded, and even if the South were to lose, she said it is the ideal situation. It is the "destiny" of Korea.

She believes that Koreans do not separate or see a difference between the American military and its soldiers. Therefore, Koreans tend to not like soldiers. She sees Koreans coming from two perspectives. Some people want the U.S. to stay and protect the South from North Korea. These people don't like the military, but they don't hate it. The other group wants independence from everyone, including the U.S. They "hate" the

American forces stationed in South Korea. She had heard that U.S. GIs in Korea are tough and aggressive, not to mention uneducated and unintelligent. She also mentioned that Koreans tend to look down on African-American soldiers most of the time, and certainly more often that white soldiers.

She also supposes that American soldiers never like Korea and they never like Koreans.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH KOREAN MALE- "KIM"

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JULY 2, 2004

TRANSCRIPT BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CHAMNESS: This begins an interview with … and Lindsey Chamness on July 2, 2004 at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. Okay, the first question that I would like to ask you is where was your family during the Korean War?

KIM: Sorry?

CHAMNESS: Where was your family during the Korean War? Your family, your grandparents.

KIM: My grandparents ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: They were at Pyongyang, now is North Korea's capital. They were born in the same place and they met in 1930.

CHAMNESS: During the war, what happened to them? Did they move to the South?

KIM: Yeah. They got married to each other ...

CHAMNESS: Is this your father's parents?

KIM: My mother's.

CHAMNESS: Your mother's?

KIM: Yeah, mother's parents. And they married in 1928 and at the time, my grandfather was a student of Pyongyang University and my grandmother was a housewife. Yeah. And they were separated from each other because my grandmother lived in Sunan, near Pyongyang and my grandfather studied in Pyongyang, so they were separated. And then during separation, the Korean War occurred and after that, they couldn't meet each other again because my grandfather was caught by the North Korean Army and my grandmother had to take care of her first son. He is my uncle. And so after the occurring of Korean War, my grandmother sought refugee to Pusan but she has to do lots of things to make money to support her and her baby. My grandfather, I don't know how he could escape from army, but ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Yeah, but ...

CHAMNESS: But he escaped?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Wow! That's cool.

KIM: I don't know but ... Yeah, and three later they met accidentally in Pusan. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Accidentally?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: That's amazing!

KIM: Yeah, it really is. So after that, they reunited.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And what about your father's parents?

KIM: My father's parents?

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Do you know?

KIM: No. They were both born in Seoul so they have no special situation.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So when were your parents born?

KIM: My parents? My father was born in 1950 and my mother in 1954.

CHAMNESS: And where were they living when they were born?

KIM: My father was born in Seoul—no, Taegu—and my mother was born in Inchon.

CHAMNESS: Do you still have family in North Korea?

KIM: No, not really.

CHAMNESS: So tell me how your parents met.

KIM: They met through the—what's that?

CHAMNESS: Like a matchmaker?

KIM: Yeah, like that. So it's quite boring. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: Okay, but in America we don't really have anything like that, so can you explain how that works?

KIM: Yeah, usually it is quite common in Korea. Usually people, when they fail to meet their spouses by dating, they have to go to some person, that introduces some spouses to singles.

CHAMNESS: Do you think your parents wanted to do that or did their parents make them go to a matchmaker?

KIM: Yeah, my grandparents ...

CHAMNESS: Made them go?

KIM: Made them go.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And where were they living at the time that they met?

KIM: They met each other in Seoul. And yeah, my grandparents were living in Seoul at the time. My whole family is living in Seoul now.

CHAMNESS: What jobs were they doing at the time?

KIM: At the time? My father did his business and my mother was a student, Yonsei University student.

CHAMNESS: Really?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: That's cool. So they were living in Seoul and when were you born?

KIM: I was born in Seoul too.

CHAMNESS: When?

KIM: 1980.

CHAMNESS: 1980. Do you have brothers and sisters?

KIM: I have one elder sister.

CHAMNESS: Okay, and she was also born in Seoul?

KIM: Yes.

CHAMNESS: So tell me about your childhood.

KIM: My childhood?

CHAMNESS: Sure.

KIM: When I was young, before entering elementary school, my father continuously failed his business, to learn his business, so my mother had to do other things to support my family. But she was so smart.

CHAMNESS: What kind of things was she doing?

KIM: She made up her mind to learn Japanese. She went to some Japanese institute to learn Japanese and after learning that, she tried to get a job. So she has been working as a guide until now.

CHAMNESS: As a guide?

KIM: Guide, yeah.

CHAMNESS: What kind of guide?

KIM: For tourists.

CHAMNESS: Really? That's neat.

KIM: Yeah. She's ...

CHAMNESS: So when you were little, she was doing that.

KIM: Sorry?

CHAMNESS: Was she doing that when you were little, as a tour guide?

KIM: Yeah, before I entered elementary school, over fifteen years.

CHAMNESS: What about your parents? What kind of people—I mean, were they strict, or were they ...

KIM: They both are easygoing and they are not so strict because they believed me always.

CHAMNESS: So does that mean you were a good child? (Laughter)

KIM: Yeah. I grew up by myself because my mother had to work so I tried to—tried not to make my mother worry about me so I tried to study hard, just to please my mother.

CHAMNESS: So before you went to school and your mom was working, what did you do during the day? Did your grandparents take care of you?

KIM: Yes.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Your mother's parents?

KIM: Yeah, my mother's.

CHAMNESS: And what about your sister?

KIM: My sister?

CHAMNESS: What is—did you all get along when you were little?

KIM: No, definitely not. (Laughter) Because actually my parents loved me much more.

CHAMNESS: Than her?

KIM: Yeah, because I studied well ...

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay.

KIM: Yeah. I obeyed my parents.

CHAMNESS: So what about elementary school, when you started elementary school?

KIM: I entered elementary school with first prize.

CHAMNESS: First prize?

KIM: For—we usually have to take an entrance exam before ...

CHAMNESS: To go to kindergarten?

KIM: Not kindergarten ...

CHAMNESS: First grade?

KIM: Yeah, yeah. Elementary school.

CHAMNESS: Okay, this is the first time I've heard about this.

KIM: Yeah, I won the first prize. And I tried—I forced myself to do well in everything.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

KIM: Yeah, I studied hard and ...

CHAMNESS: Even in elementary school?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

KIM: How do you say the word perfect ...

CHAMNESS: Perfectionist.

KIM: Yeah, I think I'm sort of a perfectionist. I know I'm not perfect, but I try to be.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, okay. Is there anything specific you remember about elementary school? Like any memories that are good or bad that stick out?

