

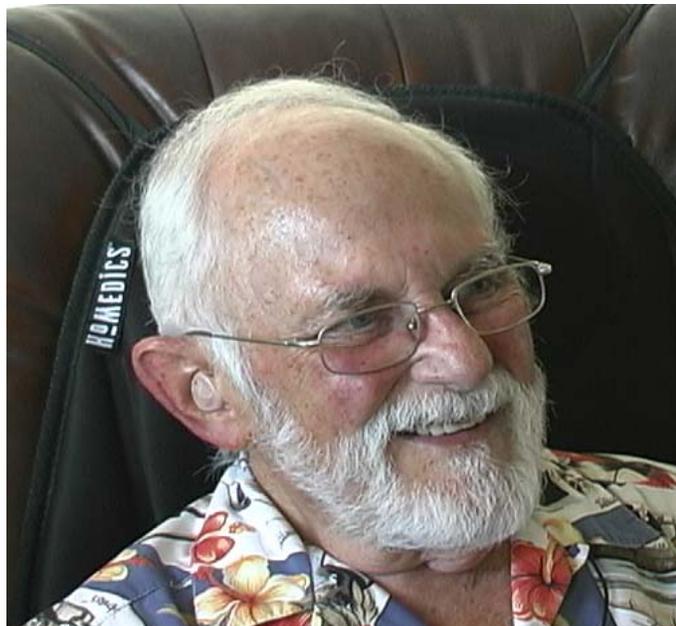


**Sheldon L. “Don” Kader**  
Captain, United States Air Force Reserve (Ret.)

**Army Air Force**  
**100<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, 441<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Group,**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Air Force, Troop Carrier Command (France & Germany)**  
**Headquarters & Headquarters Squadron,**  
**(USAFE) United States Air Forces in Europe**  
**Wiesbaden, Germany, World War II**

**United States Air Force**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Camera Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Photographic Squadron**  
**Japan and Korea, Korean War**

Interviewed on February 18 and July 22, 2009 by Rick Appleton  
in Mr. Kader’s home in San Diego, California



Transcribed by Violet Hutka  
Edited by Rick Appleton  
VMVC volunteers

September 2009

## **About the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, San Diego**

The Veterans Memorial Center, Inc. was formed in March 1989 to create, maintain and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

The site chosen for the location of the Veterans Museum & Memorial Center was the former San Diego Naval Hospital Chapel at Inspiration Point in Balboa Park, part of a complex of architecturally significant buildings with rich historical connections to the San Diego region's naval heritage.



The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Will Hays, Chairman of the Board  
Rear Admiral Rod Melendez, USN/Ret., Executive Director  
Lucy Saltmarsh, Assistant Curator

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## Photo Credits

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*Don Kader's (Korean War) 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Camera Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Photographic Squadron logo appears at left, and his service cap at right identifies his service in World War II and in the Korea (Both are frames from the interview video.)*

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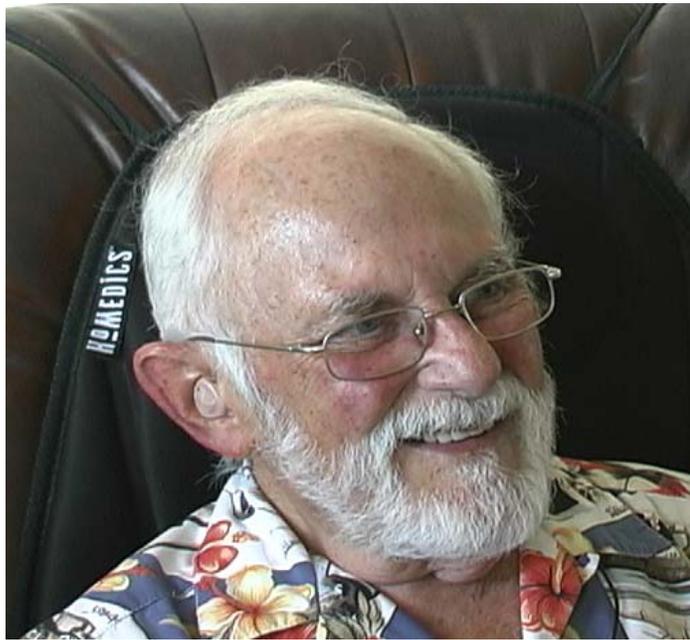
*Private Don Kader in September 1944*

Appleton: This is a conversation with Sheldon “Don” Kader. Everybody, I think, calls you Don, right?

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: And we’re conducting this conversation in his home on Wednesday, February 18th, 2009. It’s hard to imagine 2009 already. (Laughing) This interview is in conjunction with the Veterans Museum of San Diego and the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress. Why don’t we just start out, Don, by telling us a little bit about your childhood before we get into your military service, and we’ll just go from there.

Kader: Okay.



*Don Kader during his interview in March 2009*

Appleton: So you were what, a child of the Depression, or the end of the Depression.

Kader: I was born in Los Angeles in 1926. My father was a salesman. During the Depression he was never out of a job. He always had a job someplace. . .

Appleton: Really?

Kader: . . . doing something. Never was out of a job.

Appleton: He must have been a good salesman then.

Kader: Yes. We moved to San Diego in . . . I was five years old . . . in 1931, right in the depths of the Depression.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: But I didn't know anything about the Depression. We always had food on the table, had a nice warm house. I always had clean clothes.

Appleton: Were you aware that others in the neighborhood, or other kids your age were having trouble because their parents during the Depression.

Kader: Not until I got to junior high school.

Appleton: Okay.

Kader: And some of the girls, you know their mothers were making dresses for them. Some of the kids came to school without lunch, but, anyway, we lived in a rented house on Utah Street.

Appleton: And that's right across the street from your home now.

Kader: A lovely place and it was quite a large house, too.

Appleton: Is that house still across the street over there?

Kader: No. No, it's not. It's a parking lot now. I went to school right around the corner up here at Garfield Grammar School; and when I graduated from there, I went to Horace Mann Junior High School, which was up at the top of El Cajon Boulevard here, at Park Boulevard. The Board of Education is up there now (which, incidentally, is named after a school classmate, Eugene Brucker). I walked to school. It was not far, just about a mile. During the rainy days my dad would take me and drop me off there.

Appleton: Now your dad always had a car during the Depression?

Kader: Always a different car. It was always a used car.

Appleton: Oh, I was going to say, did he buy new cars or used cars? (Laughing) What kind of business was he in? You say he was in sales.

Kader: Well, he was a salesman primarily. He had been with a couple of the large meat packing plants, but he was originally from Milwaukee. My mother was from Chicago, and they were married in 1924. My mother was living in Los Angeles at the time because her family had moved out there, and my father came out and they got married in 1924.

Appleton: Sure. And you have a brother?

Kader: Yes, I have a brother.

Appleton: Is he younger or older than you?

Kader: He's younger. He was born in 1939, so he's going to be 70 years old on the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month.

Appleton: Yes. So there was quite some space between the two of you.

Kader: Yes, 12½ years. Then from Horace Mann Junior High School I went to San Diego High School, which in those days was the high school in San Diego.

Appleton: The only high school in the city of San Diego.

Kader: Well, Hoover had opened in the 30's. San Diego was opened back in the 1880's. I graduated from there. I was pretty active in student activities and athletics and things of that nature.

Appleton: When did you graduate from high school?

Kader: June of 1943. I went to UCLA through the fall semester of '43, then I wanted to go into the Navy V-5 flight training program and went down and took the test and flunked it. There were only two of us in the room and a yeoman with a big clock going back and forth.

Appleton: (Laughing) Not making it easy at all.

Kader: Then I came back down to San Diego and went into the Air Force . . . the Army Aviation Cadet Reserve Testing Program and passed that.

Appleton: Okay. Now, before we go on to that, were you in school, as you were either in junior high or particularly in high school, were you quite aware of what was going on in World War II?

Kader: Oh, yes, very, very much aware.

Appleton: What are some of your recollections, how you felt about what was happening?

Kader: Well, I was always interested in aviation. I used to ride my bike down to the Navy patrol base by Lindbergh Field where the PBYS used to come in, and they'd let me sit in the cockpit and, you know, fool around.

Appleton: Oh, really?

Kader: We would go over to North Island occasionally on the ferry and walk around the base over there. As I said, I was very interested in aviation.

Appleton: North Island is part of Coronado?



*At age 13 Don's birthday present from his parents was a trip in a Ryan 'ST' single engine aircraft taking off from Lindbergh Field in 1939.  
Don is standing in the plane.*

Kader: North Island is part of Coronado.

Appleton: And that's the big naval air station over there.

Kader: North Island was originally called Rockwell Field, and during World War I, it was an Army Air Base. And the Navy officially took the station over, I think, in 1918. I can't remember exactly.

Appleton: In school did you talk about the war?

Kader: Very much. I was there from 1941 to '43. I remember acutely, right after Pearl Harbor, the next Monday we had an assembly, and we listened to President Roosevelt declare war. We had a lot of Nisei, Japanese-Americans here. A couple of days later one of my good Nisei friends said, "I guess I'll see you after the war." And I

said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, they're sending us to camp." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, they closed my dad's business and we gotta go to camp."

Appleton: Oh, my heavens.

Kader: And that was the last I saw of him. And that was quite a shock to me.

Appleton: So that made the war take on a little different meaning.

Kader: Yes. And then some of the classes they offered were kind of aligned to war. I took a class in propaganda as an extra class. Of course, then you're acutely aware of what was going on, especially San Diego being the prime navy base on the west coast and headquarters of the 11<sup>th</sup> Naval District. And by that time my dad had gone into business. He and another fellow opened a military uniform store . . . they tailor-made military uniforms . . . on Broadway. I remember walking down Broadway. For six months there was nobody around, and in six months it was full of sailors. (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) So things really began to get moving then.

Kader: Yes. You'd see them come off the ships at the Broadway pier, and it was just this wave of white caps coming down Broadway.

Appleton: (Laughing) Well, your dad must have had good business then with the sailors coming through.

Kader: He really had a good business until his partner decided to pull it out from under him.

Appleton: Oh, well, that's another story. Now, when you were talking in school about the war, were you more focused on what was going on in Europe or more in Asia, or both?

Kader: Well, probably more in Japan or Asia, because we were, you know, on the Pacific Rim here, and all of our ships were going that way. And, of course, the newspapers played up to a great extent the Pearl Harbor disaster and everything like that, and they kept pretty good track on what was happening there. Although we only had two newspapers in town, they did, I would say, a fair coverage of what was going on in Europe.

Anyway, I graduated in 1943. I had a cousin who was from Los Angeles, and he graduated from high school back in the '30's. He joined the Navy as an officer candidate, and this is an interesting sidelight because it brought the war in Europe home to me.

He was assigned as a shore-to-ship fire control officer attached to the Army and landed with the first wave of troops at Omaha Beach on D Day with a radioman and himself going ashore. The radioman was killed. He had to take the radio and go ashore and direct fire from the ships up to the . . .

Appleton: The (German) gun emplacements?

Kader: Yes, and in doing so was wounded twice and was awarded the Navy Cross, the second highest service decoration in the Navy.

Appleton: He was a forward spotter then . . . an observer?

Kader: Yes. He was telling the ships where to shoot.

Appleton: Move a little to the right, something like that.

Kader: Evidently he had also saved a French battleship out there. He told them to get out of the way, and he was given the Croix de Guerre and had it pinned on him by General de Gaulle.

Appleton: Really?

Kader: Yes. They did a website on him on the internet.

Appleton: Really? And what is his name?

Kader: Stuart Brandel. He's my first cousin, my mother's brother's son and retired as a commander.

Appleton: Now by 1943, before you joined, were you aware, or was it in the newspapers about what was happening in the concentration camps in Europe?

Kader: No. I don't think I ever read anything about the concentration camps.

Appleton: At that time.

Kader: Yes. But we did have what was called a Victory Corps . . . a high school Victory Corps . . . and you could zero in on several different categories. I chose aviation and got to learn a little about what was happening air-wise over there. In fact, one of my classmates, Leo Myers, went into the Army Air Corps and was a tail-gunner on B-17s; and, if you remember, in the early part of '43 we lost a tremendous amount of B-17s. He was killed on his first mission.

Appleton: Oh, my.

Kader: Shot down.

Appleton: In Europe.

Kader: Yes, several of our classmates from the classes of '42 and '43 were lost.

Appleton: So you knew about what was going on then. Did that strike fear in your heart, or were you just pumped and angry and wanting to help out?

Kader: You know, it was both . . . very patriotic. It was something that was foreign, and yet it was part of me, you know. And I didn't, of course, see what had happened in Europe until I got over there and saw some of the devastation then.

Appleton: Then you really realized what happened. Well, it sounds like you had a good introduction to what was going on.

Kader: I had always been a reader and I read everything. When I was a kid I subscribed to a pulp magazine called "*G-8 and His Battle Aces*." As a matter of fact, I've got a copy of it here.

Appleton: Oh, really? And His Battle Aces.

Kader: And it was about World War I pilots fighting the Germans, and they had the German . . . 'Villain' Herr Doktor Krueger . . .

Appleton: (Laughing) Herr Doktor Krueger.

Kader: Herr Doktor Krueger. I don't know why I did it. I wrote a letter to them critiquing one of the stories . . . and they printed it.

Appleton: They did? Well, good for you!

Kader: And out of that I got sort of a pen pal relationship with a guy back east. Well, for years I said, "Gee, I sure would like to get a copy of that magazine." When I went in the service my mother threw everything out (laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) Yes, parents often do that. They clean out the room.

Kader: You know, all my old funny books and stuff like that. Anyway I went to ComicCon Convention here in San Diego many years ago and was walking around. This guy had some *G-8 and His Battle Aces* magazines, and I said I couldn't remember, of course, which month it was. The only one he had the cover looked familiar. I bought it for \$35, and, by golly, it was the one that I had written the letter to.

Appleton: And your letter was in it.

Kader: And I have it in there. (Laughing)

Appleton: Fantastic! What a stroke of luck! (Laughing) Well, good for you! Well, you did a lot of writing. We'll want to talk about that later. That's excellent. So, when you did join, you enlisted, right? Or did you know you'd be drafted if you didn't enlist?

Kader: Oh, I wasn't even thinking about getting drafted. I wanted to be a pilot.

Appleton: You were ready so as soon as you graduated from high school. Then you went and enlisted?

Kader: Yes, when I was finished. Of course, I was seventeen. and I had to wait until I was eighteen to get called. But I went into what was called an Army Aviation Cadet Reserve Program.

Appleton: Okay.

Kader: Army Aviation Cadet Reserve Program.

Appleton: Was there any training involved in that?

Kader: No. In fact I've got my card in here someplace. And then you waited to be called to a cadet class, and I couldn't be called until I was eighteen which would have been in '44.

Appleton: Had you thought about fudging on your age? I understand a few guys actually did that. (Laughing)

Kader: My mother would not allow anything like that.

Appleton: The number of guys who said that they joined when they were sixteen by lying about their age . . . I don't know how they got away with it.

Kader: Well, the parent had to . . .

Appleton: Or the parent had to confirm that.

Kader: Anyway my mother was tolerant but not that tolerant. (Laughing)

Appleton: Were your parents fearful when you went into the war that you might be injured or not?

Kader: Well, I'm sure they were. Of course, as I say, my dad at that time had that military uniform store down here, or actually a Marine and Navy uniform store; and in those days, of course . . . there were these sweetheart and 'In-Service' pins . . . in fact, I

still have my mother's 'Son-In-Service pin'. I don't remember any tearful good-byes because what happened when I got my orders to report to Fort MacArthur, which was an induction center . . .

Appleton: That's up by San Pedro, right?

Kader: Pardon?

Appleton: Is that up by Long Beach, San Pedro?

Kader: San Pedro, right. And I don't know, I just got on a train and went up there, you know, and then from there they shipped me and several other inductees to Amarillo. It was supposed to be pre-cadet, and, of course, they closed the program down. They had more pilots than they had airplanes. (Laughing)

Appleton: Okay. So that was the point at which your . . . ?

Kader: . . . my active duty started.

Appleton: Yes, but also your flying, your desire to fly as a pilot was turned down then because there were too many pilots . . .

Kader: Oh gosh, they were pumping out pilots . . . they were giving them their wings and discharging them at the same time.

Appleton: Really?

Kader: I mean . . .

Appleton: Or assigning them elsewhere.

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: Discharging them out of the Aviation Cadet Program.

Kader: Well, actually they had their commission but they didn't need them.

Appleton: And this would have been then by what, in 1944?

Kader: 1944, Yes. They closed the program . . . we were in Class 44K and we were at Amarillo at the time. 44K would have been November of '44.

Appleton: The 'K' stood for the month

Kader: The Battle of the Bulge was goin' on and they needed . . .

Appleton: And they needed ground folks.

Kader: Ground troops. And even though we were in the Air Corps, we didn't know where we were gonna go; but they did put us through some course work or tests. I wound up getting enough points, I guess, to go to Radio School and train as an air crew radio operator/mechanic.

Appleton: Oh, so some of the people that had gone through pilot training then were transferred to the Army?

