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H. So you went into the service in 1967?

G. 66.

H. 66.

G. August 66 entered the Army and that would have been after basic training and all the training here in the states. I think I got to, I went to Vietnam in 67 and I know it was October 67, I spent 7 months there before gettin wounded and huh, that was in October, so it must have been, it must have been, say uh, after the first of the year in 67, I must have gone over about probably somewhere about February or March.

H. Yeh.

G. I don't remember the exact dates but it was early the first part of 67 when I went over seas.

H. So that you were in there from. . . you went in the service on what date?

G. August 66.

H. August 66.

G. Uh hum. Right. And . . .

H. And you were discharged when?

G. August of 69.

H. So you put in two years.

G. 3

H. 3 years

G. Yeh. I was a volunteer, regular, that's what they called me, regular. So I had a 3 year enlistment as opposed to a draftee with two.

H. Of course the draft was on at that time wasn't it? And uh you volunteered instead of . . . now this was before you went to Morehead school.

G. Yes

H. You were a young fellow then, and I guess, did you just come out of high school?

G. I had just graduated away from high school and was working here in town for sears store. I was 18 yrs. of age and I was working on a delivery truck. A delivery job for them, and they came out with a new company

policy that said no longer would they allow anyone under 21 yrs. of age to work in their delivery department, and because of that my employment with them was through. And I got angry. I just got mad. I said here 18 yr. olds are fighting a war for the country but Sears decides that they're not good enough to deliver appliances for them and uh, it was just, really it was just being fed up with situation of employment and not knowing the rest of my friends were getting ready for college and I didn't have an interest in college at that time and uh, I just on an impulse, I just went to the recruiter and said, "Yeah I'd like to do something daring and bold and I want to sign up and I want to go test my wings so to speak."

- H. Did you think at all of Vietnam as the place that you wanted to go to at the time? Was that what you had in mind?
- G. Uh, yeah I knew the, I think as I remember, I think the war was, the picture of it was very clear to me, I knew what I was getting into because I went down and he asked me "what particular field would I be interested in that the army offered?" I told him I was interested in airborne and I never will forget how surprised he looked. I supposed they have to con people into that type of situation but he asked me again was I sure that's, I believe I had already finished some testing with him, and I'm assuming my tests were pretty good, and huh, I've always assumed he thought I would select electronics or something like that and I didn't. I told him I wanted to go into an airborne unit and huh, I was looking for some adventure and that's what I was looking for, I was tired of being an 18 year old kid in Ashland, Kentucky and I wanted to make my break from my home and my community. I wanted to do something bold and daring.
- H. If it wasn't Vietnam it would have been some other place, in other words, the adventure of it, you didn't really at the time, I suppose from you're suggesting you didn't think of all that you were going to Vietnam or have a reason why you were going to Vietnam as such, or the governments decision to get involved in Vietnam at the time?
- G. I don't think, as best as I can remember, I don't recall having a great deal of knowledge about the politics of it all and being caught up in that as being one side or the other. Uh, there was a certain amount of patriotism as to going in the armed forces especially at that time when they were fightin a war as opposed to my other friends just wanting to continue to party on a different campus but uh, I didn't specifically go in to win a particular war and to take sides with a certain group of politics.
- H. So you landed in Vietnam where did they send you. Were you with a particular one hundred and first airborne division.
- G. Yeah.
- H. Is that how you went over there, as a group like that?
- G. The one hundred and first was already in Vietnam and I was simply assigned and from, well I was in Ft. Benning Georgia, from jump school as they call it, they, a large group of us were simply assigned to the one hundred first airborne division. And we arrived at must have been Ben Wah, as well as I can remember all these names, airport over there and from there was processed to, oh I forget the name of the small place, but it was a headquarters of the one hundred and first and uh, we were just processed . . .

- H. What area was this in? In the eye quarter area or . . . do you recall. This was north of Saigon? North of Denang.
- G. I think the name of this was Duckfoe. Well that's what you have down here
- H. Duckfoe. Well that's what you have down here. Alright. And uh.
- G. This was north of Saigon, certainly not, it wasn't up around Denang at all, my recollection I would say probably half way between Saigon and Denang.
- H. Well did you go into combat pretty quickly after that.
- G. Immediately.
- H. Immediately.
- G. They took us from this large airport holding facility after about 2 or 3 days of processing there, I guess on the outskirts of Saigon, they took us by truck to the 101st headquarters at Duckfoe and we just had enough time to drop our gear and parafanalia in the tent and we were flown out by helicopter out into the field, the line, whatever you call it, out into the countryside there where various platoons were on the, uh, you would have called them search and destroy missions. And uh they flew us out and dropped us off and from that time on that's what we did. Just continued to move around the countryside there. Always looking, probing and in combat.
- H. Well, uh, the search and destroy mission, did you do this for how long.
- G. I think uh. . .
- H. Did they have you out in the field at that particular time?
- G. When they first took us out, the kind of operations they were running was they would take a company, and they would drop them off so many kilometers away from the base, and then I think that that company would split up into the four platoons and these platoons would cover a certain amount of area and would work there way back to the camp. Now when they first took us out and dropped us off we didn't spend but 2 or 3 days out there, this platoon that they had assigned me to was very close to coming back in anyway and so it was just a, as well as I can remember, two or three days before we had simply walked back into the camp. But you only came back, I can't remember any time that would be any longer than say 48 hours, something like that, you had time to watch a movie or something that they might set up for you and uh, get in a little rest time, and you would be given new supplies and get your gear all ready and again be flown out say another 15 kilometers or something, maybe perhaps in another direction.
- H. Is this by helicopter?
- G. Right. All movement, we didn't move by truck, we were always being maneuvered by helicopters and uh, you were always being flown 15 to 20 kilometers out from the base and uh,

- H. To make contact with the VC, or the . .

- G. At that time, when I first went over there, uh, I think they, I got the impression, as I remember it, we were just uh, first there may have been tips from prisoners they had taken about where strongholds were, where cach, cachets were of equipment, food and so forth. But basically we were just criss crossing back and forth the countryside, going through the small villages, going through the mountains, uh, heavy force, and the rice patties, just covering that area as much as we could to root out whatever enemy or to draw some type of fire. It was actually a search.

- H. Was there a way of classical type of search and destroy strategy that uh . . .

