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My name is Luke Aldridge. I'm interviewing Vietnam veteran Dennis DePuy, who served in the Army, completing two tours in Vietnam beginning in 1968. Mr. DePuy, this interview will have four sections Your Life before service, Basic training, your time in Vietnam and Your Life After Service. So let's get started with your background. All right. Great. Where did you grow up and what was your area known for?

00;00;29;00 - 00;00;58;02

Well, that's a good question. My father was in the service. Ended up spending 30 years. And so I was born in Kentucky, and we lived in Indiana for a little bit. And then we moved to Japan. Before I started, grade school back to Ohio. We lived in France when I was, like, in its seventh or sixth and seventh grade and back to Ohio and then to Hawaii for the ninth and 10th grade, and then finally, I guess, to Georgia for, junior and senior year.

00;00;58;05 - 00;01;15;27

So we moved all around the world, and we were just known as Army family. Like like so many other service dependents. Can you tell me about your family? My family?

00;01;16;00 - 00;01;54;05

It was titled Mom and Dad. Mom and dad met each other during World War two in a place called Camp Crowder, Missouri. Mother went from Salina, Ohio to Camp Crowder, Missouri to visit her. We call them, best friend now. They weren't engaged, but they were well liked. Each other. And, she drove down from Ohio to, Camp Crowder, Missouri, which is in the southwest corner in Missouri with her friend who was married to a soldier boy.

00;01;54;07 - 00;02;23;15

Well, dad had been, in the army 1935 and 36 and then got out when World War Two started. He rejoined in January of, 42. And because he was prior service, he went to a mobilization station in Columbus, Ohio, where for six months or so. Oh, he did was he was a runner for the company. And, when the orders came down, a particular group was going to form.

00;02;23;17 - 00;02;50;21

They had would take that to personnel, and, personnel would fill out a cadre of maybe 15 or 20 people. He'd take it back to the mobilization company, and they'd call guys down, and they'd send him off to

whatever fort they were, mobilized that when they had rejoined the Army, do. Fight in the war. And, he was getting a little bit tired of being administrative in the States.

00;02;50;23 - 00;03;29;21

So, He put his own name on the mobilization list and ended up going to Camp Crowder because of his prior service. He had a little bit of rank. So when, mom's boyfriend. And when that company showed up, when the two 300 guys showed up to train, dad was walking out the gate one evening and he saw, fella Jim Roebuck, who was a private in his unit, talking to a nice looking girl to had struck up a conversation with him on that.

00;03;29;21 - 00;03;47;22

If that was his wife, it's not just my girlfriend. And oh, where she from? Ohio. What are you doing down here? Women weren't allowed to come on post. They had to meet him at the main gate. So, mom was staying at the main gate one night waiting for Jim to come so they could go out on a date.

00;03;47;22 - 00;04;07;10

And this sergeant shows up and comes to my mother and says, are you waiting for Jim Roebuck? She goes, why are you asking him? How do you know that? He says, well, he's got duty tonight and he knows how much you wanted to go out. So he's asked me to take you out, and he wants to make it up to you tomorrow night with dinner and dancing.

00;04;07;12 - 00;04;28;07

And my mom said, okay, we'll go to the movie. So they went to the movie and they had reminded her that, okay, tomorrow, same time, same place, and he went to take it to dinner and dancing. Well, the next night, mom shows up and dad goes, I'm sorry, he's got KP tonight. Dad was giving him extra duty and, making dates with mom.

00;04;28;07 - 00;04;51;02

And about six weeks later, mom. Dad got married and then he shipped out to the South Pacific. Didn't come home till, I think it was October of 45. He had so many points that he was one of the. He could come home quicker than a lot of the other guys did. And so, they got married and,

00;04;51;04 - 00;05;15;04

Stationed different places. And that's how Mom and Dad met, dad. The father was, born and raised on the Indian reservation in Kansas. Is

member where members of the Iowa tribe of Kansas and Nebraska. Iowa tribe of Kansas. Nebraska. That sounds kind of different, but, our original domain was what becomes a state of Iowa and part of Missouri and part of Minnesota.

00;05;15;06 - 00;05;38;18

And through the years, it just got smaller and smaller, and we ended up on reserved land. That is on the border of Nebraska and Kansas. So we like the Cherokees. We have, one band or part of the tribe. That's Kansas, Nebraska, one part. It's in Oklahoma. And, in that military service was World War two, Korea and Vietnam.

00;05;40;16 - 00;06;14;07

He, had cousins that were in World War Two there flew, Peter William Atkinson and Robert Edward Atkinson, and Alec Al flew for the Navy and he survived the war. Peter flew with the, Schnucks Flying Tigers in 19 summer 41 to and died in October on a test flight. He was a test pilot, and then his younger brother ended up also flying in China and Burma.

00;06;14;10 - 00;06;38;09

And, in 43rd March of 43, he, didn't return from mission. He was was is am I the end of the war? We found Robert's airplane in a grave right next to it. So they knew Robert. And when they went to look for Peter, the graveyard in Chengdu, Burma, had been all tombstones, and everything had been pushed aside when the Japanese invaded.

00;06;38;09 - 00;07;06;17

And, Peter was not accounted for until 2017, when we finally brought him home. I'd love to circle back to World War Two with you in a second. How many siblings did you have? Two. Okay. A brother and sister. An older brother. Bruce. Who? Him being older, you know, he was always, played sports first. And he was in the Boy Scouts first.

00;07;06;17 - 00;07;40;28

And he did everything first. And usually did it better. Flying helicopters was, the one thing that I did before him and better than him and, my sister, ten years younger than I am, and, she's, a doctor. She's, she's retired. M.D. Bruce is, retired. Postal post office. Do you have any specific memories of your father or other men around you telling war stories from World War Two?

00;07;41;01 - 00;08;05;13

Oh, absolutely. My father never said much about what he did. He was,

single construction. I know that, when the army showed up Guadalcanal, he and his unit, that's what they did. They were construction. They ran telephone lines and set up, call centers and, maintained them. And, he but, he talked about a few things.

00;08;05;13 - 00;08;34;03

He talked about, setting up phone communications for the five aircraft or five airfields that ended up being on Guadalcanal. And through the war, they moved up the island hopping and talked about, arriving in Batangas, the Philippines and, in Tokyo. Three days for the pastry, you son. He helped put together a radio relay station that would relay the ceremony back to the States.

00;08;34;09 - 00;09;10;14

And, there were still Japanese soldiers walking around Tokyo with rifles and everything, but, there wasn't any trouble or any problem. And, they had that come home in October, which was much earlier. My friend George Mason's father was a marine. He got to the South Pacific in 45, and he didn't come home till 47. So, and dad used to read to me about his cousin that flew with flying Tigers because there were some number of books read or written, and he was so proud of, his cousins that flew.

00;09;10;29 - 00;09;36;28

I could tell it when he read about them and talked about that, I wanted him to be that proud of me. So that's one of the reasons why I chose to fly. And when you say fly, you're talking about helicopters, not plane helicopters in in the service. Yes. I tried to, you know, fighter pilot, World War two had a lot of, a lot of fame around it and admiration and kind of hero worship stuff.

00;09;37;01 - 00;09;58;29

And so, that first year of college in, I went down and talked to the Air Force and the Navy and everybody wanted a four year degree. And I didn't hear that the Army had a program. I need to be was high school graduate, and, it's a new flight school. So that's, ended up, flying for the Army, which I don't read at all.

00;09;59;02 - 00;10;30;24

You know, flying helicopters were very rewarding. Served. We will circle back to your entrance into the military in just a second. Okay. Did you have a favorite World War Two movie growing up? Oh, we saw so many. There wasn't, I couldn't even pick out a favorite. John Wayne did star in the, film about the Flying Tigers, but, you know, it was just overacting, and, you know, it was more propaganda than it was

anything else.

00;10;31;18 - 00;11;01;09

30s old Tokyo, where they bombed, Tokyo, I thought was, something that we saw a number of times. And matter of fact, in 2002, I loved being an escort for the Doolittle Raiders in Columbia and got to know some of them personally, which was, quite a reward. Other than that, in the 50s there was, you know, was this war movie when most of the time,

00;11;01;11 - 00;11;24;06

It was kind of hero stuff. But no, other than that, you know, there were so many of that, there's so many, present cowboy movies. So you mentioned earlier, your entrance into the military was around the same time that you went to college. So before you enlisted, where did you go to college and what did you study?

00;11;25;18 - 00;11;51;03

I went to August College here in Augusta, over in Augusta and, business major, it's pretty easy to pick something. And if I had to pick a major, I really didn't know. Nobody in my immediate family had ever go to college. And it seemed like the place to go. And, but I guess college didn't have a a campus life.

00;11;52;09 - 00;12;24;14

And it seemed more to me like, fifth year high school, and I wasn't very enthusiastic about staying there anyway. So, when my father came home in March of 68th March or April of 68, right after Tet offensive, everything. And my brother Dan was assigned to go to Vietnam at that time, I start it's my time to sign up, to, two semesters at, I guess to college.

00;12;24;16 - 00;12;53;02

And was that in 1967? It was fall of 67, in the spring of 68, from September 67th to, maybe May. I was also working on, a job to look at, you know, gosh, I'm working part time and if I, if I just could work full time, I'd be making twice as much and then I'd be able to afford cars and other things.

00;12;55;05 - 00;13;23;19

That, That kind of affected my decision of a drop in at college also. So did you hear anything about Vietnam during your time in college? Oh, yes. Yes. It was we'll talk about some of the guys I worked with, there was one guy named Richard that. Was getting ready. He was, probably a junior, college.

00;13;23;19 - 00;13;49;10

And he would come to work every evening with, getting close to the draft. I think I might sign up, you know, and then come and. No, he didn't. And then it was, I get in the reserves, and then it was. He didn't. And it finally at a point where he was, and I don't know what was going on with his grades or where his draft status was.