Kader: I don't know what happened to the pilot guys. We were still in cadets, but I know this from hearing scuttlebutt that they would graduate from flight training. But they never were assigned any place. They just had their wings and that was it.

Appleton: Now, did you actually do the flight training, or were you transferred out before then?

Kader: No, no. That was called Pre-Aviation Cadet Training. It was like basic training . . . learn how to march and take orders and wear your uniform correctly and stuff like that. Amarillo was an interesting base in that no one ever went AWOL from there because you could see 'em for six days. It was so flat. (Laughing)

Appleton: It's a long way to anywhere . . . Amarillo.

Kader: What was interesting, too . . . after about thirty days they'd let us go into town, you know, on the weekend, just for the day; and the first thing we saw were a lot of lawns with signs that said, "Soldiers and dogs keep off the grass."

Appleton: Really?

Kader: That's Texas, man. (Laughing)

Appleton: Not exactly a welcome sign. (Laughing) So then you were assigned, did you say, to Radio School?

Kader: I went to Radio School from there to Sioux Falls Army Air Base, South Dakota.

Appleton: Okay.

Kader: I was trained as an airborne radio operator-mechanic. We'd be able to maintain the sets and also to take code and do that, very intensive training.

Appleton: So by this time it was getting on into 1945?

Kader: The beginning of '45, so we were shipped overseas. Well they sent us to . . . I graduated from Sioux Falls and then . . . another little sidebar here . . .

Appleton: That's okay.

Kader: I was called into one of the barracks, and there was a guard with a rifle standing by an office door. They asked me to come over. I walked in and the guard closed the door. There was an officer sitting behind a desk. We got talking a little bit, and he said, "You like to hunt and fish?" I said, "Well, I've done a little bit. Not much huntin' and fishin'." He said, "You think you can skin small animals?" I said, "I guess I can learn." And this went on for half an hour. He said, "You can leave now but, you've never been in this room." Well, a bunch of us that had high speed operation certificates . . . we didn't know what was going on. I called my folks once a week, and one day my mother said, "Are you in trouble?" (Rick starts laughing)

I said, "Why?" She said, "Well, the FBI has been coming around talkin' to our neighbors and your teachers in grammar school, and teachers in junior high school and high school." And I said, "Oh, my God." I said, "No, I'm fine, nothing wrong with me."

What this was, they were going to . . . they went down our class just alphabetically, and the first half, like through J or something like that, they took thirty guys and they shipped them out. We didn't know where they went. And we found out, after the war, that these guys were put into an O.S.S. group, and they sent them to Catalina Island with the radio equipment hanging on their back, marching them up and down the hills. Of course, the war had ended . . . we were supposed to have been dropped into the jungles in CBI (China-Burma-India) . . .

Appleton: Oh, my.

Kader: . . . to set up operational radios in the forest . . . in trees behind Japanese lines.

Appleton: Now, were you in the group?

Kader: No, I was . . .

Appleton: You were just cut off at that part of it. (Laughing) They stopped before they got to the 'K's.

Kader: I didn't find this out until way after the war 'cause a bunch of us that had gone to school together, we kind of talked back and forth . . .

Appleton: Began to compare notes, huh?

Kader: . . . but they were not to say one word about that.

Appleton: Isn't that interesting. But if they had needed four or five more then you would have probably been in that group.

Kader: Or kill four or five more. (There's an entry on the back of my discharge certificate that notes this.)

Appleton: Oh, dear. So you didn't end up in that. What did you end up doing?

Kader: We were on temporary duty while they were tryin' to figure out what they were gonna do with us, so we were sent to Truax Field in Madison, Wisconsin, and then we got orders to report to Overseas Replacement Depot, ORD, at Greensboro, North Carolina. And we went from there, overseas on the good ship *U.S.S. Lejeune*.

Appleton: *U.S.S. Lejeune* as in Camp Lejeune, right?

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: Okay. Was that a Liberty ship?

Kader: Oh, no. That was the captured German luxury liner called *Windhuk*.

Appleton: Yes. Okay. So that was a German liner used as a troop ship. Was that luxurious in its accommodations?

Kader: Oh, we had bunks six feet deep you know. And the first night . . . of course the Atlantic is not one of the calmest oceans . . . first night out we did a little pitching and rolling. Fortunately I was in the second level down here. The guy at the top fell out right on his face . . . a steel deck . . . and broke his nose and cheek bone . . .

Appleton: Oh, no. Gosh. Oh, my. Six bunks high. I mean, you're eight, nine feet off the ground, or off the deck then. Oh! So then you ended up in Le Havre.

Kader: We docked at Le Havre, troops coming in. Troop ships were going out, but the guys that had been there they were sending them home.

Appleton: And this would have been when in '45?

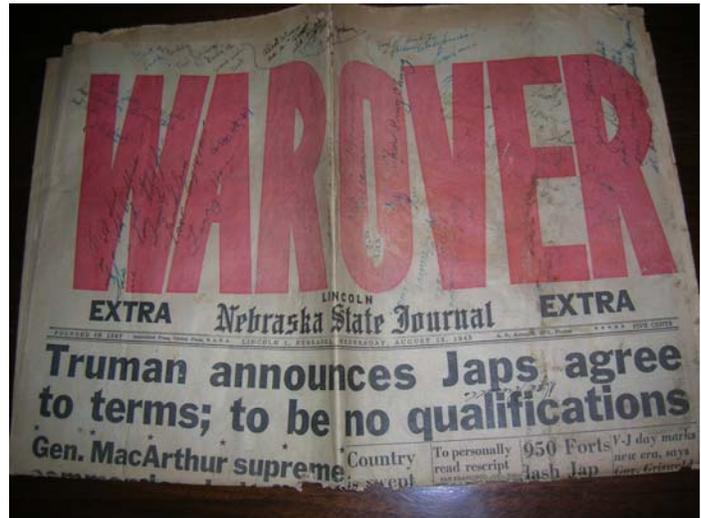
Kader: That was in . . . I'm trying to think. This was in 1945 . . .

Appleton: Before the war ended?

Kader: No, it was right after the war.

Appleton: Just after, okay.

*The Nebraska State Journal, August 15, 1945, Extra Edition. All the GIs in the photo on the next page signed this newspaper.*



Kader: I was in Lincoln, Nebraska when the war ended. I think the war ended in July or August, August, '45. I have a copy of the Lincoln newspaper here and a picture of barrack's mates looking at it.



*G.I.s at the Lincoln Army Air Base in Nebraska happily read the newspaper headline "WAR OVER," on August 15, 1945 [see photo above for the actual newspaper these soldiers were reading], announcing V-J Day. Don is 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left.*

Appleton: August. Right.

Kader: This was just shortly thereafter. September, I guess.

Appleton: Right. So, what did Le Havre Harbor look like when you got there?

Kader: It was a mess. Things were all collapsed. I have some pictures of it. They put us into one of the cigarette camps which was called Camp Lucky Strike. We were waiting on orders to be transferred to whatever squadron they were going to send us to.

Appleton: . . . So that's the time when people were coming into Lucky Strike to go back.

Kader: That's right. And there yelling, "Yes, suckers! Suckers!"

Appleton: So what are you gonna do? (Laughing) They'd say, "You'll never like it here, huh? The food is awful!" Or whatever . . .

Kader: Well, it was interesting, too. We moved on to Chateau Thierry, a famous World War I town. The food we got at Lucky Strike was C-rations.

Appleton: Really? They were really getting you ready for . . . ?

Kader: There were a lot of dogs running around in there, so one of the guys kept calling this police dog over. They were feral but they were just out there looking for food, and he kept calling this dog. "That damn dog don't understand me," he said. I said, "Of course, he doesn't understand you. He's a French dog, you dummy!" (Laughing)

Appleton: And he didn't speak French. (Laughing)

Kader: We did have a little time off before our beautiful coaches came in to pick us up to take us to Germany. So we went into this little village of Chateau Thierry there, and we were dying for something good to eat. We saw this restaurant that said "Bif Tek," and I thought, "Beef steak, wow! Let's go there." And we go in and we're speaking fractured French, and we ordered a sandwich. We had one big loaf of French bread. We started eating it and it was sweet. But it was stringy. Figure it out. There weren't any horses around . . .

Appleton: (Laughing) Wasn't beef steak.

Kader: Horse steak. (Laughing)

Appleton: It was horse steak, oh, my. (Laughing)

Kader: The one thing about being in the service . . . is you can always find something funny that happens. In the worse times you can find something funny.

Appleton: Well, that would have been one.

Kader: If you've got a sense of humor.

Appleton: Yes, right. (Laughing) Well, you'd have to have a sense of humor, for sure. Well then, when you traveled over to Germany, you said you traveled . . .

Kader: We went up in boxcars with just hay inside, and they shoved about fifty of us in each car. Those boxcars were originally from World War I . . . 40 & 8 and on the side it said, "40 '*hommes*' (men) and 8 '*chevaux*' (horses)" . . . and part of the American Legion is called the 40 & 8 in World War I. This particular car that we were in had a flak hole or some kind of big hole in the top and of course the engine was pumping out this smoke, and it would come down on us, straight into it. We looked like a minstrel group when we got out of there.

Appleton: All covered with soot, huh.

Kader: It was like an overnight thing going up to Germany to get assigned to our station up there.

Appleton: So you were assigned then in Germany to what unit?

Kader: I was assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 100<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron of the 441<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Group in a C-47 aircraft, flying out of the first air base that we had opened in Germany. It was called Eschborn, now Rhein-Main Air Force Base, which was right outside of a little village called Höchts, and we were billeted in what was left of an old office building and assigned to crews, not to the same crew all the time. They rotated wherever the plane needed a radio operator, a crew chief or whatever.

Appleton: And you were flying in C-47s then out of Eschborn?

Kader: Out of Eschborn to southern France and places wherever the displaced persons who were German slaves basically during the war were located. They had DP camps all over southern Germany and into France.

Appleton: Those were set up by the allies?

Kader: These were set up by the allies to help people to relocate back to where their homes were. We went into one of the camps that had mostly Polish people and they were just . . . it was sickening really to see them. They were skin and bones basically and (wore) what ragged clothes they could get to wear.

Appleton: Now, had they just been on the run or had they had they been in some of these concentration camps?

Kader: They weren't in concentration camps. They were in work camps.

Appleton: Oh, the Germans had brought them over to be in work camps?

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: Oh, my.

Kader: Most of the concentration camps were . . . those were for political prisoners and ethnic gypsies . . .

Appleton: Anybody they didn't like.

Kader: I did not visit any of the concentration camps.

Appleton: Were you at that point aware of the concentration camps?

Kader: In a way. But it was still kind of held back from telling us, you know, the fresh troops about them. I guess they didn't want us to take off or do anything.

Appleton: But by that point the concentration camps had been opened.

Kader: They liberated those camps just shortly before I got there.

Appleton: But the work camps were . . .

Kader: The work camps were a different thing., but they were still treated very badly. They didn't put them in ovens or anything like that, but they had them working railroads and doing all sorts of things. They were really slave labor camps.

Appleton: And so then your troop carrier unit group was flying, getting these people back to wherever.

Kader: . . . to their relocation camps up in Germany. The first one we went into . . . there were these Polish workers . . . and we put them in the airplane, and you could see that they were just frightened to death.

Appleton: Yes, I was going to say: Were they frightened by the Americans?

Kader: Well, they knew we were Americans, and we're not gonna do anything bad to them. We had an interpreter that would tell them where they were going and all that stuff. We put them in the planes, and the C-47s had these bucket seats along both sides

of the fuselage. You'd get about probably 28, 30 people in an airplane, and we got up and the ride was a little bumpy and all of a sudden they started to vomit. And I had a river of . . . I was, you know, the low man on the totem pole as far as crew went. The crew chief had a couple of stripes, and so we finally landed and we had to get a fire hose and wash all that stuff out. They took them out and put them in the showers to get them cleaned up a little bit.

Appleton: Oh, my. So you flew these flights then. . .

Kader: I only went on two of those.

Appleton: . . . two. I see.

Kader: The other flights we went on were like we went to Marseille, Istres le Tube Air Field in France. The Air Force decided to take their fighter pilots who they didn't need any more, most of them, and transition them to fly troop ships in C-47s, C-46s.

Well, a fighter pilot is a strange breed. They didn't take too kindly to that. I went on the first flight with these guys and they were trying to do aerobatics (laughing). Our pilot was just screaming his head off, and finally we landed. I said, "You know, you really don't . . ." I didn't even have the radio on. I didn't need it because they were just doing touch and go's, coming in and going out. Istres le Tube was kind of a strange airfield, and it was right on the Mediterranean. The approach . . . there was like a hedgerow wall or something just before we got to the runway, so if you undershot, you would tear your wheels off. If you overshot, you'd go into the drink. (Laughing)

Appleton: Oops!

Kader: So, you know, I wasn't too excited about that, so I told the pilot, "You know, you really don't need a radio operator." He said, "Do what you want. Go into town." So I would say I politically got myself out of that duty.

Appleton: You didn't want to end up either in the hedgerow or into the ocean.

Kader: Well, no. I mean it was incredible what the guys were trying to do with these beautiful old 'gooney birds' we called them.

Appleton: Right, Yes. Tried to fly them like a P-38 or something.

Kader: And then I got back to Eschborn, and we were just doing some . . . oh, I don't even know what we were doing other than just flying around the field and going someplace. And I got a call from the Orderly Room saying that I was to report to headquarters in Wiesbaden, the headquarters of the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), which had become a new command. I was interviewed for my post as a radio operator. By this time I was a buck sergeant. I was interviewed to be a radio operator on

one of General Idwal Edwards' planes. He was the USAFE commanding general, at that time a Major General. Well, he had two airplanes. He had a silver C-47, beautiful luxury liner which had been Jimmy Doolittle's command ship in the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force, and he had a silver B-17 which he used for his longer missions when he was doing inspections around all of the Air Force bases. Well, they hired me! Same pay but they gave me an extra stripe. I made staff sergeant.

Appleton: Yes, so you got another stripe and what, nicer service?

Kader: But it was a wonderful assignment. My crew chief and I had our own quarters in the headquarters and headquarters squadron building in Wiesbaden. The general lived in one of the castles up on a hill there, a very nice man, very, very easy to talk to. The crew. . . I have a picture here . . . my pilot and co-pilot and the navigator. The navigator was a weird guy. All of these guys had been in Europe during the war, flying around, and I'll never forget Lieutenant George Sinitzen was his name. He had, some way or another, found his way into a Leica factory which was underground.

Appleton: Oh, really?

Kader: And he had cameras hanging from every button he had on his uniform. And each time we'd go on a flight he'd say, "Where's my camera!" (I'd say), "George, it's around your neck!" (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) Now Leica was the premier German . . .

Kader: Optic works.



*On February 10, 1946 on R & R at Club Angleterre in Nice, France, Don met several members of the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team of Nisei soldiers. (L to R) Jimmie, Kader, Tommy, Harry and Dick (a paratrooper from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne)*

Appleton: . . . and cameras. Were those all 35 mm at that point?

Kader: Most of them were.

Appleton: Now, were the Leica works near Wiesbaden or was it farther?

Kader: I don't know where they were. It was an underground factory.

Appleton: Underground and he found it. How about that, the spoils of war. Oh, my.

Kader: But anyway, that was great duty. The old man, as we called him, had his own nurse assigned to him; and he would go down . . . his dentist was in Nice on the Riviera, and every time he had a tooth ache, he'd go down there. We'd fly down with him, and we stayed in the Ruhl Hotel or the Angleterre. No, I went down to the Angleterre before I was assigned to him.

Appleton: I think you've got a picture of yourself skiing there, too, right? So you had time off this time to be able to do all the sight-seeing.

Kader: Yes, well I had enough points with me . . . I guess they call it . . . to go on a rest leave.



*In 1945 while on R & R leave in Coulette D'Auron, France,  
Don and an unidentified WAC enjoy the ski slopes.*

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: R & R, rest and recuperation. The other word for it was I & I, intercourse and intoxication. (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) Yes, right. Oh, dear! Well, did you stay then with General Edwards for the remainder of your time in Europe?

Kader: Right. My crew chief was kind of a nervous guy, and we didn't really socialize too much together. But I got very well acquainted with the crew chief on his B-17. Jack Heckardt was a master sergeant, old time Army guy. He'd been in the service before the war, nice guy, and we became very good friends. His radio operator was going home, and he said, "Kader, I'd like you to become the radio operator. I can arrange it right now and get you tech stripes." Well, I was going home, and I said, "Jack, you know I've got to go home and finish college. I've got to finish college."

Appleton: So that would have been in '46 then?

Kader: That was in '46, early part of '46.



*In 1946 Staff Sergeant Don Kader leans out the window of a railroad car already chalked with U.S. troops' destinations as G.I.s proceeded to embark at La Havre, France.*





*In June 1946, G.I.s are ready to board the "S.S. Webster Victory" in La Havre for the trip home to the U.S.*

Appleton: So that was the end of your service right at the end of World War II.

Kader: Right. And I was up at Camp Beale in Marysville, California, getting discharged, and the master sergeant came up to me. He said, "You wanna go home tomorrow?" Now these guys had been sitting around for weeks trying to get back home. I said, "Sure, I'll go back tomorrow." He said, "Sign this paper." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Ah, don't worry about it. If there's another war you go back in as a staff sergeant. We're not goin' to have another war." So I signed it and I was home. I got a plane out of there the next day and went home and managed to finish college in 1949. Then I worked for an advertising agency here in San Diego, a nice little agency.

