

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
RUSSELL L. SCHEU
Crypto Mechanic, Career Air Force, Vietnam War.

2000

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Scheu, Russell L., (1945-). Oral History Interview, 2000.

User Copy: 3 sound cassette (ca. 170 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 170 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 2 videorecording (ca. 170 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Russell L. Scheu, a Merrill, Wisconsin native, discusses his career in the Air Force working in cryptography maintenance, including service during the Cold War and the Vietnam War with the 11th Detachment, 619th Tactical Control Squadron. Scheu talks about crypto maintenance school at Lackland Air Force Base (Texas): training with classified equipment, being investigated through a background check, not being allowed to take notes or have homework, and seeing classmates arrested for spying or breaking security rules. He states training under high security was stressful and had a high washout rate. Scheu talks about the changes in coding machine capabilities and the increase in secure communications over time. Assigned to a radar unit in Antigo (Wisconsin), he addresses having his radar skills tested by B-52 bombers flying Strategic Air Command missions. He touches on the policy that allowed women on the base and pulling a prank on his chief of maintenance. While stationed in Antigo, Scheu met and married a local woman and, while on his honeymoon, he received orders to go overseas. He talks about having difficulty getting paid while his orders were being changed. Scheu recalls arriving at Tan Son Nhut Airbase (Vietnam) in full dress blues, having women enter the showers to do laundry, and spending several days trying to track down his unit. Assigned to Det. 11, 619 Tac Control Squadron on Hon Tre Island, he discusses sharing facilities with the Army, lack of fresh food, water and sanitation facilities, and filling sandbags during his down time. Scheu describes his crypto maintenance duties maintaining cryptography and other communications, repairing smaller units' cryptography equipment, and using a telephone line to call in codes when the radar was down. He tells of coming under ground fire while on a transport plane. Scheu tells of being prepared to destroy code equipment if the base was under attack to prevent it falling into enemy hands, and he analyzes the policy that code workers were to be killed or kill themselves rather than being taken prisoner as well as and the bounty offered by the NVA for communications prisoners. He details a combat situation when he was on guard duty and his base was attacked by the North Vietnamese: taking cover behind sandbags, waiting for backup, and running low on ammunition. Scheu recalls an instance when the base was attacked and the Air Force personnel had the only weapons because the Army personnel had locked their ammunition up and didn't have the keys. He mentions that men who caught venereal diseases had to stay in Vietnam past their year-long commitment. He describes his relationship with "Mama-san," the unit's Vietnamese cleaning lady, stealing concertina wire and other equipment from the Army on the mainland, and the psychological effects of his living situation. Scheu talks about writing letters home, sharing food received in

packages, and getting a Red Cross telegram saying that his wife had given birth. He touches on entertainment shows for the soldiers and sneaking supplies out to give to Mama-san. He talks about supplementing rations by stealing food from the Army, use of marijuana by soldiers, and waste of equipment so that the unit wouldn't get in trouble for having too much during inspections. Scheu mentions people mailing radios or weapons home and the difficulty of successfully mailing camera film. He analyzes why the airmen in his unit didn't form close friendships, why he did not go on R&R, and difficulty of returning home and readjusting. He reflects that combat "was worse after it was all over than when it was happening." Stationed in Kunsan (Korea) in the mid 1970s, Scheu touches on learning about Korean culture, problems on the base with alcohol, the friendliness of Korean civilians, and government-sanctioned brothels. He talks about military personnel who had "long-term" girls, preventative measures against venereal diseases, strip clubs near the base, and men getting in trouble with their families because they were spending all their money on alcohol and women. Scheu addresses how the Air Force handled servicemen who wanted to marry prostitutes. He speaks about a year at Eglin Air Force Base (Florida) securing communications for test programs, being Com Sec Officer at Greater Pittsburgh International Airport with units of the National Guard and Reserves, and accumulating leave time. Stationed in Turkey, he details bringing his family, wearing gas masks and charcoal suits during drills, and learning Turkish customs. Scheu refers to the poverty his family witnessed, barring his door during a coup, checking his car for bombs before driving, and wearing civilian clothes off base. He tells of his van getting hijacked by Turkish troops, emphasizes he was "nobody because you're in their country," and reflects on the way women were treated as property. Scheu tells of buying carpets in the country, sterilizing food and water, difficulty dealing with the heat while wearing modest clothing, forming close relationships with other American families on the base, and dealing with customs taxes. He reports Turkey was the first place he worked with women communications personnel. Assigned to Castle Air Force Base (California), he talks about working as a Record Com Superintendent and being responsible for all the classified documents and equipment on base. Scheu explains why he could not be promoted past master sergeant and feeling burned out by responsibilities in California. He mentions working in England. Scheu touches on using the GI Bill to attend school and settling into a civilian career as a veteran service officer.

Biographical Sketch:

Scheu (1946-) served in the Air Force from 1965 to 1985. He achieved the rank of master sergeant and, after an honorable discharge, attended college in Wausau. He worked as a Lincoln County veteran service officer and settled in Merrill (Wisconsin).

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2000

Transcribed by Katy Marty, September 2008

Checked and corrected by Joan Bruggink, 2011

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2011

Interview Transcript:

Scheu: Close enough, Scheu. [pronounced "Shoy"]

Jim: Scheu. Oh.

Scheu: But I own up to anything.

Jim: Well, it ends in u and—

Scheu: Old German name, means shy or bashful.

Jim: Ah, it's a contracted verb, okay. Where were you born? 1946, in Merrill?

Scheu: Yes, I was born and raised here.

Jim: And volunteered what? USA—?

Scheu: United States Air Force.

Jim: Oh, USAF.

Scheu: Mmm hmm.

Jim: In 1965, and where did they send you first?

Scheu: When I first went in service I was down at Lackland for almost a year in crypto maintenance school and then—

Jim: Don't get away now.

Scheu: Okay.

Jim: Crypto maintenance school?

Scheu: Crypto maintenance: coding and decoding.

Jim: You mean this is right after you had basic training?

Scheu: Right after basic training.

Jim: Is this something they asked you to apply for or that you knew about and applied for?

Scheu: No, I didn't know about it; they put me in it. I had no clue as to—

Jim: No special talent?

Scheu: —what I was going into.

Jim: Right, but you had no talents that attracted them?

Scheu: Electronics background.

Jim: Is that what did it?

Scheu: That, and I scored very well on the test going into service.

Jim: That's the answer I was waiting for.

Scheu: An embarrassing high score.

Jim: Okay. [laughs] Sure.

Scheu: For me at the time, I was very shy and quiet in school, believe it or not, and I did very well on the tests and when the test results came back the teachers announced it. Very, very embarrassing for me because I didn't like my name known to anybody.

Jim: Oh, really?

Scheu: I was one of those if nobody knows who you are, life's better.

Jim: Safer?

Scheu: Safer, yeah.

Jim: That's the word then. Okay. Then this school was at Leavenworth?

Scheu: No, Lackland. Lackland Air Force Base.

Jim: It was right there?

Scheu: Yes.

Jim: And what did the school consist of?

Scheu: The school consisted of basic electronics to begin with and then we were—a lot of security training as far as what you can say, what you can't say, so we had some kind of a background in what we could do or what we could say, what we could tell our parents. And then it was on equipment that coded and decoded messages, electronic equipment. It was about nine months of school.

- Jim: What you could tell your parents, what's this?
- Scheu: The equipment we worked on was highly classified and we knew a lot of things that were highly classified. We were told we could tell our parents, "I work on equipment that codes and decodes messages. Don't ask me any more questions." Of course most of our parents were aware that something was going on because of the background checks that were done.
- Jim: What's that?
- Scheu: The background checks for the security clearance at that time was top secret crypto to go to school with the crypto access, and the crypto just means the coding.
- Jim: Mmm hmm.
- Scheu: They would send people to, for instance, Merrill who would talk to references that you put down on your application and they would ask those references for people that they knew that maybe knew me. They didn't actually interview the people who you put down that are the ones that are gonna give you the good references. They talked to people who like you, don't like you and whatever.
- Jim: They wanted to check out those references?
- Scheu: Yes. And from what I understand back in those days, and that's back in the early 60s or mid 60s, that was like a \$50,000 proposition. At the time it took several weeks. As a matter of fact, I didn't get my final clearance 'til almost a year after I was in service.
- Jim: The FBI shows up at your folk's house and says, "Hi there."
- Scheu: Nope. They never talked to my parents. They talked to some of my relatives, aunts, uncles, cousins, who referred them to friends, their friends, the bars I hung out at before I went in service.
- Jim: Looking back, what do you think they were looking for, bad behavior or connections with unsavory people or what?
- Scheu: I think they were looking for stability. Maybe the ability to keep a secret, you know. Be able to be somebody's friend and not say something about 'em and not do too many crazy things, get in trouble with the law, things like that. They were looking, I believe, for people who counterintelligence people could maybe get something on, financial trouble, ah—

- Jim: If you had a weakness somebody could exploit?
- Scheu: Yes. I went to school with a couple of those guys that are in jail for forever that sold secrets to the Russians. It was newspaper stuff.
- Jim: You went to school with them. They were in your class?
- Scheu: In my class, yeah.
- Jim: And then later this happened, I assume.
- Scheu: We even had 'em that were picked up right in class. At Lackland we were at the—
- Jim: Jesus. That's pretty early.
- Scheu: Oh, yeah, we had undercover people going to class with us.
- Jim: They weren't plants to ferret out other people? I mean, they were really spies?
- Scheu: No, they were looking for—
- Jim: Oh, I see.
- Scheu: —people that weren't, that shouldn't be in the program, that were doing things that they shouldn't be doing. Plus also, they were looking for spies and that type of thing. People that were selling secrets, things like that. But I've seen people, we would go to the roller rink before class started and you weren't allowed to draw diagrams, any of that stuff. There was no homework. We were told when you went to class, you learned everything there and when you walked out the door you forgot everything. Of course some people took that literally; that's why only a third of our class graduated. But we had guys that would draw out a diagram and all of a sudden somebody comes, one of our classmates whips out his wallet and away they go. They were drawing a classified drawing on the table and of course they'd rub it away with their hands and stuff but ah—
- Jim: This is one of these plants who was observing all this?
- Scheu: He would take them away; they'd be under arrest.
- Jim: From the FBI or—
- Scheu: I believe it was probably OSI.
- Jim: OSI?

- Scheu: From the military.
- Jim: Yeah. That's inside the military then.
- Scheu: And then also we had a guy when I was back down TDY for a piece of equipment when I was stationed at Antigo, I had to go back down to TDY for a piece of equipment and there was a guy in my class, we found out later, they were just working on getting information to see what he had all done.
- Jim: But a student really is not far enough along to have access to really sensitive information, is he?
- Scheu: Yes, the equipment is classified.
- Jim: I mean, the stuff that they want you to learn was classified—
- Scheu: Yes.
- Jim: —so right off the bat he was a security risk potentially.
- Jim: Before he had even passed. [laughs]
- Scheu: If you know how the machines are coded and decoded and how they code and decode you can break the code. You can understand all of the classified that is going on, everything that's being sent back and forth, and with the military almost everything is encoded and decoded. You can find out a lot of information just by how much food is going to the chow hall and what type of food is going to the chow hall.
- Jim: How can you find out anything from food going through a chow hall?
- Scheu: They already know how much food there is per person.
- Jim: Okay.
- Scheu: And they know the types of food that would be used. For example, if there'd be an exercise coming up, they're gonna have more people eating on base, different things like that. If they're going to send units out, if you happen to be at a base that has an attack unit or something like that, different things would be ordered out of the ordinary where that wouldn't be going along with that unit if they'd be going out TDY: C-rations, things like that. Of course, it's not C-rations any more. Different things like that. It was kind of stressful at the time, going to school, 'cause you always worried if you were gonna say something wrong or whatever.

Jim: Say something stupid that somebody would interpret as sensitive, you mean?

Scheu: Yes. My sisters when I came home, they were very nervous about us going out and having a few drinks because your tongue gets a little looser and ya talk to all your buddies and stuff.

Jim: Sure.

Scheu: And I had a friend that was in electronics in school, in college, and we talked a little bit about electronics. My sisters knew nothing about electronics but they thought I might be telling secrets, even though I was just talking transistors and diodes and resistors, that type of thing. My parents were very proud, though. That was big-time ego for them: Russ is doing something secret.

Jim: My son the spy, right? [laughs] Was school hard?

Scheu: Yes, school was very hard. Especially the part where you weren't allowed to—there was no homework. There was nothing you could study; you had to learn it there, and the washout rate was very high. We started with three classes: we had A shift, B shift, C shift, and I think there might have been a few on D shift, so there were four six-hour shifts there.

Jim: How many?

Scheu: There were like twelve in a class. And when we graduated there were eighteen, and that was after nine months.

Jim: So when you're through with this six—how many months?

Scheu: Nine months. And that was after nine months.

Jim: Nine months. Then you knew how to run the coding machines and the decoding machines both, correct?

Scheu: Yes. One and the same. Coding and decoding is all done by the same machine, send and receive.

Jim: I'm sure it's highly complicated compared to what Joe Rochefort was dealing with when he solved the Battle of Midway. I assume you know that. But as I'd say, with all the fancy electronic equipment it would seem to me that it would be so easy for someone to bounce into that, you know, into the network by just a few buttons and a few little this and that. It seems like it would be relatively easy to get into.

- Scheu: You could probably monitor the lines, transmission lines; that's done all over the world. We do that. 'Cause the messages went out microwave, they went out land lands, they went out satellite, but everything is coded. There is—
- Jim: Coded. You mean by numbers, a series of numbers, or a series of letters?
- Scheu: It's coded just like your computer's digital. It sends a digital signal to your modem which converts it to an audio signal. It was no different the way it was sent. However the letter "R" did not come out the letter "R." The letter "R" could have come out anything, from one minute or one second to the next. Two "Rs" in a row aren't going to be the same. An "R" today and an "R" tomorrow were—it was online coding. Everything was coded that went out. There was no way that you even knew when a message started. There was continuous traffic, so that if you were monitoring the lines you had no clue.
- Jim: Whether it was the beginning of a sentence, or the middle of a sentence or a paragraph?
- Scheu: Or if a message was being sent or a message wasn't being sent.
- Jim: Is this true today?
- Scheu: Yes, that's true today.
- Jim: There's a continual traffic in the air, in other words?
- Scheu: Yes, there's continual traffic. That way whoever is trying to get a hold of your information can't; it makes it much more difficult for him because he doesn't know when you're starting and stopping.
- Jim: Does it take a machine?
- Scheu: It's done—
- Jim: I mean, for decoding.
- Scheu: Yes. When I was still in service, and I've been out about fifteen years, they were estimating that it would take the state-of-the-art computers at the time about twenty years to decode a message, so it would be pretty much outdated or not valuable any more at that time. But if you could get a hold of the equipment that did the coding and decoding you'd have a big step up on it.
- Jim: Even that would not be the—that would not give you a readout?
- Scheu: No.

Jim: [laughs] Because—

Scheu: There are still some other things that are classified that go on top of that.

Jim: Is that still classified?

Scheu: Yes.

Jim: We're not allowed to talk about that even today?

Scheu: No, we won't be talking about that, [Jim laughs] even though they don't follow me around anymore. About five years ago they quit calling me up.

Jim: Now you got to tell me about that. What would they ask?

Scheu: They were still interested as to whether or not I had any contacts with people that were asking questions that they shouldn't be asking or if I had been to any foreign countries that I shouldn't be going to.

Jim: Oh my goodness gracious.

Scheu: Things like that. You can take two crypto machines and hook 'em together so one codes into the next one. The machine doesn't care what's being put into it, it's just gonna code it; that's another way of making things more secure. I'm sure you've seen the—when they talk about World War II and the Russian devices for coding with the rotors in it. That was used for many, many years and it's a very good system. That was used—when I first got out of service that was still a viable piece of equipment in many places; many places still use that.

Jim: Coding like this as it's done in your experience, in your time, would this kind of thing be changed every day? I mean it'd be a different code, and you'd keep moving it so there's a constant flux?

Scheu: It was changed from second to second.

Jim: Wow. But who would do that? Where would this come from, Washington?

Scheu: That was part of our job.

Jim: But these are decisions made base by base, or it goes higher and higher? I don't understand.

Scheu: You mean as far as when the code would be changed?

Jim: Yeah.

- Scheu: It was standard, it was changed. The way the equipment works, it is steadily changed, everybody's. Whether you're coding voice, whether you're coding digital signals.
- Jim: It didn't make any difference where you were?
- Scheu: Right, it didn't make any difference where we were. We could send a message to anywhere in the world from our equipment. Wherever we were, we could send a message to anywhere in the world in less than thirty seconds, and the new equipment is even much faster than that.
- Jim: Faster than thirty seconds?
- Scheu: Yes, as far as transmitting a message.
- Jim: Incredible.
- Scheu: The equipment that the military has is much—well it depends where you're at in the military, but it's much more up to date or much faster than anything that the civilian population has. Back when I was in we had page printers that would shoot a page to the ceiling, that's how fast it would print out. The paper would come out so fast it would shoot up into the air as it's printing, because it would print lines at a time. It wouldn't print a character, it prints a whole line and then you go to many lines, but technology is very, very fast moving.
- Jim: Well, it's hard for me to get this. There's a guy sitting on a base and he's in the business of sending messages. Would he have to know that there's been any change in the code or would he just stand up and his machine would have been altered so that all he had to do is pound in the message and it would go—
- Scheu: He's going to come to the communication center.
- Jim: Okay.
- Scheu: And the communication center's going to take care of sending his message. If supply is gonna send out a request, everything basically on most bases goes through secured communications now; it's coded and decoded. Pay checks, assignments, everything.
- Jim: An order for bread?
- Scheu: The more you code, the more secure your base is, the less the opposition knows what you're doing, the less they can find out about people. When I first got in, very little was done with secured communications, and the longer

I was in, more and more. Now days most telephones are secure in the military. You'd have a telephone sitting on your desk not much bigger than this, call up whoever you want, tell them you want to go secure, push a button. Now your only problem is—

Jim: You have to have somebody with a similar phone on the other end?

Scheu: Yeah. But the military has hundreds of thousands of those now, voice operated; that was probably the last five years I was in service.

Jim: In other words, now you can just speak your message, after you punch that button?

Scheu: Yes, you could talk to someone on the phone.

Jim: And some unit somewhere will mix it and then unmix the code?

Scheu: No, it's gonna be done right here.

Jim: In something that small?

Scheu: Right there. You bet ya. [Jim laughs] It's quite amazing what they can do. Little hand-helds. Communication with satellite, that only takes a couple watts, if that, so we had a lot of units that were mobile; you could put it on a guy's backpack and—

Jim: Well, now that you're an expert, what did they do with you?

Scheu: What they did with me, they sent me to Antigo, [Jim laughs] right down the road here. And to be honest with you, it's thirty miles away and I never knew Antigo existed, that there was a radar site there. We were part of NORAD. We had FPS-35 radar there which had a hundred and some foot antenna on it. We covered way up into Canada, way west. At the time the radar range was classified, which was really quite surprising to all of us, and the speed the antenna rotated. You could see the antenna from twenty miles away. SAC ran a lot of missions against us, B-52s, things like that.