KIM: Hm ... I was—I had been class monitor from third grade to sixth grade—actually, from third grade of elementary to the third grade of high school, for ten years, because—just to please my mother.

CHAMNESS: What does that mean, class monitor?

KIM: Class monitor means—usually we elect a leader of the class.

CHAMNESS: Oh.

KIM: At the time I knew my mother support lots of things. And she always returned home around eleven o'clock. She went out of house around six o'clock and she came back at eleven. So I knew that she had hard time to bring us up, me and my sister.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So what about middle school?

KIM: (Laughs) I entered middle school with third prize. Usually ...

CHAMNESS: Wait, so when you enter middle school you have to take another test?

KIM: Yeah, sure.

CHAMNESS: Okay. I've never heard of this before.

KIM: Ah, really?

CHAMNESS: Even the other Koreans I've talked to never told me. So is this just your schools or all over Korea?

KIM: All over Korea. In the middle school I tried to study much more, much harder and really it's quite boring compared to the middle school of America because everything is quite competitive. If we survive ... (Laughter) we should study maybe for ten or eleven hours a day.

CHAMNESS: When you were little, like in elementary school or even middle school, what did you want to be when you grew up?

KIM: When I was young, my father told me about the president Abraham Lincoln and he gave me lots of book about him.

CHAMNESS: About Abraham Lincoln?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Uh huh.

KIM: So I read all the books about him and he taught me honesty and sincerity. Yeah, so that's why I feel until now I have dream of being president.

CHAMNESS: Of Korea?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay ...

KIM: I know it's quite ... hard.

CHAMNESS: No, no, no. I'm not laughing.

KIM: Yeah, I know.

CHAMNESS: Because that's what I wanted to be when I was little. So I understand.

KIM: I will try to be president. I will do my best.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Was your middle school boys and girls?

KIM: (Nods)

CHAMNESS: Were your classes separated or were you together?

KIM: Yeah, separated.

CHAMNESS: Separated.

KIM: Yeah, just to prevent lots of accidents.

CHAMNESS: What is—wait, what does that mean, accidents?

KIM: No, accidents. You know. (Laughter) I mean, how do I say, sexual problems, or ...

CHAMNESS: Okay. And high school.

KIM: High school?

CHAMNESS: Sure. What was high school like?

KIM: Yeah, it was also separate.

CHAMNESS: And what do you remember about high school?

KIM: High school? High school life?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Mm ... It was really quite boring. All that I did was only study. I woke up at six and went to high school and studied all day.

CHAMNESS: Six in the morning? And then you went to high school ...

KIM: Yeah. I have to arrive there before seven.

CHAMNESS: And what time did school get out?

KIM: Almost four o'clock. And after that usually the students, or in a very good school, had to leave after finishing class, regular class, and they had to study more in groups.

CHAMNESS: At school?

KIM: Yeah, ten or twenty students. So we had to study in groups until eleven ...

CHAMNESS: At night?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: And then you could go home?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Then did you study more when you went home?

KIM: Yeah, usually after that we went to an institute or extracurricular by tutor.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

KIM: Usually I went to bed around two o'clock. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Was this Monday through Friday?

KIM: (Nods)

CHAMNESS: Did you also have school on Saturday?

KIM: Yeah, Saturday.

CHAMNESS: How late did school go to on Saturday? Was it like a half-day?

KIM: Yeah, half-day but it's all the same for us.

CHAMNESS: So after you got out on Saturday, you still stayed there and studied with your group?

KIM: Yeah. Right.

CHAMNESS: Okay. It sounds tiring.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: You did this for four years?

KIM: For three years.

CHAMNESS: Three years? Okay.

KIM: We usually go to elementary school for six years and middle school for three years and high school for three years.

CHAMNESS: In America we go for five and three and four.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Did your high school have clubs?

KIM: Yeah, clubs. But I belong to club to study mathematics. (Laughs) Yeah, because I like mathematics.

CHAMNESS: Okay, that was my next question. What was your favorite subject?

KIM: Oh ...

CHAMNESS: Math?

KIM: No.

CHAMNESS: No?

KIM: After entering university, I found I'm not good at math because it's getting harder and harder.

CHAMNESS: Oh sure.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: But in high school was your favorite math?

KIM: Yeah. And my favorite subject is economics.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

KIM: I'm also majoring in Economics.

CHAMNESS: Were clubs popular in your high school? Did a lot of people do clubs? Because it sounds like a lot of people were studying a lot of the time.

KIM: Yeah, but once a month we can have time to do club activities.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

KIM: And it was Sunday, the last Sunday. And on Saturday, the last Saturday of the month. The high school which I went to was the biggest in Korea. And there were lots of classes in my high school. And it was quite popular.

CHAMNESS: See, I think it's really different from America because our clubs sometimes are more important than studying.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: We go every afternoon, going all the time, spending all of our time doing clubs. But ... So that's really interesting—once a month. (Laughs)

KIM: It's ... only to show that we have clubs.

CHAMNESS: I think it's the same with us, just to put on your resume. So for three years, you were studying all the time and then you had to take the test, the college entrance exam. So tell me what that was like.

KIM: Actually, I entered this university without testing because I could enter with my C.V.—curriculum vitae.

CHAMNESS: So you never had to take the test?

KIM: But I took the test and I didn't get good grades. The reason why I took the test to enter another university.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So you didn't want to come to Yonsei?

KIM: (Laughs) Actually, I didn't but now I love my university.

CHAMNESS: Okay, well which school did you want to go to?

KIM: Seoul National University.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Then how did you choose Yonsei then? From the score on your test and your grades?

KIM: I was guaranteed to enter Yonsei University with the test so ...

CHAMNESS: So was your mother happy that you were coming to her school?

KIM: No.

CHAMNESS: No?

KIM: After telling my parents that I failed to get a good grade on the entrance test, my mother fainted.

CHAMNESS: Your mother fainted ...

KIM: Yeah, because she expected lots of things from me so ...

CHAMNESS: Was the test really hard?

KIM: Not so hard but ... I made lots of mistakes on the test so ...

CHAMNESS: What about your father? Was he happy that you were coming here or no?

KIM: (Shakes head)

CHAMNESS: No? They both wanted you to go to Seoul National.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: But then you came here so ... You said your major is Economics.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: How did you choose economics or why?

KIM: Hmm ... Because as I told you, I was interested in mathematics and economics is quite close, related to mathematics so that's why I chose economics.

CHAMNESS: What kind of classes have you taken since you've been here? Do you start your major when you first enter the university or do you have to wait?

KIM: I spent my first year to study to retake the entrance exam so I spoiled my first year. So I should retake the courses to make up. (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: Is college better than high school?

