INTERVIEW WITH

GHERY D. PETTIT

CLARINET 1942 & 1943
SELF INTERVIEW BY GHERY D. PETTIT

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Interviewee: Ghery D. Pettit
Clarinet 1942 & 1943

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Drum Major 1957

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Pullman, Washington
25 July 05

I was born in Oakland, grew up in Bolinas, and graduated from Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. I had piano lessons as a child and started the clarinet when I was a high school sophomore. A competent clarinetist in the senior class was my first teacher, until my parents arranged for professional lessons in San Rafael. I will never forget the thrill of my first experience playing in a group in the high school’s beginning orchestra. I’m sure it sounded better to me than it did to the music teacher. In my senior year I played solo clarinet in the advanced orchestra and band, and was selected to represent my school in an all-state orchestra in San Jose.

My mother and her sister graduated from Cal, so there was no question where my brother and I would go to college. I started Cal in September 1942, a few days after my 16th birthday. Joining the Cal Band seemed as important as taking classes required for graduation.

My audition with Professor Charles Cushing consisted of sight-reading several selections in Room 5, Eshleman Hall. It was the first time I had met Professor Cushing and my first time to enter Room 5, so I didn’t know what to expect. Professor Cushing seemed rather formal and did little to relieve my anxiety. I don’t remember him commenting on my performance except to indicate that it was acceptable. In retrospect, those auditions were probably as boring for him as
Ghery Pettit in Cal Band uniform on January 1, 1943. Note The "Sam Browne" belt referred to in some of the other oral histories.
they were stressful for the applicants

Room 5 was just as Herb Towler described it in his interview and as someone wrote in Band's centennial book, *The Pride of California*. (page 29) It was a social gathering place for bandsmen where I sometimes played Ping-Pong when I probably should have been studying.

My memory of Room 5 is a plainly furnished, utilitarian room that would not have appealed to women even if they had been allowed to enter. “Unkempt” is a word that might be applied.

I really liked Professor Cushing as a band director because he insisted that we play well, especially during concert band rehearsals in Room 175 Men’s Gym. ¹

In the marching band, I will never forget his mandate to omit all stingers.² How many band directors do that? I was disappointed that we were not allowed to play popular music like the band from St. Mary’s Pre-Flight³, but it was not until I read in *The Pride of California* about his resignation a few years later that I understood and appreciated his support of student control of the Band.⁴

There were 75 Band members in 1942-1943. The ones I remember best were Ron Sodestrom, Walter Nicol, Bill Fay, Perry Wood, Gordon Goff, Malcolm Taylor, Walt Nollner, Alcide Marin and Herb Towler. Ron Sodestrom was, deservedly, the clarinet section leader. Walt Nicol and I often walked together to and from Band events because his fraternity, Alpha Delta Phi, and mine, Phi Kappa Sigma, were neighbors on the north side of campus. Everyone knew Bill Fay and Perry Wood, both of whom made me think being an extrovert was a requirement for playing the trombone. Walt Nollner, Malcolm Taylor and Gordon Goff were prominent because of their posi-

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¹ It is now called Haas Pavilion. Room 175 Men's Gym also served as the rehearsal room for the ROTC band. The Straw Hat Band practiced there before basketball games well into the 1960's. In those days the campus had no facilities for musical rehearsals. When I first became acquainted with the Band in the late 1940's and until the Band moved from Room 5 Eshleman Hall in 1954/59, the Band rehearsed in Room 175 and in the Men's Clubroom in the Stephen's Student Union. It was only after they moved to the spaces in the basement of the Dining Commons that the Band had a proper rehearsal hall.

² I remember during the postwar-Cushing years, standard marches always seemed to be in the repertoire. Frequently, someone would forget and play the "stinger" at the end and stand out like a sore thumb, much to his embarrassment and rude remarks by his fellow Bandsmen. I don't know why Cushing insisted on omitting the stinger.

³ During the war, college campuses all over the nation were appropriated by the military as training schools.

⁴ Cushing's remarks appear on page 27 and refer to efforts by newer members of the Band to reconstitute the Band's marching style from military-style marching fundamentals to a style more like the band's from the Big-10 which we marched against in Coach Pappy Waldorf's three straight Rose Bowls. (See interviews by Bill Colescott and others.)

In addition to changing to the high-stepping marching style the change also meant playing Broadway show tunes and other popular music. Prof. Cushing was enamored by classical music and, other than on the football field, viewed the Band as a "concert" band with sophisticated performance skills. Besides, he had been the Cal Band director for many years and had, by now, gotten heavily involved with creating his own classical compositions as well as his status as a professor in the Music Department. I suspect he was growing weary of Band's undergraduate attitudes as expressed by the younger generation of incoming Bandsmen. He asked the ASUC to transfer the Band directorship to his incoming graduate student, Jim Berdahl, who had been Student Director in 1938.
tions as Student Director, Drum Major and Senior Manager, respectively for the 1942 season. Alcide Marin was student in 1943.⁵

Herb Towler and I developed a lasting friendship after Phi Kappa Sigma closed at the end of the school year for lack of members and I boarded with a few other “stray Greeks” at Herb’s fraternity, Sigma Phi. ⁶

“Stray Greeks” were fraternity members like me who were not in a military unit and needed housing because our chapters had closed “for the duration.” […]of the war] Still-open fraternities that postponed their closing by taking in boarders received us warmly because we met each other’s needs. It was fortuitous for me because my Sigma Phi roommate, Harry Reddick, planned to be a veterinarian and discussions with him sparked my interest in that profession.