- G. Just continue to put pressure on them that uh, whether they would be erecting a base in a heavy force area or whether they had set up some mortars or something around a little village or whatever they were doing it seemed to be that the army was continuing to, trying to put pressure on them and always trying to disrupt their activities simply by having a whole division of men just always walking and being lifted and dropped off and picked up, and continual movement of our troops, and uh of course I didn't, there probably was a pattern to it, but I never saw any pattern, but it was, I was only out of Duckfoe, that was our operation, it seems like I went out, my initial group, they assigned us to this platoon and we were out there just a few days and we came back to camp, we may have gone on one more mission, out of that, and missions lasted about a week to two weeks. Two weeks would have been a long time to be out. Generally I think about a week and you would have gotten back close enough to camp to where you would have been relieved a few hours and uh started a new one. But they broke camp there and started, that began, they started what they called the Americal division and we moved and moved by boat, they trucked us, we packed up our supplies, packed up the whole camp, and put it on a truck and went down to Quinyon I think was the name of it. I think that might have been south and went down there to where these uh, troop boats were, they loaded us on a boat and took us north, took the whole division north by boat to a place called Chu-lie. I believe that was the name of it and there was another place called Tam-key, they may have been real close. I'm thinking we set up our camp in Chu-lie thought, but they took the 196 light infantry brigade and first calvalry division and the 101st airborne, I know those 3 and maybe someone else, and combined them together and called them the Ameri-cal division and we were moved to the northern part for specific purposes.

- H. Do you recall what time of the year that was?

- G. No I just, I would just say it was spring of the year, I don't recall the dates or anything.

- H. Was it the same kind of operation as you'd been doing previously.
- G. No.
- H. Search and Destroy.
- G. No not really. They explained this in detail to us when we were moving. The fighting was getting heavier and the divisions I suppose would be the correct term of north Vietnamese, the regular army. This was no longer a war of south vietnamese and the black pajama enemy, this had become two major armies and . . .
- H. And this they were telling you what was going to happen.
- G. They were already, the marines were already fighting very heavy against the North Vietnamese army. And this army was being pushed farther south and the fighting was getting more intense and more sophisticated as far as the weapons used against us simply because we now were fighting a trained army as opposed to VC. And they said that the marines were beginning some special operation out of Denang and would be pushing more than one batallion of these north Vietnamese army south toward Chu-lie and uh, the Americal division would be placed in here to intercept and to block them, the Marines were simply going to drive them into us and then it was our job to destroy this North Vietnamese army, this force as much as possible. So they moved us, we set up camp in Chu-lie and were there maybe a couple of days, and as well as I can remember, they took us about 20 kilometers into Vietnam, away from this Chu-lie was right there on the coast and I think they took us in about 20 kilometers inland, and dropped us off, and it was, oh it had high, real high hills, so forth and uh, pretty rugged area and we were continuously moving but not covering a large area. We might stay in an area that had a large valley surrounded by this, a high ridge, a high mountain ridge, we might walk this entire ridge and we might come down and walk all of this valley and then go over this ridge and do the other side, but we concentrated on the same area because we were waiting. Our object this time wasn't to go out and walk back to a camp. Our object was to go out there and get to know this area, be comfortable with it, and stay out there, and keep moving and wait for the marines to push these down.
- H. You were waiting for this contact to take place?
- G. Right. Just waiting. We knew it was coming, and uh we just didn't know when and we didn't know, I don't think that they had . . . I think they were surprised by the strength of it when they did come, when we did make contact.
- H. Well there was contact.
- G. There was contact and there was a lot of people killed.
- H. Was it a big battle.
- G. Yes.

H. Where was the battle? In the fall?

G. I'm, I'll, I'll use the village name of Tam-key, seems like maybe our headquarters was in Chu-lie which was on the coast, and maybe the area that we flew out to and were operating in was Tam-key, but we had uh, they flew us in on top of a high ridge, and I remember this ridge was a large horseshoe type ridge, big valley down below, and they dropped us off on top of this ridge and we began to start walking the top of this ridge, and uh, we met an enemy on the other side of this horseshoe. They had set up a camp there and was strong resistance. I remember they called in alot of navy and marines jets from off the coast and there was alot of napalm, they spread alot of napalm over that hill, and spent the whole day, we just, we sat down on one side of the horseshoe and just watched the air show. They bombed and strafed it and dropped napalm and just used about every weapon that they had in the sky on this mountain range or hill range, whatever you call it, and after that day was over, that continued on into the night, and the next morning it ended and we went over, of course we found a few bodies of the enemy that were burned and so forth, but as always the enemy had simply gone over the back of the hill and had escaped, but we now knew that they had been pushed into our territory, they were there, and uh our work was just beginning. I remember that night when we set up camp on that side of the horseshoe that had been bombed, that night they tried to come into our perimeters during the night while we were sleeping. We had some trouble there. We had to use our defenses around our perimeters to get through that night.

H. What actually did happen. Did they come into the perimeter?

G. They did not penetrate the perimeter, they had, I remember they managed to throw a hand grenade, one of their home made hand grenades into the, landed right in the middle of our circle, right where our commanding officer, radio man and everything was, and it failed to go off, and we had to detenate two or three claymore mines to keep them from penetrating that perimeter. There was some gunfire. That particular night there was no, they just did not penetrate it. We drove them back with the defenses we had. About all it amounted to that night was a harrassment of us. The next day we moved out, and there are so many fire fights as they call them which are simply battles, they are confusing to me as to when they all took place, there was a time after that, that I remember they were training me to walk point, to be the lead man, it was my first day, and we walked into an area that they had set up camp in and they had their underground bunkers and I walked . . . well, I'll go back . . . We had a platoon that had been ambushed and completely wiped out. We lost about 30 men I guess and uh, they had been wiped out in the ambush, and we in our platoon had set out to find this group of North Vietnamese or VC, whoever they were to find them, were on their trail, so to speak. After about two days during a heavy rain storm, I, without knowing it, walked right into their camp. You couldn't know the camp because everything they had was underground. I had walked and was standing in the middle of it and the rest of my platoon was behind me, a little higher elevation on a rock ledge, preparing to come on down and follow me, I remember a fellow, a north vietnamese came out of the ground and he turned around, and he looked at me, and this heavy rain, just buckets of water coming down and he couldn't believe what he was looking at. Here stood one

American soldier with a rifle and everything, it was me, and I'm looking at him, he had a grease gun, it was a, best I can describe that would be a, an automatic machine gun with a little, for a stock it's a wire, a heavy wire stock and a little short stubby thing, and he had a grease gun there. I'll never forget this, he stared at me, I stared at him, and it was just this, you were hunting game in any woods. My thought process turned out to be the best and without ever even taking my eyes off of him and breaking his stare and breaking his concentration, I just simply, without moving my head or anything I just very slowly just lifted my rifle up, waisthigh, and fired. Of course, shot him, well when that happened they all started coming up holes I didn't even see. They just stated coming up out of the ground all around me. And of course my gunfire had alerted my platoon behind me. I guess was about 15 feet above me on this rock ledge. Firefight just broke loose. It was just a heavy firefight. Both sides began, everyone was firing, my platoon fanned out around this elevation, firing down into this wooded section and they were coming all out of the ground and were firing and running and I was standing there, and after a while it was all over and I was told, I didn't know it, they came and asked me how come I didn't get down. And I said "I don't know what I did," and they said I stood up through it all and was throwing a handgrenade and firing, but it was a, we ran into what we felt was a, at least a platoon, if not more and they had automatic weapons, and so forth, I don't know, I don't remember just how many was killed but it was a very major contact and we confiscated some weapons and uh . . .

