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Q. Dr. John Harrahan
A. Carl Cambell 24

- Q. First of all tell me a little bit about the days before you went into the service, you went in in May of '69, were you a student before that time.
- A. Yes, right after high school in 1963 I entered college at Morehead State University and went to college until spring 1965.
- Q. Did you have your degree then?
- A. No
- Q. How many years did you have left?
- A. A year and a half.
- Q. At that particular time you went into the service?
- A. No.
- Q. What happened?
- A. I got married while I was in college and dropped out. I had to go to work.
- Q. So then what happened after that, follow through up to the point where you went into the service.
- A. I worked until 1968, until Feb. I enlisted in the army three years as an X-ray specialist and they sent me to Ft. Knox for basic training.
- Q. So you did enlist at that particular time. That was 1968. February, right in the midst of the Fed. offensive. Did you realize what you were doing at that time.
- A. No, Well I had some marital problems, I was legally separated, and I knew the draft was coming and I went to my draft board and I said if I get a divorce where am I and they said you're next so I said I might as well enlist if its something that will benefit me later on, so I enlisted for X-ray.
- Q. But you weren't thinking about what the situation was in Vietnam at that time?
- A. No.
- Q. Had you been following the Vietnam involvement at all? Did you have any idea what you were going to be into?
- A. No, I had no idea whatsoever.
- Q. How old were you at that time, in 1968?
- A. 22
- Q. Well you were still a very young man, although in some ways you were probably a very old man considering some of the men you were in the service with who were only 19 or 20 years old. They say it was a teenage war. So, then you entered the service in Feb. of 1968, tell me what happened after that up to the point where you finally went in May of 69 to Vietnam. So you were in the service well over a year before you went to Vietnam. Can you tell me about that part of your army career.

- A. Well I was a little bit older than some of them at that time and I had some college and since I was an RA I was elected squad leader, platoon guide at that time. After basic training I was sent to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, its the medical school where all the medics and all the lab and Xray people take their training. So I spent 19 weeks at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas in a X-ray school, there's only 2 taught a year. The number of people in my graduating class in X-ray was 29. After I graduated from Ft. Sam I was sent to Vally Forge, PA for 6 weeks, on the job training at the hospital where I worked in the X-ray unit. After that I came down on orders for a permanent duty station which I got Ft. Knox. I worked at Treland Army hospital for six months. While I worked there I worked in X-rays and while I was there I got orders for Vietnam.
- Q. Was there any particular reason for that at that time, that you recall. Were you surprised?
- A. I was surprised, there were two people I remember at that time that came down on orders. Like I said there were 29 in my graduating class in X-ray. They sent us all to different locations which I didn't know at the time. I had one friend that was with me at the time in Ft. Knox. And two people came down on orders, one was Tripler general hospital in Hawaii and one was Vietnam. And I knew, I told them I'm going to pack my bags, I know I'm going to Vietnam. And sure enough that's where they sent me.
- Q. So when you went to Vietnam did you go over with a Unit?
- A. No, as an X-ray technician, as an individual.
- Q. You went to replace somebody?
- A. Right, coming back home. The tour in Nam was a year at that time. So I went over to replace somebody.
- Q. Well with the war on them, I guess youre closer to the experience between Feb 68 until the time you went over there in May of 69. Did you form any opinions about the war?
- A. Before I went to Vietnam I had some real patriotic opinions, I thought the government was always right and you're supposed to do what you're told. I didn't really stop and think for myself you know, what it was going to be like, why we were involved in this situation, I just did what I was told to do, when the orders came down I went. So, at this period in time that's what I did, I hadn't formed any opinions whatsoever about it?
- Q. You didn't question?
- A. No.
- Q. You were just told to go and as a good soldier you did what you were told?
- A. Right.
- Q. Had you any apprehensions about going over there? Surely with all the war you saw on television and all the rest of it, did you have any feeling about what you were getting into, certainly that it wasn't going to be no picnic by any means?