The 1942-43 school year was a transition period from peacetime to wartime campus schedules and activities. Under provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862 that established the land-grant colleges, two years of ROTC were required for male undergraduates.

In 1942, many of us took the required freshman and sophomore, basic Army ROTC classes. Others volunteered to continued for second two years, or chose Navy ROTC, which led directly to commissions as Second Lieutenants or Ensigns. Housing was not provided for either group. They were on their own.⁷

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⁵ See oral histories by Fay, Marin, and Towler.

⁶ The male student population was decimated by the military needs and fraternity population fell.

⁷ The California Corps of Cadets (See page 181 of the 1905 Blue & Gold) existed from 1870 to 1917 whereupon it was reorganized as a unit of the Reserve Officers Training Corps. (ROTC). (See page 91 of the Centennial Record of the University of California.) The first two years were required and an additional two years, called Advanced ROTC, were voluntary and led to a commission in either the Army or the Navy. This is the program that was in effect during Pettit’s years on campus and was, for the most part, considered part of normal campus life.

It is interesting to note that in 1925 a Naval ROTC program was started on campus and the Commanding Officer was, Cal graduate, Commander Chester W. Nimitz, who later played a leading role in the war in the Pacific.

The advent of WWII created some major changes. The newly instituted military draft made every young American male subject to military service. This led to an increase in enrollment in the Advanced ROTC program on the rationale that, "If I have to serve, I might as well do it as an officer."

The other change was that specialized military training units were created on campuses all over the U.S. These units were manned by people already on active duty and receiving specialized training. The ROTC units were associated with the military but the students were not on active duty status. This was a "peacetime" program that already existed before the war and, incidentally, was a contributing factor in the rapid build-up of the military services Those students were soon-to-be, but not yet, commissioned officers.

One of the specialized units on campus was the Navy V-12. "V" stood for Victory. Perhaps the "12" stood for the twelfth such unit in the nation. I think this program was for Navy enlisted personnel who had officer potential but lacked a college degree. After graduating, they then went on to Officer Candidate School to earn their commission.

On 18 May 1962. The Regents made a new interpretation of he requirements of the Morrill Act and voted to make ROTC a voluntary course. See page 434 of Vern Stadtman's The University of California 1868-1968.
After the draft age was lowered to 18 in November 1942, the Navy started the V-12 program to provide undergraduate education for selected applicants because the Navy was going to need more junior officers for its growing fleet.

Those who successfully completed their V-12 college courses qualified for Navy midshipman school or Marine Corps officer candidate school to obtain commissions. [ROTC graduates were commissioned upon graduation. NHC]

I don’t know exactly when the Navy V-12 program took possession of International House and renamed it Callaghan Hall, but the NROTC cadets and V-12 midshipmen moved in for the 1943 summer semester, when the three-semester system was introduced.⁸

Having a third academic semester during the summer months facilitated earlier graduation for those in the military programs and, I suppose, solved the problem of how to keep them busy during summer vacations.

Students in the Army Air Corps meteorology program were housed in Bowles Hall. I don’t know where the other military units lived. The Callaghan Hall residents jogged to the Campanile and back before breakfast and mustered on Piedmont Avenue before being dismissed for classes, but the Bowles Hall "Meteors" marched together to their first class, calling out cadence as they went.

The Sigma Phi house was across Bancroft Way from Callaghan Hall, so we could see and hear the morning Navy ritual if we were so inclined. The "military people", as you call them, were allowed to participate in many campus activities. My brother Floyd, who was in NROTC, sang in the Glee Club and was on the boxing team, and men in uniform can be seen in photographs throughout the 1944 Blue & Gold. Some probably played in the Band, but I don’t remember who they were. [Drummer Philip Ellwood was one. See his separate interview. NHC]

By the fall of 1943 the Band had shrunk to 35 members. Herb, who was then Drum Major as well as Senior Manager, appointed me Sophomore Manager to run errands and help prepare halftime stunts in which we would lie on the field and sometimes spread our instruments between us to spell words or make simple formations.

Herb was grooming me to become Junior Manager the next year, but those plans never materialized because I joined the Navy in 1944 to avoid being drafted into the Army.

As I recall, Herb designed the stunts and sketched them for us on a blackboard. We practiced them on a campus field on Thursday afternoon and ran through them again on Saturday morning before the game. I didn’t realize until I saw a photograph in The Pride of California (page 25) that lying down on the field was practiced even before the Band shrank during the war.

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⁸ When the Navy V-12 program took over International House, it was renamed Callaghan Hall in honor of Cal graduate Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan, who was commanding officer aboard the U.S.S. San Francisco. He lost his life in the very crucial naval Battle of Savo Island in the Solomon Islands.
It was exciting to enter Memorial Stadium through the North Tunnel and start our pre-game activity with Professor Cushing’s "Hail to California Fanfare" but I can’t distinguish my feelings about the first time from blended memories of all home football game days.