Jim: Practice sessions, testing you?

Scheu: Mmm hmm. And we would test them; it was a lot of fun.

Jim: Oh, how'd that go?

Scheu: That went quite well. [someone enters the room] It's going to be a little bit Otto. Just lay it on Renee's desk there.

Man: I was just gonna tell you one thing.

Jim: Do you want me to shut this off?

Man: You got to do me a little favor.

Scheu: Yeah we were playing games with SAC there. SAC would run missions against us with their B-52s to try to penetrate our radar. They had all kinds of things that they would to jam and things like that.

Jim: But they didn't look like a bear bomber; they looked like a B-52?

Scheu: Yes.

Jim: So how could they fool you then?

Scheu: Well, they were just trying to run missions against us. They were pretend bad guys and they would try to get through our radar.

Jim: Okay.

Scheu: And ah—

Jim: Without you noticing them?

Scheu: Yes, without us noticing them. That can be done, back in those days especially.

Jim: Dropping window?

Scheu: That and then the B-52s—

Jim: The window is foil.

Scheu: B-52s had equipment on them also that would absorb radar. They would pick up your particular frequency and then they would just start absorbing it. So the radar folks, so that we could do a little better, once in a while we'd take a height finder, which goes up and down like that. A height finder determines the height of the aircraft, so you pick 'em up with the first sweep on the radar and then you lock your height finder on 'em. Your height finder is going to just keep hitting them with the radar and it's gonna burn out their receiver.

Jim: [laughs]

Scheu: So it kinda does a job—

- Jim: Until he starts screaming uncle?
- Scheu: Does a job on their electronics.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: But you know, sometimes they would do that stuff to us. They would take our radar signal, amplify it and send it back to us and it burns up your receiver. Costs the government lots of money, but that's how things are learned.
- Jim: Yeah, I was going to say, that's a valuable lesson isn't it?
- Scheu: Yeah. And that was a lot of years ago already. People were quite surprised at the time and awed at the sight of a B-52 comin' a hundred feet over the ground.
- Jim: In Antigo; what in Antigo is so goddamned important, right?
- Scheu: We only had about a hundred and twenty people stationed there, but it was really a fun place to be. Everybody was very close knit.
- Jim: I'll bet.
- Scheu: Had a little club there; that's where I met my wife, at a little NCO club there.
- Jim: Was she in service?
- Scheu: No, she was one of the girls from downtown.
- Jim: Oh, she's a local girl?
- Scheu: Yeah. The rule at the gate was if some girls come in, you just wave 'em up on base, and if a guy comes, you stop and ask 'em what the hell they're doing there. [both laugh] That's no lie. That's the way it was. We had a lot of fun where everybody knew everybody there.
- Jim: I'll bet.
- Scheu: I worked switchboard a lot for something to do. I only had a couple pieces of equipment to maintain. We'd pull pranks on people. My poor chief of maintenance, I'd call him up—I shouldn't say call him up, I'd call his wife up on Friday and say, "Did the captain get a hold of ya?" She'd say, "No." I'd say, "Oh, okay. Maybe it was somebody else." She'd say, "Well, ring him for me, will ya?" and on Friday afternoons they had a little room set up for like officers club and if anybody's wife called they had to buy.

- Jim: Oh, that was the rule. Your wife called; it's your turn?
- Scheu: He had to buy, yeah.
- Jim: It's your turn.
- Scheu: I had his wife call him about three times a month anyway.
- Jim: [laughs] So what was your rank at this time?
- Scheu: I was an E-3 Airman Second Class at the time when I got there.
- Jim: Your MOS was—
- Scheu: 306, I was crypto maintenance. By the time I was leaving there I was an E-4, Airman First Class at the time, which now is Sergeant in the Air Force, which confuses a lot of us older guys. From when I was stationed in Antigo, then I started getting orders to go to Vietnam back off and on, and off and on.
- Jim: What do you mean off? What does off mean? Did they rescind the order?
- Scheu: We'd get a message down—at the time I had plans of getting married and all of a sudden I get a message, come over, I'm being sent to Vietnam with a very short notice.
- Jim: Active status?
- Scheu: I call my fiancée up, now my wife, and say, "I got orders to go to Vietnam."
- Jim: Right. Put her in ___[?].
- Scheu: Yup. Two days later they'd cancel my orders. Back and forth; I think I had seven sets of orders by the time I went. I got married on May the 6th and ah, the 21st or 22nd of May I was in Vietnam. I got a telegram when I was on my honeymoon.
- Jim: Wonderful.
- Scheu: It was really a great time because I had to let the commander and the first sergeant know where I was going to be when I was on my honeymoon.
- Jim: They must have been delighted to call you.
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. The commander was a very nice man.
- Jim: [laughs] Yeah, but he had a chance to get back at ya.

Scheu: [laughs] Oh, yeah.

Jim: “Hi there, guess what I got for you.” Right.

Scheu: But he saved me getting paid, with these orders going off and on all the time. He was from Kentucky or Tennessee. He didn’t like the roads up here in the wintertime. I was from Wisconsin, so I’d drive him down to meetings down at our headquarters, at the time down in Madison for division. So I’d drive him down there once in a while. Seeing I was getting these orders, my pay records, back in those days, they were sent to Vietnam. They were gone so I wasn’t getting paid and my pay at the time I think was \$120 a month.

Jim: Right.

Scheu: So I was poor. I was chasing women and no money.

Jim: That’s one of the problems when you’re moving in the service, no pay. They only pay ya when you’re stabilized. So as long as it takes you to move, you don’t get any pay. You get it eventually, but for the moment it’s tough.

Scheu: Yeah. He says, “Come on down to Madison.” I’d drop him off at a hotel where this meeting is and he says, “Go down to Finance and get paid.” He says, “Use your ID card.” And at the time I was still a two striper, which is a nobody. I walked into Finance and this senior master comes to the counter and says, “Can I help you, airman?” And I said, “Yes, sir, I’d like to get paid. I haven’t been paid in a long time. My records were sent to Vietnam.” He says, “We can’t do nothin’ for ya.” I said, “Can I use your telephone?” He says, “What the hell for?” I says, “Call up Colonel Styles.” He says, “What do you want to call Colonel Styles for?” I said, “Colonel Styles says if I don’t get paid I call him up and I’ll get paid.” He says, “Well, let’s see what we can do for ya. How much money you think you need to have?” He paid me right there.

Jim: To get you out of his office.

Scheu: Get me out of the office and keep Colonel Styles off his back, because Colonel Styles is very much a person-type guy. He took care of the people at the site, yeah.

Jim: That was nice.

Scheu: Yeah.

Jim: So, now with all your expertise, now where?

Scheu: Now—

Jim: Now you get to put it to work.

Scheu: Now I get sent to Vietnam. So I go to Vietnam, flew into Tan Son Nhut. That was my first experience taking a shower where there's women washing clothes on the floor. We get there in the middle of the night, and of course the Air Force is so intelligent we go there in dress blues.

Jim: It must have been hotter than a son of a bitch.

Scheu: Yeah, it's like a hundred degrees, humidity is a hundred percent.

Jim: You got your winter uniform on.

Scheu: Mmm hmm, which we've been wearing for twenty-four hours or more.

Jim: Well, you need it in Antigo.

Scheu: Mmm hmm. You get there and get a place to sleep, you find out where the shower is and go down there take a shower, and you're in there taking a shower and pretty soon you hear some voices and Vietnamese women coming in and they're doing laundry on the floor.

Jim: From the shower water?

Scheu: Mmm hmm. The showers are squirting down on the floor there and they're scrubbing clothes on the floor.

Jim: So you have to walk between them to get to the shower?

Scheu: You're already taking a shower. I wouldn't have walked in there; I was too shy at the time to be walking around naked in front of a bunch of women, especially ones I didn't know. But that meant very little or nothing to 'em. Then you wake up the next morning and they're looking for where I'm supposed to be. All I know it's Det. 11, 619th Tac Control Squadron and nobody seems to know where it's at. One of the people over at Transport thought it was up by Cameron Bay somewhere, so next thing you know I'm on a 1:30 or whatever it was at the time; I don't remember for sure what it was—

Jim: Transport comes sometime anyway.

Scheu: And up to Cameron Bay, spend the night in Cameron Bay. The guy there says, "Gee, I think that unit used to be here at some time." He says, "But it's not here anymore. I think it might be up by Nha Trang." So I fly up to Nha

Trang and I'm up at Nha Trang for two days and then finally I find somebody that says, "You see way out there in the bay, that island out there? That's Det. 11, 619 Tac Control Squadron, that's on Hon Tre Island, that's where they're at." "How do I got there?" "I don't know." I had to do more checking around. The next day I found out they had a LST.

Jim: That brought supplies over there.

Scheu: That ran back and forth. So I hopped on that and go out to the island and find out that boy, that's the boondocks out there. Other than it was a very, very pretty place, very green, beautiful beaches.

Jim: How big was this island?

Scheu: Ahh, I believe it was seven miles long. The bottom side where we lived at was its narrowest point; that was maybe a quarter mile wide. Halfway up the mountain was Army microwave relay, television station, radio station, and at the highest peak that was where the Air Force had our radar, radio and we also had Hawk missiles up there.

Jim: So this is the two units on that one island?

Scheu: Yes, we had Army and Air Force. We lived together in the same area. The Army was on one side of the road, the Air Force was on the other side of the road. It was just a dirt road.

Jim: How many people are we speaking of here?

Scheu: Approximately two hundred: a hundred Army, a hundred Air Force, and then we had a little chow hall down there on the bottom site.

Jim: Did you share it?

Scheu: Yes, we shared it. Food was a lot different for us Air Force folks. We were used to a lot better living than—

Jim: The grunts?

Scheu: Yeah. They had gasoline stoves, you know. We had no running water. Most of the time we didn't have electricity. Dirt roads. We had, we lived in, we called it a "hooch." We had like twelve, fourteen guys, concrete floor, screen wall, tin roof. That's what we lived in. There were no bathroom facilities. Bathroom facilities was you go outside and take a leak. No commode or whatever you want to call it.

Jim: Did you have a latrine dug?

- Scheu: The latrine—
- Jim: A slit trench?
- Scheu: No. We weren't even that fancy.
- Jim: On the ground?
- Scheu: It was on the ground. Things got a little different as we were there for a while.
- Jim: After a while it becomes a problem.
- Scheu: Yes. It got a little on the ripe side in places and people started, "Ehh, maybe we shouldn't be doin' this."
- Jim: [laughs] Jesus Christ.
- Scheu: But it was rather primitive at the place when we just got there. You know, like for a year I never saw hot water for showers, anything like that. Everything was cold water, when we got it, because that had to come from the mainland.
- Jim: There was no water otherwise, yeah.
- Scheu: No, we didn't get water on the island, I don't think, until the last couple months I was there. They were drilling but there wasn't much to be found there, so the truck would come from the mainland. They'd bring it over and fill up the—
- Jim: The LST came once every couple of days?
- Scheu: No, the LST made trips, probably five, six trips a day.
- Jim: Oh well, then you had plenty of food.
- Scheu: Yeah, if you want to call it food but **[end of tape 1, side A]** we were still living in the Army conditions, which was the gasoline-powered stoves, the gasoline refrigerators. Officers and enlisted ate different menus. Instant potatoes, instant eggs, instant milk, and the tough part was as you were going through the line if you were enlisted you got the instant, if you were an officer you got different food. You got real eggs. That was the Army method, yes.
- Jim: Geez, I was in the Navy. I got powdered eggs and I was an officer on a hospital ship. It's too late to complain, I guess.

- Scheu: Yeah. The bad part was when you were eating was the flies and it was the same food all the time. We basically had the same meals every time. There would be flies in the food, in the bread, you know, that was baked there, all the rolls were baked there. At first when you got there you didn't eat the stuff because it had flies in it. After you were there for a while you picked the flies off it and then you opened it up to see if there were any in there, and after a while longer than that you just ate it.
- Jim: [laughs] It's protein.
- Scheu: Yeah. Powdered milk had flies in it most of the time.
- Jim: Oh yeah.
- Scheu: Literally we would break into the coolers at night and steal food to eat.
- Jim: Your coolers, not the Army's?
- Scheu: No, it was the Army's. It was a joint thing.
- Jim: Yeah, yeah.
- Scheu: Army ran the chow hall.
- Jim: So what did they have in the coolers? Just more of the stuff or something different?
- Scheu: Oh, they had things like bacon, which we couldn't get, they had—
- Jim: That was for the officers?
- Scheu: —ham steaks, which we couldn't get. They had salad dressing, ketchup, mustard.
- Jim: They had all that?
- Scheu: Tuna, something that we could make snacks out of. Most of us—my shift worked generally fourteen hours, and then after that fourteen hours we would come down and we'd fill sandbags and our shift would have to do a thousand sandbags, just a daily replacement.
- Jim: You put these around your sleeping area?
- Scheu: Around the perimeter. Most of it was up at the top site.

- Jim: Where the missiles are?
- Scheu: Where the missiles and the radar and radio are.
- Jim: But you didn't run the missiles, though?
- Scheu: No, I was crypto maintenance and I also ran maintenance control center, which was our voice communications with our headquarters as far as the status of our equipment and things like that. We would set up the maintenance schedules, things like that. If something was being—if something was down, like say the radar was down, that was classified that the radar was down. I was responsible for getting out the code books and calling up our headquarters on our landlines, calling up our headquarters—actually it was a landline and then microwave—
- Jim: Yeah.
- Scheu: —but calling up our headquarters and telling them in code that our radar was down, who was calling, that was coded, and the code for what was down, why it was down, that was all coded, and what we were doing about it, and that code changed quite regularly. That was just, ah, kind of like an additional duty. Most places I've been at I've been crypto maintenance, desk duty[?] maintenance and anything else they could throw at ya that was classified because we were considered that we would handle the stuff quite well. We could handle the classified and not make too many mistakes with it. Mistakes were always made, but the name of the game is to do as few mistakes as possible. And then while in Vietnam I was the Air Force expert on TW-26s, which is a piece of crypto equipment. So if people would have problems someplace else they would call me.
- Jim: Needed repairs?
- Scheu: Yeah. Once in a while I'd go someplace and have to fix their equipment if their maintenance person couldn't fix it. One time I had to go to fly into Bambi 2[Ban Me Thuot?] on an emergency tech assist. That was over in the western part of Vietnam, close by Cambodia and Laos.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: Their equipment was down. It was a very exciting trip on an Australian Caribou, me and another guy flying in there. It's another one of their transport planes.
- Jim: Yeah, I assumed that but I—

- Scheu: Umm, I don't know that we carry them on the Air Force inventory. It's a smaller transport, but the Australians were—
- Jim: Twin engine?
- Scheu: Twin engine, yup. The gate in the back came down. Carried about, oh, I think four pallets they could carry in there; I think the one I was on carried about four pallets. Smaller pallets than what would be on the 130. Palletized material that would be sent on—
- Jim: Stuff they load their equipment on?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. Yeah, I got called there for emergency tech assist and ah—
- Jim: You had to carry some tools?
- Scheu: No. Every shop would have all the equipment that would be needed. Most of it would be electronic equipment.
- Jim: So you didn't have to carry that?
- Scheu: No, didn't have to worry about that, but it was a transport plane going in there, so it's the first thing you had to go on, so that's how we had to go. Pretty soon the load master comes back as we're flying over Vietnam and says that we're probably gonna take some ground fire when we're flying into the landing strip at Bambi 2 which is—the landing strip was some miles, a few miles from the town where the radar site was.
- Jim: So you grab your balls and hope then—
- Scheu: Yeah, all of the sudden “ting, ting, ting.” You see the—He says, “We'll be going in fast.”
- Jim: [laughs] No shit. [laughs]
- Scheu: And then pretty soon you see the light coming through the holes in the side of the airplane, you know.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: We got shot up fairly good going in. He says, “And when we get down on the runway, as soon as we hit, the tailgate's coming down and as soon as we slow down enough we're swinging it around, everything sliding out and—
- Jim: All the pallets are shoved off.

- Scheu: —you guys are out of here. You just take cover.” Because it’s not at a base now, this is just a semi-insecure runway. So they drop us off, you know, we land, things slide around, me and this other guy are off, the pallets slide off and there he goes, shootin’ all over the damn place and we’re standing in the middle of this runway. [Jim laughs] Here comes a couple of jeeps with some security folks on ‘em and M-60 machine guns and it was a, “You know how to shoot one of these things?” “Yeah.” “Just start shootin’ at the jungle.” And away we go.
- Jim: They gave it to you?
- Scheu: That’s—it was mounted. It was mounted.
- Jim: So they asked you to shoot?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm.
- Jim: Which you’d never done before.
- Scheu: Oh yeah, I had done that.
- Jim: You had?
- Scheu: Training before going to Vietnam we had fired M-60s and also in Vietnam the site I was at, plus 50s. So away we go down the road and—
- Jim: Shootin’ up the side lines and—
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. But that didn’t last too long and then—
- Jim: You were clear.
- Scheu: We were clear, ‘cause they were just around the airport seeing if they could knock an airplane down mainly. So I get there and I was quite good at what I did on the equipment. It was relatively easy to fix, took me about half an hour. Had to stay there overnight, though, and it was relatively quiet.
- Jim: Did they give you something to eat?
- Scheu: Oh yeah. Their food there was quite good. The food there was quite good at that little, really remote site, but that was an Air Force site. Air Force chow halls and Army chow halls are two different things. But I spent the night there that was relatively quiet. Next day flew out, no problem, but then that night when I got back I had to work my shift when I got back, and then on the radio that night that was one of our sites they were calling in as they were losing

stuff. They got almost overrun that night. It was a very good place to be away from.

Jim: The place you just left?

Scheu: Bambi 2, yeah.

Jim: Wow.

Scheu: Yeah, they were down to the perimeter around the radar.

Jim: Where you just were.

Scheu: Mmm hmm, where I just was. As a matter of fact, they had lost that, the area that I was in.

Jim: All the equipment?

Scheu: Yeah, they'd just send in new equipment, wire it up and away you go.

Jim: So your repaired equipment all went?

Scheu: Mmm hmm, yeah; that was all destroyed, yeah. Pulled the pins on it and burned it up.

Jim: Oh.

Scheu: Thermite.

Jim: The people on the base did that?

Scheu: Yes.

Jim: Before they could do it?

Scheu: We had thermite grenades or thermite pads that would sit on a piece of equipment so you could destroy your equipment so the enemy couldn't get a hold of it.

Jim: Had they gotten a hold of that, what could they have done with that, or a piece of it?

Scheu: Well—

Jim: Little or much?