And then in 1950 I got the telegram from Harry Truman.



*The dockside welcome back to New York City—bunting and flags festooned the pier.*

Appleton: “Greetings” again. (Laughing) Before we get to that, you finished college. Where did you finish up?

Kader: Well, I went to San Diego State for one semester, but it didn’t have the curricula that I was really interested in. A bunch of us decided that we would go up to Los Angeles, and we went to a college called Woodbury College, which is now a big university up in San Fernando Valley. This was downtown L.A. The reason we did that was because it had certain business courses and business administration courses that I wanted to take. They had a major in advertising and a minor in journalism, and it was a tri-mester program. So we were out in two years with a degree. I graduated in May ‘49, and, as I say, I went to work for the agency here in San Diego and bingo!

Appleton: And then it started all over again. So, your interest then was to get into journalism . . . either writing or . . .

Kader: Well, writing, advertising, public information, public relations . . . that type of thing. I’ve always been a fairly good writer, and I’ve always had sort of the personality that lends itself to PR-type work. I got along with people.

Appleton: And did you make your social contacts again then right away? And you later were married.

Kader: I got married when I came back from Korea.

Appleton: Oh, so it was after that even. Okay. So your “Greetings,” then, came from President of the United States, Harry Truman. (Laughing) And that would have been in 1950 then?

Kader: July of 1950 is when I believe the Korean War started.

Appleton: Yes, in June . . . I mean a few weeks before . . . just weeks. Oh my, oh my.

Kader: And the reason I was recalled was because my MOS . . . Airborne Radio Operator-Mechanic, whatever, number . . . was still Radio Operator-Mechanic. And then we begin the long involved story. (Laughing) The longer involved story.

Appleton: Right. Well, that's okay. We could start to get into that. So you got recalled. Were you to report then to a . . .

Kader: I reported to Hamilton Field, Hamilton Air Force Base, across the Bay from San Francisco in Suisun. When I reported to the personnel officer there, and he said, "Oh, sergeant, sit down." And by that time my father had outfitted me in a nice Air Force blue, tailor-made staff sergeant uniform. He said, "Oh, a radio operator! We can use you on a . . . this was a fighter wing . . . a night fighter wing . . . they called them a stealth type plane but they were not . . .

Appleton: Not the stealth fighters that we have now.

Kader: The plane they used up there was the P-39 "Black Widow."

Appleton: Black Widow, okay.

Kader: And this is still in Hamilton Field, and he said we'll assign you to the flight line but as a radio operator mechanic. I told him that I hadn't seen aircraft radios in four years and all I know about radios is to turn them on and get jazzy music stations.

Appleton: They were starting to use transistors and that sort of thing.

Kader: They were just coming into some high tech stuff. I said, "I got my degree, a major in advertising and a minor in journalism. "Ohhh," he said, "I've got a job for you. You're going up to McChord Air Force Base in Tacoma, Washington in the Public Information Office, and you're gonna take over the base newspaper up there.

When I got there, there was a corporal who was running the newspaper; and he didn't like that at all. And my CO, Captain McCarthy, was the Public Information Officer, the nicest guy in the world. So they had me writing articles for the base newspaper, and I've got a whole bunch of them over there. I had a column, a sports column. It's a weekly, four-page, published off base, sold advertising and stuff like that, and I was also kind of put in charge of handling tours that came through and showing people around the base. Whenever a new airplane came in, they landed and I would go out there and do a story on that. It was nice.

Appleton: Nice service, Yes.

Kader: And on top of that I was refereeing or umpiring base softball games . . . or baseball games . . . and going with the basketball teams wherever they played and writing the stories. I even had a 15 minute weekly radio program over KTNT FM called the "Air Force New Round-Up." I was just having a good time.

Appleton: Oh, that sounds great!

Kader: Having a good time.

Appleton: You were talking about writing sport stories and going out with the teams.

Kader: And taking four people through. I had my own quarters and it was kind of neat.

Appleton: That is nice, yes, not like the trenches.

Kader: I had forgotten that before I was recalled, I'd run into one of my old buddies that I had gone to radio school with who was living up in Washington or something. I went to visit . . . anyway we got together, and he said, "Are you still in the Reserves?" And I said, "Yes." This was before I was recalled. And he said, "Well, why don't you put in for a commission? You've gone to college now, and you've got a college degree," and I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Just go down to the recruiting office and fill out the papers," 'cause he had gotten a commission that way.

Appleton: He'd done it that way, too.

Kader: So I filled out the papers and I forgot completely about these. I got a call from my dad . . . I was up there for about three or four months, I guess, freezing . . . stinkin' . . . Tacoma (Laughing) you know, the paper mills.

Appleton: Yes. That's gonna get pretty wet and pretty cold.

Kader: And rancid.

Appleton: Yes. Yes.

Kader: Anyway, I get a call from my dad, and he said, "Hey, you got a telegram here from the Air Force." At that time they were living up on Hawley Boulevard, and I said, "Don't they know where I'm at? I'm in the Air Force now!" He said, "Evidently not." I said, "Well, open it up. What does it say?" He opened it up and it says, "You are to appear before a Commissioning Board at Long Beach Air Force Base on such and such a date." I said, "Send that up to me. I've gotta show it to my C.O.," and I did, and he said, "Hey, that's very good." Captain McCarthy was a nice guy. He said, "Yes, when you get ready to go down there, hop a plane and go on down and see what they want."

So I got down to Long Beach Air Force Base, and I'm wearing blues 'cause it was cold up in Tacoma. This was almost summertime. I checked into this barracks and reported in. There were three officers in a room. They were wearing suntans because it's hot in Long Beach. So I'm sitting there, and they ask me one question, then another question. It was getting to the point where I was sweatin'. I wanted to get out of there. It took about an hour, an hour-and-a-half. There were two captains and a major. I think it was the major who said, "Well, we're about done with this interview, sergeant. By the

way sergeant, why do you want to become an officer?" I said, "Sir, I'm just tired, I guess, of being an enlisted man." I thought that ripped it. He said, "Dismissed!"

I went back to the base and about two weeks later I got another call from my dad. "You got another telegram." I said, "What is it? Open it up!" He said, "You have just been commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant the Air Force of the United States."

Appleton: (Laughing) Even after that interview.

Kader: "Send it up." He sent it up and I showed it to my CO. He said, "God, that's great! I'm so glad to hear it." The only problem . . . the old man . . . the wing commander, Colonel T. Alan Bennett, was an old Flying Tiger pilot, but a real nice guy. He said, "I'll have to talk it over with the commander." McCarthy said the old man said, "Well, who we gonna have to take tours around the base? You got no other information specialists in there." I was a senior information specialist, and there's no billet for a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in that area. "Now what do I do?" So my CO, Captain McCarthy, said, "Well, you got your buddy . . . your buddy is in personnel over there. Why don't you go over and talk to him?" And I did. I asked him, "What am I gonna do?" And he said, "Well, let me go through and see who's looking for a non-commissioned senior information specialist. The only way I think you can get assigned that commission is to get in a unit that needs a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant or an information service officer."

Appleton: I see. And you couldn't do that in that assignment?

Kader: No. He said, "It's a little risky but here's what you gotta do. I'm gonna get you discharged from the Reserve, then I'm gonna re-enlist you as a staff sergeant in the regular Air Force, senior information specialist and send you to a base that's looking for somebody like that. And then when you get there, you show the telegram to the new CO." So I said, "Fine." So I get back to Wright-Patterson, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Camera Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Photographic Squadron, Air Force Air Photographic and Charting Service, and I go in. The CO was a recall, too, but he had also been in World War I. He's a lieutenant colonel. He had the old overseas stripes from WW I on his uniform, Lt. Col. Horace Pote. I reported in, and I said, "Sir, perhaps you'd like to see this telegram." He said, "Well, what are you wearing those stripes for?" I said, "Well, they sent me here because I couldn't get a billet for me over at McChord." He said, "Sit down!"

This guy knew everybody there was in the 4<sup>th</sup> Air Force. He picks up the phone, and dials Hamilton Field which was the headquarters for the Reserves for this area. And he said, "This is Colonel Horace Pote. I wanna speak to colonel so-and- so." This isn't verbatim, but this is about the way the conversation went that I heard out on my side.

"George! This is Horace! How are you doing, buddy?" They were World War I buddies! He said, "I'm doin' great! How's the wife and kids? Fine. Hey, got a little problem here you can help me with George. I got a staff sergeant sittin' in front of me who is a second lieutenant, but he ain't got no bars on. I want this fixed right away

because we gotta leave here in a couple of weeks, and I need a second lieutenant Information Service Officer in this outfit.” He said, ““Okay.” He hangs up and says, ““Okay sergeant go back to the barracks.” So I just lollod around, fooled around, played with cameras and stuff like that, and then we got our orders to go. He called me in. They gave me my commission, pinned my bars on. There were only four other officers, the colonel, two captains and a first lieutenant.

And so the other officers decided that they were going to take me to the Officers’ Club and drink up my uniform allowance. (Laughing)

Appleton: Oh, dear! (Laughing)

Kader: And that was quite a night.

Appleton: I bet it would be!

Kader: Then three days later we were on our airplane headed for Hamilton, and from Hamilton over to refuel . . . in either Midway or Guam, I can’t remember, then into Yokota Air Base in Japan.

Appleton: So that’s how you got to Korea . . . through that whole commissioning process.

Kader: Oddly enough, as I say, there were 25 men in the unit—five officers and twenty enlisted men who were cameramen. We were all assigned to the Far East Air Force called FEAF. I was ordained as a photographer/reporter. My main job was to write documentaries and produce them over there, but I did my share of photography, too.



*Now having been commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in the USAF during the Korean War,  
Don conducts Orderly Room roll call at Yokota Air Force Base in Japan.*



*Don works on a film documentary  
script at  
K-16 (Kimpo) Air Base in Korea in  
1951.*

Appleton: Now was the name of it? It was the Second . . .

Kader: Second Combat Camera Unit.

Appleton: . . . Camera Unit, yes.



*Don poses with his Speed Graphic camera used in his duties as photographer in the Yokota Air Force Base in Japan in 1952.*

Kader: It was part of the Second Photographic Squadron. I was there for about eighteen months, I guess and I still never got promoted. (Laughing)

Appleton: But you were a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant at this point. At least you got that recognition and the pay that went with it.

Kader: Well, they had some sort of a weird regulation in the Air Force that in order to be promoted one grade up, you had to serve in the same unit continuously for at least six months, I think. But that was stateside. It had nothin' to do with being overseas.

Appleton: Okay.

Kader: Well, I had never been in the same unit six months (laughing). When I got back out, got in the Reserve, I was on and off in the Reserve, you know, active and non-active and what have you. So I got my 1st lieutenant bars when I was still in the Service; and then when I retired, they gave me Captain bars at the retirement.



*Don pauses while working on a film documentary at  
K-16 (Kimpo Air Base) in Korea in 1951.*

Appleton: Sure. That's nice. Well, now, let's talk a little bit about what you were actually assigned to do and what you did during the Korean war when you were based in Yokota.

Kader: Our main base of operations was at Yokota Air Base, Japan, and our advanced base was at K-16 which is Kimpo Air Base in Korea. That was a fighter base. Well, it was both. It was a fighter base, and transports would come in and out of there. At that time they were still flying the F-80s with the main F-80 force was out of Suwon which was K-13 where there were also the B-26 medium bombers flying interdiction missions. I was the lowest officer in the squadron, so I would kind of do the paperwork and stuff like that. I would also write what we called story board type things for the documentaries we were filming around the Japan area. Also when I'd go to Korea, I would do documentaries over there based on the need for certain type of documentation.

Appleton: Were these documentaries, as far as you knew, for training purposes?

Kader: No. These were primarily for public release and Air Force orientation.

Appleton: Oh, okay.

Kader: We shot the film there. We had a screening room at Yokota. They would do a rough cut and a lot of out-takes and stuff like that, and then the film and the script . . . the script was pretty basic . . . nowhere near the final script . . . was sent to Lookout Mountain outside of Hollywood. That was the Air Force's photographic lab unit.

Appleton: And this is Lookout Mountain . . . where is that?

Kader: That's up in the Hollywood Hills area. And they would do . . . not the final cut, but they'd do the pre-production cut. Then that would be sent back to

Washington, D.C. to the Photographic Headquarters, and they would put the film in a final form. They'd release them on newsreels and to various Air Force units.



*In 1952 at the headquarters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Photo Squadron at Yokota Air Base in Japan. Don is showing off the new A-6 aerial, 35mm motion picture camera.*

Appleton: Now, this was the big 35mm? Or was it 16mm film?

Kader: Well, I shot 16mm but they released as 35mm . . . blow it up, you know. We did have 35mm cameras over there, but only a couple of guys knew how to use them. We had sound. We had Arriflex 35mm, and, as a matter of fact, the way I got acquainted with the pilot that I flew with on most of my missions out of Yokota, I was doing an interview with them with a Mitchell 35mm sound camera and a big tripod, and that's the way I met Mel Manley who was the captain of the plane, *Our Gal*. I got pretty friendly with him.

Appleton: Well, then, you went on missions sometimes?

Kader: Whenever I could, you know, sneak aboard a plane. But I always flew in the same bomber. I always flew in "*Our Gal*" B-29 with Mel Manley's crew.



*The crew of the B-29 'Our Gal' during a post mission briefing on  
the flight line at Yokota Air Base in 1951.*

Appleton: So what would your role be? What would you do when you went on a mission?

Kader: I would try and get as much footage of the mission itself, pre-take off and after. In other words, I'd get other planes side by side, any cover we had. We had a lot of Navy cover, F-4 U's coming off of carriers, bomb drops plus shots of the crew at their stations.

Appleton: Were you able to get a view of where the bombs were landing?





*Aerial coverage from L-15 liaison planes provided the platform for artillery spotting at the main line of resistance somewhere in North or South Korea .*



**A road sign marks the Main Line of Resistance (MLR).**  
(Courtesy U.S. Army Military History Institute.)

*This MLR photo courtesy of Korean War Almanac, Harry G. Summers, Jr., Published by Facts on File, New York, p. 188.*

Kader: Well, I did that too. But I'd get what we call a stick, you know, bombs coming out of the other airplanes, and we tried to get close-ups. I usually used a Bell & Howell 70DL, I think it was called. It was a three turret lens 16mm camera. Once in a while I'd get a 35mm, but I wasn't comfortable with a 35mm camera. Then, when I could, I'd get impact shots looking over the bombardier's shoulder down through the nose there, but most of it was pretty much the same stuff over and over. Now, in Korea it was different. We'd rotate our crews back and forth out of Kimpo, and there I was doing documentaries primarily. I also flew with the Army artillery spotting L-5s and L-15s.

Appleton: Those are smaller airplanes?

Kader: Yes, very small.

Appleton: They were the really small ones. (Laughing)

Kader: Sit in the back seat from the pilot.

Appleton: Would you shoot both still and movie . . . motion pictures as well?

Kader: Usually. I had a still camera with me. Then I also went out and visited ground troops and shoot the aerial support from the ground or just shoot GIs in action.



*Infantrymen are moving up to the command post on the MLR getting ready for action.*



*Inside a dugout near the MLR a machine gunner is firing single shots at enemy emplacements—sniping with a .50 caliber machine gun.*



*This forward command post had been destroyed by enemy artillery fire and was part of the documentary coverage provided by Don's camera unit.*



*These GIs are taking a needed break on the rear of an armored tank battalion vehicle at the MLR.*

Appleton: You showed me some pictures . . . kind of like the flight line . . . some of your photos of the planes being loaded up and . . .

Kader: Oh, Yes. We were doin' a documentary on the F-80s . . . just before the F-86s came in. I did . . . you saw it on the tape of the plane coming in for a landing.

Appleton: You have one photo that shows an airplane flying by a destroyed building or something. What was that occasion?

Kader: Well, I didn't shoot that picture.

Appleton: Oh, you didn't. Okay.

Kader: I tried to make it very clear in that article that was done for me in a *Ghost Wings* magazine that we had a very, very fine still photographer, Staff Sergeant Clyde Reavis. That was shot at Kimpo through the roof of a bombed out hangar with beautiful framing. He got a very good shot there.

Appleton: So you said a lot of these individual photos that you have at the flight lines as part of this documentary that you were doing. As I recall, you also mentioned that there was one flight that you didn't go on, so tell about that one.



*Before take-off the camera crew records preparations  
for an F-80 mission at K-13 (Suwon)*

*Note: A series of photos from the documentaries on the F-80s and B-26s is included in the Appendix to this interview on pages pp. 84-92.*

Kader: Well, I was going on a mission, so I went to a briefing in the morning. Most of these were daylight missions, but the briefings were like 5 o'clock in the morning. I went to this one briefing and would be going with the same airplane, "Our Gal;" and as I was getting ready to leave, the navigator on the plane said, "What are you goin' on this one for? This is a milk run! You got more pictures of bombs fallin' out of airplanes than you'll ever use! Go on back in the sack." So I went back to my quarters, BOQ (Bachelors' Officers' Quarters).

