

Oral History Transcript

Interviewer: Sharon V. Milligan

Oral History Candidate: Mike McCray, class of '66, Glendora Campus

June 4, 2011, Palm Springs, CA

*This is Sharon Milligan. I'm in Palm Springs with Brown Military Academy in Southern California Military Academy Alumni. It's June 4, 2011. Could you please state your name, age, address, class year and school?*

Mike McCray. The address is 1-5-5-8-9 Cristalino, C-R-I-S-T-A-L-I-N-O, Hacienda Heights, CA. I'm 63. I went to both Southern California Military Academy and Brown Military Academy.

*Ok, so Mike, let's get started with-obviously you started at Southern Military Academy. How'd you get there? Why'd you end up there? When did this take place?*

Probably starts well before I went to SCMA. I talked about this with a couple other cadets this morning from BMA. The personal side of going to SCMA: my parents were the kind of parents that probably shouldn't have had children. In fact, I think my mother regretted having children in a lot of ways and my brother got into trouble very early. He was 13, ran away from home, didn't graduate from high school, dishonorable charge from the navy when he was older and I think my parents realized that they weren't the best parents in the world. They loved each other very much. They weren't abusive in any way. They were-I've heard the opposite of love is indifference and I think that's what they were. They were indifferent to their children. And I think they thought it would be best for me to have the structure of military academy so that I wouldn't go the way of my brother. And so in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I get confused on years, so if I can count back. We can count back from '66 when I graduated, which I didn't say and I think you asked me that. In the beginning, I graduated from Brown in 1966. They sent me to SCMA when I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and I think that's the reason I went. A lot of struggles, I think, with abandonment, but I've worked through that, come to grips with it. Not a psychological problem anymore-still makes me a little bit sad, but then three years at SCMA and I moved on to Brown Military Academy. I graduated in '66, so 5, 4, 3, in '63 then I would have gone to Brown as a Sophomore in high school. I felt a little bit fortunate because I went to Kindergarten in California, though we moved to Oregon and their start-date for Kindergarteners was later or earlier than Oregon, so I sat out a year and then went to 1<sup>st</sup> grade, so I was always bigger, more mature prob.-yeah, more mature, we could talk about stories. But anyway, a year more mature, a year bigger-

*Developmentally, the mental development.*

Yeah, but anyway, so I never had any-I didn't have a lot of the struggles that a lot of the kids had at BMA that were probably more-picked-on is not the right word, but-I don't know. I'll brag, you know, I was always in the 'in' crowd for my age group and class and so there weren't fights or any of that kind of thing, because I was bigger and could probably take them, but I don't know. So that's how I got there and then I graduated in '66.

*So what were some experiences you could go into in terms of maybe school, academics?*

I don't have a lot of things to say about SCMA. I was-

*Now, explain, just for the record, SCMA was one facility under John Brown University.*

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-John Brown Corporation-University, whatever.

*And that was-what was the grade range at SCMA?*

-Kindergarten through 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

*And then Brown was-?*

-10. Or what Brown was, was I think actually 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. So there were kids at Brown that were- we'll call them underclassmen. They were really what we call junior high, middle school now, I guess they call it. And I don't have a lot to say about SCMA. I think, the main thing about Brown and SCMA was the structure that it gave me in my life and the morals, you know they always try to-both schools were Christian-oriented and tried to teach you right from wrong. When I talk about indifference with my parents, there were men at both schools that were military people that were our leaders, the commandant and the chaplain was even military and they had a good moral background-a good structure in their lives and then passed that on to the kids. I think my affinity is for Brown and the ROTC training, you talked about faculty; I was trying to think back to some of the teachers that we had and we had-I can't remember who the third one is, but we had three PhDs that taught there. They were too old to teach in the public schools. I think they had to retire at 65, I think they were forced to retire, but there was Dr. VanLar, um, I can't remember the guy's name.