00;13;49;13 - 00;14;17;13

He finally, after months of waffling back and forth, came to work one day and goes, well, I joined the reserve unit up against college, and two days later the reserve unit was activated. And he did. He did what appeared to be enough, but he hadn't even been basic training. He had got any uniformed, nothing. But they mobilized his unit.

00;14;17;15 - 00;14;57;00

He was shocked. He was upset. You know. Oh, he's done it, you know, and, but, there weren't, At that time, I don't remember any protest, locally in Augusta or, you know, anything to that? Of course. Vietnam. We had three, three news channels in Augusta. And every night, you know, it was a half hour newscast, and it seemed like half of it was, didn't matter which network you walked, half.

00;14;57;00 - 00;15;22;19

It was about being. It was, thoroughly covered in, the press in the news. It was presented to us and, also the newspaper always had a section on Vietnam, times front page and stuff. So, yeah, there was, but we were aware of it. Now, I'd like to move on to the start of your service and basic training.

00;15;22;26 - 00;15;54;03

Okay. Would you describe yourself as volunteering, being commissioned or drafted? Volunteered. And what were the main reasons you volunteered? Well, my family, my dad's ancestry, kind of a warrior ethos. And, my brother was already in and I had, uncles had served in World War two, and, I knew that the draft was out there.

00;15;54;05 - 00;16;18;08

And my dad had been in the Army for so long, of course, knew that if you were drafted, your job was picked by the needs of the service, and, I did not. My brother was an infantryman, and I did not want to walk in the jungles of Vietnam at all. I didn't want to walk anywhere. I knew that flying.

00;16;18;10 - 00;16;45;27

You probably be out of a base and have a hard roof over your head. And, not sleep in the jungle in the rain. So, I chose to enlist so that I could pick what I wanted to do, and they would guarantee it at the time. And, if they failed to give you that job or train you for that, then you'd be released.

00;16;45;29 - 00;17;22;20

Of course, then you'd probably be drafted shortly thereafter. But, yeah, I joined. And did you expect to go to Vietnam? Yes. Flying helicopters. Yes. We had, a cousin's cousin in law's brother that flew helicopters into the hospital at Eisenhower. And, we would go out to visit him while he was recovering. And he, did go into great depth about it, but I thought he was pretty cool back.

00;17;22;22 - 00;17;48;08

And, it kind of reaffirmed that. Yes, that's what I want to do. Could you talk about your dad's brother's service in relation to Vietnam? Oh, yeah. Yes. My brother, we'll start with my brother, because that's really where dad's Vietnam service begins. Joined the Army in 1965. He went basic training for going and advanced training at Fort Gordon.

00;17;48;10 - 00;18;12;24

And during the advanced training, his drill sergeant thought he showed some leadership ability and, told him about the officer candidate school and that how in a period of time out of four months, six months, he could be a lieutenant. And Bruce was interested in that. So this sergeant got Bruce to apply, and the sergeant and Bruce were going to go to the same class.

00;18;13;24 - 00;18;49;04

Well, my father at the time, 28 plus years in the military, knew what the probability of a young infantry second lieutenant survive in Vietnam was pretty low. And so had volunteer to go to Vietnam. He thought that by the time the year that he would serve there, that the, war would be over. There was, the saying and the, the some of the government folks were saying they could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

00;18;49;07 - 00;19;10;26

And, they thought that my both that that it'd be over by the time they had served. And then Bruce wouldn't have to go to Vietnam. It's an interesting. Yeah. So that's how dad went to Vietnam. And again, he was in Singapore and he ran telephone exchanges and, can I just say

one other thing about that?

00;19;10;29 - 00;19;33;00

He could do stuff like take a toothpick and block a number, and then that number would call him back and it would be Quartermaster Guy and you go, hey, my my phone's out. I'm calling you for marine. Who is this? Dad knew exactly what I said. He says, well, let's start social down to quartermaster. And they said, okay, well, give me number and we'll try to get it fixed in when I can, maybe 3 or 4 days.

00;19;33;02 - 00;19;53;12

Oh no. I got him a phone right away and they'd go, if you get my phone fixed today, I've got a case of steaks down here. Okay. So that have been around the Army long enough to know that his job in Vietnam was not going to be out in the jungle, that he would be in a more secure area and, he he did that.

00;19;53;14 - 00;20;26;22

Bruce, when, Bruce arrived in Vietnam and, April of 68 and by August and he was a, military advisor to the South Vietnamese, in two core around, duck toe, Khartoum and, and something the other and, Bruce worked with the Vietnamese every day. That's what he did. And, in August, he was wounded and, medevac by desktop three seven.

00;20;26;22 - 00;21;02;05

Mike Rinehart to play coup to the 71st back hospital, where, Bruce met his nurse and and then the second time Bruce was wounded, he had same nurse because he'd seen her in between those times. And then when they came back to the world, Bruce Lee were married. So, that ties into his wife also. And, she was, forgive me any, ten years older than my brother.

00;21;02;07 - 00;21;40;09

So being, 31 at the time, seeing 18 year olds who, you know, even when you're 31, in a little bit more maturity, especially for a woman. Their heart, her heart went out to every woman as there's a kid. And, when, when they treated him in the hospital, they would, either be able to be returned to their in Vietnam or they would stabilize them and ship them, back to Japan or, the states for recovery.

00;21;40;09 - 00;22;07;10

And, and once her patients that went back to the states left and, and the rest of the nurses never knew whether they survived or not, had no idea. You know, it left a void in her that, it was hard. Fill until

the, women's monument in Vietnam. And I think it was, late 80s. It was dedicated.

00;22;07;12 - 00;22;28;28

And then, when the hospital staffs would gather there, particular nurses, they would have, veterans come up to them and go, I did, anybody here from the 71st to back, does anybody remember a redheaded nurse that was there in 68? And and they started to make some connection with some of their old patients, which was awesome.

00;22;29;00 - 00;23;06;01

What, what the nurses did for us, pales in comparison to what I did. I mean, they were. Sure. Emotionally tried to distance themselves. But it's hard to do, and, they cared and, so we always have to remember them. Don't let that image of a Vietnam veteran be somebody. Helmet, M-16, and and tromping through the jungle when there was nurses and of course other people with other jobs there.

00;23;06;16 - 00;23;32;02

So it's, important to remember. Remember them too. Thank you. To back up a little bit on your dad's and brother's story. Your father volunteered in an effort to spare your brother from having to serve. Right. But it sounds like he had to anyway. Yes. He did. What was that like for? For your brother and your father?

00;23;32;22 - 00;24;07;23

It was just duty, you know? It's what they signed up to do. I think they had a much greater effect on my mother. That was around 67, 68, 68, 69,670. I went back in 7172, suffer, 5 or 6 consecutive years. My mother had husband, her son, Vietnam. I don't know how she did it, so.

00;24;07;25 - 00;24;35;18

But then Bruce did, you know, and when you look at that, you got to remember the families that were at home, mom celebrating her 25th wedding anniversary alone, birthdays, and, all those things. Which means so much to a mother. Without that person. So. Just think about mom, moms, our wives and children, too, you know?

00;24;35;18 - 00;25;06;04

But that was tough. Tough for a mom, I think. Then, my brother, my dad. And does your father talk to you at all about the Tet Offensive? Just a bit of humor. It, happened to be his 49th birthday. Dad was born on January 30th, and, he thought that the other sergeant, the sergeants in particular day it 78 nights had their didn't live with

troops.

00;25;06;04 - 00;25;29;26

They had their own, building. And when, when the event started at midnight, dad thought it was his buddies throwing firecrackers and celebrating his 49th birthday with him. And, that's how dad mentioned about that. So.

00;25;29;29 - 00;26;14;05

So back to your story. What, if anything, did you know about the country of Vietnam before you enlisted? Before I enlisted, yes. Where it was, it was covered in the news. That it had been, a French, coming, that there had been a, war of rebellion, so to speak, against the French. And, because of the, connection with the, World War Two American volunteer group that actually flew with, I knew that, some of the Japanese airplanes when they struck China and Burma, actually flew out of Vietnam.

00;26;16;02 - 00;26;45;07

That it was, split country like Korea and that the communists were in the north and, our allies were in South, you know, that it was, A country that had been fought over for a long time, and we were trying to prevent the communists from winning it and starting what they called a domino effect, where one country in Southeast Asia fell.

00;26;45;07 - 00;26;55;24

That meant another one was going to another one. And, then communism would spread to a much larger place. That was the.

00;26;55;27 - 00;27;31;06

That's what I understood. And did your military training include anything about Vietnamese culture history? No, not that I remember. Nothing. Nothing at all. I think it was a and I can't speak for everyone to tell you about. So, after my service in Vietnam, I thought that was a major failure for the Army. That, That they didn't tell us that, now, I wasn't supposed to be dealing, every day with the Vietnamese.

00;27;31;09 - 00;28;03;00

I didn't have that kind of working relationship. My brother did get some, made aware of, some of the customs and culture because he was going to be an advisor. He actually went through a training period setting him up to go to Vietnam. That involved, working with him and, but for me, it was just, technical flying helicopters and navigating

here and there and and, without any really.

00;28;03;02 - 00;28;29;21

I didn't think I'd have any contact with a Vietnamese citizen. I thought I thought it all be American, you know? Well, I'm very much looking forward to hear more about your interactions with Vietnamese people in just a minute. Back to basic training. At the time, just before your service, do you remember anything specific about the last days before your service or the trip to base?