- A. I thought some about it, what I saw on TV before I went, I went into the county of Camrahn Bay and I saw on TV that there were paved roads and lights and all that. Well I didn't think it would be too bad.
- Q. Of course the job that you had you figured you'd be working where, at a hospital?
- A. I figured I'd be in probably a secure area in a hospital, especially Camrahn, that's where some of the people in country, R R they call it, Rest and Recreation. So I figured well, I got it made pretty good.
- Q. Is that where they sent you? To Camrahn Bay?
- A. Initially, I went into Cameron Bay and I was assigned to the 568 Med. Company, which was a medical _____, their main headquarters was on Nha Trang, its a higher headquarters. So I went into the country, most people I guess flew in there, there was a couple of places where people from the states flew into and I just happened to fly in there. So I got in the country, I went to Camrahn, I stayed a day got all my gear and everything. I went to Nhatrang, they give me my orders and I came back to Camrahn Bay. I was stationed in a Medical group -- 568 med. group was in charge of all the medical in Two Corp I23 and that group, 568 med. group had people in the whole Two Corp Area. So I was there two weeks until the guy they had in another area divided into platoons. At that time I didn't know what it was or what I'd be doing, I did off jobs around the company area, I pulled Guard duty, I filled sand bags and I painted the rebuttments around the , put sand around the hooches for mortar attack, you'd put 2 X 12's and then you'd paint them. Just something to keep you busy. So, I did that for about two weeks. I came down on orders to go as a platoon to Banmethuot, this was an area in the central highlands which is approximately 50 miles from Pleiku. The platoon was already there, I was just a replacement for the platoon.
- Q. Was this a medical platoon?
- A. Right, this was a MASH unit, similar to a mash unit. The company at Cameron had different platoons in different areas and we were more of a support type of platoon.
- Q. Well, what would a plotton consist of, so many doctors and nurses.
- A. No, we had one doctor, no civilian nurses, we had 91 Charlies, who were the medical specialist, they were LPN's. We didn't have any nurses, state wise women nurses. We had 91 Charlies, we had medical specialist, maybe an OS technician, I was the X-ray technician.
- Q. Was it an Army Doctor?
- A. Right an Army Doctor. It was on a compound and we were on a support for a 155 Assault ehlicopter Co. and a 185 fixed wing, who did ovservation, they would fly over as a spider planes. And we were medical support for those units. We had an underground hospital. It was completely underground, you couldn't see it from the air, just by going up to it you couldn't tell it. It cost the United States government about a quarter of a million dolalrs, if I can remember right.
- Q. Very well equipped then?
- A. Very well equipped. It was dug out and it was steel enforced, with sandbags and everything. So it would take a l duece, duece, a rocket, mortars wouldn't phase it. We had a complete portal X-ray facility there, we had complete surgery unit, complete lab, radio room, facility for emergency treatment - mostly litter and we had come conexes, storage things, a metal like box that the army or air force store stuff in or ship stuff in. We had that made where you could put litter's

inside and the people that weren't injured very bad could stay there until we could fix wing them out. We'd send them out maybe in a couple of days.

I was in Cameron and it started dawning on me that the heat - that was one of the first things that got to me when I got off the plain was the heat - just so much different from here, it would take your breath. When I got off that plane it wasn't like I saw on TV, I remembered seeing before I went the paved roads and hooches and everything like that, it wasn't too bad. But you had the paved roads for a little bit then all you had was sand, every where, close to the beach you had sand and it just - "what am I doing here" - there's nothing but sand.

Q. Were you in a bus?

A. Right and another thing I remember, I got off that plane - it was a commercial job not a military plane - and it was just a blast of hot air and I remember they put me on a bus and they had steel cages on it and you couldn't see out, it was dark, and stuff starts running through your mind, where's Charlie at?, Where's the U.C. at, you don't know and you're kind of apprehensive about that. The toilet facility was another thing, they had urinals and 55 gallon barrels in the ground, you'd go over and if you had to urinate you'd do it in that barrel and your toilet facilities out in the county were like we have in Eastern Ky., just all outside toilets. And you've got people come along, and the Vietnamese would dispose of the fecal material.

Q. How did they dispose of it?

A. They'd burn it, if you did something to mess up they's put you on that detail. The thing that would get me is they had the Vietnamese hired to do some of these menial chores. So you could be out urinating and a Vietnamese woman would come by and she wouldn't think nothing of it, or you could be setting inside there in the john and she's come in to sweep the floor.

