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**The Vietnam Archive  
Oral History Project  
Interview with Harriette King  
Conducted by Kelly Crager  
Date: 6 May 2010, 11 May 2010, 18 May 2010  
Transcribed by Blair Barnhill**

**NOTE: Any text included in brackets [] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.**

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1 Kelly Crager: This is Kelly Crager conducting an oral history interview with  
2 Harriette King. Today is 6 May 2010. I am in Lubbock, Texas, on the campus of Texas  
3 Tech University, and Mrs. King is joining me by telephone from her home in Raleigh,  
4 North Carolina. Mrs. King, to begin this interview, I'd like to get a little bit of  
5 biographical information from you if I can. Can you tell me when you were born, and  
6 where?

7 Harriette King: I was born in 1935 in North Hickory, North Carolina.

8 KC: North Hickory, and what were your parents' names?

9 HK: My mother's name was Ayama. My father's name was Hiam, and my  
10 maiden name was Collins.

11 KC: Okay. What did your parents do for a living there?

12 HK: My mother did many different jobs. I was actually raised by my mother's  
13 mother, my grandmother. So, I lived with her most of my life, even though my mother  
14 was around it was a family situation that put me into my grandmother's home.

15 KC: What was your grandmother's name?

16 HK: My grandmother's name was Laura Robinson Cline.

1           KC: Okay. Describe growing up there for me, in North Carolina. You said you,  
2 of course, lived most of your childhood with your grandmother. What was life like  
3 growing up for you there in the 1930s and 1940s?

4           HK: It was just a typical childhood, and we had a typical growing up. I guess you  
5 would call it a medium sized town. From where we lived, I could walk to the downtown  
6 area, the shopping area at that time. I walked to school, which was about two and a half  
7 to three blocks from home until I got to junior high, and actually walked there sometimes,  
8 which was across town, and on into high school. I went to Lenoir-Rhyne College, also in  
9 Hickory, graduated with a degree in education, and we just did typical growing up,  
10 playmates, friendships, high school friendships, you know, the ordinary everyday things  
11 that we did, attending church, and so forth.

12          KC: Something that was certainly not ordinary, I guess its ordinary for your  
13 generation, and that is that the Second World War as a background. What do you  
14 remember about the Second World War?

15          HK: I vividly remember December the 7<sup>th</sup>. Our house had a dining room, which  
16 we also used because we kept the front part of it shut off to conserve heat. We had a  
17 dining room that was large enough that we had a big radio in the room, and we had a little  
18 sitting area there. My grandfather was still living at the time, and I can almost see them  
19 clustered around that radio when the news started coming over that morning. It was a big  
20 ole stand up radio, not the tiny radios, certainly not transistors like we have today.  
21 Everybody was in shock. Later on, my uncle, who had—he and his wife, my aunt was my  
22 mother's sister. They had an apartment in the house I lived in, and he eventually ended up  
23 in the Navy, and was gone for a period of time until after the war ended, so my aunt was  
24 there with her two children, and myself in the house, and my grandmother. Of course,  
25 then we had family members come and go. I remember very vividly the feelings that I  
26 had when—the date of Roosevelt's death, and I walked out, sat down on the curb, and  
27 just looked at the world, and my aunt was saying, "The war will never end, the war will  
28 never end," and as a child I didn't know what to expect.

29          KC: What sort of things do you remember about the home front during the war?  
30 I'm talking about things like rationing, and newspapers, and information like that.

1           HK: I can remember the rationing, and I also remember going with my  
2 grandmother, the ration books that we had, ya know, sugar rationing and so forth,  
3 gasoline rationing. Sometimes, I have an aunt that lived in Charlotte, and we would have  
4 to ride the bus to Charlotte, instead of going by car or somebody that we knew was going  
5 or something, we'd bum a ride down there. Going back and forth that way, or even, as I  
6 said, we walked to school more than those today. Of course, it's probably safer for us to  
7 walk to school than it is for children today. That's some of the things that I can  
8 remember, and of course, remembering when we began to win the war, and began to get  
9 onto our next part of our life.

10           KC: Do you remember any significant changes in the community there in North  
11 Carolina as a result of the war? I'm talking about men going off to war, or industry, or  
12 how the war effected the economy or anything in the region.

13           HK: I guess I was maybe a little sheltered in that area right around my  
14 neighborhood. My uncle was the only one that was gone. Several of the men that lived  
15 across the street from us was exempt. I don't remember why, either age, or some physical  
16 reason, or something. So, I guess I lived in a neighborhood, and I didn't pay a lot of  
17 attention. We listened to the radio. There was no TV at the time. I remember listening to  
18 the radio as I grew up. Our first TV was after I got married.

19           KC: Now, you say your uncle joined the Navy. Where did he serve, do you  
20 know?

21           HK: He was, most of the time after his basic training, he was on the west coast.  
22 He never had to go overseas. He was in California for the majority of his tour. Why? I  
23 don't know, but that just was where he was stationed during that period of time. Of  
24 course, then, they never got home, like they have now. When Carl was in, you've got  
25 some leave to come home and visit your family and go back to the war, but that never  
26 happened during World War II. I can remember how excited we all were when he got out  
27 and got to come home.

28           KC: What about the end of the war, do you remember what it was like when the  
29 war officially ended?

1           HK: Not a great deal. I read the papers, some of the celebrations, but I didn't go  
2 downtown. I'm not even sure that they had a big celebration in my hometown like they  
3 would in some towns. I don't remember much about that.

4           KC: When did you graduate high school?

5           HK: 1953.

6           KC: 1953. So, you graduate in 1953, of course, by that time the dominant global  
7 issue was the Cold War. What do you remember about the Cold War as you were  
8 growing up? Again, we are talking just a few years of the Cold War, but by 1953, of  
9 course, we have the issue with Berlin, we have the Korean War, what sort of things do  
10 you remember about those?

11          HK: I, of course, remember reading it, but I guess as a typical high school  
12 student, I was more involved with what was going on around me than what was going on  
13 with the nation. I became much more aware of things after that was—after I got in  
14 college. I do remember I was at a church camp in 1950 when the Korean War broke out,  
15 and we got all upset there trying to—"are we going to get back home" was our first  
16 thought, people there, and this type of thing, knowing that it was overseas, not here in  
17 North Carolina, but that still didn't make a difference. We were quite concerned about  
18 that. Then we came on back, and went on about our business, and went to college. We  
19 knew people were going to war, and when I was in high school, I dated a guy for a while  
20 that went off to the Air Force. Ya know, just different things, other than just knowing,  
21 "Well, so-and-so's gone in service," and that was about the extent of really my  
22 involvement of that.

23          KC: It makes sense that growing up in the environment which you did in those  
24 times, that's what—

25          HK: I wasn't close to military town anyway. I knew Ft. Bragg was down there,  
26 but I didn't know much about it at that time.

27          KC: When you graduated in 1953, what did you hope to do with your life? What  
28 were you going to do?

29          HK: I was going to be a schoolteacher. I graduated in May and started college in  
30 June of that year. Carl was already at Lenoir-Rhyne. We had met when I was fourteen at  
31 a church camp, so that was an interesting experience. I had met his parents, (they) were

1 my counselors at the camp I was talking about in 1950. He didn't come with them. He  
2 stayed with relatives, but he did come back up to the—this camp was at the college—to  
3 the camp the following year, and we sort of met each other again, and talked a while, and  
4 that was the end of that. We thought that would be the end of our relationship. When he  
5 came back to Lenoir-Rhyne as a freshman, I was a senior in high school, and I had taken  
6 my younger brother down to the, I call it the football practice field, where they flew  
7 model airplanes. My youngest brother is seventeen years younger than I am. So, I had  
8 him down there, and while he was watching them flying the airplanes and so forth, this  
9 car pulled up, and out of the car stepped this gentleman and his wife, and I recognized  
10 them, and the two sons got out, and one of them was Carl, and his younger brother. I  
11 walked over to them, and we started talking, and I asked him to go with me to the youth  
12 group that night at my church, because most of the college students, being Lutheran, we  
13 grew up, and the college is Lutheran, and we had a youth group called Luther League,  
14 and a lot of the college students would come to my church, which was not on the campus.  
15 He came up that night, and we started dating, and that was that. Our wedding anniversary  
16 is in two weeks. We will have been married fifty-five years.

17 KC: That's terrific.

18 HK: (Laughs) Of course, Carl and I dated all the way through college, and  
19 actually, we got married one week before he graduated, which was an interesting story.  
20 We took our exams early, and while the rest of the students had taken their exams, we  
21 had left on a very, very short honeymoon, came back for his graduation, and I continued  
22 my college classes that summer, so that I could graduate in about three years. In the fall  
23 of 1955, I went to Colombia, South Carolina with him when he went into the seminary, I  
24 worked in an office at the school as a secretary, administrative assistant, or whatever you  
25 want to call people, just doing everything the principle wanted you to do, for that year,  
26 and then went back to Lenoir-Rhyne the following summer to finish the credits to get my  
27 degree in the summer of 1956.

28 KC: Now, when you graduated, did you go on to teach anywhere?

29 HK: Yes, I went back to Colombia. Of course, he was still in school. I went back  
30 to Colombia, South Carolina, and taught school there for a year. I probably would've  
31 continued to teach but we had a little girl on the way. So, the last year we were at the

1 seminary, I stayed at home. She was born in November, and there were other students  
2 (that had children), so I kept the other little girl for one of the other students so that he  
3 could go to school, and his wife was teaching. We stayed there for that year until he  
4 graduated in the following May in 1958, I think it was. Then we went from there to his  
5 first parish in a little town outside of Albemarle, North Carolina, and went to Charlotte  
6 after that for two or three years where he organized, did all the field work, and organized  
7 a congregation there, and then in the summer of 1963 is when he entered the Army.  
8 While he was at basic class at Ft. Hamilton, New York, by that time I had two daughters,  
9 and had taken the two girls and went to stay with my grandmother again for two months.  
10 Our furniture had already been put in storage waiting to be shipped to Ft. Chaffee,  
11 Arkansas, which was his first military assignment after he finished his basic training at  
12 Ft. Hamilton. So, in August of that year we took the children, and his mother and daddy  
13 thought we weren't grown up people, thought we couldn't go to Arkansas without them  
14 tagging along. So, they made the trip just for the trip, and it was a big help going out  
15 there to have them with us, and when we first got there, and getting the furniture  
16 unpacked, and they were able to stay with the children while we did some errands that we  
17 had to do. One of those things I had to attend was a welcoming coffee, ya know, typical  
18 Army type of things. They always had to welcome people with coffee. Needless to say, I  
19 don't drink coffee, and I came home from that coffee, and the General's wife was there,  
20 and she was pouring coffee, and asked if I would have a cup of coffee. I was very naïve  
21 with the military at the time, and I said, "Yes." In order for me to even drink it, I've got  
22 to doctor it with everything I can put in it, milk, sugar, and all that kind of stuff. I walk  
23 back in the house after it was over with, and I said, "Well, I've tried to further your Army  
24 career. I drank coffee today," and of course he laughed at me. I quickly learned that I  
25 could ask for tea, or anything else, or just decline it. I didn't know then.

26 KC: Well, you know, that's an important part of the story, and I certainly want to  
27 get into that later. Before we get that far though, tell me what it was like to be the wife of  
28 a pastor, someone who is trying to put together a congregation, and the travel, and the  
29 lifestyle before Colonel King joins the Army.

30 HK: It was interesting. They always expect the wife to do everything. When we  
31 lived in Richfield, he had two country churches there, and we used to tell our friends,

1 interesting enough, that if you go through—because we lived on the main highway  
2 through Richfield, if you came to that area and you saw the only house that had lights on  
3 after nine o'clock would be ours. Everybody went to bed early in that area. We used to at  
4 that parish have people come, want to come spend the day with us, and they'd come  
5 early. We had to try to convince people that we were not quite ready for that. We didn't  
6 know what to do as far as having people come and join us to spend the day with us. They  
7 expected a good deal of you. Being young people out of the seminary, I had to learn how  
8 to handle myself, I guess you would say, how to behave as a minister's wife.

9 KC: Tell me about that. What sort of things would a minister's wife have to do?  
10 How would you have to behave?

11 HK: I'll have to tell you this joke. This joke, it happened as he was being  
12 interviewed for the job, they were talking about him coming and so forth and what he had  
13 to do, and as he got through, he said that he noticed that they still had something to say.  
14 He talked about me coming, and our little girl coming. At the time we just had the one  
15 child, and he knew they wanted to say something else. Finally, he asked them, he said,  
16 "Is there anything else you want to say?" The house that we lived in was sitting there out  
17 in the midst of the huge field area, so you could see the backyard from the highway, you  
18 could see it from the school buildings down below us, and from the church, and  
19 everything else. One of the men finally said to my husband, "Well, if your wife must  
20 hang her unmentionables on the clothesline, please have her put them inside a  
21 pillowcase." (Laughing) Well, I wasn't going to do that. I was rather brazen, so of course,  
22 I hung mine out on the clothesline with the diapers and everything else. We stayed there a  
23 year, but that really wasn't the reason for that. He was called to organize this church in  
24 Charlotte. Of course, when we got to Charlotte that was a much more dynamic place,  
25 because we actually did not have a church, we met in the school building. Off and on  
26 when we first got there, we didn't have a pianist, we didn't have an organ. I ended up  
27 having to play for the services, which was not my greatest joy, but I could do it. I  
28 remember as he visited different homes—one time he visited this home, and the next  
29 thing we knew, this boy, we had a fire bug in the neighborhood, and he had visited that  
30 home, and the fire bug was after several of the families and also my husband. I don't  
31 know why, he just thought it was off I think, but anyway we ended up one night having

1 the police patrol our house every so often because this was threatening, and finally I took  
2 my daughter, and my grandmother was visiting, we took them and moved them over to  
3 my aunts, so that if something happened, we quickly could get out of the house. That all  
4 got resolved by the next day when they arrested the guy and found out that it was really a  
5 family dispute, but because he had been involved with the family, so this guy was  
6 threatening us too. There were interesting things like that that happened. Later on, we got  
7 some organist. One day we had the nursery, which was interesting in the hallway of the  
8 church, and different people would keep the nursery, and one of those Sundays I was  
9 playing, and we heard footsteps come “tippy tippy tip” down the hallway. At that time  
10 there was supposed to be a man and a wife in the nursery, and his wife couldn’t come, so  
11 the gentleman that was keeping it said, oh, he could take care. There wasn’t but four or  
12 five in there. All of a sudden, my daughter had gotten out and she was going to see her  
13 daddy. This is our oldest daughter, and she came right down the middle of the room we  
14 were in. It was the library, and they had made it look like a church right down the middle  
15 isle. She was coming and I was at the piano. It was up during the prayer was coming to  
16 her daddy, well she got to me, one of the ushers was standing there, and he was a friend  
17 of the family too. He just reached down, picked her up, and held her in his arms till we  
18 could get through with the service. Then he stepped back and just sat down right behind  
19 me. So, needless to say, the children, preachers’ children, always get involved in doing  
20 something. When I got—then before our second daughter was born, I was having to be  
21 the organist again, or the pianist because they didn’t have one. He finally got up in the  
22 service and says, “Look, you got to do something. This baby might come this week and  
23 we won’t have anybody to play next Sunday.” So, they finally got around to getting  
24 somebody to play. That was some of our experiences. We had many meetings at our  
25 house because there was no place else to have meetings, other than on the Sunday, so  
26 anytime you had church meetings of any kind, we either had them at our house, or they  
27 had to rotate in being some of the future parishioners’ houses in order to get this  
28 congregation started. Then, in 1963 he went on active duty. We went to Ft. Chaffee,  
29 Arkansas after he got out of basic.

30 KC: Let me ask you Mrs. King—during this time when you are a wife of a  
31 pastor, did you find this to be a particularly fulfilling or positive time in your life?

1           HK: I think so. There were times when I felt like that, I was being expected too  
2 much of, but that was not often. I didn't feel as much like it in Charlotte as I did in  
3 Richfield. Mainly because the people that were coming into the congregation in Charlotte  
4 were younger people, and I had more of a relationship with them, even outside the  
5 church. They were—we had established some friendships, but that's another thing that  
6 we tried to be careful about who you got to know real well, because you didn't want to  
7 show partiality. We were very particular. I was fortunate enough to have my aunt and  
8 uncle living in Charlotte. So, I had a babysitter at night sometimes from my aunt, and I  
9 had a little family support there. My grandmother spent a good bit of time with us there.  
10 We did do some, even in the congregation, some babysitting for helping each other out,  
11 because we were all young and had young children.

12           KC: Now, I should make mention here that you are the wife of Col. Carl King,  
13 who I interviewed for a while earlier this year, which is how you and I came into contact  
14 with each other. I know that the Colonel had found some difficulties in the religious  
15 community in terms of the way things were done, and that he sought the Army, as a way  
16 to, not necessarily escape those things, but to try to approach his faith and his role in  
17 promoting faith in a different way. That was a very, very big jump for him. What was  
18 your opinion of this move from civilian life to the military life?

19           HK: I thought about that the other day, and I got to thinking that I really looked  
20 at it as an adventure, that this was something else we could do. I, of course, had never  
21 been separated from him for any length of time, but then again, I remembered back when  
22 the first year we were married, that summer when I finished summer school, he had taken  
23 a supply pastors job at Greensboro, out of Greensboro, and I was at Hickory finishing, so  
24 there again, we had been some separated back and forth. So, for the two months he was  
25 at, or two and a half months he was at Chaplain school, like I said, I lived with family,  
26 and got reacquainted with my—ya know, we had been gone for a couple of years in  
27 seminary, and the churches that we had served, so I had some time with the family again,  
28 and I guess I'm gullible. I like to travel, and we looked forward to going where we were  
29 going. When we got to Arkansas it was an adventure for us, and I thoroughly enjoyed the  
30 life that we had, even with some of the hardships that we had, it was something that was  
31 an adventure for us.

1           KC: Was there anything in particular that you feared would be challenging or that  
2 would be difficult? I'm talking about the moves and all these kinds of things that go  
3 along with military service.

4           HK: That did not put a fear in. I knew that as we went into the military service,  
5 there was going to be separations because I knew that we would have—of course, we  
6 weren't into Vietnam then like we got into it later, but I guess I just looked to see what  
7 the next day was going to bring, and I figured I would tackle anything that came up.  
8 That's sort of the way I went through the, as you say, my military career with my  
9 husband.