00;28;29;23 - 00;29;00;21

Had a girlfriend? And, The, you say before my service. Just that it was, there were guys that were being drafted. There were guys that were going, there were some guys that had been had gone. And, a couple of months since high school that had gone and come back wounded,

00;29;01;00 - 00;29;25;07

Other than that, I was just 18 years old and trying to go to college, trying to work and wondering when my dad was going to be home and and then finally, then when brother went to, it's not a fog. It just doesn't seem like there's anything that jumps out at that. How would you describe your boot camp experience?

00;29;25;21 - 00;29;29;28

Normal.

00;29;30;00 - 00;29;58;10

With a little exception. Getting it started. Dad had promised me, as he had my brother, that, when I joined the Army, I would take my basic training at Fort Gordon that knew the edge. And out there, I had served with him in France, in in the 50s and 60s. And, Colonel Hathaway assured dad that when I went to service, he could get me assigned to Fort Gordon, just like he did my brother.

00;29;58;12 - 00;30;17;05

And it made, my brother's basic training, where a lot of guys maybe weren't allowed to leave the base. Well, there'd be the sergeant there, and he was able to sign my brain home and, on the weekends and bring a friend and eat and, you know, kind of have a break of the training. Well, my dad promised me that.

00;30;17;05 - 00;30;47;26

And when I went to Fort Jackson, to be inducted, it was only about a

four hour event. They called eight of us, to sit outside, and, they brought a set of orders out, and they told us, gave it to one guy named Sam Davis, and he was going to be the group leader. And we got on a bus and I thought, well, I got two busses to for Gordon.

00;30;47;28 - 00;31;06;28

So that's where my dad said I was going to take basic training and, took us to the airport, put us on an airplane. Wow. This is called flight school. Really cool. Because now they're going to fly us to Atlanta and then fly us to, Augusta. You know, I have arrived, and, we weren't going for going at all.

00;31;06;28 - 00;31;29;23

We're going to Fort Polk, Louisiana, and, it was, come to find out, that's where the majority of helicopter pilots have signed up. We'll call it high school. The flight school, took their basic at Fort Polk and then went on to Texas. So that was quite a surprise. And we got for Polk and we hadn't been issued uniforms and everything.

00;31;29;23 - 00;31;51;26

And, that's where we got our haircuts and started basic combat training is what they called it. So and it was, I imagine it was just like anybody else's. You were it was very regimented up at a particular time of day. You did, physical exercises. If you were fat boy, you didn't get to eat as much at the mess home.

00;31;51;29 - 00;32;16;14

We, went to classes and went to the range and learned how to, shoot an Army rifle and the march back and finally were, graduated, put on a bus, and I must say, probably at least half of that company went to, for welders to flight school. And then we, were taken to the local airport.

00;32;16;14 - 00;32;43;17

This is in Louisiana, and we were flown to Love Field in Texas and then got on a DC3, an old prop plane that started flying in the 30s. And it was Trans Texas Airlines, which I understand was owned in part by the Johnson family and then flown to, Fort Polk, Louisiana, on this whole rig, a World War Two aircraft, which was quite an experience.

00;32;43;19 - 00;33;14;04

I'd I'd been on one before, and this was the evening flight. And you could see the exhaust, the fire kind of spitting out of it. And some guys were really concerned that the aircraft was on fire, and they

mentioned something. And, the stewardess said, don't start warranty, don't see the fire come up. So, it was it was a little surprise getting there, but the rest of it was, routine for the, eight weeks there to go through basic combat training.

00;33;14;04 - 00;33;40;11

The guys that, weren't going to flight school, most of them ended up going to North Fort Polk, which was called Tiger Land. And that was, a a prep course for becoming infantry. And Vietnam down there. Again, I didn't want to walk. Yeah, I met some guys that, in basic that, I knew through flight school all the way through flight school.

00;33;40;13 - 00;34;07;00

And, one of them was, George Mason from Oklahoma. We'll talk about him later. I'd like to move on to your time in Vietnam. Okay. Before we get into your experiences, could you clarify the dates of your two tours? Okay. My first tour started. Arrived, the third or fourth of Vietnam. 3rd or 4th of August, 1969.

00;34;07;03 - 00;34;44;19

And, I believe I left Vietnam on the 5th of August. 1970. I came back to the States for a year. I was stationed at the Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, and then, I volunteered to go to Cobra School, so I knew that would take them back to Vietnam. And I went to Cobra school and, went back to Vietnam and arrived in Vietnam, middle of August, 1971 until January the 16th of 1972, when, my unit 101st Airborne stood down.

00;34;44;22 - 00;34;59;03

And anybody that had that much time in country was allowed to go home. If you had less than six months and they just transferred you to another unit.

00;34;59;05 - 00;35;24;18

Time out. Where are we going? To talk about my helicopter training before I get to Vietnam? I think we can, if you'd like to talk about that a little bit. You know, that's up to you. That's, Yeah, that's a year or nine months worth of prep. So. And when you're talking about, your time flying in Vietnam, if there's things related to training that you want to bring up, that would be a perfect time for that.

00;35;24;21 - 00;35;55;23

Oh, okay. Okay. All right. At this point, I think we're we're past that. And it would be very hard for Doctor Morris to kind of jump

around, so. Okay. Did anything stick out to you about your initial flight to Vietnam? Yes. Two things in particular. We had quite a celebration the night before I left, and I got drunk and got on an airplane in August, and mom and dad were there.

00;35;55;23 - 00;36;31;12

They. And I was going to, California and, went to Atlanta, change planes. When we stopped in Dallas, the stewardess woke me up, says, we're in Dallas. And I said, oh, I'm going to California. She says, okay, so I never deplaned. And we got to California and I got off the plane. I went down to the baggage check, and I was looking for my bags, and there was some military duffel bags, and that's what I had in a net.

00;36;31;13 - 00;37;02;27

And my bag never did come across the ground. So I went to the last baggage and I asked them, and they took my ticket with the baggage claim number stuff. And I said, you know, where's my baggage? I looked at it says, your baggage is in San Francisco. You're in Los Angeles. So, I was supposed to change planes in Dallas, but they ended up getting me there, and, when I got there, some of my flight school buddies lived there.

00;37;02;29 - 00;37;37;16

And his dad, who worked for Caterpillar Tractor, came out, picked us up, took to his house while we waited for our departure date, which sometimes was 3 or 4 days, and we in effect had a flight school reunion there. There were guys that were there that left the day that I came to Mr. Williams house and, then maybe 4 or 5 guys a day showed up, and then, 3 or 4 days later, I left, and they were very generous to, rather than staying in a hotel to staying on base to come get us and take us there.

00;37;37;18 - 00;38;32;21

So I'm on the airplane and we go, through Alaska and Japan to get to Vietnam, and we get to Vietnam, land. And it's, you know, everybody's who were born Vietnam. The brokers and this Third World stench rolled into the, cabin of the aircraft, and the heat and moisture from the tropics rolled rolling with us. And, you know, the aircraft had already been shut down, and it was humid and hot and a couple of MPs, military policemen got on board and they gave us a deplaning brief and, how we were supposed to move rapidly to, bus and we would be taken to the replacement battalion.

00;38;32;23 - 00;38;55;11

And it was, I don't know, 15 miles, half an hour, 45 minute ride and so when we did that, you know, and it says move hastily to it, don't delay. And, so, of course, everybody was scared. And we did that and we got on the bus and they were army busses, and they had this, chicken wire over the windows.

00;38;55;11 - 00;39;20;02

The windows were up, and they said that was to keep people from grenades hanging. Took after this third world country with people in rickshaws and, three wheel Lambretta and and bicycles and to some mass humanity. And we just figured everyone was busy and everyone had a grenade and they scared the hell out of us. But it was uneventful, you know.

00;39;20;02 - 00;39;53;01

But, it just didn't realize what you what you'd gotten after being there while we we didn't notice the stench, but initially, it was quite a shock. And that's two things about getting there from airplanes that I distinctly remember. Would you describe yourself as being in combat in the rear or something else in combat? Bill assault helicopter pilot.

00;39;53;04 - 00;40;27;01

That was our job was to basic. Our primary job was to take combatants into a landing zone so they could engage in. Yes, combat. Could you talk a little bit more about the kind of work you were doing? You'd be flying? We had a number of different kind of missions, and it was all to support the, folks on the ground, you know, let's primarily what we were there for, primary mission, an assault helicopter coming in.

00;40;27;05 - 00;41;03;24

We had, 20 troop carrying helicopters called slicks and, probably eight gunships that would provide escort and cover, for the, slicks for these other highways. We would, go some place the pickup zone, load up with troops, take them to a designated spot of off, offload them, which sounds very. They'd jump off, whether or not, our door gunner shot was dependent on whether or not anybody would shoot at us.

00;41;03;27 - 00;41;29;07

And, sometimes we'd make we'd. You should make more than one trip into that landing zone until that, entire unit was there. And then the troop carrying aircraft would go to some relatively safer place and stand by and wait on a cold mission. And the next thing that would be scheduled was to pick them up and take them home.

00;41;30;01 - 00;41;56;10

If we made five lives in that, we figured we'd make five lives out. And usually we were a flight ten. In between those times, there, gunships would provide close air support to them, be with them. And if, they got engaged by the enemy, then the gunships would engage bad guys. We would have, we were on standby.

00;41;56;13 - 00;42;31;11

And, if they needed us again, they would call. And if they did, it was because they made contact with the enemy. And, somebody had been wounded in 1 or 2 ships, depending on how many were wounded. We'd have to go out and pick them up and take them to a medical facility. If the contact was heavier, we would, perhaps bring some replacements and pick up more wounded folks on the way.

00;42;31;12 - 00;42;59;28

And we'd take replacements and they'd take the wounded out if the if they needed more ammunition, we would an extra mission during the day would bring them ammunition. And, the last one is usually the worst. If they were just in, if they were outnumbered greatly and just needed to get the hell out of there, then in amongst all that contact and fighting, we'd have to go pull them out.