Q. Here's this good Eastern, Ky., boy here!

A. Right, that blew my mind! They didn't have any hot water where I was at. They had a big steel drum that they fill with cold water which is gravity fed. If you want to take a shower, which it didn't make any difference, the temp. was 110° or 120°. That was one thing that was kind of funny for me, I figured it would be modern enough to at least have hot and cold running water and toilet facilities. So you'd go take a shower and it was all gravity. By the time you'd take a shower and walk back to where you were staying, the perspiration was just like you'd never taken a shower. But that's the initial shock I wanted to tell you about, the morals of these people.

Q. Well of course they were just casual about these things?

A. Oh yes, they didn't think anything about it. That's everyday stuff for them.

Q. Were there any women medical people at Cameron Bay? Nurses and so forth?

A. There were medical nurses, USO people, red cross people there, but I was only there two weeks and I didn't come in contact with them.

Q. Did they share these primitive toilet facilities?

A. They had their own as far as I know. I don't know really. The whole time I was there I didn't come into contact with too many American nurses.

Q. Another thing Carl that a lot of guys talk about that hits them, is not only the heat, but the smell.

A. That didn't bother me that much.

- Q. Getting off the plane they say that the smell is just an odor like mildew or something, they couldn't figure it out, it stayed with them all the time they were there. It didn't hit you that way?
- A. No, it didn't hit me that way. OK, now I want to go back to where I went to Banmethuot. They had me doing all the detail that I guess you do in the army. So they sent me to Banmethuot and I get off a C130 and the guys pick me up in the deuce and a half and we take a little trip to where I'm going, and come on that compound, it's all concertina wire and completely different from Cameron Bay, you know Camrahn Bay you'd think you were down town somewhere, there's no concertina wire there's no bunkers, there's no nothing. This is completely different, mud everywhere, when I got there it was the monsoon season.
- Q. What kind of a location was it?
- A. It was in a mountainous area. It was in the central highlands, up in the hills. The temp. would be warm in the daytime, but at night it would get cold, you'd have to put on field jackets. And you'd have to sleep under blankets. That was another thing that was different from Camrahn Bay. Camrahn Bay was so hot which is down south. When I got to Banmethuot I remember getting there and it was just so muddy. They said find you a place to stay and I reported in duffle bag and m14 and the place I had to stay was in a bunker and I was on 24 hour call as an X-ray technician. They took me a tour of the facilities - the army as you may think now wasn't there, it was under field conditions. You didn't blouse your boots, you didn't have to wear a cap, you could just wear a regular t-shirt, you didn't have to do no spit and polish as you think of the army as being. That was something else kind of different. They put me over in a bunker with three other guys and you had a cot. It wasn't but maybe a 12x12.
- Q. Were these all medics?
- A. All medics. I'd say there was 25 or 26 of us. We all lived together but we equipped all the other people in the support unit we were just kind of out by ourselves. I remember we had a mortar pit right out beside the hospital. To get down into the hospital you'd see all the sandbags and you'd see all this galvanized steel pipe like you'd put on a culvert and you'd walk down in there and it'd open up and you'd have your hospital facilities. I remember right out from that was a mortar pit and on the left hand side was a 50 caliber machine gun which was mounted on a guard there. The bunker where I was at was on a perimeter. They had a perimeter like a berm build around the whole compound. They had outside that perimeter say a hundred feet or two of concertina wire, barbed wire with cans on it, and that bunker I was on was a shooting position if anything happened, that would come toward our compound we'd shoot fire from that bunker.
- Q. And you guys were supposed to man the guns, is that it?
- A. No, we all had weapons, everybody had weapons, you had a steel pot, you had a flak jacket. . .
- Q. Well who was to man the machine guns and the mortars?
- A. Well, the people that were assigned that we were supporting. The medics did what we were supposed to do and these guys were. . . I can remember right.
- Q. Did they stay?
- Q. They were there all the time?
- A. Right. They pulled guard duty out on that perimeter. And another thing I remember, there was a rubber plantation out in the area on the other side of the tree line, that was owned by a Frenchman, plantation owner. They told us we couldn't fire into that area until we were told to. If we got small arms fire we couldn't fire into that area because if we did the United States government had to pay that Frenchman so much money for his rubber trees. I thought that was

kind of stupid, here we were fighting a war and thinking about this guys rubber plantation. I was there doing my job, any time a casualty came in our main job was we had medivac choppers, well it was a mash unit because when someone got hit out in the field, wounded, if it was in that area, or dust off ships they would fly in, medivac those people to our hospital, we would do everything we could to save their life or patch them up as we could. Then we would medivac them out by chopper as soon as we got through with them to say Camrahn Bay or some of the larger facilities or I remember Nhatrang or Pleiku. But we were just a temporary measure, we did just basic first aid but we saw every type of injury that you could ever imagine. I was on 24-hour call and I got involved in ??? there I too, I wasn't just X-ray, I got into all of it, as a medic.