I don’t remember much about running through our half-time stunts on Saturday morning, but I have a clear picture of marching up Bancroft Way to the stadium, each of us raising one hand to warn the man behind him as we came to obstacles like traffic control posts.

Entering Memorial Stadium with the Band was a high point in a festive day filled with anticipation and excitement. Playing the fanfare was like opening the curtain for a stage play to begin. It seemed as though everyone on campus was busy preparing for whatever they were to do on game day. My Phi Kappa Sigma brothers had the job of operating the stadium scoreboard by sliding metal sheets with painted numbers into place. It wasn’t easy and you had to stay focused.

A feature I enjoyed was counter-marching through the opposing team’s band as we met to play The Star Spangled Banner before each game. I was surprised at the 1942 Big Game to encounter an otherwise properly uniformed clarinetist wearing a papier-mâché Indian head complete with headband and feather. And who but UCLA would wear uniforms consisting of mustard-colored slacks and a powder blue sport coat? The coats had no lapels as a nod to wartime conservation. [Err. Umm. Check out the photo on the next page. NHC]

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9 Whenever the Band was marching in the street and encountered a step, curb, post, or other obstacle, the Bandsmen in the first rank would hold up their hand and Bandsmen behind them would pass it along to the rear. That way no one would be caught unawares and stumble, perhaps hurting himself. The Band does very little street marching these days and this practice is probably forgotten.

10 I didn't know this but I am not surprised. This was in the days when the ASUC "owned" and administered Cal's intercollegiate athletics. They would turn to student employees for this kind of task rather than hiring people from outside. During the immediate postwar years the ASUC used off-season athletes to control discipline in the rooting section rather than the professional "event managers" they use today. Bear in mind that they were known to the student-body by virtue of playing on a sports team and quite often through their fraternity affiliation. It was easy to them to maintain crowd control.

11 My memory from the late 1940's is that both bands would form a block, facing north and play the Star Spangled Banner. I vaguely recall that there was only one national flag in the stadium and that was the one over the north scoreboard, the flag the band was facing as it played. In recent years, the now-voluntary, campus ROTC units provide a color guard which comes out on the field to Present the Colors, and the entire stadium stands and sings the National Anthem. It is very striking, in contrast to the present custom at other athletic events, particularly in professional sports, where a soloists sings and most of the fans are not paying attention.
From the front page of the October 14, 1949 issue of the Daily Cal. The uniform on the left is the one from Ghery Pettit’s time. The one on the right has the famous mustard yellow trousers that nobody liked. These later got cut off to bermuda shorts. See pages 35 and 36 of the Cal Band centennial book. This uniform was also criticized because it made the Band look like bellhops.
Other good memories were marching up Bancroft Way to the stadium before the games, and our noisy rendition of *One More River* as we exited through the North Tunnel\(^ {12} \) before stopping to serenade and listen to Coach Stub Allison’s talk after each game. […] *from the balcony overlooking the exit to North Tunnel. NHC*]

During my two years in the Band, the only game we traveled to was the 1943 East-West game in San Francisco’s Kezar Stadium. We also played at a number of class reunions in San Francisco the night before the 1942 Big Game in Berkeley. Cal did not play Stanford in 1943.

While I lived at the Sigma Phi house I helped Herb operate his innovative "Sandwich Man" business in which he sold sandwiches, milk and fruit at sororities during weeknight study hours.

Each morning, Herb drove his sedan to Oakland to buy “Duchess” brand sandwiches, apples and oranges, and small cartons of milk. There may also have been candy bars. We carried the food on a large tray (which I held on the roof of his car between stops) and rang the front doorbell. When the girl who answered the door called out, "Sandwich Man", customers came running. The business was successful because our arrival was a welcome break from studying and pizza delivery did not exist. The job cut into my study time, but it was more productive than playing Ping-Pong in Room 5.

After the war I earned a B.S. in Animal Science (1948) and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (1953) at UC Davis and played for a short while in the Cal Aggie Band. It just wasn’t the same as the Cal Band, so I didn’t stay with it.

I played in the first Cal Band Alumni Band\(^ {13} \) and once or twice thereafter before I moved to Pullman, Washington, to join the faculty at Washington State University.

In 1974 my elder son, his wife and I became charter members of the Pullman Community Band, which was organized by their former high school band director. Son Ghery S. played bassoon and Marilyn played bass clarinet. People who don’t play a musical instrument miss out on some joyful experiences.

**DIRECTED INTERVIEW**

**via e-mail**

**CHEATHAM:** Given the conditions, the war and all, were there any bonfire rallies or other manifestations of school spirit?

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\(^ {12} \) During those days the Band was part of the big crush of fans exiting out through North Tunnel. It was a very slow process and the Band repeated the tune over and over again echoing those great trombone opening bars that echoed throughout the tunnel. It was explained to me that "one more river was crossed" bringing us closer to the end of the season. There is also a parallel connection that in early campus days each academic class had it own class song. For the Junior Class, it was *One More River* signifying that they had one more academic year before they could graduate, i.e., "one more river to cross". See interview with Ralph Edwards.