- H. You were lucky though that you survived it.
- G. Oh, there's more than one incidence I feel that uh, God had his hand on me. When I, you know I was talking about that contact that we made on top of that high, that horseshoe type mountain, ridge. When I landed, when I got off the helicopter, I developed over there something I've thought about ever since, I developed the keenness of sense that I've never seemed to possess since then. I had a sense of danger over there, I could fortail and uh as soon as you jump out of a helicopter you spread out into a circle to secure your area for others landing and uh, I remember I got together with about 4 or 5 away from the landing zone and I looked over to the other side of that horseshoe and I just told them I said, there are alot of NVA over there, I know it, they're over there, and we're gonna find them, and as it turned out it ended up one of the larger groups that we ran into although we didn't have to combat them, it ended up you know the air strikes and so forth, but there was, there was another time when we had come up out of the rice paddies and were moving into the hills and were walking up a path that was there, we were in single file, I was about half way back in the platoon, and I got the strangest feeling that I should take my rucksack, my pack off and be prepared, and I just took it off while I was walking, and as soon as I got it off of my shoulders, we were ambushed, I was prepared and nobody else was. We lost about . . .
- H. What was your instinct, as soon as you, I mean what was, describe in a little more detail the ambush itself, how it hit you, where was it coming from?

- G. Well, we were walking on the side of a hill at a slight incline on a path and the hill was to our left and I just sensed the danger and that uh, I just sensed that I should be prepared now, and I took it off and immediately a gunfire, they began to ambush us, gunfire broke out, and I was already down, rifle ready, and everything. Others were rasting with their equipment and so forth, but we did what we were trained to do. We had an incompetent lieutenant at that point that was not prepared for leadership in battle at all. He didn't have the knowledge. Many, there was more than one time in my experience in the war to where the enlisted men had much more savy and ability and their common sense was much more productive in that situation than all of the classroom schooling that the officers had. Generally you would find your old Korean veteran sergeants was where your strength was and your real leadership. We had a, that was the situation here, our lieutenant just didn't know what to do and the sergeant took over. The only thing you can do in an ambush is to move forward, just to charge them even though you may be crawling . . .
- H. You got out of the path and into the . . .
- G. You simply fall into the hill and then begin on your belly you begin to crawl up that hill, firing. You begin to throw back as much fire as you can. You don't know where to fire, you don't know if they're in the trees, if they're in a bunker, or what. But the only thing you can do is, 30 or 35 or you, how many there are in the platoon, throw back as much fire as you can, and begin to crawl towards them, which is what we did. We got about half way up the hill and they were . . .
- H. Were they up the hill beyond you, is that it.
- G. They were on top of the hill.
- H. Firing down on you
- G. On top of the hill and as it turned out there was a, they had a bunker up there that they were firing from but they had, they had 3 or 4 of their men in trees. Which was very confusing to us. We couldn't find any location of where to stop the fire. It wasn't necessarily a heavy fire coming in but it was single shots that were well aimed. They were looking down on us.
- H. They could see you, you couldn't see them.
- G. Could not see them, NO, and they were being able to select their targets. We were firing wildly and just anywhere. It was a very frightening situation. The larger trees were up the hill ahead of us. We didn't have the cover even to get behind some large trees. In encountering ambushes, your machine gunner, and he's got to spray this whole hill. You know, it'll be effective to a point, at least to . . . uh, he's laying down fire that will be ricocheting and uh, you know, even if you're not hitting the enemy, you're posing a threat to them and

you're putting a fear in them. Well he came over, we were screaming at him to come over and begin to fire. He dropped down and just as he began to fire his gun jammed. And that left us very weak. That left us with rifle men not even knowing where to shoot and if we did give a burst of 20 rounds, we had to change a clip again. So it left us very weak in fire power. In the meantime there were three or four of them in trees that were just taking aim on us. I was right beside of the machine gunner and he was trying to get his gun unjammed and they shot him.

H. He was hit?

G. He was hit? Yes, shot in the heart and before he died he turned around, and he had one week to go, he was going to come home, and he had already been telling me what he was gonna do and everything. That was a common situation. Men would be very close to leaving and it'd be a matter of days, and they would be killed. I remember that this fellow, as he was slumping over, bullet had just gone in his heart, he turned around and he just stared at me. That was the first time I had seen anyone die.

H. Did you know him well?

G. I knew him well. He was a friend of mine.

H. Do you recall where he was from.

G. Drew was from . . . His name was, I believe Thomas Drew, but I know it was Drew and he was from New York City. I saw him get shot and uh. . .

H. You were within a few feet of him?

G. Oh I was within 3 feet of him. Beside of him. I saw this perplexed look of unbelief on his face. As I recall now, the look just turned into hopelessness. He looked at me and then he just slumped over on his gun, and by that time I had stopped firing. I wasn't even participating. I was just looking at him and allowing you know what . . . I was just pondering, I was just staring at him. I was trying to take it all in. It didn't, I didn't lose my sense of responsibility or anything like that, I-just, people were hit and wounded. People were screaming and yelling in all directions. It was just total confusion and I was just not a part of it. I was just simply laying there, not knowing whether I'd be hit or not and eventually they did what damage they had intended to and they just went on over the back of the hill. After about 20 minutes or something like that . . .

H. That's how long it lasted?

G. I'd say. I'd say about 20 minutes. Quiet settles back in. There's no more gunfire and people start calling out other names and looking around for their buddies and you begin to regroup and find out what the casualties are, who the wounded are, and so forth. I can remember though, I can remember some humor in the very middle of it. We had left the path, were down on our stomachs and were crawling forward, and I had fired maybe a couple of clips, that would be 40 rounds, and my gun jammed.

H. What kind of a gun did you have?

G. I had an M-16. M-16's were always jamming. There was a problem with M-16's. Not necessarily with the design of it but with the way we were told to maintain it. There was a big fight in the army about how to maintain the gun. There was a fight in Congress as to where the, whether the gun was a bad investment or not. I can remember one time that I told, it would sound very stupid, but the argument was, is it best to apply no grease to the gun where the bullets enter the chamber and so forth as opposed to using a lot of grease and that in turn would attract dirt. The army had not settled the issue and I remember as a squad leader one time I told my group, I said, boys they can sit over there in Washington and debate this from now on, but I said, your life depends on it and you've been told not to put any grease in it. I'm telling you, you get a tube of grease and fill the whole gun with the grease. If it tears up, get you another one. I had found out a way that works better. It was things like that, it was always confusion. You always were having, not only did you have to deal with fighting the enemy, you had to deal with trivial, foolish things like that.

H. Why were they trivial.

G. Not trivial to me, but . . .
Things that

H. Could have been easily corrected.

G. Foolishness

H. Is that what you mean? Foolish as in things that could have been corrected, taken care of, should of been left up to the men who was doing the fighting? Is that what you had in mind?