Q. Tell me a little bit about these people that came in that were wounded. What caused their wounds, what kind of wounds did they have?

A. Any type of wound you could think of. We got them in there where helicopter pilots were shot down and burned up to where just their torso's left, gun shot wounds to the head, willy peter or white phosphorus burns.

Q. Where would that come from?

A. It came from the VC a grenade type thing. Shapnel wounds, mines, any type wound that you could possibly get in combat we saw.

Q. Was it heavy casualty?

A. Yes, I've seen them come in a duece and a half load, big truck, just loaded, piled in there. We had ambulances that would go down and you talk about full of people, we'd put them in the isles and everything to get them up there.

Q. You'd have to sort them out according to their wounds?

A. Sort them out according to which ones were the worst. We went down the line and we'd cut their clothes off and find out really what was wrong and we'd get the most serious first. And, besides that we got mortared. When I first got there we got mortared sometimes twice a night. And on that compound, like I said it was a 155 helicopter compound. The VC were after those helicopters and they would lob the mortar in trying to knock out the helicopters. But we were just there I guess in their way. They'd get heavy mortar fire, it got real hot, they'd bring in the heavier choppers.

When I first got there we had claymore mines which I didn't know what a claymore mine was, I was a medic, but a claymore mine is the type of weapon that you set off with a charge from your bunker and its got a wire going to it and it sets out like BB shots in all directions, like a shot gun effect, which stopped the enemy. When I first got there the VC had changed and turned them all back toward the bunker, so if anybody had gone in that bunker and set them off it would have killed those people. We were medics but I never went out in the field, I never was a field medic but when I first got there about everynight you'd would get mortared, if nothing else just for harrassment. They would get you up and you'd put a steele pot many time we'd crawl to get a steele flight jacket on and try to get down to the hospital, it was pretty safe down there.

I lived in the bunker and then I moved up a little to the big stuff, I moved to a GP medium tent -- the type you see in Eastern Kentucky that they may have a prayer meeting in.

Q. That wasn't much protection was it?

A. No, but we had sandbags around it?

Q. Of course if it hit directly . . .

A. Well, you're gone anyway. No, no protection at all. But I want to tell you about the toilet facilities there. They had a big round like a shower place and they had all their toilets and running water, hot and cold and a swimming pool. I couldn't believe it, Here you were living in a bunker and you could go have hot and cold running water and a swimming pool and just the other way around at Camrahn Bay -- you'd imagine the swimming pool at Camrahn Bay. But I guess what that had in mind there was for these pilots, all these helicopter pilots and the fixed wing pilots.

Q. Did they actually use it a lot?

A. Oh yes, they used it. They had a club, no hamburgers -- you had Frenchbread and I still hate french bread today, over that

Q. Was the food pretty good?

A. You had Vietnamese cooks, American with Vietnamese. It wasn't bad.

Q. Plenty of milk? Plenty of beer?

A. Plenty of beer, beer was cheap, whiskey was cheap. Beer was I guess \$3.00 a case, a fifth of Seagrams was about \$1.25, no taxes on it.

Q. Do you think drinking was heavy?

A. Oh yes, drugs and . . . over there where I was at you were either a juicer or a drug user.

Q. Do you think the army encouraged the drinking by making it so available?

A. Maybe because you're there, you have a lot of money, you haven't got any place to spend it. I mean you can't go down and buy something. You've got a PX there but what are you going to do. The whole time you're there you don't go anyplace. I wasn't a quarter of a mile, the whole time I was there, away from that place.

Q. How long were you there?

A. I guess I got there in the latter part of May, 1969 and I left there around the first of April of 1970.

Q. Almost a year.

A. Almost a year at the same place.

Q. Did they let you go out at all?

A. There's no place to go.

Q. No, I mean to get away from it?

Did they take you out for a break?