KIM: Yeah, much better.

CHAMNESS: Do you study as much as you did?

KIM: Actually, yes, I think so.

CHAMNESS: Really?

KIM: Because these days the Korean students—for Korean students it's not so easy to get a job.

CHAMNESS: Oh right.

KIM: It's quite competitive—getting more and more—so we should study harder than before.

CHAMNESS: What about clubs here? Are you in any clubs?

KIM: No. Oh, now I have one club named *Sancmo*, it's the Christianity club for economics students.

CHAMNESS: That's very specific.

KIM: Oh really?

CHAMNESS: Christian club for economic students.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What do you do in your free time? Do you have free time?

KIM: Yes. Really I love to work out, yeah, in my spare time. And I usually work out for one hour a day. And usually I play some computer games with my friends.

CHAMNESS: I forgot to ask you where you live now.

KIM: Ah, I live in Seoul, Apgujongdong, but I will move to Sinchon to lodge with my friends because I have spare time to study.

CHAMNESS: So what year are you here?

KIM: You mean ...

CHAMNESS: What grade?

KIM: Ah, what grade am I in? I'm in—I'm a senior.

CHAMNESS: And when do you plan on going to the military?

KIM: After finishing second grade. Usually Korean men decide to go to Army after finishing second grade. Yeah, it's common.

CHAMNESS: Did you apply for KATUSA?

KIM: Yeah, I applied but I failed. It's kind of lucky draw.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

KIM: And I wasn't lucky. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: I think Americans don't really understand the Korean system because we don't have anything like forced military service. So can you explain the military service in general?

KIM: Oh.

CHAMNESS: Like how long do you have to go?

KIM: I was in Army for twenty-eight months but in my case I didn't go to regular Army. Instead of that, I entered some public office just to classify some documents or monitor some illegal car parking.

CHAMNESS: Was it like a policeman? Is that what you mean?

KIM: It's like assistance of public officer.

CHAMNESS: And how long did you do that?

KIM: Twenty-eight months.

CHAMNESS: Instead of the Army?

KIM: Yeah, because my eyes were quite weak so I couldn't go to Army.

CHAMNESS: Is it possible for somebody who is fully healthy and can see fine, can they get out of the Army?

KIM: It's impossible.

CHAMNESS: Impossible?

KIM: Because one of the sons of former candidate for President named Yi Way-Chun, he tried to—he was exempt from going to Army.

CHAMNESS: How?

KIM: Because he was so skinny.

CHAMNESS: Really?

KIM: Yeah, he was too skinny to go to Army. But after that, the standard concerning Army is more strict than before.

CHAMNESS: But pretty much every man has to go, right?

KIM: Yeah, yeah.

CHAMNESS: Now we're going to switch over to your opinions and stuff like that. I want to ask you about your family. Would you consider your family conservative?

KIM: Yes.

CHAMNESS: Your parents, did they ever talk about America? Would you think that your parents are ... Hold on a second. (Tape paused)

KIM: They are quite in favor of ...

CHAMNESS: To the American military?

KIM: Yeah. So my father accepts the importance of the American Army's achievements. Yeah, if they stay here, we can spare—Korean government can spare much money.

CHAMNESS: Okay. What about in school? In high school, and now in college, what kind of things do you learn about America? Do you take American history?

KIM: No.

CHAMNESS: No? Well, what kind of things do you learn in general?

KIM: No. In general, no.

CHAMNESS: Nothing? (Laughs)

KIM: Nothing. Almost nothing, yeah. My teachers accented the importance on mathematics and science and Korean and English. Yeah, so ...

CHAMNESS: When do you start learning English?

KIM: English? From the sixth grade of elementary school. There are not that many foreigners in Korea compared to especially Thailand and so it's not so easy to get a chance to speak with native speakers. So that is why usually Koreans can't speak well compared to other things, listening, reading or writing.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. I think it's the same in America. We learn languages so we can read or listen, but our speaking skills are not strong.

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: There was a tank accident two years ago in the summer. Do you know what I'm talking about, where an American tank ran over two Korean girls?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay, can you kind of describe what was going on when that happened?

KIM: Um ... two years ago I heard from T.V. that the operator, the driver, of the tank was sleepy when driving so he misoperated the tank, so it occurred that accident to trample two middle school girls. I saw the pictures after.

CHAMNESS: Right. They showed the pictures a lot, didn't they?

KIM: Yeah. It was quite disgusting.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: (Sigh) I was aggrieved after seeing that.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. What about other students? How did they react?

KIM: As you know, we can't do special things against the American Army at that time.

CHAMNESS: Sure.

KIM: Korea is allied with Americans so that's why I think that American Army does everything in Korea. They think they can do everything because they give us the support and especially in Army. I'm so sorry to see—Can I ... (Tape paused) I think we need—Korean government needs the help of American Army because the American Army is most powerful in the world and they have the newest, updated equipment and skills, but I don't think they can violate some Korean laws between Korea and America. But some American Army ignore obligation or regulations. And they violate. After violating, most of them don't get punished so I think that's the problem.

CHAMNESS: Do you think it has to do with SOFA?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Yeah?

KIM: Yeah, so I think that America has to enforce the law.

CHAMNESS: Okay. There was also something that happened two months ago in Sinchon. Do you know what I'm talking about?

KIM: Two months ago I was not here.

CHAMNESS: Really? Where were you?

KIM: I was in Thailand.

CHAMNESS: Okay, well then tell me about Thailand then because I missed this.

KIM: Okay.

CHAMNESS: Why were you in Thailand?

KIM: I had been there for six months from last December to this May.

CHAMNESS: Doing what?

KIM: I was working for the United Nations.

CHAMNESS: Okay—wait, doing what?

KIM: Doing what? To help refugees, especially Korean refugees. There are lots of refugees going to Thailand ...

CHAMNESS: From Korea?

KIM: From North Korea and Burma. So that is why I was there. And I helped them a lot—I tried to.

CHAMNESS: So what—did you take a semester off? Is that what you did? So how did you—or why—how did you choose to work with the United Nations?

KIM: I would like to do lots of things, irrespective of my major and also to widen my experience.

CHAMNESS: So did you just apply and they accepted you?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Did you apply specifically for Thailand?

KIM: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Wow, that's fantastic. Were you in Bangkok?

KIM: Yes. Have you ever been there?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: How long?

CHAMNESS: Twenty days.

KIM: Twenty days. Yeah, it was ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Did you also get to travel around Thailand?

KIM: Yeah. I visited Phuket Island and Koh Samui.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Tell me—how much do you have contact with—I mean, do you ever see American soldiers, anywhere?