G. I don't think people were, there always seemed to be a lack of communication and being prepared. They would buy the best equipment that could be manufactured and that money could buy. But yet, people weren't properly trained in handling it or didn't know how to operate it. Or what we needed would be in the rear and wouldn't even get to us. It was that type of uh. . .

H. What would be the type of situation that you were talking about where people were not trained in the use of equipment.

G. Well . . .

H. Equipment was very good but they didn't know how to use it. Is that what you are saying.

G. Well just for instance, like, like the rifle that we carried the M-16. There was a, you would have, now you went through basic training and then you went through an AIT and then of course we went through jump school. Then when you got to Vietnam you went through, oh maybe another introductory

two day course about what you were going to encounter. And at each stage you might start off in the United States with the very basic program, you might start off at the textbook approach to a certain piece of equipment. Manufactures recommendation for the handling of that, well by the time you got to Vietnam you were talking to a seargeant from Tennessee who had already served two tours over there and he's telling you how to really operate this. That situation. It goes back to what I was telling you a minute ago. You had classroom textbook type of leaders who knew what the manual and what the policy and what the book said and how to go by this. And then you had other people who were out there fighting this was and living it and using this equipment and they knew what was important and what was not. They spent a great deal of time as I remember, well not a great deal of time, but they spent some time hear in the states training you with shoulder, with small bazookas and so forth, uh, anti-tank type weapons things like that. Well that wasn't the type of war we were fighting. Didn't need em, didn't use em, never saw em. I think it was a, Vietnam was a tremendous testing ground of weapons. A great proving ground and a place to test new ideas and develop new equipment that many times I think at the cost and expense of people's lives. However after I said that, I don't know how else you're going to test and put weapons to a proper test on that magnitude.

H. Well getting back to the M-16, apparently it was unreliable, you never knew when it may jam. A finicky weapon wasn't it. That's what I understand from different men that have talked about it. You know the jungle conditions of mud and rain and all the rest of this, the weapon was so sensitive. If it got dirty at all it endangered the life of the soldier.

G. I think that's basically correct. I think it was a fine product. I think Colt manufactured that gun and I think it was a fine weapon and so forth. An American sportsman back here in the US would be thrilled to have a gun like that I am sure. But under those conditions, what you're talking about, that's true. It jammed on me so many times that I just know that something better could have been developed. I remember many people, many of my buddies would much rather have had a russian AK 47. They just, they felt like the North Vietnamese had a better gun. It accepted, I don't know too much-about the weapon, but I think it accepted 45 calibre slugs which the reason the army had a 45 calibre handgun so many years is because that size of a slug stops a man. Just the pure size of it stops a man. Well there was a debate. I don't know if its ever been resolved. There was always a debate as to whether the M-16, it was a 22 calibre bullet, I think a .222 as to whether it tumbled or whether it spun as it went through the air. And they would show you what it did to concrete blocks and all. There was this great big discussion about what would it do to the human body. Would it, and, I just felt like it was a very sophisticated, and maybe a little too sophisticated for what we were needing it for.

H. Getting over to the officers again.

G. What got into all that was that I said there was a little bit of humor in the middle of this terrible ambush where people were killed, my gun jammed and I had to crawl back off that front line, I had to crawl back off the hill to where this path was, to just get out of the heat a little bit. You had to get a cleaning rod to run down in there and get that cartrage out of that chamber. Well everybody didn't carry a cleaning rod.

And the ones we had were in our rucksacks which were all dropped on the path. So I crawled back down the hill and I run into Gary Johnson, another friend, and he was down there, and he kinda joking me said, "Where are you going?" Cause looked like I was retreating and I laughed and I said "I gotta have a cleaning rod?" He said "What for?" And I told him. And he said, "Look down there in that pack of mine." And its just hard to imagine but there's bullets flying over your head and bouncing off trees, people screaming, getting killed, so I found this rod and by the time I found it and I crawled back up there where he was and I start to, I use it, I get mine unjammed, so I give it to him, we both were just laughing because we both know that in the next few seconds we may die, and here we are, we've been sent over by the greatest country in the world, the most powerful country and the most affluent, and we're sitting here, it just the whole thing, we're sitting here in a jungle, of a small country, and we've been ambushed by someone we can't even see, and we're holding a very expensive rifle that doesn't work, and we're trying to find a cleaning rod, and we've only got maybe 2 for all of us, and it was just, we just saw the humor of it all and the pathetic situation and I can remember that we were laying on the ground laughing. There was always in Vietnam, the one thing I remember, alot of the bad experiences and the fear and so forth, I guess, have been blocked from my memory but the one thing I do remember is humor. Every soldier that I can remember had a terrific sense of humor and it was the only way to get rid of the pressure and the fear and the death and the, all the horrible things, there was a humor and everybody could take it, nobody objected to it. You could joke about so and so would get it today, would be killed today and you could laugh about it. If, just anything ...

- H. You knew that it might happen.
- G. Right, you know, little barbs, jokes, and so forth. The humor there, involved and centered around all of the horrible things that went on. The fact that a friend, or you, may be killed in the next few minutes or people losing their arms or legs and we never lost the humor.
- H. And you saw alot of this.
- G. Oh yeah, there was alot of people wounded. I didn't see a high number of people killed. Only that one time when they killed the entire platoon. I guess that was the largest number of men that I had seen killed. But just to be able to handle the pressure and you knew that people were back home having a wonderful time, going to college, partying, having a great time, you could see in their letters, they didn't really, they cared, and they wanted to sympathize, but they didn't even know where you were, what you were doing.
- H. You felt a lack of that support then didn't you?
- G. Oh yeah. But you, the soldier used humor to get through all of that. I'd say humor was one of the great releases, the great valves that kept people from going insane, and being able to handle all of this.
- H. I suppose some couldn't handle it even through humor though.