\(^ {13} \) See interviews with Herb Towler, Dave Wenrich, and others.
PETTIT: We had a bonfire rally in the Greek Theater before the Big Game in 1942, which the Blue & Gold said was the only bonfire the Army allowed on the coast. My best memory of that rally is recurring shouts of "Freshmen! More wood!" I know there were small rallies on Wheeler Steps in which some Band members participated, but I don't think I was in any of them.

In 1942 the rooting section was still segregated, with men wearing white shirts and rooters' caps and women in white blouses and waving blue and gold pom-poms on each side of the men's rooting section.

The felt rooters' caps were blue on one surface and gold on the other, so they could be reversed to make a blue 'C' on a gold background. They were constructed somewhat like a Navy enlisted man's cap, with a soft brim. The cap could be reversed to expose either the blue or the gold. I still have the one I wore at events where the Band wasn't playing.

Only the men performed card stunts, which were carefully prepared and precisely executed. I can still hear the cheerleaders shouting alternately, "Everybody, Uuuup!" and "Everybody, dwwwn!" as the cards were changed. [This caused the stunts to "snap" into view and finish smartly. See the interview with Natalie Cohen for a detailed discussion.]

It’s too bad those days are gone.

The Band had seats of honor in front of the men’s rooting section on the 50-yard line. [It still does.]

I’m glad to hear that.

Here in WSU’s 43,000-seat stadium, the WSU band sits in one end zone and the visiting team’s band (when there is one) sits in the opposite end zone. The rooting section sits from the corner

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14 This created a spectacular image. See old Blue & Golds. When I first encountered the rooting section in the late 1940’s, the Women’s Rooting Section, complete with pom-poms, as described by Pettit, was on of south of the Men's Rooting section. On the north was the "mixed" rooting section. If you went to the game with a date she couldn't sit with you in the Men's section, nor you with her in the Women's section, so there was the "Mixed" section on the north. It had no special distinction such rooters caps although I think they wore white shirts. When the Band was playing the women would display their pom-poms in unison…up…down…left…right. It was spectacular to view from the opposite stands.

15 Certain seating spots in bleachers were marked with a blue paint spot. If you sat on a blue spot, you wore your hat with blue side showing. When viewed from the opposite side of the stadium, there was giant Blue "C" displayed against a gold field. This was superimposed against a white field created by everyone wearing a white shirt. It was truly spectacular to see. During the second half of the game the colors were reversed.
by the band to about the 30-yard line. Sale of seats between the 30-yard lines helps pay the bills.\textsuperscript{16}

For amusement, the men's rooting section would periodically "roll" an apparently willing victim up and down the rows, holding him up and passing him overhead with many upheld hands.\textsuperscript{17}

At any game, a woman walking in front of the men’s rooting section in a red dress would be subjected to loud calls of "Take off that red dress! You bag!" \textit{[After the War women would sometimes do it on purpose. NHC]} \textit{[Pettit adds that he is sure that it was that way during his years too.]}

It was the custom for referees to measure penalty yards by walking them off, so when a penalty was against Cal the rooting section counted along with the referee: "One, two, three, four, five, Yoooou Bastard!" That eventually stopped when officials retaliated with another, more severe, penalty.\textsuperscript{18}

In 1943, the segregated rooting section and card stunts were suspended. There was still a mostly white-shirted center section, but it consisted primarily of women. The Band still had seats in front. Photographs in the 1944 Blue & Gold show a preponderance of uniforms on each side of the center section.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{CHEATHAM:} Elaborate on Prof. Cushing's support of the Cal Band's student government system.

\textbf{PETTIT:} I was young and naïve and knew no other college band, so I assumed that leadership by the Student Director, Drum Major and Senior Manager was the way all college bands operated. As I mentioned earlier, it was not until I read in \textit{The Pride of California} about Prof. Cushing’s forced retirement as Band Director after the Band was outclassed by the famed Ohio State

\textsuperscript{16} Cal is probably the last remaining stadium that still seats its rooting section straddling the 50-yard line. However as I write this in August 2005 the campus is embarking on a program to seismically upgrade the stadium. This involves major renovation. There will be a great temptation to move the rooting section and market those seats to help defray the costs of renovation. Let's watch and see what happens.

Into the 1950's the rooters from the opposing school straddled the 50 yard-line on the opposing side. This section would be especially full for the Stanford, UCS, and UCLA games. Each rooting section would try to out-yell the other as well as shouting insults to one another. In time fewer students would follow the team to out-of-town games and these were turned into a revenue source, the out-of-town being relegated to the south-west corner.

\textsuperscript{17} In the immediate postwar years this was done to people who wore red or otherwise misbehaved and offended their fellow rooters. This custom no longer exists. I presume it was abandoned for safety reasons and is now forgotten.

\textsuperscript{18} It was re-instituted in the immediate postwar years. Currently they use measuring "chains" and no longer pace out the yardage. During those immediate postwar years the all-male rooting section behavior was not for innocent ears. There are letters of complaint in the Robert Gordon Sproul archives. He answered them as best he could but he really had no direct control over the rooting section. In the late 1890's university president Benjamin Ide Wheeler granted authority over student conduct affairs to the student government. I don't know details but I am sure that fine line has moved back and forth over the years, especially as related to the affairs of the late 1960's and 70's.