*What stands out about those three-and if you can't remember the name, there's some quality or some personality trait that's really stuck with you, so what is that?*

Just that they had more teaching knowledge; they'd been teachers for their entire career. They understood kids, they-if we took the time to listen, they taught us a lot. They taught us on an advanced level, I think. We had a Colonel Cole, graduated from West Point, last in his class, but Neely-a guy names Neely was in '65 or '64, called him out on it one time and Colonel Cole just about-threw him out of class-but just about kicked his butt out of class, I mean literally kicked his butt out of class. We had a teacher by the name of Odo stare and he graduated from either the naval academy or one of the military academies or the Diplomatic Corps-I never really got that straight-in France and they-France sent him to Mexico-this is the story that's told. France sent him to Mexico on a diplomatic mission to get Maximilian his gold from Mexico and he met Pancho Villa. And wrote with Pancho Villa for at least a few years, and of course we all thought that was a BS story and he actually brought in pictures of him with Poncho Villa and I think he was 76 at the time-he was really old. Then he told us about the time he was a forest ranger and about the time he was in silent movies and in 1917 during the Bolshevic Revolution, he was in Russia, filming silent movies, and told us about the bodies stacked up like cords of wood, during the Bolshevic Revolution and we didn't believe him and so he brought in pictures of him and Pancho Villa and we went to the French Club dinner in Hollywood one time and I was the French Club president. That was my first year and as I was very popular, they voted me French club president and I never did learn French-I didn't know anything about French, but they didn't like the guy-and I won't name his name-that was the French club president, so they voted me, so anyway, we went to Hollywood to a French restaurant, field trip for the French club and as we pulled up in front of the

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French restaurant, Oro ran out of the bus, off the bus and down the street to about midway in the bus and grabbed this old guy with real long blonde hair and a long beard and said, "John, I haven't seen you in...age." We could hear him yelling this to this guy and they were in silent films together.

*Oh my.*

And he would tell stories about being a forest ranger. He was a marvelous person and if you go to Odo stare-no um, not Odo stare, Wikipedia, it'll bring up Odo stare. So he was the most memorable teacher there. But we had great teachers. Coach Bill Judy. I know some of the other guys are talking about putting one of the coaches' or one of the teachers' cars on the roof down at Pacific Beach; well we took Bill Judy's car and put it next to the gym. It was touching the gym. He couldn't drive it away, because it couldn't turn or whatever, so it was a Volkswagen, so he made us all go back and put it up and move it, and I don't know, just stupid stuff kids do. Johnny Hanes used to be a boxer. He was my history teacher. He'd throw me out of class more than once. One thing about Brown in Glendora is we had-all of the grass in Glendora was senior grass. Nobody but seniors could go on the grass. In my junior year, I was in Johnny Hanes' class, and the president of the senior class was Bob Smith and everybody feared Bob Smith, I mean, we met 9 years later and I mean he's a great guy and probably was then, but everybody feared him. He was the kicked who kicker your butt all the time. So Johnny Hayes threw me out of class, made me take my desk out onto the senior grass and I'm a junior, and you just don't go on the senior grass, but he told me to, so I'm sitting in my desk on the grass for the rest of the class and Bobby Smith comes walking out of the barracks and comes to walk in front-and he walks in front of me and I thought he was going to do something. He just looked at me and said nothing, just kept walking on by. Anyway, that was a bit of a nervous time for me, but Johnny was a funny guy.

*Well let me ask you, going on about your teacher kicking you out. I know there's rank, and there's a lot of discipline. How would other students maybe handle that? Was that-was there just a sense of you know, people-guys were guys and there was a goofiness or were there people that were, you know, definitely out of control and people felt that they had to handle that? You know, how did that fit in terms of all the different personalities and-?*

I don't get the question.

*I'm saying that I know there's discipline, like your teacher could send you out. What in terms of your classmates or peers, would there be any discipline or, you know, would somebody come up to you and be like, why are you goofing off in class? Like was that part of, maybe, part of the structure of Brown that peers could-?*

Yes. Yes, you know, all the stories aren't going to be the funny stories or the good stories, but there was, if you had, and you'll hear this probably from others, but if there was somebody in the group that their hygiene wasn't particularly good or they screwed up in military drills and that kind of thing, if they weren't-their health wasn't good, you would give them a G.I. shower, which was you throw them in the shower, scrub them down with brushes and brule pads and all that kind of stuff. One thing I'm not very

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proud of is we brought one guy into our room-to my roommate's room. My senior year we had the only room in the school that had its own shower and toilet.