A. You could go on R & R, you could go to Australia and Bangkok.

Q. Did you go?

A. No, I was saving my money at that time.

Q. Oh, it was at your expense?

A. Well the trip there was on Army expense, but what you spent after you got there was at your expense. But, like I said we had every possible casualty that I could ever imagine.

Q. Can you describe any of it at all, what do you remember, how did it hit you?

A. It's something that you never get used to, I never got used to it. But it got till after a while it was just there like a job. I used to go to with the doctor over to graves registration. The doctor we had would have to pronounce people dead. Well I'd go with him and help him -- open the body bags up and stuff. Thats one thing I remember. It dawned on me that those guys laying in those body bags -- and you'd zip it down and see a little blue hole in the head -- are about my age and that could be me laying in that. Another thing that made me think of, maybe I was wrong, but you're expendable and after you're laying there you're nothing but a number and nobody gives a damn about you. They ship you to Saigon or ever where they ship you to and send you back to the states, you're gone, nobody cares, except your relatives who bury your butt upon the point someplace. And that's about what I well like after you asked me before, did I have any thoughts about it, thats where I started thinking what in the hell am I doing here.

Q. In the sense of these poor guys and what had happened to them and you began to say well what does it matter?

A. Right. What are we doing here? You know, every time we shoot into that rubber plantation we've got to pay that Frenchman money, and we're over here to fight a war. We couldn't fire at them unless we got orders, they could fire at us but we couldn't fire back at them. Many times we got small arms fire into that compound and they'd fire tracers . . . that's another thing that got me -- somebody's trying to kill me, you don't really think about that the whole time, it never really dawns on you, its like going to school -- but somebody out there means business, somebody's out there to kill you. And then you see all these people laying there -- I remember one occasion and this really sticks out in my mind -- I used to go down in the ambulance with them and help them pick up casualties off the helicopter, I remember seeing this boy, I can't remember if we got him off the helicopter, yes off the helicopter -- and it was night time, and you couldn't really see real good and I saw a glistening. You could see it was blood but you couldn't tell what from -- This guy had both his legs blown up where he'd stepped on a land mine, his legs were gone and what I was seeing was just the stubs of his knees. I remember one time we were taking care of this one guy and we couldn't find anything wrong with him, we had his clothes cut off him, and they'd missed it some way but it was under the arm and we were giving him blood and somebody turned him over and he had a hole in his back I guess the size of a baseball and the guy was dying, he was bleeding to death. We had stretchers, that's what we used, we'd just take them in on stretchers and load them on the helicopter and take them out. The ones that wasn't injured real bad we'd save them for a couple of days and ship them out on fixed wings which there was an airport there.

Q. So, over beyond the hill then all this action was taking place, the fighting was taking place?

A. All around us.

Q. And this was American units out there fighting?

A. Right and Arvn's units. Some of the Arvn's would not go out in a hot LZ, and they'd get in a skirmish with the VC. But they had their own helicopter pilots, they would not go if it was a hot LZ and pick up their own people. Our pilots would go and get them. They would bring them to our hospital, which they had their own Arvn hospital downtown, we weren't supposed to take care of the Arvn's we had our own people to take care of. They would call in and they'd just run, their pilots wouldn't go. The Arvn's would run under battle. Our pilots would go get them, we'd have to doctor them. I remember many of times putting them in the ambulance and taking them downtown with a shotgun.

We were all on this compound surrounded by concertaine wire, with the guard towers with the 50 calibre machine gun, we had an napalm in barrells where supposedly we'd set in case we got a sapper attack, which we did. We'd get a mortar barage the sappers would come in, which would try to blow up those helicopters, sapper charges, you know a case full of explosives, try to blow up trucks and hospitals and knock out a few buildings while they were doing it. And I've seen them many of times, VC on the fences, just dead, and they'd leave them hanging there for propaganda purposes. I've been downtown in Banmethust a couple of times and I've seen them laying on the street dead. I remember one time when I went down there and I saw an arm just an arm and over here lay another guy dead and the flies over him. They let him lay there for propaganda purposes. The separate attacks, the VC which is the civilians they wore the black pajamas and hats. The Arvn police, they called them white mice would come up and break their hands, rigomortis would set in and they'd stretch their hands out and break them, get their finger prints then they'd find out who they were, they didn't know who they were. They got their fingerprints and they'd leave them laying out there a couple of days.

