

# Basic Detail Report

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## Richard G. Ryder Oral History

**Date**

March 25, 2022

**Primary Maker**

Richard G. Ryder

**Medium**

MTS, PDF

**Description**

Richard G. Ryder served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid (CVS-11) as a hospital corpsman first class (HM1)

from 1965 to 1966, during Intrepid's first Vietnam deployment. The Museum recorded his oral history interview on March 25, 2022. See transcript for complete interview. Below is a summary: Ryder began his interview by briefly discussing his early years in outer Cape Cod. He then explained why he joined the Navy. While speaking about this decision, he stated why the Navy recruiter signed him up for guaranteed corpsman school. After noting boot camp at Great Lakes, Ryder discussed corpsman school. They were taught anatomy and physiology, and how to give shots. Ryder recalled that the big test was when you were sent to a hospital as a ward corpsman for six months, as this was where you took care of people, gave shots, changed dressings, administered medicine, etc. He then noted that, if you had an opportunity to get off the ward, you took it, and he had an opportunity to strike for pharmacy technician. Ryder soon explained that pharmacy school was one of the Navy's more difficult and lengthy schools for medical personnel. He stated that the school was eight months long, and he recounted some of the information they learned, such as the common, generic, and Latin names for drugs, and how to make aspirin. The topic of pharmacy school also led to a discussion on Ryder's compounding book, which he donated to the Museum. Ryder recalled that the book contained a formula for making ChapStick, which proved to be helpful when the flight deck crew needed ChapStick and the ship's store ran out of it. Ryder then stated how much compounding was done in the pharmacy, noting that they made maybe twenty-five percent of the items they dispensed, such as cough medicine. After noting that cough medicine contained alcohol, Ryder explained that he had to keep track of controlled substances. He also described how he filled prescriptions and recalled a prescription he wrote for Gemini astronaut Gus Grissom, another item he donated to the Museum. After discussing sick call hours, and explaining that some crew members tried to use sick call to get out of work, Ryder noted that, if he had spare time, he liked to look at the ocean and get up to the bridges. Ryder then returned to the topic of the pharmacy, describing the pharmacy's layout, recalling the equipment, and explaining how the equipment was used. He also recalled that an inventory board inspected the pharmacy in order to ensure that every substance was accounted for, which led to an explanation of why alcohol was used for making cough medicine, and why he locked the pharmacy. Ryder then noted some of the personnel who worked in sick bay, before he discussed the hydrogen sulfide

accident. In describing this event, Ryder explained: how the gas formed, how the crew responded to the situation, and who was overcome or killed by the gas, specifically a corpsman named Richard Gauthier. As the interview continued, Ryder discussed replenishment at sea, or underway replenishment. He recalled two collisions: one between Intrepid and an oiler, and another between Ryder's Karmann Ghia and a fire extinguisher on Intrepid's hangar deck. Ryder then explained that, during Intrepid's deployment to Vietnam, the captain would maneuver Intrepid within twelve miles of the coast so the ship was in the combat zone and the crew would receive combat pay. Ryder also discussed his general quarters battle dressing station and the first time he learned why sand was kept in this location. As the interview came to an end, Ryder provided additional information relating to topics he had previously discussed, such as: weeding out slackers who went to sick call in order to avoid work, caring for those who truly needed medical attention, and G.I. Gin (the cough syrup they mixed). He also shared information relating to other topics, including: monitoring the ship's first aid boxes, manning a motor whaleboat during man overboard drills, and Resusci Anne, their CPR dummy. Ryder then recalled the diversity in sick bay and stated that the crew was proud of the ship. As the interview ended, Ryder was asked what he hopes visitors will take away from seeing sick bay, and he stated that he hopes visitors will realize that corpsmen were caregivers.

Extent: 8 video files, 30 page transcript

### **Dimensions**

83 minutes