KIM: No.

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) Just no?

KIM: (Laughs) You mean, did I meet any American soldiers?

CHAMNESS: Sure, I mean, do you see them ever?

KIM: Yeah, near Yongsan district.

CHAMNESS: What were you doing in Yongsan district?

KIM: My grandparents live there near Yongsan.

CHAMNESS: Near the base?

KIM: Yeah, near to base. And Itaewon. You can see lots of foreigners there. Yeah, and that's all.

CHAMNESS: My next question is about the area around the base and Yongsan and in Itaewon. Can you describe for the people that haven't been there what kind of area it is? What goes on there? Is it good or is it bad? Is it busy or slow?

KIM: Hmm ... Well, what I heard about Yongsan base was quite negative because usually near the military base, always the problem of prostitution happens. It's common all over the world. And some of my friends visited there just to learn how to speak English and that's all I heard.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Do you—do Koreans generally regard the area around the base as bad? You mentioned prostitution, so is that kind of thing—is that what Koreans think, is that it's not that good of an area around the base?

KIM: Could you ask me in another way?

CHAMNESS: Sure, sorry. Do you think that Korean people generally, when they see an American Army base, they think that the area around the base is not so good?

KIM: I think Korean people are not used to seeing or meeting foreigners because there are so few foreigners in Korea. So it is natural that Korean people feel strange and uncomfortable but these days it has changed, usually. The feeling—I think not because we have bad feelings about foreigners, but because we are not accustomed to it.

CHAMNESS: Not used to it?

KIM: Yeah, not used to it.

CHAMNESS: Okay, I'll come back to that in a second. But, this is just your opinion—Wait, hold on. (Tape stops)

----------TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO----------

CHAMNESS: It's just your opinion so say whatever you want to say, but do you think—you sort of briefly said this before—but can you tell me a little more about whether you think the U.S. military should stay in Korea or leave?

KIM: I think the U.S. military should stay in Korea because we are still—Korea is still allied with America. And I think Korea is quite important geographically important because Korea is quite close to China and this day America is challenged by China in many ways, economics and ... forces. So I think ...

CHAMNESS: So what would you say to somebody who says that America should leave Korea? Because I know a lot of, especially younger, people in Korea think that the American military is not good or should leave.

KIM: But I think it's impossible to defend Korea with only Korean Army.

CHAMNESS: Okay, tell me what you think about this. I talked to one girl who said that the American Army should leave and when I said what about defense, she said that if North Korea invades South Korea, and even if you lose, then that's fine. That's your destiny. I'm not saying that's right or wrong, I'm just saying do you think a lot of people have that opinion?

KIM: Uh ... maybe not.

CHAMNESS: Is that strange?

KIM: Yeah. The person who is reasonable will insist that American Army should stay longer, as long as possible. We can't afford to support the Armies.

CHAMNESS: What do you think about two things: First, the American military bases, like Camp Casey at the DMZ and Yongsan in Seoul, are moving. So what do you think about that?

KIM: It can cause lots of problems.

CHAMNESS: What kind of problems?

KIM: I think Korean Army is weaker than American Army so the defense line ...

CHAMNESS: The DMZ?

KIM: Yeah, can be weaker according to that movement.

CHAMNESS: And what's the reaction from people in Korea about American soldiers leaving to go to Iraq this summer?

KIM: It depends on the person but ...

CHAMNESS: What about you then?

KIM: I'm very worried about the reoccurrence of the Korean War. The North Korean Army—it remains dangerous still to Korea. Some students ignore the power of the North Korean Army because the situation in North Korea is getting worse and worse and they have—some students think that North Korean government have no money to support their Army but it's not true. They still have enough money to support.

CHAMNESS: If that's the only—they can't support their own people but they can support the Army.

KIM: I heard from North Korean refugees directly.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, that's true. You did. Okay, last two questions, both your opinion. Do you think that Koreans like the American military and American soldiers? That's one question (Laughs) with two parts.

KIM: Oh. American military?

CHAMNESS: Or do they separate the two? Do you understand what I mean?

KIM: No.

CHAMNESS: No. Do Koreans like the American military and do they like the soldiers? Or is it the same thing?

KIM: Could you ask me more specifically?

CHAMNESS: Sure. Do you think that Korean people like or dislike the American military and American soldiers?

KIM: I think it's a Catch-22 because we need the power of the American Army. I think the reason why the American Army stays in Korea is we need them.

CHAMNESS: But?

KIM: What is that—the necessary evil?

CHAMNESS: Yes! I've heard that so many times.

KIM: Oh?

CHAMNESS: Necessary evil.

KIM: I think the American Army is not so bad because some American soldiers made mistake or did harm but not all American Army.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: So I think Koreans must try to understand that kind of thing and problems because it's only a few soldiers, not all. But I think Americans should also try to understand Koreans.

CHAMNESS: Well that was my next question so I'm glad that you said that. So that's the final question. In your mind, in your opinion, do you think that American soldiers like Korea and do you think they like Koreans?

KIM: Well (Laughs) I worry that I will hurt your feelings.

CHAMNESS: No, don't worry about my feelings.

KIM: Okay, but when I was in the United Nations, usually I felt that most Caucasians look down on Asian people. But I can understand because we are the same when we see there are people from Southeastern Asia. Yeah, we feel sometimes. But these days the situation turns differently. The status of Korea is quite improved. You know, the Americans have still the discriminations to other races. Even my Canadian friend thinks that Americans—most of Americans—think that they are the best race so ... I think it'll be changed ten or twenty years later. I wish that the day when American people can treat other places only as a person—how do I say—person to person, not American to Korean, not American to—only person to person.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

KIM: Yeah so that's all that I would like to say.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Thank you.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH BUMSEOK PARK

FOR
SAME SIDE OF THE 38TH:
A COMPARATIVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
BY: LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY

INTERVIEWED BY
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
JULY 4, 2004

TRANSCRIPT BY:
LINDSEY N. CHAMNESS

CHAMNESS: This begins an interview with Bumseok Park and Lindsey Chamness on July 4, 2004 in Seoul, Korea. So, Bumseok, the first question I want to ask you is where your grandparents were during the Korean War.

PARK: During the Korean War, my dad's parents, they were up in North Korea and during the Korean War, they came down to the South. They were refugees from North Korea and yeah, that's all I know about my grandparents in dad's part. Oh, one thing also I know is that my dad's older brother, he was left in North Korea and we don't know if he is alive still or not. Yeah. And well, my mom's grandparents, they live in the east side of Korea, which is called Kangwando and they still live there. They were born there and my mom was born there too. Yeah and that's all I know about my grandparents.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Did either of your grandfathers have to serve in the military, do you know?