We moved up from the bunker to the tent and then we got big time just before I came back in April. I can't remember how and when they did it, but they built us -- started winding down a little bit you could tell, when I first went there the mortar attacks, casualties was real heavy, another thing I remember it was stars and stripes -- they'd say no injuries this week, no casualties this time in Two corp or the areas they'd have. I remember in our area there were four people in a helicopter that got burned up. Like I said before, I really remember that -- no casualties this week back to the home people and here these ole boys were laying there, completely burnt, just their torso, their heads, arms, legs burnt off.

About the club, like I said you had a PX, you had plenty of beer and if you were a pothead or something like that you could get it.

Q. There was a lot of it?

- A. A lot of it. Everywhere. We didn't have any inspections -- everybody did their own job, everybody worked well together -- good team work. When they did have to work and the casualties came in, everybody just knew what to do, there wasn't no running here and there not knowing what to do -- everybody knew, the cooperation was just fantastic. I hand developed all my X-rays, I had a dark roo, I had everything, I had _____ and I handled all these things. We developed X-rays and we sent them out with the patient.
- Q. So, what did you think of the general attitude of the men?
- A. They wanted to go home -- most of them felt like me, that it was a political war. It was run by the civilians, the military didn't have anything to say about it. You were there, if you got killed fine, if you didn't, maybe fine. Most of the people where I was at, and like I said I was there -- ate and slept with these guys the whole period I was there and when one of them would come back home everybody wanted to come home -- that was it -- get out of here. You could get killed any minute. I had one friend of mine that had about three days left -- he was a medic -- they had a convoy going someplace, he said I'll go down there with them, just to have something to do, about the first week or two when you're getting ready to come home its kind of slow you don't have anything to do. So he decided to go with them so while he went down there with them, they were in the back of this truck and got hit with a mortar and it didn't kill him but frags all over him so he stayed over there awhile in the hospital, I never did know what happened to him.
- Q. He survived?
- A. He survived but that's just the kind of thing it is, one day you're there, one day you're not.
- Q. You've lost track? Where was he from?
- A. I think it was Tennessee. I remember one of my friends from that bunker was from Bogalooosa Louisiana. He was telling me about the Mardi-Gras, the first time I think I'd heard any thing about it.
- Q. Did whites and blacks get along pretty well?
- A. Yes. One of my best friends, well a couple of them was blacks. There were no racial problems whatsoever. I've heard of incidents, probably in Camrahn Bay there were, -but in an area where your life is depending on each other you didn't have time to think about black or white or yellow or whatever. I've loaned a guy twenty dollars or he'd loan me twenty dollars you didn't think about color. I remember one guy was a black guy from Washington D.C., he and I came from Banmethuot back to Camrahn Bay and left to come back to the states about the same time.
- Q. At the time you were over there President Nixon was winding down the war withdrawing thousands of them at a time.
- A. That got me.
- Q. In what sense?
- A. Well I think I got an early out on that, in April, I can't remember how many days. But he was bringing like 50,000 home a month.

Q. And you happened to be one of them?

A. I happened to be one of them. But I remember the newspaper reports -- Richard Nixon, president, is bringing back, _____ he's bringing 20,000 back a month and hell the ones he was bringing back was the ones getting ready to come back to the states anyway. You know 30 days, all short timers.

I was one of them -- I'd take two days just to get the hell out of there. I had ten months left out of my 36 months obligation when I came back from Vietnam they said well do you want to enlist for six months and get out, I said no, I'll take my chances back in the states.

Q. You said something about it being a political war, is this something you came to believe after a while.

A. Oh yes.

Q. What was this, to get this feeling about the war, why did you think it became political?

A. Well because to me they wouldn't let the generals do what they were supposed to do. I remember one time we had a whole division of North Vietnamese regulars close by this compound and to me, they weren't even doing anything about it. They just let them go on instead of being on the aggressor and here they are not even doing anything just waiting for them to come to us.