That mission was a max mission. They had almost 40 B-29s from Okinawa and Yokota, the entire 98<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing. It ran into the highest concentration of MIG fighters and the highest concentration of flak that any mission had ever encountered. "Our Gal," flown by Mel Manley was shot down. Of the eleven guys on the crew I think only, maybe, five or six survived. Mel did survive. Being the plane commander, he was, of course, the last man out of the airplane; but when he went out and pulled his ripcord, the buckle came up and hit him on the chin and just ripped his chin right up. He landed in the Sea of Japan, and, of course, we had coverage, not only by our own patrol boats but also the South Koreans. They picked him up and shipped him back to the hospital. But I

always said I would have gotten some great shots, but nobody would have ever seen them.

Appleton: Nobody would have ever seen them, yes. There are a lot of aerial combat shots that just wouldn't be there.



*While at Kimpo Air Base in Korea in 1951, Staff Sergeant Clyde Reavis shot this dramatic photo of a C-47 through the bombed-out roof of one of the hangars at K-13.*

Kader: But it's funny how fate comes into this, just luck. I wouldn't be here talkin' to you.

Appleton: Well, you might. You might have been the sixth one, you know. But still it would have been tough.

Kader: Knowing my wanting to take pictures. (Laughing) I would hang onto that camera. I don't want to lose that.

Appleton: So the crew bailed out then.

Kader: Oh, they would have bailed out, of course, and the plane went down into the sea. It's interesting to note that they got the plane out (of the sea), and the nose art is in the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson [Air Force Base].

Appleton: Oh, they were able to pull the plane . . .

Kader: They cut it out, I guess.

Appleton: Oh, my. That's amazing. Now you also mentioned . . . I think you said you were on another mission where you flew right up to the border between North Korea and the Soviet Union.

Kader: Oh, yes. And I do have a copy of that . . . out of a Japanese newspaper. This was a max mission also.

Appleton: Now, by max, you mean all available aircraft?

Kader: Maximum—most of the entire wing of B-29s would go . . . with all kinds of air cover.

Appleton: Now, max would be how many planes probably?

Kader: Probably twenty planes. This was a mission to a place called Najin-dong, better known as Rashin, and it was at the very, very top of North Korea.<sup>1</sup> I believe it was twelve or eighteen miles south of Vladivostok; and at the briefing the briefing officer said, "Look, you're gonna be right next to the Russian border. You can see on your flight charts where it is. Make your turn before you get to the border."

Now this is a delicate time. The Cold War was on, and the Ruskies were lookin' for a chance get at us. Well, we went in . . . God! There were airplanes all over the sky! Practically all of the Navy fighter pilots were givin' us cover, F-4Us and God know what else. We made our drop, and I was sitting, at that time I guess, lookin' out the port window, over the port wing. I looked down and our wing tip was right over the border.

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<sup>1</sup>A joint Navy-Air Force raid on August 15, 1951, crippled the rail network in Rashin. A port city 17 miles from the Soviet frontier on Korea's eastern coast, the town of Rashin (now Najin) is connected to the Soviet port of Vladivostok, which is less than 110 miles away by both rail and road. . . . Political restrictions on the flight paths of the Air Force's B-29 Superfortress bombers made them especially vulnerable to MiG attacks from enemy bases in both Manchuria and the Soviet Union; therefore, fighter-escorts were considered critical. Since Air Force F-86 aircraft were out of range, the decision was made to use Navy F9F Panther and F21-12 Banshee jet-fighters from the carrier USS *Essex*. This was the first time in the Korean War that Navy carrier fighters escorted Air Force bombers. This procedure was repeated on October 8, 1952 when fighters from the USS *Kearsarge* escorted Air Force B-29 Superfortresses attacking the Korean rail center north of Wonson, an attack repeated on December 10, 1952, when Rashin's munitions factories, rail marshaling yards, locomotives and rail cars were struck again . . . .

You could see the difference between the two countries, you know. We didn't draw one shot of flak and not one fighter. We had previously dropped thousands of leaflets that we were comin'. They dropped them the day before.

Appleton: Really? Well, they knew you were there. Oh, my.

Kader: I was really expecting to get some good footage. (Laughing)

Appleton: And that was the milk run.

Kader: That was the milk run.

Appleton: Not the one that you didn't go on, but fortunate for you. What was your downtime like, when you had time to relax?

Kader: Oh, I did a lot of paperwork, squadron paperwork. I was low man on the totem pole . . . morning reports, and whatever . . . getting' supplies straightened out. I was kept busy, but I always had time to go to the Officers' Club.

Appleton: Yes, well, we can talk about that in a minute. Just one another question before we talk about that. You knew that you were with a lot of bombing runs, either in a B-29 or in the smaller planes.

Kader: Well, that was just observation.

Appleton: Yes, observation. Was there any thought that had gone through your mind about where those bombs were going and what was going to happen?

Kader: Never gave it a thought. Oh, I know we were trying to wipe out rail heads. And this was where, I told you, one of our squadron guys was flying a B-26 and he went around and . . . no, I mean . . . you know, it was war.

Appleton: It was war and you didn't really think about where the bombs were ending up.

Kader: I never thought about it. It was probably a good thing.

Appleton: Yes, that was probably true, too.

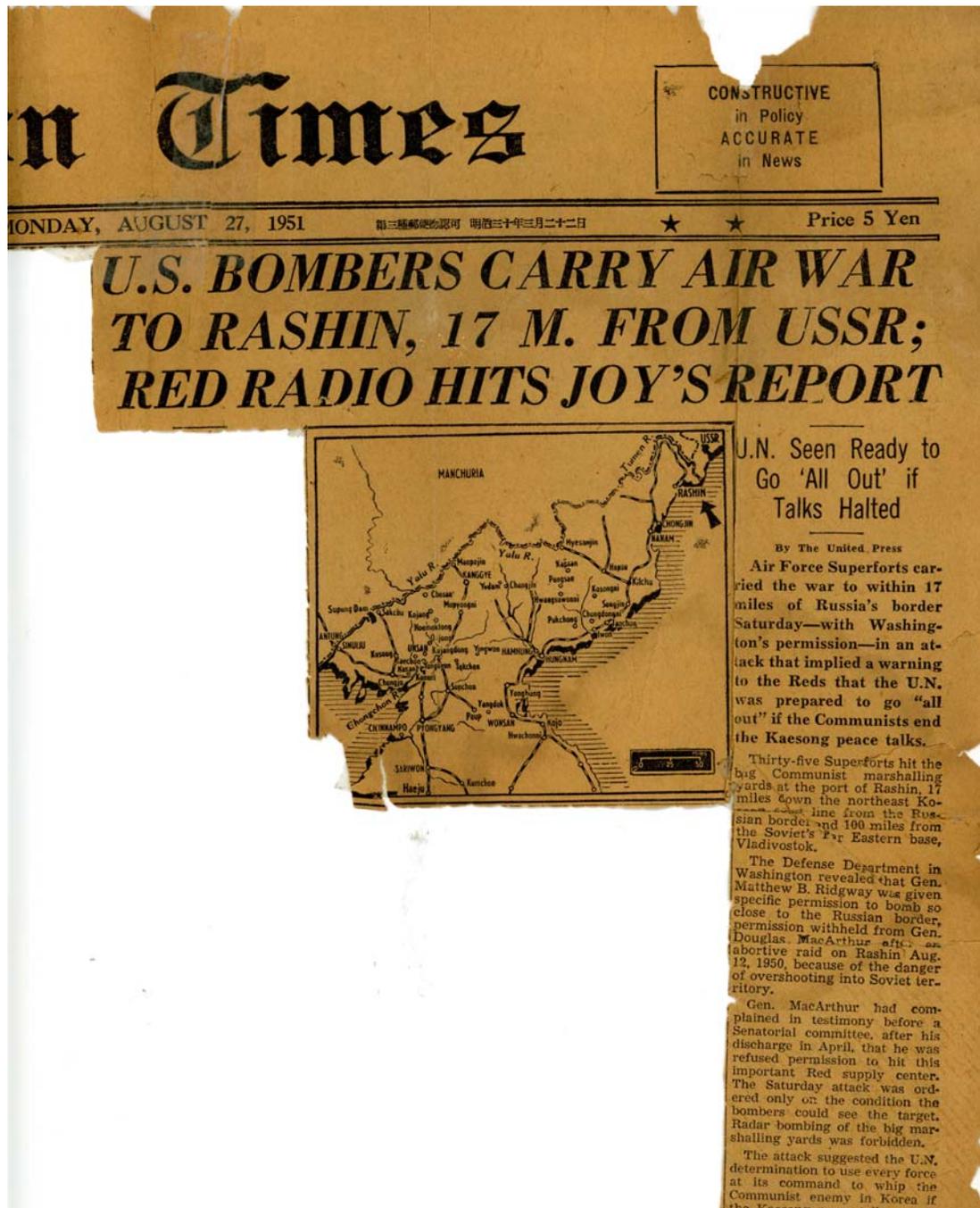
Kader: 'Cause I remember the M\*A\*S\*H series. That was actually supposed to be analogous to the Vietnam War, but it was done about Korea.

Appleton: Yes, it was.

Kader: And there was one or part of one session they had where a bomber pilot came in, and he was going to make everybody pure. He had talked himself into being Jesus Christ. Do you remember that one?

Appleton: Oh, Yes, Yes.

Kader: That to me was a little off-beat because I never ran into anybody over there, ground guys or air guys, that talked about where the bombs were going or where the shells were going. They were shooting at us, too, you know.



*The August 27, 1951 issue of the Nippon Times reported the B-29 “max-effort” mission on Rashin, North Korea, just south of the border with the Soviet Union. Don was cameraman on this mission in the plane, “Our Gal.”*

Appleton: You wanted to avoid the ones coming at you. You weren't concerned about the other ones.

Kader: Well, I imagine there were certain semi-conscientious objectors that felt that this was an immoral type of thing to do, but war is not morality. It's immorality.

Appleton: That's true. And it's not being able to solve some of these issues in other ways. Yes. Well, the Officers' Club. You enjoyed going over there, both at Yokota and what, at Kimpo? Or mostly in Yokota?

Kader: Well, there was kind of a quasi-officers club over in Seoul, Korea, but it was noisy goin' down there. We had ANZACs, Aussies. We went down to the one in Seoul . . . we were just outside of Seoul . . . and there was a bunch of ANZACs in there. They were nice guys, but they are the biggest drinkers and noisiest guys.

Appleton: Now, the ANZACs are from New Zealand, right?

Kader: Yes. And they wore hob-nailed boots. They had a Maori dance that they did, and it was called Boom-a-la-boom. And they'd come down and the floor was wood, and they would grab you off the floor. I'm not a little guy, but these guys were monsters! They grabbed me and they'd start dancing with me and come down hard. They'd come down and would miss my foot . . . they'd see how close they could get to my foot with those boots.

Appleton: Without crushing you. (Laughing)

Kader: You had to drink just to be loose. (Laughing)

Appleton: And quick. And what did they call it?

Kader: They said, Boom-a-la-boom. I don't know. It was a take of one of the Maori's dances. Then, of course, the Officers' Club in Yokota was a nice club, good food, good drinks. After missions they had Happy Hour with 15 cent martinis. (Laughing) And there was this one guy I got acquainted with, and he was really a character. He was a major, a pilot, but the guy was a mad man! Do you remember what the Virgil Partch cartoon characters looked like, kind of very sharp features?

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: . . . and this guy looked like a Virgil Partch cartoon. He had fashioned himself a car that was made out of a wing-drop tank and put a little two-lung engine in it. We'd sit in it and we'd go off base and do all kinds of crazy things. The MPs were afraid to stop him. They thought he was crazy. But he would come in from a mission, and he would go right to the bar. The bartender knew exactly what he wanted . . . and these were big martinis, monsters. He'd bang one down and bite the end off the glass and spit it off, and then he'd have another one. I don't even remember his name, but he was one of those characters that you run into that just stays in your mind.



*A little relaxation at the Officer's Club at Yokota was always a welcome diversion from the stresses of aerial combat photo coverage.*

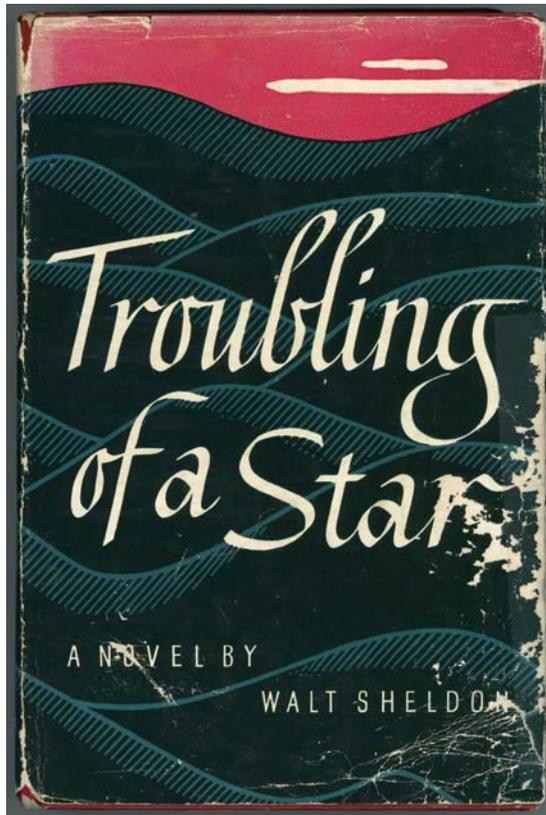
*(L to R) Capt. Don Bjoring (CO of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Photo Squadron), Lt. Don Kader, Lt. Ken Mason (B-29 pilot), Capt Phil Browning (2<sup>nd</sup> Photo Squadron)*

*Note: Shortly after this picture was taken, Mason was in a fatal crash landing coming back from a mission. Phil Browning was killed shortly thereafter on a night interdiction mission in a bomber out of K-13 rigged with a 10 million candle power searchlight.*

Appleton: Well, of course.

Kader: Now, another thing also interesting about . . . and you know how things go out of your mind? Well, last night I'm sitting here and I was thinkin' . . . I met a guy who was a captain, who was a PIO, and we met him in the Tokyo Officers' Club. No, he

came through our unit once in Korea, but then we met him again. His name was Walt Sheldon. And he's an author and he was writing a book. I could not remember its name, and then suddenly it came to me, just in a flash. It was called *Troubling of a Star*. I just did a search on it. He had married a beautiful Japanese woman who had some connections . . . she was related to the imperial family . . . a princess or something like that. But he was a very serious guy, and I did a search. He evidently wrote a lot of pulp detective stories.



*Walt Sheldon's novel was written while he was a public information officer at the truce talks ending the fighting of the Korean War.*

Appleton: Really, that's interesting.

Kader: But I finally got a copy that book and I'll let you read it. I've met almost every one of his 'fictional characters'!

Appleton: What was your contact with the population in Japan?

Kader: Oh, I loved Japan!

Appleton: What was the attitude of the Japanese people around the base towards you, towards Americans?

Kader: Very good. As a matter of fact I met a very, very nice young Japanese lady living off base, and we started to go together. So what I did was . . . we weren't supposed to be, you know, doin' this, but everybody looked the other way. No one said anything about it, so I rented a little house right off base in a little town called Fussa, and I had a bicycle. It was a nice Japanese style house with tatami floors, and it was fairly large. So I rented out one of the big rooms to a navigator and his Japanese girlfriend, and I used to go down there. In fact I stayed there all the time when I wasn't on duty. You know, stayed overnight. Ride my bike in. Ride my bike out of the base and this was not unusual.

Appleton: Was there any leftover feelings about World War II because that was only six or seven years before?

Kader: I didn't think so. Now, we were there . . . this was Occupation time basically or the end of the Occupation time. I didn't notice any backlash at all.

Appleton: Now Japan had been pretty badly bombed.

Kader: Oh, it was terrible!

Appleton: I mean, beyond Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I mean Tokyo . . .

Kader: No, Tokyo was made out of paper and wood. They went in with firebombs and just torched . . . I felt very comfortable with the Japanese.

Appleton: And they seemed to be comfortable with the Americans?

Kader: Oh, Yes. There were certain times when you'd go into Tokyo, you'd run into guys who thought they were pretty tough, but they laid off, too many MPs around. (Laughing)

Appleton: Well, MacArthur set, I think, a good tone in the Occupation which probably helps, right after the war that it was not an Occupation that was mean spirited. It was to try to build Japan up again, I think.

Kader: Well, it's interesting. The Japanese are very, very, very industrious people.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: In fact I was amazed . . . I went into Tokyo the first time . . . the way they'd build their buildings. They'd build them from the top down. They put the

scaffolding in, build the top floor, take the scaffolding off, next floor. By the time they get through. the building is finished. It's amazing.

Appleton: They put up the frame but they start up at the top.

Kader: All the flooring and walling at the top.

Appleton: Isn't that interesting.

Kader: And the Japanese also . . . there was a very kind old Japanese man who would come to our . . . we had a little lab there at Yokota, and he would buy our chemical that has silver in it . . .