- Scheu: They would have made us do a lot.
- Jim: By switching things?
- Scheu: Yes. We would—the whole United States Air Force, Navy, Marine Corp, everybody that had that equipment would of—
- Jim: Made an adjustment.
- Scheu: —had to do some changes, yes. And they might have been able to take that and decode some yesterday's traffic. So now at least you might not have some real up to date stuff, but you might have some stuff that—as a matter of fact, for us guys that had the clearance, we were not supposed to be captured, we were supposed to be killed. We were expendable. That was not a well-publicized thing, but people with certain clearances were not supposed to be captured; we were supposed to be killed by our troops.
- Jim: Tell me how they presented this to you, please?
- Scheu: Ah, it was just a—
- Jim: Sort of unspoken?
- Scheu: Just this is what it is. The regs says you will not be put in a position where you can be killed or captured.
- Jim: They told Gary Powers that and he didn't kill himself. He didn't take his pill or whatever he was supposed to do; he didn't do it.
- Scheu: Yeah, very few guys would do that actually. Not that many people are that gung-ho about dying
- Jim: No kidding.
- Scheu: Yeah. [pause] Everybody likes to breathe in a little longer.
- Jim: Just a little while longer, anyway.
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. They always think there's another way out of it.
- Jim: But they didn't give you any pills or anything, nothing like that?
- Scheu: No, no.

- Jim: What did you think they thought you would do? Walk into some enemy fire or just stand there and duck out of the way, or what the hell did they think you were going to do?
- Scheu: If we were going to be overrun or something like that, it was basically our troop's responsibility to take care of me and a few other people.
- Jim: Oh, you mean the guy next to you is supposed to shoot you?
- Scheu: Well, the security folks would of probably taken care of that. Yeah. That was—I don't know if that was ever done anywhere, but that was the unspoken—
- Jim: This guy who just bought you a beer last night?
- Scheu: Yeah, he might be the—he might be the one. Of course you didn't want to have—we had bounties on us in Vietnam. Anybody that had clearances or people in communications, the VC and North Vietnamese would pay—
- Jim: But that was alive?
- Scheu: Yes. But then, ah, as you know most—there were a lot of people that were captured in Vietnam that we have no clue as to where they are.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: Umm, and as far as we know they were probably given some drugs, and you're given the right drugs, you're gonna tell everything you know, I don't care who ya are. We still have quite a few thousand from Korea, actually. Thousands from World War II.
- Jim: Oh, yes. Eight thousand in World War II have never been accounted for.
- Scheu: Yeah. And many of them are known to be in the—were known at the time to be in the hands of the Russians. A lot of the Korean troops were known to be in the hands of the Chinese and Russians, and the same with Vietnam.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Scheu: But we didn't, you didn't think about that stuff too much.
- Jim: How did you know there was a price on your head? They just told you as a group?
- Scheu: Yes.

- Jim: But not specifically.
- Scheu: We were told that—yeah, we were briefed on that. That communications people had rewards out for ‘em, be careful where you went, don’t tell people who you are.
- Jim: Be careful, you just went into the fire fight zone.
- Scheu: Oh yeah, they didn’t pay a whole lot of attention to that stuff. We would be put on guard duty. I was on guard duty one night and I normally had like eighteen clips for my M-16 and I had six rounds of ammo left when I got help. That was a rather trying time where I got to write to my sister and—
- Jim: How did you feel about loosing those, shootin’ up that?
- Scheu: Well, I was in the—they would take some of us Air Force types that weren’t security people and they put us on ground positions, sandbags up to your nose like that. We had concertina wire finely put around our perimeter, and a few lights there, and they give you your M-16 and a couple of pop flares, and you’re there to make noise, that’s what you’re told. You’re there to make noise when they come so we know they’re coming. That time, we’d get guard duty every month or so. That particular night I was behind the chow hall, which was jungle on both sides of you then, and, oh, I don’t know how late at night it was, that part escapes me now. But the first thing was there was a “thump” in my little bunker there and—
- Jim: Jesus.
- Scheu: I’m froze. Not jumping out, I’m—
- Jim: Looking for that gun.
- Scheu: The gun you had ready. The thump was a rock. Okay, they weren’t supplied very well on the island. We had about three hundred North Vietnamese regulars got put on the island one night and they would throw rocks to get range first.
- Jim: And they wanted you to shoot so they knew where you were?
- Scheu: No, they could tell where you’re at; that’s a piece of cake. You’re there in the light. There’s a light right in front of ya. They would throw a rock to get the range for throwing a grenade.
- Jim: Oh.

- Scheu: They just pick a rock about the size of a grenade and, okay. But then when the grenade come, that just landed about three feet short so it was this far away from me, but it was on the other side of the sandbags, on the bottom of the sandbags right in front of me.
- Jim: And?
- Scheu: Well, that'll loosen your stool up for ya. "Poof," that goes off and now it's time to do a little shootin'.
- Jim: So did that happen?
- Scheu: Yes, that happened.
- Jim: Then you grabbed your flare and threw that up?
- Scheu: No, no, didn't have time for that to begin with. First it's shoot.
- Jim: At anything.
- Scheu: 'Cause the—well they're shootin' then, too, as soon as the—
- Jim: Oh, the grenade had gone off.
- Scheu: The couple lights that were there, they were shot up. They were gone so the lights were out.
- Jim: You don't want to stick your head too high above those sandbags.
- Scheu: No, you're sitting about this high and you're taught to put the M-16, the butt of it in the middle of your chest, because you can't see the sights anyway.
- Jim: Right.
- Scheu: And then you, every third, fourth round depends on what you got for ammo, is a tracer, so you can see about where you're shooting, so "chchchch," and it doesn't take long to use up a clip.
- Jim: Right.
- Scheu: And then when things got a little quiet, then I'd pop a flare, but I was out of flares by the time—I only had, you only have three flares and I was out of them by the time I got help, but you know you're "pfff" and then pretty soon you're "Geez, this is my last clip." The sandbags are getting smaller because the sand is running out of the sandbags.

Jim: Where's the posse?

Scheu: Yeah. Where's the posse? And I can see the jeeps and stuff because you're up—one side, is, was like a valley and you could see the traffic on the other side of the site. The jeeps and stuff like that you could hear them, and I'm waitin' and waitin' and waitin' and there ain't nobody comin' yet. [phone rings] The machine can get that.

And then pretty soon you hear the “woof.” The mortar team, we had the Army mortar team there, the mortar team starts up. [pause in tape] They're gonna put up some flares, they're gonna put up some light for me. Of course, the first few they sent up were short and landed behind me.

Jim: Outlining you perfectly.

Scheu: Yes, outlining me perfectly because there's no other light around. Ah, sandbags got real short there, for a while.

Jim: Son of a bitch.

Scheu: And then I'm still doing a little bit of—

Jim: Weren't you screaming at these guys by then?

Scheu: Oh, they couldn't hear. They wouldn't have heard that anyway.

Jim: Too far away?

Scheu: Yeah. And then they'd finally start getting in range and start getting them out in front of me, and then I started really getting low on ammo. You put that last clip in there, and you put in eighteen in a clip; it holds twenty but you only put in eighteen to keep 'em from jamming. The M-16 had a tendency to jam, the springs would get weak, so you only put in eighteen. We were only supposed to have three clips, but you never turned your clips back in when you left, you always gave them to somebody. So I was lucky, I had eighteen clips. But anyway, you put that last clip in there and you know, you—they're shootin' at you and you go [sound of bullet firing] seventeen, sixteen.

Jim: Right.

Scheu: And boy, I'll tell you what. When you start getting down there, you get a little slower and slower.

Jim: You don't spray them, do you? It's one shot at a time.

Scheu: It's one shot at a time. And then pretty soon I hear the “memememe”.

- Jim: What's that?
- Scheu: Jeep comin' up, and then I could hear a little bit of cracklin' on the radio and then they started putting mortars out in front of me, high explosive stuff. Ahh and then the—
- Jim: No phosphorus?
- Scheu: Um, not there, not then. They usually used them during the day. But anyway, the, they start putting that stuff out in front of me then the jeep come up and asked what was goin' on. They could see where I had been shooting and stuff and they thought that I had hit somebody. That bothers me a bit.
- Jim: Why? The guy's trying to kill ya.
- Scheu: Oh yeah, but he's somebody, too.
- Jim: Not in my mind.
- Scheu: Yeah, but—
- Jim: Well, we won't dwell on that.
- Scheu: But anyway, then they brought me two more people, M-16 machine gun, all kinds of ammo, bunch of pop flares, and then nothin' happened; it was, it was done there. Then they hit the other side of the site. Of course that was standard thing, try to draw—
- Jim: Yeah, they'd rush in one area and pull back as soon as we—yeah.
- Scheu: They would—well, it was see how much of our protection we could draw to that particular site and make the other side weaker, so what they did was, I was expendable there anyway and they knew I was still shootin', so I must still be there, so they reinforced the—they put a bunch more troops on the other side of the site and that's where they ended up hitting in force. It didn't get nowhere, but that's where they ended up.
- Jim: That's the ploy, though?
- Scheu: Yeah, that's the ploy.
- Jim: Didn't you explain to your superiors how valuable you were and you had a price on your head and that you shouldn't be out there in that position?
- Scheu: Nah. No, you never talk to your superiors like that. [both laugh]

Jim: It's too logical?

Scheu: Yeah, there wasn't a whole lot of logic at the time. For instance—

Jim: But they knew that you had this extra value?

Scheu: Yes.

Jim: But they still put you out on point?

Scheu: Sure.

Jim: That doesn't add up.

Scheu: They don't care. A lot of the powers that be didn't really care. The first time we got hit there, we had no concertina wire up, no nothing. We had Army and Air Force. Okay, now you know the Army is gonna be much better trained than we are as far as settin' up a perimeter or anything like that. Well, the first time we got hit, the first round come through right across the—you know, it's just a dirt road, and right across, the next hooch over, right across from mine. Went right through a guy's bed. [people talking in distance]

Jim: Could you close that door, those girls are talking too loud?

Woman: The sound's coming from _____. We're having _____.

Jim: Oh, I know that, but I don't want to record it.

Woman: [unintelligible]

Jim: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Scheu: Went right through a guy's bed that had just got called to work five minutes before that. He was—this was like at midnight; right at midnight you can hear him, he's bitchin' and moaning that he's got to go to work and "f" this and "f" that and blah, blah, blah, and no sooner does the jeep that picked him up start driving away, then the round went right through his bed. Blew the concrete out of the floor.

Jim: Jesus.

Scheu: But then we had troops all over inside our perimeter and lo and behold the only people that had weapons and ammo was the Air Force. The Army stuff was locked up in the, in their hooches in containers, no keys for 'em. They busted off the locks, no ammo. We held the perimeter until the Air Force

signed out ammunition, I mean until the Army signed out ammunition from supply.

Jim: Somebody must have been court-martialed for this.

Scheu: Oh, no. No, no.

Jim: The Army overlooked that?

Scheu: Sure. The only thing that happened over that was a lot of congressmen got written, and after that the Army got to carry ammo and their weapons. The Army commander didn't trust 'em. [laughs]

Jim: Well see, that brings another whole angle. He didn't want the soldiers having any weapons without a specific reason?

Scheu: Mmm hmm.

Jim: Fearing for his life?

Scheu: Well, I think that could be part of it. The Army's discipline is a lot different than the Air Force discipline from what I see. You know, I'm not sure how their discipline worked, but I've had a lot of troops that have come in, a lot of my people who I take care of come in and talk to me and they talk about where their officer got fragged, got killed.

Jim: By friendly troops, dropping a grenade?

Scheu: And I don't know if that was in the back of their minds or whatever, but to begin with they weren't trusted with—

Jim: Well, the morale in the Navy and Air Force is infinitely higher than the Army universally.

Scheu: Yes, that's true. It was a different place to be; it was almost like a dream place. Home was a dream. Family was a dream.

Jim: Did you know how long you were going to be there?

Scheu: Yes. Air Force was a year.

Jim: A year?

Scheu: Unless you happened to come down with some sort of disease, then you might be there longer. If you happened to be one of the runners and came down with some type of venereal disease because ya were runnin' around,

you might be stayin' there longer, which I knew some people who ended up havin' to stay longer.

Jim: As punishment?

Scheu: No, you weren't allowed to go back if you had—

Jim: Oh, they didn't want you to share that bacteria?

Scheu: Yeah, they didn't want to share it back home, yeah. Then the guys would have to write funny letters to their wife to explain.

Jim: He's too important to send home?

Scheu: That was the standard letter.

Jim: [laughs] I got to get rid of this clap, right.

Scheu: Yeah, clap and some other ones. There were some—

Jim: I know the other ones. I saw a lot of them on my hospital ship.

Scheu: Oh God, I can imagine that, yeah. One of our—we had maids that would come from the—what you want to call them? Mama sans, they would come, oh, probably 9:00 in the morning, leave at 3:00 in the afternoon. I don't know why exactly they did that, but they would come and do our laundry and sweep up the place, stuff like that. The ones we had were really from the sticks, though, and they didn't even know what electricity was, so when we got power and stuff our Mama san that we had, Ma Leung [?] her name was, she was gonna start a fire to heat up the iron, to make the iron hot; she couldn't, the damn cord kept getting' in the way on her and stuff. She was really quite excited when you'd plug it into the wall and it got hot. [Jim laughs] But that was a real, she was a real learning experience. She was a—she liked me because I was young and it was easy to say "Scheu" because "Choi," "Scheu" you know. She would laugh when she'd come in and she'd give me something. Like I'm not much of a breakfast eater, but I was like her baby san; I was twenty years old. "Here, here, you've got to eat something."

Jim: What would she do? She had—

Scheu: She would do the laundry. Sweep the floors.

Jim: Everybody's laundry?

Scheu: For our little twelve man area there.

Jim: Your hooch?

Scheu: Our little hooch, yeah.

Jim: Now your hooch held how many? Twelve?

Scheu: Twelve people and then finally we got, we stole refrigerators from the mainland. We sent an Army guy and an Air Force guy over to the supply dump and—

Jim: [laughs] You nicked them?

Scheu: Yeah, we, you know, you take an Army E-9 and an Air Force E-9, put 'em on the back of a deuce and a half

Jim: E-9?

Scheu: Senior Master or Chief Master Air Force.

Jim: Oh, you mean he had enough rank that he could get this stuff?

Scheu: Well, nobody would question him. You'd just drive into the supply depot and you take some, the lowest ranked people you could find, a couple of two stripers with ya, just point at stuff and have 'em load it up on the truck and then you forget to stop when you get to the gate and you drive right on the LST and out to the island you go. We had to steal concertina wire 'cause we had nobody trained to put up concertina wire.

Jim: Yeah, that takes a special—

Scheu: So they won't give it to you.

Jim: It's like barbed wire but it's like razor blades; it'll cut ya to ribbons.

Scheu: Yeah. When I got to the jungle it was probably, maybe a hundred feet from the back of the back of hooches and no concertina wire, hardly nothin'. We would take turns sittin' out on the back of the hooch.

Jim: At night?

Scheu: Watching.

Jim: Your own special patrol.

Scheu: Yeah. Our own. We'd do it by ourselves. Nobody else seemed to be smart enough.

- Jim: That would disturb your sleep, no question about that.
- Scheu: Yeah, that was—but most of the time nights I was working. I worked most every night. You work thirteen and then you were off for a day.
- Jim: Off for a day? But there's no place to go.
- Scheu: You could go to the mainland.
- Jim: The LST bring you back?
- Scheu: You could go to Nha Trang. You could go to Nha Trang, spend a couple hours there, maybe get a case of beer, put on your shoulder, bring it back, put it in your little refrigerator and—
- Jim: I have this feeling that nobody really bothered ya; if you look like you know what you're doing, you could drag practically anything back to that island.
- Scheu: Yes, mmm hmm.
- Jim: Nobody bothered to question.
- Scheu: We had one guy went and he got himself a jeep. [unintelligible], you know. Very, very hard to come by.
- Jim: No kidding.
- Scheu: Yeah, he just stole one.
- Jim: Somebody's going to miss that.
- Scheu: Stolen, but who's going to come to the island to look for it?
- Jim: Just rolled it into the LST?
- Scheu: Yeah, just drive it on and away on the island you go and there's—you can put gas in any time you want. His big problem was we had a total of about two miles of road on the island and he got drunk the night after he stole it and he rolled it in front of the commander's headquarters building where there was a little hooch where the orderly room was. Then he got in trouble but he got to go home.
- Jim: That was bad timing.
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. But a lot of people did a lot of stupid things over there.

- Jim: Why?
- Scheu: People would—Oh, I don't think a lot of 'em cared. After a while sanity kind of changes. You're around, you live in a situation which you're completely unaccustomed to, the food is terrible, there are basically no women around, and women, I think, moderate a lot of things. If there's women around, we're still brought up for that.
- Jim: You behave a little better.
- Scheu: There's no running water. You have no contact with really the outside world. You work lots and lots of hours and you carry a gun and people are trying' to kill ya.
- Jim: I see. Yeah, you get an attitude.
- Scheu: You really change. Like I say, it's kinda like a—after a while—
- Jim: Atavistic, I think the term is.
- Scheu: You start—like I was saying before, home is like a dream world and stuff. It's not really there. You write letters home. I was real good at that; I wrote basically every day.
- Jim: I did too.
- Scheu: Of course that's the way you get mail. A lot of guys were jealous of me. They'd go down when the mail call was at the Con X, I'd get lots and lots of mail. I have a big family and a lot of my sisters and relatives, teachers—
- Jim: Terrific.
- Scheu: —and they would put my name up on the board: Here, write my brother. Got lots of packages, a lot of food and stuff, and like I was sayin', the food stuff **[End of tape 1, side B]** that was really tough to come by. Believe it or not that was the—
- Jim: It was hard to get food over there? By mail?
- Scheu: Well, you could get it by mail, but that was about the only way you were gonna get something other than the same stuff you ate in the chow hall every day.
- Jim: Or you nicked from the officer's mess.

- Scheu: Mmm hmm. And I would get sausage, cheese. People would—I was known so well known to get packages, I would be followed back to the hooch [Jim laughs] and of course—
- Jim: [unintelligible]
- Scheu: —a lot of the guys, not being from Wisconsin, don't know that mold on the outside of stuff don't hurt it. So I'd get sausage in the mail, I always had a clean garbage can, I'd get sausage in the mail and it would be just fuzzy and they'd go "ah." And I'd go "Ah, damn" and throw it in the garbage can and then I'd get the cheese and the cheese would have mold growing on it.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: "Bam" in the garbage can, and put their head down and walk away, you'd get it out of the garbage can, [Jim laughs] clean it up and eat it. Otherwise you had to share too much. I'd share it with the hooch [Jim laughs] but can't do the whole sec that way. But some guys wouldn't like you because you got too much mail.
- Jim: Oh, I'm sure.
- Scheu: Because there were so many people that got none. Oh, I felt sorry for them guys.
- Jim: We had the same problem on our ship. A lot of guys were really depressed.
- Scheu: Yes. I think that was one of the biggest things that helped me keep my sanity was the contact with family at home
- Jim: Nothing exceeded mail from home.
- Scheu: Yeah. I'd read that stuff over and over again, the whole highlight of the day or when we would get mail was get those letters, and sometimes you'd let other people read your mail because they didn't get any.
- Jim: They didn't get any?
- Scheu: Yeah, they didn't get any.
- Jim: Tell me about the disease rate; was that pretty high?
- Scheu: Oh, I would say, the island I was at was probably 25%.
- Jim: But the girls that they would attack or share with would be these people that helped out on the—

- Scheu: On the island, no. They would go to the mainland.
- Jim: Yeah, there wasn't anybody on the island really.
- Scheu: No. All, like Mama san, if you saw a picture of Mama san—
- Jim: Ya right.
- Scheu: —you'd have to be—
- Jim: There was no inspiration there?
- Scheu: Yeah, there was no inspiration. The only time there was really inspiration was when we would get, once in a great while they would have, what do they call them? Red Cross girls, or whatever, come over. They were always under guard, under armed guard.
- Jim: [laughs] I'm sure.
- Scheu: But guys would just be—you know.
- Jim: You hadn't seen a girl for a long time?
- Scheu: Yeah. But sometimes it was really quite surprising at how the morals couldn't be better. I can remember one time they had a stripper come out and she was very good lookin' with her clothes on but as her clothes came off there were more and more boos.
- Jim: Boos?
- Scheu: Boos, oh yeah. Boo, boo, boo, put it back on, you know.
- Jim: Oh, my.
- Scheu: But, you know, it showed how things went. The best thing we probably got was a family group came out one time and played music and sang. They had little kids with them, which was really quite surprising.
- Jim: From the States?
- Scheu: No, I think they were from somewhere in Europe. Had everybody crying'. Little kids singing songs. Oh, that's somethin' that touched most guys' hearts over there was kids.
- Jim: Home.