Q. Do you think that this was the politicians making this decision, is that what you believe?

A. I believe so.

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- Q. I was wondering what the Generals could have done other than what they were doing?
- A. When you're in that situation, you never know, but cuar is big money, from everything to the toilet paper to the beer and wiskey to the body bags. Everything is shipped over there. So people on the state side made money off of it! To me as long as it wasn't them over there, they didn't care.
- Q. When did you start to get that feeling, while you were there or when you came back?
- A. When I was there, I started getting it when they sent that trumped up report that said no casualties - you know, everything's going great - it just amused me that they said everything's going great when some of these units may be getting their butts kicked. They didn't know except what they were told - people back here didn't know and they didn't care, most of them, they weren't there. But I guess it was that thpe of thing knowing good and well, like I said about those four pilots that got killed and put in those body bags, just the fact that you thought nobody gave a damn about you.
- Q. When you came home were did you land?
- A. Seattle.
- Q. You still had how many months in the Army?
- A. Ten.
- Q. So where did they send you?
- A. That was another good one. In Vietnam, you fill out a dream sheet, you process out of the country and turn in all your weapons. You fill out a dream sheet - so I put in for Ft. Knox, naturally since I'm from Ky., and Ft. Campbell and Benjamin Harris, I think. I flew back into Seattle and from Vietnam you get a 30 day leave. So I came back home on leave and my orders came down for Ft. Lewis Washington, Seattle area. So I came home on a 30 day leave and shipped my butt back to Seattle. That was another thing that ticked me off.
- I was a Spec 5, I made Spec 5 I believe is 18 months, that's a sergeant. I made it in 18 months, that's about as quick as anybody I've ever known to make it.
- Q. You didn't see any sense in sending you all the way back there then?
- A. Why no, well because it's the same difference. Why does one guy go to Hawaii and one to Vietnam? Out of those 29 people I was telling you about in my X-ray class, I remember one guy went to Brussels Belgium, one went to Ft. Waynwright, Alaska, a couple of guys went to Germany, England, and I think there were only about two of us out of that whole class that went to Vietnam?
- Q. How long did you stay in Seattle?
- A. I stayed the rest of my tour.
- Q. When were you discharged?
- A. I was discharged on February 26, 1971.
- Q. When you came back I suppose the anti-war feeling was pretty well washed out by that time, winding down in 1971, so you really didn't feel any of that.

- A. Another thing you didn't wear your uniform, I didn't wear my uniform, like when you come home from basic you wear your uniform it was really super patriot. You get the feeling when you came back, and I'm not just saying this because I've seen it on TV, I got the feeling that, I've had guys buy me drinks at airports just because I had a uniform on. When you came back you didn't want to wear that uniform because you were a subject for a mugger because they thought you might have a few dollars on you or something. I came back to Ft. Lewis and they put me in a 37th Surgical Mobile Unit, about the same thing I'd been in Vietnam, and the first Sergeant sent me over to this warehouse and he said I want you to work with this portable x-ray, it was the very same x-ray machine I'd used Vietnam. So here I'm getting back and I'm wanting to get back into some of this modern stuff, I'd been gone. But he told me to go over there and do that. They wanted me to do that for six months, pick up cigarette butts and do that, I couldn't take it and I told that guy you either put me over here in a hospital where I can learn something or just send me back to Vietnam. It was that bad. I'd rather have gone back to Vietnam, even though I couldn't wait to get out, but it was so bad I'd have gone back. So they put me in this hospital and I worked for 10 months in an outpatient x-ray unit, and I worked in special procedures, all the special procedure stuff I never even dreamed existed. In 1971 I got my license in x-ray.
- Q. Well, then you came back home in February of 1971, I guess you came back to school didn't you?
- A. I got out but I didn't come here I stayed at Seattle, I looked for a job. I liked the country out there it was beautiful and I met a lot of people, so I stayed down there and went downtown and started looking for a job, I worked in this place and this guy was a retired Colonel and he had three girls working for him and one had a baby and was just part-time so he gave me a job and made me the Chief X-ray Tech. So I worked there for about a year and a half. . . That's when I decided to come back to school. I'd been there a year and a half, I didn't have any relatives out there, so I said just go back to Kentucky, go back to Morehead. So I took a two weeks vacation and came back to Morehead went down to St. Claire and got a job, so in the latter part of 1972 I came back to school here at Morehead. I went to school days and worked at St. Claire nights. I worked about 6 months.
- Q. You've left the medical field entirely now haven't you?
- A. Yes. The last time I worked in x-ray was, let's see I quit St. Claire and I worked about a month over at Maysville hospital.
- Q. You didn't seem to have too much difficulty making an adjustment to the Vietnam Experience. Of course you had some skills and could get a job. You've always had a job haven't you.
- A. I think that helped more than anything because I worked at General Motors awhile, I had a real good job there. I worked in a lab as a lab technician before I went to Vietnam, there were things there that bothered me like anybody else, but it didn't really bother me, you know like I've seen on TV I went out and killed somebody and to me they try to blame it on Vietnam, and I'm sure there's psychological problems from Vietnam and I've probably got them and just don't realize. But I can't see where these people just blame something, I mean you can blame anything, I'm sure I saw as much in Vietnam as anybody has, I wasn't out in the boonies marching in the swamps, but what I saw in the hospital, it's a reality, no matter where you're at. You never