Appleton: Oh, the silver nitrate . . . developing chemicals.

Kader: . . . yes, developing chemicals, buy all of that, and then he'd leach all the silver out of it. And he invited the officers to a dinner at his house. It wasn't a very fancy place but it was a huge room. Of course you sit on a tatami, and he had all kinds of girls waiting on us and everything and one course after another course. The food was stacked up all over. Oh, my God! Nicest little guy in the world.

Appleton: Really?

Kader: He spoke fairly good English. He knew what to do with that silver.

Appleton: Probably made a good living out of it, yes, yes.

Kader: I'm sure he did. We had a lot of chemicals. Every day we had a barrel full.

Appleton: Now, you developed both your film, your movie film as well as your still shots?

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: That's amazing. One of the outtake scenes that was included in that outtake reel of yours was of the peace talks at . . . was it Panmunjom in Korea? Wherever the Armistice talks were being . . . Armistice Village? I don't remember what they call it.

Kader: Yes, Panmunjom. Well, I was covering the peace talks.

Appleton: Yes. Now were you actually shooting a lot of that footage as the people were coming up to the peace talk building, as I recall . . .

Kader: With the guards standing out front?

Appleton: Yes, there were guards out in front.

Kader: Yes, yes. That, and then there was a hi-angle shot of a bunch of correspondents, all kind of huddled together . . . this very famous infamous guy . . . he was an Englishman, but he was a communist. I can't think of his name, a very well known man. That's the only reason I took that picture.

Appleton: Yes. You knew who he was. (Laughing)

Kader: Everybody knew who he was. And then, of course, right after that there was a flight of birds that came across, and they were in a "V" formation. It was symbolic to me.

Appleton: Now, was that at the time that the Armistice was beginning to take hold? Of course that's been going on until . . .

Kader: Well, you know . . . the Armistice has never been signed.

Appleton: Yes, it's never been signed.

Kader: Just a cease fire.

Appleton: Right. I guess you're right.

Kader: In fact my friend Pete, a retired Air Force major . . . he's much younger than me . . . was stationed over in Korea in the '60s, I think, and he said those guys were still mean. They were warned not to get too close to them because they'd shoot at you, the North Korean guards.

Appleton: Years later even.

Kader: Yes. This is 15 years after.

Appleton: And you're right. That hasn't been settled yet. It might in the next five or ten years. (Laughing)

Kader: I'll tell you, they're very difficult some times. How do you tell a North Korean from a South Korean? They all look alike. There was a story that . . .

Appleton: Maybe clothing might give them away.



*Interrogation of a North Korean prisoner*

Appleton: The prisoners knew that they would generally get pretty good treatment.

Kader: You bet!

Appleton: And good food.

Kader: They'd get better treatment than from their own troops. If they tried to run away from their own troops they'd shoot 'em.

Appleton: Had you heard stories of that where the North Koreans would run over to the other side if they could? Or if they weren't shot first.

Kader: Well, it's interesting because that culture really has no borderline as far as life and death. Death is just another thing. There's a story that's supposedly true. When you're driving down in a jeep or something like that a Korean would walk across the front of the jeep as close to being hit as they possibly could. They believed that there's dragons following them and if you hit the dragon, they're okay. It's folk lore but I can see where their culture is.

Appleton: But there's something to that. Isn't that interesting. So were you driving jeeps sometimes and having to be careful that the people wanted you to hit their dragons?

Kader: Oh, Yes. For the most part, to get back to Japan, I went into Tokyo as much as I could. I'd go to one of the nice little . . . they were not hotels, but they were like inns . . . up in the mountains and just spend a weekend up there, just relaxing. Then another thing that we used to do once in a while we'd go into Tokyo to what they called

Tokyo Onsen or something like that, I don't know, but it was where you take these baths and had the girls run on your back, you know.

Appleton: Yes. Give you the massage and all that and steam baths.

Kader: That was relaxing.

Appleton: I'll bet that would be. You stayed then until about what? 1955 was it?

Kader: No. I was out of there in '53.

Appleton: Oh, you left in '53.

Kader: '51 to '53.

Appleton: And then where did you go from there? Now, you stayed in the Air Force?

Kader: I stayed in the Air Force Reserves, and I'd go do my monthly meetings and annual two weeks active duty and this and that. But, shortly after that I got married and that turned to be not too good. So I couldn't make the meetings. I couldn't do this or that, so in order to get retirement you'd have to have what they called ten good years. In other words you had to go to certain meetings, etc. and I had to drop out at a certain time there, so I only had 8 ½ good years. So I get no retirement pay. I get disability pay but I don't get any retirement pay. As I look back now I can see the error of my ways because I could be making another thousand dollars a month.

Appleton: Yes, well, there's always those missed opportunities.

Kader: But I still have all the privileges of a retired officer. I can go to the commissary.

Appleton: That's good. Tell us about the injury and the disability that was from the firing of the guns.



*With a 105mm Howitzer this artillery gun crew is firing near the front in 1951.*

Kader: Yes. I was with an artillery battalion for a while and I was taking pictures of 105 Howitzers and 155s . . . still pictures . . . and this was just to kind of fill in another story I was doing, and they brought in a self-propelled 8 inch cannon on wheels . . . on tracks and they were big, big . . . it's similar to the 8 inch guns they have on the Navy cruisers, so they wanted some pictures of it, so I said, "Okay." And it's interesting . . . nowhere in Korea where I went not one guy that was shootin' a gun or mortar or cannon had sound suppressors. They just put their fingers in their ears. And I filmed it. It was very difficult to take a picture with your fingers in your ears!

Appleton: It was a little hard to control the camera! Right?



*Some artillery gun crews used the 8" self-propelled Cannon near the front lines. No special ear protection was provided to the gunners who merely placed their fingers in their ears. While taking this photo, Don suffered significant hearing loss and is totally*

*deaf in one ear as a result. Thanks to the VA's fine care, he's now on his fifth set of hearing aids. As he said later, "It's impossible to aim the camera and put your fingers in your ears at the same time."*

Kader: Anyway, when this gun went off, the concussion just leveled everything around it, monster noise but mainly concussion. My ears started to ring, you know, tinnitus, but I didn't pay attention 'cause everybody else was doing the same thing I was doing. When I came back and got back into civilian clothes it just kept getting worse and worse and worse. It finally got to the point I was deaf in one ear. I went to the VA and they said, "Well, what you've got is nerve damage and we cannot repair nerve damage. No way to do it." So I said, "Shouldn't I get some kind of disability?" They said, "Why?" I said, "Because I was taking pictures of guns going off!" "Oh, can anybody prove you were there?" This is known as government intelligence. (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) Yes, right. But you did have the photo!

Kader: Well, I did.

Appleton: How close were you to the guns when they were going off?

Kader: You can see by the picture, maybe 10 feet. It was that 8 inch that did it. So I brought the pictures in, and . . . I have to make a point of this . . . all the help I got on this was through the Disabled American Veterans. I'm a strong supporter of the DAV and a life member. So I showed the pictures and they said, "You took these?" And I said, "Of course I took 'em. Do you wanna see the negatives? I can bring those in, too." So, okay, they took the pictures. "You'll hear from us." About a month later they called me and told me I'd be given a 20% service-connected disability and it was retroactive to the time I first showed them the pictures.

Appleton: When did you do that in the 60s or 70s?

Kader: Oh, no, when I was back in San Diego. This was in the '80s. It was thirty years later, but I'm part of the VA now. They give me a hearing test every year, and all of my medical problems are taken care of there.

Appleton: You go in periodically?

Kader: Yes. As a matter of fact, they raised it to 30% about a year-and-a-half ago. I just was in again to get these hearing aids fixed, and said they want to me come in next Thursday to do a complete check again. You know, the state of the art on these things changes overnight . . .

Appleton: I know it does.

Kader: . . . and so they've given me a new set which probably will get me a little better resolution. I can talk to you and I hear you even when you're at a low pitch, but if get sittin' in a restaurant . . .

Appleton: There's a lot of noise, yes.

Kader: . . . I can hardly understand anybody.

Appleton: Yes, that's sign language. When you think back on your military service, was this a life changing event or was it just an interruption?

Kader: I think it was an evolving time. I learned a lot. I learned quite early to keep your mouth shut and your eyes and ears open, and I learned discipline. I was fairly disciplined at home. I still make my bed every morning.

Appleton: You're Mom's not lookin' over your shoulder, or is she kind of in your mind? Yes, yes. I understand that.

Kader: I think that I was . . . I evolved very well, and I still consider my time on active duty as a very important part of my life. And I still consider the Air Force, not so much now but the Air Force as I knew it, a very important part of my life. And I think that my patriotism level is up very high. I don't agree with some of the people in Washington because I don't think they always know what the hell they're doin'.

Appleton: Sure, That's always the case.

Kader: I am very happy to have gone through this. It's made me appreciate what our country needs, or what it should be. That's why I've got that flag out there every day, 24/7.

Appleton: Before we talk about what you've done after you retired, you've got the photo there that you might want to tell us a little bit about. That's interesting.

Kader: Well, I was down on the Riviera in Nice in February of '46, and this was at the Angleterre Hotel. This was in a club for the GIs on rest leave down there. I ran into this group of Nisei fellows who had been in 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, which, of course, was the most decorated group in the Army during World War II. And you can see, they're all very young guys, really nice fellows, and I just had a nice evening just talkin' nothin'.

Appleton: Did they talk about anything in particular?

Kader: No, we weren't talking about the war or anything. In fact everybody wanted to get home, go back to school . . .

Appleton: . . . back to a normal life again.

Kader: This guy here, his nickname was “Blackie” Kurahara.

Appleton: Of course these guys were, I suppose, a little bit like that friend of yours back at San Diego High School that said, “Well I’m gonna go to camp now.” And I suppose they didn’t say anything about it but . . .

Kader: No, these guys enlisted. They formed that group out of the “Go for Broke” guys.

Appleton: That’s amazing.

Kader: Well, you can see how young they are.

Appleton: Sure. Well, of course all you guys were . . . I mean you were . . .

Kader: Babies.

Appleton: . . . in your late teens. At that time you were probably 18 or 19. That was kind of the age of most of the guys.

Kader: This was just a bunch of guys that were in my squadron.

Appleton: But this was also in Europe?

Kader: That was at the Hotel Angleterre.

Appleton: So this would have been after the war was over, 1946 . . . back in February. I suppose everybody was trying to figure out when they were gonna go home ‘cause the war was over in both Europe and Asia, and it was just a matter of winding down.

Kader: I think most of us were enlistees. We weren’t drafted. Normally when you enlisted you pretty much had a chance of getting into whatever area you wanted, the Air Force, tank corps or whatever.

Appleton: Well, that’s still the case. Of course, there isn’t any draft now anyway. When you retired then . . .

Kader: Well, I was retired after serving 20 years in the Reserve.

Appleton: I meant retired from the Air Force.

Kader: Well, I was in the Air Force.

Appleton: . . . and you went into the Reserves?

Kader: I wasn't married. I got married in '54 and that started taking time away from me going to my one-night-a-month meetings, and then two weeks during the year active duty and taking courses and all that business. So I really never was able to fulfill that obligation. Looking back on it now, I was dumb because I could have been retired with a nice pension.

Appleton: Well then, what kind of work did you do then?

Kader: I worked for an advertising agency here before being recalled, and they wanted me to come back after I got out..

Appleton: That's nice.

Kader: . . . and I got to thinking . . . oh, do I wanna be in an old two bit agency in San Diego . . . the end of nowhere . . . so I went to work for an agency up in Los Angeles, primarily in a big retail-type agency. That's where the May Company had their account, and they were producing a TV show. This was a once a week remote from the May Company downtown. It was called the "The May Company Department Store of the Air". This was the first television show where people could look and see cheap stuff demonstrated, then call in to the bank of operators, and order it on their charge card.

Appleton: Oh! I see. Yes.

Kader: And in those days they had charge cards. They didn't have credit cards.

Appleton: Right. And you helped set that up?

Kader: Well, basically it was produced over Channel 13 which was KTLA, which was the Bing Crosby station. So the guys from KTLA were the ones that were on the cameras, and they had a director. But I worked very closely with the director, telling him what I was interested in them showing and the questions I wanted them to ask. On one show they did, they interviewed an author who was from San Diego, Oakley Hall. He had written several books, one of them called *The Corpus of Joe Bailey*. The director from the station liked what I was doing, and I didn't know beans about television. All I know is motion picture stuff. He said, "How'd you like to come work for us?" I said, "Are you kiddin'? This television isn't gonna last. I'm an old motion picture guy." And that was the end of that. Well, that was another great mistake in my life . . . the guy's boss was Don Fedderson, a top TV director/producer.

Appleton: (Laughing) Yes. Right.

Kader: Then I worked on other accounts and copywriting and this and that, and I finally left that agency. I had answered an ad for a technical writer at Collins Radio Company in Burbank, and I was writing instruction manuals which were boring as hell.

That's where I met my wife. She was a drafts person and we got married, and then that folded. I don't know why. Then I went to work for another agency in Redondo Beach. That was pretty good. I worked my way in and I did a lot of writing for them. I became a vice-president creative director. I had the SONY Account. When SONY came to the United States with the video cameras, I named the first portable video camera they had. The video camera had a big portable battery pack, and I named it the Video Rover. I bet they made a lot of money on that. I did a whole series of ads for them.

Appleton: So you were working mostly in the advertising business?

Kader: I wrote copy for other accounts they had. They handled mainly industrial accounts. I felt more at home with that. I knew a little bit of the high technology and stuff like that; however, it got to the point where the marshal kept coming to the office. This owner of the agency wasn't paying his bills. He had opened another office up in San Francisco and he was a playboy, smart guy but he was a playboy. He wasn't paying his bills. Well, we had a 24 page, 4 color catalog we were putting together for SONY and they had to release it in a certain time. I called the printer and said, "When will we get the catalogs?" And he said, "When it's paid for you'll get it." So I had to call SONY and I said, "You've got to send me some money to get this out of hock." They did. And I left the agency with the account, and they were gonna sue me and a whole bunch of stuff.

I went to another agency. And they were as bad as the first one!

Appleton: (Laughing) How terrible! Oh, my.

Kader: And I had meanwhile picked up some pretty nice accounts, especially in the high technology area. Then I went to work for a holding company. I said, "I can set you up with a house agency, and you can get a nice return on the investment and everything." Well, that didn't work out too well. So finally I decided . . . I had hired a gal as my secretary, and a guy came in, kind of a blow hard, but he was a fairly good writer. I said, "Let's start our own agency." I didn't know too much about managing an agency. I was a creative guy. Anyway, he came aboard, and I had a big beautiful account that made aviation navigation systems, primarily for business planes and things of that nature, Communication Components Corporation.

Oh, go back to SONY . . . I had the account. They were billing 4 million dollars a year. In those days that was a lot of money. And you figure the agency is getting 15% of that. It's a pretty good income. Well, after we went through this fiasco, SONY called back and said, "We'd like you to come back to New York." I was going back and forth to New York about four or five times a year because that's where their headquarters were. I went back and they said, "We're gonna use another agency." Well, at that time SONY's corporate account was held by a very large New York agency called Doyle, Dane, Bernbach, very famous, very well known. And I guess a guy from Doyle, Dane

said, "Hey, this looks like this television stuff of yours is on the move. How about we take it over?" SONY said Yes, and that finished me with that agency.

Appleton: Well, so you stayed in doing the kind of work you pretty much trained to do in your college then. And, of course, your military experience with public information and photos . . .

Kader: PR and stuff like that. I handled all the trade shows for them and all that stuff.

Appleton: You carried that right through. Now, you mentioned trade shows. Tell me about the trade shows because you got involved in the trade shows not only in setting them up, but you were participating.

Kader: Well, I got involved almost from day one. They wanted to do a trade show, so I'd contact an exhibit house and go over plans, or however they wanted to show the stuff. This was for SONY originally and then through this other Communications Components Corporation. I would then go back and supervise the erection of the booths and then work the booths. Get girls in the booths and, you know, kind of talk about the equipment, pretty much what you had to do in those days. It was wear and tear on my body and nervous system. I'll tell you that.

Appleton: Oh, I'll bet. Yes, a lot of running around.

Kader: The Marketing Manager for SONY was an Irishman. Now there are two types of Irishmen. There were Irishmen and there were Dublin Irishmen. Dublin Irishmen are really hard drinkers.

Appleton: And those are the Dublin Irishmen. (Laughing)

Kader: Anyway, John McDonnell. I always kept in touch with the key Japanese marketing guy out of Tokyo. Nice guy. One year they gave me a SONY watch . . . a calendar watch . . . I said, "Kori, when this gets to December 7th, does this blow my arm off?" (Laughing) He cracked up!

Appleton: (Laughing) What was his name again?

Kader: Kori Koriyama. Koriyama . . . the definition of that is Ice Mountain. 'Yama' is mountain and 'kori' is ice. But he was a really nice guy.

Appleton: How did you get involved in the collecting and the buying and selling of memorabilia?

