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INTERVIEW WITH DICK GRANT

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C: Dick, could you tell me your rank and what branch of the service you were in.

D: I was in the old Army Air Corps, WWII, '47--of course, it became the Air Force. In my 20 1/2 years I served 3 years with the Navy, 15 years with the Army Special Forces I was in unconventional warfare, which now seems to be the common thing--Green Berets and everything. During the period we're talking about here, I used to listen to Tokyo Rose down in New Guinea at Port Moresby--Spring '43 until I came home after two years. I remember specifically every evening around chow time between 6:00 and 7:00 when everybody had finished the chores and back home and everything, the most up-to-date and most modern music emanated from Tokyo Rose and her evening broadcasts. And everyone tuned in to listen to the latest music from home. We didn't have Armed Forces Radio like we do now or like we did during the Korean War or the Southeast Asian War. And not only the music but what we all marveled at--the Tokyo High Command had some kind of an intelligence net that really produced, because Tokyo Rose would get on the air and, for instance, "The 5th Fighter Squadron--when you come over Rabaul tomorrow we're going to be waiting for you." Specifics like that--she would name the

targets that had been planned to be hit the very next day. And of course the guys laughed it off but they still wondered how in the devil she could get this information, because as you know, New Guinea was just above caveman status. They were aboriginals and there was no chance of any of them even, any native peoples, working in any of the offices or working around in the camps. But I still marvel at how they used to get that information.

Of the two years I was over there, 18 months, my squadron was assigned to the Australian 7th and 9th Infantry Divisions to re-supply them by parachuting in the jungles and isolated patrols and everything, and just before I came home in early Spring of 1945 I was in the Dutch East Indies and I went to pay my respects to the senior Australian general who was on the same island in the Dutch East Indies on which I was stationed and I wanted to tell him good-bye because I had worked with him 18 months out of the previous 2 years--his name was Sir Leslie Moreshead. When I went to say good-bye to him, he said, "Come on up, Grantie." I said, "Sir, I just wanted to say good-bye before I go back to the States. And, sir, there's a question I want to ask you--Is it true that Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, called you Ali Baba Moreshead and Your Twenty Thousand Thieves?" The general roared [he

was a 3-star general], short, chubby, but a real man.
(Story about Rommel and North Africa--going through a
mine field. Turning point for Rommel.)

I was born and raised in Washington, D.C. and was
in government 5 1/2 years before the war started.
(Talked about his going into the service.) (Talked
about the unit being sent to Port Moresby and getting
in on the last Japanese bombings of Port Moresby.
History shows that the Japanese got within 5-7 miles of
Port Moresby and if it had been taken, Australia was
wide open.)

It was at Moresby that I first heard the
propaganda of Tokyo Rose because it was the only radio
station we could get over there. New Guinea itself is
a very mountainous area, like Montana is, and the music
was up-to-date, modern, it seemed like it was piped
right from the United States via Tokyo into our tents
over there. That, and the fact that she interspersed
her music with taunts, threats, call it what you want--
for instance, she would say, "You fellows in the 5th
Fighter Squadron, we'll be waiting for you over Rabaul
tomorrow." Rabaul, of course, was the main Japanese
base in the South Pacific. And, sure enough, they'd be
waiting for the guys. She'd do this with the units
every night--fighter squadrons, bomber squadrons. We
made the first parachute drop into New Guinea a couple

of months after I got there and this caught her by surprise, and that night she was very vindictive towards us because of what had happened. But it was a good program--we enjoyed it. Everybody listened to it. I shouldn't say "everybody" because I know Glen Parmeter said he didn't.

C: What was the quality of her voice like?

D: She had a real sweet voice. It was a sexy voice, whether she was trying to make it sexy or not, we were pretty lonesome down there in New Guinea and any woman's voice was kind of sexy at the time. But she had good delivery and she evidently had good intelligence, or the Japanese Imperial Staff had good intelligence--they just fed the propaganda to her. But I never forgot Tokyo Rose.

C: How did the music make you feel?

D: Well, the old-timers will remember the Mills Brothers singing "Paper Doll" and some of the old quartets they had and some of the singers, very melancholy, would make you think of home. And that's what she wanted you to do and probably tear down your resistance, but the Japanese I don't think really had any clear understanding of the Americans' psyche. This would make us want to hurry up and get the job over with and get home. That's the way all of us took it, I thought.

C: Did you listen to the news when you were there?

D: We listened to her news, yeah. It was very interesting. Oh, they know we're coming tomorrow-- that's interesting. But we were just as alert then. This didn't scare us at all. I imagine it was meant to make you apprehensive because maybe the Japanese thought we were not a war-like race, or war-like people, I should say. And something like this would intimidate us. But I think it just got our dander up. We took it, not as a joke but . . .

C: Do you think these programs were the product of a thought-out plan, or do you think it was a group of people ad-libbing?

D: I'm convinced in my own mind because they did seem to know the places we were going to hit--maybe just by deduction that they knew that, Rabaul for instance was the thing she used over and over, but that was the main shipping center, both surface shipping and aerial shipping--it supplied the Solomons, Dutch East Indies, all over the South Pacific. I'm convinced it had to be a planned operation.

C: Did her broadcasts have an emotional effect on the guys you were with where you were stationed? Did she depress you or anger you or . . .?

D: I don't know anybody that she angered or depressed. I know a lot of fellows that wouldn't miss her for the world because she was entertaining. And even though

she had these innuendoes and threats and kind of cast aspersions on your family life back home, they took it with a grain of salt.

C: Do you think she liked you?

D: After reading about Tokyo Rose and the fact that she had been an American citizen, supposedly went home and got caught there by the war, I think she was just a young girl who got caught up in the spirit of things and the Japanese used her.

C: At the time when you were listening did you have any idea what her psyche was like?

D: No. It was a Japanese mentality. I think they bit off more than they could chew and they realized it after Pearl Harbor when we struck back. It was those few seconds those B-25 bombers spent over Tokyo--that really must have surprised them. And from then on--and even with your best propaganda how can you beat success? MacArthur was one of the most brilliant men in military history, in my estimation. He could have gone against every island on the way up, but he didn't--he left entire Japanese armies, like the 18th Japanese Army in New Guinea--he left it there, bypassed it, went on up to the Philippines. You can't beat success regardless of how much propaganda. Of course, we knew we were having the success. We had our own bulletin boards and everything, telling what happened. (Talked

about the newspaper "Guinea Gold.")

C: Was there anything that she said in these broadcasts or that the news announcer said that you could identify clearly as being lies?

D: No. We took most of it with a grain of salt, about our sweethearts back home off with somebody else. That happens during wartime--wartime separation makes the heart beat greater for somebody else. It was just one of the facts of life. I don't know of anybody that was really affected by that.

C: So, in general you're saying that everyone looked forward to hearing her and . . .?

D: Yes. I'll make a flat statement that everybody looked forward to hearing the good music and listening to her forecast what was going to come up the next day, whether she was right or not. She had a pretty voice.