10          KC: Okay, tell me about your time at Ft. Chaffee. What was it like there? What  
11 was your role in supporting your husband? What was your role as the wife of a U.S.  
12 Army officer?

13          HK: Well, there we only had one vehicle, one car, so there were days that I did  
14 not have a car with me, or for me. Ft. Chaffee only had one house, home, whatever,  
15 quarters, for the Commander of the post, the General of the post. Everybody else lived in  
16 the town of Ft. Smith, and it just so happened that right around me, I had many other  
17 Army families living within walking distance of where we are. My daughter was in  
18 Kindergarten, my oldest daughter was in Kindergarten there in downtown Ft. Smith with  
19 another little boy up the street. We shared, his mother and I shared duties of getting them  
20 back and forth to kindergarten. My next-door neighbor was one of the physicians,  
21 surgeons down at the post, and he and his family, and my children—my children played  
22 with his, and our families visited, enjoyed each other's company, and so forth. We had  
23 other military people living all around us. One of the interesting things, as I said, I was  
24 new to the military. I had my grandmother's sister who lived in Texas at the time with her  
25 daughter and son-in-law who went to the Air Force Base. She'd come to visit me, and my  
26 youngest daughter decided she wanted something on the top of her dresser, pulled out the  
27 bottom drawer of her dresser. Proceeded to climb to try to get to the top, and the dresser  
28 fell over on her, and cut her head. I picked up the phone and called the hospital in Ft.  
29 Chaffee, and said, "My daughter has cut her head open, and I'm on my way out there." When  
30 I got there, they had this surgeon standing by waiting to something to her, and all they  
31 had to do was stitch her cut over the eye up, and I had gotten out there, somehow, we got

1 in a mix up. I didn't have my ID card with me. They were trying to identify me as to  
2 being a legitimate dependent with a dependent child. I learned right quick to be sure that I  
3 had everything I needed when I went into the base, and to not over emphasize the injuries  
4 to my children as they grew up, but it was interesting.

5 KC: That brings up a pretty good point.

6 HK: We were living there of course during the—when John Kennedy died.

7 KC: Okay, tell me about that. What do you remember about the Kennedy  
8 assassination?

9 HK: I was glued to the TV for days. I was, as typical of all women at that time,  
10 we'd happen to be watching the soap opera when it was interrupted, and I went to the  
11 phone immediately to try to call my husband, and of course the lines had been pulled at  
12 Ft. Chaffee right away. He and the other chaplains out there were playing basketball. It  
13 was their meeting day, and then they had some recreation with it, so they were playing a  
14 game of basketball. I remember him telling me later, he says when the message came  
15 through, or when the information came through, somebody had thrown the ball, and it  
16 just bounced down the way, and everybody stopped, did what they did, and went back to  
17 their units right away, and started making any kind of preparations. At that time, they  
18 didn't know what they might be called upon to do. For two or three days, we went  
19 through the process of watching it on TV, and he being at the post most of the time, then  
20 at the appropriate time we attended the service that they did at Ft. Chaffee. The typical  
21 memorial services they do on each of the posts and so forth. It was a heartbreaking thing,  
22 and also an idea of what is going to happen to us next, because Kennedy had gone  
23 through Arkansas, and he said, "If you vote for me, I will see that Ft. Chaffee is opened,"  
24 and Arkansas went democratic that year. They reopened— Ft. Chaffee had been closed,  
25 they reopened Ft. Chaffee, and the unit he was with, and other units had been brought in  
26 there, and we all began to realize that with his death, they were going to close it back  
27 down, and use it only for training purposes for the reserves and so forth. Our next thought  
28 was, "Okay, where are we going to go from here? What next assignment are we going to  
29 have?" Of course, after that got over with the family—Carl had to go to Dallas for a  
30 Chaplains meeting of his denomination, and the children and I went with him, and we  
31 had the opportunity to go through Dealey Plaza, and ride through that area while we were

1 over there. This was before much of the—this was in January after the assassination in  
2 November, so it was quite fresh on everybody’s mind. After that time, we, in April, they  
3 had what they called desert strike at that time, they played war out in the Arizona desert.  
4 His unit went out there, and the wives were left behind, of course. Several instances that I  
5 thought we kind of interesting, one of them, I was there, and the phone rang, and I went  
6 to the telephone and answered the phone. she said, “I need to speak to Chaplain King,”  
7 and I said, “Well I’m sorry, he’s not here right now. Can I make a call and have someone  
8 call you?” “No,” and she says, “Maybe you can help me.” I thought, “Oh dear, now  
9 what?” She says, “My husband is not here right now. He’s gone with his other people,”  
10 and she began to tell me where he’d gone. He was gone on this desert strike situation,  
11 “and I’m here by myself and my family lives on the East Coast, and my children are  
12 driving me crazy, and I’m just wondering if it would be alright if I could go to work and  
13 find somebody to keep these children. I just can’t stand it any longer.” At that point I said  
14 to her, I said, “My husband happens to be with yours.” I said, “My family also lives on  
15 the East Coast. I’m here by myself. I have a sick child who cannot be left. My neighbors  
16 are getting my groceries and taking my other child to school. I can’t leave the house.”  
17 She says, “I guess I don’t have it so bad after all, goodbye.”

18 KC: Simple as that.

19 HK: One of the other situations there prior to that, I have thought about, was that  
20 my husband’s parents had come to visit, and this was before Desert Strike. We had a very  
21 small house we were living in, so we had given up our bedroom for them, and we had  
22 gone to the couch. Of course, he was with the Red Cat One unit, which meant they were  
23 on alert all the time. He kept his bags packed, and one morning—there again, we only  
24 had one phone in the house at the time, and the phone rang about 3:30 AM that morning,  
25 and I got up and answered the phone, and it was this group calling him. They’d called  
26 him in. Well, of course, we didn’t think about something like that happening, so I had to  
27 get up, and go into the bedroom, wake my in-laws up to get his packed bag while he was  
28 getting ready to go. Well, they got all excited. “Where’s he going?” I said, “I don’t  
29 know.” “What’s he going to do?” I said, “I don’t know.” “When’s he going to be back?” I  
30 said, “I don’t know. He was called. He has to go.” So, he left. His chaplain’s assistant  
31 came by to pick him up, and they went on in, and they started asking me all these other

1 questions. I said, “Look, I don’t know anything. I won’t know anything. It’s just the way  
2 you live in the Army. I’m going back to bed. You can stay up all night if you want to.” I  
3 turned and went on back to bed, and they got up again later on, and got real excited. I  
4 thought, “Well, they just got to stay in the dark because I didn’t really know what was  
5 going on either.” About that time, about 9:30 AM, ten o’clock, he calls me, and they had  
6 stood them down, they didn’t take them out that morning, and he was coming home late  
7 that night. They got so excited and so upset because—and I just told them, “Well, he’s  
8 been called. He’s got to go, and I don’t know what’s going on.” While they were on  
9 Desert Strike, the Deputy Commander of his unit’s wife, I guess you’d say, the  
10 Commander’s wife just was not real active with the women in the organization, so the  
11 deputy’s wife took it upon herself, and she called me up, and she says, “You know, some  
12 of these wives are getting kind of upset, and they’re getting lonely. Let’s see what we can  
13 do about helping them out here at home,” and I said, “Okay, what can we do?” We  
14 decided that we could set up what we called a round robin calling system, because the  
15 wives were all right in the daytime, they had the children, they were involved with their  
16 children, getting them back and forth to school, daycare, or just typical childcare, but the  
17 nights got awfully lonely for these women. So, we set up a round robin type calling, just  
18 to say, “Hello,” and “How are you,” and, “If there is anything we can do, just let us  
19 know.” That went on for the whole period of time that they were out in Arizona. I  
20 personally think it did them some good, because it made them think that there were other  
21 people going through the same thing, having the same problems, and if they did  
22 something, they’d come up and we could at least discuss it, and find out how it could be  
23 resolved. It was one of the things that we had going for us anyway.

24 KC: That’s interesting that this was kind of an impromptu kind of support service  
25 that you were all creating there.

26 HK: Well, it tried to be, and you have to do that. There are many times, I don’t  
27 think any of us would’ve survived without support from the other families, wives,  
28 husbands, or whatever.

29 KC: What sort of things would come up, would be issues for the wives of men  
30 who deployed?

1           HK: Sometimes it would just be childcare. Sometimes you need to go for an  
2 appointment, and you didn't need to take your children with you. Sometimes it would be,  
3 like I was, in the situation where my child was sick, and still had another child trying to  
4 get to and from school, and get groceries, and get medicine, and so forth. It really, you  
5 needed all that support from other—and you really got it from military families. I've  
6 never had the support in civilian life that we had when we were on active duty. Where  
7 people would just come. You knew you could call on somebody if you needed  
8 something.

9           KC: What sort of things bothered you the most when your husband was away for  
10 something like this?

11           HK: I think that it—as I said it was the night times. The times after you get  
12 everybody to bed, and you realize how lonely it can be, and if you don't keep yourself  
13 involved in something, or being active somewhere, as far as—I read a lot, I watched a lot  
14 of TV, but it's the nights that make it lonely, and of course once they are overseas, that's  
15 another story altogether because you've got total responsibility, not only for your  
16 children and yourself, but for your whole maintenance of your household, you're paying  
17 the bills, and literally running everything. Once I took that over, he never got it back. To  
18 this day I pay all the bills. Well, it was, his allotment was coming in. I had to keep up  
19 with everything that had to be paid, whether it was rent there, or other things, car  
20 payments, or whatever. I learned right quick because I had never done that until he went  
21 on active duty.

22           KC: What I'm hearing you saying is that you are becoming much more  
23 independent, much more confident in your abilities, and being able to take charge and  
24 handle these things. Did you feel that you were becoming so? Did you feel better about  
25 the work, or feel good about the work that you were doing at this stage, holding the  
26 family together on your own?

27           HK: I did. I felt like, I was positive. Okay, we are in this situation, and we deal  
28 with it. It's just like, in a sense, when he went, not active duty, but when he would go  
29 overseas. One of the things that we were very particular about was that when he would  
30 leave to go overseas, he went off, and I'll just use the illustration. The first time we came  
31 back to North Carolina when he got orders to Korea from—he was over at Ft. Chaffee.

1 His unit went on. We couldn't even remember where, but they went west somewhere.  
2 Probably to Ft. Huachuca because he was with the 53<sup>rd</sup> Signal Brigade. He got—he knew  
3 when he wasn't assigned to go with them that he was going to get an overseas order. So,  
4 his orders came in for Korea. Well, he brought the children and I back to North Carolina,  
5 and we came back to live in Salisbury where his mother and daddy were living at the  
6 time. I had an apartment there. I felt like I needed some support, and we went there for  
7 the first overseas assignment, and later assignments I went to Hickory. When it came  
8 time for him to leave to go to Korea, he drove to Charlotte, which was the nearest airport  
9 to catch his flight, and my aunt and uncle, who I mentioned before had lived in Charlotte,  
10 brought my car back to me that afternoon. He got up. He got dressed. He told the children  
11 goodbye. He told me goodbye as if he was going off for a day's work. Of course, that day  
12 lasted a year, but that's the way we handled it. The children knew he was going, but it  
13 was not going to the airport and the tearful goodbyes and this type of thing. I got the  
14 children up that morning and we went on to church with the family, and as I said in the  
15 afternoon, my aunt and uncle brought my car back to me. Each time as he would leave to  
16 go on a duty assignment like that, an overseas duty, we handled that situation that way, as  
17 if, "Okay, Daddy's got to go away for a while, and he's going off to work again." I got up  
18 the next day. The children went to school, or my oldest daughter went to school. My  
19 younger daughter was still not school age yet, and we went about doing what we had to  
20 do. It was just—every time we would make a new duty assignment, it was, "Okay, we're  
21 going to the next duty station," or "We're going to this." We were not going to go  
22 through this, "Oh, I don't want to go," or "Why do we have to go," and this and that.  
23 They quickly learned that if you're positive about where you're going, and looking  
24 forward to the new assignment, that they could be positive too, even though they may be  
25 leaving some friends behind.

26 KC: Tell me about that. This is the first time you have been separated for this  
27 long. He goes to Korea. Tell me about that first year. You are back in North Carolina, but  
28 it's not just a matter of training where he is going to be gone for a couple of weeks. He is  
29 going to be gone for an entire year. Granted, you've already got some experience with  
30 handling more and more of the duties, and handling with the children, and dealing with  
31 the bills, and this support group that you kind of had there in Ft. Chaffee. Now, you are in

1 North Carolina, and it's not two or three weeks in training. It's a full year away from  
2 your husband, away from the Colonel. Tell me what takes place in that year.

3 HK: Well, you do the normal things. You get up. You move your family. You get  
4 your family—your children off to school. You deal with another situation there where my  
5 daughter got sick during the time. My younger daughter, once again, and I had neighbors  
6 and my in-laws getting my older daughter back and forth to school. Then my younger  
7 daughter got better. My across the hall neighbor who was an older woman would come  
8 and sit with my daughter so that I could take my older daughter to school till the younger  
9 one got better. I lived in, as I said, an apartment there. It was very interesting that it  
10 happened in one of the downstairs apartments was two, actually those two had gone to  
11 high school with my husband when he was in high school in China Grove, North  
12 Carolina, and all four of us had gone to college together. So, my daughters were  
13 extremely happy to have Uncle Willie and Aunt Emily living on the lower level there.  
14 They didn't have any children. They spoiled my children rotten and took care of them. A  
15 couple of things I got involved with, one of them was that there were a group of other  
16 wives in that area, not all Army wives, they were just military wives. We would get  
17 together and have a little group coffee, and so forth. During that time the newspaper in  
18 Raleigh—in Salisbury printed an article. I don't know if you are aware, of southern  
19 railroad, I guess, in Spencer, North Carolina, which is right out of Salisbury. There is a  
20 big railroad shop, and they closed down those shops. All the men that lived in those shops  
21 went to, had to go over to Tennessee to work because—in order to keep their jobs so they  
22 could retire. There was this big article in the newspaper about these guys going off to the  
23 shops over there on Mondays, and coming back on Friday, and they talked about the  
24 widows and how the wives were having such a difficult time getting along without their  
25 husbands for four or five days a week, and then the husbands would be home for the  
26 weekend, and they'd go again. So, I talked to some of these other wives, the military  
27 wives, and said, "I'm going to call the newspaper and talk to the lady down there and see  
28 if she would be interested in doing an article about us living here for six months to a year  
29 at a time, and our husbands are overseas, and we can't even get in touch with them by  
30 telephone. We have to do it by either tapes that we sent, or written letters, and so forth. I  
31 called the newspaper to talk to the lady who had written the article, and her response was,

1 “I don’t think that would make a very interesting article.” I said, “Maybe I don’t need to  
2 read your paper, too.” (Both laughing) Our oldest daughter had so many emotional  
3 problems. I was—physical problems. I was having to get her back and forth, trying to get  
4 her straightened out with the doctors, and two interesting things was I had this phone call  
5 one day. This was, let’s see, Carl left in September. This was the following summer, and  
6 I had taken the children to bible school at his dad’s church. His dad was the local minister  
7 there. They were at bible school, and I had come back home to do something before I had  
8 to pick them up, and my phone rang. I thought maybe it was him calling for something,  
9 my father-in-law, or my mother-in-law calling to check on me for something. I answered  
10 the phone and this gentleman, this guy said, “I want to speak to Beth.” That’s my  
11 daughter’s name, and I said, “What do you need to speak to her for?” I said, “She’s not  
12 here.” I could tell it was a person that was maybe late teens, early twenties or something,  
13 and he said, “Well, I want to ask her out on a date.” Now, this child was between the first  
14 and second grade.

15 KC: Holy Smokes!

16 HK: I said, “I think you have the wrong number.” “No,” and he went on to tell me  
17 that he knew of my husband, and husband’s family, and he wanted to date my daughter. I  
18 said, “I don’t think so.” I said, “I don’t think you need to be concerned about that  
19 whatsoever,” and I hung up, and I picked up the phone as soon as I got a dial tone. I  
20 called the church, and I got my father-in-law, I said, “You get both of those girls, get  
21 them in your office, you keep them, and I’m on the way over there.” I said, “This guy  
22 says he knows where they are.” I said, “Don’t you let them out of your sight till I get  
23 them.” I got over there, and he turned around and called the Sheriff’s department. We  
24 never could find him, but from that time on until I moved out of Salisbury, those children  
25 were never outside the house that there wasn’t one of us with them at all times, and we  
26 don’t know what prompted that phone call, but it did scare the you-know-what out of all  
27 of us because I had a seven year old and a three year old, so it was very, very upsetting.

28 KC: I can imagine so. Now, how do you—you’ve got to deal with this one was or  
29 another. Like you said, you did the very, common, sensible thing, keeping close wraps, or  
30 a close eye on them, keeping them under wraps, if you will. How do you relay this, or do  
31 you relay this to your husband who’s in Korea?

1 HK: No.

2 KC: Did you find that this was—that there were things that you just simply  
3 wouldn't tell him in letters?

4 HK: That's absolutely true. What could he do about it overseas?

5 KC: And of course, if you told him, he would just worry about it of course.

6 HK: Absolutely, and this happened even when they were sick, is that you don't—  
7 I did it one time, and I found out that was not the thing to do. I told him about, as I said  
8 the younger one was running a high fever, and of course at the time the tapes got to him,  
9 she was well, practically. So, you don't tell him about that until it's over with. With our  
10 older daughter's emotional problems and her physical problems, he left when she was in  
11 the first grade, I still didn't even talk about that to amount to anything. Another  
12 interesting thing, when I've mentioned that, was being in the first grade, her teacher was  
13 one of the most unique teachers I ever had to teach a child. She, of course, knew that my  
14 husband, because when we registered for school, we talked to her that he was going  
15 overseas, and that Beth wouldn't have her father around like other kids in her class would  
16 have that year. She talked to the class about it. When he got ready to leave, she took the  
17 map—now, these were first graders, but she took the map, showed the first graders how  
18 he was going to fly over to Korea, where he was going to fly, and what countries he was  
19 going to be in, and that Beth would be without her father for that year. That teacher then  
20 in turn, made out two report cards, every time there was a report card to come out. I got  
21 the official report card to sign and return. Another one was given to her, she brought it  
22 home, we mailed it to her daddy to show her daddy what kind of grades she was making,  
23 he signed it and sent it back for the next reporting season. She went through that extra  
24 trouble to do things like that. Our daughter was also a very good student, was reading at a  
25 much higher level at that time in first grade, to where she got to be a discipline problem  
26 because she'd get up and get in trouble. The teacher went and got some third grade  
27 reading material, brought it back, put it on a special shelf. We talked about what she  
28 could do, and this is what she decided to do, called Beth over, and said "Beth, here is  
29 some reading material. When you finish your work, you go get something over there, and  
30 sit down and read it." That was the end of the problem, because she could then go and  
31 find something to keep her entertained while the rest of the class was being entertained.