\textsuperscript{19} My guess is that the military men sitting in the rooting section were not allowed to wear civilian clothes and therefore could not wear the white shirts required to be in the rooting section.
band at the 1950 Rose Bowl, that I realized student control of a college band was unusual. I think the published excerpt from Prof. Cushing’s resignation speech deserves exposure again:

"Commercialism\textsuperscript{20} and professionalism has been accorded a larger place in band work and the band’s initial function \textemdash namely, to perform music \textemdash has been superseded on the Berkeley Campus. I have clung to the seemingly outmoded belief that a band is a musical organization primarily. Concessions have been made, but the final outcome admits no compromise.

"Visual appeal, show, spectacles, and swing are apparently what is wanted.\textsuperscript{21} I am convinced these things can be obtained at a price reckoned in terms of dollars and at the partial though probably complete forfeiture of student control. It stands to reason that an undergraduate drum major responsible for originating plans and rehearsing the marching maneuvers cannot successfully compete with a staff of professional drill masters such as are found at those institutions which our student body seemingly wishes to emulate."

CHEATHAM: This is the first time I have heard about the papier-mâché Indian head. Tell me everything you can about it. Oski’s first appearance was the year before, 1941, do you think this was Stanford’s answer to Oski?

PETTIT: No, I think it was just a student wanting to do something entertaining and, perhaps, test his band director’s sense of humor. I’m pretty sure he passed that test. All I know is that I saw it during the pre-game performance and there was no visible effect on the Stanford band’s performance, nor any Cal reaction except amusement. Incidentally, I didn’t know Oski was only one year old at the time and assumed he was a well-established character. Is the identity of the person playing Oski still a well-kept secret? I liked that tradition, but any entertainer deserves to be recognized. [For Oski’s full story see the interview with Bill Rockwell. NHC]

CHEATHAM: Tell us about "lie-down" stunts.

PETTIT: The best way to describe the "lie down" stunts and my reaction is to quote from a letter I wrote to my mother on October 18, 1942. I found the letter this morning while looking for a photograph of me in my Band uniform. The letter contains more detail than I can remember after more than 60 years.

"The Cal Band is sure fun. The conductor is a great guy. We did stunts between the halves at the game yesterday. We formed a bear’s head facing the UCLA side, with the inscription "O HELL" underneath it. Then, with a lot of commotion, the "O" broke up and ran to the other end. Then we faced the Cal rooting section and, lying flat on our

\begin{small}\textsuperscript{20} The Big-10 bands had corporate sponsors who kept them in new uniforms and instruments and provided transportation.\end{small}

\begin{small}\textsuperscript{21} The Cal Band was completely outclassed in three Rose Bowls in a row by the Big-10 bands. There was a clamor among the student-body for the Cal Band to get its act in order. In the end it did so with its constitution and its student leadership intact. This was done by the student leadership and in 1954 the high-stepping Cal Band you see today made its debut under Drum Major Bill Isbell. See other oral histories, especially those by Bill Colescott and Bill Isbell.\end{small}
backs, spelled out "Ruin the Bruin." Of course, we lost the game, but I had a lot of fun. Some of the marches we use are the same ones we played at Tam, and it's kind of a let-down to be playing 2nd clarinet instead of solo --- but I hope to work up in a coupla semesters, or more."

The "conductor" I praised was Professor Cushing. "Tam" was short for Tamalpais High School. Those stunts were performed when the Band had 75 members. We used our instruments to fill in the gaps in "lie-down" stunts the next year when we had only 35 members. By that time, "lie down" stunts were no longer a novelty, and in fact were a necessity for a spirited football field performance. We did it only a couple of times but it was so unusual that I certainly remember it.

CHEATHAM: In his oral history Dick Auslen tells how he introduced lie-down stunts during his duty in the Army at Ohio State University.

Auslen: I took basic training in Arkansas and went to school in Missouri. Then I went to Louisiana State University. While there I played in their orchestra. The Army decided I should learn French which I spoke in the first place so they sent me to Ohio State University where they didn't teach French, so they taught me German. While at Ohio State...I was there for a year...and one day there was a bulletin...anybody who wants to play in a band or orchestra, come sign up. So, I signed up. It turned out I was only one of two people there who had stripes on their arms [referring to badges of rank], which was sheer coincidence. So I ended up as cadet first sergeant. Another fellow ended up as cadet conductor.

The job had a real good perk. It had a Class A pass that went with it so when the First Sergeant says he was going to lock the building, you could go out, go anywhere you wanted, any day of the week. We were there for a full year, almost. We were there for the football season so I introduced the Midwest to lie-down stunts, which they had never heard of before. It wasn't very colorful in olive drab uniforms but at the same time, it got a fantastic reception.

Tell us more about the rationale behind the UCLA uniform coats with no lapels.

PETTIT: It was the southern California tradition-breaking casualness of sport coats and slacks for band uniforms – in not-quite University of California colors\textsuperscript{22} – that shocked me. Styles that included trousers without cuffs or pleats and shorter skirts for women became common manifestations of wartime shortages of clothing material, but UCLA's uniforms were the first sport coats without lapels I had seen. I don’t think they ever did become popular.

CHEATHAM: What was the USC band like?

PETTIT: The only bands I remember marching against were UCLA, Stanford and St. Mary’s Pre-Flight in 1942, probably because there was something memorable about each of them. We didn’t travel to any away games in 1942-43 (except the 1943 East-West game In San Francisco) and other non-military bands didn’t travel much, either.