*Because you were officers.*

Because we were-and two of us lived there. Well we were the company commander and the executive officer, so we got the best room and we brought one guy in, put a blanket over his head and the whole company just kicked the hell out of him. That's not a proud moment, but that answers the question and that kind of stuff did happen and if somebody was bringing down the company or the class or whatever it was, it didn't have to be physical; it could be just, you know, telling the people that they're screwing up and not physical or mental abuse other than just a couple of times, but-

*So how did the ranking look like? Where did you end up; you ended up as an officer. How did you go through that progression?*

I was-when I was a Sophomore, I think I got to the rank of corporal. When I was a junior, I was a sergeant something and then my senior year, being an executive officer of Company A, I was a second lieutenant and then-what's the word-first lieutenant. That's where I wound up, as a first lieutenant executive officer. There was a change in company commander and I would have been given that, but in football I dislocated my shoulder and did it nine-well eight times since for a total of nine and I was bandaged and in the hospital with a lot of operations and so they called me and said we're going to give it to this other guy because of your disabilities and you're not here all the time and whatever, but they let me stay as executive officer. Sad point in my life, because I could have had an appointment to West Point. I had a full-ride scholarship set up to William College, dislocated shoulder and all of it went down the drain. That's a sad point. But the good thing is, I went to Santa Ana College and met my wife and we've been married for 43.

*Tell me about your sports. Yeah, what's your sports career like?*

At SCMA or two years ago, SCMA had their first annual reunion. We went. This last year three weeks ago, they it but we were in Hawaii so we couldn't go, but the first year-and this talks about athletics-in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade I tried out for the football team. Our coach's name was George Divina and he cut me from the team. I made it in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, but he cut me in the 7<sup>th</sup>. So apparently-I don't remember this-but my first year at Brown, I wrote Mr. Labina a letter and just gave him hell about cutting me and I don't remember any of this-that he shouldn't have cut me; I was playing varsity football, I was starter, I was first string and so he-when we went to this reunion two years ago, I said hi Mr. Divina and shook his hand, Mike McCray, and he looks at Sharon and he said I remember him. He wrote me this letter after when he-I'm so embarrassed by that.

*Adolescent.*

But that made me remember-so at SCMA I lettered in three sports: football, basketball and baseball. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, same as senior year, I went to Brown, lettered in football, basketball and baseball.

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Junior year, football basketball and baseball, was athlete of the year my junior year in 1965 and then dislocated my shoulder in '66. I played, but I was a catcher in baseball, I played second base so I wouldn't hurt my shoulder. The coach put me there; I could still hit and I dislocated it in basketball, I couldn't do that anymore, dislocated it twice in baseball, so I became the kicker for the team in football and that year we scored five touchdowns; I kicked five extra points and on five touchdowns, we won two, lost two and tied one.

*Were athletics a big thing on the campus? Or was it balanced?*

They were for the athletes. Athletics were a very big thing for me and you know, old war stories and all that, but if you went out for a team, you didn't get cut because there just weren't enough-but some of the people were very good, but it was a single-A, small school, so we played single-A small schools. Nobody-very few people watched us, you know, like college scouts or that kind of thing. But for the people who were on the team, it really meant a lot to them. It meant a tremendous amount to me. Brown means a tremendous amount to me. That's why I think I like to come back to these things. One of the-this is kind of off the topic, but one of the things that was mentioned today in our earlier meeting is-one of the guys said that they came back or he came to Brown in San Diego and all of a sudden felt like he had 200 brothers. Well it's the same, I think. We were sitting today with somebody from '41, '48, '61, and Mitch '66 and us in '66 and all of us-the stories that we told weren't exactly the same, but they were all the same thing-the same things that we went to-or that we went through: the, you know, some of the loneliness, the camaraderie, the, you know, the sports. It's like it doesn't matter if you're from '41 or you're the last class in '66, the way I look at it, we're all the same class almost and that's just the way I feel about it. I don't know if everybody else does. When we have these reunions, I think if you took the average rank from the guys here, the majority of them are probably officers. They're the ones that had the most fun. The people who didn't want to come here, the people who go to Brown, or the people that didn't have a good time there, they weren't particularly popular and they were people who were picked on, it's the same as every other school, well they don't want to come back. I go to my wife's reunion. Well not everybody goes; not everybody had a good time in high school. I had a tremendous time. Oh one thing I maybe-we had a cannon at Brown. We know where it is. It's at Cable Airport in Tijuana, so if you put that in the book, that's where the old cannon was.