1           KC: While all this is going on, do you get the sense that your husband is pleased  
2 with the way things are going back home, that he doesn't have to worry about what is  
3 taking place because you are taking care of it and that he trusts your judgment? Do you  
4 feel that bond and understanding taking place?

5           HK: I guess I could. He doesn't seem to be particularly—I guess he worried  
6 about us. At that time, we really did not have any verbal communication, other than  
7 through the tape recordings, like we had on later assignments when he could use the  
8 telephone or the amateur radio, and just straight-out phone calls, you didn't call long  
9 distance like that. It was entirely too expensive. I guess he felt like that we were in a  
10 situation where we were pretty well taken care of here. He didn't indicate, and we really  
11 never talked about it very much.

12           KC: When the Colonel comes back, when Carl comes back to the U.S., comes  
13 back to you and the family after that one-year tour in Korea, what was it like to have him  
14 back in your family life? Obviously, you're glad to see each other, and it's a wonderful  
15 thing to be reunited with the family and all of that—

16           HK: Yeah, but you've been used to making your decisions all by yourself.  
17 (Laughing)

18           KC: That is my next question. How do you deal with this? All of a sudden, he is  
19 back, and you've been doing this for a year.

20           HK: Well, let's back up just one minute because I'm going to tell you about it.  
21 When he got his orders to come home, and we knew what flight he was coming in, it  
22 happened to be on a Saturday night. His father was having some kind of church service  
23 so, he couldn't go to Charlotte to meet the plane with us, but his mother and I and the  
24 children went to Charlotte to the airport. As we were waiting for the plane to come in, the  
25 nervous nilly that I was, I was getting very anxious, so I had turned to her and I said,  
26 "I've got to step in the restroom. Please take care of Patty, here, hold her hand until I get  
27 back out," and all of a sudden I heard the scream in the hall, "Get that child, get that  
28 child!" She was running down the hall. Now, this was a three-year-old child saying,  
29 "That's my daddy's plane, that's my daddy's plane!" Somebody grabbed her and held  
30 her till my mother-in-law got her hand, but she was going to meet that plane (laughing).

31           KC: She just knew that was the one, huh?

1           HK: And it was. It was his plane coming in. “That’s my daddy’s plane,” but yes,  
2 I guess you do have to go through some experience of, “Okay, now we can rely on each  
3 other a little bit, and it’s not all one sided,” but we made it. A couple weeks later we  
4 made plans to go to—he was on leave for a couple of weeks, but in that time, we made  
5 plans to go on his next assignment to Ft. Eustis, Virginia, to go up to get on the housing  
6 list so we wouldn’t have to wait to see what the situation would be as far as housing was  
7 up there. I had asked my mother-in-law, she had told me before they came in, “Now,  
8 when he gets ready to go up there, the children can stay with me.” Of course, when the  
9 time came, it was not convenient for her to keep them, so I pulled my daughter out of  
10 school, and we went up there, because we just had to go find, to see if there were  
11 quarters, or if we were going to have to find a place to live up there. We got on the  
12 housing list, and came back, and about two weeks later furniture was moved, and we  
13 moved to Virginia to Ft. Eustis, and got set-up up there. That’s the next duty assignment,  
14 and we told Salisbury goodbye.

15           KC: Let me ask you this question again, here. When your husband came home,  
16 again, you had been making these decisions, you’d been taking care of things on your  
17 own, and you mentioned that you had to find some sort of middle ground, it’s not just me  
18 anymore, and you had to come to some sort of conclusion how you are going to approach  
19 it. What things did you find the most difficult about making that adjustment of his being  
20 there again?

21           HK: I hadn’t thought about that. It just sort of fell into place, and I really didn’t  
22 find much difficulty in doing it, and I really didn’t think about it. We just sort of went on  
23 and did our thing. We put the family together, and it stayed okay.

24           KC: Would it be safe to say that you both had your own spheres of family life,  
25 and you’re responsible for this, and he’s responsible for that?

26           HK: I think so. He did his thing, and I—he’s a cook, and he came right back in to  
27 helping in the kitchen as far as cooking is concerned. He never did dishes, or laundry, or  
28 anything like that, but he always was a good cook. My children would tell me, “I sure am  
29 glad daddy is back. We now have good mashed potatoes,” said, “Mother never could  
30 mash potatoes.” My brother informed me when I was living in Hickory that I didn’t know  
31 how to make biscuits either. We just sort of had our different things that we had been

1 doing before, and we just sort of fell back in that groove. I continued to pay the bills. He  
2 did other things. I mean, I didn't have to drive all the time. He was back, and he could do  
3 some of the driving, and that type of thing. It made a big difference.

4 KC: Alright, now tell me about your time there at Ft. Eustis. I know that this was,  
5 after talking to your husband for all those hours, that Ft. Eustis was a pretty important  
6 time, it seems like, in his career, and in your lives together. Tell me about your time there  
7 at Ft. Eustis.

8 HK: Well, it was an interesting assignment. It was one of our better assignments.  
9 He used to tell people that, "If they told me, I could go back to Ft. Eustis, I'd have my  
10 bags packed and gone in an hour." That's not quite true, but we all liked it. We liked the  
11 fact that we were close to Williamsburg. We got to enjoy the surroundings of that type of  
12 entertainment, I guess you would call it because we thoroughly enjoyed participating in a  
13 lot of the activities up there. At that time the soldiers at Ft. Eustis were given yearly  
14 passes, just like the residents. It wasn't as large an area as it is now. We could go and  
15 come with our passes to get in and out of the buildings like we wanted to. So, we may  
16 only take one day and go up there. We got the children enrolled in school, or actually  
17 Beth. Patty was not going to school yet, and I sort of settled down at the beginning. He  
18 had different assignments. He was of course assigned at the post chapel, and then the  
19 longer we stayed he went over to the transportation, to the transportation OCS (Officer  
20 Candidate School). I got, with him, very involved in going the OSC candidate's wives'  
21 group. We had to give, I guess the, you'd say they had to be instructed in how to operate  
22 as officers in the military, so we had different types of social functions that we had to  
23 attend with them.

24 KC: Tell me about that a little bit. From what I understand there was clearly a  
25 social structure among the wives. What about the social structure that you experienced  
26 and the role of the wives, and what they were supposed to do, and how you dealt with all  
27 of that.

28 HK: Of course, it was not only that, but I had the social structure of having to go  
29 to all the officers' wives club meetings, regular monthly meetings, going to the post  
30 chapel for the protestant chapel wives club, and sometimes I got bored. I'd rather not  
31 have gone, but yes, you do things for your husband's career many times. The thing that—

1 we had these big social functions for the candidates and their wives, and I remember  
2 some of the things, the candidates would come, not only to social functions, which we  
3 would have the dining-ins showing them, and the dining-outs showing them out to  
4 perform at those. The guys could only see their wives, of course, for just a short time on  
5 Sundays. Even though they were in the area, they were confined to the barracks the rest  
6 of the time. So, these guys would all come to the chapel that was designated at the  
7 transportation chapel, where my husband was, of course, serving. The wives and the men  
8 and the soldiers would get together, and as I said, from the looks of what took place  
9 during those services, I don't think they heard most of the sermon. They were too cuddly  
10 in the pews, but it was the only time. When they'd go out, and of course they marched  
11 them there in formation, so they only had that time they were there, and they'd get  
12 outside the chapel and have this little cuddle section for a few minutes, and all of a  
13 sudden then the sergeants would get them back in formation, and make them go back to  
14 the barracks, and there they'd go. One of the other interesting things that we had go on  
15 there, was that there was a lady who lived across the street from us that killed herself. She  
16 had gone in, fixed a nice supper for the family. Gone upstairs, and while the family was  
17 eating supper, had gone into one of the bathrooms and shot herself. Come to find out that  
18 she happened to be a recovering alcoholic, and her husband, both of them, and he was not  
19 as faithful to his recovery as she was, and she finally said she couldn't take it anymore,  
20 and left four children. I think the thing there, for me, more than anything else, of course  
21 was the loss of life for her, and the sadness over the fact that she couldn't find help, and  
22 that was the only way she could take care of it was to just end her life, but the other factor  
23 that I dealt with in the neighborhood, was the other women in the neighborhood, because  
24 this family had just moved in there at the beginning. This happened early October. They  
25 had just moved in in early September, and the rest of the wives in the neighborhood felt  
26 like they had not shown her enough welcoming and support as she came to live in the  
27 neighborhood. After talking to Carl, and everything else, I would go back to these wives  
28 and say, "I think we gave her the support that we did, and I don't think anything was  
29 going to talk her out of doing that," but that was an experience that I don't think I'll ever  
30 forget. It was just one of those things, and he talked about different times when other  
31 tragedies would happen on post, and even though you're not totally involved, you are

1 involved because you have to be some type of support for him. Somebody's got to listen  
2 to the chaplain and can learn to keep their mouth shut. You cannot repeat what you've  
3 heard. You can't discuss it. Many times, with some of the things that you hear with  
4 anybody else, you've got be his sounding board, and he's got to be able to know that it's  
5 not going to go any further than that. I ran into this situation one time when one of the  
6 other chaplain's wives came in and said, "Did you know so-and-so was going to Korea?"  
7 or Vietnam, one or the other, and I said, "Really?" I really knew, but those are just things  
8 you don't talk about in public because it's supposed to be, I guess in a sense, private  
9 information, if it's not even classified. I said, "You really shouldn't be talking about  
10 something like that out where other people can hear you." I don't know whether she  
11 appreciated it or not, but anyway, I told her I thought she should not talk about things like  
12 that outside. I was always willing to listen, but if he told me things that I knew was not  
13 supposed to be discussed, I never did. I might know a lot of things that maybe I shouldn't  
14 have known, but they never went beyond the doors of my house.

15 KC: That is certainly a very, very important role for him, of course. What about,  
16 do you believe that as the wife of the chaplain on post, do you believe that other wives  
17 looked at you differently, or that they expected a different sort of function out of you? Do  
18 you think they treated you differently in either positively or negatively or whatever  
19 because you are the wife of the chaplain?

20 HK: Sometimes, not often, but sometimes. It depends on, I guess, where you are,  
21 or what environment you are in. Yes, the expected me, most definitely they expected me  
22 to go to the protestant chapel wives club, protestant women of the chapel. I got rather  
23 upset with that one because when I got there, it ended up, the majority of the people—I  
24 used to call it the protestant officers wives club, officers' women of the chapel. It seemed  
25 like there we just so many officers' wives trying to run that, and that organization should  
26 be across the boards, regardless the rank of the individual. One of the ways I got out of  
27 doing things like that, was after our younger daughter went to kindergarten, I was offered  
28 the job of their permanent substitute teacher. So, I went to work many days as the  
29 substitute teacher for the post-kindergarten. For a year I did that, and the following year I  
30 became a regular teacher in the kindergarten when the, one of the kindergarten teachers  
31 had to retire because of health. For the last two years of our time at Ft. Eustis, I had an

1 excuse for not having to attend all these social functions, except at night when it was  
2 things that we had to attend for his—as a couple we had to attend them, but I got out of  
3 some of these wives’ meetings that I had to attend because some of it was kind of bitchy.

4 KC: Explain what you mean by that.

5 HK: Well, they would talk about other people, and complain about other people.  
6 I just didn’t like to hear it.

7 KC: Right. Okay, okay.

8 HK: An interesting thing when I was teaching, the first time I went in as a  
9 substitute teacher, Carl called our younger daughter in and he sat down with her and said,  
10 “Now, your mother is going to be there tomorrow, and she is going to be the substitute  
11 teacher there.” He says, “You are going to have to respect your mother, and not be  
12 jumping up and down. Just because she is your mother, and there are other children in  
13 there who are not her daughter, so you are going to have to sit in your seat, and not be  
14 running up to her,” and so forth. So, the next day I went into class, and was teaching the  
15 class, and this little hand went up, and she says, “Miss King,” and then she went on to ask  
16 whatever she wanted, and I just about fell through the floor, (laughing) and she behaved,  
17 and I was just Miss King to her in kindergarten. When we got home, I was mama, but it  
18 was kind of cute.

19 KC: One of the things that I think was most striking about your time at Ft. Eustis  
20 was when your husband was called upon to deliver death notices.

21 HK: Yes.

22 KC: Tell me about that.

23 HK: I think that takes a toll on anybody. He would, of course, have to come  
24 home, and tell me he had to go so-and-so and do it. We knew it was part of his job. We  
25 didn’t really talk a lot about it, other than he knew that I was there to listen if he needed  
26 that. Usually there was more than one chaplain that went together. As he told you, he  
27 went all over that eastern shore to deliver these notifications, and then he would come  
28 back, and he would tell some of the experiences that he had had, being shot at, being,  
29 tried to be attacked down at Newport News because they had gotten so upset. He had  
30 some good drives that would know to get them the car at the right place to get them out  
31 of harm’s way, so to speak. They were in as much harm sometimes delivering death

1 notices as the person that they had to deliver it for, but it was something that had to be  
2 done. One of the times, this was not a death notice, but one of the times he had gone to  
3 Arlington to perform a funeral and had come back, and the children were taking music  
4 lessons in Williamsburg, and I had taken our daughter up there for her music lesson.  
5 Undoubtedly, he had somehow missed—didn't pick up his keys to his quarters, and he  
6 couldn't get back in, and I was late, not late getting home, but later than normal. So, there  
7 was only one way to get in, he found out, and that was to go in through the kitchen  
8 window, which came in over the sink. He decides to climb in the window. Our little dog  
9 was a miniature dachshund we had there, and she was kept in the kitchen when we were  
10 gone. As he came in over the sink, stepped in there, she got back in the corner, the  
11 farthest corner away from there as she could, back to the sink, yelping as if she—I said,  
12 “She certainly isn't a guard dog.” Yelping as he came over that sink, somebody was  
13 breaking in, and she wasn't going to defend it.

14 KC: What kind of toll, and that's a work that you used, what kind of toll do you  
15 think the delivery of these death notices had on your husband?

16 HK: It certainly made him aware of the impact of Vietnam, and how many  
17 casualties we were having. Of course, he went to 'Nam after that, even though he kept  
18 coming up on orders for 'Nam, and they kept coming back and saying he hadn't been  
19 home long enough at one time, for his first unaccompanied overseas assignment, so he'd  
20 get off those orders, and a couple months later he'd get back on them, and then the people  
21 up in Washington, suddenly they'd come back and say, “No, he hadn't been home long  
22 enough.” We stayed at Ft. Eustis for almost three years, and then we went to Alaska, but  
23 this assignment, you could tell each time that he had some interesting experiences doing  
24 it. It was a hard thing to do. Even when you have to deliver these death notifications of  
25 people that weren't casualties of the war, but were casualties of plane crashes, and other  
26 things like he had to deliver, death notices that say, “Yes, your husband was in that plane  
27 that went down here,” and it was a hard thing to do.

28 KC: What sort of things do you do to help make his life easier when he is going  
29 through this?

30 HK: You're there to listen. You're there to offer whatever comfort you can, and  
31 if it's nothing but sitting quietly. What he needs more than anything else is to know that

1 he's got your support, and that is sort of the way we have always gone around doing  
2 things.

3 KC: Okay, Why don't we stop there for today Mrs. King.

**Interview with Harriette King**

**Session [2] of [3]**

**Date: 11 May 2010**

1           KC: This is Kelly Crager continuing an oral history interview with Mrs. Harriette  
2 King. Today is 11 May 2010. I am in Lubbock, Texas on the Campus of Texas Tech  
3 University, and Mrs. King is joining me by telephone from her home in Raleigh, North  
4 Carolina. Okay, Mrs. King, you said you wanted to go back to Ft. Chaffee for just a  
5 moment.

6           HK: Just for a moment. I thought about something, and for us it has always been  
7 something that's fairly unique. Carl would conduct funerals, of course, in that area. Ft.  
8 Smith was right on the boarder of Oklahoma and Arkansas. Actually, if you cross the  
9 river, you were in Oklahoma, but there was a little town he ran into, or area he ran into  
10 close to one of the times that he conducted funeral call, Ft. Gibson. It was an old, old Fort  
11 there. Actually, Robert E. Lee served on that post. So, he said we needed to go over there,  
12 and just tour that. It was not in use anymore. You went inside this walled area, as typical  
13 forts were built during that time frame of the early west. Totally surrounded by all the  
14 rooms, all the quarters, the courtyard, parade field, or whatever. As we walk through  
15 there, the children and my husband and I, there wasn't anyone else visiting that day. We  
16 had this very unique feeling that we had gone back into time, and you could almost hear  
17 the conversations and the people. It was a very eerie feeling, but we've experienced those  
18 two or three times, and as we go through this, I will tell you the other two times that we  
19 have felt things like that as time has passed, but we were almost transferred back to a  
20 previous time and frame. It was a very interesting place to see, this little old fort there in  
21 Oklahoma. Anyway, got that off my brain. Back to Ft. Eustis.

22           KC: Okay take me back to Ft. Eustis. You mentioned that there were a number of  
23 things you wanted to discuss there before we move on.

24           HK: Well the, several things happened there, and one of the interesting things  
25 that I thought was—of course we were there at the time that Martin Luther King was  
26 killed in Tennessee, and being not of the post in Washington, but of course, one of the  
27 closer posts to Washington, the day of his, the next day after the death, we had started off  
28 post to go get something to eat that evening. For that post, there was really only one very  
29 good access in and out, and that was the main gate. There was one other gate that was

1 opened in the evenings when people were leaving post, getting off of work, but Ft. Eustis  
2 is built out on a peninsula off of Newport News, in that general area. As we started out  
3 toward the main gate we were stopped, and the MP (Military Police) at the gate says,  
4 “You can’t leave the post,” talking to my husband. He says, “Your wife can go, but all  
5 military personnel are restricted to the post.” Of course, we turned around and came on  
6 back home and found something else to eat that night, but they were beginning to,  
7 thought they were going to have to bring up fire troops even, at Ft. Eustis to go to  
8 Washington because they didn’t know how much they would have to patrol the streets of  
9 Washington until the situation was kind of calmed down a little bit. It was an experience  
10 that we remember very readily.