CHEATHAM: Tell us about your uniforms.

\textsuperscript{22} Even to this day UCLA uses a "baby" blue which Cal fans make fun of.
PETTIT: The photo attached to this e-mail is the only one I have of me in a Cal Band uniform. It was taken on January 1, 1943, shortly before the East-West game.

I was proudly wearing the new uniform introduced that fall. It replaced the previous white ones.

The coat was blue and we wore a white Sam Browne belt with a strap that went over the right shoulder to and from the left hip. The pants were gray with a blue stripe on the outside seam. The visored cap was yellow with a blue "C" in front. I’m almost positive the necktie was yellow (gold!) to match the cap, but it might have been blue. If it wasn’t yellow, it should have been. Shirts and shoes were white.

CHEATHAM: Tell us about playing One more river coming out of North Tunnel.

In the post-war years it was combined with an off-color song relating to O'Reilly's Bar. I am curious if that was a prewar custom, or did it arrive with the postwar vets?

PETTIT: We started playing One More River as soon as we entered North Tunnel. Boy, was it loud in there! The North Tunnel Echo...the Newsletter of the Cal Band Alumni Association...was aptly named.

If you hadn’t mentioned also playing the other tune in the tunnel, I would have said we played One More River until we exited from the other end. Now, I’m not so sure.

We did play the other tune on what the Drum Major considered appropriate occasions, which included waiting for the coach to speak after the games. Another "appropriate" occasion was on the bus or in the streets in San Francisco while traveling between class reunions the night before the Big Game.

CHEATHAM: That is new information for us. This would indicate that its presence may have preceded the postwar years when so many new customs returned with the veterans.

In spite of the fact that this song is so raunchy that we are both embarrassed to mention its name, I feel a need to expand on this because it was, at least in the late 1940's and the 1950's, a major part of Band lore.

Exiting North Tunnel in the crowd was so slow that there was time to play both One More River and O.B.R. several times through. The Drum Major would time it so that the Band would exit the tunnel to O.B.R. It was just the custom of the day. I don’t know how it started but it may have been some sort of an inside joke.

23 It was close to the color of painted lines on highways...similar to the color of "gold" used in the logo on the cover of this interview. This same color is still used in rooters paraphernalia of today.

24 I remember in the 1950's seeing yellow ties around the uniform room. The Sam Browne belts are mentioned in several oral history interviews but it always leaves a vague image in the readers mind. I am pleased to have such a clear photo of it.

25 Well, alright, it was abbreviated O.B.R.
Somewhere in the 1970's (?) the Band started playing a post game concert on the field to let the crowd thin out so they could march right through. By this time the coach was no longer coming out on the balcony. Someone, it may have been Bob Briggs, made an arrangement, using both tunes, that could be played during the now shortened exit.

The fictitious Mr. O.B. Reilly became the unofficial mascot and inside joke of the Band. When waiting for a table at a crowded restaurant, one would hear the announcement, "Mr. O.B. Reilly…table for four." Or, at an airport…”Mr. O.B. Reilly…White courtesy telephone please."

The words are lost to posterity and today's Band members don't even realize that there are two tunes in the arrangement they play of One More River.

Tell us more about going to S.F. on the night before Big Game.

**PETTIT:** I did it only once, of course, since Cal didn’t play Stanford in 1943. I think we went to 4 or 5 class reunions. We played 1 or 2 (or maybe 3) Cal songs at each one. We were pretty relaxed and having a good time. I didn’t drink, but some Band members' exuberance may have been enhanced by libations offered by appreciative alumni.

**CHEATHAM:** During my undergraduate years, the alumni seemed intent on handing drinks to Bandsmen. Certainly they had a few drinks under their belts too and they may have been remembering their undergraduate days, which surely including drinks, and they were motivated to make sure the Bandsmen didn't miss out on the libations of the evening.

Do you have any insights about the whys and wherefores of not playing Stanford in 1943?

**PETTIT:** I’ve been wondering about that, but I don’t know the answer. Bands and most teams didn’t travel much in 1943 because of gasoline rationing, unavailability of tires, and military priority for public long-distance travel. Three of our 1943 games were played at home against military teams (St. Mary’s Pre-Flight School, Coast Guard and Del Monte Pre-Flight School from Monterey). And yet, in a unique situation, Cal played home-and-home games with USC and UCLA, four games total, even though Stanford was much closer.

Why? One can imagine that those four games occurred because neither USC nor UCLA would make the trip to Berkeley unless Cal made a comparably difficult reciprocal trip to the Southland.26

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26 According to page 189 of Nick Peters' book *100 Years of Blue and Gold* there was no Big Game in 1943, 1944, and 1945. I have no reference on this but I imagine there was a small wartime student body at Stanford prohibiting them from fielding a football team. John Sullivan writes in his book *The Big Game*, page 244, referring to the the 1943 season, "Stanford abandoned football for the duration of the war, and another Big Game would not be played until 1946."