*That's military, so what's the military end of it like for you? When you think of it, it's a military academy, so help me understand, what does that mean and how does that impact you and how did that affect your day-to-day living?*

Again I mentioned structure, but while I went along with things, we rebelled against it (I say we thinking my roommate Ross Bart). We rebelled against it a little bit. For instance, we had the only room in school that had its own-well it also had a walk-in closet, and you needed to secure that closet, so we had a padlock on it, on the little thing. So for morning formation, you had to get up at 6:15, and Sergeant Moffett would announce over the-we really hated this-that it was time to get 6:15, that it was time to get up. Well, I would go into the closet, sleep, Ross would lock the door, and so as they walked through the barracks to see who didn't go to breakfast, well I'm asleep in the closet and they're shaking the door

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and they can't open it and of course they don't have the key. And then the next morning, it was Ross' turn to sleep in.

*Very intelligent!*

So we only ate breakfast about every other day up there because we were sleeping.

*What did you have to wear for that morning drill? What did you have to look like?*

Generally, we wore gray pants with stripes, gray shirt, you know, formal tie, that kind of thing, but some mornings we were in fatigues, combat boots, fatigue hat, you know.

*Did it take you long to get ready? Was it something you had to get up half an hour-45 minutes before to iron or anything?*

No, our-we had our clothes laundered, so they were pretty much taken care of. I sent laundry out. My mother wouldn't ever take care of it. I don't know if others did or not; I don't remember that.

*So was your day really structured then? You started your morning like that and how the rest of the day, what was that structure like?*

We would eat, we would get into formation and march down to breakfast and before we went into the mess hall, whoever leading that day-battalion commander or whoever it was-would say, "Johnson, say grace!" I'm gonna remember it. "Dear heavenly father, we thank you for this food and all the blessings of life. Help us to receive it with gratitude and be faithful in our daily duties." Done. But then they would call one of us smart-asses and say, "McCray, say grace." "Grace!" And then everybody'd go in or somebody'd say, "Good food, good meat, Good God, let's eat!" you know, just be stupid. So then we would eat and after that we'd have a few minutes to go back to the barracks, do whatever we needed to do and then off to class and then course you're in classes all day.

*Like what was all day, like 8-3, 9-4?*

Probably 8 to noon, no 8 to 11:30? You know, I don't remember, 8 to noon. And then an hour for lunch. We again would go down to the mess hall, have lunch. After school, you would have free-time. My free-time was always in sports practice; I would be playing football, basketball or baseball. And then after that, that free-time, there would be study time, I'm sorry, then we would go to dinner and then after dinner, you had study time. And if you had a B-average, you could study in your room. If you had less than a B-average, you had to go down to a study hall, which is a classroom and people had lessons and such. And my senior year, if you were an officer, seniors had their cars on campus, where in other years as I understand it, they had to hide their cars in the neighborhood so that when they got out, they could go get their cars somewhere. They'd go to a friend's house or something, or maybe they lived in the area, but my senior, year, we could have our cars on campus and after football practice, if you were an officer, and you had a B-average, you could get out every night-had to be back as 10:00.

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*Every night of the week.*

Every night of the week. So I was off campus most of the time. One funny story about that, is food wasn't the best at Brown, so because I was an officer and I could get in and I had a better than B-average, and I could get off campus every night, I would go from room to room to room and take orders for A&W and then go into the study halls and take orders for A&W and if at that time a pop-a-burger's what they're called, I don't know if that's what they're called now, was 50 cents, well I charge them 75, cause that's how I got my money for dates on the weekends. I came back one time with 8-or with 5 full boxes of hamburgers and French fries from in and out. And I put a desk in front of my door and people would walk up and get the food from me and then they'd take it back to their room and eat it. I made a lot of money. It was great. You know, a quarter back then was 2 gallons of gas almost, so anyways.