11 KC: What sort of things come to your mind when you think about that time? Of  
12 course, Martin Luther King, Jr. being assassinated, and the racial unrest, and the  
13 problems that this created, what do you remember specifically about your time there in  
14 that region?

15 HK: A little bit of fear, I think because we didn’t know what was going to  
16 happen. We didn’t know whether they would be, the men, soldiers would be called up, or  
17 not to go and help support, because they felt like that the area in D.C. was going to be the  
18 area where up rest and uprising would happen. So, I think that it was a time when you  
19 wanted to consider all the things that were going on. Even at the time when Carl was at  
20 the basic course at chaplain school in that August was the time that Martin Luther King  
21 went and had the big thing on the mall in D.C. I was in North Carolina at the time, and of  
22 course, my husband and I, I think being from North Carolina, we’re a lot more, I guess  
23 you would call liberated, much more acceptance of the blacks and other nationalities and  
24 so forth. I can remember, even then, hearing the comments that were being made at the  
25 time when they were in Washington, because I grew up in the South. My grandmother  
26 when we were living at Ft. Chaffee came to visit us, and she went to church with us, to  
27 the chapel, and she came out the first Sunday after she had been the chapel. It was an  
28 interesting comment for her, and this gentile lady growing up in the South as she did, and  
29 she came out and she said she had counted the number of black people that were in the  
30 chapel there, and she said, “Did you see?” I said, I called her “mama,” I said, “Mama, no  
31 I did not. There are people that just come to the chapel, and they worship with us, and I

1 don't know how many there are of any race there." This was a person who, at the time  
2 she was visiting us was in her eighties. Of course, having grown up in the South, it made  
3 a difference. She recognized that she had not worshiped there much with people of a  
4 different race. Those are some of the things that had happened during my earlier life in  
5 the military. One of the other things that happened, I think, at Ft. Eustis that were kind of  
6 unique, as I told you before, there were many times, even after Carl had returned from  
7 Korea the first time, he would come up on orders to go to Vietnam, and they would come  
8 back in and say, "No, you haven't been back in the States long enough." They tried to  
9 give him a longer period of time before they had to go back unaccompanied overseas.  
10 One of the senior chaplains' wife was rather unique in her acceptance of her husband  
11 being deployed overseas. They had in eighteen years that they had been on active duty,  
12 her husband had never served an unaccompanied tour, and there were many of, not only  
13 the chaplains, but of other senior officers in that area, and even junior officers whose  
14 husbands had already pulled one or two tours in either Korea, or Vietnam, or whatever,  
15 because not only do we have the transportation—well we had the transportation school  
16 there, but we had pilots, because we also had aircraft there. We had pilots that were going  
17 over and coming back and going over again. She was all upset. She didn't know how she  
18 was going to handle it. Now, this was a middle-aged lady, handled this thought of her  
19 husband being gone for a year, and she wasn't going to be able to handle the situation,  
20 and there were these young wives, who were the ones that should've more upset about  
21 their husbands going overseas that were taking this assignment of separation much  
22 greater and much better than this lady. She was not giving them much support because  
23 she didn't know how to even support herself. It was just one of those things. We've  
24 commented over the years, of course we called her by name. She just couldn't accept the  
25 thought of being separated, and some of the rest of us have had more than one or two  
26 separations. It's interesting how each woman, I guess now you can talk about men and  
27 women, because the men have to stay at home and take care of the family, and the  
28 women go overseas. How you deal with separations—I know we just got a couple back  
29 from, the National Guard just returned one of the big units here, and both husband and  
30 wife were gone, and the grandmother took care of the children while they were gone. It

1 can be a hardship, and it can also be a growth process if you let it be for having to live  
2 with being separated for that period of time.

3 KC: You raise an interesting point there. Do you think the Army does a better—  
4 the military in general, but specifically the Army, do you think it does a better job now  
5 than it used to dealing with this kind of family separation?

6 HK: I guess it does. I'm not sure. We've been away from it for these many years  
7 now. I guess I can say yes, having worked in my job before I retired, being with the  
8 North Carolina National Guard, and having to see our men and women leave for  
9 assignments because I was actively involved when we were, the first call up in the  
10 nineties, getting our soldiers ready to go, be they male or female. I had already retired by  
11 the time they started calling them up for this last situation, but I think they do—and local  
12 experience with that, they certainly try to do more with the support of the wives. Really  
13 recognizing national guardsmen wives are actually civilian wives. They haven't lived on  
14 post to the extent that I did because they're called up just for the active duty and back,  
15 and their wives or husbands are staying in their respective towns, but I hope that they  
16 take care of them a little bit better. At least I can say that the respect of the people  
17 themselves is better for these guys that are serving now, than for the men and woman that  
18 went to Vietnam, and how disrespectful people were of their tour of duty. We know have  
19 people, when my husband goes out with his cap on, and his medals, and his cap, and  
20 they'll come up and they'll say, "Thank you for your help," and "Thank you for your  
21 time and service," and, ya know, during the time that he actually was there, and  
22 afterwards it was almost like, we'd go out and people would want to walk the other way,  
23 so I guess it's coming around, but they certainly were not welcomed home with parades,  
24 and flags flying, and this type of thing that you see today. I'm certainly glad that we're  
25 doing something positive for the people coming back.

26 KC: You mentioned a moment ago about the Martin Luther King, Jr.  
27 assassination. You were in a certainly unique situation in that you grew up in the South,  
28 in North Carolina, and that your views were a little more tolerant than we general think of  
29 being the standard of the norm in the South. How did you view the assassination of King?  
30 How did it affect you? What did you think about it?

1           HK: Well, I was upset. I think—I just don't think things like that should happen  
2 regardless of race. I think that it shouldn't have happened in the first place. I was afraid  
3 of what was going to take place, and I knew it was going to take us awhile in the country  
4 to resolve that issue, and to at least get us so that we are not as torn up as it was. Actually,  
5 we were in Alaska during the conventions, and we saw happened the following years as  
6 far as the fighting that went on at the democratic convention that year, I mean, in the  
7 streets, and the riots that they had, and of course, the riots in California. I remember my  
8 daughter being a poet, it wasn't long after that, and this is just a pass that she, she wrote a  
9 very, even in sixth, seventh, grade, she wrote a very beautiful poem called *A Daughter of*  
10 *Time and Trouble*, and it was talking about a white girl and a black girl being friends, and  
11 how much trouble they were having. She was even aware of growing up in the south and  
12 having friends of a different color, and how much trouble sometimes they would run into,  
13 and yet, what good friends they could be.

14           KC: Very interesting. Okay, take me back to Ft. Eustis. You guys, I think, from  
15 what I understand, from what you've said before, and what your husband, the Colonel,  
16 has said, it was a very positive time. Despite the difficulties, it was a time there that you  
17 guys enjoyed, and you spent quite a bit of time there, is that right?

18           HK: We were there about three and a half years, or maybe just short of three  
19 years. We enjoyed the whole area. It was a good area to go sight-seeing in, and to enjoy,  
20 not just the post itself, but the surrounding areas. I think we started off, and I've reflected  
21 back on this, I think one of the best things that made us happy to be in that place, was the  
22 way that the chaplains and the post received us when we got there. Normally, when we  
23 got an assignment, we were assigned a chaplain family as our sponsors when we would  
24 come to post. Now, as we went to Ft. Chaffee, we had a sponsor and his wife, and they  
25 got us oriented, helped get the children in school if they needed to be, and they helped us  
26 find places to live there, made sure that things were going good, taking us around, and  
27 showing us things that we needed to know. When we got to Ft. Eustis, we were moving  
28 in our quarters, and the day we moved in, I think every chaplain on that post stopped by  
29 our quarters as they were unloading the truck and everything to welcome us to the post,  
30 including the senior chaplain and his wife, who were on their way out. They were being  
31 transferred to another post, but they took the time to come by and welcome us to that post

1 and tell us that they were sorry they were not going to be there long enough to get to  
2 know us better. I'll never forget the feeling of welcome and how much it seemed to mean  
3 to them that we had come to that post. We went through other places, and it was not quite  
4 that happy feeling which we may talk about later. That was the experience, and I don't  
5 think that we will ever forget that. He and I have both talked about it over the years. Of  
6 course, as we stayed there and toured, and this, that, and the other, and we had activities,  
7 my last two years were spent mainly in, as I said before, teaching kindergarten. April  
8 Fool's day of 1968 the telephone rang in the classroom, and my husband was on the  
9 phone, and he says, "Well, I have my orders, and this is not an April fool's joke. We're  
10 going to Alaska, but we do not have concurrent travel," and I said, "What?" He says,  
11 "We'll talk about this when you get home." Well, it was kind of unusual at that time that  
12 we couldn't have concurrent travel, but of course they had, I believe it was the year  
13 before is when they had the floods up there, and they were still trying to get things  
14 cleaned up in Fairbanks. So, we came home, and the orders were for the end of May, and  
15 he had to be up there, I think, the first of June. Really, at the last minute then, I had to  
16 find a substitute for me, for the last week of the kindergarten session so I could be at  
17 home to get ourselves packed and moved, and we had different shipments. Some was  
18 going in storage, and some was going up to Alaska, then when they said we didn't have  
19 concurrent travel I had to make plans whether I was going to take the children and go to  
20 North Carolina and then fly up there later, or what we were going to do when the decision  
21 was made, that would go across country together, and I would go to Seattle. He had a  
22 friend in Seattle who was going to find me a furnished apartment for the children and I.  
23 Carl felt sure once he got up there, he could see, as he called it, the lay of the land, and  
24 probably could get me there before August, when my orders with the children were for.  
25 We had kept out a few things for us to kind of set up housekeeping out in the Seattle area.  
26 I guess all of our household goods had been packed, and the orders came through for  
27 concurrent travel (laughing). The people there at the parcel office were just beside  
28 themselves, because they had to turn around and get all my orders ready to go with the  
29 children all at the same time. They just knew that he had pulled strings, and done this,  
30 and that, and they got real apathetic with him. He hadn't done a thing. It just fell into  
31 place, and they came through at the last minute. So, there were some things that I kept out

1 that I didn't need, and I just put them in a box, and shipped them home to my  
2 grandmother. We took everything else with us, and of course, got the quarters clean, and  
3 we then drove across country, which we planned to do anyway. I was just going to stay in  
4 Seattle till he could get us up there, so we were able to stay there, and get on the plane  
5 and fly up to Seattle, and the car went up by—well, they flew the car up on a train, or  
6 something, I think it was. It went up by ship. Of course, we were without a vehicle when  
7 we got up to Ft. Wainwright for a week or so until the car came in, but he had to go and  
8 pick it up, and drive it back from Anchorage, so it was an experience to be up there  
9 without a vehicle, to have to depend on other people to get you around, and get you  
10 places.

11 KC: What did you think about leaving Ft. Eustis for Ft. Wainwright? You are  
12 moving to a completely different environment. You are bringing your kids with you.  
13 What was that like for you?

14 HK: I didn't know what I was going to get into. I felt like I was going to the  
15 wilderness, in a sense. I didn't know enough. I was a little apprehensive because of the  
16 change of weather that I knew we would face in the fall, and winter, but as I've said,  
17 we've always looked at every assignment as, "Okay, this is the assignment, and we're  
18 going to make the best of it." So, we did have a good time. We got to sight-see going  
19 across the country. We stopped in—where the Custer's battle ground was, toured there.  
20 That was another one of those "A-ha" experiences when you looked out over that field.  
21 Once again, we were alone. The family was there with very few tourists, and we could  
22 look out over that field, and you could almost, as I told him, I said, "I think I hear the  
23 horses coming." So, we've had some enjoyable times in moving from station to station,  
24 by being able to tour the country and see things. One of the experiences that we had on  
25 that trip from Ft. Eustis to Washington, to the Tacoma area, and before we got on board  
26 the plane was, we happened to be in Rapid City, and in the same motel, during that time,  
27 they were having a rally for Robert Kennedy, and Ethel (Kennedy) was there. We got out  
28 on our balcony, and looked at the rally they were having in the courtyard there of the  
29 motel we were in. Of course, then, went on, and went on through Montana, and were in  
30 the motel in Montana when we turned on the TV to find out about his death in California,  
31 and our last leg of the trip from the Spokane area into Seattle was, of course, hearing all

1 the information that was coming across on the radio. There again, we were thinking about  
2 all the sorrow that was going on in the nation. We didn't know what was going to take  
3 place, if we were going to have rioting again, or what, because this had all fallen so close  
4 behind the death of Martin Luther King, and they had been so active in Dr. King's  
5 activities, he and John Kennedy. So, those were some of the things. We got up there. That  
6 was an interesting welcoming. I talked about chaplains welcoming you. The post chaplain  
7 met our plane, got us off the plane. We got our luggage. We got in the car, and we looked  
8 out, not only was he there to welcome us, but there was a couple that had been at Ft.  
9 Eustis with us. Carl had served with the male individual of this couple, also in Korea.  
10 They were there to welcome us to Ft. Wainwright, and to say, "We just came to say  
11 hello," and "Anything you need, just let us know." We didn't go home with them. The  
12 post chaplain took us to the guest house, and dropped us off, "Okay, here's where you're  
13 going to stay. I'll be by tomorrow morning to pick you up to go to work at eight o'clock."  
14 Didn't tell us where the officers club was, anything else for us to be able to even get a  
15 meal, and of course these dear friends of ours came in and filled in the gap, had us over to  
16 their home, and were there with anything I needed until I got my car, so we had  
17 transportation. I met the chaplain's wife about two or three weeks later when they had—  
18 and that was the first time I had met her, and some of the rest of the chaplains, so as you  
19 see, when we went to different posts, we had a different type of welcoming. Living in  
20 Fairbanks, or at Ft. Wainwright, we got adjusted to it. The children played, enjoyed their  
21 playmates around. When the furniture finally came in, I began to unpack, and he went on  
22 to duty, and it was an interesting experience. Not the best assignment we've ever had, I'll  
23 put it that way.

24 KC: Why do you say that?

25 HK: The post commander, for one thing, was rather rigid. He would go out, as  
26 you well know, and because of the day light hours up there, June the 21<sup>st</sup>, they play a  
27 softball game at midnight with natural light. We had to cover the windows in the girl's  
28 room with aluminum foil so that we could even get them to bed at night, because it would  
29 be daylight. It wouldn't be dark enough to get them to bed. Of course, we still pull the  
30 shades down, but it was still light. This commander, among other things, would go out  
31 and measure the height of the grass, and it couldn't be more than an inch and a half to

1 two inches. If it was more than that, you got a DR (Delinquency Report) because you let  
2 your grass grow too high. Well, the grass would grow. You were mowing the grass about  
3 twice a week. Fortunately, the little plot of grass you had wasn't much to mow. He was  
4 very critical. In the wintertime the dogs, or the animals had to go outdoors. All their trips  
5 outside, they had to be carried to a certain area for them to take their breaks outdoors.  
6 There were other things. Another interesting thing that happened there was, the quarters  
7 had a door, and then an entrance area, and then another door that actually went into our  
8 quarters because that entrance area was where you came in and go out of your, the  
9 wintertime especially, got out of your outer clothes, your boots, and everything else  
10 before you went into the house, apartment, or whatever. We, of course, got a paper. Well,  
11 the paper was being delivered by the Deputy Post Commander's son, and he would come  
12 by, and we had a little dachshund at the time, and opened the back door. Of course, I  
13 couldn't keep it locked. The children were in and out, and he would open the back door  
14 and my little dachshund would go, and she was kind of a nippy little thing too. We told  
15 him to not open the door and put the paper inside. He'd throw it at her. Just leave it on the  
16 step. I don't care if it rains, if it whatever, do not do that. Well, he did it one day. Hit her  
17 on the head with the paper, and she nipped him, and got his hand. The next thing I know,  
18 my husband was getting a call up to the Commander's office, and he was going to be  
19 given a DR because the Deputy Commander's son had been bitten by my dog, which  
20 became an MP report, and so forth. He informed the Deputy Commander that his son  
21 was—"if you charge me with this, I'll charge your son with trespassing" because I had  
22 told him to stay—he was saying he had told the boy, and I had too, to stay out of the  
23 house, do not open the door, we knew the dog was a little bit feisty, and she never went  
24 out with my children, she never went out unless I was with her. Therefore, he, by getting  
25 bit, he had put his hands inside our backdoor, therefore, he was trespassing. Well, that  
26 kind of calmed down, but the other interesting thing that happened with that incident is  
27 the fact that the incident had to be reported to the veterinarian's office there also, and  
28 having the dog all vaccinated and shipped up there by air, had she had stayed in the clinic  
29 there, was boarded there until we got up there to get her out, so she had passed all these  
30 physical requirements for being on post, so after this incident happened, I got a call one  
31 morning from the vet's office, one of the little specialists over there informed me that I

1 had to keep the dog quarantined because she had bit someone. She had already had her  
2 rabies shots, they had a record of it, and I said, “Okay, she doesn’t go out anyway, out of  
3 the house. She’s paper trained, and she stays in here, and the only time she is ever  
4 outdoors is when I have her outdoors on a leash.” I said, “She will not go out.” I think it  
5 was a ten-day quarantine, or something, to be sure that everything was alright, and this  
6 little specialist calls me back. She says, “I was just calling to check on how the dog was  
7 doing, and if she’s alright?” I said, “Oh, you mean my poor pet who was running in  
8 circles, and foaming at the mouth, and fell over the other day?” (Laughing) I could hear  
9 this great gasp on the other end of the line. I said, “You know that she’d had all her rabies  
10 shots, and she’d had all the other vaccinations to come up here, and it’s only been a  
11 couple weeks since we got here, and you call up to ask me how she’s doing? She’s  
12 perfectly alright.” You see, I’m just kind of a feisty person like that.