- Scheu: Home. We got permission to have Mama san—her husband was an ARVN soldier and he had his legs blown off, so she was the sole support for the family and stuff. And umm, she always wanted to take ice cubes home because she had never seen ice cubes, ya know. And she had to have permission for everything, so she'd wrap 'em up in a handkerchief to take 'em home. She had about a three hour ride home, so she didn't have ice cubes when she got home.
- Jim: No.
- Scheu: But she didn't know even refrigerator, freezer.
- Jim: That was a mystery to her?
- Scheu: I showed her pictures of my wife from Antigo standing in front of a snow bank; she wondered what that stuff was. I told Mama san it was the same as in the freezer at home. "You boocusaw [?]," you big liar; that can't be like that, you know. But like I say, she was like a mother to a lot of us, you know. And then, you know, we tried to explain stuff to her and finally we got permission for her to bring her kids out to the island.
- Jim: Huh.
- Scheu: And she'd get to bring one kid out and that kid would get spoiled so rotten; anything that kid would want to have that kid could have. Anybody'd give 'em anything just to talk to them, and most of the people could hardly communicate with them at all. Yeah. Mama san you'd almost have to strip every day before she left so that she wasn't stealin' anything. T-shirts, underwear.
- Jim: Who made her do that? I mean who'd check to make sure she wasn't taking anything?
- Scheu: We'd just say, "Okay, Mama san." She'd say, "Okay, time to go now." "Okay, Mama san," have her pull up her blouse, see if she had a T-shirt on underneath. Pull down her pants see if she was wearing GI underwear.
- Jim: Honest to God.
- Scheu: Otherwise your stuff would all disappear.
- Jim: Incredible.
- Scheu: Yeah. But then it was—she needed stuff to sell on the black market to support her family.

- Jim: Oh, that's what she would do with it; she wouldn't use it herself?
- Scheu: Yeah. So we would end up, after we found out about this, we kind of helped her out.
- Jim: Give her money?
- Scheu: No, money wouldn't do her much good.
- Jim: Oh?
- Scheu: Then she'd get in trouble with that. She would get stopped and searched and stuff.
- Jim: Oh, oh.
- Scheu: They would stop and see if they had soap with them and stuff like that, take that off of 'em.
- Jim: Who would?
- Scheu: The ARVN troops, the American troops. They would have to go through some checkpoints and if they weren't supposed to have it they would—
- Jim: If they had soap they took it away from them?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. So we would sneak stuff past all that if we had it and then we'd hand it to her after she was past all that stuff, then she would get away with it and stuff. But she was really an ugly, nice, nice woman. Umm, and they would know when things were gonna be happening, when the, when we were gonna get hit and stuff like that; they knew that. I know she was upset that I didn't have—I was one of her favorites, 'cause I was her baby san. She was upset that we didn't have camouflage jungle fatigues, and I said, "Well, the Air Force don't have them." When I was over there some of the Army had 'em but the Air Force didn't have 'em, so she went on the black market and got me camouflage jungle fatigues which I was supposed to wear that night I went on guard duty, that night I almost ran out of ammo; that's what she bought 'em for.
- Jim: That's incredible.
- Woman: Did you wear 'em?
- Scheu: Oh yeah.

Jim: Interesting.

Scheu: Yeah. Really, ah, I don't know—really different. She was like people's family; she was the closest contact to a woman you could have.

Jim: Mmm hmm.

Woman: Have you spoken with her since you've been back?

Scheu: No, I would imagine she's dead, that's what I would think.

Jim: Because?

Scheu: Because she was helpin' us.

Jim: Oh, so when the communists took over—

Scheu: Yep. They would have known what she was doing even at the time, like the lady that took care of the hooch across the street, she was killed and her head was put on a pole in front of her house by the VC 'cause she worked for us. 'Cause, you know—

Jim: That's too bad.

Scheu: Literally nothing to do with the war, but life is so cheap over there.

Jim: I understand.

Scheu: Life is so cheap. Mama san didn't know what shampoo was, even and bein'—yeah, Mama san was probably 35, looked like she was 60 or 80, you know. But they were like little kids if they would get something, you know. Holler at ya if you left any money out.

Jim: She wouldn't steal?

Scheu: No, she wouldn't steal that.

Jim: She'd take your T-shirt, but not your money?

Scheu: She'd wake you up and tell you, "You'd better damn well put that money away." She says, "Somebody take, who they come and see? Mama san."

Jim: Oh, that's right; it was protection for her.

Scheu: It was automatic that she was gonna get blamed for anything valuable that got stolen and she needed that job or else her and her husband were probably

going to starve to death. She had a bunch of little kids. Of course, who knows. Maybe she was bringing some extra ones out, too, to get those candy bars and the ice cream and stuff like that that we'd steal.

Jim: When you're trying to survive you'll do anything.

Scheu: Sure. Well, that's like I was sayin', I would of never thought of breaking in and stealing food.

Jim: Right. But you thought nothing of it when you were in that situation.

Scheu: No. Stick your M-16 in the lock and twist it and snap that baby, snap the lock off and—

Jim: Now we got bacon.

Scheu: Yup. Canned bacon. Ohh. Stole a little gasoline stove, one of those little bitty ones.

Jim: Sterno?

Scheu: No, gasoline, would take regular gasoline. Heat the stuff up and bread and bacon sandwiches. Steal tuna fish.

Jim: That must have been just like cake for you.

Scheu: Oh, yeah, everybody'd be sittin' around, you know, all the lights out, all you got is the little glow from the stove 'cause if people knew about it everybody and their brother's gonna be there, and you had to eat it quick because pretty soon the smell was gonna get out.

Jim: [laughs] Especially bacon.

Scheu: Yeah. Because, well, night time, God, we had—we worked fourteen hour shifts and midnight chow for us was onion soup, period.

Jim: Every night?

Scheu: Every night. No nothin' else with it. No, nothing. We stole C-rations to eat. And we were, we—

Jim: Boy, you were down to desperate.

Scheu: And we were stealing the—we still had stuff from World War II; that's how old the C-rations were.

- Jim: Yeah, but at least you got a candy bar there.
- Scheu: Canned stuff, most of the stuff was really quite good. The cigarettes would burn like a fuse.
- Jim: Yeah, I expect.
- Scheu: Oh yeah. Boy, did we smoke a lot over there. Holy smokes.
- Jim: Did everybody smoke pot?
- Scheu: No, very few Air Force people that I knew smoked pot. A lot of Army guys smoked pot, but they had much more access to something like that than we would. They would get access because it grows all over the damn place.
- Jim: All over Vietnam?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. And me, I'm dumb enough, seeing as I was never interested in that, I wouldn't of even of known at the time what it looked like. Could tell ya that it smells like rope.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Scheu: But then I have this love of life, too. I don't figure your chance of living is real good if you're all hepped up on pot and you get hit that night.
- Jim: So this is mainly out in the boonies with the Army and Marines?
- Scheu: Yeah. There was some minor stuff I would say that was done on the bigger bases and things like that, but I don't think most of the time it was usually that much. The people that I see here that come and see me that talk about it that have drug problems, they were usually in units that were out in the jungle. They spent a lot of time out in the jungle.
- Jim: That's what I've learned is that most of the guys are—
- Scheu: You know, then they were under some pretty bad stresses. I figure I had it pretty good.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: People shot at us once in a while and stuff but—
- Jim: But not every second.
- Scheu: Yeah. And I had a bed to go to every day.

Jim: That helped.

Scheu: A lot of people didn't have that. I had a fifty-five gallon drum to take a crap in, of course you had to burn 'em once in a while but—

Jim: Right.

Scheu: A lot of people didn't have that.

Jim: How did your specific job go? Did that seem to work alright? The equipment worked the way you wanted and—

Scheu: I was pretty lucky there.

Jim: Did that become sort of routine after a while?

Scheu: Yes, after a while, and that's always been my thing. I was into electronics when I was in high school and after you understand the basics of electronics, but almost everything is digital these days and with that stuff it's ones and zeros that you're playin' with, and I understood that quite well. We would have some problems once in awhile with temperature, things like that, but usually I didn't have too much of a problem.

Jim: Moisture didn't bother your equipment?

Scheu: We didn't really—well, the problem with the equipment with moisture would be you may get some mold or something like that growing on it, but most all of us had—oh, I can't think of what it's called any more. You had a box with another piece of equipment in, basically in parts, and toss—I shouldn't say toss it, you take it out and put a new one in and send it in to get repaired someplace if you couldn't fix it up yourself, if you couldn't clean it up. And a lot of the equipment was coated with stuff to prevent fungus from growing on it and stuff.

Jim: Oh, yeah.

Scheu: But usually things, usually equipment and stuff worked pretty good.

Jim: In Desert Storm the problem was sand, it's just another problem.

Scheu: Yeah, Desert Storm was sand.

Jim: I had a friend; she was over there as a doctor and she said the x-ray equipment wouldn't last three months. There was just no way they could keep the sand out.

- Scheu: Yeah. Our country wasted so much stuff over there. We'd get inspections so that we'd have to take our extra stuff and throw it over the side of the hill, otherwise you'd get written up for having it. It was just amazing.
- Jim: Wait a minute, why? You weren't supposed to have it?
- Scheu: You had too much. If you happened to get too much, you ordered one, you got two.
- Jim: But then you were penalized if—
- Scheu: You got caught with it, sure. Supply, boots. I'll tell ya, one of the things with supply, boots. They were only authorized to have so many and so many sizes. I mean, yeah. Like so many size 8's, so many size 8 ½'s like that, right?
- Jim: You mean per unit or squadron or what?
- Scheu: For our supply on that island.
- Jim: Okay.
- Scheu: Umm, inspectors come and you're gonna get so many because they expect you to use so many. So you don't wear 'em out as fast as you're supposed to wear 'em out, so supply has too many of 'em; over the side of the hill, or else, brand new ones, or else you go to work and take 'em and somebody's leaving, "What size boots you wear? You want six pair?" "tu-tu-tu-tu."
- Jim: You'd give him those?
- Scheu: Sure. I knew one guy shipped a whole radio set back, complete with antenna. It was time for him to leave and we had an inspection team coming and we had a radio that was a spare that had been stolen someplace else.
- Jim: You didn't want to be charged for it?
- Scheu: And we'd just get in trouble; you got too many questions asked. Because war is not the same game as peace time. You know. Packed it up and away it went rather than destroying it.
- Jim: But he could get that through customs and all that?
- Scheu: Yeah, most of the time. Put it in hold baggage and ship it.
- Jim: In—

- Scheu: Hold baggage, your baggage that you—
- Jim: Ship it to a warehouse somewhere and then you pick it up later?
- Scheu: No, they'd come and pick it up from your, from right when you were leaving. They'd give you a box to ship your personal possessions back home in.
- Jim: Okay.
- Scheu: You could fit it in there and nail it shut, away it's gonna go, it's gonna be waiting for you at your next base.
- Jim: So it's HOLD, that's hold baggage, you say.
- Scheu: Hold baggage, yes.
- Jim: So at the next base, then you'd just claim that and find another airplane to ship it on further?
- Scheu: No, it'd be delivered right to your home.
- Jim: From Vietnam?
- Scheu: Sure. Right to your home, yeah, when you were leaving.
- Jim: That's an opportunity for a lot of people to steal a lot of valuable stuff. And I suppose they did.
- Scheu: A lot of weapons got sent back home that way. That was probably the biggest thing is weapons. But if they x-rayed and stuff like that it was, you know, they couldn't tell what was in there, it looked like a stereo or whatever.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Scheu: As long as it didn't look like a gun you were alright. Pictures were difficult. If you took a lot of pictures and stuff like that, a lot of times that stuff never came back.
- Jim: They'd open your bags and take 'em out and throw 'em, who knows.
- Scheu: You would just send your stuff in to get developed and if it was stuff that showed much of anything, that would have a tendency to just disappear, it wouldn't be there, you know, when the film comes back, or else the whole roll of film would disappear and they'd send you a thing back and say "Here's a free roll of film. Nothin' showed up on yours." Ha ha.

- Jim: Especially after we opened it in the light, right?
- Scheu: Yeah.
- Woman: Do you communicate with your hooch mates?
- Scheu: No.
- Woman: Not at all?
- Scheu: Not at all.
- Jim: No interest? You dismiss that quickly.
- Scheu: The, oh, how shall I say it? The Air Force I think is probably different than any other branch as far as putting people together. Now my hooch mates could have been there anywhere from a month to twelve months. When they got there they were gonna be gone in twelve months. We didn't all get there at the same time. About the only time we were together other than at work—you know, at work you just had a very few people. I still know a couple of them, but the guys that I lived with you only saw them waking hours, maybe an hour a day, if that. You know, I had maybe six hours to sleep a day and that was it. Other than when we'd steal food, you'd sit down and talk and things like that, and I don't know, tell a few stories and things like that and try to get people calmed down. Some of them would get pretty wound up once in a while, they'd get letters from home that weren't good, and things like that. But ah—
- Woman: You didn't bond with anybody that you'd want to see and talk to again?
- Scheu: No, you didn't get real close with a lot of people. I don't know if you were worried about losing 'em because you're—
- Jim: That's true in the rifle companies. You don't ever want to get close to a guy because that guy might be shot.
- Scheu: You didn't do a big thing when somebody left, they just kind of left. You didn't, ah, otherwise, you know, you'd probably cry. When people were goin' home, people would get jealous that you were goin' home.
- Jim: I'm sure.
- Scheu: You can usually see somewhat the fear in their eyes when they were goin' home, because that last night or two they weren't gonna have an M-16, they had to turn that thing in, and after you live with one of them for twenty-four

hours a day, seven days a week you kind of miss that security, that's part of you, and you got to turn it in.

Jim: So they had to sleep the last couple of nights without that gun?

Scheu: Mmm hmm.

Jim: Yeah.

Scheu: And otherwise you had it right there, I mean loaded.

Jim: I understand. But you had to turn that in?

Scheu: You had to turn it in at least twenty-four hours before you left, usually forty-eight.

Jim: That made a tough two nights.

Scheu: Mmm hmm. 'Cause you're always worried that something was gonna happen and what are you going to do because that's—you memorize your serial number, the little bitty club that we had, that we built out of a hooch with flare casings, the insulation that's around the flare casings, you know, you'd go in there and you'd check your gun at the bar, you know, and it's just sittin' there right next to the bar.

Jim: Wild west, right?

Scheu: Yeah, and drink your beer and take your gun and go home.

Jim: Did you have good access to beer?

Scheu: Yes. After a while we had access to beer. The first six months, eight months the only beer you could get or booze you could get you had to go to the mainland to get and—

Jim: Is that right?

Scheu: —for the longest time we had no way of cooling it until we ended up stealin' those refrigerators.

Jim: Right.

Scheu: And warm beer wasn't very tasty and most of the time, you know, you're one day and fourteen when you were off. That day there was a good chance you got drunk when you got back, but you had to be in good enough shape to go and work again the next morning and it better be a quiet night. If there was,

had much been going on those few days before that, you probably weren't going to get drunk.

Jim: You just wanted to sleep.

Scheu: Yeah.

Jim: And the USO came over once, twice?

Scheu: Yeah, just a couple of times they came over. It was more of a, okay, here's, we're here.

Jim: But it wasn't much?

Scheu: No. Very minor. They might be there for an hour and they might bring, I don't know five, six girls out there and they'd play chess or something like that, but once in a while we had a few shows that would come over, mostly, like I say, strippers or something like that, you know.

Jim: Generally disappointing?

Scheu: Mmm hmm, yes.

Jim: Mail okay? Mail no problem?

Scheu: Mail, ah, mail we got probably three times a week.

Jim: That's pretty good.

Scheu: Yes, we were very lucky with that.

Jim: Yeah, even aboard ship we never got mail that often.

Scheu: Sometimes you'd get it almost every day, then you might get it weekly, you got it once, but most of the time if the weather was halfway decent, you know, and the LST could get back and forth fairly decently you'd be all right. You'd get your mail and your packages.

Jim: You had no leave time?

Scheu: No, not even R and R.

Jim: Weekends, but—

Scheu: No, I had one day in fourteen I was off.

- Jim: So that was it, there was no more?
- Scheu: There was no more, no. And if you were gonna take R and R, which supposedly everybody was authorized, then there was the fear of you might be here longer if you take R and R.
- Jim: Because?
- Scheu: Because you're gonna be gone and we're gonna be short people, so we just might just put you down for another couple of weeks. It wasn't that hard to screw somebody over and keep 'em for a while longer.
- Jim: Geepers. You have to watch your back, too.
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. And then, too, you see the guys that come back from R and R and, god, some of them are really depressed when they come back, and you don't want to get the way they were.
- Jim: Just the thought of going back into that life was just too much for 'em?
- Scheu: I think it's almost scary to go back. It was almost scary to come back home. The different—
- Jim: By come home, you're saying come back to your same duties?
- Scheu: No, to come back home after you leave, to leave it, in a way it was almost—
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: —it was almost scary because you learned that life and it's a very kind of regimented life kind of thing, you know. You did almost the same thing every day, you carried a gun, you're responsible for yourself and the guy next to ya. And then all of the sudden that's gonna be gone. You're gonna be out there on your own and you're gonna have to act different now. I know I didn't act very good when I came home. That "f" word was somethin' I was usin' all the time that I new knew I was usin'.
- Jim: Sure. I think all of us that were overseas for a time had an adjustment period, not as severe as yours, but just you all of a sudden had to start making decisions and you weren't allowed to make any decisions before.
- Scheu: Loud noises weren't good to be around.
- Jim: Yeah, I expect that.