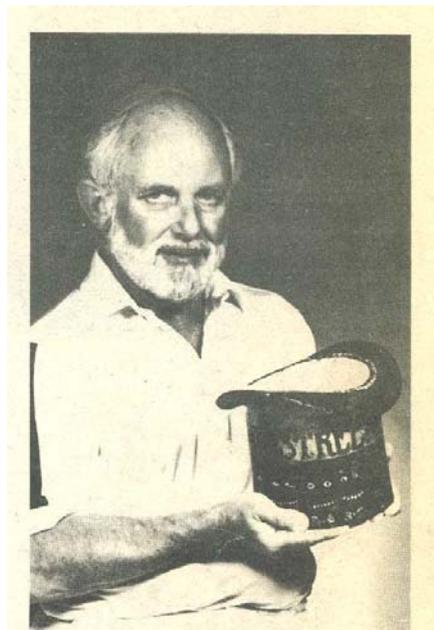
Kader: Okay. Well, that's kind of fill-in . . . I was always interested in going to swap meets, and I was always interested in history. I was at the Rose Bowl swap meet on

Sundays, and I was walking around and looking at stuff. I found this little post card of two little black kids sitting on cotton bales. It had to be the most negative thing, but it was cute. So I bought that and then got to looking around. I kept seeing other black oriented items, and I just got so deeply interested in that. And I met a lot of people. I helped promote the first West Coast Black Memorabilia Convention in Pasadena. I had collected a lot of advertising memorabilia over the years and in those days it was very, very collectable . . . you know, the old stuff. The old signs and stuff like that. So once a month I'd get a space at the Rose Bowl and I'd buy and sell and I'd make a few bucks, you know. Underground economy. I got acquainted with a lot of the top Black memorabilia collectors.

And then it got to the point where I was living in West Los Angeles near Fairfax in a duplex. It was a big old Mediterranean style duplex and I must have had 2,000 items in my collection. In fact this one friend of mine used to be a client, came over and I said, "Come on in and sit down. What are you standing up for?" He said, "I'm afraid if I sit down I'll destroy history." I had stuff all over the place! I had my son come in and he did a video and I wanted to sell the whole collection. But who wants 200 salt and pepper shakers? All different. So finally I ran an ad in the *Antique Trader* . . . a big antique magazine . . . Sold a couple items off of that but I never sold the whole thing. I didn't have any room for anything anymore. I met a lot of real nice people doing this. Some of them were from San Diego. Most of the people bought it for the historical content, but I would not sell to any people who bought it as a put-down. I told one guy . . . I had a bank he wanted to buy and he said, "You want too much for that darkie stuff!" I said, "Well, no matter what you pay, you're not gonna get it!"

Appleton: Yes. You're right. That black memorabilia for some people would be offensive but . . .

Kader: But it became a very hot item. I sold one piece . . . do you remember the actor that was on Dallas—Ken Kercheval? He was sort of the bad guy. He collected primarily things that had to do with the theater. I don't know if the picture is in one of those that I showed you, it showed me holding this cast iron "penny pitch hat" which was placed on the stage during minstrel shows for the audience to throw tips into -- a very rare item. Ken bought that for a very healthy sum!



One -of-a-Kind: author holds cast iron minstrel show "penny pitch" hat from early 1870's. Hat now in collection of famous TV personality. Photo by Gil Edelstein

Appleton: Oh, my!

*This photo of Don Kader and his accompanying article appeared in the West Coast Peddler in the April 1985 issue. Don's article provides a clear overview of the background and history of "Black Memorabilia" along with sensitive observations on how such a phenomenon became part of American culture after the Civil War.*

Kader: He knew what it was. And it wasn't a derogatory thing. It was a historical piece of vaudeville memorabilia. So it was an interesting time of my life.

Appleton: Now you sold some of these things then later on eBay. Is that what you said?

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: Did that ever work out?

Kader: No. I got rid of it. I've only got two pieces left and they're in the kitchen. Both of them are broken.

Appleton: Well, that happens.

Kader: But then I got into military stuff, especially this sweetheart jewelry. I really got excited about that because nothing had ever been really . . . well, there were two books put out by a guy named Nick Snyder from Atlanta. Nick was Vice-President of United Parcel Service, UPS, and he's the guy that invented the computer sign-out. When the truck delivers something, it's sort of like a computer thing. UPS is an employee-owned company, and he had stock up to here. But he wrote the two books and I ran into Nick . . . the first time I was doing a show . . . military show up at Pomona Fairplex and everybody knew Nick. He'd go to all the shows. Go all over the country to shows. He came in. He started looking at my stuff. I had a huge inventory and some really fine pieces, and he wasn't in my booth more than fifteen minutes and spent over \$700 on little pieces of jewelry.

Appleton: Really? That was the sweetheart jewelry?

Kader: That was the sweetheart jewelry.

Appleton: That's interesting.

Kader: I wrote a couple of articles. When I get involved in something I'd like to know what the history of it was.

Appleton: Sure. Well, you've been that way your whole life. You're interested in the history of things. And that's good. Well, I think we've had quite a conversation. I don't know if we've come to the end of it or not, but . . .

Kader: Well, I'm gonna be 83, so you're almost at the end of it. (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) Well, we're gonna put all this together before 83. Before 84 even. But I think that probably this is a good enough place as any to stop. But as I told you, what we'll do is make copies of the photos and put those in, type up the whole transcript for you.

Kader: I will get that other tape back from Pete.

Appleton: Yes. Maybe we could take part of that.

Kader: He comes over every Tuesday, so I'll have him bring it over the next time.

Appleton: Okay. That's good. Well, I want to thank you very much for doing this and I hope that the finished product is something that you'll enjoy.

Kader: The way you're doing it I don't see how it could be anything but good.

Appleton: I have enjoyed doing it. On behalf of the Veterans Museum in San Diego and the Library of Congress, thank you. This has been a delightful conversation.

Kader: The pleasure was all mine.

Appleton: Thank you, and thank you for lunch. I enjoyed that, too.

**Note: The following dialogue recorded on July 22, 2009 is a continuation of the interview the first part of which was taped on February 18, 2009.**

Appleton: Here we are again with Don Kader finishing up the interview that we started in February, and here it is July 22<sup>nd</sup>. It's your mother's birthday. What a nice way to celebrate.

Kader: Time marches on.

Appleton: Time marches on. Wonderful. Okay. Alright. Don, we're starting the interview again and to pick up some of the pieces that we missed last time. Why don't

you talk a little bit about Phil Browning, and who he was, and where you were stationed at the time, and about his mission?

Kader: Okay. Well, Phil was a captain in the Air Force, a cameraman, an old time cameraman. Phil had been, oh, gosh, he was a sort of a soldier of fortune. He did free lance combat camera work on the side of the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War.

Appleton: Wow!

Kader: He joined the Army Air Force at the outbreak of World War II and became one of their top motion picture cameramen. He was assigned to the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force and earned high praise for his coverage of the B17 bombing missions. Much of his footage was used in such famous feature films as "Target Unknown" and "The Memphis Belle." When the war ended, he returned to his film business and spent much of his time traveling world-wide producing travel films. When he was recalled for the Korean War in 1950, he was assigned to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Photographic Squadron and was the first of our unit to go overseas. In July 1951, he was sent to the United States Navy carrier *U.S.S. Sitkoh Bay* to cover the movement to Japan of the Air National Guard 116<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing being transferred to the Far East. Again, he received high praise from the Air Force and Navy for his coverage.

Phil was a character (chuckle), he could speak several languages fluently including Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and after a month in Japan, Japanese! He was a great guy. He was just the kind of . . . I don't know . . . it's hard to explain.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: But also he was very dexterous. We used to sit at the Officers Club with these little cans of peanuts to see how many each of us could take out with the chopsticks.

Appleton: (Laughing)



*Phil Browning in a relaxed moment at the Officers Club*

Kader: Phil could finish a whole can of peanuts without dropping one.  
(Laughing)

Appleton: So he had a great facility with language and with his hands. (Laughing)

Kader: Yes. (Laughing) And with ladies. He always had a couple of ladies, going to Tokyo or someplace.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: We learned about this B-26 mission that was going to run out of K-13 (Suwon). It was to be a night interdiction mission, and I previously had been doing some advance work for a documentary on the squadrons and what have you. So I knew the area quite well. I had come back to Yokota and was on another mission somewhere in Japan. Anyway, Phil found out that were going to do a night interdiction mission on September 14, 1951, with a B-26 carrying it's normal bomb load with a 10 million candlepower lamp attached to the bottom of the fuselage, and Phil got permission to fly with it to test the feasibility of night photography of these "Intruder" rail-cutting missions. The North Koreans had trains that would come south with supplies, armament and so forth, for their troops at the front.

Appleton: You mean the North Koreans supplied their troops by trains?

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: By trainloads?

Kader: Trainloads, Yes.

Appleton: Okay.

Kader: And, of course, the trains were well armed because they didn't know what was going to happen to them. Now I got this all after everything happened. But, anyway, Phil's plane, which was flown by Captain John Walmsley of the 8<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, went in for its first pass with the light turned on, dropped its load of bombs and turned off the light. Then Walmsley, who had pretty much used up his ammo, called in for more B-26 support and went around again low with the light on so his support

planes could finish the job. The anti-aircraft on the train shot right up the light beam and blew the plane and everyone on it to smithereens.

Appleton: Oh, my!

Kader: They never found a piece of the plane. Never found anything of any of the guys on the crew.

Appleton: Oh, dear! Now, were there other support planes with that . . . ?

Kader: Well, Yes. They of course saw this. I don't know if they had any photographs of it or not. I don't think they did. Phil, of course, was there to photograph that special mission with the light.

Appleton: Now, Phil was with the photographic squadron then?

Kader: Yes. He was part of our squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Camera Unit.

Appleton: Yes. Right.

Kader: 2<sup>nd</sup> Photo Squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Camera Unit. I found out about that when I came back from my little job and Captain Don Bjoring, who was our CO said, "You didn't hear about Phil?" I said, "No, I didn't," and he told me. I said, "Oh, my God!" You would have just loved this guy because he always had great tales to tell us, you know, from his experiences and everything.

Appleton: Yes. Now, where was this mission over North Korea? Do you know roughly where that was?

Kader: It was near Yangdok.

Appleton: Oh, okay.

Kader: Don Bjoring, our CO said, "Let's see if you can put him in for a Silver Star." That's the second highest military award. And I did. I wrote up the citation and sent it in to headquarters and the Air Force, in its brilliance, decided he'd have the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

Appleton: So that's a lower ....

Kader: Much lower.

Appleton: Much lower. Right. Yes.

Kader: Anyway that was quite a shock to us.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: He was a great guy and always smiling. Always smiling. Have you seen a picture of him?

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: There was always a great grin and a smile on his face.

Appleton: Now, Walmsley was on the same mission?

Kader: Yes, Walmsley was the pilot of the B-26.

Appleton: He was the pilot.

Kader: He was with the 8<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group that was flying out of Suwon, and what happened was that Phil had heard about this mission that they were going to put together. So he went over and talked to the group commander, I guess, and said, "I want to photograph this. It's very important". So they put him on John Walmsley's plane and Walmsley was a captain also at the time. Walmsley was awarded the Medal of Honor for his participation.

Appleton: It's interesting there would be such a difference. Did you ever figure out why?

Kader: It was somewhat of an unlikely thing because the Medal of Honor normally is awarded to some very heroic deed . . . saving people's lives, or things like that. Who knows? I don't mean to say anything against Walmsley, of course . . .

Appleton: Of course. Now, what was the reason for having the powerful light? Was it for the photo . . . ?

Kader: Night.

Appleton: . . . or for the nighttime bombing precision . . .

Kader: . . . a night mission for the bombing to have the feasibility of night photography of interdiction missions.

Appleton: Okay. Was that common?

Kader: Well, that's the first time they used this powerful light. They did have flares that they used to drop and things of that nature, but this was an actual searchlight. Ten million candle power.

Appleton: Yes. It makes a nice target.

Kader: So they knew where the rail line was, and they just flew up the rail line and turned the light on; and, of course, that was the best target in the world for the anti-aircraft guns on the train.

Appleton: Oh, yes. How sad. Yes. I bet it took a while to get used to that loss. Now, were there very many of your fellow officers and enlisted men in the Photographic Combat Unit that were injured or killed in the mission?

Kader: Other than Phil, not anyone of our squadron. But everyone . . . the whole crew of the B-26s was . . . but I don't know . . . I understand the other planes finally came in and destroyed the train,

Appleton: How about throughout the whole Korean conflict? Were the combat cameramen at particular danger, and were there casualties in your unit as well in other missions?

Kader: A cameraman was always in danger. It's very difficult to take a picture with your fingers in your ears!

Appleton: Well, that's true. (Laughing) It's true when you're next to the big guns. But when they're flying on other missions did you lose some other members of your unit?

Kader: No, just Phil. We only had three officers left. One was Bjoring, who was our CO, so he didn't do much flying. He would fly us back and forth from Kimpo, and Ned Hochman,<sup>2</sup> an old timer who did a lot of motion picture work, an old timer. I never knew whether these guys would even know where they were going. They'd just go out and see if they could get on a plane and go around and fly. The enlisted men were doing missions. A couple of the enlisted men got air medals for the number of missions they flew; but we basically were there to cover Air Force action. And the ground pictures that I shot were sort of on my own, other than the documentaries during air support.

Appleton: Was it difficult to get on a mission? Did the pilots and the crew care? Or did they say, "Sure, come on along."

Kader: No, no. They were all pretty friendly, you know, since they figured we'd photograph them, and you had to go through channels a little bit, but like when I was flying in the L-15, an artillery spotting thing, I saw the pilot over there and I said, "Could I go with you on your next mission?" He said, "Sure, but shave first!"

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<sup>2</sup>While at the University of Oklahoma, Ned Hochman shot all of their football games and did a highly praised documentary of their famous football coach, Bud Wilkinson.

Appleton: (Laughing)

Kader: He was an Academy man. (Laughing)

Appleton: Who wanted to keep standards even if nobody's looking! (Laughing)

Kader: I knew he was an Academy man 'cause his pants were pressed!  
(Laughing) Yes, that's the way we did it. A lot of the guys went on air rescue missions . . . mostly the enlisted guys in the SA-16s and things like that. And missions of guys being plucked out of the ocean and stuff like that.

Appleton: Sure. Well now, were you actually given assignments certain times to cover certain missions?

Kader: Only once in a while, since I was basically what they would call a photographer-correspondent, so I tried to dig up human interest stories.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: I was there to do documentaries, and if I could find out someplace to do a documentary . . . and we did one, and I don't think I ever mentioned it to you before . . . which was interesting. We called it the United Nations Blood Story. We found a fighter pilot and asked him if he'd donate a pint of blood to the blood bank, and we followed that pint of blood around, all the way through and up into Korea to where it had been transfused into a guy who was shot. We followed the guy back to Tokyo to the hospital and got the pilot to come back and meet this guy.

Appleton: Yes ...

Kader: And they released that, the United Nations Blood Story that I wrote about. So that's the type of stuff. It works, human interest stuff. I also did one on USAF chaplains in Korea.

Appleton: Sure. Is there anything more you want to tell about Phil Browning?

Kader: Well, I think you've got that thing that I wrote there that . . .

Appleton: We'll include that. OK, good. Alright. Then how about . . . you were talking about "The Boys from Syracuse," the geisha party.



*“The Boys from Syracuse” in a lighter moment at the Geisha party in Tokyo  
(l to r in back row) Ned Hochman, Kaplan, Mel Manley,  
Don Bjoring, and Don Kader in front*

Kader: “The Boys from Syracuse.” The picture’s on the wall over there. You saw it. I don’t know how that all came about. I think Phil was off on a mission, so he isn’t in the picture. But we had Ned Hochman. We had Mel Manley, the pilot of *Our Gal*. Of course, Don Bjoring, who was our CO, myself, and this crazy psychologist or psychiatrist, Kaplan, the Air Force had sent over to see how guys reacted in combat. Well, this guy came along too. He was nuttier than the rest of the people. (Laughing) So we got a picture. We went to this geisha party. It was nice. It was good. Big dinner and sitting around a table and everything; and then I guess the guy that was in charge of this house . . . it wasn’t geisha. Geisha is a dance. It’s a formal sort of thing. We call it a geisha party. Nice group. Nice ladies. None of that hocus pocus stuff. They put on these kimonos, and they posed us in front of one of the rafters there in this room that we were in. I showed one of the girls how to use my Speed Graphic, and she snapped the picture. As you notice, the picture is of a bunch of guys having fun.

Appleton: (Laughing) Yes.

Kader: And we called it “The Boys from Syracuse.”

Appleton: Okay. Where did that name come from? Or did that just . . .

Kader: A movie.

Appleton: Oh, okay. Okay. It dates me. I guess I don’t recall seeing that. But I wasn’t really watching movies at that time.

Kader: It was in the '50s.

Appleton: In the '50s. Yes. I was still in high school. Now, did you write about something ... this, or something in the *Ghost Wings* magazine, or is that a different story?

Kader: The *Ghost Wings* magazine . . . I used to do military shows and, you know, try to sell some militaria that I'd garnered over the years, and this young fellow used to come over to me and talk to me, Jonathan Abbott, a very nice young man, an Asian American, spoke perfect Japanese. His father was Jewish and his mother was Japanese and he didn't look like either one. (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) But you met him in Japan or here?