- G. No, no, but the group that I was with, and all the people that I was around, there was only one person, and I guess he wasn't there a very short time, and he shot himself in the foot one night so he could be sent home. But that is the only time that anybody that I can remember that could not handle it. As I look back on it, humor was a, laughing about it was a great release from the reality of it.
- H. How about the _____ and frustration that this business of being ambushed by almost a primitive people, soldiers always seemed to be you're the ones who get surprised. Did you find that kind of a frustrating experience?
- G. All the . . .
- H. The efforts that you were putting into it, did you often wonder about the results of it all?
- G. Yeah, we were pouring, I think we were pouring a million dollars a day at one time I remember figuring like that, that we were aware of that we were, the country was pouring, maybe even a greater figure than that, but we were aware of the millions of dollars that were being thrown into supplies and so forth. And to have a group of ten either Vietcong or North Vietnamese just stop your platoon or stop your company and harass you, uh, if you take three men, three Vietcong a mortar, up in the hill, and they see three Platoons, US soldiers, coming through a rice paddy. Well they set their mortar up real quick and it is primitive. I mean they're just kinda, they may have had a little bit of training with it, but they're just basically using their judgement of distance and so forth, and they'll lob four or five shells down, and they may get lucky it may fall in the middle of you, but it'll be in the vicinity of you where you are. They've stopped that whole company. That whole company has stopped. Now the company calls to off-shore guns and they fire the 16 inch guns in and try to, and they'll have a . . .
- H. 16 inch guns from where, some battleship.
- G. Yeah, some battleship out there, I guess that's the size they had, it had to be, I know we were several miles in. I don't know what else could have lobbed a shell in there.
- H. To wipe out three or four Vietcong with their mortar.
- G. Yeah it was just this thing, it was like, our resources were inexhaustible, money was no object. I've talked to a friend of mine who was on a ship, on an aircraft carrier out there, and they were having a great time, and they were just waiting out there for these foot soldiers to call in. They'd be glad to lob some shells and it was no problem for them. And that's what I say, you would have, in my mind, as I saw the picture, you've got three or four men who may have been pressed into the VC service out of some village and they're up there as a, basically a sniper type harrassment and they've stopped a whole company and this company commander is going to finally get the chance to put his training to work and he can coordinate all of his grids and come into radio contact with this navy personnel floating out there and he can have jets, lotched off that carrier and come in there with an air strike and stuff, where you see youve got the whole hill smoking and all those guys did was to lob 4 shells on top of you and they took off.

And they're probably four miles away by now. It was that type of situation and uh, they drained us.

H. Who was they?

G. The enemy. If nothing else, they drained us financially. For every one bullet they would fire, we'd, let's say, I'd just put a dollar, let's say they would fire a bullet that cost 50 cents. We'd throw a five thousand dollars back at em. It was harrassment that . . .

H. A very effective kind.

G. Very effective. And look at the men. They lived there, they knew those hills, they knew where they were, very difficult to fight someone on their home turf, especially that type of a wooded area. You had to know your way around.

H. Was this getting to you, or did this, or just something you put up with, how did it affect you? Did you begin to question what are we doing, how are we doing it?

G. I began to question the intelligence of our congress. I knew . . .

H. You went all the way back to Congress for the responsibility.

G. Well, let me tell you why. We get, we would get newspapers and so forth, and we wouldn't get all the news, but we knew that there was a hawk-dove battle going on. We knew that there were differences of opinion and so forth and my frustration was this, we've got 50 thousand men there, no more than that, that was the number that got killed, but we had these 100's of thousands of troops there. And what got to me was that this country . . . war. I hadn't lost my support of the war at all, but I didn't like, and what I became frustrated with, and the aggravation to all of us was that people would dare to support the enemy by allowing their debates and their controversies and their slanders and so forth to one another to go out all over the world and to present the picture of a divided nation. And here we were, we were over there in the jungles, and out there in those rice-paddies and our lives were on the line, and we didn't feel like that we had the backing of the United States of America. We had a president who was fully committed and we had General Wes Morland who was totally committed but we had a congress who was bickering and we had people who were, we had mothers and fathers who were encourageing their children not to come and it was a very frustration situation. We wanted the country to either say, We're committed to a war, and we got tired of people calling it a conflict. It was just disgusting to us to have someone shoot a friend of ours and talk about the conflict. It was a war. And we wanted the country to either say we're committed to winning the war or we're not. Let's go home. One way or the other. Let's fight it or let's go home. I remember a time when some VC, and saw them very clearly, in the middle of the day, black pajamas, straw hat, rifles, were on the other side of the river, and they fired some shots at us, just harrassment type thing, and we were going to fire back across the river, and the lt. told us, he said "No," "We cannot fire." and we asked him why and he said "That hasn't been cleared for operation, that's not a clear area for us to fire into yet, that hasn't been approved." And it was just unbelievable, and we said "YOU see them don't you?" Right there behind

those bushes? He said "Yes I'm looking at em right now." I said "You know they just fired at us, you know they'll kill us, and we're here in Vietnam, fighting, why can't, why can't, why would you stop us from shooting at the enemy." And it was simply orders from on high that there were certain areas we were to have the conflict in and there were other areas that we weren't to, it was always those frustrated things, there was never a clear cut 100% commitment from the U.S. people and their representatives, that we were going to win that war. You would walk through the villages and you could very plainly see, I mean, You gotta remember we're 18 year old kids, and we're not . . .

H. In a teenage war.

G. We're not wise in the world. But it didn't take, but if we saw it, it must have been very plain, as 18 year olds, these people didn't care about higher politics, these people cared about getting their rice crops planted and harvesting that, and keeping their children from danger, and living on the land that their ancestors, their forefathers had lived for generations. That was what was important to them. We could see that they had grown very tired of soldiers every 10 years, a new group of soldiers walking down through their fields, and the only thing was changing was the color of the uniforms. To them, it was always somebody foreign wanting to possess their land and destroying their lives. And the American soldiers treated those people terrible. We may not have destroyed them militarily but we certainly disrupted their lives with our moral influences and things, certainly in the towns, we went over there and just made a din of drugs and prostitution and corruption and vice and encouraged all of the illegal activities. We were a part of that. We'd go out through the villages and we would go in and take their fruits from their gardens and plunder through their villages and if we saw something we wanted a souvenir, we'd pick it up and take it. We were very cruel and rude to them. We treated them with no respect. It was a disgusting conflict because the people at home didn't support us, and the people there didn't appreciate us, and at the whole time we had to continue what we were doing to get out alive. And another thing about it was, I knew, as an 18 year old boy, I knew that there hadn't been a whole lot of wars in this country that had been fought with the idea that if you just fight and make it for one year you can go home. Generally it was a commitment, we'll fight until the battle is over. All I had, and my father told me when I left, he said "Son, just . . ." it was a very selfish statement and I'm sure he meant well, he said "be sure and look out for yourself, because you make sure you come on back home, and make through one year and you're through." Well really, that's all anybody had to do. They didn't have to go over there and win a war. Just had to make it through 12 months and they could come home, they was through. That's a sorry, you told your troops before they ever get to Vietnam that you have no commitment to winning the war. You're just going to place them in a hazardous duty for a year. No commitment.

H. Despite all this, do you think that there was a commitment as long as you were there? That the soliders did the best job possible under all of these conditions? Is that the way you feel about it?