Quite aside from the absence of Big Games, the military draft was decimating the Cal football team and it was not very successful. Page 307 of S. Dan Brodie's book *66 Years of California Gridiron 1882-1948: The history of football at the University of California* says, "During the seasons of 1943, 1944 and 1945 football deteriorated to an almost meaningless sport. Crowds at home games were modest and no one really was too interested." He goes on to say that, "Southern California came up to Berkeley for the first of two games which were to be played under the wartime conference rules." He does not expand on those rules.
If that were so, a similar arrangement with Stanford might have been impossible because (a) there can be only one Big Game each year, or (b) since the game would have been in Palo Alto, Stanford refused to go to Berkeley to equalize the travel problems.

You don’t buy that? Whatever the real reason was for no Big Game that year, it had to be Stanford’s fault! :-)  

CHEATHAM: Tell us more about The Sandwich Man. Herb said so little about this in his interview.

PETTIT: "Sandwich Man" was the only name the business had. Herb probably announced himself that way on his first visits and the women took over from there. In addition to a lack of competition, his success was aided by restrictions sororities imposed on their members at night. They had to "sign out" if they left the house and there were deadlines for their return. "Lockout", when the door was locked to prevent their re-entry, was 11:00 PM on weeknights and 2:30 AM on Fridays and Saturdays. None of my dates ever missed Lockout, so I don’t know what happened if they did.

The rules varied from house to house, but my wife (Frances Seitz, UC ‘48) told me that at her sorority, Alpha Delta Pi, freshmen and sophomores could not leave during study-table hours imposed because of low grades. Upper class women had no restrictions, but all members were required to walk in groups of two or more at night for their personal safety.27

Fran says the freshmen and sophomores were allowed to go to the library to study at night until…it was probably 9:00 o'clock. The rules emanated from the Dean of Women’s office. The rules were for the women’s protection and were accepted with little serious complaint.

Friday and Saturday 2:30 AM lockout was probably chosen because the bars had to closed at 2:00. A cartoon in “The Pelican” (a student humor magazine) showed a vacant lot full of weeds on one side and a row of tightly spaced bars on the other side, separated by a sign with an arrow

27 The concept was that all the women were to be home safely by "lockout". If they weren't they would have to ring the doorbell for someone to let them in. This would trigger a hearing by the house Judicial Committee. Without a good excuse, the offender would be "campused" and not allowed out at night for a prescribed number of nights.

At least in the 1950's, about five minutes before Lockout, all the cars parked up and down the street would start honking their horns as an alert to everyone not to lose track of what time it was and miss lockout. The guys didn't want their girlfriends to miss lockout and get "campused". For additional insights on "lockout", see the oral history with Natalie Cohen.

There were exceptions, for women on the Daily Cal night staff for example. The guys were always available to escort them safely home.

The rationale here is referred to as en loco parentis and was the University's way of ensuring parents that it would take good care of their precious daughters once they agreed to let them enroll at the University.
pointing toward the vacant lot that read, "UC 1 mile." In those days, alcohol could not be sold within one mile of any UC campus.

A more important factor helping Herb was a nearly complete absence of eating establishments within walking distance. Few students had cars and those who did used them as little as possible.

I don’t know how far Herb drove to buy his supplies in Oakland and run his route, but with the basic "A" gas ration sticker allowing only 4 gallons every 10 days, he probably didn’t drive his car for many purposes other than his business. More generous "B" and "C" rations were available for certain "essential" uses, but I doubt if "Sandwich Man" qualified for either of them.

**CHEATHAM:** Did you know Chris Tellefsen?

**PETTIT:** I probably met Chris Tellefsen when he was issuing Band uniforms, but I had no other contact with him. From what I have read about him since then, that was my loss.

**CHEATHAM:** How did you hear about Pearl Harbor?

**PETTIT:** I was a 15-year-old senior in high school when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7, 1941. We heard the news on the radio that evening, but its full meaning did not hit until an assembly at school the next day when we listened to President Roosevelt’s "Day of Infamy" speech. Most of us didn't even know where Pearl Harbor was. Some of the older boys in our senior class enlisted in one of the Armed Services almost immediately.

There was concern that an attack on the mainland might be imminent, so a "dim-out" at night was imposed to make it more difficult for the enemy to identify targets from the ocean. A dim-out wasn't a total blackout, but windows had to be heavily shaded and lights facing the ocean were extinguished.

Our home in Bolinas was near the edge of a 300-foot cliff overlooking Stinson Beach, which might have been a potential landing site, so we blacked out our ocean-facing windows. Cars had to drive with parking lights on coastal roads, which wasn’t very safe. My stepfather was an electrical engineer, so he put a resistor in our car’s lighting circuit to reduce low beam to the legal brightness. Volunteer airplane-spotters, including high school students, watched the sky for unfamiliar planes, and the country began to prepare for a long and difficult war.

**CHEATHAM:** Tell us about your rationale for joining the Navy.

**PETTIT:** You had to ask!

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28 Indeed, the closest bars were at the one-mile distance down Telegraph Avenue, at approximately Alcatraz Avenue. It was called the Alcatel. There was also the White Horse. The other one was called Berkeley Square and was one mile down University Avenue. I believe those names still exist although I am sure students don't hang out there these days. (The action seems to be centered at Henry's at the Durant Hotel or elsewhere on Telegraph Ave.)