Kader: Here. He used to come by at military shows, and he always liked to talk to me about my military service. He was a free-lance writer.

Appleton: I see.

Kader: He was going to journalism school at SC and he was very interested in the military. He and his twin brother collected military stuff. So he called me up one time and he said, "I want to do a story for a magazine called *Ghost Wings*. It's out of Pennsylvania. I'd like to come and talk to you about a few things you might have done." I said, "Well, what do you want?"

"Well, were there any special missions that you . . . ?" So I said, "Well, there was one we did that was unique in the fact that everybody expected to get shot out of the sky. There was not a shot of flak or a MIG in the sky. We went 17 miles south of the Russian border, south of Vladivostok."

So he came and interviewed me and took pictures, and his story was published in this *Ghost Wings* magazine . . . "Flash Over Rashin."<sup>3</sup>

Appleton: Yes. Okay. That was the Rashin mission?

Kader: It was the Rashin Mission on the B-29, "*Our Gal*," and he even interviewed Mel Manley, the pilot who lived up in Selma, California. It was a nice story.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: Nothing exciting but it was for me one of the key missions I did because it was such an important area that we had to hit up there.

Appleton: Yes.

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<sup>3</sup> "Flash over Rashin" *Ghost Wings*, pp. 48-53, Issue 12 (Volume 3 – Number 4)

Kader: It was a rail head, and that's where all the supplies for the North Koreans were coming down from that area.

Appleton: Was it quite successful in terms of destroying the rail head? Was the destruction fairly complete?

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: Now that was written up and you have that article.

Kader: Yes.

Appleton: Okay. Well maybe we can get a copy of that to include. Now, Mel Manley was the captain of that mission?

Kader: Yes. Well, his plane was "*Our Gal*;" and whenever I could do a B-29 mission, I'd go on his plane. We became close friends and he was sort of almost a member of our squadron. He was an amateur photographer and he was a . . . what do they call these guys? Guys that send radio messages back and forth . . .

Appleton: The radio operators?

Kader: Ham radio operator . . .

Appleton: Oh, ham radio operators, yes. Yes.

Kader: . . . and a real nice man. So he kind of got involved with our squadron.

Appleton: I see.

Kader: We'd shoot some film and he'd come to our lab and view them.

Appleton: Now, was he based then at Yokota where you were based as well?

Kader: Yokota, 98<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing.

Appleton: Just to tie it in with what you said before, he went on a later mission and the plane was shot down, but he did survive.

Kader: Yes. I was supposed to have been on that mission but I scrubbed it because his navigator told me it would be a "milk run" since they'd bombed it so many times before.

Appleton: That was a good survival thing for you!

Kader: Like I said before, I could have gotten some great film but no one would ever see it.

Appleton: Yes, nobody would see it, right. Now, you were based in Yokota, Japan, but sometimes you went and were in Korea staying near Kimpo, which is near the city of Seoul.

Kader: Yes, it's outside of Seoul.

Appleton: Now, when you went over there were you in barracks temporarily then in Kimpo for a while? Did you stay at Kimpo sometimes?

Kader: Yes, that was our main base over there we had two large tents.

Appleton: So you would go and stay several days or longer?

Kader: We'd usually stay about two to three or four weeks maybe.

Appleton: Okay.

Kader: We'd rotate the crews over there. We'd have usually myself would be the only officer, or one of the other officers might come by for a day or two. Then we'd have four or five enlisted men, and they'd go out and do what they were supposed to do, acting as my camera crew on documentaries.

Appleton: Sure. As a camera unit ... combat camera people.

Kader: And that's where I got all that footage of the truce talks at Panmunjom.

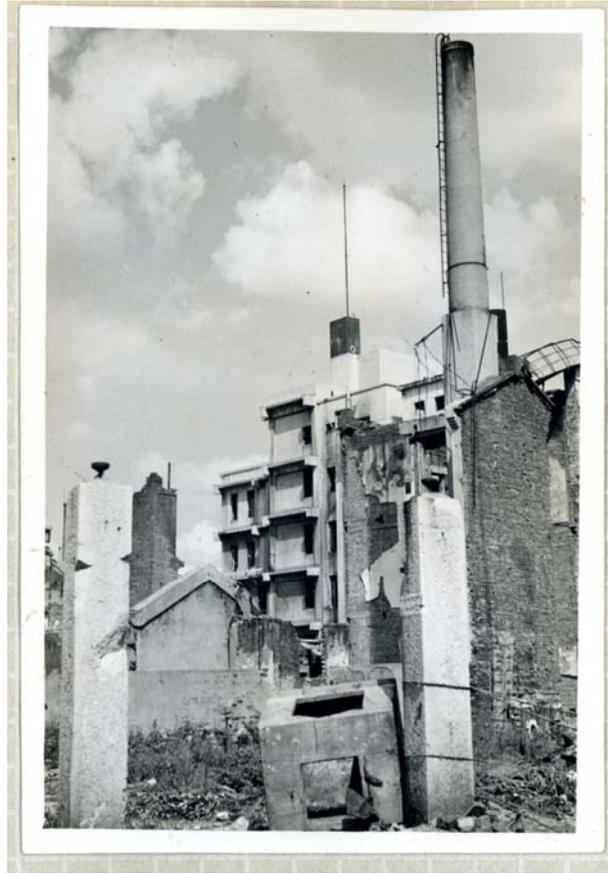
Appleton: Before we talk about that, can you describe a little bit about the Korean people and what was happening to them while all this war was raging back and forth, particularly in and around Seoul.

Kader: The war had pretty much shifted north so there was nothing there. But Korea was ... Seoul ... they went through that three times up and down, so there wasn't much left.

Appleton: Seoul was pretty thoroughly destroyed.

Kader: There wasn't much left there. Most of the Koreans are, like most Asians, they're reticent. They don't want to talk or anything but they were friendly. But they're still kind of shy. The children were great. They wanted chewing gum. (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing)



*The war left Seoul badly damaged in 1951.*

Kader: And they called everybody “Joe.” (Laughing) But we had the Kim family who kind of took over our camp, did our laundry for us and made coffee in a great big pot with the coffee grounds flowing through our tee shirts. (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) Very hot water, huh?

Kader: So, yes, and strong. We had our own tents and everything. An interesting part about it ... this was sort of where all the reporters and other correspondents used to come through ‘cause they knew we had some booze for them. (Laughing) But also we had the only large refrigerator over there to store our film in, and so most of the media guys and the press guys would leave their bottles there in the refrigerator. They went to the front and then came back, hoping that they were still there.

Appleton: (Laughing) Partly if not completely empty, huh?

Kader: But we did meet some very interesting guys.

Appleton: Sure. How about the Korean people that were still around there in Seoul?  
You took some pictures of them. What was their reaction to all of this chaos?



*The Kim family did the cleaning, cooking and laundry for Don Kader's unit while at K-16 (Kimpo) Air Base in Seoul in 1951-52.*



*Older children often took care of younger ones on laundry day while mothers are washing clothes in the Han River near Seoul.*



*Korean Women wash their clothes at the Han River's edge near Seoul in 1951.*



*More of “Wash Day” at the river.*

Kader: Well, they had to go with the flow and were pretty much used to it by now, and some of our higher officers were taking an interest in seeing that the children were taken care of. And, as I mentioned, Colonel Gabreski (Francis P. Gabreski, World War II flying ace)<sup>4</sup> when he got his fifth MIG, we took some pictures of him and then he came into Seoul, and he presented the mayor of Seoul with enough money to start an orphanage there. And the mayor presented him with the key to the city.



*While Don was covering fighter ace Colonel Francis Gabreski's visit to a Seoul orphanage the colonel had sponsored, the mayor of Seoul presented Gabreski with a key to the city and a cloth rosette of a traditional Korean flower. The mayor also gave this one (at left) to Kader.*

Appleton: Was that at the time or did he come back later after the war?

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<sup>4</sup> Gabreski was the top American ace in air-to-air victories over Europe during World War II where he was officially credited with 28 victories. While he was strafing a German airfield on July 20, 1944, the propeller of his P-47 struck the ground and Gabreski had to crash-land. He was captured and sent to Stalag Luft 2 near Barth, Germany, where he spent the remainder of the war. He returned to combat during the Korean War, scoring an additional 6.5 victories. Gabreski retired from the USAF in October 1967, at the time America's top living ace. He passed away on February 2, 2001 at age 83.

Kader: No, this was right after I took his picture.

Appleton: Oh, really!

Kader: I just followed him around. I don't know how you would . . . we were the good guys, but some of our guys were not so good. Some of the guys were like any other GIs. They called everybody a "gook."

Appleton: Yes, I'm sure. Was there danger to you personally or anybody that would leave the base there at Kimpo?

Kader: No, there was nothing . . .

Appleton: The civilian population wasn't threatening to American soldiers.

Kader: No, after all we were looked upon as their "liberators." There were no gangsters or anything down there. They had seen enough of guns, believe me. They didn't want to see anymore of that. There was a little thievery going on because they didn't have anything so they had to steal once in a while just to get by.

Appleton: But it was nothing like Iraq where you didn't know who was friend or foe . . . all of that bombing stuff going on.

Kader: There were no politics. See, the Korean government really hadn't been formed at that time.

Appleton: That's right.

Kader: Because they were still trying to figure who owns the south and who owns the north. So, no . . . the people were friendly.

Appleton: And you got a chance to get out and you just had pictures of the people out washing clothes out on the river.

Kader: Oh, yes. Every once in a while when I didn't have any writing to do I'd go out with a camera and walk down the street and like I got that guy carrying out all his clothes and that thing on his A-frame. That was the one way they moved stuff, an A-frame on their back.

Appleton: Yes. It looks like he was carrying his whole closet on his back! It was huge.

Kader: And there were a few animals, mules and stuff like that.

Appleton: Did they use carts very much? Or carts, like animal-drawn carts?

Kader: Yes. But mostly oxen, though. What they had left that they didn't eat, I mean. (Laughing)



*A Korean civilian moves his furniture in downtown Seoul in 1951.*

Appleton: But hardly any vehicles that were motor driven. They just didn't have . . .

Kader: Bicycles. Everybody rode a bicycle. And when you're driving a jeep and you got fourteen bicycles crossing in front of you . . . all at the same time ....

Appleton: (Laughing) Guess who has the right of way?

Kader: But it was very interesting. The people were nice. At least they were to me. But, as I said, sometimes they were very shy.

Appleton: Yes. Now, how did you meet the Kim family? Did they just come to your barracks or to your tent?

Kader: Well, that base was over there before I got over there, and the Kims, I guess, said that we'd help . . . you know, we'd do this and that . . . so they were our sort of part of our family base.

Appleton: Were they given some special access to the base area then because you had employed them, or was that a problem?

Kader: Oh, I don't even know how they did that because there was always a bunch of Koreans working around down there. They never got to the flight line, though.

Appleton: Yes, okay. There were levels of security on the base.

Kader: Yes, right. Right. But the Kims were there when I got there.

Appleton: Okay. So they were a fixture already.

Kader: The mother was a cook, and she always wanted us to bring her ajinamoto, a condiment used in Asian cooking . . . salt and what have you . . . it was terrible stuff though . . . it gives you high blood pressure. So you know, you'd get over to the base in Yokota, go to the PX, pick up some ajinamoto and bring it back to them. Ohhhhh, boy! It was like bringing them gold 'cause you couldn't buy it there.

Appleton: Yes, Yes. That's right because you were going back and forth from Japan to Korea.

Kader: You know we'd bring cookies and you know, stuff like that.

Appleton: Sure. Oh, I can see that they would appreciate that.

Kader: They loved to see us come back from Tokyo

Appleton: With a fresh supply of condiments for Mrs. Kim and chewing gum for the kids. (Laughing) Well, for a little bit, let's talk about the International Combat Camera Association (ICCA).

Kader: Okay. Well, that was formed by two very nice men named Joe Longo and a fellow named Bill Rogester. Joe had been a cameraman in World War II, and he was an active motion picture cameraman in civilian life. He was a member of one of the professional camera organizations. Joe flew in World War II in North Africa and in England and France. Bill Rogester was a cameraman in the 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force down in the China, Burma, India Theater and, of course, flew an awful lot of missions over there, which got pretty dicey because mainly they were flying C-47s. They were flying very low and people were taking potshots at them from the ground. Bill is now pushing, I guess, about 90. Joe just died about a year ago, a wonderful man. So they formed this organization.

Appleton: When did this happen? After Korea?

Kader: Oh, this goes back to about the '80s I guess. And I didn't get involved with them until somebody introduced me to a fellow named Donnie Shearer, who had been a marine combat cameraman. He was a retired gunnery sergeant in the Marines. He was very well known. His pictures are in all in my 'Nam combat books. But he's a crazy Scotsman! (Laughing) Anyway, so he talked me into joining, and so I joined and got very involved with it. I was recording secretary for a while.

Appleton: So basically you got together periodically.

Kader: Yes. Well, they were up in Los Angeles, so I would take the train up there all the time for the quarterly meetings. But as years went on and we all got a bit older, the guys were dying off, then the young blood was coming in. It was open to any combat photographer from all over the world, a world-wide Association of Combat Photographers. That was the sub-title to it, and that book I gave you was our first major reunion that we had. I was involved in that quite a bit. Then I got kind of . . . not bored, but I got kind of upset with some of the people that were coming in . . . the newer guys 'cause we shot on film. These guys were all satellited . . . you know, they'd go over and take a picture with a satellite, and it goes straight in and that's it.



*The International Combat Camera Association Logo appeared on their inaugural association meeting brochure on Las Vegas in 2000.*

Appleton: Yes. The technology changed very quickly.

Kader: The technology changed. It changed too quickly for me, to tell you the truth.

Appleton: Well, it's still changing.

Kader: I seldom even use my little digital camera—my 35mm single lens reflex for me! Joe's motto was . . . he said, "The heroes are shooting the enemy, and the crazies

are shooting the film”. (Laughing) You had to be a little bit nuts to go out there with a camera, you know.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: But I was young.

Appleton: It’s kind of like being unarmed.

Kader: Well, Yes, you know ... but our job was to document the war and that’s what we did.

Appleton: Sure, of course. Now they still have military combat photographers . . .

Kader: Yes, lots of them, but it’s completely different.

Appleton: Now it’s all digital technology.

Kader: All digital technology. They go out there and set up with their satellite stuff or whatever, and so they started to come into the organization. They were a bunch of young guys as far as I was concerned and I just got tired of going up there and listening to a bunch of garbage, so I dropped out. But I still pay my dues. Once a year I send my dues in and I’m a card carrying member . . . just to keep the thing going, you know.

Appleton: Sure. Of course. One of the last things that we were talking about adding . . . and that is the story that you have about Bob Hope. How you met him and then saw him 25 or 30 years later. When did you first meet Bob Hope?

Kader: Okay. When I was recalled in 1950 as a staff sergeant, I was sent up to McChord Air Force Base in Tacoma, Washington to the Public Information Office as editor of the base newspaper. In the fall, I guess, of 1950 we got news that the Bob Hope Troupe had just been over to Korea and they were there for over a month, I think. They went to every base in Korea to put on a show with his troupe. It was the largest troupe that he ever took overseas, even during World War II.

Appleton: Now, did you first see him at McChord Air Force Base? Or over in Korea?

Kader: No, no. No. It was before I went to the Combat Camera Unit.

Appleton: Oh, I see. Okay.

Kader: I was with the fighter wing up there. My job as a senior information specialist, of course, was to document base activities, take people on tours, and edit the weekly base newspaper, which was a weekly and then, of course, write feature articles.

Well, when they came . . . they had flown in . . . the last stop that they hit was up at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska, and then they flew in. I think the show was put on a Thursday, but they got there the day before because they were really tired. They'd just flown all the way across the Pacific and then back down the coast so McChord was the first base they hit in the continental United States. And they had one heck of a show!

Of course they had Hope. He was a real character. And singer Marilyn Maxwell who was a beautiful lady. They had the High Hatters, a tap dancing troupe, country star Jimmy Wakely, Bob's orchestra, Les Brown and his Band of Renown, a full orchestra. There were about 50 or 60 people, and I think they came in two airplanes. Anyway, they landed and the wing commander met them, and they were coming off the plane. I got this picture of Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell, the wing commander and the chief 'yes' man for the wing commander. Colonel T. Alan Bennett was the wing commander, a former pilot in the Flying Tigers, tough guy. So we got this picture of them as they stepped off the plane on this little platform they had for them.

Well, that afternoon, I think, Bob recorded his regular radio show in front of a live audience, two or three hundred people in the base theater. The next night they put them on the show in front of I'd say several thousand people from the base and Fort Lewis.

Appleton: Oh, my!

Kader: Maybe five thousand. Everybody on our base and Army troops from Fort Lewis down the road were there. It was in front of one of the hangars with a big stage put up. Well, between acts Bob came backstage and I asked him if I could interview him. He said, "Sure, sure," and we got to talking. I asked him how the trip was and he said, "Oh, the best one we ever did! Best one we ever did." He talked very rapidly, but he very seldom smiled, though.