00;43;00;03 - 00;43;28;05

And when we pulled them out, usually the last lift out was, where we would receive the most fire because, before that, there would be a perimeter and our guys would be defending the landing zone, and for the last lift, and they would evacuate the dislodge themselves from the defensive positions, and then the other guys would occupy those and wait for the helicopters.

00;43;28;05 - 00;44;00;03

Come in and, and engage helicopters. So the last lift, those combat assaults, sometimes we, would have an individual, just one ship to support the mag be biters of a province or county. Think of it as Aiken County. And, we'd go to the headquarters and pick them up and make what we called a mail run to all the outpost and fire basis that they had to bring mail, bring a replacement, or to bring somebody that had been on our and or, or to pick up somebody and bring them back.

00;44;00;04 - 00;44;21;24

It was like a bus. And, we do that once in the morning, once in the afternoon, we had, usually the operations sergeant for that, province would be coordinating and calling heads, hey, list of things that we

needed to do and that single ship mission that usually was about for us was usually about ten hours, flight.

00;44;22;18 - 00;44;51;04

We had night missions. Later on in 1970, we had the night missions. They were called Nighthawk, back up to combat assaults. They could take place daytime or nighttime. Sometimes if the operation was large or larger than expected, it would be continuous. And sometimes we'd be out for 24 hours. Which was unusual. But back to the Nighthawk, mission.

00;44;51;06 - 00;45;15;20

That was two troop carrying helicopters that had been outfitted with some more armament. We had a low bird that had a minigun which shot, a Gatling type gun that was designed to shoot 6000 rounds a minute, but usually was time down, in aircraft, in for 2000 rounds. I mean, I think hardest was 2000 rounds minute.

00;45;15;23 - 00;45;45;06

And that machine gun being a rat a tat tat anywhere. And even in the daytime, you can see the fire coming out of metal. You know, that same ship we had a, c on Searchlight that was adapted from a tank. And when we'd be out at night, maybe around 500ft or lower, if you saw something that was suspect, got rid of the light, would turn the light on and illuminate the target and then decide to engage or not as a cover ship.

00;45;45;06 - 00;46;10;26

We had a another troop carrier that had been outfitted with a, a 50 caliber machine gun, which had a lot more range than the minigun or the M60. And, they would be up at maybe 1500 feet outside of small arms range. And if the, low bird was engaged, then the the high bird would cover him with its fit count.

00;46;10;28 - 00;46;41;21

And a lot of times the harbor also carried flares which could help illuminate. And then we had, kind of ash and trash missions that were, administrative or if, particular maybe a colonel or a general needed to go see something or go someplace special. He could, request the ship. But all the request, whether it's combat assaults or the single ships, were requested through our battalion, who was about a hundred miles away.

00;46;41;23 - 00;47;16;18

And they would hold the request through the day and prioritize it. And then when we when our company and there were four companies of the day and a calf troop, when the assault companies then would in the evening would communicate with Battalion and say, we've got, 15 mission capable Huey's and we've got so many mission capable gunships, and then they would generate a mission based on our availability and assign it to us.

00;47;16;21 - 00;47;39;05

And that's, what we do the next day. So some days it was just combat assaults, and other days it was a mix of things. And, we. Their troops. That and what I say, aircrews. I want to say that all the things I did is helicopter pilot. I couldn't do without an air crew in the back.

00;47;39;11 - 00;48;03;07

Crew chief. Whatever I couldn't do without the guys at refueled rearm. I couldn't do without the guys who turned wrenches on the aircraft. During the night. I couldn't do without the guys that, delivered the fuel to the airfields. There were so many people that supported us that really never do get the credit that, you know, when somebody say, oh, you flew helicopters.

00;48;03;07 - 00;48;31;06

Oh, I appreciate it. Y'all picked me up. Did this? Well, we'd been sitting in a 6,500 pound paperweight. If it hadn't been for all the guys that made the helicopter fly and we just flew. So a lot of credit really needs to go to a whole lot of other people and just helicopter pilots. Yeah. How would you describe the people you served with in terms of economic background, race or religion.

00;48;31;18 - 00;49;04;18

Americans. Yes. Oh very We really didn't have, the, the, the only guys that seem to be different in the end were guys who had gone to, West Point. Not all of them, but, I knew a few. One on one guy. Captain Dale was. You'd never be able to tell. He went to West Point based on the, way the other ones acted.

00;49;04;18 - 00;49;27;16

They were. Seem to think they were better than anybody else. Or smarter. They were regular army officers. They had a particular attitude about them that, just didn't settle well with a lot of the folks. And, based on their rank, you know, they got quite a bit more themselves in what other people did.

00;49;27;16 - 00;49;54;13

And I'm not saying that was for everyone. Just, I'm sure there's a lot of military, academy graduates that, you know, where we'll say regular people. It's hard. It's hard to pick out economic differences in folks when you're all wearing the same uniform every day. You get the same haircut and you do the same job, and, nobody goes, my dad's a doctor, you know?

00;49;54;15 - 00;50;30;04

You know, what? Do you do it. You know how good a pilot are you going to be? 100 crew chief, are you? You know, and all those other factors just didn't didn't, didn't fit in there. But like society, we did have, we did have social problems. There were some drugs around, and, there were guys who were, didn't really care for authority and but, you know, you had that all over society.

00;50;30;04 - 00;50;46;22

And when people kind of reflect, a lot of those negative traits to the army in Vietnam, it was it was, reflective of what society was at the time. Really.

00;50;46;24 - 00;51;24;22

How did living in Vietnam and meeting Vietnamese people affect you? We lived on base. I lived in a wooden. Building. I had my being an officer. I had my own room, particularly a pilot. I had a refrigerator and a fan. On the days that I did not fly, when I wrote letters home or or just didn't do anything or just relaxed, or sometimes we were able to catch a hop, catch flight into Saigon.

00;51;24;22 - 00;51;58;02

We'd have a day off, by exposure to, So it was pretty easy. Like, my exposure to the Vietnamese people. Initially it was contact with those who were on base, and most of those either worked in the clubs, you know, were there were clubs. And I'm talking about like nightclub. There were, civilians who were hired to, work in the missiles.

00;51;58;09 - 00;52;24;01

And there were civilians that were hired to if you had a hooch that would clean up the hooch while you were gone and wash clothes and do that kind of stuff. So and then the, the those who worked in the clubs, in the bars and the waitresses, that was initial contact, but, on days off, we went into, the city, you know, and you got, got to see their society.

00;52;24;01 - 00;52;49;17

And, there was always somebody trying to hustle you for to exchange your American script. Funny money. Play money for the. It means money. In exchange rate, they would give it to you at a higher rate than what you could, post. There was always somebody trying to make a little extra money, or people on the black market sold.

00;52;49;19 - 00;53;35;03

A lot of times we would have to buy flight gloves. Were hard to get. We'd have to go. We'd go to Saigon and go to black market buy because the spy system just couldn't get them, didn't get them, couldn't get them, bars and, bordellos and stuff like that. I really didn't have any contact with, mainstream citizens that worked 9 to 5 in a regular job, or went to school or all those parts of society, or definitely not the farmers in the fields in the remote areas of Vietnam playing with water buffaloes and, just trying to make a living for their family, living in thatched huts.

00;53;35;24 - 00;54;04;08

We'd see them when we'd fly over, but didn't really have any contact with. And what do you remember about Vietnamese children? That, they always seemed to congregate. Those seem to come to us. When I was there, you could wear civilian clothes. We did have some civilian clothes. And it didn't matter whether you in street clothes, in military uniform.

00;54;04;11 - 00;54;36;28

When when I say we went in the city, I went to Saigon and there were, districts of China district, which was Chinese. And, you know, it was, different parts of the city. And the children always seemed to approach in a crowd, wanting something. And, I found out later, after tour, started, that if I patted one on one hand that that was forbidden.

00;54;38;05 - 00;55;07;21

From what I was told, that was their sacred place. It was some kind of connection with the spiritual world. And you were supposed to touch them on the head. Well, you know, I Americans had a kid on hand all day long. And then there were some Soviet little folks that were gangsters and, they would pickpocket you, and they would have a sharp object that they would cut the bottom out of your pocket with that cut, you and your whatever you had, that pocket would fall out.

00;55;07;23 - 00;55;28;26

If you saw a bunch of kids coming at me and see you taking a ring and a watch and stuff off and putting in your pocket, they'd get it out of the pocket. Stealthily, and you wouldn't even know it was there. There were guys if we rode in a three will Lambretta that looked like a motorized rickshaw.

00;55;29;07 - 00;55;53;22

If you were there with a camera hanging over your shoulder or sitting there with your watch arm hanging out the outside. I fell on a motorcycle with a rider in the back would come by and they would hook your watch. Do you watch? Or they'd grab the the camera switch and your camera was gone. And of course, your own history will start.

00;55;53;22 - 00;56;26;04

And they were on a motorbike. They were gone. Yeah. So it was, Didn't have a whole lot of good things to think about the Vietnamese based on those kind of contacts. We've never really dealing with one faced face until, after my tour of Vietnam. I worked with a lot of Vietnamese student pilots and other and got to know them on a more personal basis, which.

00;56;26;07 - 00;57;02;28

Kind of got rid of that, negative, ideal. Did you experience any culture shock in Vietnam? Yes, yes it did. You know, when I look back and I never thought about it like that, but, Seeing how primitive the family, farms were, open sewers, you know, that relates to the stench that you smell, in the river, for instance, flying up rivers and stuff like that.

00;57;03;00 - 00;57;31;16

You may see somebody that had a, outhouse on a little pier in a little dropping point in the river. And then just downstream, there'd be somebody out there washed clothes. Had to be careful about the water. You just drinking water on post was okay. And we had bottled water back then, but, we had, some pills that if you got a canteen full of water, for some reason, you were to treat it.