PARK: What I know about the military service is the only reason why we still have to serve the military service is because of North Korea we are divided and North Korea is our enemy. So I don't know about our grandparents and if they had to serve.

CHAMNESS: So you said your mom grew up in Kangwha?

PARK: Kangwando.

CHAMNESS: Kangwando.

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Where did your father grow up?

PARK: My father grew up in North Korea.

CHAMNESS: Oh really?

PARK: I think until the age of close to ten. No, no, no. He was just born, actually. My bad. (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: Okay.

PARK: And his family escaped from North Korea to Kangwando, I think, because what I remember is my mom and dad knew from their childhood.

CHAMNESS: So they grew up together?

PARK: I think so.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So how did they get married or how did they start dating, do you know?

PARK: Uh ... Maybe the biggest reason is because of the church, because they went to the same church. They got closer I think. And I don't really actually know because I never asked them how they got married. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: Okay, okay. Were they students at the time or were they out of school?

PARK: They both graduated from Seoul University and after my dad graduated from Seoul University, he went to the United States to study. He went to Georgia Tech and Hawaii University and my mom followed him. I think they were married at that time.

CHAMNESS: And what was your dad studying?

PARK: He was studying—what is it—I forgot, MBA?

CHAMNESS: Like business?

PARK: Yeah, business first and—yeah, he majored also in data telecommunications.

CHAMNESS: So when were you born?

PARK: I was born in 1984.

CHAMNESS: Do you have any siblings?

PARK: Siblings?

CHAMNESS: Yeah, brothers or sisters.

PARK: Oh, older sister, four years older.

CHAMNESS: And where was she born?

PARK: We both were born in—we both were born in Seoul.

CHAMNESS: In Seoul?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Did you grow up in Seoul?

PARK: No, I went to—I lived in Hawaii for five years right after I was born. I was taken to Hawaii. (Laughter) Yeah, until the age of five, then we came back to Seoul. And then—this area, Apgujong.

CHAMNESS: Why did they go to Hawaii for five years?

PARK: Oh, because my dad went to Hawaii University, for graduate school.

CHAMNESS: Oh okay. Do you remember anything about Hawaii?

PARK: No. All I remember is I was wearing red shoes.

CHAMNESS: Red shoes?

PARK: Red sneakers.

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) That's a very vivid memory. And that's all you remember?

PARK: Yeah, that's it.

CHAMNESS: So after you came back to Seoul, tell me about growing up, like when you were really little.

PARK: When I was really little, right after I got back from Hawaii, I think I remember started learning Korean first because I never learned Korean. My parents said I only used English in Hawaii, so I had to learn Korean. And they said I was pretty smart so I finished learning Korean in three months or something.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

PARK: Which I don't believe. Then I went to kindergarten at the age of seven. And elementary school, Chongdam Elementary School nearby Apgujong.

CHAMNESS: So when you came back you were kind of confused, right? Because you had never used Korean.

PARK: Maybe. I don't remember.

CHAMNESS: Okay. What were your parents like, their personalities?

PARK: Oh my mom, she was—well, I was kind of punished a lot because I was not a good kid.

CHAMNESS: What does that mean?

PARK: There is a place—*hagwon*—you learn something. It's like a different place from a school, but they teach you school stuff. I kind of skipped a lot and go to game room a lot. So I was punished a lot from my mom and my dad really didn't care about me.

CHAMNESS: What? He didn't care about you?

PARK: Not like not caring, but he didn't really say something.

CHAMNESS: Oh okay.

PARK: Yeah, he was like—but once he gets—he's a really quite person so once he gets mad, he's very scary.

CHAMNESS: Right, right. What about elementary school? What do you remember from elementary school?

PARK: Not really—nothing much. I have a really bad memory about my past.

CHAMNESS: Really?

PARK: Yeah. What I remember is that I had a—I like six girls every six years—every year for the six years. So which makes a total of six girls. (Laughs) Okay?

CHAMNESS: Okay ... When you were little, were you learning English when you came back too?

PARK: It's sort of a second language so we have to learn English.

CHAMNESS: When did you start learning in school?

PARK: From the first grade of elementary school.

CHAMNESS: Really? That early.

PARK: From the alphabet.

CHAMNESS: Okay, so after elementary school, middle school.

PARK: Middle school.

CHAMNESS: What do you remember about middle school?

PARK: In middle school I was a very good person.

CHAMNESS: You were a very good person ...

PARK: I was a hard, studying worker. Well, I tried to study hard, okay? But the grade wasn't really good. (Laughs) It was always the same. Like in American—if you say in American style, it's kind of B+. Yeah, always. Even when I—we have a week of finals, you know, just like America, yeah, and I always try to study early. Even though I start

studying a month earlier or right before the final starts, it doesn't matter. My grade was always B+.

CHAMNESS: I see. Did you go to a school that had boys and girls.

PARK: Mm, for middle school. But high school, no.

CHAMNESS: Were your classes together or separated?

PARK: Oh, it's a co- ...

CHAMNESS: So boys and girls in the same classroom?

PARK: Yeah. Which I really miss a lot. It was really good.

CHAMNESS: What about discipline?

PARK: What do you mean discipline?

CHAMNESS: If a kid acted up, if a kid was bad in class or something ...

PARK: Oh, yeah. There was a—these days they don't really hit you. But for my age, my period or something, yeah, it was crazy.

CHAMNESS: What does that ...

PARK: Like the teachers, they punish you a lot by hitting you. Once, one of my friends got caught reading a comic book during study, during the class, and he got hit by a wood stick, like fifty centimeter long and five centimeter width. He was hit on his butt, like fifty times.

CHAMNESS: Fifty? Five-zero?

PARK: Yeah, like full-strength. But it was a really normal thing for us.

CHAMNESS: Did you play sports?

PARK: Soccer. I love soccer.

CHAMNESS: Did you have a school team?

PARK: I was in the school team for middle school.

CHAMNESS: Alright. How much did you go to school? Did you go six days a week?

PARK: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday ... six days a week.

CHAMNESS: Did you spend a lot of time studying in middle school?

PARK: No.

CHAMNESS: No.

PARK: Not really. I had to do it, but I don't think I did. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: So when you were little, elementary school or middle school, what did you want to be when you grew up?

PARK: Uh ... I always wanted to be a soccer player.

CHAMNESS: Professional?

PARK: Professional soccer player but—I don't really remember but from a moment it changed, somehow, I think by my parents. Well, I kind of like being the one it has changed to, the second future. It was doctor.