- Scheu: Train tracks went right by my mother-in-law's house in Antigo; that wasn't a good thing.
- Jim: Any noise—I mean specific—
- Scheu: Yeah, that loud noise of the—you'd be at least out of bed.
- Jim: Any nightmares?
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. Once in a while I would dream, dream through the stuff in Vietnam.
- Jim: Do you recall what those generally were like?
- Scheu: Most of the dreams were repeats of stuff that happened. I can picture—like the night that I was telling you about when I had six rounds of ammo left. I can just run through that in my mind, just like watching a movie.
- Jim: It comes out okay each time though. [laughs]
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. It's the same pretty much every time, you bet. And it was, you know, one of the things that seems strange about it is it was worse after it was all over than when it was happening. It was the next day when, that's when the nerves hit ya and you start thinking, "Holy smokes, I could've got killed." You really look at your life a whole lot—anyway for me, you know, it was like the next day and then it was, "Oh wow." You know, "I could've got killed out there. What would of my wife done?" And I had a baby, you know. Of course I never wrote her about that stuff. But that one I had to write somebody, so I wrote my sister. She took care of that; she handled that real well. She was my sound—
- Jim: You wanted your wife to know about these things but be told in a more gentle fashion?
- Scheu: No, no she never knew. She never knew. I just wrote my sister and explained to her what had happened and that hey, maybe I won't come home. There is that possibility and can you kind of keep an eye out for—
- Jim: You could have phoned home.
- Scheu: Ah, that was an almost impossible thing.
- Jim: The lines were so long?
- Scheu: Oh, we didn't have any lines where I was at; there weren't any telephones.

- Jim: The lines generally, a phone in Saigon?
- Scheu: We would have to go through radio relay stuff.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: And that would have been very difficult for us to do, even when my son was born when I was over there. By the time I got the Red Cross message that got delivered to me while I was working, the Red Cross message was down to that my wife had a baby and I didn't know what day or what the sex was.
- Jim: Great message.
- Scheu: I mean, that's how bad communications were that way, and the mail, the mail system was gonna probably take me about two weeks or maybe a little bit better, so then it was write home and mention "the baby," don't mention boy or girl because you don't want to get too excited about one or the other and get in trouble that way. And then finally the letter would come that said—
- Jim: Which it was.
- Scheu: Yeah. Sometimes they were in the wrong order and stuff, but as far as I know, I don't recall anybody calling home from there. From the island. I don't even know—
- Jim: But in Saigon, I know some guys called home from Saigon.
- Scheu: Yeah. There they had regular landlines, communication lines and stuff like that.
- Jim: Regular phones.
- Scheu: I don't know if we'd have been allowed to use our radio and stuff. Because they were all tactical, it was all tactical equipment, and I don't know if they'd allow us to use any of the channels to call back and forth. I know when I was in Korea, then we could, but not when I was in Vietnam. I don't recall anybody doing it anyway.
- Jim: When did you go to Korea?
- Scheu: I was in Korea in the mid '70s . I was there—I was in the Air Force for twenty-one years. I was there in Korea in the mid '70s. What years would that have been? '75, '76, something like that.
- Jim: What was your duty there?

- Scheu: I was crypto maintenance.
- Jim: Crypto maintenance, still? It was quiet?
- Scheu: Well, most of the time it was quiet. They still would be, the North Koreans still sent troops down to blow up the oil lines and do this—
- Jim: Right.
- Scheu: —and do that.
- Jim: Where were you stationed in Korea?
- Scheu: Kunsan, otherwise known as the asshole of Korea. That's—
- Jim: I'm not sure where that is, but I've been—
- Scheu: South of Seoul, and it's on the western, it's on the China, China Sea.
- Jim: China Sea. That's near Inchon, right?
- Scheu: Mmm?
- Jim: Well, Inchon is west of Kunsan.
- Scheu: No, this would be more in the middle of the country.
- Jim: Okay.
- Scheu: It was another great learning experience over there. My boss had been there for like seven years. He taught me to write my name in Korean, stuff like that.
- Woman: Was your family with you?
- Scheu: No, family couldn't go with over there. That was still too dangerous, too backward a place. Very, very, very poor country.
- Jim: You wouldn't of wanted them there.
- Scheu: Yeah. But communications were a lot easier there. There was a lot more things to do. Things to—alcohol was much more of a problem over there in Korea, I'd say, than in Vietnam.
- Jim: It was more available to you?
- Scheu: Yeah. Much, much more available.

- Jim: How big a base was that?
- Scheu: Kunsan was a pretty big base. I would say we probably had more than two thousand troops there, something like that, and quite a big contingent of Iraq soldiers there too.
- Jim: This was an Air Force base?
- Scheu: Right, yes.
- Jim: Did you have the big planes there or the smaller planes like helicopters?
- Scheu: We had everything.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: But mostly fighters, which mostly was air protection. We were back from Seoul because they didn't figure anything at Seoul would last more than fifteen minutes; if there was a war, the first thing that would get wiped out would be the airport there, where you get further south from Seoul and most of the highways were set up for runways. They could land aircraft all over the place there. American soldiers probably were liked more there than any place I've ever been, including this country.
- Jim: The Koreans were nice to you?
- Scheu: The older Koreans especially. The older Koreans, the papa sans with the funny hats and a little beard, they'd walk up to ya on the street, shake your hand and thank you for being there.
- Jim: Oh, really? I never had—of course I was there in the '50s; they weren't doing that then.
- Scheu: See we were in the sticks, too, so that was **[end of tape 2, side A]** a little different there.
- Jim: People are nicer in the sticks.
- Scheu: Yeah, they are. I think that's like most parts of the world. People are a little more friendly.
- Jim: I've observed that many, many times.
- Scheu: There was still a curfew when I was over there.

- Jim: Oh, really?
- Scheu: 11:00 o'clock curfew. I knew guys over there they'd be puking their guts out at 11:00 o'clock at night in the middle of the road, just waiting to get picked up because they're past curfew, and the Koreans would drag 'em in their house, clean 'em up, feed 'em, wash their clothes, next morning send 'em off to work with a clean uniform.
- Jim: Isn't that's nice.
- Scheu: Yeah. Really amazing how nice a lot of the people were.
- Jim: How about the marijuana in Korea as compared with Vietnam?
- Scheu: Didn't have any contact with that at all.
- Jim: None whatsoever?
- Scheu: Yeah. But like I say, alcohol is a real serious problem. We had probably the—I think it was the largest NCO club in southeast Asia was there, and alcohol was cheap and there was a lot of it around.
- Jim: What was your rank by this time?
- Scheu: I was a Tec Sergeant.
- Jim: Tec Sergeant?
- Scheu: Yeah, waiting to sew on Master. Ah, but I still did the same thing. I liked working lots of hours, keeps me out of trouble. A lot of temptation over there.
- Jim: Yeah, were the brothels pretty thick and—
- Scheu: Oh yeah, there's a place called A Town which was several miles off base which was a government-run brothel, probably had five hundred prostitutes.
- Jim: What government?
- Scheu: Oh, that would be hard to say. Put it this way, the buses would come on base and pick the guys up to take them there.
- Jim: That would give you a clue, I think.
- Scheu: Yeah, mmm hmm.

- Jim: I've never heard that before; in all of my years involved with this stuff, I never knew the United States government officially ran one of those.
- Scheu: Oh, I would never say officially, but—
- Jim: Of course not officially.
- Scheu: But they, the buses, maybe they were payoffs or whatever, but the buses would come on base and pick the guys up and take them there. A lot of guys lived there. They had a lot of bars and stuff.
- Woman: Were you ____ the girls were not infected?
- Scheu: Well, supposedly when you got over there, see, now I've always been rather afraid of coming down with somethin' and trying to explain to my wife, so I always tried to be one of the good guys. When you got over there they'd show ya how many shots it took to cure ya, and then they would show ya, okay this is what the cards look like that they give the prostitutes, and this has the date on it when they were last checked. If they don't have one that's a current date—
- Jim: Leave her alone.
- Scheu: Yup, that's how it was supposed to be. But I think most guys ended up, how should I say it? Long-term rentals. They would— [laughs]
- Woman: [unintelligible]
- Scheu: Yeah, they would pay a girl \$100 a month.
- Jim: [unintelligible], right?
- Scheu: Yeah, and she would take care of the place, wash the clothes, feed him whatever but there— [pause in tape]
- Scheu: —really quite a good time with that and he told me about compliments; the Korean society you don't give them. Woman are not complimented very much. So he told me, you know, to compliment them once in a while, but not in a sexual way. It's "You look nice today," or "Boy you're smiling and laughing today; you must be having a good day," or something like that. Compliment them on the service, things like that. Umm, he taught me how to sign my name in Korean and they were very much into it—how should I say it, if you wanted to kind of fit in with their society, you wanted to learn something about them, they liked that. You know, I learned, I could sign my name in Korean. When you ordered something you had to sign the slip, and well, that helped me out quite a bit, too, because in the chow hall, in the

restaurant part of it, I was poor. I lived on \$5 a day and most of what I had my \$5 a day I spent on drinkin'. So there was very little money left over for eating well. Ramen was cheap, but they made real good Ramen. Ramen noodles like, kind of thing.

Woman: Sure.

Scheu: But they would put all kinds of stuff in, not at all like the thin crap that we eat.

Jim: What about the Kim chi; didn't that bother ya?

Scheu: No, loved it. I love spicy food. Love that.

Jim: Garlic, the odor?

Scheu: The smell is bad but the taste is much better.

Jim: Oh, I couldn't even come close to tasting it. You could smell that stuff for a mile away.

Scheu: My boss would have me come down by his house—

Jim: Or their breath.

Scheu: Oh, yeah. The breath part was really bad.

Jim: Boy.

Scheu: But I really had a, I could say a good time except for missing the family over there. I learned so much from them and why their life is the way it is. If the woman doesn't have boy children the husband can divorce her because it's her fault, and I would try to explain to the women that the man determines the sex of the baby.

Jim: That's right, just the opposite.

Scheu: And they would just sit there amazed. Well, that I would talk to them like they were intelligent people, you know, instead of as objects, which most of what they are over there is objects. They have to do all the work and—

Jim: These guys who had a permanent mama san there, did they pay them from their salary?

Scheu: Yes. Well, they would pay 'em money or you could give 'em, let's see, what were they looking for? Coffee.

- Jim: That would keep 'em with ya?
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. Coffee, beer, booze.
- Jim: Didn't they take some of that stuff and take it home to their big family?
- Scheu: Oh sure. Oh yeah, you were supporting much more than—
- Jim: So you were really supporting more than them?
- Scheu: Sure. I would say probably the average wage over there, as far as somebody that was working, you know, a Korean he might be making fifteen bucks a month or twenty bucks a month, and here's a prostitute making sixty, a hundred, a hundred fifty. There was one that worked at the NCO club, I think she was getting two hundred and something. Very pretty girl.
- Jim: But she didn't do her work in the NCO club?
- Scheu: She worked at the NCO club, too. Yeah, oh yeah. She probably made more in tips than anybody, than the commander of the base made.
- Jim: But she didn't do her whoring on the base?
- Scheu: No, no. She had a place downtown.
- Jim: That was pretty well controlled?
- Scheu: Yes. Oh yes, that was controlled. That didn't happen on base that I'm aware of.
- Jim: And you think that probably most of those girls in that brothel that whoever supported—
- Scheu: Mmm hmm, A Town.
- Jim: A Town, right, were kept pretty clean? You think they—
- Scheu: Umm
- Jim: —had doctors keeping them and getting the penicillin moving around, so—
- Scheu: We still had a lot of guys coming down with stuff, but from what I understand it was free for them, and I don't think they wanted to come down with a disease any more than anybody else did, so they could go and get checked free quite regularly.

- Jim: How much did they generally pay these girls?
- Scheu: Oh. I'm trying to think back.
- Jim: Whether it was cheap or—
- Scheu: Oh, a few dollars.
- Jim: A couple of bucks?
- Scheu: Yeah, a couple of dollars on up, depending on the girl.
- Jim: I see.
- Scheu: Depending on whether the guy was sober. We had this—right next to the, what did they call it, the go-go lounge, they had strippers in the club. Topless dancers, put it that way. Probably \$12, \$14 a day in one of the bars, okay. And—
- Jim: This is on base?
- Scheu: Yeah, on base. Yeah.
- Jim: Strippers on base?
- Scheu: Yeah, that was every day. And like I said, I spent a lot of time drinking there 'cause I didn't have anything else to do, I was trying to be good anyway. Let's see what time did that close down? 2:00 in the morning. 2:00 in the morning there's the, they're closing down the, this little bar in there, it's darker than hell in there. But anyway, half the people are drunk on their ass and ah, they're watching these girls, and they come out of there and there's this row of seats and most of us that were—
- Jim: Regulars?
- Scheu: Had a sane mind yet and that didn't bother us, the girls in there. Most of us went in there to drink, actually, and after a while you didn't pay much attention to the girls. There would be the old hookers, I mean the sixty plus group, but the guys would be so drunk. I just can't imagine what it would be like when they woke up in the morning. [Jim & woman laugh] They'd come staggering out of there and these old hookers would grab 'em and, "Hi sweetie," you know. They could speak pretty good English, and out into a taxicab they go, you know. They knew who you were after a while, if you were susceptible or not.

Jim: Oh, really?

Scheu: Yeah. They knew the new guys; the old guys they knew better than—

Jim: Like flies, sure.

Scheu: They'd see me walk out of there too many times and you know, after a few times of "I ain't interested" they'd leave you alone and go for the guys that were really plastered. God, I just—and we'd laugh. We'd walk back to the, stagger back to the barracks and be just laughing.

Jim: Mostly beer drinking?

Scheu: Yeah, mostly beer.

Jim: Booze was available but—

Scheu: Oh yes, booze was available, but it was a little more expensive.

Jim: Fifteen cents, come on.

Scheu: Yeah, but that much is—cut down. Like I say, I was on a budget.

Jim: That's right, you had two children already.

Scheu: Yup. Yeah, that was a real learning experience. Especially being able, with my boss knowing so much about Korea and taking me downtown and showing me around.

Jim: You picked up a lot of good stuff there.

Scheu: His wife was Korean. He explained to me the, a lot of the things, their reason for doing stuff. They didn't even have any swear words when I was over there.

Jim: I'm sure they do now.

Scheu: He said the Korean language has no swear words. He said you have to do something like "Your mother sleeps with dogs."

Jim: You have to give 'em a whole sentence?

Scheu: Yeah, you have to give 'em a whole sentence. His wife, one of her big things was to bring out the pictures, and here's a picture of her breastfeeding the boy baby.

- Jim: Yeah, I'm sure they're very proud of the boys.
- Scheu: Yeah. Woman in this country aren't gonna have a picture to show everybody breast feeding. But for her it was, he says for her it's, "I have a boy and I can breast feed; I have milk. What more can I want? I'm really a good mother."
- Woman: Did your wife—what did she live on?
- Scheu: Everything else went to her, all, you know.
- Jim: You sent home \$50 a month or—
- Scheu: Oh, no, it would be much more then that. I had like \$150 a month to live on and she probably had \$500. She lived with her mother and the kids with her, so I would send everything home. Otherwise you could get in too much trouble if you had too much money.
- Woman: Sure.
- Scheu: Money breeds problems. That was another thing.
- Jim: What was another thing?
- Scheu: Money breeds problems if you have too much to spend.
- Jim: Well—
- Scheu: I saw too many—I get to fill in for the first sergeant once in awhile. So then the guys would have to come in with their letters that they would never write home, and you know they're the same ones with all the hookers. They're spending all their money on the hookers downtown and not sending any money home.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: In the Com Center you see the Red Cross messages comin' in, so and so is trying to contact her husband.
- Jim: Right. So the wives would contact the Red Cross to contact their husbands—
- Scheu: Right. They haven't heard from their husband in forever.
- Jim: —and send some money home?
- Scheu: Sure. Some of 'em are getting' thrown out of their house.

- Jim: How was that handled?
- Scheu: Usually those messages went to the first sergeant—or the commander and then to the first sergeant. The people would get called in and counseled and be told, “You *will* be taking care of your family.”
- Jim: Right. You’ve just lost your home or maybe is going to lose it if they don’t come up with some dough.
- Scheu: There was a line every week, every Monday morning, over at the first sergeant's office. People to write letters home. Okay, here’s my letter to Mama, here’s my money order. It was rather sickening to see that.
- Jim: They had to be treated like children?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. It was a shame, but they were spending too much money on drinking and whores, but that’s sometimes how life gets.
- Jim: But who are we talking about? We’re talking about eighteen-year-old boys?
- Scheu: No, no.
- Jim: No?
- Scheu: Well, we’re talking about eighteen-year-old boys that would get sent back home because they wanted to marry the sixty-year-old hooker. Plus we would be talking about staff sergeants, master sergeants, captains, majors, colonels.
- Jim: The whole thing?
- Scheu: You bet ya. It was rather amazing. But that was pretty much hid, but I worked in the Com Center and I would see the messages coming over my equipment.
- Jim: If a colonel didn’t send money home, that would be a significant amount because he was making a lot of money?
- Scheu: Sure. But he was probably, he probably had that \$300 a month hooker, plus he’d be taking her all over, traveling around.
- Jim: How about guys getting married to them?
- Scheu: That was rather difficult to do. You had to go through your unit to get married. They would investigate the girl and a lot of times they would try to send the guy home.

- Jim: Yeah, that was the ploy that we used on our ship. We had a couple of guys that wanted to get married and all of a sudden they had orders off and they just got rid of them.
- Scheu: But we would have these guys flying back and pick up the girl, and a lot of them were in love.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: Of course, a lot of them, it was their first time away from home and the first time they had sex and thought, "Boy, this stuff is pretty good. I better hang on to this one" and blind eye where they—you know, they'd come back with the investigation and they'd go, "Okay, now, this is her real name, this is how old she is. Um, she's been a prostitute for twenty years; are you sure you want to marry her?"
- Jim: But that would be the truth?
- Scheu: Oh, yeah, I love her. Yeah.
- Jim: That would be the truth; they wouldn't try to make up a story?
- Scheu: No. But if it was a young guy trying to marry a young one they would still try to talk 'em out of it. Counsel them and send 'em back home but—
- Jim: If he was determined, he could end up marrying her?
- Scheu: Yes, yes.
- Jim: Off base?
- Scheu: Yes, off base.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Scheu: Or else he would come back and marry her off base and bring her back to the States.
- Jim: Yeah, right. A lot of them did that.
- Scheu: Yeah. And a lot of 'em had—everything worked out fine for them. And a lot them, well there's some funny stories over there. I can remember one time, as long as my boss from over there would never see it, he woke up one morning and he had a girl sittin' in a chair by the bed in the barracks, sixteen years old. He had gone out, got drunk and bought a farmer's daughter, in a tavern, and

there he is, he has no idea how he got her on base. She's sitting there with her clothes tied up in a bundle on her lap.

Jim: He promised her we're going to the United States, right?

Scheu: No, no, he just bought her. It would be like buying a prostitute. He owned her, whatever he said she had to do, whatever.

Woman: What did he do with her?

Scheu: Ah, he woke up and first thing was, okay now I gotta—he was a good guy when he was sober. He goes, "What am I gonna do now? How am I going to get her off base to begin with, and what am I going to do with her? I can't take her home to my wife." His wife lived downtown. He went out and got drunk and still had a room on base, he had a barracks room on base. He ended up sneakin' her back off base and then he took her to the Methodist Hospital in, can't think of the name of the town, a big church hospital.

Jim: In Korea?