00;57;31;16 - 00;58;12;02

But, it just just it was Third world, you know, it was poor country and, very meager and, made me thankful for what we have here in the United States. A lot of things, one that there's universities and schools over there and a lot of times, selling units, what they would have would be an effort, to sponsor an orphanage or to sponsor a school or, the nurses in the hospital sometimes would go out and try to.

00;58;12;04 - 00;58;45;23

Help heal, prevent diseases and stuff like that. But it was seem to be very back, primitive, more primitive, given to say third world. And there was, thinking about it, there was some of the structures and the stuff of course, came from colonial French and they were reminded me of the buildings when we lived in France, the buildings in France, the way they were stuccoed and the color they were painted and tile roofs.

00;58;45;25 - 00;59;27;05

And you could see this French colonial culture that had been there, the now the. So of course, some of the Vietnamese were in those buildings and using them. But, the the difference between that and the rule that person boats people that would pull them, if you had a motor one like an album motor that we had, it was, a motor with a very long shaft and a prop, they fished and had fish traps in the river, and, it was just it was Third World.

00;59;27;08 - 00;59;57;17

It was a little bit. It wasn't the exotic Orient that, we grew up there was portrayed in some of the movies and stuff, you know, there was a place, that we went to a time to called Boat Out, which was, French call Cup Saint Jack, and it was French Riviera, Vietnamese big houses, big hotels, beach, a lot of, European influence there.

00;59;57;22 - 01;00;34;04

And that was like go to another country. Can you talk about differences between Vietnamese and American priorities in evacuations? Oh, yes. Certainly. There was a fire base that was overrun one time. We were called to as a flight, not as a single ship, but as a flight to go, pick up the wounded dead. And when we got there, the Vietnamese unloading the dead onto the aircraft, and we wondered where the wounded were, but, you know, it was here.

01;00;34;05 - 01;01;09;06

Take those to, the place where we offload them for the morgue, and, then eventually got to the wounded. And the way it was explained to us was that, I'm not sure whether it was that particular religious sect or whether it was overall, Asian, culture customs that, where we motivated our troops by telling them if you or your body gets wounded and if we can get to him, we can get him to the hospital and, get you one guy to the hospital in less than an hour.

01;01;09;09 - 01;01;37;03

High probability that you live. And that, so to speak, motivated him to continue to fight. But the Vietnamese, if you tell them, got the same motivation out of, we will make sure if you die, we will make sure that your body is returned to your family so that you can participate in the spiritual afterlife that meant more to them than being evacuated if they were wounded.

01;01;38;21 - 01;02;05;08

And, we worked sometimes with the Koreans. Koreans being Asian, they understood that, you know, you threaten, somebody from a Western culture with death and they start that frightening, you know, and you can't kill me. What do you want to know? What the Asian mindset. What I understood was, fine. I'm just going to my ancestors just to deal.

01;02;05;10 - 01;02;23;06

But if you threatened to cut off a body part and disposed to feed it to the dog or some other part where their body wouldn't be complete, when it came time for them to go to their spiritual afterlife, that that was a hindrance to. So, yeah, I'm going to cut off your finger if you don't tell me.

01;02;23;13 - 01;02;50;29

Okay. Cut my finger up. I'm okay. Wait a minute. You know, or I'm going to kill your kids or your mom or dad or some, but with the, that Asian culture, that was just the opposite. And in order to. Deal with them in that situation, you had to know what was, Valuable to them. Was life more valuable or death, you know, which which meant least to them.

01;02;50;29 - 01;03;18;09

It's the I would there. I'm sure there was a lot of Americans didn't understand that. And so, and likewise with a lot of other cultures, if, if you know what's valuable to them, you can, perhaps get them to, share their knowledge and share intelligence, military intelligence and other. Do you remember any distinct animals during your time in Vietnam?

01;03;18;15 - 01;03;53;27

Animals? Dogs. We had a dog around myself. I hated Vietnamese. I know my brother served some time in creating the eight dogs, but, and, you know, dog in America camp was a puppy, a friend, a pal. It was a food source to the, water buffaloes. I always thought of water buffaloes as being wild and and, although there were some herds of them that I saw.

01;03;54;04 - 01;04;23;07

They were domestic animals, beast of burden to help plow fields and move heavy loads and, I like that, fish to. It's just amazing. Same kind of fish traps in the rivers that they had that were kind of based on the title system that, They worked, you know, did you have some animal in mind?

01;04;23;09 - 01;04;56;17

Well, you send me a picture holding a snakeskin. Oh, okay. That was at, one of the missions, that we had dealing with, The military advisers, and, for whatever reason, they had this trophy that they'd found a snake or killed a snake or something like that, and it was, Everybody in the army used to get around about Special Forces guys being snake eaters.

01;04;56;20 - 01;05;19;21

And it was, What'd you do with it? Did you eat them pieces? You want a piece and. No, no. I'm fine. Just took a picture with the skin. I didn't have anything, dude. Other than, being part of the folks we supported and go, wow, you. That's a big snake. Did you personally encounter the Vietcong? You know what?

01;05;19;23 - 01;05;30;28

Did you personally encounter the Viet Cong? You know, not person to person. Of course we did. Flying.

01;05;31;00 - 01;05;59;17

There was, you know, that's where they were Vietcong, which were like civilian militia or an organized, North Vietnamese regular army. That's, there was a time when, we did the Falcons, our gunships found a three guys crossing a rice paddy. And, when they flew over, they stopped and they stripped the shirts off, and, they started picking rice.

01;05;59;17 - 01;06;26;19

And, when they call for clear code for, you know, to relay the intelligence to the, command control helicopter who had, the military advisor and their Aavin, partner there. They back forth when they asked about it, man. And they were picking rice and, what they authorized, to us for the purpose to fire on them because they were picking rice.

01;06;26;19 - 01;06;50;08

It was just a wrong time to harvest rice. It was probably time when

they would just been planted. But, you know, that's that's what they decided to do to try to survive. And they ended up being, Vietcong folks that were transporting money and papers, and they found those in the fields, the other times was in the second tour.

01;06;50;10 - 01;07;16;10

There were times when our, and I was an Air Cav scout, Air camp troop, and we had, we provided reconnaissance and we had one scout, I believe his name was Bartlett, that when he flew around lo looking for the enemy, we were in Cobras, at a high camp. And if he found any, we would engage him while he got away from.

01;07;16;13 - 01;07;44;18

He could tell when he saw tracks on the ground if he called them as North Vietnamese regulars. When we finally found him, they had where they were in uniforms. If he called them Vietcong or VC or Charlie, and they would be wearing black pajamas when fighting. And how he did that, when we asked him, was he got so close to the ground in the tracks that he could see whether or not there was a boot print, a heel print, and if there was a heel print that mean they were wearing boots, had to wear boots.

01;07;44;18 - 01;08;12;11

The wearing uniforms were wearing uniforms. The North Vietnamese regular troops, and if it was a sandal mart, if there was no heel mark, if it was a, track without a heel mark and he'd call them back, become, he was amazing, to be able to glean that much information. But you pass over road or a, stream crossing or, just track them down the road.

01;08;12;11 - 01;08;48;29

He sometimes can tell you they've been. I got ten or more guys went by here 24 hours ago, and as he tracked them, the time would get children shorter until he found them. They shot. And that was his job. Get shot at Scout POWs. Crazy. But, then again, if he had, you know. But I you know, how long ago that was he said when I crossed the stream and I can see the footprints in the stream, but there's no water washed up on one side and know it's a long time ago.

01;08;49;01 - 01;09;13;01

If I come by there and, they're still oozing a little bit of muddy color, and that was a little bit shorter time. If the water is still washed up on the bank, that's even shorter time. It was amazing. He was, but other than that, you know, just getting shot at by somebody and it's hard to tell sometimes where their vehicle.

01;09;13;03 - 01;09;51;10

Do you remember Agent Orange being sprayed? Yes. We had one ship that, had been, used and was used to spray Agent Orange. It had a rather large tank in the back where it was mixed. And it had, a like an agricultural spray rig out to the side, and I forget what the recommended airspeed was, but, when we did that, then the gunships would fly behind us in the covers in case we'd get shot at, that ship when it wasn't when we didn't have a spray machine.

01;09;51;20 - 01;10;33;17

Was used to carry troops and, I believe it was an aircraft. Two, five, eight. And, they couldn't keep it painted. They'd paint it and the paint would peel off and stuff, and and, when we flew it, and if the spray gone, honestly, I think there wasn't anything that said the taking uniform off right away in wash it or any protective clothing that we wore, you know, if our gloves, which, were in short supply, if they got moisture or, we didn't even watch those that, you know, we just wore on the next day, yeah, we sprayed it.

01;10;33;19 - 01;11;18;29

You mentioned the gunships covering you. Were they flying behind you or behind this this helicopter that was spraying? Not directly behind, but, they'd fly off. One would be off. Right wing on one way off left wing far enough back to where if somebody shot at the, bird, it was spraying. If somebody or even if they were escorting a single ship Q or a flight or whenever they were, they were far enough back that, they could engage and shoot their weapons immediately in the area that that the, that aircraft was in, if they were up any closer, you know, they wouldn't be able to engage it.

01;11;19;09 - 01;12;08;29

Sometimes, they would be equally spaced across, to cover the aircraft in flight. And, if they took fire from the right side, the guy on the right would immediately engage, and the other guy would come up and get ready to cover this guy. When when the initial gunship made his run and when it broke, usually to the right, when they broke, then this gunship covered his break by engaging the area where they would get fire, and then this guy would turn around and climb up and try to be in a position to cover this guy when he broke until the, the flight or the aircraft that had been shot

01;12;08;29 - 01;12;33;04

at, was out of danger, usually 1 or 2 runs. And of course, folks were far enough away where they would be engaging in. Or they may, if

they're still continuing to be engaged. This guy, the second guy may cover the initial break and then turn and cover the the flight while this guy climbed up and covered his break and continued to cover the the flight.