CHAMNESS: So when did it change?

PARK: I don't really remember. I think when I changed from elementary school to middle school, that part. I always wanted to be a soccer player because I love soccer. But soccer player is just a dream that every student dreams of. Doctor was my final decision I think.

CHAMNESS: Okay. So how—middle school in Korea is sixth, seventh, eight grade? Or seven, eight, nine?

PARK: Seven, eight, nine.

CHAMNESS: So after you finished middle school, tell me about high school.

PARK: I went to high school called Kyunggi High School. It was a boys' school, guys school, which sucks. I went there for just the first year. Yeah. And after that I went to the United States to study.

CHAMNESS: Why is it so popular for Korean high schools to be only boys or only girls?

PARK: I think it's probably the tradition of going to college. Because if the high school is mixed up with boys and girls and you have to go to college, it kind of disturbs you, probably. That's what I think. And in the old days it's really important to go to college. Just like these days it's important too, but the old days it's the same.

CHAMNESS: Do you mean it would distract you?

PARK: Yeah, yeah, distract you.

CHAMNESS: Alright.

PARK: Boys and girls ... you know what happens. (Laughter) It's messed up. And in high school you grew enough to know something, yeah, boys and girls things. Like middle school, you don't really know anything and you're not really sure about the relationship between boys and girls. But in high school it's certain.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. Do you ever get any sex-ed?

PARK: No.

CHAMNESS: Never?

PARK: No.

CHAMNESS: Never?

PARK: No.

CHAMNESS: (Laughs) Okay. So tell me about your one year in high school here.

PARK: It was really fun because—since it's a guys' school, and there was no girls, we can talk everything we want. Just like anything, any sexual stuff or anything like dirty stuff. (Laughter) We can just roll down the floor.

CHAMNESS: Did you have male and female teachers or only male teachers?

PARK: Oh we had female teachers. I remember the German, *Deutsche*. She was—the teacher was a female. We made fun of her a lot.

CHAMNESS: Why?

PARK: Because she put on too many make-ups.

CHAMNESS: Oh.

PARK: It was really thick.

CHAMNESS: Did you study a lot?

PARK: I think I did. I tried to.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

PARK: But still the same, B+.

CHAMNESS: Did your high school have clubs?

PARK: Hm ... yeah. We had a lot of clubs because there was a festival every year and every club has to perform something. And I was in some kind of club that I don't even remember. It sucked, it was like the worst club in the school. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: So you don't even remember what it was?

PARK: No.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And then how did you decide to finish high school in America?

PARK: It wasn't really my decision. My dad asked me, "Oh you want to go to America? Okay." I was like, "Okay, what's that?"

CHAMNESS: Okay. So how did he decide to send you to America?

PARK: Oh, because my grade never changed. (Laughter) They thought they have to give me some kind of big change, you know. Yeah, big change in the environment.

CHAMNESS: So when he decided to send you, how do you pick a school? How do you decide where to go?

PARK: We kind of heard from ... it's like a company that takes care of students going to the United States and they give you some kind of information about high schools, also colleges too. We got this Wayland High School, which I went to in the United States.

CHAMNESS: And that's in Wisconsin?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What's the name of ...

PARK: Wayland.

CHAMNESS: What's the name of the city that it's in?

PARK: It wasn't a city, it was a town. (Laughter) Beaver Dam.

CHAMNESS: Very small?

PARK: Sixteen thousand.

CHAMNESS: So your parents sent you to America in high school. So what was it like?

PARK: Well, I don't know why, but I don't feel like weird or anything.

CHAMNESS: Could you speak English when you went?

PARK: Maybe I have kind of a memory that I don't remember from Hawaii and I don't really have problem making conversation with Americans. But my parents always practiced with me to pronounce English. But I was still not as good as an American but ... yeah.

CHAMNESS: Pretty close. (Laughs)

PARK: Thank you.

CHAMNESS: So what kind of things did you do there at Wayland?

PARK: Well the only thing special was the varsity soccer team. And choir.

CHAMNESS: So you played soccer ...

PARK: I played center.

CHAMNESS: Which made makes you happy, and you sang, which you're really good at singing.

PARK: I am? (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: Yeah. What—are you tenor or bass?

PARK: I was tenor at first.

CHAMNESS: At first? Then your voice changed?

PARK: As I grew up, yeah, my voice changed. I don't know why but the composer—what do you say?

CHAMNESS: The conductor.

PARK: Conductor, conductor. He put me down to bass, I think. I think there was enough tenor, probably. And that was the best, yeah.

CHAMNESS: What about your friends?

PARK: I ... don't really have Korean friends. I have Korean friends but there is a youngership and an oldership, you know in Korean relationships. Yeah so we don't really call friends. But I really had good relationships with Americans.

CHAMNESS: Your high school had a lot of international students?

PARK: Not really.

CHAMNESS: No?

PARK: Six maximum for Korean. Yeah, six years maximum.

CHAMNESS: Were there other—people from other countries too?

PARK: They were some Taiwanese, and people from Hong Kong and also Indonesia, Japanese, Chinese. There wasn't a lot though.

CHAMNESS: Okay. Was it really difficult?

PARK: No.

CHAMNESS: No?

PARK: I don't know why but it wasn't really difficult. But I wasn't really trying to get A's in all of my classes so that was the reason why it wasn't so difficult.

CHAMNESS: You were okay with B+.

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What was your favorite subject?

PARK: My favorite subject is math.

CHAMNESS: Math.

PARK: Yeah, because I was better than everyone.

CHAMNESS: Better than everyone. What kind of math?

PARK: Every kind of math.

CHAMNESS: Every kind.

PARK: I learned all the subjects in high school, American high school, those subjects—I learned that already in Korea. And I don't really have to study for math.

CHAMNESS: So when did you graduate high school?

PARK: 2003, last year.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. And how did you pick a college?

PARK: I was looking for the cheap one, actually.

CHAMNESS: The cheap one?

PARK: I always wanted to go to east side or west side like California or nearby Boston. I was looking for Boston but the deadline had already passed so I couldn't ... And like around California, I was trying to apply for UC schools and also the deadline had passed so I couldn't apply anywhere. The only schools that were left were middle part from Wisconsin down to Indiana. And I found Michigan State, Urbana, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Bloomington and Purdue. They are cheap and easy to get into so I applied there.

CHAMNESS: So how did you decide which one to go to?

PARK: I first got into Michigan State and I was happy. "Oh yeah! I'm going to college!" (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: So really you were just excited to go to college, right?