Scheu: In Korea. And he was one of the few people that had a vehicle over there, so he drove her to there, and seeing as how he could speak Korean fluently, he told her that he sold her to the hospital and she had to stay there and work for them. And the hospital said—it was run by Americans; he explained the situation to them—"Okay, she can work in the hospital and we'll teach her to be a nurse." So actually she came out—

Jim: Pretty good.

Scheu: Very good on the thing. And my boss, he thought much better of himself after he did that, and I think after he did that he had a little different outlook on things.

Jim: Good. He should.

Scheu: But that was, you know, things like that happened. People would wake up and they'd find some girl in their room or something like that, and a lot of them girls, you better not mess 'em over. A lot of 'em were told, "I'm gonna marry you." Cut down the price, you know.

Jim: That's right, if they told 'em—

Scheu: I'm gonna marry you and take you back when I go home.

Jim: Tell me that again, because I may have lost that when we switched there about marrying or not marrying. If you just wanted to—

- Scheu: If you wanted to marry a Korean girl?
- Jim: No, but if you they'd get attached to ya—
- Scheu: Oh. If you told 'em that you were gonna take them back with you, the price would probably come down, because a lot of them wanted to come back, come to this country. As a matter of fact, if you were up in Seoul, you could probably get paid money by somebody's family to marry their daughter, a considerable amount of money.
- Jim: Because they wanted you to take them back to the United States?
- Scheu: You bet. Then the daughter could send for some more of her family.
- Jim: The family come over, then you'd have twelve of them in your lap.
- Scheu: You could probably get five, six grand, maybe more than that, and at the time that was quite a bit of money for taking a girl back.
- Jim: If you married one of those girls, then, of course, there's no reason you couldn't bring her family back to the United States?
- Scheu: Umm, the family, you could only take your dependents back. Now however, for them to immigrate to this country once they had someone living in this country that could guarantee them a place to live, then it's much easier to do.
- Jim: Yeah. That's why most of them did it.
- Scheu: Yeah, a lot of that stuff. But those guys, they'd sneak out in the middle of the night. I mean all of a sudden they'd tell—when it was time to go back home, and of course they told them they weren't married and all this other stuff.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: Then they'd say well, they got an exercise going on on base, so I'll be on base for a couple of days. Take the plane back home.
- Jim: That's how they got out of the deal?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. Yeah one night at the NCO club the very, very good-looking girl that worked at the club, the high price girl, she was in love with the guy that she was living with and he left. She was at the club and she was crying, she was really heart broke, and that happened to a lot of them. I feel sorry for them and I think it made us look pretty bad, but you know, the majority of people weren't like that. The majority of the people were pretty good.

- Jim: So after this exciting year in Korea?
- Scheu: Year in Korea, yeah. In between Vietnam and Korea, from Vietnam I went to Florida, Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Then I went to England.
- Jim: What would you do on at Eglin Air Force base after being in? You were trained to do a different thing.
- Scheu: Worked in the communications center. I was crypto maintenance again. But there I had extra duties with the ranges that they had there. That's the biggest base in the world.
- Jim: A ranger base?
- Scheu: Yeah, they have, as far as the size of the base goes, it goes almost all the way to Alabama and then it goes out into the gulf.
- Jim: I know it's huge.
- Scheu: And I got paid mileage to drive to work. For a while I worked normally one day a week.
- Jim: You were in service?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm.
- Jim: And you got paid extra money?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. I got paid mileage because it was—driving on base, I think it was like thirty some miles to work, on base, so I got mileage.
- Jim: [laughs] You never left the base, thirty miles?
- Scheu: Yeah, that was interesting. You get a call that says, "Well, Russ, you got it. Tomorrow morning you gotta go open up the site at 6:00 o'clock in the morning." Then I might be out there for an hour, I might be out there for twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours, then when the thing was over I'd shut it down.
- Jim: A training exercise?
- Scheu: Well, no. We would, we had a lot of stuff where they did a lot of experimental stuff at the time with laser-guided bombs, remote control airplanes, helicopters, things like that.

- Jim: What was your involvement with that?
- Scheu: My involvement was the secure communications for them. Whenever they would be doing this we'd have to have secure communications up so that the planes could talk to each other, they could talk to the ground, different things like that. That was always an interesting place to be and another place where a lot of money got spent.
- Jim: Tell me what you're saying.
- Scheu: You know, with money being spent, a lot of stuff with test programs are expensive, planes would crash, there'd be so many people out there, and a lot of civilians on that base. A lot of money gets paid to civilians compared to the military. And then practice always costs money, practice ranges where they're dropping the bombs.
- Jim: By expensive, you mean to the United States?
- Scheu: Yeah.
- Jim: Money wasted, in other words?
- Scheu: Yeah, yeah. We had an SR-71 flying out of there going, taking pictures of Cuba. That was always interesting. Classified. You'd drive right around the—the road goes right around the end of the runway and of course it's classified; when they're gonna take off.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: They roll it out and there it goes. Like who can't see this big thing going up in the sky?
- Jim: Right.
- Scheu: Then we had the climatic hanger there. That was interesting.
- Jim: What's that?
- Scheu: Climatic hanger, where they put planes in to test them for different conditions, weather conditions and stuff like that.
- Jim: Oh, okay.
- Scheu: That's about when the C-5 came out. They put the C-5 in there.
- Jim: You had a hanger big enough for that?

- Scheu: Yes. It could hold two B-52s and then they had to make it bigger to put a C-5 in it. Yeah. That's how my furniture and stuff got sent home from Turkey, on a C-5; imagine what that cost.
- Jim: It had nothing else, except your furniture on it?
- Scheu: Well, my furniture and some other people's furniture, yeah.
- Jim: From Turkey?
- Woman: Was your family ever with you?
- Scheu: Yes, in Turkey they were with me, both. Except when I was in Vietnam and Korea they were always with me. My wife always said that she didn't care what it was like, she would be there. Like Turkey, if you go there by yourself it's one year, bring the Mama it's two years. So we had a lot of guys that were there for two years by themselves, because they'd bring Mama and Mama would say, "Eew, this is pretty bad; I'm going home."
- Jim: I wanted to stay an extra year in Japan when I heard the ship was coming home, but I wanted to bring the family over, but no deal. They were happy to reassign me to Japan to stay there, but no family.
- Scheu: Yeah. Turkey was probably the best thing that ever happened to my family.
- Jim: Is that where you went after Korea?
- Scheu: No, after Korea, where did I go from Korea? Greater Pittsburgh International Airport, I was stationed there.
- Jim: Wonderful.
- Jim: Yeah. I was the ranking enlisted guy on the base. It was a Guard and Reserve base and they had a com center there so I was maintenance in the com center because the military hangs onto their crypto stuff pretty tight. Then I was the base Com Sec Officer for that, the National Guard and the Reserves there.
- Jim: Oh, so what was your rank by this time?
- Scheu: I was a Master Sergeant.
- Jim: Okay.
- Scheu: That was just regular duty again, but I was pretty important because I was the Com Sec Officer, and some of the fun part there was the communication

center there, that all had to be temperature controlled, otherwise the equipment starts lying to ya, but they didn't want to turn the air conditioning on. For example, they didn't want to turn the air conditioning on and the temperature's going up in the com center. So you call up base civil engineers—and you gotta remember now, this is almost all civilian. He says, "Air conditioning doesn't go on until the first of May," or whatever it is. I say, "We need air or I'm shutting this stuff down." "Well, I don't care." So then you call up the wing commander who's a civilian, except on the weekend.

Jim: Right.

Scheu: Yeah, call him up and say, "Colonel—

Jim: Guess what.

Scheu: —this is Sergeant Scheu. I just want to call and let you know that you're gonna lose all your secure communications in about fifteen minutes." "What? What's happening?" I says, "Well, it's getting' too hot. Civil engineer says I'm not getting any air." "Why aren't you getting' any air?" I says, "Because the base regs say they can't turn it on until May 1 and they don't care." He said, "They'll be right there." And they were right there, and then they thought I was somebody, so then after that civil engineers thought I was somebody so—

Jim: Then now all you had to do was suggest after that?

Scheu: Yeah. Oh, yeah. That and then classified; they weren't used to handling as much classified, things like that.

Jim: But you didn't have to share that with them?

Scheu: Well, any classified that was on base was mine. I was the one that was responsible for it.

Jim: Yeah, I know but these civilians really didn't want to—

Scheu: There's a lot of civilians working for the government that have access to classified. So anything classified that would come on base, um, COMSAC-wise communications, would come to me, be inventoried, put in a safe and issued at the correct time and made sure that it was destroyed properly, things like that. So you get to be an important person, kind of. It makes ya, you know, one of those feel-good things, but then the stress starts building up about when you go to jail when they find this document that's supposed to be destroyed and you thought you destroyed it, ya know.

- Jim: Well, that didn't happen, did it?
- Scheu: No, no. I was always too nervous about things like that.
- Jim: So how long were you at Pittsburgh?
- Scheu: Almost four years.
- Jim: That's the longest time you spent at any one spot up to that point.
- Scheu: Good duty. Yep. Other than England; England was four years.
- Jim: Were you a Pirates fan?
- Scheu: No, no. Went to a lot of Pirates games, though. That's where I'd bring my inspectors; when they'd come to inspect me, I'd take them to a ballgame.
- Jim: Probably couldn't get Steelers tickets there, probably too hard to get.
- Scheu: No, easy.
- Jim: Really?
- Scheu: Back then all that stuff was easy, yeah. Big, big stadium. But I was a Steelers hater at the time.
- Jim: I see. You're still a Packer.
- Scheu: Yeah. My boss, he was a retired Army E-9, he was a GS-11, 12, something like that. He got paid really well, but he was an Army E-9. I get there looking for housing and he says, "Yeah, okay, go ahead." He said, "Let me hold your leave papers for ya." So he says "I don't want ya to be charged with leave while you're looking for a house."
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: So then they found me a house at one of the former missile sites that got closed down. So then it was time to go back home—I had my wife with me—then it was time to go back home and pick up the kids and stuff, you know. So he says, "Okay." He says, "Here's your leave form; sign that thing here." He says, "I'll keep it for ya." He says, "How long are you going to be gone?" I says, "Well, I'll be comin' right back." He says, "Take your time; take your time, we don't worry about things like that here." I come back a week later because I didn't want to burn up all my leave. He pulls out his drawer, pulls out my leave form, rips it up. I says, "Aren't you going to turn that in?" He says, "Hell no." He said "Everybody deserves to have an assignment like this

once in a while. You gotta get your leave time built up.” Of course that came in real handy when I went from there to Turkey.

Jim: Right.

Scheu: And you couldn't get any leave over there except for us who had the maximum built up, so they—

Jim: So.

Scheu: So it was go to the colonel and say, “Colonel, either sign my leave form or sign this other form that says I can carry over more than sixty days.” “How the hell did you get more than sixty days?” “Saved it up, sir.” [Jim laughs] “How many days you have to take?” I says, “I got ninety comin' right now.” I said, “So I gotta take thirty or else I lose it.” So I got thirty days of leave twice over there. It was good.

Jim: Fantastic. Getting over to Turkey, now you had to deal with the Russians.

Scheu: Ahh, the Russians weren't too bad. I was more worried about the Turks than the Russians. The Russians it was, we were there to get the airplanes [**end of tape 2, side B**] in the air and so you had your gas masks—

Jim: It was a SAC base?

Scheu: No, it wasn't. Who did we belong to? NATO.

Jim: I see.

Scheu: We were there to be alive for a couple of hours to get the planes in the air. You practice a lot with your gas masks and your charcoal suits, things like that. You just about died in the heat, but they figured—

Jim: What were you doing in a charcoal suit?

Scheu: They figured they would hit us with chemicals or biological weapons.

Jim: The Russians?

Scheu: Yeah, so that they would have the base. So they wouldn't destroy the base.

Jim: Oh.

Scheu: And all it takes to wipe out a—we had like five thousand people there. All it would take to wipe it out would be maybe a couple teaspoons of the right stuff sprayed over the base and everybody's dead.

- Jim: Right. Everybody's dead and then they had the base intact.
- Scheu: Then they would have the base intact.
- Jim: That was your biggest concern?
- Scheu: That was a chief concern other than the Turks themselves.
- Jim: That was the gas? Son of a bitch.
- Scheu: Yeah, they told us normally we would have a matter of a few minutes if we weren't in our suits. Everybody's plan was, if that would ever happen, we'd get the aircraft up and you'd go home, take your stuff out, and sit outside with the wife and kids.
- Jim: Let me have that in a little more detail.
- Scheu: So if you were going to die, you were going home to die with the wife and kids. They had nothing. They didn't have no gas masks or charcoal suits.
- Jim: Oh, the ones that were living on base?
- Scheu: Yeah. That's—
- Jim: You said you'd go home?
- Scheu: Yeah, everybody would be dead in not too long a period of time.
- Jim: You were housing them on the base, that's right. Then you wouldn't worry about that.
- Scheu: No. Wonderful, wonderful place, though. Taught the wife and kids what poor was.
- Jim: I'll bet.
- Scheu: Wife had a maid. She had never had a maid before and will never have one again. [Jim laughs] But ___[?] was a maid and you had to have a maid to keep the Turks away from the door.
- Jim: Beggars?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. Beggars and more people wanting to come to work for ya, because I was literally a millionaire over there, as a Master Sergeant.

- Jim: But how did they get on the base?
- Scheu: No, this was downtown; I had to live downtown for a year first.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: Before I got base housing. Bars on all the windows, push your refrigerator in front of the door at night sometimes. They had a coup when I was over there. Everybody had to stay in their houses. Shootin' in the streets.
- Jim: The refrigerator in front of the door because they'd try to break in, perhaps?
- Scheu: Well, that would be your only protection, yeah. Other than the bars on the windows, but the door would be the easiest one to break into.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: So you didn't advertise the fact too much of where you were.
- Jim: You had a car you drove to the base?
- Scheu: Well, not until we were allowed to. That was a few days before we were allowed to go outside. You could hear it on the radio, which wasn't supposed to broadcast more than the perimeter of the base, but you could hear the radio downtown and they gave instructions what to do. Made sure you didn't start your car from the inside; you always started it from the outside in case it would be booby trapped or something like that.
- Jim: Not allowed to start your car on the inside of your garage, you mean?
- Scheu: No, inside the car. You always reached in from the outside to start it 'cause if it went you had a much better chance of surviving if you weren't in the vehicle when it blew up. That happened.
- Jim: I never heard that.
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. That was—you'd look underneath your vehicle.
- Jim: Who would that be?
- Scheu: The Turks. There was a group of—
- Jim: Protesting Americans being in their country?

- Scheu: Yes, yes. Oh yeah. That hated us, that just plain old hated us. You gotta remember, they were on the German side during World War II for most of the time.
- Jim: [unintelligible] like the Swedes.
- Scheu: Yeah, [sighs] it was a different kind of place. They either loved ya or hated ya, and if they loved ya they'd do anything for ya. If they hated ya they would usually leave women and children alone but men were fair game.
- Jim: You mean shoot 'em in the street?
- Scheu: Ohh, yeah. Shoot 'em, blow 'em up. We'd wear civilian clothes most of the time. I think most of the time I was over there it was civilian clothes off base.
- Jim: They told you not to wear a uniform?
- Scheu: Right. Because you, you know, take different routes to and from work. Of course that's pretty hard to do when you have a highway to go on. One time I got hijacked by the Turkish troops. They were just looking for a ride into town, but they had checkpoints. I had a Volkswagen bus. Going home, pull into a checkpoint. You know, you gotta remember, these guys hold life and death over you. You are a nobody. As a matter of fact, the government didn't really recognize that we were in Turkey, our government. If you were born there you were born in Germany; if you died there, you died in Germany. But I'm at this checkpoint and this officer opens up the door, all these guys armed to the teeth, he opens up the front door, opens up the sliding door, and all of the sudden the whole damn Volkswagen bus is filled with Turkish troops. And he's in front: "Chabook." That means go. You got me. "Mmmmmm" down the road I go. There's a—
- Jim: No other words?
- Scheu: No, "Chabook." That means go and it's this way. So it's okay.
- Jim: Jesus Christ.
- Scheu: Chabook. Here we go. I'm "chabooking" down the road [Jim laughs] and I'm not going fast enough because there's this truck in front of me, big truck; either little cars or big trucks, that's all they got. And the truck driver in front of me, he's not gonna let me by. And he could tell I had an American vehicle because of the plates.
- Jim: Oh, he's sticking it to ya?

Scheu: Oh yeah. So he's driving back and forth to keep me from going by him. Pretty soon the Turkish guys tell me I'd better get on going by him. So finally there's a light, and I'm on the shoulder of the road and there's only a couple lights there in the whole dang country, but I'm on the shoulder of the road next to this truck. The Turkish officer rolls down the window—well, the window was down, pulls out his gun and takes his gun and sticks it in this guy's face [Jim laughs] in this truck next to us and cocks it and grins at him. [laugh] The guy dove for the floor in that truck, let me tell ya. Then it was go further into town, and I'm wondering what's the deal with me, ya know. And it comes to the point where I'm supposed to turn and go by my house and I'm going someplace I ain't never been before, and I drove for a few more miles and all of the sudden I'm on the edge of town and he tells me to pull over to the side of the road. I pull over to the side of the road. He tells me to get out.

Jim: You said, "Oh, boy this is it."

Scheu: Yup. I get out, he lines 'em all up, lines up all the guys and they all come by me and shake my hand, and then he salutes me and away they go. And I'm, oh boy.

Jim: Then you have to find your way home?

Scheu: Mmm hmm.

Jim: Jesus Christ.

Scheu: That was a—my heart was pounding there for—

Jim: I bet you thought you were dead meat.

Scheu: Yeah, I did. I thought the vehicle was gone and the—

Jim: I'm gone.

Scheu: That was a very different place. Very different.

Jim: Did your wife have trouble getting food and clothing or anything?

Scheu: No, I can tell ya a funny thing on clothing.

Jim: What's that?

Scheu: The women couldn't get bras over there. You had to order bras from the United States, and then there was a Turkish strike on base, for all the Turks that worked on base. And then they got some of the American woman to do some of the stuff on base and, you know, nobody could ever explain how

come there weren't any bras. So they're in the warehouse and the story comes out there was six ounce cups, eight ounce cups, A cups, B cups, C cups, twelve ounce cups. They put 'em up with the cups. [everyone laughs] But they don't know. But you know, just funny things like that.

Jim: That's hysterical.

Scheu: And things you can't say. You couldn't say anything bad about Ataturk; if you said something bad about him you could go to jail. You could go to jail for tearin' up money that had his picture on it. They would warn kids.

Jim: He'd been dead a long time.

Scheu: Yes. We went to school. As a matter of fact, you had to go to school when you first got there for, I think, probably about a week to learn customs so you wouldn't get yourself in trouble.

Jim: The base ran the school?

Scheu: Yes.

Jim: For new people?

Scheu: Yes, yeah. The Turks still believe that, well, they step over the back of their shoe so their heel is sticking out of their shoes because Ataturk said that when he came back he was gonna come back as a cat and scratch the heel of the next leader of Turkey. So they're all waitin' for a cat to come scratch their heels and that very—

Jim: That's common then?

Scheu: Yeah. And don't say "peaches."