01;12;35;15 - 01;13;10;26

The tactics that were used by our Huey gunships, the amount was quite different from what the, tactics used by the Cobras were. Cobras usually started out a lot higher altitude. The bimodal gunships or the Charlie model gunships. The Huey gunships, because they were closer to the same level. You felt I felt a lot better covered because, they were close enough to where they could also, take the fire that was chewing it, as well as a cobra starting from a lot higher altitude.

01;13;11;00 - 01;13;37;28

You know, if if their armament engaged the enemy, they broke a lot higher. So they really were no longer a threat. So then they would take fire flat. I felt more comfortable with the other gunships. So to get back to Agent Orange, were you concerned at the time about Agent Orange being sprayed? Nope, nope. Yeah. One where they wouldn't wear one to wear long term stuff.

01;13;37;28 - 01;14;12;06

I don't know if anybody was, of course, the Air Force had been spraying it in, a lot, a lot larger airplanes could cover more ground. Ours was mostly, smaller projects, if you will, maybe fire bases killing the vegetation back from the perimeter of the fire base. The not so much, straight line along a canal or a creek or anything like that, but no, but.

01;14;12;08 - 01;14;44;28

We didn't know, you know, it was just spray. You know, it's going to kill the vegetation, you know? So. What were some of the ways you coped with the war? Coped with it? Drank. Drank heavily. First and second tour. It was a stress release. It was a time for guys to get together, relax.

01;14;44;28 - 01;15;17;25

And if you wanted to talk about the day we did or, there's a group of guys that played cards and poker. They didn't drink, but, we sang songs and told stories and talked about girlfriends and and meshed with the new guys, new guys that were just coming country and Lakewood happy. I came in country and, went to the club a particular time and I go, how would you take your, check around today?

01;15;17;25 - 01;15;39;11

And, it's not they took the, operators test. How'd you do? I pay? So, what, you pass by the bar? Okay. You know, beer might have been a nickel and dime and try to look at the same thing. You put $5 on the bar, and it was bought for most of the night, to, you know, did that.

01;15;39;22 - 01;16;00;07

Hey, guys, I took my check right today. Did you pass? Yeah, by the bar. Got first letter from home today by the bar. Got a letter from my girlfriend that my bar, got shot at today by the bar, and you just, some guys were pretty easy and did that for a while for the current.

01;16;00;09 - 01;16;24;01

And a lot of times it was, you know, and we should think we had 60 pilots. And if you divide that up into here, you basically had a pilot program to leave about once a week. And so you look for new guys to come in. So, you realized you'd been taken with this by the bar thing when a new guy come in and somebody say, hey, did you get a letter from home today to take a check, right?

01;16;24;01 - 01;16;51;07

Yeah. You got by the bar here? Yeah. That's what they did to me. And usually the guys that, gave the new guys the hardest time were the guys at two weeks ago were new guns. There's a lot of things done to them. But that was a stress release. We sang songs what was the most memorable friendship you had during your time in Vietnam?

01;16;52;26 - 01;17;17;13

There was quite a few of them. Most of the guys I flew with every day and in particular, the guys that I've seen since then, one fellow in particular, Bill Freeman, lives in Simpsonville. In I knew he was from South Carolina. He knew I was from modesta, Georgia. So that and we, we arrived in Vietnam, about four weeks apart.

01;17;17;13 - 01;17;47;25

So, Vietnam age, we were the same age. And, gentlemen, that's who you were closest with. Where guys came the same time. And that same bill a number of times. And we ended up being a National Guard together. And, I went to his wedding, tried to go to his wedding in 1972. It, Bill Freeman, we flew together.

01;17;47;27 - 01;18;08;01

You know, we were same time frame, left a month apart. Ended up in the

National Guard together. So many times after Vietnam. I didn't have any contact with the guys anymore, because, you know, I'm not. Right. The guys back there, you know, at home with my girlfriend, my family, and moving on to the internet, came around.

01;18;08;01 - 01;18;37;04

It was sometimes difficult to find people. But Bill Freeman. And George Mason, which I mentioned earlier, was a good friend in basic and flight school, and, when he was killed, his mom and dad requested me to be a party escort. So we were good friends in high school, but we were separated quite a bit in Vietnam.

01;18;37;04 - 01;19;02;13

And, I developed a close relationship with his mom. Dad, after bringing Bill to. Who did you write to or receive letters from while in country? My mom and dad. I mean, of course, I had a girlfriend and that was probably the most important one, the one I look forward to the most. But that only lasted from August until October.

01;19;02;25 - 01;19;30;05

Mom and dad, promised and did write me every Sunday. I got a letter once a week from my mom and dad, which was looked forward to and, regular. And it gave me a routine. The next one would be Mr.. Mrs. Willingham, whose house stay the Californian for? I came over and, he told Mr..

01;19;30;05 - 01;19;51;11

William told us told everyone in the class, when you get to Vietnam, get the address right and tell me what it is and tell me where you're at. And when we did that, Mr. William, who worked Caterpillar Tractor, had his secretary put together a newsletter about once a month, and the first one came out and, you know, amongst other things about the combine.

01;19;51;13 - 01;20;14;26

Dennis's in very long. And my son, you know, is in Vietnam in the third and fifth and Gary team is in third, fifth. And he let us know that on this big base there was about seven of us. So, you know, when we had time off, we could go look for each other. He also when somebody write and tell him that, classmate had been killed, he would include that.

01;20;14;28 - 01;20;40;23

And, both his son and Gary, Tammy, Eddie, then were wounded and ended

up going back. And they kept us updated on them. And anybody that would write Mr.. Miss Willingham, they would put it in this newsletter and send it out to us. And, with all the love, the bad things that are said about Vietnam and how people felt and a lot of times California stuff out there.

01;20;40;23 - 01;21;04;18

But, Mr.. Miss Willingham, we're great. And they also invited everybody on your way back home. Stop by. We'll do it again on your way home. And, but I came through, McGuire, new Jersey, out in country California. So I didn't get to see him on Google. And, of course, favorite brother and brother and his wife, who had orbited on that day.

01;21;05;13 - 01;21;22;28

Probably the best gift I got was, and I don't know how Bruce did it, but he shipped me a box of apples from Washington state, and, I go up there and I take 1 or 2 the apples with me, and it's a big treat. So.

01;21;23;00 - 01;22;03;06

What was your most expensive or frequent purchase at the most expensive was a camera, 35 millimeter camera. A lot of times, we'd be out during the day for our missions and stuff. We'd come back in, and today the paints got a shipment of watches in it. And of course, it'd be late in the day or maybe the next day before we got over and all the good stuff was going to look, but, the most expensive was, a camera, 35 millimeter camera that my brother picked up a Rolex watch for $95 when he was there, and he tried his daughters to get me to buy one, to order one through the,

01;22;03;13 - 01;22;26;12

military catalog stuff. But, you know, that was 20 years old. I would spend the $95 on that watch. I should have, some of the guys bought cars while they were over there. They would order cars and pick them up when they got home. I didn't do that. I wait till I got home.

01;22;26;15 - 01;22;42;19

Typically a piece of jewelry, a watch and a camera. What kind of high on the list? And then, of course, Christmas gifts could be ordered through the catalog, and they'd ship it right straight to whoever you wanted it.

01;22;42;21 - 01;22;50;01

What was the most beautiful thing that you saw in Vietnam?

01;22;50;03 - 01;23;21;02

That. I hate to say lot of two things, nature wise. It was when I was, in I Corps. Flying with 101st in the mountains. There were waterfalls that had to be 2 or 300ft tall. Juggled sides of hills and, looked very peaceful. But then you go a little bit further and you come across a valley that was bomb craters and everything else.

01;23;21;02 - 01;23;41;23

But, some of the countryside was absolutely gorgeous. And there was a we were looked down. There was. Some ladies there were half French, half Asian that were beautiful, gorgeous.

01;23;41;25 - 01;23;51;21

All right. Well, that's the end of my service questions because there another story we haven't talked about from your time in Vietnam you'd like to share.

01;23;51;24 - 01;24;21;06

There's this there's a few, One of them is, my first, experience of seeing somebody shot down was on September the 1st, 1969. And we were night missions. And, were guided into Cambodia by the captain that was in charge of the C-in-C and lost the lead ship. It was shot down when we we're about 150ft.

01;24;21;21 - 01;24;48;24

It was actually Cambodian. We were supposed to be there, and there was a yellow green tracer that just fill that aircraft full, and they're flying off it. We were chartering what was off the left side at 45 degrees. And of course, I hadn't been there a full month yet. I was copilot, Peter Pilot, and I was guarding the controls, guarding ready to go on the controls when the aircraft commander was.

01;24;48;27 - 01;25;12;24

If he was wounded and my eyes were on the, aircraft that was being shot, and it hit it in the engine, and, it was like a bottle rocket going off. They're just pieces and hot parts and stuff at night. Look like bottle rocket just spewing out the back end of that in the in. You quit, they hit the ground and, just burst into flames.

01;25;14;00 - 01;25;48;10

We landed and the troops jumped off. Maybe some of them were shot getting off and our gunners were shooting and the Cobras were

suppressing. And we left, the glow of the burning aircraft that lit us up and, felt a little bit safer as we flew out of that light into the darkness, felt a little bit safer and then got to altitude, went back, there was a advisor named Michael Burns that was, wounded that night, died later.