- G. Yes. Yes I did. I think the soldiers who were with me, and that I was involved with were very sincere, very proud of their country, and were willing to look over or not think so much about any wrong motives that certain politicians or certain government contractors or whatever might have, I think they were looking for the good, and I think they were trying to carry on a tradition that they'd been taught in school, that if you have freedom you're suppose to appreciate it and be willing to fight and die for it. I think they were just simply trying to uphold, we were trying to uphold a principal that we had been taught in church and school. Even though we knew that if you stripped all of the window dressing away most of it was phony. It was a growing, not from us, I'm talking about, we knew that the leaders and so forth in this country, that ahhh, distrust and everything was setting in, we were becoming as, we were maturing very fast, and we were beginning to see that there was a lot more lies that there was truth. But I think through it all, I think we held on to what we perceived as a good cause and being right. I personally did not look at the North Vietnamese as being wrong or evil. I felt very sympathetic to him. He had a group of people who had forced him into a situation or indoctrinated him the same was that I was and I knew that he I always felt that at times when I would kill someone, I felt very sorry because I knew that somewhere in the North, he had family. That he had left home and that they had felt very strongly that he was going to protect their way of life and to stop what they perceived as an evil aggressor. I knew that he and I were not to blame . . .
- H. For all the victims huh.
- G. what a sorry situation that we ended up the victim of, powerful men in big offices, who won't tell the truth, who won't be honest with the people that they lead.
- H. What about the south Vietnamese army? The Arvin? Did you have much contact with them and did you, more or less, develop opinions about them as you did about these other two groups that you just mentioned.
- G. No, I didn't have very much contact with them. Only one time did we have some South Vietnamese troops work with us. They were very friendly, very pleasant to be around, they seemed to respect us, and we appreciated their help and they . . . I can remember, we had our C-rations, they had their own particular rations their government gave. Well, their rations included rice and small fish and so forth that you would put boiling water into, and it made a very different meal for us, and I remember that we all traded. It was a banquet type thing out there in the woods, it was a treat that we got to swap food and it was a good time. I remember it was unusual for me and us to be associate with them, because our operations were not even close to each other.
- H. Did you ever think that you were fighting their war. The fact that you just mentioned that you never saw them, so . . .
- G. I knew that they were in the, more to the south, and I felt that they were fighting as best they could, I felt that they were victims of alot of politics, and they certainly weren't capable of overcoming the situation any more than I was. I felt good that we could help them. That's all I wanted to do. I didn't feel that they were, at that particular time, I didn't have any great knowledge, or any thoughts that there was wide-spread corruption among their troops and they were using us or anything. I just felt like that they were a

fledging, struggling army that had turned us and said, "we embrace your ideas and your form of government, but we're so badly split up and so weak that we need your help," and I felt good about helping them. I didn't have a great deal of knowledge about them or work with them.

- H. I suppose this period of the war, for you, there wasn't much of the drugs or racial conflict that we hear alot about later on.
- G. Ah, marijuana was the only drug that I ever knew to be used. There may have been others and I'm sure there was, but that was about the only thing, and, and there wasn't that much of it in our platoon, in our company. Someone would go on R and R to Bancock and they would bring back one or two packs of marijuana cigarettes and that would be about the extent of it. There might be three or four get together and do that but my personal feeling was, were that at that time I didn't have anything against marijuana, but my feeling was, we were in too dangerous a situation for me to get drunk or stoned, or to be unable to defend myself and my common sense just told me that I was not to be drunk, that I was to be sober. It was a situation to be sober in and I think for the most part, most of them felt that way. There was only, I only remember one evening that two or three of them did get high. It was a situation where we were pretty much relaxed. We didn't feel a great sense of danger. We hadn't had contact with nobody for several days. There wasn't a great deal of drugs. Most of what I saw was if we would be dropped back into camp after a 10-day period or something like that, there'd be alot of beer and alcohol consumed. Of course that was seemed to be encouraged by the army. They would provide beer and so forth. But now, as I look back on it now, I really question that. They did, they encouraged, it was perfectly all right, they encouraged you to go ahead and get drunk and let loose for a couple of hours.
- H. How about getting along with the black soldiers and minority.
- G. I don't remember any racial incidents at all. We had several blacks. We were just a tight group. We were friends. We were really buddies. I felt like in my particular situation, in my platoon, it was a relief to be able to escape the racial situation here in the US and begin to help each other and live in a situation where we needed each other. I appreciated it and I feel certain that most all of us did. It was such a refreshing relationship as to the way we had lived or let's say basic training here in the states, alot of friction. But over there, it didn't make any difference if his speech didn't match mine or his likes or dislikes, my life depended on him, his life depended on me, and I think, I'm just guessing now, but I think the lower, I would say, you would probably find more tension in the more relaxed areas. Go back to Saigon, go back to Cameron Bay and stuff, where these people weren't out there putting their life on the line, they were just working an 8 hour job with supplies, gettin drunk at night, having a big time, I'd say they had a lot of problems. For us, we were 30 men, 10 miles out from anybody, and we depended on each other. We didn't have time, it wasn't important, it didn't matter, it wouldn't have made any difference if one of us had green skin, I'll tell you what mattered out there -- were we a good soldier or not. If you weren't pulling your weight, you got the pressure, and you got the verbal tongue lashings from everyone. You pulled your weight and that's all that mattered, not your color, not your background.

- H. You know, from the way you speak, the moral seems to be quite high among the soldiers despite the conditions under which you were fighting, the frustrations and all the rest of it. It must have been a high point in morale in the war for America this time in 67 and it's too bad that was to deteriorate later on. Do you keep in touch with any of these men?
- G. No I don't.
- H. Have you ever been to Washington to see the Vietnam War Memorial.
- G. No I haven't.
- H. It's a very touching.
- G. I've heard that and I don't understand why.
- H. You'd have to go and see it. It's not only the memorial, the starkness of these black marble tablets in the form of a kind of arrow with the names of . . . but it's the people who come and look and there seems to be something happens between a person and the names on the wall.
- G. Yeah, I've heard that. I saw a documentary on TV and I don't understand where those feelings . . .
- H. It happened to me, and it happened under probably not the best of conditions because it was probably one of the hottest days that I've ever experienced in the middle of July in Washington last summer when I got a chance to see it. And I didn't linger very long because the heat was so bad. I was so tired but I could sense that.
- G. Well I have very deep feelings about the whole . . . my involvement, and the people I was with. I've got a lot of tears that I've shed and a lot of tears that I have not shed and kept inside, but I've felt over the years that I've regained my emotional stability, I've had no problem, I've put it behind me, when I came back from the war, I had nightmares and I had a period there where I had to readjust to civilized living and so forth, but it wasn't difficult for me to put it behind me. There's been so many people, people here in this town that have come back and never been able to put it behind them. They haven't been able to attend a party or to be around people or anything because their mind is just literally eaten up with the sadness and the disruption of it all in their lives. And I haven't found that and ahhh . . .
- H. Do you know many of these people?
- G. Well I'm thinking about one person in particular who's become an alcoholic over it. People no longer care to associate with him because he won't hush about it and it's one war story after another. And it all comes from a sadness and a bitterness and just an inability to bury it, put it behind him. I look at the United States and all the people here and I don't think they really care. I don't think they care about it, I don't think they know anything about it, I don't think they have any idea of what we as soldiers went through, I think there was two

groups of soldiers, I think there was soldiers over there who fought a war, and I think there were soldiers who went over there and stayed drunk for 12 months in the rear. I think there were 2 groups of people. And I don't think they understand each other. I've got a bitterness that there was a lot of time and lives and money wasted. I feel like one of the men that played a great deal of starting it was assassinated and I feel like there was a lot of answers that this country should have had from him and we've been denied those answers. I always wished John Kennedy would have lived and would he have stood up and he have said "I made a mistake and . . ."