13 KC: (Laughing) I’ve noticed that.

14 HK: It was an interesting experience. Some of the chaplains were very nice. Some  
15 of them, as I said, we went to this senior chaplain’s household, really, supposedly to be a  
16 welcoming party for us, and to introduce us to all the other chaplains on post, and to  
17 introduce us to also, the chaplain’s assistants and their wives. They were there, and I  
18 said—well we got over the post, at the house that they lived in, and we were met at the  
19 front door by the senior chaplain, and he got his wife, and introduced us, and she said,  
20 “Hello, come in. The people are in the basement.” That was the last I saw or heard of her  
21 until she said goodbye. I came home, and I said to Carl, I said, “Well, I don’t think I will  
22 ever get to know her. She seems more interested in talking to all these other people,” and  
23 I was just not used to something like this because when I was around people, and  
24 especially when somebody new came into the group of people that were already there, I  
25 tried to go up to them, and find out about them, and make them feel welcome, talk to  
26 them, “How do you like it?” “What can I do to help you?” I never had that offer of help  
27 at all. It really was, to me, an experience that made me even more conscious to be sure  
28 that when I became a sponsor, or if my husband was a sponsor and I was his wife, when a  
29 new couple came in, a new chaplain, or even just another family come in, that I was  
30 going to be as welcoming, show them the welcome that I felt like they needed, and  
31 offered to help them in any way I could. It was a very sour feeling on my part, and maybe

1 I just took it the wrong way, but she was more involved in wanting to be friendly with all  
2 these other people that she already knew, I don't know, and she was a schoolteacher. So,  
3 it was not that she was somebody that would be shy, but anyway. As I said, some of the  
4 things there were not— did not give us a good feeling. We did not stay very long. Orders  
5 came, and some of the people really went to bat for us, and as I said, had it not been for  
6 these friends of ours that were there, that had been there from Eustis, I think I would've  
7 had a very uncomfortable time up there. The weather was terrible at times. As I said, it  
8 was forty degrees below zero the day we left up there. We had scheduled this plane out to  
9 leave around midnight, so that we could get the children on board plane, and they would  
10 sleep until we got to Seattle, and when the plane landed in Fairbanks, the engines froze  
11 up, and it took them over two hours to get them thawed out well enough for them to start  
12 again and take us off the ground. In the meantime, the other flight that was going out had  
13 come and gone, and we were still sitting on the ground. The only thing that they brought  
14 out big ol' Herman Nelson heaters, and thawed them out, after they had taken us, and run  
15 up and down the runway and everything else trying to break the ice loose to get us off the  
16 ground, so we were looking forward to getting back into the states, and into Seattle.  
17 When we landed, they had just had a twenty-five-inch snow, the most snow they'd had in  
18 I don't know how many years, and here (laughing) we landed in more snow, so to speak,  
19 but it was an experience of being up there.

20 KC: I remember the Colonel talking about how there were difficulties, and the  
21 Chaplains up there just kind of split, and it just wasn't a comfortable fit.

22 HK: It was not a comfortable setting. There were several of them, and we had  
23 some that were very friendly, but that unit was not, that chaplain section was not a  
24 cohesive section. There were a lot of discomfort and a lot of grumbling going on, and it  
25 was one of the lesser assignments I think we had. We were kind of glad to get out of  
26 there, even though we knew that he was going overseas, and I was coming back to North  
27 Carolina.

28 KC: When you left Ft. Wainwright, forgive me, I can't remember from the  
29 Colonel's interview, did he know that he was going to go to Vietnam from Ft.  
30 Wainwright?

1           HK: Oh yeah, oh yeah. His orders were for Vietnam. The interesting thing was,  
2 one of his nicer supervisors there, tried his best to try to get him TDY (Temporary Duty)  
3 to Ft. Bragg, so he would get some of his expenses paid to bring us to North Carolina, but  
4 that fell through. Anyway, we still made it. We came back. We had the car shipped down  
5 and had to wait in Seattle for almost a week for that car to come down. When he went to  
6 get it, somebody had left one of the windows rolled down, not much, but just enough. He  
7 had to shovel snow out of the car because it had snowed on the way down. It came down  
8 by truck, and it snowed into the car, and he had to shovel the snow out of the car before  
9 he could even bring the car over to the motel where we were. We thought we left the  
10 snow behind us, but we didn't. Our experience then was coming across country, and  
11 actually, we were one day, ahead of a huge snowstorm all the way across the country.  
12 The people in Seattle, we told them where we were going, and they had sat down with us,  
13 and plotted our trip because we were coming across country in January, where we should  
14 stop, and call ahead to see what the road conditions would be like. We had to come from  
15 Seattle to Bakersfield, California before we could start across country. Then we came the  
16 lower route, across through—actually, we made it through Flagstaff, and we were one  
17 day ahead. We got into Oklahoma. I have a cousin living in Oklahoma. We stopped with  
18 them, and then down through Tennessee, but it would seem like just the next day, after  
19 we got through that town, we would have snow behind us, but we made it, and we got to  
20 North Carolina.

21           KC: What was your feeling when your husband received his orders for Vietnam?  
22 You know what's going on there. You are aware. You know what's taking place. What  
23 did you think about it?

24           HK: I guess that's one of the reasons that I was not considering going anywhere  
25 to live except home to my family. I wanted, I guess, that security, that I felt like I would  
26 get there with my family, if something happened to him. I didn't want to think about that  
27 happening, but I also had to face reality that I wanted to be back on ground that I knew,  
28 that I felt comfortable with if I had to raise those children by myself. That was the theory  
29 behind me going there where I knew my family would not reject me, and they would be  
30 there for whatever I needed. I had the support there that I knew I wouldn't have anywhere  
31 else, and that was the truth. It was that way. I didn't want that to happen, but we had

1 faced him going to Vietnam for three years off and on every time, he'd come home from  
2 orders when we were in Virginia. So, by the time we got to Alaska, and then those orders  
3 came, I guess we both felt like, well, as much as we didn't like the separation again, it  
4 was better than—at least we were getting out of Alaska. I think that was the way he  
5 looked at it. It was getting him out of Alaska, and into a different climate.

6 KC: Yeah, definitely, a different climate.

7 HK: We actually had to buy him a coat in Seattle at Penny's there because he had  
8 shipped all his winter gear already in our household goods, and what he had was what he  
9 was going to take overseas with him. So, he had to go into Penny's and buy him a jacket,  
10 and I laughed because I still wear that jacket when I take the dog out in the wintertime.

11 KC: Obviously, you have had all this experience before in dealing with raising  
12 the family on your own from his time in Korea, and you've seen this, and you've seen  
13 families, and how they deal with the support system there. Was there anything different  
14 about his going to Vietnam? He's going to war this time, not just a station in Korea, but  
15 he's going into a war zone. Did that give you any cause for hesitation, or were you upset  
16 about this? What are you thinking when this is taking place?

17 HK: Like everything else, I think it was—yes, I was fearful of something  
18 happening to him. I was, but we have always faced each tour of duty, whether it's  
19 separated or not, this is the next step in what we have to do. When we came back to  
20 North Carolina, my brother and grandmother had gotten me a place to live, actually in the  
21 apartment in the home of—now, this was my grandmother's classmate in high school.  
22 She was friends with this lady, and she had converted part of her house into an apartment  
23 for her granddaughter to live in, who had in turn, moved out, and they got me a place to  
24 live there, but I couldn't move into the apartment until the furniture had gotten in. Our  
25 storage furniture, and our furniture coming in from Alaska, and so forth. So, I was still  
26 staying with my grandmother until about two days before Carl was supposed to leave for  
27 Vietnam. Our furniture arrived, so here we were, our children had been enrolled in  
28 school. They were going back to the same school that I had attended when I was in  
29 school. The school had been rebuilt at that time, but it was still the same area. We were  
30 trying to get settled, and as it happened before the same uncle that had come before to  
31 take him when he went to Korea, by that time, he and his—his wife was my mother's

1 sister, but they were in Hickory. She, of course, was in the last year of life. She had  
2 cancer. They were retired, and they spent a great deal of time in Hickory, so he was there,  
3 and he took Carl to Charlotte that morning. Carl went off to Charlotte as if he was going  
4 off to work in his uniform. The children went to school, and we just treated his leaving  
5 that day as another day of going off to work. As I said, I think the therapeutic thing, for  
6 me, with him leaving was, that I had all those boxes to unpack, and get us settled in, so I  
7 really didn't have time to think about a lot of it for a little while. One day, I guess he'd  
8 been gone about a month, I had taken my grandmother to visit this aunt of mine who  
9 lived about thirty miles away. As I said, she was sick, and in and out of the hospital. We  
10 were coming back from this trip on the road into my apartment, as we were coming in, I  
11 looked up and I recognized my in-law's car. They were going out on that same road to  
12 get to the highway to go back, they were living in Winston-Salem at the time, tooted  
13 horns, and all this kind of stuff, and they recognized my car, and they turned around and  
14 came back to the apartment. I said, "Well, what are y'all doing? Y'all should have called  
15 if y'all were coming up." My mother-in-law hummed and hawed around a minute. She  
16 finally then came in—I may have told you this story, but anyway—with this newspaper  
17 that she had in her hands of *Parade Magazine* from the week before, and on the front of it  
18 was this service man in blue pajamas in the hospital, and she just swore, talked about the  
19 way that the service people, what good care they were getting in the hospitals in Vietnam.  
20 The article was about that, and so forth. She just knew that picture was my husband, and  
21 she looked, and she thought she saw on the collar of his pajamas was a cross, for his  
22 chaplain's cross. I had just gotten a tape from him the day before that he was fine. I said,  
23 "Look, they had, when they got this," this was like a Saturday, and this had come out in  
24 the paper the Sunday before she picked it up when she went to visit her sister. So, before  
25 coming up to see me, they had tried to contact the Red Cross, and this, that, and the other.  
26 They didn't bother to call me to see the status. They just knew he had been hurt, or  
27 something. They contacted the Red Cross, and the Red Cross wouldn't tell them  
28 anything. They were not the next of kin, of course. They were upset about that, so they'd  
29 come up. Now, they didn't bother to call and let me know they were coming. They came  
30 on up, and I wasn't at home, and they kind of hung around town. They used to live in  
31 Hickory, tried to wait for us to come home, and finally decided we wasn't, and that's

1 when they started home. I sat them both down right then and there, and I said, “Let me  
2 tell you something. If he’s been injured in any way, they will notify me, and I will then  
3 call you. You do not need to go through all of this worry when you see something, and  
4 that is not his cross in that picture. That article was probably written months before he  
5 even left,” because he’d only been gone about two weeks. I said, “Don’t you go through  
6 this again. I will be the first to be notified, and I will not keep you in the dark. I will call  
7 you if I hear anything.” They were doing all this stuff, always behind my back. I had a  
8 time dealing with them, but the important thing was the fact that I was back in my  
9 hometown where I had support of my family, and as I said, this aunt and uncle, even  
10 when I went to, when I met him on R&R (Rest and Recuperation) in Hawaii, and this was  
11 two months before her death. They were there to pick up the children in the afternoon  
12 from school while I was gone, to be sure that they got to my grandmothers, so my brother  
13 and his wife could pick them up in the evenings to take them home for the night. It really  
14 took, I call it a family, to take care of those children while I was gone, but they did. Since  
15 my mother-in-law backed out on the fact that she was going to come stay up there while I  
16 was gone. Oh yeah, she was going to come and stay with, and they’d both come, and then  
17 they’d take them back with them on that weekend while he preached, and of course, then  
18 she informed me that she was sorry, they were going to be going to the New England  
19 States on a tour, and they couldn’t keep them. At the last minute I told my mother, I  
20 guess I couldn’t go, and my mother goes, “You will go, and we will take care of them.”  
21 This is the way things were.

22 KC: Now, your husband is in Vietnam, and I know you guys corresponded  
23 through audio tapes, and things like that, and you’ve discussed some of this in a brief  
24 portion of his interview where you discussed this, but how to you get through a day? I  
25 know you are busy; you’ve got the kids, you’ve got your own things to do, but how do  
26 you get through a day knowing that your husband, again, is in this war zone?

27 HK: I guess, what I would say, you take it minute by minute, hour by hour, and  
28 day by day, and you just do what you have to do. You keep yourself busy. You look  
29 forward to the mail coming in because you want to see if there is a tape coming from  
30 him. Then you plan your time so that you can sit down and quietly do your tape to him.  
31 You keep busy. You keep involved. My daughter, my youngest daughter was ill a great

1 deal at that time. She was an asthmatic, and of course his being gone precipitated asthma  
2 attacks. I'll never forget, he hadn't been gone too long, and I said, I was in this renovated  
3 apartment, so my kitchen had been a bedroom at one time and renovated for a kitchen.  
4 Therefore, it was a large room, large enough to eat in, and so forth. She was in the  
5 kitchen. She was in the second grade at that time. She had gone in the kitchen, and I  
6 started vacuuming the kitchen, and she had a knife in her hand. I said, "What are you  
7 doing with that knife?" She looked up at me, and she says, "I'm going to stab you," and I  
8 said, "Why?" She says, "Because if I stab you and hurt you my daddy will come home."

9 KC: Oh wow!

10 HK: I swallowed good, and I said, "No, give me the knife." I said,  
11 "Unfortunately, if you hurt me, then you won't have either one of us because they can't  
12 bring your daddy home right now, and you won't have anyone to take care of you." I  
13 said, "Now, give me the knife, please." Of course, she did, and after that we had a big  
14 hug, but this was—at that age, here she wanted her daddy to come home, and she thought  
15 the only way she could get him home was if I wasn't able to take care of her, then he  
16 would come. Then one of the next things with her was when she had one of her bad  
17 asthma attacks, and I sat up with her all night to keep her head elevated so she could  
18 breathe. I sat in a rocking chair with her, and called the doctor the next morning, and took  
19 her on to the doctor to get some medicine. We had talked about it. I said, "She's having  
20 these attacks." He said, "I know, I think part of it is your separation." I said, "I know it  
21 is," and he walked over, and she was sitting on my lap in the family room. He picked her  
22 up, carried her back over, and sat down with her, and put her on his lap. He looked at her  
23 and he says, "Now, I want you to know that I know your daddy's gone, but I'll be here  
24 for you, and anytime you need me, your mother's going to call me," and he hugged her.  
25 She seemed to get better that afternoon. It was just, she needed that reassurance that  
26 somebody cared about her. So, there again, I think I was glad that I had gone to that area  
27 because I knew those people knew my family, and knew me, and would help take care of  
28 my children.

29 KC: That had to be an incredibly tough spot.

30 HK: It was, and as I said, just to get me out to Hawaii to meet him was an  
31 experience, too. As I said, my mother-in-law said that they would come keep the

1 children, and then they backed out at the last minute, and my brother and sister-in-law  
2 came through. The children stayed with them at night. The lady across the street from  
3 where they lived happened to be a college classmate of mine, and she took my oldest  
4 daughter. They were not in the same school at that time. They were in two different  
5 schools. Our oldest daughter had been selected to go into a specialized achievement class,  
6 and they only taught at one school in the city, but the girl that lived across the street from  
7 my brother and his wife, went by that school on her way to teach, so she dropped her off  
8 every morning. My sister-in-law passed the school that my youngest daughter was in on  
9 her way to teach her kindergarten class, and took her by the other school, and then as I  
10 said, my aunt and uncle went by both schools in the afternoon, and picked them up, took  
11 the children back to my grandmother's, so that my brother, as he came from work could  
12 pick them up to take them back out to his house for them to spend the night. This is the  
13 way that we got through that trip. My mother worked at night; she couldn't help. As I  
14 said, it took a family to take care of them, but they did. They were determined I was  
15 going to Hawaii. I spent five days in Hawaii with him on R&R.

16 KC: Tell me about that trip. Tell me about that R&R there.

17 HK: Well, that was an interesting thing, too. After my mother-in-law had decided  
18 that they couldn't come because she was going to go to with some group of hers to the  
19 New England States for a tour, that trip suddenly fell through, and she called me up and  
20 asked what she could do, and she said, "Is there anything we can do?" and I said, "Yes,  
21 you can come take me to the airport tomorrow," because my brother was going to have to  
22 take off work to do it. So, they came up the night before, spent the night, and we got up  
23 because I had to be in Charlotte at 6:30 AM or 7:00 AM. It was about an hour's drive  
24 from home. Then my mother came, got the children, and got them to school that morning,  
25 and then all the others took place after that. They took me to Charlotte to the airport. This  
26 was when Eastern Airlines was still flying, and I had gotten one of the first cross-country  
27 flights to L.A. that Eastern was flying. It was a new route they had put on. So, I went to  
28 check in with my baggage and so forth, and I said, "I understand that this is a cross-  
29 country flight," and the attendant at the desk said, "Oh yes, but you have to land in  
30 Atlanta because we are picking up passengers there." My mother-in-law was standing  
31 beside of me, and I said, "It goes to Atlanta," and she says, "Oh you don't have to get off

1 the plane, but you can't go to hell without going to Atlanta." My mother-in-law's mouth  
2 just about dropped open. I get on the plane. I fly, and we go across country, land in L.A.,  
3 got my flight out to Hawaii. Carl had been in chaplain school with this other guy he knew  
4 in Hawaii who had gotten me a room at the R&R Center there. I guess I lucked out  
5 because he was about to get me a—he met my plane and had a big ole lei to put on my  
6 shoulders when I got in, and then he told me that he'd gotten me a room, and it was in my  
7 name, and so forth. Then they put us on buses and took us over to the R&R center there.  
8 A lot of the women had to bunk with each other because somebody they didn't know and  
9 everything, and I just thank that I just lucked out for that. So, I got in late in the  
10 afternoon, and Carl's flight didn't come in until the next morning. He had gotten a  
11 cottage over at Bellows Air Force Base for us to have during the time we were there, and  
12 that was a nice little retreat over there. We got to go touring, and he was driving one day,  
13 and some car backfired as he passed it, and I thought he was going to take us off the road  
14 because he thought it was gun shots, of course, from the big guns firing over in Vietnam.  
15 He finally straightened the car up and went on. We spent that time, so when we got ready  
16 to leave, I had scheduled my flight out, or actually been scheduled at midnight, and his  
17 flight didn't take off till about two hours after that, so I said, well for the first time in his  
18 life, I got to leave before he did (chuckling). He had to tell me goodbye. Coming back,  
19 we were halfway out of the—(laughing) he told me I forgot to tell you about when we  
20 first got to Bellows. We went over to the officer's club the first night, and had dinner, and  
21 we had a bottle of Bolduc, and I'd been up for twenty some hours—you're going to laugh  
22 about this. Got through it, and I got ready to get up, and I said, "I don't think I can walk  
23 out of here." He proceeded to help me get to the car. I didn't drink that much, but it just  
24 sort of hit me. We got back to the little cottage we had, and he had to wake me up the  
25 next day. He said I slept for eighteen hours. I didn't, but he tells the story, the first night  
26 he was home, and I slept through the night. Anyway, when I got on the plane coming  
27 back, he was talking about some of the times he would fly, and there would be fires in the  
28 galley, and so forth. We were out over the ocean, and they came on and asked about, "Is  
29 there a doctor on board?" This was night. We were flying at night. Nobody responded  
30 that I know of. About that time, they turned the lights back off. Everybody settled down.  
31 The plane didn't turn around and go back, and the next thing I knew we were landing in

1 Los Angeles on our way home. Got on the plane in L.A. and flew to Atlanta. There, I had  
2 to change planes this time, coming back. Once again, the plane that I was coming into  
3 Charlotte on flew to Charlotte, let us off in Charlotte, flew back to Atlanta, and then flew  
4 to Washington D.C. The girl at the desk in Charlotte must have been right, you can't go  
5 anywhere without going to Atlanta.

