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*Gay Marion Postell (#3)
Sept. 15, 1935
by Farmer*

GAY MARION POSTELL made the following responses under oath to questions propounded by H. W. Farmer, Investigator, in the investigation entitled "Re Hurricane Florida".

1. Q. What is your name?
A. **Gay Marion Postell.**
2. Q. What is your home address?
A. Ducktown, Tennessee.
3. Q. Are you a veteran?
A. I am.
4. Q. How old are you?
A. 42.
5. Q. What near relatives have you?
A. Brother, Thomas Postell.
6. Q. What is his address?
A. Ducktown, Tennessee.
7. Q. Do you have a mother, father, wife or any children living?
A. None.
8. Q. Were you employed at the Veterans' Camp on the Keys during the hurricane?
A. Yes sir.
9. Q. Were you at the camp during the blow itself?
A. Yes.
10. Q. What were your duties?
A. **First aid.**
11. Q. How long had you been there at the camp?
A. Since February 23rd, 1935.

12. Q. Your regular duties were giving first aid?

A. Yes.

13. Q. Where were you located?

A. Lower Matecumbe. No. 5

14. Q. Where were you on duty in the camp?

A. We had an infirmary near the highway on the corner, southwest corner I guess of the camp.

15. Q. Did you receive any injury during the storm?

A. Yes.

16. Q. Describe it to me.

A. Laceration in back of head and abrasions on right arm and something struck me in the pit of the stomach, and abrasions on left leg and collar bone -- don't know what hit it-- is sore.

17. Q. Do you have a claim with the veterans' administration?

A. No, I have had but it has been denied.

18. Q. Do you know what the "C" number was?

A. I don't.

19. Q. At what time were you rescued from the Keys?

A. Wednesday late in the afternoon.

20. Q. How were you taken off?

A. By boat.

21. Q. Do you know anything that would indicate that anyone made any effort to prevent the veterans from leaving the camp prior to the hurricane?

A. I don't know anything to keep them there, only ones like myself. We were on duty, not during the hurricane but during payday and we could not get away during payday or the holiday. Doing first aid but it was not to hold us there for any reason.

22. Q. Why could you not go away during payday or the holiday?

A. Doing first aid and that was when we had a lot of injuries, scratches, etc. They would not leave us get away till four or

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five days after payday.

23. Q. Do you know of anything to prevent anyone who was not assigned to specific duties leaving prior to the storm?
- A. That is right, nothing to prevent them.
24. Q. Why were there more injuries payday or holidays than on regular work days?
- A. Well, I don't know necessarily there were but they just wanted us infirm men to be all free to assist and then take our time off later.
25. Q. Has anyone from any government organization or anyone at all cautioned you about telling what you know?
- A. No.
26. Q. Did you personally see any veterans' bodies that you could identify by name during the hurricane?
- A. Yes, but they were identified positively.
27. Q. I would like you to tell me the names of any veterans you actually saw dead yourself.
- A. We had 32 bodies on the dock; I could not tell you the names to save my life. I knew every one of them.
28. Q. Do you recall any marks or anything at all that would serve to identify any body that you saw?
- A. One person with an arm off; I don't know his name.
29. Q. Which arm?
- A. I think his left arm.
30. Q. How big was that fellow?
- A. Heavy fellow. I had given him first aid once before for some injury. Don't remember just what.
31. Q. Do you know the names of any veterans who left camp before the hurricane that might be reported missing?
- A. I don't believe I do.
32. Q. You are requested to tell anything additional about the storm which occurred on the Keys Sept. 2nd which you have not already told. In making this statement the record is open to you to say anything you want to say and you are specifically requested to tell any additional facts you may know that you have not already related.

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33.

A. I don't think of anything to say. We were expecting a train to come. We was told to pack the ambulance with emergency dressing and dressings which we might need and the ambulance would then go up the road and they wanted to take someone out of camp to go with the driver and I suggested I go with the driver and they said, no, they wanted me to go on the train. We got the ambulance packed and the man ready to drive it and they said, "Let's go over to the store." A man named Bradford had a little store. We goes over to the store waiting for the train. Pretty soon the wind started blowing; it had been blowing before but pretty soon it started, I mean blowing.

34.

Q. Tell about when that was it started blowing.

A.

Must have been around 5 o'clock. The ceiling of the store come down on one end and the other end standing up and everyone rushed for the door. I was amongst them. Just as I got outside the door I was struck in the back of the head with what I think, was filling station pump. I went out and when I come to myself I was in an automobile and someone rolled up the glass. Then the wind let up kind of and they told me the ambulance driver was ~~hit~~; could I do anything for him. I got out of the car, still kind of dizzy. He had a piece of timber stuck in him, protruding out. I tried to pull it out, thought may be it had a nail in the other end and would not disturb him. I had some dope I put in my pocket for such an occasion. I gave him a dope dose of pyraldehyde. I waited for it to take effect and he was begging to go to the hospital. I did not know at that time the road was washed out so I told some of the boys - could see the headlights of the ambulance- I called some of them to carry him to the ambulance and they told me one of the shafts was turned over against the ambulance. I said to get about twenty men and see if they could roll it off. Finally they told me they could not get the ambulance. We picked the man up and put him on a stretcher and put him on a truck and dropped the curtains and turned the truck toward the wind and then they hollered everyone better go to the water tank as it was turning back (the storm). That is the railroad water tank. I gave the man another dose of dope and then I went to the water tank and just got there and a wave was coming in and I could not get on to the tank, all filled. I grabbed hold of the rail on the side and pretty soon something crashed me and everything else taken away. I landed in a bush and stayed there till morning, three hundred yards away. That is all I guess.

35.

Q. What happened to the man you left in the truck?

A.

He died next morning. Elmer is his name; could not think of the last name. I think all veterans understood arrangements had been made with the Florida East Coast Railroad to take

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us out of there in case of a hurricane and they understood that from the beginning.

I, Gay Marion Postell, DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR that the statements made herein in response to questions propounded by H.W. Farmer, Investigator, have been read by me and they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, so help me God.

Gay Marion Postell

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me, H. W. Farmer, an investigator for the Veterans' Administration, this 15 day of September, 1935.

H. W. Farmer
H. W. Farmer, Investigator.

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