Jim: Because in Turkish it means—

Scheu: It has sexual connotations to it. You can't go like this, that's another one. There was quite a few things that we were taught, don't say this or do that. Umm, don't sit with your foot pointed at somebody, don't cross your legs.

Jim: Don't cross your legs?

Scheu: No. If you cross your legs, if your foot's pointed at somebody that means they're lower, like if you had your legs crossed more that they would be pointing to somebody over there, that means they're lower than whatever you walk on.

- Jim: Yes, she's making a statement then?
- Scheu: Yes. They're lower than the shit that you walk on.
- Jim: [laughs] Oh, a real statement.
- Scheu: Oh, yeah.
- Jim: That would bring fisticuffs or something like that?
- Scheu: Insult law; you'd probably go to jail. They'd probably pick you up and you'd go to jail.
- Jim: You mean that person would report to some nearby policeman and point and say—
- Scheu: Yup.
- Jim: She just did this. That's all it took?
- Scheu: Oh yeah, that's all it took. And you're a nobody because you're in their country. We were told that. You're a nobody; you just do what they—
- Jim: There's nothing you can say to dissuade that?
- Scheu: No. The speeding ticket was a cop sitting alongside the road and, "There goes an American car." "Vmmm" pull ya over. "How much money you got in your wallet? You were speeding." He don't even have a gun to see how fast you're going. Nothing. But that's how it was.
- Jim: So he just took your money, he was stealing your money?
- Scheu: Yeah. Yeah.
- Woman: Did you report the incident with the Volkswagen and the Turks you gave a ride to?
- Scheu: Oh yeah, they just laughed. But you know, it was—
- Woman: Who laughed?
- Scheu: Security people on base.
- Woman: They just laughed?
- Scheu: We had no, nothing.

- Jim: You had no power there?
- Scheu: No power. Very different kind of culture, different kind of thing. A friend of mine, his wife was running around with a Turk. Umm—
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: Yeah. Doin' what she shouldn't be doin'.
- Jim: Ah ha.
- Scheu: And he went to see a Turkish lawyer and the Turkish lawyer said, "Go and get a gun and shoot him; you're supposed to."
- Jim: That's the Turkish law?
- Scheu: Yeah, you can do that; that's no problem.
- Jim: You catch your wife with another man—
- Scheu: Shoot 'em both.
- Jim: Without any recrimination?
- Scheu: Yeah. Oh yeah. But they're really tight on—
- Jim: Vicious.
- Scheu: Yeah. [laughs] They're really tight on the stuff. If you're alone with a woman—
- Jim: That means?
- Scheu: That means you'd better marry her or make some kind of peace with her family 'cause otherwise they're gonna come after you and maybe kill you or you're gonna go to jail, because you're not supposed to be alone with a Turkish woman.
- Jim: Any time, any place?
- Scheu: Any time, any place.
- Jim: Jesus Christ. How did the prostitutes work their street then?

Scheu: No, uh-uh, not for Americans. You stayed away from that. Now the Turks had brothels but they were operated by the prison system. The way it was explained to us was if man holds high esteem, woman are lower esteem, whatever you want to call it, a piece of property. A lot of times the wife would go to jail for her husband's crime. Somebody else can do the time for him, and her own way of surviving is becoming a prostitute. Then, of course, when she gets out he can divorce her because she's a prostitute.

Woman: Can he shoot her?

Jim: Oh, exactly.

Scheu: I don't know. I wouldn't doubt it. Most places, most of the poorer countries women are pretty much property.

Woman: Did your wife have to cover her face or anything like that?

Scheu: No.

Woman: Wear simple clothing?

Scheu: She had to cover up. She wasn't supposed to have her neck showing or arms showing or legs showing, and you know it was like 112, 113, 116 degrees during the day and you hung clothes up on the top, on the roof, you didn't hang it out back because it would get stolen. A pair of jeans is worth a fortune over there. She would have to have a long skirt to put on around her shorts so that she could go outside, otherwise she'd have everybody and their brother following her down the street. It was bad enough the way it was, because all American women are loose, you know.

Woman: Oh really?

Scheu: Yeah, you'll talk to anybody. I mean the women would talk to the guys on the bus, you know, the Turks that ran the bus back and forth to town. They weren't used to that kind of stuff.

Jim: Having women to speak to them?

Scheu: Yeah. Seeing the arms stick out; most of them don't see that. A guy probably is thirty-five years old, saves his money and buys a girl. Sees one walkin' down the street and says, "Oh, I kind of like that one." And follows her home. And, I mean, he can't see nothin; most of the places it's like that. In the bigger cities it's a little more modern, but this is some years back already. He follows her home, Mama goes and checks her out, makes sure she's a good girl, and then the fathers get together.

Jim: To set a price?

Scheu: See if they can make a deal, and then they sit across like this; that's as close as he's going to get until they're married, and then she's gonna go live in the compound that he lives in. I always considered it kind of like the time of Jesus where you have the compound, the wall around the little area you lived in, and a lot of the places are like that. When you get out of the big towns women don't get out much.

Jim: That's right.

Scheu: But very hospitable people.

Jim: Ah.

Scheu: One time we all hopped in our vans and buses and stuff and went up to Fethiye or Fecae[?] up in the Taurus Mountains. I forget how many hours drive it was, winding roads, um, really backwards. We were going looking for carpets. We go into town; we heard there was a nice carpet store there and in the sticks it's cheaper, always. So we go in this carpet store and this guy sees us comin' in. The first thing he does is shoo us all back out, closes the door, locks 'em up, and we have to go over by his house, because he has to honor us because we honored him by coming into his business. We go to his house, they offer us cigarettes, coffee, tea, beer. The women made cherry juice, squeezed by hand.

Jim: Your wife was with you?

Scheu: My wife was with me, yeah. They weren't used to the women being with like that up in the mountains and stuff, but they accepted it. Their women were pretty much covered up and stuff. Then they fed us some stuff, I don't know what it all was, then back down to the store we go, then we can see all his stuff. Next time we come back, which was, I don't know, maybe a month later, all of the women got purses that were hand crocheted by the Turkish women.

Jim: They knew you were coming?

Scheu: Uh-uh. But we told 'em we'd probably come back.

Jim: Oh, okay.

Scheu: So they presented them with all that. One of my kids got sick in the car and threw up on his shirt. They went down and bought him a new shirt. Very much, very hospitable. You go into a store, the first thing they ask you is "Bira, Pepsi, Cay," "Beer, Pepsi or tea?" And there's a big bag sittin' there

with cashews and you can walk around the store; you're not being charged for anything,

Jim: This is an ordinary department store?

Scheu: Yeah. Well, they don't really have department stores, yeah. Little ol' shop where some guy's making something.

Woman: Did you buy a carpet?

Scheu: Oh yes, yes. Yeah, we got a few; we sent some home.

Jim: I'll bet they're lovely.

Scheu: Yeah. But the thing you gotta remember, the good carpets are made by little kids. They're the only ones whose fingers are small enough to make those knots.

Jim: Did you ever go watch that being done?

Scheu: No. We just—you'd go in a place and they'd have a hundred of 'em and they'd start rolling' them out for ya, you know, see what ya wanted.

Jim: What would that cost?

Scheu: Oh, anywhere from probably \$80 to \$10,000, 'cause some are made out of silk even. You can imagine how much time it takes to—you know how fine silk is, but those, we usually didn't go to those high class places. Most everything is done by hand.

Jim: But still, a rug, an oriental rug for \$80 is a steal.

Scheu: Um-hmm, yeah.

Jim: Wow.

Scheu: It was really a learning experience. Then you'd go downtown and go shopping for vegetables and it's much like the San Joaquin Valley of California, it's their vegetable area. As a matter of fact, the Army Corp of Engineers built their system for irrigation there. Ah, food, just like you wouldn't believe, and they'd give you some to try. You walk in there, and their watermelons are the round ones, about like this, like a big-size softball, and the guy's got a horse cart there and he's got five hundred of 'em on there. As you're walking by he'll take one and stick it in front of you and he takes his machete and "plew" cuts it in half [Jim laughs] and cuts out the middle, here you go, you want to buy some of them, you know? And they were like

eight cents a piece or seven cents a piece. And our problem was all we knew how to say was “kilo,” and “kilo,” that means half a kilo. You know, kilo is your 2.2 pounds, so when you’re buying green peppers you’re going to get a lot of ‘em, but it was dirt cheap. Ahh.

Jim: The fruit and all the vegetables are good?

Scheu: Well, we were all told we were supposed to wash the stuff in bleach water, just like we were supposed to put—

Jim: Bleach?

Scheu: Mmm hmm. We put Clorox in our drinking water, downtown. Ohh that’s bad. But you had to do that to kill the bacteria and stuff.

Jim: You drank that?

Scheu: Um-hm. Oh yeah.

Jim: Did you ever get used to that?

Scheu: No. It tastes really bad. [Jim laughs] But we did get past the part of soaking all the fruits and vegetables in bleach water because it tastes terrible. It tastes terrible.

Jim: You mean that would spoil the taste of fruit?

Scheu: Mmm. Yeah. Just like buying eggs over there. You buy eggs on base and they’re all treated. But every couple months you had to try a fried egg. Eew, bad, and the yolk’s almost white instead of yellow.

Jim: From the bleach?

Scheu: No, from the chickens getting’ fed so bad. I mean, they eat very, very poor. There’s nothing to waste. You know, to them to eat meat a couple times a week, they’re doin’ good. And we eat meat like it’s going out of style, but they’re poor and we don’t realize what poor is.

Jim: Huh. [Pause in tape]

Scheu: —commissary and PX on base and that kind of stuff, but downtown the women would get together; they would go shopping without the men, and the women would get together and a lot of people would be following them around.

Jim: They would be safer that way.

- Scheu: I mean, look at them woman; you could see their butts. With the Turks, they're not used to that. [Jim laughs] Your hair is too short, they'd be following you around. They can see your neck, my God!
- Jim: You mean they're following you around to look at ya?
- Scheu: To look at ya and you're a curiosity. There's one of those Americans, one of those rich Americans, and especially the women. You should of seen 'em hanging around the swimming pool.
- Jim: Who was?
- Scheu: The Turks. Remember it was a combined base, Turkish and American, and actually the Turks owned the base so we were—
- Jim: Guests?
- Scheu: We bowed to the Turks. The swimming pool with the American woman wearing a swimming suit—you know, they're pretty much separated, boys and girls are separated probably at the age of twelve or maybe even younger than that. So there's—
- Jim: They've never seen any skin?
- Scheu: No. Very little contact. They don't even know what's under there, I don't think. [both laugh]
- Jim: 'Til their father tells them.
- Scheu: Yeah.
- Jim: You're going to be married tomorrow and this is what—
- Scheu: Yeah, it was a— [laughs]
- Jim: But tell me about this, the Turkish soldiers that were on the base would be hanging around your swimming pool?
- Scheu: Oh yeah, they'd just be dieing over at the swimming pool, looking at these American women just—
- Jim: Something they'd never seen before in their life?
- Scheu: And that gives them the idea that American women are loose. Yeah. I mean look, they'll run around half naked in front of everybody.

- Jim: No one—
- Scheu: And their husband lets 'em.
- Jim: Right, so obviously, that's a simple conclusion to come to.
- Scheu: Yeah. That and then, of course there was always the problem with the heat being so bad and there was a lot of old trailers that came in there from Libya, so a lot of the American women were running around nude in the houses and once in a while would get seen.
- Jim: Oh, boy.
- Scheu: But the temperature is a hundred sixteen and you're living under a tin roof, you know it got to be pretty warm.
- Jim: Was that heat moist or just dry?
- Scheu: Yeah, very moist.
- Jim: So it was just the worst possible conditions?
- Scheu: Yeah.
- Jim: As bad as Vietnam?
- Scheu: Oh, I think so. Yes, I think so. And when we first got over there then somebody blew up the transformer on base so we had no power on base so we were living at—the transient quarters was a tin building that's supposed to be air conditioned, and you know, buildings that are designed for air conditioning have very few windows and doors and stuff like that. So there's everybody with their wife and kids living in these things.
- Jim: The tin roof heating it up even more?
- Scheu: Right.
- Jim: Jesus.
- Scheu: So when nighttime would roll around everybody'd be sitting in the hallways or outside and you could literally drink a six pack of beer and not know you ever drank a six pack of beer and you don't gotta go to the can either.
- Jim: Why?

- Scheu: 'Cause it took quite a while for your body to get accustomed to the heat, but the new people were easy to figure, big wet rings around their arms.
- Jim: Oh, yeah.
- Scheu: Down your chest, down your back, your crotch, your butt, behind your knees, you're just running water.
- Jim: 'Til after you're there far a while.
- Scheu: Yeah. After a few months you kind of got used to it. But if you did much in the way of manual labor, oh wow.
- Woman: Your wife, your marriage survived?
- Scheu: Oh yes. Made it better, made it stronger.
- Woman: She didn't want to go back home?
- Scheu: No, it was either a make or break place.
- Woman: Geez.
- Scheu: You had to get along with your spouse, you had to talk to your spouse, because you didn't have too many other people to talk to. What little TV and radio we had was very old.
- Jim: When you had housing on the base, though, didn't you have a little group that did things together?
- Scheu: Oh yeah, but you didn't have things to do like you do here. Things to do there were get together to play cards, go for a walk—lots of going for a walk—ride your bicycle, you know, things like that. Very close to those people. We stay in contact with most of them, yeah.
- Jim: Must have been movies.
- Scheu: Yeah. Most of the stuff was quite a few years old; we never got anything that was new. TV, the soap operas, which most women watch and my sister used to send me when I was in Korea, so I was very popular. She would take notes on All My Children and send me the things that—everybody'd come over to get the notes from that, all the women that were stationed there.
- Jim: Oh, to find out what went on?
- Scheu: Yeah, what went on, because it was up to date.

Jim: Who divorced who and all that stuff?

Scheu: Yeah. And I just couldn't—well, anyway. Most of that stuff was so outdated you didn't go to that stuff. Bowling was very big. Kids' sports, you'd get *hundreds* of people at a kids' baseball game, *hundreds* of people, or a football game, ah, that was really big-time stuff.

Woman: [unintelligible]

Scheu: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Jim: What about the USO now; did they come over there?

Scheu: No.

Jim: I didn't think so. They didn't want to or the Turks wouldn't let 'em in probably.

Scheu: It was a very hard country to get in and out of. It took a long time just to get your vehicle cleared. Um, one of my buddies, his van came in and you get a Turkish registration for it. They're gonna put a number off the engine, it might be the firing order or whatever, but they're gonna take down a number and you better watch 'em and know what number they took down because when you leave, you've got to leave with that same vehicle, that same engine, and then on this title it also describes the vehicle and says what color it is. When it was time for him to leave, his color didn't jibe.

Jim: This is for the Turkish officials?

Scheu: Yeah, so we could ship it through them. We had to ship it, we had to get through the Turks to ship it back home.

Jim: But any discrepancy would give the Turks a reason to keep it, right?

Scheu: Mmm hmm. Keep it or you're gonna pay.

Jim: Wow.

Scheu: And it cost him, I forget how many bottles of booze and—I forget, there was a brand of cigarettes that was very popular, I think Pall Mall, Pall Mall Gold, I think it was. So a few cartons of those for him to get it out of the country. But who knows what, do you know what Turkish—

Woman: [unintelligible]

- Scheu: My Volkswagen was “portakal krem.” It was cream colored and portakal, I think, is orange. But the taxes on that were 25,000 bucks on my ‘78 Volkswagen bus.
- Jim: What do you mean?
- Scheu: That’s if I would have sold it to a Turk or if I didn’t have it.
- Jim: Oh, to get it back.
- Scheu: It’s going to cost me 25,000 bucks before I can leave; if I don’t have that vehicle I’m gonna pay that. When you get to Turkey they have a thing called “Bayonami [?] list,” and that Bayonami list is everything they think is worth anything. [Jim laughs] And that’s no lie, a guy comes and—
- Jim: I’m sure.
- Scheu: —sits in your house. You’re kissing his ass as much as you can and givin’ him whatever he wants and he’s writing down, as they’re unpacking stuff, he is writing down what—
- Jim: You brought in the country?
- Scheu: —you brought into the country. Okay now, for an example, one of the things I had over there, I had a dryer that went belly up. Was it a dryer or a washing machine? I don’t know, it was either a wash machine or a dryer that died. I was there for a year and it was gone. I go to base, say “Hey, can I get rid of this thing? Take it to the dump, get it off my “Bayonami List?”
- Jim: Spell that for me?
- Scheu: Oh, Bayonami; I don’t know how that would be spelled.
- Jim: With an O, O-B? I can’t understand what you’re saying.
- Scheu: It would be B-a-y—bayonami
- Jim: Okay, all right.
- Scheu: And I told him, you know, get it off my list, send it to the dump. Turks gotta approve it. They weren’t about to approve it. That flew back home with me. That went on a C-5 and got shipped back home at who knows how many dollars a pound, but that came back. Sometimes your blue jeans, they would be put down on your list. They would count ‘em when you left. Maybe your dishes were gonna be on there. You break one, you keep it. Bicycles, very expensive. Again, they would be on the list.

- Jim: Any excuse to extract money from you really is what we're talking about.
- Scheu: And they were afraid that you were going to sell something downtown and they weren't going to get the taxes on it, and their taxes are extremely high. We have very low taxes in this country compared to any place I've ever been, including England, which was another place where taxes are very high. But most socialist countries are like that. Socialist countries or dictatorships or whatever. But we had a lot of fun there together, though.
- Jim: And your work went about the same, is that pretty—
- Scheu: Oh yeah, work is always work.
- Jim: Was that just like Pittsburgh only in more adverse conditions?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. Yeah. A lot more people there. It was the first place I was ever at where we had women working in the com center, in the job that I did.
- Jim: Military?
- Scheu: Yes, where there were military woman there.
- Jim: That's your first experience with a female soldier?
- Scheu: Well, first ones working for me there, yes, like that.
- Jim: Yes. How'd that go?
- Scheu: Ohh, that took some getting used to 'cause you had to really keep the reins in on the young guys. Now you gotta remember you're in Turkey, forever away from home, and the only women there are that they can possibly date or talk to **[end of Tape 3, side A]**
- Jim: [unintelligible]. Right for these soldiers—
- Scheu: —are the American ones, and they were very, very popular, and they were good looking girls, too.
- Jim: I'll bet. Yeah.
- Scheu: Yeah. They were both married, so that makes things even tougher. "Hey, leave her alone, she's married. Watch how you're talkin'."
- Jim: Is that you saying this to the soldier? You felt obliged to discipline them in that regard?