6 KC: You'd think it would be easier just to fly on up to D.C. from there.

7 HK: Well, I just couldn't understand why they did that, but that was the route  
8 they took. They flew to Charlotte, went back to Atlanta, back up, and then straight to  
9 D.C. That didn't make sense to me, but we laughed about it. She was right, you can't go  
10 anywhere without going through Atlanta.

11 KC: As you look back on your time, Mrs. King, again while your husband is in  
12 Vietnam, what did you find to be the most difficult aspect of his being there, and your  
13 being in North Carolina?

14 HK: The separation there. The communications there. As he's talked before,  
15 during that time there was no direct communications for phone calls and so forth. It was  
16 purely by tape, and I had to be cautious of what I put on the tape because remembering he  
17 was getting it five or six days later. For instance, if the children got sick, I didn't tell him  
18 they were sick until they had gotten over it. Say, "Oh by the way," and I'd tell him  
19 whatever they had or didn't have, or whether they cut falling down, as Patty did one time,  
20 and cut her hand and had to have stitches in it. You didn't tell him things like that until it  
21 was over with because there was nothing, he could do about it, so I just had to carry on  
22 each day. Be sure that I took care of them, took care of myself, and worried about him,  
23 but not much I could do about it. Tried to stay as involved as I could in activities in the  
24 church, and different things. One time I had gone to choir practice, and the children were  
25 by themselves where I lived in this house, and there was an inside door that opened that  
26 went down into the ladies, where she lived in the lower part of the house, and that door  
27 was always opened, or I had a key. She would listen for my children. It was about a half  
28 hours' time, and my daughter was in the sixth grade at the time. She would listen for the  
29 children. They knew they could go down there until my mother came by to stay with  
30 them after she had been to her choir practice, and we had an earthquake that hit. Where I  
31 was at choir practice that night, people were running outdoors, and this, and that, and the

1 other. The church was beginning to shake, and I walked into the office to the phone,  
2 picked up the phone, and called the children. Beth answered the phone, and I said, “Are  
3 y’all alright?” She says, “Oh yeah, we’re fine.” I said, “You felt the earthquake?” She  
4 said, “Yeah, that’s nothing. We used to have them in Alaska.” All these other people in  
5 North Carolina were running outside because they were afraid of the earthquake. It was,  
6 as I said, even the neighbors or the friends were good to us. I guess that’s the reason that I  
7 made sure that I was at home as much as I could be, to my family so that they could help,  
8 and give us the support. I had an older brother, a year younger than I am. He’s the one  
9 that kept the children, he and his wife. Then I had a brother who was in high school at the  
10 time, and the place I lived at was right behind the high school, and he was always in and  
11 out, picking on my children because he’s only about five years older than my oldest  
12 daughter. It was one of those situations where I knew I had the support of all of them, and  
13 I could not have made it through a year with him being in Vietnam had I not been where I  
14 was. I can say that for sure.

15 KC: Outside of all this family support, and even support in the military with what  
16 there was available, what was it like to have a husband in Vietnam? Were you treated any  
17 differently by just folks on the street if they knew? What was your perception of the way  
18 people were viewing Vietnam veterans?

19 HK: The people, and everybody at that time—I had an unlisted telephone number  
20 because I never knew what was going to happen. I didn’t want to take threatening phone  
21 calls. The church was very protective of me. In one of the situations that I remember was,  
22 as I think he told you, my whole congregation there got him a musical instrument that we  
23 got arranged to have shipped to him for one of the Vietnamese groups that he was  
24 working with and supporting over there. The phone rang, and I answered the phone, and  
25 they said, “This is such-and-such person from the,” and he told me from the newspaper,  
26 and my first question to him was, “How did you get my phone number?” and he said,  
27 “Don’t be upset, the pastor gave me this, and I promised him I would not reveal this  
28 phone number to anybody else. He’s already told me that this is an unlisted number and  
29 it’s not to be given out.” He was true to his word. I never heard another word after we got  
30 through. He wanted to interview me for this article he was writing in the paper about this.  
31 They were very protective of my security because we did have—we just didn’t let on to

1 everybody that my husband was in Vietnam. The teachers knew it, part of the members  
2 of the church knew it, but you just didn't go on advertising because there was so much  
3 unrest that was going on in the cities and the towns around. I was very protective. I didn't  
4 face some of the things, threatening things even in Hickory to the children that I did in  
5 Salisbury, and he was only in Korea at the time.

6 KC: What did you think of this unrest, this anti-war movement there? You have a  
7 husband in the combat zone. What did you think about what was going on nationally  
8 when you would read in the newspapers or see it on television?

9 HK: Well, I was upset about that because I thought, "Maybe they didn't ask for  
10 it. Maybe we didn't ask to be in the situation, but if our men are over there, we need to  
11 support them." I did not appreciate people's attitude that they weren't supporting the  
12 troops. I mean, they could argue with why we were there, but you certainly don't  
13 want to treat them unkindly, or treat their families unkindly, and bring out your wrath  
14 against the people that are there. It was not a pleasant situation. As I said, it's just now, in  
15 this later life, that, at least my husband, maybe others too, are being shown the  
16 appreciation for what they did for their country in Vietnam, and that they are being  
17 thanked for it now. I have seen this in recent years, we had stopped at one of the local hot  
18 dogs hang out places, and one day here, not too long ago, this gentleman walks up to him,  
19 and Carl had his cap on, and he said, "I want to buy your lunch today." I don't know who  
20 he was, and I still don't know who he was, but when we got to the counter, he walked up  
21 to the counter, and he said, "I'm buying their lunch today, whatever they want." We had  
22 gone through restaurants here in the last couple of years, and I think that what's going on  
23 now in Iraq and Afghanistan had brought out the appreciation of the people more, even  
24 for the retired veterans that we have around here. We were sitting in another restaurant  
25 where a guy got up and walked across the restaurant, and he said, "I just want to thank  
26 you for your service." We go in another restaurant, and a little girl there that has to have a  
27 hug from her veteran every time we go in there. It's amazing how much more respect  
28 they are getting now than when they came back from Vietnam, or while they were over  
29 there.

30 KC: Did you have any firsthand experience with anyone, or any aspect of the  
31 anti-war movement?

1           HK: No, I did not. It was—I guess I lived in my little world there. My traveling  
2 consisted of going to—being there. I would go back and forth to Winston-Salem some  
3 where his parents were living. I went to Ft. Bragg one time to take care of some medical  
4 needs that I felt like they could take care of better than anywhere else. Also, to begin to  
5 start getting ready for his return home, but I didn't do a lot of being out. I guess my life at  
6 that time centered around the family and my church and getting them back and forth to  
7 school. It's just what I did during that time.

8           KC: A lot of soldiers in Vietnam, military personnel in Vietnam kept a short  
9 timer's calendar. They marked off the days. Did you have a calendar at home?

10          HK: Not exactly, but—I mean, I wouldn't cross off the days. I know they had the  
11 calendars that they kept, but we knew approximately when he was coming home. I just  
12 sort of counted them off as far as how many more days, until he got counted down to the  
13 last minute. I would just sort of look at the calendar and say, "Well, he's supposed to  
14 come." He actually got home a couple days early. As he said, he got short orders to come,  
15 and I really didn't realize he was in until he was almost here. During that time, I spent a  
16 great deal of my time, not only with my children, but taking care of my grandmother. She  
17 by that time had quit driving after many, many years, and she needed to. It was an  
18 opportunity for me to help the rest of my family, since—specifically my mother, and  
19 getting my grandmother around to places that she needed to get to, medical appointments,  
20 groceries, this, that, and the other, during that year before that responsibly fell back on  
21 my brother and my mother, which helped them. I guess, in a sense, you would say it gave  
22 me some opportunities to be useful, there again when I mention that my aunt, who was  
23 my grandmother's daughter, was going through her final year of life, and spending most  
24 of her time in my grandmother's home. The times that she was in the hospital, which was  
25 about forty miles away, we would have to be going back and forth there. So, this was an  
26 aunt to my children, who they were very close to their great-aunt because we had lived in  
27 Charlotte where she was living at the time we were there, so they had gotten to know her  
28 quite well. It was, in a sense, a family situation. I've often felt like that I didn't want him  
29 to go to Vietnam, but he had to go. I mean, I would rather have had him someplace else,  
30 and we could've been with him, but if that tour had to come, I guess it came at one of the  
31 best times, for me, for my family, my extended family so to speak, because I was needed

1 in North Carolina that year more than any time I had been needed before to help carry the  
2 burden of, not only my grandmother losing, not losing, but giving up driving, my aunt  
3 with her cancer, and the support that she needed. That's really what I spent my time  
4 doing, was taking care of my children, and doing that.

5 KC: I would think that staying busy, especially with your family, would've been  
6 instrumental in helping you get through the days.

7 HK: Oh, it did. I really think the hardest time I had in all that tour of duty was the  
8 day I came back from the R&R, and I got home, my brother met my plane and the  
9 children, and we got home, got them settled down, and my mother worked at night—  
10 actually she was, I don't know if you ever heard of the Stanley products, but anyway she  
11 was a Stanley lady. She would go out and give these parties and so forth. She called me  
12 when she got home and wanted to know about my trip to Hawaii. At that time, I think it  
13 was because I was tired, the impact of the trip, and the impact of leaving my husband and  
14 coming back to North Carolina, and him going back to Vietnam suddenly hit me, and for  
15 the first time I just broke down and collapsed. My mother got in her car and was there  
16 within ten minutes. I think it was the first time I really just gave in to the impact of the  
17 sorrow of, sometimes the aloneness that you felt, but then by the next day I had to realize  
18 that life had to go on, and he would be home in a couple more months, and we would go  
19 about doing something else.

20 KC: You know, it's strange, I've heard military personnel tell me that going on  
21 R&R was one of the worst things that they did because they knew that they had to go  
22 back, and they knew what they were going back into, in a combat situation, and that  
23 when they first got in country they didn't know any better, but after having gone on  
24 R&R, then they knew what they were getting back into, and that it was very difficult to  
25 go back to this. In a way, that's kind of a similar thing that you experienced, it sounds  
26 like.

27 HK: Very much so. His going away the first time, I mean, his going to Vietnam  
28 because of having done it like we did, with someone else taking him to the plane, I didn't  
29 have to see that plane leave, but coming back, and coming back in from there, and I guess  
30 just being tired from the week, and the long plane ride back home, it just suddenly hit me  
31 that I was alone again. We'd had a good time, but I was alone and was going to have to

1 face that alone for a while, and of course, this was in October, and then not only did we  
2 face that, then I had to face my aunt's death in December right before Christmas. We had  
3 talked about it while I was on R&R, actually when I was on R&R, I had told the family  
4 because we knew it was coming that I would not leave and come home, they could notify  
5 me. I had a good friend that worked in the Red Cross, and I said, "You can contact her,  
6 and she will try to get a message to me," but I said, "I'm not leaving early to come back,"  
7 and I would think that this aunt would have wanted me to do because she was the one  
8 who was insisting that I go. It didn't happen until after I got home, but there again, I had  
9 family to take care of, my grandmother to take care of, and then Carl came home in  
10 February, and we were, then had to start preparations for our next assignment, which was  
11 at Ft. Jackson.

12 KC: Describe your reunion with Carl when he came back.

13 HK: Well, he got off of the plane. Probably the only person that got off,  
14 especially the only person in uniform. He got in about eight o'clock in the morning. The  
15 children were with me. We hadn't told them till the last minute that he was coming in  
16 because we didn't want them to get their—not sleep the night before, and so forth. I had  
17 called his parents after I heard that he was on his way home, and of course, we went back  
18 to the apartment. It wasn't long before they arrived from Winston-Salem, so of course I  
19 got my grandmother. It was quite a big day, so we really did not have a time to settle  
20 down to ourselves or have a quiet moment until after everybody had departed the home  
21 that day. He was tired, and I think he spent the next day or two, really just sleeping and  
22 resting because he had had a long journey home, and it had been quite an experience  
23 from there. Of course, then we still had to go on to Winston-Salem to his folks, and we  
24 had told his mother that if people wanted to see him down in that area, her family, they  
25 could come there. We weren't going to be riding all over the country. Needless to say,  
26 that's not exactly the way it happened. We still had to go to Salisbury, and here and there,  
27 and everywhere else, but anyway, that's neither here, nor there.

28 KC: Yeah, those family plans never seem to work out like you hope that they  
29 will. That's just the way that it goes.

30 HK: We had to keep the children—it being in February, we had to be sure that  
31 we were at home during the weekdays because they still had to go to school. We did

1 make arrangements, once again, for my sister-in-law and brother to keep them so that we  
2 could go to Ft. Jackson, so we could go down there and try to find a place to live down  
3 there. We bought a home down there. Again, the availability of us buying a home was  
4 because this aunt had given us some money, given each one of her nieces and nephews  
5 some money, knowing that she was dying before her death, and I took that and used it for  
6 a down payment, or for the closing costs, so to speak, on a house in Ft. Jackson because  
7 there really was not good quarters there at Jackson for field grade officers to live in. They  
8 just didn't have enough quarters for all of us, so that's what we bought our house in West  
9 Columbia.

10 KC: Did you detect any change in your husband when he came back from the  
11 war?

12 HK: As time progressed, yes. He was a changed individual, and I've said, as he's  
13 commented many times, the war that keeps on giving. The PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress  
14 Disorder) that came about afterwards, he still was very, even years after that, the back  
15 firing, gun shooting, types of things like that were still very jumpy. He didn't have the  
16 patience that he had before. It had changed his life, and I guess in a sense, it changed  
17 mine too, because as each time he would go overseas I had to assume more  
18 responsibilities, and I guess when he came back, I didn't want to give them up either.  
19 When we got to Ft. Jackson, we only had one car for a while, and we knew that wasn't  
20 going to work at all. Mainly, because the base was thirteen miles from our house, and I  
21 had to have transportation in case something happened to the children. We quickly had to  
22 go find us another little car for him to get back and forth to work in, but that's where  
23 we—things that happened there.

24 KC: Now, I know that the Colonel had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress  
25 disorder, as you mentioned. What, and feel free to not answer any of these questions if  
26 they are too personal or anything like that. What was the most difficult part of dealing  
27 with someone who came back from the war with post-traumatic stress disorder?

28 HK: I'm going to have to think on that one for a little bit. Maybe we can pick this  
29 up, since we've got this far. I believe it's what? About 2:30 PM?

30 KC: Yes, would you like to take a break for today?

31 HK: Yes, I think so. I've got to do some errands.

**Interview with Harriette King**

**Session [3] of [3]**

**Date: 18 May 2010**

1           KC: This is Kelly Crager continuing an oral history interview with Mrs. Harriette  
2 King. Today is 18 May 2010. I am in Lubbock, Texas, on the campus of Texas Tech  
3 University, and Mrs. King is joining me by telephone again from her home in North  
4 Carolina. Mrs. King, you mentioned that there was something that you wanted to discuss,  
5 an important event or development of your time there at Hickory while your husband was  
6 overseas.

7           HK: There were two things, after reviewing some of my thoughts, which I had  
8 put down on paper to help keep me going in order was, during the time that Carl was  
9 overseas, he, of course, was quite an accomplished photographer and made many, many  
10 slides everywhere we went. He would then take those slides and have them developed  
11 and sit down with a tape recorder and do a slide program with the slides and explain to  
12 them by tape recorder where these were. Where he was touring, what he was touring if  
13 you tour in a combat zone, but still, and would send those home so that we could see  
14 some of the scenery and so forth in country while he was over there. I thought that was  
15 important to me and to my children, as well as to his and my families. One of the times  
16 we did that, my daughter's third grade teacher had asked that I bring that slideshow in  
17 with the tape recorder, and show this to the children in her classroom, and I think that  
18 helped those children understand a little bit about, in a sense, her daddy being away at  
19 war, and so forth. The other thing that I did while I was there, which kind of became  
20 important, knowing what I was going to be doing later was, during the summer of that  
21 year, I went back to college, what they called a summer school, a six-week summer  
22 school, to renew my teacher certificate. They also offered a class—it just so happened  
23 that my children, a class for children to be in a demonstration class there for teachers to  
24 observe during that time, and both of my girls fell into the age brackets for those two  
25 classes. So, I took both of them to college with me every morning, and they went to their  
26 classes, and I went to mine. It certainly helped with babysitting problems for the summer.  
27 We always had morning classes, and the afternoons were spent studying. At that time, I  
28 would take the children to my grandmothers, and usually my aunt and uncle were there.  
29 Somebody would be around, and they would stay with her while I went back to the

1 college to go to the library, do any studying that I had to do there. They had a tremendous  
2 experience being in a group of other students, because these were not just the students  
3 that were normally in their school room classes, but had come from all over the city, and  
4 I felt very fortunate that we had obtained a slot for them in this course that summer. That  
5 got my teacher certificate renewed, and then as we got to South Carolina I was able to use  
6 it as I went to work there teaching school again. So, that was part of the way that I spent  
7 part of my year while he was in Vietnam. As I said, then we got on to—after he got back  
8 the following March, we went to South Carolina, he and I went to South Carolina to  
9 check on housing availability. We had already been told that the housing facilities on post  
10 were very limited, so we had made up our minds to start looking for a place to live down  
11 there. Having lived there when he was in seminary, thought maybe we would make South  
12 Carolina a retirement home, and we'd just go ahead and see about buying a place down  
13 there to come back to. We found a place, it happened to be a new place. They just  
14 finished this development, quite some distance from the post, but that also offered me an  
15 opportunity, as I said, when I got ready to do some teaching, of going and teaching in a  
16 different area. So, we bought this house, moved the children to South Carolina, got them  
17 enrolled in school, and he of course went on to post. We were about thirteen miles from  
18 Ft. Jackson, but living in really, West Columbia. Of course, he had to go from West  
19 Columbia, to Columbia, then on to Ft. Jackson every day. That immediately called for an  
20 extra car of some type of wheels for one of us, because my children were in school in  
21 Lexington, which was in the opposite direction, about six or eight miles. You just don't  
22 want to be where you can't get to your children if they need you. So, of course, they rode  
23 the bus, but I still wanted that opportunity, and of course, during some of that time, I was  
24 doing some substitute teaching also. I really did not get very involved in the activities at  
25 the post, as far as being a military wife, or a chaplain's wife. I didn't even go to the post  
26 on Sundays for chapel services. He did, of course, because he conducted them. It  
27 happened that our church was really, in our backyard, and the pastor of the church had  
28 been a friend of ours from before the Army, and so we attended that church. The children  
29 got involved in the Sunday school, and the bible school, and this type of thing there, and  
30 we really went back to a civilian church for a year, and kind of got involved in something  
31 like that. Went to the post and went to the chapel when it was absolutely necessary. I did

1 not really get involved in the officer's wife's club, or anything like that because before I  
2 knew it, I had a job teaching. I had just been substituting, and they called me, and asked  
3 me—they had established a new class at one of the schools in that same county. A  
4 different school from where the children were, though. I drove about, I guess, almost  
5 twenty miles to work every day in an absolute different direction from where the children  
6 were, and where my husband was. We were in a little bit of a triangle there for a little  
7 while. I had a group of fifth graders for a year. It was an interesting challenge for me.  
8 These fifth graders were very behind in their abilities had been sort of sloughed off, and  
9 not really worked with well. It was a challenge to teach them because I had to go and  
10 hunt additional resources other than the materials that were provided for us, for that age  
11 level children. That made an interesting year of teaching, and it—so, for about the time in  
12 Hickory, and the time at Ft. Jackson, really kept me out of really good activities with  
13 military surroundings, except when I had to be, but it was an interesting experience.