01;25;48;13 - 01;26;17;19

And, it got to be really complicated being, 1st of September of 69. And however, he was shot down in Cambodia, it influenced the way I thought about stuff the rest of my, time in Vietnam and the four pilots that didn't get shot and all the American crew survived that, believe or not. And, well, they're the pilots that were shot down.

01;26;17;19 - 01;26;43;18

We're really bitter about the captain taking us to that place. When we found out later that he knew that automatic weapon was there. And so, shortly after that, I was transferred to another unit. In that other unit, the Cowboys flew quite differently. We had, did a minute back mission where the, crew chief toward Silver Star for jumping out of the aircraft.

01;26;43;18 - 01;27;10;07

Don't get the guy putting him on board. And Robert Lukey lives in Arizona. February the 4th, we had aircraft go down, and I picked up the four survivors, took it to the hospital. And, when we got back to, Bearcat that morning, the, it was set up. Got back. We've been gone for over 24 hours.

01;27;10;15 - 01;27;16;26

We had 16 hours flight time, which was an awful lot. The.

01;27;16;28 - 01;27;38;27

Crew chief was post flying the aircraft, and he came to me and he called me back and said, Dennis, just look at this one. Tell me what you think it is. And it was a mark on the underside of our rotor blade. From the gunships terror. We'd had a mid-air, but it's not very many people have the helicopter and survived.

01;27;41;00 - 01;28;15;20

March. The the end of March, that February and a march, we had an aircraft, you know, last pick up zone, take an RPG and exploded. And, I picked up two of the survivors of that one guy died, and, we just didn't find the third guy. And, I get a a card from, Phil Miller pretty much every year on the anniversary of that, thanking me for the

because he's had the rest of his life in this marriage and kids, grandkids and career.

01;28;16;19 - 01;28;39;11

We see each other unions very next day. That day when I picked up Phil, I was trail next, the day I was lead and my copilot to six rounds. Nobody else but some of the troops on the back were hit, but, Goldsmith took three rounds on the way in and three rounds on the way out, and he survived.

01;28;40;25 - 01;29;08;08

May, we participated in, the Cambodia incursion, which was, quite an operation. You know what? D-Day. But our helicopters are concerned, 1974, sir. The whole massive helicopters, it, we went up to Panama pin River and and secured the ferry crossing from Saigon. And, during that time, I also had an engine fight with a guy named Frenchy Dumont from Maine.

01;29;09;11 - 01;29;36;07

We survived that. During the month of May, George Mason was killed. His mom and dad requested me to bring his body home. And then, Mr.. Miss Mason, after we buried George, gave me an envelope, and I'd been extended, two weeks to take care of some personal business by the major from Fort Sill.

01;29;36;09 - 01;29;58;29

And so I asked Mr. Mason what he needed me to do. I want to get started, because all I want to do is get back to you, to my guys. I was one of the senior pilots at that time, and I just I just wanted to get back to the guys. And, Mr. Mason pulled out a envelope from the jacket that he was wearing funeral and handed me a envelope that had, him and his wife and bought a round trip ticket from Oklahoma City to Augusta, Georgia.

01;29;59;02 - 01;30;25;29

And they said, you go see mom. Dad. And then when I got back, I found out that one of the guys new to the unit was from Oklahoma. The same, county that George was from. And he wrote his mother and his mother knew miss Mason. Miss Mason knew her, and and, a month or so later, Cromer had enough time to become an aircraft commander.

01;30;25;29 - 01;30;35;00

And by that time, I had a scheduling officer, and I scheduled them to fly his first mission. Then, he was dead by 12:00.

01;30;35;03 - 01;31;00;23

20 years. I was 20 years old. Second tour. I flew with, two guys that had done flight school with my brother. And I thought my volunteer to go to the 101st, that I'd be working entirely with Americans. But most of the American ground troops had been pulled out. And, so when we did our reconnaissance, primarily from case on to the Ash Valley, we were out there by ourselves.

01;31;00;25 - 01;31;25;24

We always brought a Huey Long, we had a scout loaded two guns, and, here is it flew 130, 500, 4000ft. So he had line of sight radio communications with the unit back home. And if anything happened to any one of the other three aircraft, no questions asked. We wanted him to beat us to the ground, because, we didn't even have artillery coverage out there.

01;31;25;24 - 01;32;00;05

We were just eyes and ears of the division. So, and they also had a club, got drunk, sang songs, and, used to down, in January of 72. And my mother and dad, because they were Army, they got the, Stars and Stripes and Stars and Stripes had an article that said the second of the 17th comes home to Fort Campbell, and they said that newspaper to me in Vietnam, headdress to the second, the same in there.

01;32;00;07 - 01;32;31;15

But once they got 51% of the authorized strength at Fort Campbell, they called the unit home to go, and then I got out, met my wife and, had kids and family and, live the rest of time. Well, on that note, I'd like to talk about your post service life. Okay. What relationship in your life was most changed by your service?

01;32;31;18 - 01;32;53;14

Well, the girl I was engaged to, when I went the service, We didn't have anything to do with him a couple of months, in Vietnam. And what happened was what my dad predicted. I talked to my dad about marrying this girl, and he said, son, he says, don't do it for you. Go to Vietnam.

01;32;53;14 - 01;33;20;28

He says, if your relationship can last a year in your absence, it'll last forever. Well, it lasted six weeks. Eight weeks. She she was young, and I. Needed socialite. So that that was a big effect. And, of course, and,

01;33;21;01 - 01;33;54;21

Gosh, I had 2 or 3 other things there. Tell me ask me the question again. What relationship in your life was most changed by your service? Relationship with my sister. Who, Protested, quite a bit, yeah. And during that time, She seemed to be pretty strongly against everything. It's day to day now.

01;33;54;24 - 01;34;23;26

Me somebody saying anti-war has completely different connotation. What it did back then. Am I a pro-war person? Hell, no. You know, I don't. It'd be great if we never, never had to place people in jeopardy. But sometimes it's necessary. A strong as she felt about all this stuff. When, Gulf War and stuff came around, she.

01;34;23;29 - 01;34;55;23

She changed completely. Now she supported everybody. So I tend to think that it was something chic and popular that her and her friends did because it was, popular attitude. And then when it was, okay to support the military. And then she changed again, the what was she, the fashionable? So, and that and some other things, but, yeah, my relationship with my sister was changed, by that.

01;34;55;25 - 01;35;00;03

Did you know any antiwar veterans?

01;35;00;05 - 01;35;08;06

You know, you have to say chronologically,

01;35;08;08 - 01;35;39;11

Through the years, it has shifted back and forth and, One guy, who was more of a hippie than anything else. And it was it was a whole atmosphere of what he, what he was he was pretty cool to hang around and be with, laughing, that kind of stuff. But he wasn't, really overtly, strongly anti-war, anti-military.

01;35;39;14 - 01;35;57;02

He'd been a marine. He just had a little bitter tour. But, no, no. Who? Since the war have you talked to about Vietnam?

01;35;57;05 - 01;36;32;07

Until the 90s, it was. We were all pretty much invisible. Didn't

really bring the subject up. And it wasn't till after 911 that, the military service began, but the general population, was noted and appreciated and applauded, and, I think as part of my healing, I was able to be in the National Guard with, many other Vietnam veterans.

01;36;32;10 - 01;37;07;06

We were able to talk about it and, sometimes brag about it or tell stories, or at least have some release and, without any criticism. And I think that helped a whole lot. But being able to, speak about it to, veterans organizations, or to, in the educational, platform that my daughter helped with my daughter's school teacher in, Bamberg, South Carolina.

01;37;07;06 - 01;37;34;15

And when she started to cover, World War Two, she asked my dad to do a little first person history of it. And they said, well, no, I want you to talk. What should I talk about? For an hour before the war? During the war in that war. And he took a little piece of mementos and stuff. So the the children, the fifth graders in particular, could touch and feel and, and have something tangible to relate to.

01;37;34;27 - 01;38;09;28

What dad was talking about. And then when Vietnam came along as a history book, which, you know, for fifth grade and you can't dedicate a chapter to something like that, it's just kind of a page. And Amy had one uncle show up where the the book said the, the war ended in, 1973 with all the troops, combat troops came home and he had a, a friend that was killed in 74, 75.

01;38;10;01 - 01;38;32;06

And he was irate because Amy was teaching her children to war ended in 73 when there's still many deaths, go to 75. And she kind of goes, got to teach what's in the book. And so, we, we talk to the kids and bring touchy feely stuff and, take questions. Amy has, I asked Amy one time.

01;38;32;06 - 01;38;53;08

I said, you know, I've seen you do did and the in your students had a lot of questions. I said, find out what their questions are based on what they've read. This is fifth and sixth graders and have them rant questions down. And I will try to when I talk about I'll try to incorporate the answers and of course can do it with all them.

01;38;53;08 - 01;39;16;29

So what I did, I took those questions and I wrote an answer to a all

the questions and so that Amy could give it back to them and what she did, we she made copies of it at home. She's got, from that a couple of the classes questions that they had that I wrote the answers to and tried to incorporate it.

01;39;17;01 - 01;39;48;07

And so go from there. And, speaking to some veterans group to her on, Veterans Day, or, Memorial Day or something like that, trying to, share it helps me heal and, I hope it can help educate other folks. I had something came up in my mind. Welcome home. If we're going to ask about the welcome home, go ahead.

01;39;48;16 - 01;40;08;21

Have a lot of veterans. Sometimes when I'm speaking, you know, remind me that they didn't get a parade when they came home. And, I'm sure there's a lot of folks who didn't, especially after nine, 11 when troops would come back from Iraq and Afghanistan. It was going well. We didn't get a parade and it's too late.

01;40;08;21 - 01;40;14;29

And, you know, there was,

01;40;15;01 - 01;40;34;11

There were units that shipped Vietnam, and there were units that came home, but not the same group of guys came now. And the unit ships, I will say, from Fort Gordon at Fort Eisenhower, if there's 2 or 300 people that go, those 2 or 300 people, hopefully the same people come back to the families and everybody stationed at that fort.