PARK: Yeah, at first like that. And then I got into Bloomington which has a pretty good management school and I was thinking of management, becoming management. So I was like, okay. And I wasn't really thinking about Purdue because at first when I applied to Purdue, I applied over the Internet and I was just looking. I wasn't even thinking of applying and I saw this message, "If your TOEFL score is over 580, you can apply for Freshman Engineering." And my TOEFL score is 587.

CHAMNESS: Alright.

PARK: And it took me like ten minutes to apply for the school.

CHAMNESS: For somebody that's never had to take the TOEFL test, what's the highest score that you can make?

PARK: 680. Well, so I applied to Purdue and I forgot about it because it wasn't really in my mind when I was applying. And I got this message from Purdue. "What is this? Did I apply to Purdue?" And I opened the email and it said, "Congratulations! You got into Purdue." So I was like, Yeah! It's one of the top ten schools in the United States so ... yeah.

CHAMNESS: So you were thinking management and ... "Oh, I'll just be an engineer instead"?

PARK: Yeah. Yeah, I was good at math and I can calculate. I can do math. So maybe becoming an engineer is not so bad.

CHAMNESS: So how did your parents feel about that?

PARK: Oh, they were very happy because they thought if I just go to Bloomington level it would be fine, you know. Because I really didn't study hard in high school and my SAT score was 1170 so it wasn't—it was just average. Not so good, not so bad. But think about it—Purdue Engineering School?

CHAMNESS: Yeah, that's pretty good.

PARK: Yeah. It's ranked ninth in the United States.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. So you've spent one year there now, right?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What's it like?

PARK: Kind of boring.

CHAMNESS: Okay ...

PARK: That what I thought. I expected becoming boring anyway.

CHAMNESS: It's kind of in a small town, right?

PARK: Yeah, about like sixty percent of the students major in Engineering and in Engineering the ratio of boys and girls ...

CHAMNESS: Yeah, that's what I was going to say. There aren't many girls there, right?

PARK: It's eight to two. So eight boys and two girls. That's it.

CHAMNESS: That's it. That's it!

PARK: Yeah! You can't even have fun watching girls, so it was kind of boring. And there's nothing to do. It's a small town by the university.

CHAMNESS: So what do you do for fun?

PARK: Play—like during the days, like Monday through Thursday, I do nothing. I just do homework and play a little bit of computer games and watch TV in my room. And weekend—if the weekend comes, we go to some—like a lot of Koreans go to this place, a certain place, to play poker.

CHAMNESS: Poker?

PARK: To gamble.

CHAMNESS: Do you have a lot of Korean friends there?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Is it really difficult in Engineering?

PARK: Oh yeah, it is ... horrible.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. So now you really do have to study a lot.

PARK: Yeah. I really screwed my first year so ...

CHAMNESS: Playing too much?

PARK: Ah, not studying too much. I really didn't even play that much, I think. I had a lot of time to study but I just wasted those times just doing nothing. Just rolling around in the floor in my room. (Laughter)

CHAMNESS: Okay ... And next year, you're going into the military service, is that right?

PARK: Not next year. After first semester.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And for people in America that don't understand, can you explain the military service?

PARK: People in America?

CHAMNESS: I mean, like in America we don't have to do that. We don't have to go to military service. So explain what you have to do.

PARK: As most America knows, it's a requirement for Korean citizens. If you are an American citizen, you don't have to go even though you're Korean. But the only reason why this exists, the requirement of Army duty, is because of North Korea.

CHAMNESS: Right.

PARK: Yeah, they're our enemy actually even though they are our blood, which sucks.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

PARK: Mm hmm. And we serve for two years. Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Are you going to regular Army?

PARK: I'm planning to go to KATUSA, which is American Army in Korea and you have to take TOEIC, and if you get a certain score you can apply for that. And if I don't get into KATUSA, I'm just planning to go to regular Army.

CHAMNESS: What's the difference between the TOEFL and TOEIC?

PARK: TOEIC is usually for like a job. If you want to apply for a job, you usually take TOEIC.

CHAMNESS: Does it test different things?

PARK: Yeah. They do test different things. TOEIC is usually based on a workplace. Conversation and reading are all based on job—like advertisement for job, or conversation making in the workplace. And TOEFL is usually for college student more, when you apply for college.

CHAMNESS: So is it really difficult to get into KATUSA?

PARK: You can't say it's difficult because it's a random pick.

CHAMNESS: How does that work? You just put your number in a hat and they draw it out?

PARK: Yeah, it's kind of like that.

CHAMNESS: Wow.

PARK: Even though you passed the requirement score, they don't just put you in the KATUSA. They pick you randomly.

CHAMNESS: So there are a lot of people that want to do it?

PARK: Yeah, a lot because it sucks to be in Korean Army.

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Tell me why it sucks.

PARK: Uh, there is like—it's really, really strict, the higher class and the lower class. Even why that sucks—probably in America they don't really care because there is no oldership or youngership. Everyone is friend in America. But in Korea, if you are even one year older than him, you have to respect the one year older person. But in Army that doesn't concern you. Even if you are one year younger, if you are higher class, you can just beat the ... yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay. It's pretty violent, right, the Korean Army?

PARK: I think it got loosened a little bit these days.

CHAMNESS: Really?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: So you're going to start that after next semester and you have to spend two years there?

PARK: Two years.

CHAMNESS: After that, what do you plan on doing?

PARK: Going back to Purdue University and finish my studies.

CHAMNESS: How does that work? You just take time off from there? Do they know that that's why ...

PARK: What I heard is for every university in America they have that kind of policy for Korean student or students from a country that requires Army duty. So we can just tell them, "Oh I have to go serve my Army duty" and we can just take off.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And then after you graduate from Purdue, what's next?

PARK: I haven't really decided. I'm just thinking of either getting a job or going to graduate school right away. I might go to graduate school.

CHAMNESS: For engineering?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Do you still want to be a doctor?

PARK: Oh yeah, I told you that. I might not go to graduate school for engineering because I'm planning to major in bio-medical. Since I want to become a doctor I want to go to medical school.

CHAMNESS: What kind of doctor?

PARK: I don't know what it's called but it's related to bone.

CHAMNESS: Right ... I forgot too.

PARK: Okay.

CHAMNESS: Oh, orthopedics.

PARK: Yeah, it sounds like that.

CHAMNESS: So you spend a lot of time in the U.S. learning like American history and stuff like that. Is that kind of stuff taught in Korea?

PARK: No. Not about American history.

CHAMNESS: But you start learning English really young, right? So let me ask you about your family. Would you consider your family conservative?

PARK: No, not at all.