14 KC: Let me ask you a couple of questions. One, is that you mention that because  
15 of your job, and because of the children, that you weren't able to participate in the  
16 military activities, and that part of the social life. Was there any sort of backlash? Was  
17 there any sort of negative things that came out of this in terms of your husband's career,  
18 or the way that you were seen by the military community?

19 HK: Oh, probably so. They wondered why I was not coming to this function, and  
20 that, but I had a good excuse. After all, if I was just not going because I didn't want to, or  
21 I was just staying at home, but teaching school was a little bit different than it was if I just  
22 hadn't attended things. I tried to get to the chapel occasionally. If it was, like going to  
23 Christmas services, or thanksgiving, or things like that, but the routine, every day  
24 Sunday, we'd go occasionally, but not often. It probably had some effect on it. They  
25 thought I should participate more, but he always said, I didn't join the Army he did, or so  
26 to speak. He used to tell the people of the parish, "You didn't call my wife, you called  
27 me."

28 KC: So, there were people who would ask about it then?

29 HK: Oh yes, oh yes. Even some of his commanders would ask about. He could  
30 kind of handle his own, and say, "She's got her career, and I've got mine."

1           KC: You mention this, the career again. Let me ask you, the time that you had  
2 away from your husband, the time that you were accepting all of these responsibilities  
3 and doing all of this work, do you think that had an effect on your career, even your  
4 choice of career, or the way you approached your career, or any of the things you  
5 accomplished in your career?

6           HK: It probably did, of course, having a degree in education, and when he was in  
7 seminary, I taught school for a year down there before we went on active duty, so I have  
8 never looked at something else, but as we got to Ft. Huachuca, I got into a different  
9 career path, and was perfect, content, happy to be out of the education field because it  
10 became more, and more difficult to try to—for one thing discipline the children in school.  
11 I had several incidents in this group of fifth graders that I had in a little town, you would  
12 never find it on a map hardly, but it's called Pelion, P-E-L-I-O-N. It was one of these  
13 unique situations at that time, was when the school from first grade—we didn't even have  
14 kindergarten there. First grade through high school was on the same campus. It was  
15 principal, the principal was principal of the whole first grade through twelfth grade. It  
16 was just after the schools in South Carolina had been integrated, and that also, in that  
17 rural area of South Carolina had created some problems there.

18           KC: Tell me about that. I think that is very, very interesting. You were there to  
19 see this on a small scale, this large-scale process of desegregation. What was that like for  
20 you? What did you see? Tell me about that.

21           HK: Well, I could see that there was—I noticed there were some teachers that  
22 were not particularly happy to have the black students in their classroom, but the school  
23 had been integrated, and I think that's really one of the things that prompted this class  
24 that I went to teach this group of underachievers, so to speak. They had put several of  
25 those in this classroom. I had one little boy in the classroom, in the fifth grade, and was  
26 reading on a second-grade level. So, therefore, it made me strive to go find materials, if it  
27 was in discarded books, or in wherever, in broom closets, where things had been placed  
28 to try to find the appropriate material so that I could build his foundation. I had another  
29 little girl, a sweet little black girl in my classroom, and her parents couldn't read and  
30 write. That made an interesting thing for her. She would go home, and read the report  
31 card to her parents, and then I got it signed with an 'X.' One of the other students'

1 parents—this was a little white boy. The student’s mother came flying in one morning to  
2 the school, and said, “I want to know why”—I’ll just use his name as Johnny because I  
3 don’t even remember his name— “Is not doing the same math work as Joey, in the other  
4 section of this fifth-grade classes, in his math book.” I finally just looked at her, and I  
5 said, “Well, there’s one thing about it. You do not put a roof on a house until you build a  
6 foundation,” I said, “I’ve got to build a foundation for this young guy before I can let him  
7 grow up to get to where the other guy was in the classroom.” This was what I was doing,  
8 was bringing these children, at least, up as far as I could toward grade level, because they  
9 were all under grade level. Finally. I had one of the students in my class that was almost  
10 sixteen years old, and he still was in the fifth grade. He didn’t show up for school, and I  
11 asked around, if they heard about him, where he was, and the next thing I knew, he run  
12 off, and had his parent sign for him, and he joined the military. It was an interesting place  
13 to work. I think the most interesting thing I had about it—well, one of them, was that the  
14 principal of the school, I often said, “You never know which way he was going to fall off  
15 the fence.” He kind of rode the fence. You didn’t know whether you were going to get  
16 the support that you needed or not, or whether he was going to side with the parents. It  
17 worked out alright. I rode back and forth to school with two very senior teachers, who  
18 had been there a long time, who had taught there a long time, and I had learned an awful  
19 lot, being a lot younger than they were, from them and how to handle the parents,  
20 because they had worked with these parents in that area as their brothers and sisters had  
21 come through under them. That was a big influence on me, to help me be able to not get  
22 upset, to continue to say, “this is what’s going to happen,” and not give into—ya know,  
23 stick by my rules and regulations of the classroom.

24 KC: One of the questions I asked you last time, and you said you were going to  
25 have to think on it for a little bit, was what it was like to live with someone who had been  
26 gone for a year, and who returned with post-traumatic stress disorder. What are your  
27 thoughts on that? What do you remember with dealing with someone, on the most  
28 personal of levels, who is suffering through this particular disorder or affliction?

29 KC: Well, I had to stay as levelheaded as I could, I think. Help be a sounding  
30 board if he needed it. Let him talk through his stress if that’s what he wanted. Just let him  
31 know that I could be there for him in whatever conditions had happened. There again, he

1 would come home, he would hear the—wake up in the night. I had been knocked out of  
2 the bed because he thought he heard gunfire, and he was telling me to get down and get  
3 into the tunnels, and I have been kicked out of the bed, and pushed out of the bed, so I  
4 could get out of harm's way, so to speak. There's not a lot you can do about it, except be  
5 understanding. If he got upset, if he got angry, even angry at me sometimes, you just  
6 walk away and leave it, because you know that part of it is coming from this post-  
7 traumatic stress.

8 KC: How long before you recognized that something was not the same? I know  
9 he talked about someone who said, "Look, you've got an issue, and you've got anger, and  
10 you need to deal with it," but this was a little ways down the road. How long before you  
11 recognized there was something changed about him?

12 HK: It wasn't long after he got back that I realized that, in a sense, this was not  
13 the same person that went to Vietnam that came back. Even to this day, there are things  
14 that come up that you just deal with it. Sometimes you even blow up yourself. You get  
15 angry. You get angry at him. Obviously, we have continued to support each other, or we  
16 wouldn't have been married as long as we have if we hadn't.

17 KC: In what ways would the PTSD, would these issues come out, and what kind  
18 of effects did they have, on not just you, but on the children that you were aware of?

19 HK: I think the thing that we noticed more than anything else was the—and I  
20 guess the way I'm going to put it is the lack of patience that, or the less tolerant of  
21 anything that went on that sort of crossed over than he had before he left. He was a much  
22 more patient person, and the children recognized that. They would come and say, "Oh,  
23 daddy doesn't like so-and-so now," and I'd say, "Just leave it alone, let's go somewhere  
24 else," or "do something else," and it would pass over. They recognized it also, but we just  
25 continued to live, and move on. They never lose PTSD, even now, but I think some  
26 people learn to handle it better than others. I can't say for anybody else, but I think that  
27 time helps a little bit.

28 KC: Okay, we've got you there at Ft. Jackson. How long would you be at Ft.  
29 Jackson?

30 HK: We were really only there about fifteen, sixteen months, so we didn't have a  
31 lot of several things happen there. He was getting ready to go on overnight maneuvers, or

1 something, and he decided he didn't want a cold c-ration, so he decided to take his little  
2 one burn Coleman stove, and test it out to go out on the field, and instead of taking it  
3 outdoors, he decided to do it on the kitchen table. The fuel for that ran over, and it was  
4 either he burned his hand, or he burned up the house. So, he grabbed it, and fortunately  
5 the back door was right there. He threw it out in the backyard, and when it hit the yard  
6 out there, the fire went out. I had gone with my younger daughter to pick up take-out  
7 dinner for supper, and when I got back, there he sat with his hands in ice water that our  
8 older daughter had gotten for him, with his hands in ice water, and had burned his right  
9 hand pretty severely. We didn't get much supper that night. We piled in the car and had  
10 to take him out to the post. There again, its thirteen miles to get out there, and for them to  
11 debris his hand. He went through a lot of care out there for six or eight weeks of having  
12 that hand taken care of. We were fortunate that two of the people that were working with  
13 him that had just returned from Ft. Sam Houston's burn unit, had been out there on  
14 training and so forth. So, he had excellent care with his hand, and as the result there are  
15 really no scars from it. Beth, even though she was in the eighth grade, or seventh grade  
16 at the time, she quickly grabbed the ice and got him fixed till I got back home, which I  
17 thought was pretty good for a child that age. One of the other things that we had in  
18 addition to that—these were little family matters, but we had a miniature dachshund, and  
19 dachshunds have a habit of, well part of them is they will slip the disks in their backs, so  
20 we had the dog operated on. Actually, did that at the post at the veterinarian facility there,  
21 but they had no way to furnish the rehabilitation of the therapy. They could do the  
22 surgery, but they didn't have the therapy. We had to send the dog on to someplace else,  
23 so I said, "Well, tell me how to do it." So, every morning I would take the dog, fill up the  
24 bathtub so that the dog couldn't touch the bottom of the tub, and work her legs back and  
25 forth. It took a couple months, and then all of a sudden you began to see those legs wake  
26 up, and she started walking again. It was kind of an experience for us to live through and  
27 get her back to walking. Other than that, we really didn't—being there on such a short  
28 time, and I was involved in school. One of the interesting things when I was teaching  
29 school, I had—this was around thanksgiving. The children had been sick, and I developed  
30 an infection, and ended up with being given penicillin to take care of it, so I was out of  
31 school for a couple of days. When I went back to school, in the meantime, over that

1 weekend, I had discovered that I was allergic to penicillin, so when I went back to school  
2 on Monday, I still had a breaking out on my face and around my neck. One of the little  
3 boys looked up at me and he said, “Ms. King, do you have the measles?” I said, “No, this  
4 is just an allergic reaction to a medication.” Obviously, I was allergic to penicillin. I have  
5 to be very careful, even to this day, when the animals have had to be given any kind of  
6 penicillin, I have to put on rubber gloves to give it to them, or I cannot even handle the  
7 medication. “Ms. King, do you have the measles?” (Laughs) They didn’t want me in the  
8 classroom with them either. We were only there a short time, and then after having been  
9 there, we made the decision that we would not—we put the house on the market. We  
10 would not keep the house there in South Carolina. We did not want to be absentee  
11 landlords for one thing, and we decided that if we were going to go back to Columbia  
12 after we got out of the military, that it would be in a different area of Columbia anyway.  
13 Needless to say, we didn’t—had owned the house a little over a year and a half. We  
14 didn’t make anything on it, but we didn’t have it hanging over our heads and be gone. We  
15 were on our way to Ft. Hamilton, and we didn’t know where we would be going after we  
16 left Ft. Hamilton. That was in New York, but we didn’t know where our next assignment  
17 would be after that, and as it turned out, it was out in Arizona, so that would’ve been a  
18 very difficult thing to have had to be. To be out in Arizona and have problems with the  
19 house in South Carolina.

20 KC: Because you went to Ft. Huachuca after this.

21 HK: That’s right. Well, we went to Ft. Hamilton when we left South Carolina,  
22 and spent that year at Ft. Hamilton while he went to the advanced course of chaplain  
23 school. We went from Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, to Ft. Hamilton, New York, for a  
24 year. Then we left there. We went from Ft. Hamilton to Ft. Huachuca, Arizona, and of  
25 course we stayed there for the rest of his Army career, except for the time he went to  
26 Korea, the next time. So, we packed up in the summer, and we got the house sold. The  
27 girls and I had to get out of the house because it was sold, and the people wanted to move  
28 in. He was not quite ready to leave Ft. Jackson. The orders and so forth had to be  
29 arranged for the move and the shipment of household goods and everything. We took—  
30 the household goods were ready to go to New York, and we went up there. Took one of  
31 our little cars, and drove to Ft. Hamilton, and left the children with their grandparents.

1 We got up there, and they gave us the apartment we were going to live in, and we were  
2 able to have the furniture unloaded. Then I went back to North Carolina and stayed with  
3 the children, while he went on back to Ft. Jackson. Stayed in the officers' quarters down  
4 there until he completed his assignment there before we went to Ft. Hamilton for good.  
5 One of the interesting things about our move to Ft. Hamilton, we got up there, got the  
6 quarters, the van arrived with the furniture that we took up there. A lot of it had to go to  
7 storage because they had told us we would be in smaller quarters that year. We were on  
8 the fifth floor of the high-rise apartments at Ft. Hamilton. The people that had picked up  
9 our furniture in South Carolina came out of Florida, and I don't really think they knew  
10 much about moving people into high-rise apartments. So, when they got up there, it took  
11 them eleven hours to unload four rooms of furniture because they would come on and  
12 bring the furniture off the truck, come in, get on the elevator, and go up with the sofa, or  
13 the chair, or the box, or whatever, and back down. At this time there were not a lot of  
14 people living in there because it was between classes. The class that had left, and the  
15 class that was coming in. Instead of going in and taking the elevator, loading it full of  
16 furniture, going up to the fifth floor, unloading all of that load, and going back down. It  
17 took them eleven hours to unload us. We just thought we would never ever. I said, "Well,  
18 they had never tried to unload anybody in high-rise apartments." The other fact, when we  
19 left out of there, all the students were trying to leave at the same time, and we got pictures  
20 of ten or twelve moving vans, moving out of there at the same time, and you had to be  
21 sure that your furniture would get on the right moving van. I've got pictures of all these  
22 moving vans, from all these different buildings there, and they were all in a great big  
23 circle. I think there were five or six high-rise apartments there. It was an experience and a  
24 half to live in Ft. Hamilton, but back to the—they had told us we couldn't take the dog  
25 after we have gone through all the rehabilitation of the dog. They had informed us that  
26 we couldn't take the dog up there in the apartments we were going to be placed in. We  
27 had made arrangements. My husband's parents had said they would keep the dog. They  
28 lived out in the rural area that year, and they would keep the dog. We took the dog up  
29 there, and the children stayed with them while we were gone, and then while I was  
30 visiting with them, and with my folks in Hickory, the dog stayed with them, and when  
31 they came to pick me up in Hickory, I didn't have a vehicle at the time. They told the

1 children that they couldn't keep this dog for that year, and the reason they couldn't keep  
2 it, which really hurt my children, was because they were going to go to Europe the next  
3 May with my husband's brother and his wife. That really upset my children, so I had to  
4 overnight try to find some place to, try to find somebody to take care of this dog, and it  
5 ended up with us going back to Hickory the next day with the dog, and my sister-in-law  
6 found somebody that we could give the dog to, and we had to give their dog away.  
7 Needless to say, the children became very upset about it, and it took them a long time to  
8 get over it. It may have been some trouble, but even the time they were going to be away,  
9 the dog could've gone to the kennel or something, but anyway that kind of made us leave  
10 that area right then with a lot of unhappiness in our hearts to have to give that up at that  
11 time. But we got on to Ft. Hamilton, and he got to school. The children had to be enrolled  
12 in a public school up there, which was—we were living in Brooklyn, really. They went to  
13 a school in Brooklyn, not too far from the post. That was another interesting thing. To  
14 take the children to go into the schools at that time. The school was in a lock down  
15 situation. Had a fence around the school. There was a guard at the gate. You were  
16 admitted through that gate into the school building where there was another guard at the  
17 door, and if you had to go pick up your child, or even see the teacher for anything, you  
18 went to the principal's office, and they went after your child. They did not let you wander  
19 the halls at the school or go to the classroom where the children were. I guess we  
20 appreciated the protection that they had. I was glad that mine were still in classes that was  
21 considered their elementary school, so that they didn't have to go to the high school,  
22 because the high school was on two sessions a day. The earliest sessions started at like  
23 seven o'clock in the morning and got out at noon, and the other one went from one to  
24 five, or something like that. I was glad mine didn't have to be involved in that—going  
25 farther away from home. One of the other interesting things that we ran into, ya know,  
26 my children were raised in the South, raised by southern parents, I guess. When our  
27 youngest daughter was called upon in the classroom, and my daughter answered with,  
28 "Yes ma'am, Miss So-and-so," and the teacher got very upset that she said, "Yes  
29 ma'am." She thought that Patty was insulting her. We tried to explain to her that this was  
30 considered very appropriate behavior and respect for her in the South, but I finally had to  
31 teach my daughter to say, "Yes, Miss So-and-so," because otherwise she was going to get

1 criticized or called down by the way she was answering her teacher. So, you run into  
2 different areas of the country, and different things happen, and different styles, and  
3 different language, and different signs of respect are there.