get used to it. Like when I worked at St. Claire the worst thing I saw down there was a guy come in and he'd run over his foot with a lawn mower and that's still bothers you, but it's not an everyday thing like it was over there. That's one of the reasons I wanted to talk to you about that. But I think people use Vietnam or World War II or I even, there are psychological problems, but I think alot of them use it for a crutch.

Q. You know a lot of guys of course and that's your general opinion about them?

A. Right, not everybody. I saw on TV, a documentary about Vietnam, and to me these guys are copping out, flashbacks of Vietnam. I don't have flashbacks, but maybe that's just me, maybe I'm lucky, maybe I've got a mental block or something. But my attitude, it's kind of weird, I'm still as patriotic as I ever was, I'm a legion member, I'm treasurer of the DAV, I've been involved in the Veterans organizations ever since I've been out. I've lived in Morehead 10 years and I've marched in many many parades carrying the flag. But it still didn't change the way I felt over there. I felt like I'd been taken advantage of . I felt that it was a political war. That's one of the reasons I went into history. I wanted to study why things happened. To study about the wars, the different wars. I took Vietnam, of course, under you. That's the reason I took it. I wanted to know why and I took a lot of history courses, in World War II and Vietnam and Civil War periods. I'm interested in knowing why these things happen.

Q. Have you read any books on Vietnam lately?

A. No, I probably haven't read a hardback since I've been to college.

Q. Have you watched that television series?=-

A. No, I can't get it. I saw one show on it and I wanted to see it, I'd love to see it if I could get it. I may go get it now, I've got a satellite disk. Is it still there?

Q. Yes.

A. When I first saw it, they'd put one show on regular TV and I watched it and I wanted to see something about Banmethuot maybe or Camrahn Bay or Nhatrant that I would remember.

Q. What do you think of our Marines in Lebanon? Do you think they should be pulled out, do you think its a similar situation to Vietnam in any way?

A. It's the same thing that happened in Vietnam, they sent the special forces in to train them and with that small force they've got in Lebanon they can't win. They'll have to pull them out or do like they did in Vietnam, commit themselves. They're going to have to do one way or the other, they're going to have to commit themselves to a pull out or, I wouldn't say war but a skirmish like we had in Vietnam or they're going to have to get out. That's how Vietnam started out, special forces. Put a few in, then a few more.

- Q. What do you favor then, I seen on tonights news that the Democrats have passed a resolution that the marines should be pulled out of Lebanon, they don't say when, what they don't want apparently is any increase in the American military presence in Lebanon. Do you agree with that?
- A. Well yes I guess. Because I don't think the US should limit their selves you know as far as what they can do or their peace keeping missions. I think Lebanon, those people, I don't think we can do anything with them.
- Q. What do you think of our relations with the Soviet Union, this whole tension over the arms control, the deployment of missles in Europe and so forth. Do you follow that at all?
- A. Oh yes.
- Q. How do you come down on that? Are you fearful, do you have any apprehension about what's happening?
- A: Sure, there's nothing I can do about.
But sure you're fearful because if somebody over there pushes the wrong button we're all gone.
- Q. Well do you think there is a possibility more than there used to be? Do you think we're closer to that?
- A. Well from what I've read lately, yes, because of the people over there and their propaganda.