01;40;34;14 - 01;40;55;20

We didn't I didn't go that way. My dad didn't. My brother didn't, and he didn't go that way. We went as an individual replacement by ourselves all the way to Vietnam to, replacement battalion. Was assigned a unit and I made it to a full tour. And when I came home in August of 70, I didn't know what day I'd be home.

01;40;55;22 - 01;41;10;22

I didn't know what airplane I'd be home because I was one person coming back. And I called my mom and dad from Atlanta, and I told them, I'll be in August at 230 on flight number Center. And so they met me at the airplane. You know, that's how much notice they had. And they took me to the house and they welcomed me home.

01;41;10;22 - 01;41;30;17

It house, not a big overt circle. Circus out in the front yard in the neighborhood with signs and everything like that. My family welcomed me home. We had families in the neighborhood whose sons were in Vietnam. We had family in the neighborhood who had lost a son. And there wasn't any reason to put this out on the street.

01;41;30;17 - 01;41;59;08

So the welcome home celebration kind of became invisible the way we talked about ourselves until the, after 911, when we started wearing our hats and saying it's okay to recognize me now. I feel some guys still don't want that, but, I think for the most part, everybody came home as an individual. And there wasn't this big unit when Norman Schwarzkopf parade in New York City.

01;41;59;08 - 01;42;34;10

Take duct tape, stuff like that. So that's a welcome home to. Yeah. Thank my family. Have you been to the wall in DC? Yes, yes I have. What did you think of it? Just leave that cat over there. Yes. No question. It's very moving. Very moving. I was fortunate enough to, when I was working in Manassas a number of years ago that, we had been worked 6:00 and got off at 230 to avoid the congestion, traffic congestion in DC.

01;42;34;12 - 01;42;52;09

And, one of the guys I worked with was also a Vietnam vet. He wanted to go to Arlington and go see the wall with him. So on Saturday we did that and it got to be a little bit late. And being an electrician, one of the things I had was I carried it. I carry a little pocket flashlight with me.

01;42;52;09 - 01;43;11;18

When we went to the wall, there were some people there that were looking for a particular panel, and the panel numbers are way down on the bottom. They changed the lighting. And, you really could see that. So I pulled out my flashlight. I was helping people find it, and I got a good feeling about helping people find something in it.

01;43;11;20 - 01;43;49;20

I talked to one of the volunteers there in the met. She became a volunteer, and I go, did him schedule? If I felt like going down the wall and, answered questions and, you know, making comments about the wall and helping people find stuff that I would do that helped, veterans find stuff that families find that even one Wednesday night, I helped, three ladies, they were walking down the west wall, which is

the one that points to the, Lincoln Memorial and the one lady, it was really a woman and her two daughters.

01;43;49;20 - 01;44;10;06

One daughter was dragging her hand on the wall, and she walked down there. And when they and I asked them if I could help them find a pal or name, or if they had a question about the wall, I'd try to answer it. And, I said, well, we don't know anybody on the wall. And I thought that was strange.

01;44;10;09 - 01;44;33;26

And I said, you don't you don't know anybody on the wall. She says, no. After Wednesday night service, sometimes we'll come down here and one of us will walk along with a hand on the wall, and the other one will say, stop and we'll say a prayer for a family of who's ever name where. But we don't know anybody on the wall and said, sir, would you like to meet somebody?

01;44;33;28 - 01;44;57;19

Shut that. They're all dead. That's a well. I can introduce you. So it's an untold story. Told them about George. I told about, Crum Ryan. I told them about Sheldon Kimball. And after the third one, they kind of went. It's enough. Oh, we got to go. And they turned to walk away and walk about 2 or 3 panels back in the direction they'd come.

01;44;57;21 - 01;45;26;18

And the mother stopped. She turned around and came back to me. You know what? I wonder what I did. And she said, if you want to thank me. She said she'd been they've been to the wall many times, but that was the first time the wall talked to them. I also met, Hal Moore there at the wall late one night by ten, 10:00, maybe show got trench coat.

01;45;26;18 - 01;45;43;10

He came down. I asked him the same questions and he said no. He knew where he was going, and he asked me if I was a veteran, what I did. I told him and, he thanked me for my service. And he got to the pal. In one of the things all the volunteers know, they know where the, Grand Valley Bank guys are.

01;45;43;13 - 01;46;13;06

And he stopped there and I says, you know, so I drank. He says, yeah, I was there. And, he thanked me for what I did in Vietnam. Thanked him. As in what? Your name. It says, Elmore. Also met, some of the guys I flew with, Carlyle Roach, who lives in Scotland, and I flew

with second tour, who knew my brother.

01;46;15;12 - 01;46;38;21

His son in law contacted me and said they were coming to the States. And one thing, all I want to do is visit. Well, can I meet him there? Sure. So that was 2 or 3 months away, and, I got a motorcycle route up to DC, and my cab had standing at the apex of the wall, and I saw Carlyle come around the court, and, he saw the cab.

01;46;38;21 - 01;47;10;26

Hadn't made a beeline for me, didn't recognize me, just saw the hat. And when he got close, he recognized me. And it was a good reunion surprise for it. So, yeah, I've been there. And, one thing that was added after the wall was built and dedicated, I think in 82 was the, the women's Memorial, it's, just up off the east wall in that same area, and it's a statue of, three nurses holding a wounded guy, and it's, extremely moving.

01;47;10;28 - 01;47;38;27

It really is. If anybody hasn't been there, and can't handle the wall, for, as a veteran, a lot of lot guys will go. It just it's it's too hard. Maybe they could stop by the nurses. Monument. The women's monument, which is getting very moving. Yeah. But I've been to the wall taking my grandchildren to the wall.

01;47;40;23 - 01;48;06;00

Had them in the, in the fall. The east wall that points towards the Washington Monument gets heated up late in the evening by the sun. And after the sun goes down for a little bit of time, they go, put your hand on that east wall and it almost feels like it's body temperature. It's get goosebumps. It's a it's a great memorial.

01;48;06;03 - 01;48;29;23

It's not a war memorial. It's a veteran's memorial. The government built and government did for this was a gable land to on it was built entirely for private donations in intact. And like I said, the only thing the government did was give the land to build it up. From a distance, it just looks like a big black stone.

01;48;29;23 - 01;48;54;13

And as you go to it, you really walk down into it and, like the war for so many of us, that was invisible and hidden in, not in public view, because it's sunken like that from a couple angles. You don't even know it's there. But, it's like deep cut in the country. It's

awesome. I highly recommend it.

01;48;54;15 - 01;49;27;06

Have you been back to Vietnam? No, I don't have any desire. No. Some guys near me. I don't like the, not the same place. And what would I go for? I'd much rather go see, because, I was there with, you know, Las Vegas or Reno or Orlando or someplace else. Just meet girls. Okay. And this is my last question.

01;49;27;09 - 01;49;34;18

Do you have a favorite book, poem or movie about Vietnam?

01;49;34;21 - 01;49;44;24

Yes. Movie would be, We were young. We were soldiers where we had,

01;49;44;27 - 01;50;22;16

Pretty good movie sometimes. Hollywood takes too much artistic, to make something. But they it's close. I'm sure there's some things that they had to massage a little bit, but overall, I think it's it's a good ballad. Number of books. And, a lot of them involve helicopters or, Special Operations group, Hill in a small place which deals with, the balloons in the, in food where the French were defeated.

01;50;22;19 - 01;50;55;10

But, overall, I have to tell you that, dear Mark is something that, it's a little different. Susan Jamison. Compiled the letters that she wrote to her brother Mark, during training and during Vietnam, and even after he died. She might need an older brother to talk to. I think when, he died. When Mark died,

01;50;55;12 - 01;51;19;29

I don't know, eighth grade, 13 years old. Something young, think older brother. And, even after Mark died, she might feel the need to write a letter and go. Today was Mom and Dad's 25th wedding anniversary. Did the actually. And she kept all those original letters and the one she had to do. And somebody who knew they had to do.

01;51;20;00 - 01;51;48;24

And you don't get to read a book. And so, the book, one of the things in the book is, they got missing an action telegram before they got the. He did a day. The missing in action telegram came, was her older sister wedding. Her dad got them, got the telegram, read it like Mr. Mason. He stuck it in his pocket.

01;51;48;26 - 01;52;17;23

And he didn't bring it out till maybe the next day to let up, you know, joyous occasion. So. But, Susan's book, dear Mark, is about, Her trick to find out not how Mark died. They had a pretty good detailed description of the events surrounding his death. But how he lived, she wanted to make contact with, the guys that were his unit.

01;52;17;25 - 01;52;42;00

Did you have any pictures of my brother in Vietnam? And what was he like? You know, and, So she goes about now with the internet, finding guys that knew her brother. And, in this one of the other things she finds out that when he was in Fort Wallace, Texas, he met a girl that went to, I think, Denton Woman's College who he fell in love with.

01;52;42;00 - 01;53;11;23

And the family didn't even know this. And so when Mark died, this, pseudo fiancé wasn't notified at all. And she does to the context of, Mark's, he finds out about school ends up contacting her as and and the whole book is about finding their son that's only halfway through. There's so much more back of it, but it's a different perspective.

01;53;11;24 - 01;53;42;07

And, you know, yesterday I went flying. It's clear 22, and we lifted so many troops and, people shot at us and stuff like that. And here's, here's her telling about growing up with Mark and and being a brother and trying to find people, from, it's from the family aspect, from the gold star family who, we don't hear that much from, and it's, it's different from what I normally read.

01;53;42;10 - 01;53;47;20

Dear Mark, Susan Claude Felder. Jimerson.