4 KC: Mrs. King, if you would, take me through your time there at Ft. Huachuca. I  
5 know you were there for quite a while, and I don't expect all the gory details, but I know  
6 that your husband was involved in some pretty important work there, in terms of race  
7 relations.

8 HK: Okay, you're talking about Huachuca. I was talking about Ft. Hamilton.

9 KC: Yes ma'am.

10 HK: But you want me to go to Ft. Huachuca?

11 KC: Well, if you are finished there at Hamilton. If there is something else you  
12 want to contribute there, please do. I wasn't trying to hustle you along or anything.

13 HK: No, no, no, I think, I just—the one thing we did enjoy at Hamilton was that  
14 we were able to go see some of the Broadway plays. They offered us tickets, and so forth.  
15 Then, we went from there, as I said to—one other interesting factor that I feel is  
16 important was how much the men, and classmates would back up each person there. We  
17 had one of our students who had an emergency call to go home because of an illness and  
18 death in his family, and at that time the PX (Post Exchange) could only cash checks for  
19 fifty dollars at a time, and he went to the bank—we all, and I think I've told you this  
20 before. Everywhere we went, we always had a checking account, a local checking  
21 account to take care of local items that you had to pay for. Most all of us had a major  
22 checking account at our home bank or somewhere else. Our happened to be at the  
23 National Bank of Ft. Sam Houston. This gentleman went to get some money at the bank  
24 off of his other account, and they would not give it to him. They had to wait for that  
25 check to clear that bank out there, and he had to have emergency money to leave. So,  
26 several of his friends, when they found out about it, all went to the PX and cashed their  
27 maximum amount they could get and gave him the money. He, in turn, wrote each of us  
28 checks to replace the money. The following Monday morning we all went down and  
29 closed our checking accounts at that local bank. (Laughing) That bank really got upset,  
30 but that was the way the students protested. If you can't take care of us in a situation like  
31 this, then we will find another way to do it. We all went and closed our accounts out, and

1 said we'll just live—fortunately, it happened to be toward the end of the year, and we  
2 didn't have to—but we did. It's a way of taking care of your friends and your brother and  
3 so forth. We had a most interesting trip out to Ft. Huachuca. One of the main things we  
4 had, because we had some car trouble, and we had to stop in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and  
5 we of course visited—have you ever heard about the chapel out there, with the stairway?

6 KC: No, I have not.

7 HK: It's called the Loretto Chapel, and it has this spiral stairway in it that has no  
8 support. You don't know how it was built. I'm not going to go into detail, but if you ever  
9 have the opportunity to find out any more about it, it's called the Loretto Chapel. St.  
10 Joseph, the carpenter, was supposed to have built the stairway. After we get off the tape,  
11 if you'll stay on the line, I'll give you some more information about it. Okay, then we got  
12 to Ft. Huachuca. I guess it's probably the best assignment other than when we were at Ft.  
13 Eustis that we had. When we first got there, they didn't have any field grade quarters for  
14 us to live in, so we were moved into the company grade quarters, which, in a sense, was a  
15 pretty good place, because it was right below the hospital. The children could walk—  
16 Beth was in school downtown, but Patty could walk to school. Patty was in the sixth  
17 grade. Beth was in the eighth-grade downtown, in the town of Sierra Vista. There I got  
18 involved in working with the Army community service, and with the American Red  
19 Cross. I think that one of the interesting things that we had is, as I think my husband had  
20 mentioned, of trying to get the children enrolled, and where their bomb shelters were. Of  
21 course, we went through that exercise—they couldn't give us locations. The school  
22 wouldn't let us enroll because we didn't have the location of where they were supposed  
23 to go, and they couldn't give us that because that was classified information. We kind of  
24 went round and round. Obviously, we got the children enrolled, and the other thing was  
25 when we got a notice from Ft. Hamilton about sending our children from the schools at  
26 Brooklyn, that our children were delinquent and hadn't reported to school that fall, and  
27 they wanted us to send the children to school, or we were going to have to face the truant  
28 officer and so forth. That's when my husband wrote back and told them if they could tell  
29 us which subway, we could put them on in Tucson, Arizona, we would send them back  
30 up there all the way across country. We never heard any more from them after that. It was  
31 an interesting situation. I got involved, as I said, with the American Red Cross on post,

1 and doing volunteer work at the hospital, specifically, working in the pharmacy. Then  
2 involved with the Army Community Service, helping newcomers as they came in. We  
3 had a lending service closet that you could borrow stuff from that if all of your household  
4 goods hadn't gotten there, or if you needed something. Even if you had company coming  
5 in, just like we did. We had relatives come in and we had to borrow a highchair and a  
6 baby bed because by that time, we no longer had that kind of stuff, and they were  
7 bringing a small child with them. Then one of the—I was going to social functions. There  
8 I got back into going to the chaplains' wives' clubs and going to the officers' wives' club.  
9 I was being a regular Army wife again. Sometimes not liking it, but I was doing my  
10 thing. Then they all looked to the wives when they were participating in this volunteer  
11 work. One of the other members of the Army community service group of ladies and I set  
12 up a class because we realized that we had a lot of our young couples coming in out  
13 there, very far from home, no family surroundings. Some of them were so young they  
14 really didn't even know how to manage a household or hardly how to take care of their  
15 children, and Ft. Huachuca, being on the boarder of Mexico, down on the Southern part  
16 of Arizona, we were seventy miles below Tucson. Sierra Vista is not a very large town  
17 either, as you come off of post, so we were kind of isolated down there. These young  
18 people just—some of these wives really didn't know how to balance a check book if they  
19 had to, how to buy groceries, and they didn't have mama to turn to, or a mom-in-law to  
20 turn to, or whatever. So, we got this group organized where we brought them in and had  
21 classes, and brought people into talk to them about budgeting, and about how to buy  
22 groceries, and how to go to the PX and buy things so that they could live on the meager  
23 salary that their husbands were getting. We felt like it functioned pretty well, so I got  
24 involved in helping get that set up. Then, of course, I decided that maybe it was time that  
25 my children—I was getting ready to have a daughter go off to college by the time I  
26 started bringing in some income. I began to apply, go through the civil service, got  
27 certified, and applied to get a job on post. In the meantime, one day, we were sitting there  
28 in these—actually we were living in company grade quarters waiting on something, and  
29 he happened to be playing golf one afternoon, and he got a call to come pick up the keys  
30 that he was going to move, that we were going to move on Monday, and he had to go  
31 pick out one of the two quarters up on the other side of the post, the field grade quarters.

1 We go up. We look at the quarters and decide on the one we wanted, and they said they  
2 will be there Monday morning to start packing, and of course we got the keys, started  
3 moving our stuff up there over the weekend. Sure enough, they came in Monday  
4 morning. They started packing and got everything packed, moved it up there Tuesday  
5 morning, or Tuesday, and when I started unpacking stuff, I unpacked garbage, coffee  
6 grounds and everything. I mean, they packed everything.

7 KC: True to their word.

8 HK: To their word, they just packed it up and moved it. Fortunately, we didn't  
9 have to wait for it to be unpacked over a couple days. So, we got moved into—these were  
10 larger quarters, and we were up on the close to the old part of Ft. Huachuca, which had  
11 the old homes that were there during the Calvary days when the black regiments were  
12 there, and the old parade field up there. We used to walk from the house up to the parade  
13 field in the evening. It's another one of those experiences when you go out on the parade  
14 field, and if it's very quiet, you can almost hear the soldiers marching on the parade field,  
15 or hear the horses going around on the parade field. It's up in the mountains up there, and  
16 it's a very eerie experience, but anyway. After this, while we were still there, finally, I  
17 got a job, and went to work for the alcohol and drug control office and spent my time  
18 there. I went in there as an office assistant, and this is where we processed. They did an  
19 awful lot of testing for drugs and alcohol, testing for drugs, and of course counseling for  
20 both the drugs and the alcohol. It all worked out of the Human Relations Department,  
21 which, at the time, my husband was running, but I wasn't working directly for him, so I  
22 guess we got by with that. One day, I put in for another job. I was trying to advance  
23 myself as usual, so I put in for another job. I went up to be interviewed by the head of the  
24 personnel office at Ft. Huachuca who, yes, we also—I knew him because we also would  
25 go to the same parties, and he was a (inaudible), but anyway, he was a (inaudible)  
26 employee, but he still hung out at out parties. So, when I went into his office, and he  
27 started interviewing me, he said to me, "You're a chaplain King's wife." I looked him  
28 straight in the eye, and I said, "Sir, I'm not here as the wife of my husband. I'm here as a  
29 civil service employee applying for a position. I come to you with my own credentials." I  
30 knew I didn't have the job when I came back, and I didn't, but I wanted him to know  
31 right quick that I was not to be considered for that job just because of who I was married

1 to, but for what my kind of credentials I had. I'm a little upstart at times, but I still  
2 enjoyed my work at the drug and alcohol office they gave me. I was there three years,  
3 roughly, while he pulled another tour of duty, unaccompanied. During that time, he went  
4 to Korea, and spent a year in Korea while we homesteaded at Ft. Huachuca. Our oldest  
5 daughter was in college that year. I was working, and it just didn't seem very practical for  
6 us to uproot ourselves, and go to an assignment in Germany, or someplace else like that  
7 because we would have to leave her behind, and I'd lose my ability to gain my length of  
8 service in the civil service program, and our youngest daughter was in high school, and  
9 she was getting ready to graduate, so it was just one of those case where it was better for  
10 me to stay behind. We had a great opportunity there by being the communications center  
11 of the west out there that he was able to call me more frequently on the audio lines, and I  
12 was able to get in touch with him if I really needed to. I had enough contacts that if I  
13 really needed to call him and talk to him, rather than wait for the tape to go over and  
14 come back, I could contact him for whatever need be, and we had to do it sometimes. It  
15 was a—the people out there were just fantastic, taking care of me while he was gone,  
16 making sure that I had things that I needed. If I had a car break down, or something, that  
17 somebody was always checking on me. One day I was in the office, and I had had the call  
18 from the senior chaplain on post wanting to know if he could come down and borrow our  
19 coffee machine, and I said, "Oh yes." Theirs was broken or something, and he wanted to  
20 know if he could come down. I said, "Fine, come on down." He came, opened the door,  
21 and walked in, and I said, "Well, come on back." We went back to where it was. About  
22 that time, my supervisor had been somewhere, and she came, and she saw him come in  
23 the door. Oh, she came flying in. She was so upset. She said, "Are you alright? What's  
24 going on?" I said, "What are talking about?" She says, "Well I saw the chaplain. Is your  
25 husband alright?" I said, "He's fine, I guess. I haven't heard anything from him." She  
26 thought he had come down there to talk to me and tell me something had happened to  
27 him. I said, "He's fine." She said, "Well, I just saw the senior chaplain come in." She was  
28 an interesting woman. She got upset over that. I guess that was nice. She wanted to be  
29 protective of me. One morning I started into work, and I was stopped at the door as I  
30 walked in the office by the MP, and I said what's happened. About that time, one of my  
31 fellow employees, one of the counselors walked out. He said, the Captain had been hurt.

1 She'd been hit on the head, and they had to transport her to the hospital. She wanted me  
2 to bring such and such over to the hospital to her, and this, that, and the other. So, I  
3 gathered up what I was supposed to take. We have yet—when I left the post, months after  
4 that, they never had identified who had hit her, who had broken in and got to her before  
5 the rest of the employees got to work that morning, but it was—it makes you uneasy.  
6 They put a little more restrictions on. You had to be sure there were more than one person  
7 there before—people went together to go in and out of that building because we were in  
8 an isolated area and having to deal with the people that were either using drugs or were  
9 drinking. Sometimes they wanted to retaliate against the counselors, or whatever, the  
10 involvement. It was kind of an interesting experience to live through something like that,  
11 but they always made sure that I was taken care of, and that the children were okay. It  
12 was an interesting job, and I left there, then after he came off active duty, and we went to  
13 Phoenix to live. I first had a job at the military examining station, and then went from  
14 there to the contracting office at the Arizona Army National Guard. That's when I got  
15 transferred to North Carolina, was to the North Carolina National Guard in the  
16 contracting office.

17 KC: And you've been there ever since?

18 HK: Till I retired in 1996. I worked my way up that way, and got my warrant for  
19 a contracting officer, and also supervised the small purchase area to buy small purchases.  
20 I enjoyed doing that. I guess I found my niche until I retired. After I had twenty years, or  
21 more of service, they offered us an offer to buyout, and I took it. It was a blessing in  
22 disguise. I got—this was in 1996, and then in November of '96 is when our daughter was  
23 diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, and I became her caregiver until her death. I would  
24 have to have retired by that time anyways to take care of her, but I got my twenty years  
25 in, and Carl got his twenty years in. So, we took care of it like that.

26 KC: Well, I've got just a couple more questions for you Mrs. King. They are kind  
27 of general, broad questions. They are questions that I generally ask the veteran  
28 interviewees, rather than a spouse of a veteran, but I will ask them to you as well. How  
29 do you think your husband's experience in Vietnam had most affected your life, and your  
30 family?

1           HK: It certainly had its impact. The experience of being in this field of fire, so to  
2 speak, I think, made more impact on me than him being in Korea either time he was  
3 there. Just the fact of his war experiences coming back, and I've listened to him talk  
4 about them over the years, makes me know how dangerous a situation it was there for  
5 him. Also, him being over there and seeing how the nation, our nation, part of it was so  
6 opposed to the war, and how they were treated. I was thinking of that the other day how  
7 much difference, and I think I've spoken of this before, how much different it is for them  
8 coming home now, and being welcomed home, to what the Vietnam veterans, or the guys  
9 coming back from Vietnam were almost—it was almost a sin, or an embarrassment for  
10 them to come back from there, and they didn't want to welcome them home or anything.  
11 We are seeing more of the appreciation for the Vietnam veteran now than we did at the  
12 time they were over there serving. I was reading the paper, and some business has just  
13 happened here recently. I read the paper this morning where some guy in Connecticut or  
14 something had talked about his—had alluded to his military career, and talked about what  
15 he was doing, and come to find out he didn't even serve in Vietnam, but he is running for  
16 office some place up there in Connecticut. We had a situation here where, back when  
17 they did the Vietnam memorial, had the ceremony after they built it here in Raleigh, and  
18 this guy that got up, he was just Master of Ceremonies, or whatever, and talked about his,  
19 ya know, the welcoming of Vietnam people, the guys who were in Vietnam. Come to  
20 find out he never even served in Vietnam, but he made everybody think he had a big  
21 career in the military. I think he had been in the reserves somewhere. When they got to  
22 this ceremony, we went down there hoping to participate in the ceremony because they  
23 didn't really welcome the Vietnam veterans very much, and we actually weren't able to  
24 even sit in the roped off area. That was only for the local dignitaries there. So, they still at  
25 that time, and this was way after the guys had come home from Vietnam, were still not  
26 being recognized and welcomed. I get kind of upset at times about the people that—the  
27 way the guys that served in Vietnam were treated at that time. I guess you would say that  
28 our children were different children after he came back. Some of the experience that we  
29 had while he was gone. Obviously, on both of them. Patty's missing her daddy so much.  
30 It impacted, I think, both psychologically and physically on both children through the rest  
31 of their lives. It has impacted mine. He still gets upset. I have started to live with it, as he

1 tells everybody, especially with his disability now. He says, “It’s the war that kept on  
2 giving, and giving, and giving,” because of his disability now.

3 KC: One last question. What do you think the most important lesson is for the  
4 people of America to learn from the Vietnam War?

5 HK: Sometimes you can’t go in and do things that maybe shouldn’t have been  
6 done. I don’t know exactly. I’m not the person that thinks along those lines a great deal.  
7 I’m not the great statesman or anything else. Maybe we should have not been there.  
8 Maybe we should have come out before we went, but if we were there, we needed to be  
9 supported by the people while we were there. At least, let them know that they did have  
10 our support.

11 KC: Is there anything else you would like to add to the interview before we close  
12 it down?

13 HK: I think I have pretty well covered my life. I have—we have enjoyed the  
14 military life. We miss it at times, but we both have said, now of course we are older, “I  
15 don’t think we could go back and live on the post like we did when we were much  
16 younger people, but it certainly gave both of us a great deal of experience that we would  
17 never had had any other way, and I think it had broadened our experience in life, and had  
18 certainly broadened our experiences as a married couple to have had that experience. I  
19 have never regretted, even the hardships that we had to put up with, the years we spent in  
20 the military. Of course, when we came back East, my husband said, “You moved with me  
21 all those years,” and there were twenty-five moves over that time. There were some short  
22 terms, two or three months here and there, and he said—so when I had the opportunity,  
23 my children wanted to come back to North Carolina, and I said, “You’re not going  
24 without me.” We drug him along. I traveled with him all over the United States, and  
25 wherever. He said, “Now it’s my time to move with you.” Literally, everybody gave up  
26 their jobs because I had one back here, and they all came back to Raleigh, and found  
27 work. Then we got to go and re-establish our life here in Raleigh.

28 KC: That’s a lot of support there. Some serious support.

29 HK: They were coming, and both of them had been working in Arizona, and he  
30 gave up his job in Arizona and came back, and he went to work here and held down two  
31 or three different types of jobs here. He went to work as a temporary for a while until he

1 got permanent with the office of equal opportunity, the office here in Raleigh as an  
2 investigator before he retired. He held down two or three different things, and then I  
3 came back, as I said, I came back as a purchasing agent. Took a downgrade really,  
4 because we decided that we wanted to come back, and work my way back up. I got my  
5 warrant so I could sign the contracts and then I ran the small purchase area for the Guard  
6 until I retired.

7 KC: I want to thank you very much for participating in this interview Mrs. King.

8 HK: I hope it's been helpful.