In the late '50's, I think it was, Larry Blake successfully challenged the one-mile regulation and won. He was then allowed to open the Rathskeller. Only beer could be sold. I think it was a City of Berkeley ordinance.
After 5 semesters at Cal, my grades were not good enough to get into an officer training program, so I decided to enlist in the service of my choice before I became eligible for the draft at my forthcoming 18th birthday. I had been a Sea Scout, I was not especially fond of the Army ROTC classes I was required to take during my first two years, and I had originally planned to go to medical school. So I enlisted in the U.S. Navy Hospital Corps as a Hospital Apprentice Second Class (HA 2/c). The immediate advantage was $54/month instead of the $50/month I would have received as an Apprentice Seaman.

CHEATHAM: Tell us about your experiences in the Navy.

PETTIT: The Navy was remarkably good to me. I went to boot camp and Hospital Corps School in San Diego. My first assignment was the Mare Island Naval Hospital, where I trained in an amputee ward, sick officers’ quarters and the psychoneurotic ward. After 3 months I was transferred to the Receiving Hospital in San Francisco, where patients returning from the Pacific Theater were treated until they were well enough to be sent to a hospital closer to home.

Shortly after the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945, I was assigned to Navy Medical Research Unit #1, hidden on the top floor of the Life Sciences Building on the Berkeley campus. The mission of NaMRU #1 was studying offensive bacterial warfare, a secret not revealed until well after the war ended. The Army was secretly studying bacterial warfare defense at Fort Detrick, MD. The subject bothers me now, but at the time it was a fascinating bacteriology lab where the potential consequences of our work were not discussed in the presence of enlisted men like me.

While I was there an officer who was a veterinarian helped me decide to pursue a career in veterinary medicine rather than human medicine. I was discharged from the Navy as a Pharmacist’s Mate Third Class (PhM 3/c) on July 26, 1946.

I know you will ask, so I will tell you how I happened to be assigned to NaMRU #1 and live in Callaghan Hall while my future wife was going to school at Cal. While I was living at Sigma Phi I met a fellow boarder who was stationed at NaMRU #1, Navy Lieutenant Rod Matthews. When I told Rod I was joining the Navy’s Hospital Corps, he asked me to let him know where I was stationed after I finished my training. I told you the Navy was good to me!

CHEATHAM: Give us a résumé of your working years.

PETTIT: I was a much better student after the war. When I graduated with the second class from the new UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine in 1953 I was offered a one-year position in the Small Animal Clinic. I was placed in charge of small animal surgery and remained there for 8 years. Remembering that my original goal had been private practice, I resigned and joined a practice in Sacramento. I enjoyed private practice, but after 3 months I accepted a position at the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine. I was Head of Small Animal Surgery there for 26 of my 30 years on the faculty. My specialties were orthopedic and spinal surgery, with research interests in intervertebral disc protrusions ("slipped discs") in dogs and reconstructive joint surgery in dogs and cats.
I was a Charter Diplomate\textsuperscript{29} (founding member) of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons (ACVS, the veterinary surgical specialty board) in 1966 and was its president in 1979. I was editor of the only international veterinary surgery journal, \textit{Veterinary Surgery}, published by ACVS, from 1987 to 1992. I received the Norden Distinguished Teacher Award at WSU in 1971, was a WSU Faculty of the Year in 1985, and received the ACVS Distinguished Service Award in 1994.

I have been advisor of the Phi Kappa Sigma chapter at WSU since it was colonized in 1981 and received Phi Kappa Sigma’s Bronze Medal for outstanding service as a chapter advisor in 1991. I was the fraternity’s international 2nd vice president (1993-1998) and international president (1998-2000). While I was president, Phi Kappa Sigma became the fourth national fraternity to adopt an alcohol- and substance-free policy in all of its chapter living facilities. My greatest disappointment was inability to reactivate our chapter at Berkeley.

It’s a sad story. Our Berkeley chapter, which was founded in 1903, was Phi Kappa Sigma’s first chapter on the West Coast. The chapter house was destroyed in 1990 by a fire in which three students died. A group of local alumni raised money, much of it their own, to rebuild the house. Three years later, chapter members whose interests were not consistent with the fraternity’s goals and ideals fell behind in their payments and damaged the house so severely that the alumni evicted them, repaired the damage, and rented the house to women.

They were not interested in reopening the chapter when I approached them in 1999 because they were beginning to recover their investment and they knew the climate at Cal was not good for fraternities. Seven fraternities had closed in the previous 5 years, others were struggling to keep their numbers up, and the Interfraternity Council had made it almost impossible for a new fraternity to be established.

Nationally, fraternities have lost popularity in part because of well-publicized tragedies associated with excessive alcohol consumption. Banning alcohol from chapter property and encouraging responsible drinking are ways Phi Kappa Sigma and a growing number of other national fraternities are trying to change their members' attitudes about the role of alcohol in their lives. It’s a slow but very important project.

\textbf{CHEATHAM:} This is truly a great interview and I want to thank you for your insights into a period of Band history that we know little about.

\textsuperscript{29} The spelling of “Diplomate” is correct. The ACVS membership certificate is a “diploma” because it is awarded after 4 years of postgraduate surgical training and a rigorous examination, so its holders are called "Diplomates." The term applies to any doctor who is certified as a specialist by an examining board in a particular branch of human or veterinary medicine.