*It sounds like you might have gotten pretty good grades? Did they watch them really closely, and what do you know that they did if they were slipping?*

I don't know because I never really got into bad grades, thank God, for P.E. and it always got me an A.

*Did you feel pressured that way? Like there'd be detrimental results if you got bad grades or you naturally were a student who did okay? I mean, did you feel pressure that grades were important?*

No, I didn't. It came easy, it came easy to me. If I had applied myself, I would have gotten better grades, I'm like 3.3, and well B, B+ something like that. I could have done much better I suppose, but it came easy, I was lazy, kind of, especially in that area. In college I wasn't a very motivated student.

*What about, what were some of the things you did in free time? Like what was-you were in PB, correct?*

Say again?

*Were you in Pacific Beach?*

No, I was in Glendora.

*Oh, you were in Glendora, so-*

Well, one of the times, Ross and I, after I dislocated my shoulder, wanted to build up my shoulder, so we went and cut down oak trees. That wasn't real-

*Let me retract because I think this would be important. What about sanctioned activities by Brown, not-that weren't campus activities. What did Brown maybe do that was off the campus? Did they-camps, or I don't know, any retreats or something?*

Well I think the only time they did something, I was restricted to campus fairly much because I raised a little bit of hell during the week, so we had to stay during the weekends; I couldn't go home because I raised a little bit of hell.

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*So what was it like on those weekends?*

Well they made you stay in your room and study and there was a tv somewhere, down in the officer's lounge, I think. But they had one off-campus activity; it was to go to church on Sunday, so everybody either went to the Catholic church or the Quaker church; our chaplain was Quaker. But other than that, there wasn't really anything; they didn't have-

*They had Prom.*

Yeah, but that's-we had military balls.

*Okay, so they'd have some military-*

Yes, and we didn't have it on campus; we'd have it like at the E. Bell Club or something like that. We would dress up in our West Point uniforms; that's what they looked like, exactly like. In fact, the old t's, the jackets were from West Point. They were from West Point, used one I guess. We had one that had Eisenhower's name on it, but we don't know if it was Dwight or if it was his son, but it said Eisenhower on it. I didn't have it; somebody else did. We would have our military balls and we would go get our girls, girlfriends. If you didn't have a girlfriend, our social director's name was Mr. Granger and so you could arrange a date through him, cause there were girl schools in the area. So you'd say Mr. Granger, I need a date for the military ball and we would call the girls the Granger's Rangers.

*Escort service.*

Well actually, there was a young lady, first name was-or her name was Donna Helman that we went out more than one and she was-they-all of them were great girls, but you know, it's kind of embarrassing to have to take Granger's Rangers to the dance, but anyway. I was more into sports than I was to girls; at least that's what I tell my wife.

*So how do you think this training prepared you? It sounds like there was discipline and structure. You had sports that helped you feel that excelled. It sounds like you fit in. You got a little crazy here and there and hung out on the campus over the weekend, but how do you think overall, it sounds like a very pleasant experience, that this has affected you past that experience and the rest of your life.*

Well, structure, I'm fairly detail-oriented now, and I think that was part of it. I have a job where I have to be detail-oriented.

*And what do you do?*

I have a loss mitigation team that works defaulted, sub-prime loans, short sales, basically and I have to deal with the public and I think Brown had a lot to do with that, because you had to deal with almost everybody on campus. You had to deal with adults, you had to deal with younger kids. I was an officer, and so I was sort of in charge. I was the executive officer, not the leader of the group, but still, you have to learn to be a leader when you're in that position. Sports, of course, teaches you teamwork and



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camaraderie and I just made a lot of great friends and I think that helped me in the business world. I didn't graduate from college, but been in financial career my entire life, in lending and mortgage service and that kind of thing. And that takes teamwork, leadership and all of that and I think Brown contributed a great deal.