- H. Do you see the origins of the war in his decisions, is that what you're saying? He's the first one to make these commitments.
- G. I think he took some of Eisenhower's ideas and philosophies and, yeah, I think he put 'em into practice. That's the way I see it.
- H. And then, have you read any books about the war?
- G. Maybe one.
- H. There's quite alot written on the war.
- G. I do not dwell on it. No.
- H. Did you see the Vietnam, you know, the television history?
- G. On P.B.S.
- H. Did you watch it?
- G. I saw one segment of it, and uh, it did the same thing to me as a, . . . some years ago there was another documentary, Vietnam, and, just the sound of helicopters takes me all the way back. Just the sound of helicopters puts me back on top of that hill, puts the gun back in my hand and, uh, sometimes I can even feel my heart a pounding a little faster, it makes me nervous, not that I couldn't handle it then, and couldn't handle it now, uh, I just choose to leave it buried, because, it's almost pointless to me to begin to get excited and nervous about it and to dredge it up and reminisce and ponder the questions of right and wrong and there's no one to talk to about it. There's no one understands. My wife doesn't understand. My parents don't understand. My pastor doesn't understand. The governor of this state doesn't understand. It's just building up with no where to let it out. Because there's no one, everyone just has a piece of it. I think what you're doing, and I think as time goes on, like anything that happens in history, I think the pieces will come together, and I think students of history probably in the next few years are going to have a more clear, better understanding, of that period of time than they've ever had, but, in these, in my time during the war and in these last few years everybody has had a piece of it, and there's been no one to talk to, and no one that really understands, and uh, I just choose to forget it. I've got a lot more life to live. I'll concentrate on the present and the future and not on the past.

- H. But some how you can't close it off entirely in this sense, that that experience has certainly done something to you as far as your attitudes about your country is concerned, and it affects the way you see the government's decisions today on what you might even think our repetition of the same mistakes or whatever I don't know. I'd ask you a little bit about that.
- G. Sure. Lebanon, El Salvador, those things. I weigh everything.
- H. Yes.
- G. . . . on the scale of Vietnam. Sure.
- H. First of all, do you think our leadership is any, has anymore credibility today than it did say, when you were a young man, with time of Kennedy and Johnson and Nixon, and those certainly must . . . , and I always look back at them for a young person, and I was bringing up a family now, or then I mean, and I had 3 of my own in the service, and taught at the University where I met lots of young men, and I always look back at it as a time of whether you were in Vietnam and you developed a sense of disillusion and from that experience, or whether you were home here, as an anti-war person, and you, you kind of shared the disillusionment with the men in Vietnam, but for a different reason. In other words, you do get a kind of generation that's been scarred. I think a great deal by this experience regardless of how it came to them. I was wondering, the American leadership today, do you think that we're, you learn any better or wisely than we have in the past?
- G. Well I guess there's certain . . .
- H. Or is that too ???? a question.
- G. No, I guess there's certain exceptions. With exceptions, I'll say no, I don't. I still do not see an honesty, a truth, coming from the leadership of this country. I don't have, because of my involvement and experience and sacrifice I know that people made in Vietnam, that doesn't make me immediately lash out against any involvement with South America or Mid-East. I don't give a knee-jerk reaction because we got burned one time. Certainly we could learn from our mistakes and do better, but what I don't understand and don't appreciate is that we never . . . we still have to go to extensive efforts just to get the truth. We don't have a honest leader who trusts us as American citizens, as brothers and sisters of the same country. I just wish, for instance like Lebanon, you know I feel like they're trying to group us together under this banner of Americanism and the country who cannot be defeated and so forth, and we'll back down from no one, this macho image and so forth, that uh. . . give us the truth. Is there anything worth fighting for there, if there is, fine, tell us what it is, tell us what the price is, what's it going to cost us, how many lives, how many years, be honest with us, open, and then let us American people decide to accept or reject the responsibility of our place in the world. If it's not worth it, if it's a matter of pride, a matter of lack of communication, tell us. They made a mistake, tell us, I'll appreciate a leader much more for honesty. We don't get that, we're never gonna get it.

- H. Well alot of the men that I've talked to respond in a similar way that we find we had a government, as far as Vietnam was concerned, in which the country was divided about the involvement in Vietnam. And the reason for the division in the country was that the people didn't understand what the government was trying to do. That a policy was not agreed upon within the government, so then it became clear to the nation just exactly what . . .
- G. And that situation exists now. The same situation.
- H. Here we are, say in Lebanon where the president has made a commitment, yet there's a continuing quarrel between the South and the Congress, and the South and the Democrats over his decisions, and it seems to be part of the reason is that there has never been unionimity on purpose of what we're doing. I think that's what you're saying in part isn't it.
- G. Sure. In ElSalvador, I don't have the knowledge or, Nicoragua, or let's say South America, it's hard for me to read a newspaper and to keep all of the Factions and the Marxists and the different groups straight. I don't know who caused what, who's supporting who, every week it's a new group claiming responsibility for this or that, they send commissions down, the commissions make this recommendation, the president appauds some of them, and the congress picks out the ones they agree with and so forth. I'm not saying all that is their fault, it's a complex world, it's not like Hitler rises up and he announces his aim to take over the world, so we rise up and say "Well our aim is to stop you." It's very clear cut, let's go to it. The world's more complex, I realize that. They may be your enemy on one particular issue, and they may be your friend on another, but the country parents cannot be asked to provide, to give their sons to the war, provide the lives and the finances through their taxes and everything else, unless they know what's going on. And that's going to take first of all, you said unimity, they've got to come to agreement themselves on what they want to do and then they've got to start an educational campaign to tell us just what these facts that they've agreed upon are. The only place we get any facts at all are from reporters. And then we have to judge which newspapers to believe. Which editorial column is closer to the truth or not. It is, there is no basis, there is no foundation there at all to ask them to give their lives.
- H. Another issue that comes up on all of this Greg is the prospect of a nuclear war that hangs over all of us today. And you have the recent walk out of the Soviets from the arms control talks, you're familiar as much as I am, on the policies of the present administration on all of this. How does it all strike you? How disturbing is it to you, what's going on?
- G. Well, that's difficult to answer. Of course, I wouldn't want to see us or any other country purposely set out any policy that would end up in destroying us. However, my religion of Christianity and my beliefs of the revelation that Jesus provided for us certainly lead me in this area, I feel that as men who are lost and without Christ, they're headed for destruction. Everything they do is on a destructive path, and I feel like the world itself under the thumb of man is destined for destruction, and so its, uh, while we as a country may have certain policies and may deflect that progression towards destruction time to time, I feel that man is directed by a force to destroy himself. I just feel like there are two masters to serve -- evil or good. I feel like the evil would have us to destroy ourselves and . . .
- H. You're very pessimistic.