- Scheu: Oh yes. Oh, yes. I've always been that way. Somebody works for me they're like my kids.
- Jim: Right, but that's a personal thing. There was no order from higher up then?
- Scheu: Oh, no, no.
- Jim: You just did that on your own, you mean?
- Scheu: Yeah. And I would even explain to them, you know that, "Hey, don't let these guys get away with it," you know, even if it is just joking around.
- Jim: You told the girls this? Don't tolerate anything?
- Scheu: Yeah. Because it can get out of hand really quick and you can't have that in a place like that where you're workin' so close. Because that's another one of those things where everybody knows everybody and what everybody is doing and believe me—
- Jim: I was going to say, with that super secret stuff that's even more of a problem.
- Scheu: Mmm hmm, yeah. But it was another good place. I enjoyed most every place I've been at. Of course, after a while you remember the good things and forget about the bad a lot. The bad isn't worth remembering anyway. And the wife and I and my kids, we talk about Turkey quite a bit yet.
- Jim: Oh, really?
- Scheu: Yeah. That's the only place my oldest son ever got a B. [Jim laughs] He got a B in Spanish because the teacher thought that he could do better, even though he was the top Spanish student she had. So when he graduated school out in California he was the second in his class because of that B. But he's a major in the Air Force now.
- Jim: Oh, really?
- Scheu: He's a doctor. I think my kids are all very intelligent. My oldest one, he's a doctor. My daughter, Julie, she's a special ed teacher, a degree in special ed. Darin has a degree; he's a bio—med tech, works in a hospital, does the tests on blood and tissue that kind of thing—
- Jim: Yeah.

- Scheu: —like a chemist kind of thing. And my youngest one, he's in college for bookkeeping and accounting, and I think a lot of that can go back to service experiences and stuff in service and what they all learned.
- Jim: Perhaps.
- Woman: Traveling is such an education.
- Scheu: They learned to make friends.
- Jim: Yeah, Army brats—
- Scheu: Kevin was seventeen.
- Jim: All the army brats I've ever known, they're always personable, very personable people.
- Scheu: Otherwise you don't get any friends. You gotta—
- Scheu: Make 'em right away. Yeah.
- Jim: So.
- Scheu: I'm that way, I think, from the military; I feel very bad if people don't like me.
- Jim: Yeah, I'm sure.
- Scheu: A vet comes in here and—
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: —thinks that I'm the cause of his problems. I do anything I—
- Jim: You try to dissuade that. So after Turkey?
- Scheu: After Turkey, where'd I go? After Turkey I went to California.
- Jim: Okay. Wow, geez, that's a contrast.
- Scheu: Castle Air Force base. No, wait a minute, yeah, Castle in California. Oh yeah, big time contrast. There I'm the Record Com Superintendent. I've got crypto maintenance, d_____ [?] maintenance, teletype maintenance, and SACS maintenance working for me. Plus I'm—
- Jim: Still just a Master Sergeant?

- Scheu: Yup. Couldn't get any higher because I have a—
- Jim: No warrants, didn't you have a chance to be a warrant officer?
- Scheu: No, Air Force does not have warrants.
- Jim: Oh, I didn't know that.
- Scheu: And I couldn't make Senior Chief because I couldn't go to any of the senior NCO academies; I have a bad mitral valve. As a matter of fact, they tried to throw me out of service when I was stationed in England when I was twenty-five; that's when that was first discovered. Although I can still do anything anybody else can, but they said, "Well, you can't go." So there I had additional duties: I was base Com Sec officer, I worked for the general on base, I worked for my squadron commander, I also worked for the chief of maintenance as the Record Com Maintenance Superintendent and I was also Squadron Safety Officer. So it was just piles upon piles of—
- Jim: So how long in California, then where?
- Scheu: That was about four years, then it was time for my son to go to college. He was seventeen and I love my family and I'm not going to let 'em get away. And the Air Force wanted to send me back to school because radio maintenance was short of seven levels, middle management, middle grade NCOs, and they wanted me to go back to school and become radio maintenance, run a radio shop somewhere. Uh-uh. I was tired of going to school and tired of—I would have been the ranking man in the shop, but I would be the lowest as far as skill level goes on that equipment because you have to work your way up 3, 5, 7, 9 level. And I was kind of burned out; California burned me out. I owned more B-52s and Casey 135s than anybody else in the world, and I was a Master Sergeant.
- Jim: You owned them? How did you mean?
- Scheu: I was signed for them and all the classified that was on them.
- Jim: By signing for them, exactly what was that? To release them for operations or—
- Scheu: No, somebody always has to own them. Somebody is always responsible for 'em on some base. Okay, they're mine and they're mine because it's classified and I'm the ranking classified guy on base. I'm filling a Major slot.
- Jim: This has been standard practice for a long time?

- Scheu: Yes. I'm filling a Major slot as the base Com Sec officer.
- Jim: I see. You're doing Major's work?
- Scheu: Yes, I am.
- Jim: And you're a Master Sergeant?
- Scheu: I report directly to the Wing Commander, who's a general. I walk into the general's office and the general's secretary would interrupt him no matter who he had in there, and say, "General, Sergeant Scheu's here to see you." I mean, that was good for ego but very bad on nerves, very bad stress-wise.
- Jim: Because—
- Scheu: Of the power you have and the responsibility you have. Responsibility probably more than anything.
- Jim: And in which direction here?
- Scheu: Okay now, if you're the base Com Sec Officer you are ultimately responsible for all classified that's on the base, all the classified documents and the equipment.
- Jim: That's what you're trained for. You're not trained for keeping track of the parts on the B-52.
- Scheu: Yeah, but my original training is for maintaining that equipment; that's what my job is. I'm doing an additional duty that is now against Air Force regs for me to do and I was the reason it got to be against Air Force regs because they were taking somebody out of maintenance and putting them in operations.
- Jim: Oh.
- Scheu: Otherwise I'd have my little corner of the world where I had all my little classified, which is still quite a bit—
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: —but instead of owning everybody's, I would just have my squadron's. But I had twenty some colonels that reported to me, and I'd walk in their office and they'd go get me a cup of coffee and people just couldn't understand it, but I literally had the power to have them in jail that day.
- Jim: On what basis?

- Scheu: On security, not protecting my classified.
- Jim: Like what might they do?
- Scheu: Uh, maybe a document is missing.
- Jim: A classified document is missing and that came from your desk—
- Scheu: And I assigned it to them. “Here Colonel, here’s your classified for the month. Sign these.”
- Jim: Right.
- Scheu: And page check ‘em. Okay, now I’ve got my thing. Okay. Now I go to do an inspection. “Okay colonel, I’m here.” You don’t announce those. “Open up your safe.”
- Jim: I want to see that piece of paper, huh?
- Scheu: “I want to see those documents.” I mean it’s, we got in—put it this way, a lot. It’s not a piece of paper, things like that, it’s many documents to many, many people.
- Jim: Okay.
- Scheu: It’s amazing how much stuff there is out there like that. But it would be—okay, I’ve got my inventory, I know what he has.
- Jim: Right.
- Scheu: I know what is bad that’s supposed to have been destroyed, and what isn’t supposed to be, what’s supposed to be being used now, what isn’t, who he can issue stuff to, who he can’t, and I can check his inventory. And every time he opens up that safe he better inventory every item that’s in that safe and sign it off and inventory the pages on the documents.
- Jim: Jesus Christ.
- Scheu: Oh, yeah. It can be a real headache but—
- Jim: It takes a while to do that.
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. Oh yeah. You should see when we would have to do ours, which was the main unit. Our walk-in safe was bigger than these two rooms, much bigger, probably twice this size, and it was loaded with nothing but safes

containing classified, because we were it for the whole base. Anybody that had any classified came from us.

Jim: So when you checked on these generals, your purpose was to make sure that everything was tidy? I mean, that's what you're—

Scheu: Yes, that's what I'm there for. And to make sure I'm also the one that trains them so that they know how they are going to be taking care of their classified. Air Force Regs 2051 and then some classified Com Sec documents.

Jim: So if he falters, then you have power to discipline him?

Scheu: Mmm hmm. Yeah. Power to go to the general and say, "Hey general,—"

Jim: "We need you for a while. There's a problem"

Scheu: Yeah. Or if you'd lose an airplane. When we'd lose a B-52, it would crash somewhere, or one of our fighters would crash somewhere—

Jim: In training? Yeah, and then what?

Scheu: Yeah. Ah, then there's a real serious amount of documents.

Jim: Does that mean Russell's at fault?

Scheu: No, no. That means Russell's got a lot of work to do, 'cause now we have all this classified that isn't there anymore.

Jim: How about all the—

Scheu: That is possibly compromised.

Jim: How about all that classified stuff on that airplane? How did you deal with that?

Scheu: Now this stuff—

Jim: That was your responsibility.

Scheu: Yeah. Now we start the paperwork, which gets involved with lots of people.

Jim: Who would you send out to that crash site?

Scheu: Ah, that would already be done.

Jim: Oh.

Scheu: The Air Force would already have that secured as soon as it went down.

Jim: Because they'd want to get that stuff off the plane.

Scheu: My main thing would be to report what would be on the plane.

Jim: And make sure they got it out before—

Scheu: Well, not so much that. It would be so that everybody knew what is now possibly compromised.

Jim: Code wise?

Scheu: Uh-huh. This stuff ain't no good no more.

Jim: Right. B-52 goes down, change the codes, right? Not only for that base but for the entire Air Force?

Scheu: It would depend on what the plane was carrying. It could be a lot; it could be a little.

Jim: It could be, though, the entire Air Force would have to change numbers?

Scheu: It could be, yeah.

Jim: Jesus Christ.

Scheu: There's a lot of things can happen when classified goes wrong. You know, when they catch a spy. Then all of the sudden anything—the way the stuff works on classified, if there's any particular document or piece of equipment that gets compromised, whoever uses that equipment wherever, theirs is compromised also if they are using the same stuff.

Jim: Yup.

Scheu: So, that's like if someone invents something and they keep it kind of confidential how they're making it, when somebody finds out about it everybody starts making it.

Jim: Right.

Scheu: And then what you make ain't too good anymore. But it was a fun job, as I look back at it, if you get past the stress part. But—

- Jim: So then what did you do? Retire?
- Scheu: That was it. I came back here and went to school.
- Jim: Back to Antigo. [laughs]
- Scheu: Back to Merrill. Actually I lived in Wausau and went to school there and had a couple of part-time jobs while I was going to school.
- Jim: Oh, you used your G.I. Bill at long last?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. Using my G.I. Bill, this job came open. My predecessor committed suicide.
- Jim: From the stress?
- Scheu: You'd be surprised how much of that there is.
- Jim: Oh, yeah.
- Scheu: Especially Vietnam era, Korean era.
- Jim: Well they're a little paranoid anyway.
- Scheu: Real serious amount of—
- Jim: Paranoia?
- Scheu: Yeah. But anyway, the job comes open and I apply for it. There's a hundred, I sound like I'm bragging again, a hundred and thirty people or so apply for the job and I'm the one that at first I thought unlucky enough to get it. I thought a nice easy job, I always was gonna get a job where I didn't have to push papers no more.
- Jim: A cushy job, just sit there?
- Woman: Push papers.
- Scheu: Yeah, that's all I do is push papers, solve problems. But those are fun stuff, make somebody happy; that's what makes the world go round.
- Jim: Sure. So looking back, pleased with your career?
- Scheu: Oh, yes. That was probably the smartest thing I ever did was go into service and stay in service. Be surprised the number of people I get that come in this office and say, "Boy I wish I'd stayed in service." Or "How come the military

isn't drafting? I wish my son would go in service." I think the military is something that really makes people grow up.

Jim: There's no question.

Scheu: In a way I wish they would go back to the draft or even make it so that once you got out of high school you got two years of doing the military, minimum.

Jim: My theory would be two years of doing something for your government.

Scheu: Mmm hmm.

Jim: I don't care what it is.

Scheu: Something where there's some discipline involved and responsibility.

Jim: Yeah. Right.

Scheu: Because so many young people nowadays have—

Jim: Amen.

Scheu: Yeah. They have nothing to do. They have a lot given to them. Of course, that's part of the problem, I think, with the young militaries, they have a lot given to 'em that they didn't before.

Jim: What are we going to do about the—new people aren't going into the military now. How is that going to be solved?

Scheu: Ah. [sighs] The military's reputation is going to have to change. They're going to have to change what's going on in the military now. My son that's a doctor can tell you some real good stories about what goes on in the military and how they won't let people out because they're so short of people. One of his friends has MS; military would discharge you, wouldn't they?

Jim: Wouldn't they?

Scheu: Uh-uh. He's a doctor; they can't afford to let him go. I have people that come in here, half the aircraft they have on their base isn't flyable because they don't have parts for them.

Jim: Or pilots maybe.

Scheu: Well, pilots is somewhat of a problem, but there's still a lot of people want to be a pilot. The military still trains most of the pilots. Young pilots they have,

but the older ones have a tendency to get out and go to work for the commercials.

Jim: The commercials pay them so much money—

Scheu: Yeah.

Jim: —service can't compete with the jobs that the airlines offer. They make big money.

Scheu: Oh, yes. The military makes people very valuable on the outside.

Jim: Explain to me.

Scheu: Like if you learn a skill. If they learn a skill in service, you're worth a lot of money.

Jim: Because they know that you're well trained?

Scheu: And you have some discipline. After all, if you make it for your [Jim laughs] four years in the military and you have an honorable discharge, that means that you can follow instructions and get along with people, because if you don't get along with people the military is gonna get rid of you.

Jim: Yeah. A lot easier probably than in civilian life.

Scheu: Civilian life, I don't think people are used to taking orders or being responsible for something. Saying hey, your butt's gonna swing if you don't take care of this.

Jim: Right.

Scheu: And part of what I miss about the military is saying, "Okay, now this needs to be done and we're gonna do it." I'm still used to—I can get along with government fairly well where a lot of department heads maybe can't because I'm used to, "Okay, now they come down with this crap. We know it's a bunch of bull, but it's a lot easier to do it than to try to fight the system and carry that on you shoulders for forever. Now this is stupid, what we're doing, but let's take care of it and then we'll work another way around doing it and see if we can find it." Instead of blowing up and saying, "God damn it, I'm not gonna do it."

Jim: Then you don't make any progress at all, in any direction. What awards did you win, decorations, for all this charging around the world? Besides unit citations, which I'm sure you've won several of those.

- Scheu: Oh, God. The highest decoration I got is an MSM, meritorious service.
- Jim: Meritorious service?
- Scheu: I've got two, I've got three Air Force Commendation Ribbons, of course: longevity, good conduct, expert marksmanship, Vietnam service, Vietnam Campaign. I don't know, there's a lot of them. I never paid much attention to them.
- Jim: Well. You've certainly had a fascinating career.
- Scheu: I had a good time in service. I can talk and talk and talk about the service.
- Jim: I love it. Have you run out of stories?
- Scheu: Oh, I suppose I could run out of stories, yeah.
- Jim: Before I turn this off, is there something you missed telling me?
- Scheu: Nah. We can survive with what you've got. I can probably get in enough trouble with that.
- Jim: No trouble, no. Rae won't say anything. You didn't say anything bad about the service anyway.
- Scheu: I get along good with WDVA. I'm one of the good guys, actually. Of course that's my military, long time military. Of course, a lot of the veteran service officers are retirees, military retirees.
- Jim: You have twenty-five years in?
- Scheu: Twenty-one.
- Jim: Twenty-one years, so you were started at three-quarters pay?
- Scheu: No. I get fifty, about fifty-one percent.
- Jim: What is that?
- Scheu: Twenty years is fifty-one percent of base pay.
- Jim: Which is?
- Scheu: Oh, what I'm getting right now? God, I don't even know, that goes right to the bank and the wife spends it. [Jim & woman laugh] When I got out it was six hundred and some dollars a month.

- Jim: As a Master?
- Scheu: As a Master Sergeant.
- Jim: Six hundred a month?
- Scheu: Yeah, so that's what my retirement was, so I was making probably \$1200 a month then. I would say it's probably close to twice that now, because with pay raises.
- Jim: That's right.
- Scheu: Pay raises keep going and going and going. That pays my house payment, pays my car payment, pays my taxes. Otherwise I couldn't afford to have this job. And I've got—this is the fifteenth, no, this is the fourteenth year of kids in college straight, and I've got—
- Jim: Fourteen years?
- Scheu: Mmm hmm. I have kids in college, and this fall my youngest one goes back again.
- Jim: You've got two that are physicians, so they get into civilian life, you tell them I want some of that back.
- Scheu: Yeah. Their wives, my oldest one, the one that's a doctor, he said, because I always teased him about money and they could make my house payment and stuff like that.
- Jim: Sure.
- Scheu: When he graduated from med school he said, "Dad," he said "you know, I could probably do that." He says, "I could probably make your house payment." I said, "Ha, don't worry about it." I says, "By the time you're making money, your wife will know what to do with that money." When he was interning he got married.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Scheu: And of course, being in the service he doesn't—what does he make? He's got major pay which is probably about 35-, 40 thou and his bonus is 30 thou for being a doctor.
- Jim: Yeah, when I was in Korea I got double bonus, one for being a medic and one for being in the Korean war theater.

- Scheu: Ahh, okay.
- Jim: So I got an extra four hundred dollars a month.
- Scheu: That's big time money then, too.
- Jim: It sure was.
- Scheu: It's like when I was stationed in England the first time I was drawing P-3 pay.
- Jim: I don't know what that is.
- Scheu: Pro pay.
- Jim: I don't know, what's that?
- Scheu: Uh, specialized career fields where it cost 'em a lot of money and experience so they'd give you more money to stay in, so I was drawing the max. P-3 pay in the Army was three hundred bucks, everybody else was three hundred bucks, but Air Force is cheap; they paid us fifty bucks for every P, so I got one hundred-fifty bucks a month extra. I left there as a tech, but as a Staff Sergeant I was making more money than a senior, than an E-8 was making, because of that. And then all of a sudden they started taking that away, so I was three years without a pay raise. Fifty bucks they'd take away one year and then next year was another fifty a month, and the next year another fifty. But now the military gets paid fairly decent, but my son, the doctor, he could be making a quarter of a million a year on the outside. He's an anesthesiologist.
- Jim: Oh, anesthesia?
- Scheu: Yeah. He makes a good thousand bucks a day part time.
- Jim: He likes living in California?
- Scheu: No, no, he's not in California. He's at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.
- Jim: Oh, yeah. Where all the big planes are; we've been there.
- Scheu: Yeah. And a *lot* of generals around that place.
- Jim: What's the implication here? They're retiring and taking full pay and doing nothing?

Scheu: No, no, active duty. Active duty generals. Oh, yeah. There's a—

Jim: They don't need generals in Wright-Patterson Air Force base?

Scheu: Yeah, there's a lot of them they don't need there, that's for sure.

Jim: Right, that's what I mean.

Scheu: In most bases there's—well, of course the military has to have an amount of, what do I want to call it? Extra? You need to overlap because in case something happens, like right now—I mean, active duty can't take care of it and you got to call up the Guard and Reserve, and they really whine. I mean, they come in here and, "I want my husband home; he's been gone three weeks already."

Jim: Three weeks? And you say, "Listen sister, let me tell you something."
[laughs]

Scheu: But a lot of them do quite well on that.

Jim: Yeah.

Scheu: But it's tough.

Jim: I know, but those are second jobs, so they can whine all they want but their Guard money is not their primary purpose, and so all that is extra beyond what they make otherwise.

Scheu: We got a lot of those guys retired in the Army. Okay.

Jim: So, all right. Thanks.

Scheu: Oh, you're welcome, just hope you can use something out of it.

Jim: Use something; I'll use it all. Outstanding, it really is.

[End of Interview]