I was smoking cigarettes in those days. I was smoking Pall Malls. I pulled out a pack of Pall Malls and I said, "Do you want a cigarette, Bob?" He looked at me, leaned over, and he knocked that cigarette pack out of my hand and sent it sailing across the hangar floor! He said, "You smoke in front of me, you smoke these," and he held up Chesterfields. And he meant it! (Laughing)

Appleton: (Laughing) Well, he was probably paid. Chesterfield was his sponsor.

Kader: That was his paycheck.

Appleton: Yes, right! (Laughing)

# Bob Hope Comes To McChord Marilyn Maxwell Co-Stars With Famous Movie Funster



By S/Sgt. Sheldon L. Kader  
McChord buzzed with excitement yesterday and today as they prepared to welcome the Bob Hope show which will be presented tonight.

Arriving Thursday night at 10 p. m., Hope, lovely Marilyn Maxwell, Les Brown and other entertainers prepared the last show on their tour of Pacific, Far East and Alaskan military bases.

The McChord presentation will be in two parts. The first will be a radio show which will be held in the base theater at 8 p. m., and will be witnessed by some 550 lucky airmen and officers who obtained tickets through their orderly room Thursday. The second show will take place in Hangar 4 at 10 p. m., and will be a television presentation. All personnel at McChord, including dependents and civilian workers will be invited to this show on the occasion, first served basis. There are plenty of seats, with plenty of room for everyone else.

It was just 30 days ago that the troupe left Burbank and winged its way out to the Pacific. Since that time they have played before nearly 100,000 service personnel at such places as Honolulu, Johnson City, Guam, Okinawa, Tokyo, Manila, Osaka, Pusan, Taegu, Seoul, Wonsan, Yonpo, Shemya, Adak, Attu, Fanning and Anchorage.

It was in Wonsan, Korea, that Bob Hope and company arranged to do a show and found that they had beaten the First Marine Division into the city by 12 hours. The McChord show is the last on the current tour, and only one to be presented in the United States.

## Where There's Life

There's life at McChord. And there was lots of life at Operations last night as Bob Hope and lovely singing star Marilyn Maxwell disembarked at McChord in preparation for the Bob Hope Show which will be presented tonight. The official welcome was extended by Base Commander Colonel T. Alan Bennett and Air Base Group CO Lt. Colonel Pearl Roundy, shown above with Miss Maxwell and Hope.

(Photo by Base Photo Lab)

*Bob Hope visited McChord Air Force Base when Staff Sergeant Don Kader was writing for the Base Information Office. Twenty-five years later Bob signed this article for Don.*

# Bob Hope Troupe

Along with funnyman Hope and beautiful Miss Maxwell, the two-hour show will feature Les Brown's orchestra; acrobatic and specialty dances by Judy Kelly; intricate tap routines by the High Hatters; a trio of girl vocalists, the Tailor Maids; western comedian and singer Jimmie Wakely; and comic Jack Kirkwood, who flew up from Hollywood for this show.

This troupe is the largest outfit that has made a trip of this nature. The cast includes 42 people, and it has been the

(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 1)

most pretentious effort to take a show of this type overseas.

The largest crowd to watch the show was probably at Seoul, Korea, where approximately 10,000 persons were in the audience. In contrast, it was at the tiny base of Anchitka, Alaska, where Hope boffed only 62 persons.

Thanks for the Memory

Hope plans on staying over until Saturday, so that he will be able to witness the Washington-California football game in Seattle. Hope is scheduled to begin work on a new movie on December 2.

The tape-recorded radio show will be aired to the public on November 23, as a regularly scheduled Tuesday night broadcast.

Supervising the many-faceted committee which took care of all arrangements to present the show here was Lt. Col. Pearl Roundy, Air Base Group Commanding Officer.

## Mr. Music' Out; Mr. Hope In

Bob Hope, who presents his troupe to McChordians tonight, may be kidding when he feuds with his pseudo-rival, Crooner Bing Crosby. However, a strange coincidence caused people to wonder about that feud.

The Bob Hope radio show, which is to be presented in the base theater, made it necessary to cancel the regularly scheduled motion picture for tonight.

"Mr. Music."



## 6000 Persons Watched

and applauded as The Bob Hope Show performed last Friday night, November 3, in front of Hanger 4. Upper left, lush thrush Marilyn Maxwell teams up in a duet with funnyman Hope. Center, cowboy star Jimmie Wakely gives out with a song. Upper right, The Tailor Maids harmonize for the crowd. The lower photo shows Hope in a dance routine with Les Brown's band.

*This is the remainder of Staff Sergeant Kader's reporting  
on the visit by Bob Hope's troupe.*

Kader: So, anyway, we had a nice interview and found out that he had hit every base in Korea and said with a big grin, "We got to Wonson two hours before the Marines got there (laughing). Another kind of a sidebar was when Marilyn Maxwell and I got to talking to each other. She was very friendly, you, real down-to-earth, no "Hollywood Phony" whatsoever. One of the colonel's 'dog robbers' as we called his aides, said, "We're having a reception for you and Bob in the Officers' Club this evening." And Marilyn said, "Oh, boy," and she grabbed my arm and said, "Are you going with me?" And this guy said, "He can't go with you. He's not an officer!" Marilyn looked him straight in the eye and said, "Well, if he can't go, I'm not going either!" This put the "dog robber" back a couple of paces. I said to her, "Don't let it bother you, Marilyn. I've been through this type of segregation before." She said, "OK, if you say so." Then she gave my arm a squeeze and turned around to hug me and give me a kiss on the cheek!! I didn't wash that side of my face for a week!

Appleton: (Laughing) So, what finally happened?

Kader: Well, they had the reception.

Appleton: But you still you couldn't go?

Kader: No, I couldn't go. You can't go in. What are you talking about? A staff sergeant going in there with a bunch of lieutenants and other assorted brass? I wasn't a lieutenant yet.

Appleton: Yes. You didn't have your commission yet.

Kader: But anyway she did sign the picture I have and I can't find it now. So, fast forward.

Appleton: Yes.

Kader: That was 1950. In, let's see ... I think it was the spring of '75 or something like that I read where Hope was gonna come ... I was living in West Los Angeles ... and Hope was coming in for a book signing. He had just written another book. A very good writer really. And the book signing was in Beverly Hills, so I went up there and got in line. I took the copy of the *Defender* article that I had written, and I went up (to him) pointing to the book. I said, "Put your name down here, please," and he

signed the book. Then I said, “Bob, would you mind signing this, too?” And I put the paper down in front, and he said, “My God!! That was a million years ago!” (Laughing) He scribbled his name on it.

Appleton: How about that. He didn’t say anything about the Chesterfield cigarettes?

Kader: No, not that time.

Appleton: You didn’t bring that up either. (Laughing)

Kader: I’d stopped smoking by then! But it was a good one.

Appleton: Oh, of course. Those little incidents that are fun to recall.

Kader: It was 25 years ago. He remembered it though. He remembered that ‘cause that was his first show after Korea, and it was the last one he did that year.

Appleton: Really? Well, Yes. He was an amazing spirit booster, I think, for the troops, no matter where . . .

Kader: He did a dance routine with these two black tap dancers, The “Top Hatters” because he was a dancer to begin with, and he never missed a step. And I have a video that somebody shot of him and James Cagney at some sort of a meeting or something, and they’re tap dancing, and Cagney, of course, was a great dancer! And they’re tap dancing on the table and I’ve got a copy. I’ll send that over to you.

Appleton: Oh, I’ve seen that, and when I saw it, I didn’t realize that he was such a good dancer.

Kader: He was incredible.

Appleton: Yes. Well, he was obviously very talented in many, many ways. Well, I think we’ve probably touched on all the things that we forgot, unless we forgot something else. Is there anything else you want to add, to put into the whole story here that we haven’t mentioned?

Kader: Well, I do want to make a statement . . . that the Veterans Administration . . . a lot of people have bad things to say about them, but I have had the best care from the VA here in La Jolla, the hospital, medical center, and from the clinic in Mission Valley than I’d ever get from any hospital or any medical organization.

Appleton: That’s good to hear.

Kader: They have had me on a study program for seven years for diabetes and hypoglycemia and hypertension and they cured me. I’m not a diabetic anymore.

Appleton: Wow!

Kader: The study program has leveled me out completely. They are the nicest ... I've never had ... once in a while you meet some yo-yo, you know, but I would say 95 or 99% of the time I've had nothing but good treatment there. I'm on my fifth set of hearing aids now.

Appleton: That's good. That's great.

Kader: And this was sent back three times because it wasn't working right. It's not working now.

Appleton: (Laughing) Well, it'll be six times.

Kader: I give them A+ all the way.

Appleton: Great.

Kader: And the other group that has been very helpful to me is the Disabled American Veterans. The DAV, when I was 80 years old gave me a full paid life membership, and they were the ones that helped me get my disability, my hearing disability I told you about.

Appleton: Well that's wonderful to have positive experiences.

Kader: There are only two veterans' organizations that I donate to and I don't have a lot of money. I donate several times a year to the DAV and to the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Appleton: Well, all those donations for the organizations add up . . .

Kader: I know where that moneys going.

Appleton: You know where it goes, and they makes a big difference. Well, I think we've got most of the story. We'll put this altogether, and you'll get the final copy. We'll keep working on it.

Kader: Is this going to get an Academy Award do you think?

Appleton: I think we're gonna have to award ourselves the Academy Award.  
(Laughing) I don't think anyone else will.

Kader: We're not gonna get one from the museum (Veterans Museum and Memorial Center of San Diego) are we?

Appleton: Well, I don't know about the museum, whether they'll do that or not. I doubt it. But, probably the most important thing is that we're able to preserve the stories, the recollections, the memories in your own voice for you and your family, and that's probably the most important thing. Of course, the museum gets a copy and the Library of Congress gets a copy, but the most important copy is the one that comes back to you and to your family.

Kader: Can I make a copy of the copy?

Appleton: You can make as many copies as you want. Absolutely. There are no restrictions.

Kader: My brother asked me.

Appleton: Oh, yes. Absolutely. Nothing is restricted. There are no copyrights here, unless you want to copyright it and write a book, and that's up to you.

Kader: I think I've written all I want to write.

Appleton: You don't need to write anymore. Okay. Well, I think we'll just draw this to a close.

Kader: It's been a real pleasure.

Appleton: This has been a pleasure for me and we'll still have to meet a couple of more times to pull the pieces together, but that's okay.

Kader: As an epilogue, I'd like to add, "When I prepare to enter the final approach to the Great Aerodrome in the Sky, I can only hope that the runway lights are lit and that someone's in the tower!"

**KEEP 'EM FLYING!!**





*Before take-off the camera crew films preparations  
for an F-80 mission at K-13 (Suwon)*



*Don captured this unusual view of an F-80 wingtip tank framing the flight line as part of a documentary on the fighter group.*



*Ground personnel are securing the aircraft and assisting the pilot.*



*Napalm bombs are attached to an F-80 in preparation of an air strike.*



*A cameraman is filming a take-off with 16mm coverage of the activity at the base.*



*Another view of the take-off.*



*The F-80s are off the ground on their mission of the day at Suwon.*



*An unidentified motion picture cameraman from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Combat Camera Unit uses the Eyemo 35mm camera producing the documentaries photographed by Don's unit in Korea and Japan.*



*Documentary coverage included landings and take-offs of B-26 attack bombers at K-13, Suwon, Korea. This photo was at part of a series of documentary shots of B-26 missions which Don and his camera unit prepared during 1951-52. (Note: Please see the next photos which are part of the B-26 documentary photo coverage.)*



*Armorers carefully prepare the bomb load.*

*The armorers attach 500 pound bombs to the wings of a B-26.*



## Index

<i>"Our Gal"</i>	
Rashin Raid.....	42
100th Troop Carrier Squadron.....	16
105 mm Howitzers.....	49
2nd Combat Camera Unit.....	62, 91
2nd Photographic Squadron.....	26
40 & 8 box cars for travel.....	16
441st Troop Carrier Group.....	16
442nd Regimental Combat Team	
R & R in France, WW II.....	52
98th Bomb Wing.....	68
9th Air Force.....	16
advertising agency work.....	54
Air Force Reserves.....	49
Amarillo, Texas.....	11
Angleterre, Nice, France	
Angleterre Hotel.....	52
Ruhl Hotel.....	20
ANZACs.....	42
Ariflex 35mm camera.....	31
Armistice talks, Panmunjom, Korea ...	46
Army Air Corps	
enlistment.....	4
Aviation Cadet Reserve Program.....	9
Class of 44K (November 1944).....	10
B-26.....	61, 64
Bell & Howell 70DL.....	33
Bennett, Col. T. Alan	
former Flying Tiger pilot.....	78
Bjoring, Capt. Don.....	43, 62, 66
Black memorabilia.....	57
Brandel, Stuart	
Kader's cousin in the Navy.....	7
Brown, Les	
and his Band of Renown.....	78
Browning, Phil.....	43, 59
B-26 bombing mission, crash.....	61
C-47s.....	18

Camp Lucky Strike .....	15	interaction with civilians, Korea ...	69, 74
Chateau Thierry, World War I town ...	15	internment of Japanese Americans .....	5
childhood		Istres le Tube Air Field, France .....	18
growing up in San Diego .....	3	K-13, Suwon, Korea	
college graduation in 1949.....	22	documentaries on F-80s and B-26s.	37
Communication Components Corp.		K-16	
account .....	55	Kimpo Air Force Base in Korea .....	30
DAV		Kimpo Air Base, Korea.....	68, 71
Disabled American Veterans ....	51, 84	KTLA television station.....	54
Depression of the 1930s		L-15 spotter planes.....	33, 34, 64
living in .....	2	Le Havre, France.....	13
discharge at end of WW II.....	22	Leica factory .....	19
documentary film work.....	30	Lindbergh Field.....	4
Doolittle, Jimmy		flying in a Ryan ST.....	5
C-47 command airplane.....	19	Lookout Mountain near Hollywood, CA	
DP Camps		Air Force photographic lab unit.....	31
displaced persons resettlement.....	16	Manley, Capt. Mel .....	66
slave labor camps.....	17	Manley, Mel.....	37
Edwards, General Idwal		Maxwell, Marilyn	
C-47 command airplane.....	18	singer.....	78, 81
enlistment		May Company Department Store .....	54
Army Air Corps .....	4	McChord Air Force Base, WA .....	78
Fort MacArthur induction center .....	9	Public Info. Office assignment .....	24
Eschborn, Germany.....	16	memorabilia collecting.....	57
F-80		Black memorabilia .....	57
documentaries .....	36	military training	
documentary at K-13, Suwon .....	37	secret radio traing for CBI Theater .	12
FEAF, Far East Air Force .....	27	MLR, Main Line of Resistance	33, 35, 36
Fort MacArthur .....	9	North Island Naval Air Station	
<i>G-8 and His Battle Aces</i>		originally called Rockwell Field.....	5
Kader's published letter .....	8	<i>Our Gal</i> .....	32, 67
World War I magazine.....	8	nose art at Air Force Museum,	
Gabreski, Col. Francis		Wright-Patterson AFB .....	39
World War I flying ace .....	73	shot down in Sea of Japan.....	37
<i>Ghost Wings</i> .....	36, 66	Overseas Replacement Depot, assigned	
Hamilton Air Force Base, Suisun, CA	24	to .....	13
Han River, near Seoul .....	72	Paralyzed American Veterans.....	84
Hochman, Ned .....	64, 66	Pearl Harbor, remembering.....	5
Hoechts, Germany.....	16	photographer/reporter in Korea.....	27
Hope, Bob		Pote, Lt. Col. Horace.....	26
Chesterfield cigarettes.....	79	prisoner interrogation.....	48
troupe at McChord AFB, Washington		promotions	
.....	78	commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant ....	25
ICCA		to 1st lieutenant and captain.....	29
International Camera Combat		radio operator assignment in Europe ..	18
Association.....	76	Radio School	

Sioux Falls, South Dakota .....	11
radio school training .....	10
Rashin Raid.....	42
August 15, 1951 .....	39
Reavis, S/Sgt. Clyde .....	36
recalled for Korean War in 1950 .....	24
retirement from Air Force.....	53
Rockwell Field, Coronado .....	5
Rogester, Bill	
WW II cameraman.....	76
San Diego	
childhood in .....	3
San Diego High School.....	4
Victory Corps.....	7
self-propelled cannon (8") .....	50
Seoul, Korea.....	68
Shearer, Donnie	
retired Marine gunnery sergeant .....	76
Sheldon, Walt	
author of novel " <i>Troubling of a Star</i> "	
.....	44
SONY ad account .....	55
sweethart jewelry .....	58
<i>U.S.S. Lejeune</i> .....	13
captured German liner, <i>Windhuk</i> ....	13
USAFE Headquarters	
Wiesbaden, Germany .....	18
VA	
Veterans Administration .....	51, 83
Victory Corps in high school .....	7
Wakely, Jimmy	
country singing star.....	78
Walmsley, Capt. John	
8th Bomb Squadron .....	61
Medal of Honor.....	63
Wiesbaden, Germany .....	18
World War II	
discussions in high school.....	6
Yokota Air Force Base, Japan	
assignment to .....	27
fighter base.....	30
Officers' Club.....	42