- G. I realize that. However, in my pessimism for the world and the human race, I have a great hope that nothing that happens . . .
- H. Do you think that the present policies of our government is relieving you of that pessimism or deepening it, that you're safer now than you were before Reagan came into office?
- G. I don't feel that we're in that much greater danger, under his leadership than anyone else. I feel like, what I was getting to was, I feel like we're always progressing towards destruction. I feel like his policy from time to time has set the Russians back a bit and have made them sit up and take notice that certainly not the liberal attitude where they're willing to give and give and give, that he's got a defiance streak in him and I feel like it's causing them to have to reaccess some of their policies. Now, I think he's gonna have to use, his administration's gonna have to use good judgment as any disciplinarian would do . . . there's just so many times you use the rod and every so often its nice just to offer 'em a little bit of honey and see if their attitudes change, which I think he might be doing now. I don't see our world poised on the brink of nuclear destruction any more than it was under a democratic leadership or anything else. I think the covering, I think the window dressing has simply been taken off. I think the missiles have been pointed at each other for years, I think the plans to develop nuclear weapons in space have been on the drawing board for years. I just don't think, again, I don't think we have an honesty of someone to come out and say these things as openly as he has. There are certainly times that I wished he would have pedaled a little softer. But basically I appreciate alot of the times that he's just simply called a spade a spade, and said, this is the line, this is our threshold, we go no farther. You will come to this threshold, we'll go no farther towards you." I appreciate that and I know that people say, "that's setting a deadline, that's setting a time table, that's setting a very risk for the war." The risk for the war has always been there and I don't, I have a hope for eternal life and I'm not willing to give up all the freedom and all of the things that we have strived for and fought for in this country just to appease someone, just so they wouldn't push the button and go ahead and let them have everything. I do mean, I'm not saying I embrace his policies, or his big stick approach totally, but I do lean toward his type of situation to where he does draw a line.
- H. There was one other final thing I wanted to ask you about. Now you came back to school after you came out of the army, when was that? When did you first go to Morehead?
- G. Let's see, I got out in August of 69 and I worked, I must have, it was probably 71. I probably worked about a year and a half, something like that, a couple of years. And was not satisfied with what jobs I was getting, and so forth, and had gone to the employment office and she suggested that a, why don't I use what benefits I had and go back to school, get me an education, so I think it was probably in 71 that I started going to college. I went all during the summers, my wife was working, so I wanted to get out as fast as I could.

H. When did you get married?

G. I got married a year before I got out of the service. I got married in 68. So my was in X-ray, she was in school when we got married, so by the time I got out of service she was an X-ray technician, so she worked and I went, a while later I went to college and she was able to work, and I commuted from here to Morehead and went to ACC for a year and then went to Morehead for 2 commuting, and finished in three years.

H. What did you think of the education ?? ???? Do you think it helped you to make the adjustment from the war experience, give you motivation, and goals and so forth?

G. I think my maturity coming back from the service and the war was a great help to me in college. I graduated with a B average. I doubt if I would have even graduated had I gone to school before service. I much more of a purpose in life, I felt good about myself and the future, very appreciative of anything and everything. Electricity, clean water, a job, being alive, I feel like probably when I would walk down the campus I was probably much more appreciative of the opportunity just to be there than the 18 year old who had just got there from high school.

H. Did you think, what did you think of the quality of the education you were receiving. Was it satisfactory?

G. No. No I didn't. I regretted that I went to Morehead. I went down there with two fields in mind. I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I just wanted to prepare myself better and make something more of myself. And I had thought about, I think it was called Applied Medicine, anyway it was working with health departments and things like that, that type of administrative so forth, or I had thought about the field of Agriculture. I got with a counselor down there and they got to talking about a general agriculture degree and teaching agriculture, and me being a teacher, and so I gravitated towards that route and followed their advice and they painted a good picture that there was good employment and weren't enuf ag. teachers to go around. While the other positions for teachers were filling up, particularly agriculture was a very open field, and I felt like farming and so forth would interest me and so I followed their advice and went into that program. I don't, the quality of education for agriculture at Morehead when I was there, was poor, not good. Their facilities did not allow the hands on training that I later found out I needed. I had a couple of friends that realized this and transferred on into UK and wanted me to go, and I just couldn't with my situation, she was working here and I had to commute and it was just not possible so I stayed and I graduated and I knew everything that the books said. I graduated with a B average and immediately got a job in Ohio teaching Ag. and very quickly I realized you just don't come from the city and walk in a classroom and teach. I had not, I just feel that somebody, and I've got a couple of people in mind, they just did not, were not either not truthful or not, I think they were wanting to build their own program their. It was a young program, and I feel like when I came along and said "Yeah, I'll take that as my major" I feel like they should have said, "You ought to go into horticulture, you don't have the farming experience to teach in a classroom, you ought to go more for the metropolitan type field of it which would be horticulture." I don't feel like they did that, they needed people in the chairs, they needed their program built up and I found myself, I wasn't competent in the classroom as far as the vocational aspect of it; I knew all of the material out of the books, I didn't have the hands on vocational experience. You know,

theres a saying, those who can do, and those who can't teach. That's exactly what I was. I couldn't, here I was teaching it. And the program ended. They didn't have enuf students in this place in Ohio and so they was going to cut it down to a part-time teaching job and so we moved to Florida and immediately got a job teaching down there. You could just walk, lay your degree and your major down and you could get a job teaching agriculture anywhere.

H. How Long did you stay there?

G. It was worse down there, I was in the citrus industry down there. You can imagine being raised in a town in Kentucky going to school at Morehead and going down there and trying to teach in a citrus industry. I could have bluffed my way through but I feel good about myself. I was honest with myself enuf, I walked in and told the principal "this was not for me, I could not do the job that needed to be done and I was leaving the teaching field and I was going into public work." He understood, I stayed down there 6 months. I had an operation that took me out of the classroom for about a month. It was the time of thinking and there was just, I just felt like that was one of the times in my life to where, you know, I was very honest and didn't try to continue doing something I wasn't capable of. I came back and got a job with United Parsel Service which doubled my income immediately. There was no more trying to be something that I wasn't. I was simply called upon to do a physical job, get paid well for it, and that was it. I have not been in my educated field since.

H. Is that what you're doing now?

G. Hm hmm! I've done that for eight years. Worked there for eight years and haven't had anything to do with agriculture since. Still have a love for farming and a deep appreciation for the rural life and their values and that work, but I didn't have the background. The mistake I made was if I wanted to be in the field of agriculture, I should have gone into ag-economics, horticulture, not farming agriculture. And if I was going to continue to pursue that, then go to a campus where they had a large farm, several operations, and you could work, you could feed, and you could clean, and you could take care of animals, you could plow, you take a course out there in ag-mechanics and you don't even get close to a tractor. You work on a gasoline lawnmower engine, it's pathetic.

H. Well thank you very much Greg. It's been a very fine experience for me talking to you. You certainly express yourself very well.

G. Well I was glad to help you if it's . . .

THE END