*How do you-help me understand how when you come in at such a young age and then you end up developing this leadership, do you feel like it was this kind of gentle nudging or do you feel like it was kind of pushed on you to be a leader? Was it them doing it? How do you think that leadership came about? What were their processes?*

I think it was more learning by example from the people that were our leaders. I don't think they pushed it on you. You earned what you got; we had, you know, a number of people that were in the class that didn't become officers, that were still privates or corporals, or, you know, sergeants, whatever it was. I think it comes naturally, but again, if you're looking at the people that were in charge of us, they were army; they were navy. They were-most of them were leaders. I think most of them were officers, you know, so we were learning by their example in a lot of ways. Some of it you just learned. Sometimes you learned the hard way. You did something wrong and not doing that again.

*Did you ever get marching demerits or that kind of thing, anything like that where you had to do so many hours in the yard or-?*

At SCMA, I know this isn't for SCMA, but if you got in trouble, you used to have to go up and stand on the white line; we'd do that. You know, it was just a line and you just stood there and waited your half-hour or however long it was. My Sophomore year, the seniors, the officers at the time that I was a private, favorite thing to do was to make you go down and run laps on the track when it's screwed up and I ran my share of laps and I wasn't, you know, I wasn't a bad kid. I was kind of a goofball and you know-not goofball, that's not the right word. Kind of smart-alec.

*You were just kind of pushing the boundaries a little bit, like normal kids, just seeing how far you could get away with it.*

Yeah.

*You were a kid.*

I enjoyed being a kid; I enjoyed my time Brown. We had fun. People ask me, you know, are you sorry that you went to an all-boys school? Hell no. We did so many weird, fun things up there and you know, and guys in high school, regular high school, I mean, yeah they do well with girls. I went out with girls. But there, you know, on a coed situation, they probably know how to deal with girls better than guys from Brown, I don't know. But we did okay. A lot of the guys had sisters, so-And we had Granger's Rangers! Geez. Oh my.

*Okay, well anything else you can think of-wrap it up or if there's something else that comes to mind that you think would be-*

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[someone talking in background]

*Yeah, just in closing, what would you say that you're walking away with, that you've carried with you, that has been kind of a sustaining factor or principle from that experience at Brown.*

I think yeah, since-I'm pretty much a black-and-white person. I either think things are right or things are wrong and I think I got a lot of that from Brown. I don't think I'm stubborn, but if I have a point of view, I'll listen to people and I've been changed-opinions been changed by my daughter for one. But the structure, the leadership-I think I'm-with what I learned there, that-and they teach you honor in that your word counts and I can't remember a time; there probably has been, but it doesn't stand out in my mind that if I told somebody I would do something or leave them my word, that I wouldn't do this or whatever it is, I'd do it, because you know, that's what men do. Women too, but men-you know, you can't be a weasel in your life and I don't know. I guess that's why it's life. We did have some fun times up there though.

*That's nice. I mean, it's nice to look back and say it was fun. You know, like you said, and I'm picking this up from everybody, you know that there's a real side, things that, like you say, we all have in life that we look back and think 'eh', but that's part of the growing up. But overall, it sounds like a very positive experience, with a lot of fun sprinkled in there.*

It was.

*And your showing up at the reunion, so you're a percentage of people who think that was something worth coming back to.*

Yup; well again, it's like everybody that was in that room today-their wives too, a lot of them, you know, in a lot of ways-cause Sherry even remembers-my wife remembers a lot of stuff more than I do. We were in a meeting and she said, stand up and tell them about oh, stand up and tell them about, you know. I would have never thought of that stuff, you know. But I don't have Alzheimer's; I have some-timers, so anyway. I guess that's it.

[wife?] I think we started and you didn't finish-that a lot of the people that are here were officers. They were movers and shakers then and are in their private life now and I think that-

Well you can look at all these guys and they are, you know-you heard the woman that stood up, and I think she was exactly right and I think she expressed it eloquently and I think that's the essence of Brown, just what she was talking about and there's very similar stories when I was older at Brown, so-

*Okay, well, thank you very much and I'll get a form for you, so you will be here 'til this evening, so I'll just make sure I have you sign your release.*

No problem.

*Ok, we're good.*

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Oral History Candidate: Mike McCray, class of '66, Glendora Campus

June 4, 2011, Palm Springs, CA

[wife] We'll remember something later, but-

*Yeah, I can go back and-*

-Probably the most important item.