CHAMNESS: What does your family think about—your parents or grandparents or anybody in your family—what do they think about the U.S. and the U.S. military in Korea?

PARK: Well, I haven't really talked about it with my parents but maybe about U.S.—maybe now they don't really like the U.S. My dad doesn't ... yeah. You talked about George Bush, right, with my dad?

CHAMNESS: Yeah.

PARK: Yeah, last time, and he doesn't really like him.

CHAMNESS: I think a lot of people don't.

PARK: (Laughs) And about U.S. military, I don't know. I don't know what they think about that but I think—but what I think is that it's really necessary for Korea still.

CHAMNESS: What about—were you here or were you in America two years ago—there was a tank accident that ran over two middle school girls.

PARK: Oh, okay. I was in the United States.

CHAMNESS: You were in the United States. Did you hear about it there?

PARK: I didn't actually know until like a week later that happened. And I read it over the Internet.

CHAMNESS: Internet.

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: What kind of things did it say on the Internet, I'm just curious.

PARK: They usually say it is on purpose.

CHAMNESS: On purpose?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay.

PARK: And they kind of give you evidence why it was on purpose and those kinds of things. And most people believed it was on purpose.

CHAMNESS: Yeah, that's what I was going to ask you. What kind of—what were you thinking at the time and what about your Korean friends? What were they thinking?

PARK: I don't think my friends and I, all of us really know about it. I don't know why but it was really huge happenings in Korea but I didn't really know what was going on in the United States. Maybe I wasn't in Korea. All I was doing was reading over the Internet so I didn't really feel about it or something, probably.

CHAMNESS: Okay. When you're here in Korea, during the summer or Christmas break or whenever, do you ever run into American soldiers? Do you ever see them?

PARK: I always see them in the airport when I come back to Korea.

CHAMNESS: Is that the only place?

PARK: Yeah. I never saw any Americans around here. (Phone rings, Tape paused)

CHAMNESS: This is sort of just your opinion, so you can say whatever you want. But do you think there are problems between the U.S. military and the Korean government or the Korean people?

PARK: Uh, yeah.

CHAMNESS: What kind of problems?

PARK: Korean people really don't like them. First reason is running over the two girls, because of that, because they think that it was on purpose.

CHAMNESS: But you do ... Sorry I didn't mean to interrupt. Do you think that kind of thing changes people's minds or just makes them more ... Do you know what I mean? Do you think it changes people to think bad things or it only strengthens people who already thought bad things?

PARK: Both of them. It could change and it could strengthen.

CHAMNESS: So you said that. And what else were you going to say?

PARK: And also having war with Iraq. And also there was ...

CHAMNESS: Okay, you are the first person that's mentioned that. So can you elaborate?

PARK: Iraq ... They don't ... (Tape paused) Iraq.

CHAMNESS: Yeah. You said it's a problem. So how is it a problem?

PARK: Well, first, a lot of soldiers were killed. It doesn't matter if it was American or not. Because at first when they broke out the war with Iraq, Bush said it's not going to be a problem. It's going to be really easy to just run over Iraq. Not run over just ...

CHAMNESS: Take over.

PARK: Yeah, take over. Win. And a lot of people were killed. And a lot of Iraqi citizens too, just normal people. And recently one Korean was killed and that really triggered ...

CHAMNESS: Triggered.

PARK: Triggered people's minds.

CHAMNESS: Okay. And you were going to say something else too.

PARK: And it was really small happenings, but there was—in a drinking place, this one American soldier, he punched a Korean and it was in the newspaper.

CHAMNESS: That was two months ago or something?

PARK: About. This summer.

CHAMNESS: So that kind of thing makes people think what?

PARK: I don't know if the Koreans really hate America or if they hate George Bush. Yeah. I think it's concentrated on George Bush usually.

CHAMNESS: But do you think it would change if we had another president or do you think ...

PARK: Maybe.

CHAMNESS: Really?

PARK: Because all this happened, the biggest reason is having war with Iraq.

CHAMNESS: Oh, okay. Have you ever been to a military base or a camptown?

PARK: No, never.

CHAMNESS: Never. Have you heard anything, because I'm sure—I mean, do Koreans talk about what goes on around a military base?

PARK: Uh, no. We don't talk about it. We don't actually know what's going on.

CHAMNESS: Okay. This is also your personal opinion, so you can say whatever. Do you think that the U.S. military should stay in Korea?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Because ...

PARK: North Korea. They have a lot stronger Army than us. They actually try to have a war with South Korea and this is like what I read in the newspaper, a professional newspaper opinion, and they said if just South Korea and North Korea have a war without the United States Army, we will be defeated in a few hours or something. Yeah, so I think we really need the United States to defend our country.

CHAMNESS: There are also a lot of Koreans that say that the U.S. military should go. So why do they feel that way?

PARK: Because United States kind of blocks us from developing our military technology. They kind of make us limit that, like the distance of firing missiles, that kind of thing. Even though we have the skills to develop our technology, we can't do that because of United States. Probably that's why.

CHAMNESS: And you sort of answered this one already, but I want you to be more specific. Do you think Koreans like American soldiers? Like you sort of said about the military and George Bush, but do you think Koreans like American soldiers? Or do they separate, I mean do they only think military or ...

PARK: I think just normal American people and American soldiers are different. American soldiers, they are kind of rough, kind of not like normal people. They are pretty violent. (Tape Paused) So ... what was the question?

CHAMNESS: If Koreans like American soldiers. You said that they're not like normal people. So does that mean that they do or they don't like them?

PARK: They don't like them.

CHAMNESS: They don't like them.

PARK: They don't like them because as I said, those happenings and they have maybe a spirit of superiority or something. They think the United States tries to control us, you know.

CHAMNESS: Like condescending, you mean?

PARK: Yeah, probably. It's not just American soldier. It's not like all of them, just many of them.

CHAMNESS: Is there a difference between white and black soldiers?

PARK: No.

CHAMNESS: They're just soldiers?

PARK: Yeah.

CHAMNESS: Okay, and then the last question is sort of the opposite. Do you think that American soldiers like Korea and like Koreans?

PARK: As I know, the reason they come to Korea is because they get paid a lot, right?

CHAMNESS: It's combat pay, yeah.

PARK: Yeah, and probably they think we're not going to have a war for a long time, you know. I don't know if they really like Korea or not. But I think many of them like Korea, don't they?

CHAMNESS: I don't know.

PARK: I think so, it seems like. It's a good place to play around.

CHAMNESS: Sure.

PARK: A lot of drinking places and a lot of ... you know. (Laughs)

CHAMNESS: Okay, well that's it.

PARK: That's it? Alright, thank you.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------