*-Yeah, something really important. I have your file, with your little initials on it, so you know, I'll be able to go back, so you know.*

[wife]...oh that's being a catcher all those years.

*I was going to say, he's-*

No, I have a predetermined, not a determination; that's not the right word I was-

[wife] anyway, bone-on-bone on his hip.

*I'm feeling that I think I have versitus, cause I can't sleep on this hip anymore, and when I sit too long in a car, my leg goes numb and it just burns. So when we were driving here, my husband's like, are you okay. I'm fine; I just can't feel my knee and I need to move it a little bit.*

*So we're at two things.*

Two things: you mentioned the armory and Mitch. Ross and I got to-the armory, he probably told you was lined up with M1s and 30-caliber machine gun in there and whatever. Well Ross and I-my roommate-got a wild hair one day and we stole one of the M1s. This is regular army issue. This is government property and in the closet I told you, we had one of those push-up things, you know, so you could climb in to the ceiling; well that's where we hid it. So about two days later, they came out and they said, look you guys, somebody stole an M1; it's government property and the FBI is coming out today to find out who stole it. So we had to very quickly get it back into the armory, which we did. We didn't get caught and we were pretty cool with that. What was the other one?

[wife] oh, um Ross took that gun away from the guy that was jammed.

Oh, we used to-the guy's here, sayin' Orange Grove and it wasn't an Orange Grove; it was a lemon grove, but there was-we used to have maneuvers and the MS team-Military Science Training 4s-had been in training-were up in the lemon grove and they were defending the lemon grove and then the 2s and 3s would get a battle plan so we could take our M1s. We shot blanks and stuff to attack the hill and take it like we were attacking the enemy in real warfare and then the 1s just watched. So after the maneuvers were over, we'd have lemon fights and we would throw lemons at each other and such and so Ross and I were walking down the hill and a guy was trying to open the bolt on his M1 and Ross came over to him and ripped the gun out of his hand and he-this is the butt of the rifle-he had it on the ground and with his foot, he kicked the bolt open and out came flying a bullet and it was a live 30-30 round and

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I don't remember the kid's name and I wouldn't say it if I did, but he was going to kill Sergeant Varl, one of our ROTC officers. He was actually going to shoot him.

[wife] not everybody at military school was there by choice.

-Or had any fun. So Glendora PD came out and took this kid away and did you know, whatever they did; he was going to kill our ROTC sergeant. So, not everything at Brown was rosy.

*Like you said, diverse people there for different reasons.*

Yeah, but anyway, those are the two things. As soon as you said armory I got that M1 we stole-geez. Every week, the teacher would write-this was in public school-would have to write a note to my parents on Friday to tell them if I was a good boy or bad boy, so this may not all be-part of this is trouble too, that I was screwing around.

*This might have been the incentive of how you ended up there.*

Yes, because I think they saw that I was going down the same path my brother was.

[wife] your mother and father worked fulltime in those days, which a lot of women did not, and he was on his own a lot.

Yeah, I was on my own-I'd wake alone and you know, getting home from school, they wouldn't be there until 6.

*Did they save you allowances and things like that? Or did parents do that?*

They sent my lunch to school.

*Did you go each day? You didn't stay over? Or you stayed over-*

No this is in public school.

*Oh, public school, okay.*

Like I was saying, the teacher would write a note home every Friday and if I was a good boy, we'd go to the Dodger game and if I was a bad boy, we couldn't go, so-that was probably-

[wife] Well, and you had to take the bus to the train station-

Oh God! Have you ever been to the bus station in Long Beach?

*Not lately.*

How about the Union Station downtown?

[wife] L.A.

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*No, I'm from San Diego.*

[wife] in his uniform, by himself.

I would, at SCMA, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, they would take me down to the bus station in Long Beach, which is by the hike and the hike is really seedy, in my dress-blue uniform, with the hat and the whole thing, put me on this bus to L.A. to the bus station in L.A. and I mean you've got guys rolling down-they've got no legs; they're just on roller skates and they're pushing themselves with their arms and all the hobos sitting around. Here I am, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 12-year-old kid in a stupid uniform standing on the corner, waiting for them to pick me up.

[wife] cause mom and dad are picking you up.

Oh God, that was horrible. Anyway, well you've got to go...